



**A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO
BEING RUGBYSAFE IN
SCHOOLS & COLLEGES**

2018 - 2019



Think Rugby...

Think:



RUGBY

SAFE



**PUTTING PLAYER WELFARE
AT THE HEART OF THE GAME**

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INTRODUCTION

Schools and Colleges have a responsibility towards the health and safety of those pupils who use their facilities and participate in rugby and other sport activity. This document aims to provide schools and colleges with information, guidance and recommended procedures to ensure that rugby union is delivered to the highest standards in a safe and enjoyable environment.

RFU Regulation 9 (Player Safety) sets out the responsibilities and requirements of those organising any rugby union activity, however due to the variation in rugby programmes being offered in schools and colleges, the recommended level of care, policies and procedures should be based on the individual circumstances at the school, college or venue and what is reasonably practicable. As schools and colleges are responsible for their own regulation the information provided in this document is guidance and whilst the implementation of procedures and best practice is highly recommended it is recognised that not all the information will be relevant to every school.

There is a similar document specific to rugby clubs and universities. The “Practical Guide to being RugbySafe in Clubs” provides guidance on best practice in clubs, RFU specific information and recommended procedures.

The Practical Guide to being RugbySafe in Clubs is available at: www.englandrugby.com/rugbysafe

RFU REGULATIONS

RFU regulations are in place to ensure that the administration, organisation and manner in which the game is played is appropriate, fair and safe. Schools and Colleges are responsible for ensuring they are operating within the RFU regulations, not adhering to and/or acting outside of RFU regulations may invalidate the cover of the RFUs or their own additional liability insurance.

RFU Regulation 9 states that:

Safety is of paramount importance, it is therefore essential for those involved in the Game to consider their own safety, and the safety of others at all times. They should familiarise themselves with any specific responsibilities that may be applicable to them, as set out in various documents issued by the RFU and/or World Rugby from time to time.

All those involved in the Game should consider their own fitness before participating in any rugby activity. The parents and guardians of players under the age of 18 should consider the fitness of those for whom they have responsibility. In particular, it is recommended to seek medical advice after injury and before recommencing any rugby activity.

All clubs and those involved in arranging any rugby activity must ensure that:

1. there is an appropriate level of immediate care and/or first aid cover, and equipment provided for that rugby activity. These should be determined by a risk assessment and further guidance on the minimum requirement at each type of rugby activity is given in:
2. there is access to a telephone to ensure that the emergency services can be contacted immediately when needed; and
3. there is clear vehicular access for an ambulance or other emergency vehicle.

Regulation 9 also covers policy and procedures on:

- Head Injuries and Concussion
- Reporting Injuries
- Health Care Professional Workers

There are a number of other regulations and guidance documents that are important to be aware for ensuring best practice player welfare provision in schools & colleges:

- Regulation 15: Age Grade Rugby
- Age Grade Rugby Codes of Practice
- Regulation 20: Anti-Doping and Illicit Drugs
- Regulation 21: Safeguarding

Key Link: The full list of downloaded regulations and other associated guidance can be found at:
<http://www.englandrugby.com/governance/regulations>

INSURANCE

Liability cover is not arranged by the RFU for schools and colleges; cover for these must be provided by the educational establishment to which they belong.

Personal Accident Insurance

Players in school and college teams are covered by the RFU's Personal Accident insurance cover in the same way as club players.

The policy, arranged with RSA, provides fixed benefit payments for death and permanently disabling or catastrophic injuries, such as a traumatic brain injury or spinal injury, caused as a result of an accident that occurs whilst you are taking part in the sport.

Cover is not included for sickness or injuries resulting from a medical condition. If the school/college or parent/guardian(s) feel that such cover is required it is recommended that an additional policy is taken out that is appropriate to the added needs.

First Aider / Healthcare Professionals Insurance

It is very unlikely that any action would be taken against a first aider who was appropriately using their first aid training. Schools/colleges should check that their insurance policy provides liability cover for individuals carrying out first aid duties on their behalf.

All schools/colleges should check that any healthcare professionals, who provide services, have their own indemnity insurance in place. Schools/colleges who engage such personnel, or deploy volunteers in this capacity, may have a vicarious liability for their actions.

