

West of Scotland Rugby Referees' Society

Safeguarding Guidance for Referees

The background

The Committee of the West of Scotland Rugby Referees' Society (WRRS) is aware that:

- Some referees may not be familiar with legislation protecting vulnerable and protected groups;
- In some places changing facilities are limited;
- Some referees may not have been trained on situations regarding children; and
- Male referees officiate at ladies' matches and vice-versa and sometimes there are mixed gender officiating groups.

This interim guidance is issued pending more information that may come from the Scottish Rugby Union and/or the Scottish Rugby Referees' Association.

The Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme managed by Disclosure Scotland helps ensure people who are unsuitable to work with children and protected and vulnerable adults cannot do certain types of work or activities. Presently the primary impact on refereeing is that coaches who advise referees who are under the age of 18 must seek registration with the PVG scheme.

Society referees who officiate at under 18 or younger fixtures do not require to be registered but should take cognisance of the details listed below.

Those who have committed a criminal offence/s against children and young persons will not be permitted membership of the WRRS nor officiate any matches.

Definitions

For the purposes of this guidance, the following definitions shall apply:

Children	Anyone under the age of 16 years.
Young adult/person	Anyone aged 16 to 18 years.
Adult	Anyone aged 18 years and over.
Foul Language	This includes but is not limited to swearing and sexually explicit comments.
Gender	An individual's biological sex or acquired gender via a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC).

The referee

It is important that the referee is seen to be a role model who should treat all people with respect and carefully consider their actions in advance of, during and after matches.

The actions

It should be obvious that many of the points below reflect a common-sense approach; but they are noted in order that referees can familiarise themselves with the issues.

The following list is not exhaustive.

Referees should not:

- Change in the same area as children, young players and adults with the opposite gender;
- Shower with children, young players and adults with the opposite gender;
- Be alone with children and young players at any time, whether indoors, outdoors or in a vehicle;
- Use foul language;
- Tolerate foul language from any children or young adult players;
- Tolerate foul language from any players where it is obvious there are children and/or young spectators present;
- Smoke tobacco or any other products in the presence of children;
- Administer First Aid - except in an emergency and you feel competent to treat the player. Always seek help from a professional and/or dial 999;
- Check studs of children and young players without their coach being present;
- Allow a player to continue playing if there are doubts about their fitness to do so – remember, **if in doubt sit them out**;
- Overtly criticise children and young players or use language which may humiliate or cause the player to lose confidence or self-esteem; and
- Give a lift in a vehicle to a child or young player unless there are other young people (over 16 years) or adults in the car and the parents have been informed.

Adverse incidents

Physical abuse by coaches/parents/spectators to a child or young player is never acceptable and the circumstances must always be reported to the appropriate Club Child Protection Officer.

If a referee witnesses verbal bullying by coaches/parents/spectators to a child or young player this must be reported to the appropriate Club Child Protection Officer.

All reports of adverse incidents should be by email with the WRRS Secretary copied in.

Video Recording

We are aware that some referees record their matches to assist with their own professional development.

Referees are not permitted to record any matches involving children and young players at any time.

If you are officiating an adult game and you wish to record the match, you must check with both clubs beforehand to ensure that no young adults are playing. If a young adult is playing and you still wish to film the game, you require permission from that player's parent or guardian to film the game.

Changing facilities

Referees intending to officiate at matches involving children, young players, and/or persons of the opposite gender should confirm with the home team that segregated changing and showering facilities are in place. If they are not, the referee should travel to the match pre-changed and from the match unchanged. Ideally this would never occur, but referees have to be cognisant of the physical and financial restrictions under which some clubs operate.

We recommend the use of cubicles at all times, if available.

Date of document

This document was issued on 17th January 2023 for immediate implementation by Society members.