Rugby is recognised throughout the world as a model for sportsmanship.

The IRFU provides [Official Codes of Conduct](about:blank) for players, coaches, parents, spectators, and referees. All Portlaoise RFC members and patrons are expected to abide by these.

Whenever we pull on a jersey, hoodie or tie, we represent Portlaoise RFC, a club with over 50 years of proud history. We live our Values of “Respect - Fun - Integrity – Inclusivity”

It is important to note that our Social Media Policy supports and aligns with our Code of Conduct.

**Players**

* Play for enjoyment and become part of the rugby family.
* Respect the ‘Game of Rugby’ and play within the Laws of the Game.
* Accept the referee’s decision and let your captain or coach ask any relevant questions.
* Play with control. Do not lose your temper.
* Always do your best and be committed to the game, your team, and your club.
* Be a ‘good sport’ and applaud all good play, whether by your team or the opposition.
* Respect your opponent. Treat all players as you would like to be treated. Do not ‘bully’ or take advantage of any player.
* Rugby is a team sport, so make sure you cooperate with your coach, teammates, and club members.
* Remember that the goals of the game are to have fun, improve your skills and feel good.
* At the end of the match, thank your opponents and the referee for the match.
* Always remember that you owe a duty of care to your opponents. Tackle hard but fairly; do not intend to hurt your opponent.
* Winning and losing is part of sport: Win with humility – lose with dignity.
* As part of the team, it is important that you attend training regularly, listen to your coach and help your team.
* As a team sport, it is important to understand that all members are important to the team!
* Remember you represent your team, club, family, and the Game of Rugby.

**Coaches**

* Remember that as a coach of an ‘age-grade team’, you are acting ‘in loco parentis’ and that you have a duty of care to all your players.
* Lead by example – young people need a coach they can respect as a Role Model.
* Be generous with your praise and never ridicule or shout at players for making mistakes or losing a match.
* Teach your players that the Laws of the Game are mutual agreements which no one should evade or break.
* Ensure that you are appropriately qualified by gaining the relevant coaching accreditation for your level.
* Be reasonable in your demands on the players’ time, energy, and enthusiasm.
* Encourage respect for all participants – teammates, opponents, and match officials.
* Create a safe and enjoyable environment in which to train and play.
* Always follow professional medical advice in determining when an injured player is ready to play again.
* Develop policies for your club/team to agree procedures regarding discipline, injury prevention and treatment, team selection etc.
* Be responsible and ensure you uphold the ethos of the game and the IRFU.
* Support the IRFU Child Welfare Policy and all policies regarding Children in Sport.

**Parents**

* Remember, young people play rugby for their enjoyment, not only yours.
* Encourage your child to always play by the Laws of the Game.
* Teach young children that honest endeavour is as important as winning so that they accept the result of each game without disappointment.
* Help young people to work towards skill improvement and good sportsmanship.
* Set a good example by applauding good play on both sides.
* Never ridicule, humiliate, or shout at young players for making mistakes or losing matches.
* Do not place emphasis on winning at all costs.
* Do not force an unwilling child to participate in the playing of rugby. If the child is to play, he/she will do so in good time through your encouragement.
* Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from rugby.
* As a spectator, do not use profane language or harass referees, coaches, or players.
* Do not publicly question the referee’s judgement & their honesty.
* Recognise the value and importance of volunteer referees and coaches.
* Identify and acknowledge the good qualities of the Game of Rugby and uphold these values.
* Remember you and your child’s contribution to the Game of Rugby is very important to the IRFU, and be proud of your contribution.
* Understand the value of team sport and its importance.

**Spectators**

* Remember that although young people play organised rugby, they are not ‘miniature internationals.
* Be on your best behaviour and lead by example. Do not use profane language or harass referees, players, or coaches.
* Applaud, good play by the visiting team and your own.
* Show respect for your team’s opponents. Without them, there would not be a match.
* Condemn the use of violence in all forms at every opportunity.
* Verbal abuse of players or referees cannot be accepted in any shape or form.
* Players or referees are not fair targets for ignorant behaviour.
* Encourage young players to play by the Laws of the Game.
* Spectators can contribute to the enjoyment of the event and all involved.
* Be proud of your club and the Game of Rugby.

**Referees**

* Respect every child's rights, dignity and worth and treat everyone equally, regardless of gender, disability, ethnic origin, religion, etc.
* All referees must be a member of their Branch Referees Association.
* Act as a role model to promote the positive aspects of rugby and maintain the highest standards of personal conduct.
* Monitor the boundaries between a working relationship and friendship with players.
* Avoid being alone with underage persons.
* Never deal with injuries unless qualified to do so.
* Encourage coaches/parents to act responsibly and to be responsible for players' behaviour and performance.
* Never criticise individual players and or coaches or parents.
* Ensure that safety is paramount in all games.
* Follow agreed protocols regarding shower arrangements after matches.
* Agree on appropriate times for entry to changing rooms to deal with match preparation and ensure team management members are present.
* Be punctual, prepared and well-presented.
* Ensure players and officials comply with the Laws of the Game.
* Adhere to all rules and procedures as agreed by the Branch Referees Association