Coaching in Schools and Colleges

The liability insurance provider for teachers/coaches delivering rugby union at a school or college may be different depending upon the circumstances:

- If the teacher/coach is **directly employed by the school or college** the public liability protection should be arranged by the employer.
- If the coach is from a local **club** and attends the school or college on behalf of the club, the coach will be **covered under the club's public liability insurance**. It doesn't matter if it is on a voluntarily or paid basis.
- If the coach is **directly employed by the RFU** and providing the coaching as part of an RFU programme the coach will be covered by the RFU's corporate insurance.
- Finally, if the coach is **self-employed** and providing coaching to the school or college as a contracted coach, the coach must arrange their own public liability insurance. Schools/colleges should ask the coach to provide evidence of this.

For more details of the Insurance cover and Personal Accident insurance please visit:

www.englandrugbyinsurance.co.uk

SCHOOL/COLLEGE RESPONSIBILITIES

Schools, colleges and any organisers of rugby activities are responsible for providing an appropriate level of care to the players, staff, volunteers and spectators using their facilities. There is considerable variation in the level of care that would be considered appropriate and this will depend on the individual circumstances at the school, college or venue. It will also depend on what is reasonably practicable for the school/college or organiser to provide.

Whilst schools/colleges will carry out general risk assessments it may be appropriate for an individual risk assessment based approach to be undertaken to determine any specific requirements for their rugby programme and provision.

Schools, colleges and other bodies who organise rugby activity, have the following responsibilities with respect to safety and first aid:

- Complete and record a risk assessment to determine the appropriate level of activity and first aid provision.
- Ensure that providers and appointed first aiders are appropriately trained and undertake recertification in accordance with their qualification.
- Ensure that the procedures for the recording and reporting of incidents are followed.
- Ensure that suitable first aid facilities and equipment are available.
- Ensure that there is adequate cover to allow for absences.
- Ensure that all coaches/teachers/referees have the minimum/appropriate level of qualification and training for delivering rugby activity.

Appendix 2 in this document provides an example season checklist that schools/colleges can use to review their processes and provision.

For more information and guidance on first aid specific risk assessments please visit:

www.englandrugbyinsurance.co.uk/risk-assessment-tool

RECOMMENDED LEVELS OF FIRST AID/ IMMEDIATE CARE PROVISION

The level of cover that it is reasonable and practicable to provide will depend on the individual circumstances of the school, college or event organiser. Schools/colleges which have the resources, and where it is reasonable to do so should consider engaging the services of health care professionals and providing appropriate equipment and facilities.

An overview of the recommended minimum levels of provision are listed in Appendix 1, however the actual level of provision will depend on each individual school/college's risk assessment. Teams should usually provide their own cover, even when playing away fixtures. The following situations may occur, however:

1. Where it is appropriate for a single provider to cover the home and away teams, it will usually be the home team that is responsible for provision although this must be agreed in advance to avoid confusion, as the visiting team has a shared responsibility to ensure provision.
2. Where a game is arranged at a neutral venue, the organiser is responsible for ensuring the appropriate level of provision. This could be provided by the venue but again, this must be agreed in advance to avoid confusion.

Where possible the RFU recommends having a specifically appointed First Aider(s). Having a number of individuals trained to this level will ensure that this basic level of cover is available at all matches and training sessions.

