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

The IRFU provides Official Codes of Conduct 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