Evidence based approach

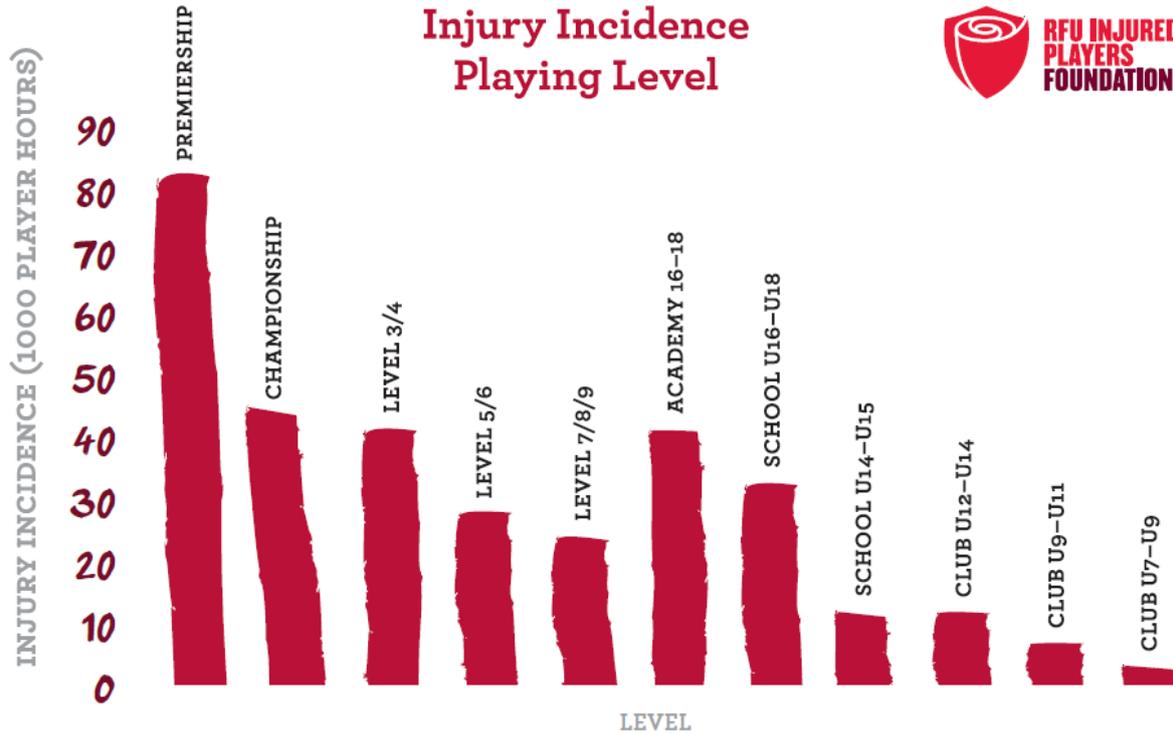
The recommended levels of first aid/immediate care provision is set based on information and data collated through RFU research and can be utilised to inform risk assessments.

Risk by Age – The chart below demonstrates why U16-U18 is a focus area and why the minimum levels have been adjusted as a result of research.

Number of Practitioners – This is based on the following:

- **Management of severe/catastrophic injuries.** Suspected, severe and catastrophic injuries require a minimum of two practitioners to provide adequate care i.e. first to stabilise the neck and the second to assess and manage other injuries. The minimum levels below provide a minimum of 2 trained practitioners at every game, with opposition medical staff providing mutual support in such circumstances. If a practitioner is required to accompany a player to hospital, this enables cover to be continued to be provided.
- **Frequency of injuries.** The CRISP data shows that an average of 5 injuries per game required on-field assessment and/or attention. To ensure safe assessments and on-going off-field management of this number of injuries per game requires each team to have its own practitioner.
- **Avoidance of conflict.** There have been examples of coaches/players refusing to accept the opinion/advice of opposition practitioners, with accusations of bias. Individual team provision avoids such situations arising.

Injury Incidence Playing Level



More information on the RFU injury surveillance programmes, research reports and articles can be accessed at <http://www.englandrugby.com/rugbysafe/research>

PITCH-SIDE FIRST AID/IMMEDIATE CARE ROLES & TRAINING

Schools and colleges should be aware that there are different levels of training required in order to provide first aid and immediate care cover.

Role/Qualification	Emergency First Aider
Description	<p>An Emergency First Aider should be qualified to a minimum of Level 3 Emergency First Aid or equivalent (this was Level 2 up until 1st Oct, 2017 – anyone with a valid Level 2 qualification (their prior to 1st Oct 2017) may continue to use this until it expires after 3 years from completion.</p> <p>Emergency First Aiders are trained to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take charge when someone is injured or ill, including calling an ambulance if required; • Provide emergency first aid to injured or ill persons until more expert help arrives; • Look after the first aid equipment, e.g. restocking the first aid box. <p>They should not attempt to give first aid for which they have not been trained.</p> <p>Every squad/team should have a nominated Emergency First Aider to provide help to any injured or ill player until more expert help arrives.</p>
Training	<p>The minimum qualification for an Emergency First Aider involved in rugby is the Level 3 Emergency First Aid.</p> <p>The RFU’s Emergency First Aid in Rugby Union (EFARU) course is the equivalent to the Level 3 Emergency First Aid at Work (EFAW) qualification with additional rugby-specific elements also covered. The EFARU sits on the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) and is awarded by 1st4sport Qualifications and similar to many other First Aid qualifications it is valid for 3 years. The course provides learners with a nationally recognised qualification that is transferable to the workplace and/or other sports.</p> <p>Whilst the EFARU is recommended due to the rugby-specific content, other qualifications are recognised for Emergency First Aiders. If selecting an alternative course/qualification, it should meet the minimum requirement:</p> <p>Courses of this level should take a minimum of 6 hours face to face training and be acknowledged with a certificate from the recognised awarding body. The assessment criteria should be a competency based</p> <p>Any courses should have a quality assurance process (shown by an accreditation mark)</p> <p>The course should cover both more common rugby injuries (such as concussion) and rare but serious injuries (such as spinal injury) in sufficient detail.</p> <p>Additionally the following should be considered when deciding how delivers the training:</p> <p>What experience and qualifications does the trainer have? E.g. medical background, years of tutor experience, knowledge of rugby.</p> <p>How many people will be in the training session? Suggested maximum: 16 per trainer.</p> <p>What insurance does the trainer have? E.g. personal liability cover.</p> <p>What resources are provided E.g. Learner workbook</p>

Other Information	<p>Schools and colleges which have employees may actually fall under the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 (SI 1982 No 917) and will need to refer to these for minimum qualification/training standards.</p> <p>Based on an individual risk assessment, it may be considered appropriate to engage the services of externally trained first aiders. When using external providers, it is the school/college's responsibility to check that the individuals are appropriately checked, trained and experienced.</p>
Role/Qualification	First Aid Qualified HCP
Description	<p>There are a number of different therapists and Health Care Professionals (HCP) involved in sport (see Health Care Professional and Allied Health Care Professional Descriptors for examples of role descriptors and requirements), including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctor • Sports Therapist • Osteopath • Registered Paramedic • Physiotherapist • Graduate Sport Rehabilitator • Chiropractor • Registered Nurse <p>These individuals may provide first aid cover along with additional support and/or treatment based on their qualifications.</p>
Training	<p>Qualifications will vary based on the individual's experience and training. Schools/colleges should check that any individual taking on this role has an up-to-date first aid qualification. Being a HCP does not automatically mean the individual has an appropriate first aid qualification.</p>
Other Information	<p>Schools/colleges should ensure that the individual therapist/HCP has the relevant qualifications, experience and insurance for the role. There should be a formal agreement that covers roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>If performing treatment above that of an emergency first aider, these individuals may require their own insurance arrangements as a requirement of their regulating body. Below the elite level of sport, such insurance will usually be provided at no additional cost to them, as long as they have the appropriate training and experience.</p> <p>Therapists/HCPs should be able to provide evidence of registration with or membership of their relevant regulatory body or society to help in this process.</p>

FIRST AID & IMMEDIATE CARE ROLES & TRAINING

Clubs should also be aware that there are different levels of training required in order to provide first aid and immediate care cover.

Role/Qualification	Immediate Care Practitioner
Description	<p>Immediate Care Practitioners are Health Care Professionals (see Health Care Professional and Allied Health Care Professional Descriptors for examples of role descriptors and requirements) who have undertaken specific training to allow them to provide enhanced pitch-side care.</p>
Training	<p>The RFU's Immediate Care in Sport (PHICIS) courses are rugby union specific courses that provide training for healthcare professionals and allied healthcare professionals working within sport.</p> <p>Pre-Hospital Immediate Care in Sport (PHICIS) Level 2 The PHICIS Level 2 is a one day course, aimed at those HCPs/Allied HCPs working in the community game (Level 3 leagues and below and CB representative rugby). The accreditation for the Level 2 lasts for two years.</p> <p>Pre-Hospital Immediate Care in Sport (PHICIS) Level 3 The PHICIS Level 3 course is a requirement for those HCPs/Allied HCP working within professional rugby, including the Premiership, the Championship and with national teams.</p> <p>Other immediate care qualification are accepted however the course must be endorsed by the Faculty of Pre Hospital Care and the content is appropriate for sport. Other approved courses include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rugby Football League Course • Jockey Club Course • Resuscitation and Emergency Medicine On-field Course (REMO) • AREA Course (Football Association) • Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Course • BASICS Immediate Care Course • Advanced Trauma Life Support Course (orientated towards hospital based care)

Other Information	<p>Schools/Colleges should ensure that the individual therapist/HCP has the relevant qualifications, experience and insurance for the role. There should be a formal agreement that covers roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Therapists/HCPs should be able to provide evidence of registration with or membership of their relevant regulatory body or society to help in this process.</p> <p>These individuals will have their own insurance arrangements as a requirement of their regulating body. Below the elite level of sport, such insurance will usually be provided at no additional cost to them, as long as they have the appropriate training and experience.</p>
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HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL AND ALLIED HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL DESCRIPTORS

Health Care Professionals	
Chiropractor	<p>He/she should be registered with the General Chiropractic Council (GCC) as a Chiropractor, and have appropriate experience and training in immediate care.</p> <p>For more information visit: www.gcc-uk.org</p>
Doctor	<p>He/she should be registered with the General Medical Council (GMC), and have appropriate experience and training in immediate care.</p> <p>A doctors registration status can be checked at: www.gmc-uk.org</p>
Nurse	<p>He/she should be registered with the Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC), and have appropriate experience and training in immediate care.</p> <p>A nurses registration status can be checked at www.nmc-uk.org</p>
Paramedic	<p>He/she should be registered with the Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC) as a State Registered Paramedic, and have appropriate experience in providing cover for rugby or other contact sports. If working outside the NHS they will require their own indemnity insurance.</p> <p>Registration status can be checked at www.hpc-uk.org</p>
Physiotherapist	<p>He/she should be registered with the Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC) as a Physiotherapist, and have appropriate experience and training in immediate care.</p> <p>Registration status can be checked at www.hpc-uk.org. More information on physiotherapists is available at: www.csp.org.uk</p>
Osteopath	<p>He/she should be registered with the General Osteopathy Council as an Osteopath, and have appropriate experience and training in immediate care.</p> <p>For more information visit: www.osteopathy.org.uk</p>

Allied Health Care Professionals

Sports Massage Therapist	<p>He/she should be registered as a full member with the Sports Massage Association at Level 3 or 4 membership, and have appropriate experience and training in first aid or immediate care.</p> <p>For more information visit: www.sportsmassageassociation.org</p>
Sports Rehabilitators	<p>He/she should be registered as a full member with BASRaT (British Association of Sports (pending BASRaT's application for inclusion of members on Health Professions Council)) and have appropriate experience and training in first aid or immediate care.</p> <p>For more information visit: www.basrat.org</p>
Sports Therapist	<p>He/she should be registered as a full member with the Society of Sports Therapists, and have appropriate experience and training in first aid or immediate care. First Aid training is mandatory in Sports Therapy degree programmes recognised by the Society.</p> <p>For more information visit: www.society-of-sports-therapists.org</p>

FIRST AID FACILITIES

Where possible and practicable, schools/colleges should have a suitable first aid room (or rooms) for use during rugby and other sporting activities. It should be warm, have good lighting, and contain essential first aid facilities and equipment. Suggested specification includes the following:

- A sink with hot and cold running water;
- Drinking water;
- Soap and paper towels;
- A refuse container;
- A store for first aid materials;
- A container for the safe disposal of clinical waste;
- A treatment couch with waterproof protection, clean pillows and blankets;
- A first aid record incident book.

The room should be easily accessible to stretchers and be clearly signposted. Wherever possible, the room should be reserved specifically for providing first aid and with a designated individual (e.g. first aid lead or appointed first aider person) being responsible for the room.

For many schools/colleges a single location is probably insufficient as playing fields can extend over a large area, often on separate sites far away from other school infrastructure. Schools need to consider carefully how First Aid assessment points are identified and where they should be located. These facilities need to provide a suitable place for the assessment of injuries and a comfortable waiting area prior to transportation.

Transportation

Very few sports injuries will require the emergency services being called. However, there are injuries that require assessment by hospital A&E departments and the transportation of injured players to hospital requires careful consideration and planning. Schools/colleges should develop their own arrangements for both home and away matches to ensure that there are sufficient personnel available to transport injured players to the local A&E department whilst ensuring that there are appropriate levels of supervision for the other team members. This information should be made available to players and their parents at the start of each season along with contact details for key individuals on match days.

FIRST AID EQUIPMENT

It is important to have appropriate first aid equipment readily accessible whenever any rugby activity is taking place; it is an RFU regulation that those organising rugby activity ensure that this is in place. Every school, college or rugby activity organiser should assess what equipment is required when completing their first aid/immediate care risk assessment. This will be determined by the playing level, type of activity, facilities and number of participants.

The minimum level of first aid equipment is recommended as suitably stocked first aid kit for each pitch-side trained first aider.

More information on the suggested contents of a basic pitch-side first aid kit can be found in the “First Aid Equipment” RugbySafe Essential Guide available on the RFU website at www.englandrugby.com/rugbysafe/guides-and-faqs

First aid equipment should be checked frequently to ensure sufficient quantities and that all items are usable. A process should be in place to ensure that the content is replenished as soon as possible after use. Some items, particularly sterile ones, are marked with expiry dates. They should be replaced by the dates given and all expired items safely disposed of. In cases where sterile items have no dates, it would be advisable to check with the manufacturers to discover how long they can be kept. For non-sterile items without dates, it is a matter of judgement, based on whether they are fit for purpose.

Emergency first aid should only be given by appropriately trained persons. First aid equipment should only be provided appropriate to the level of training of the first aider or immediate care provider.

Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs)

The RFU are working with the Community Heartbeat Trust to provide guidance and support to clubs, universities, schools and colleges on the purchasing, governance and maintenance of Automated External Defibrillators (AED).

More information can be found on the RugbySafe webpages www.englandrugby.com/rugbysafe or by visiting the CHTs dedicated webpages www.communityheartbeat.org.uk/rugby-clubs-schools

Medtree

The RFU have teamed up with Medtree an international medical equipment supplier to offer clubs, high quality discounted equipment, this includes the bespoke designed RugbySafe first aid kit, the waterproof bag comes fully kitted out for a pitch-side Emergency first aider. It can also be personalised with a club or specific logo.

For more information go to the RugbySafe webpages www.englandrugby.com/rugbysafe or visit Medtree’s dedicated website <https://medtree-rugby.co.uk>

MEDICAL EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

Schools and colleges have a responsibility to ensure that their facilities provide a safe environment. The requirements of this duty of care will be identified through a risk assessment and should include having a clearly documented plan that outlines the actions and processes in a medical emergency.

Along with appropriate levels of first aid cover, a medical emergency action plan (MEAP) should be an integral part of the player welfare provision across all sports and recreational activities.

A MEAP should consider all those involved, including players, coaches, officials, parents and volunteers, staff, sports trainers/first aiders and spectators. It should provide a simple, safe and systematic approach to ensure that any emergencies can be dealt with quickly and efficiently.

It is important that the MEAP is effectively communicated to coaches, first aiders and any other staff/volunteers who would be involved in the incident management during an emergency situation.

An MEAP template example is given in **Appendix 3** of the document. Many schools/colleges will already have a general MEAP in place, however the following questions can be considered in order to develop a simple, effective MEAP:

Contact Details

- What is the critical information that is needed, especially in the event that the emergency services need to be called?
- Which contact details need to be available?

Chain of Command & Procedures

- Exactly what will the procedure in an emergency be?
- Who will be in charge?
- Who will call the ambulance? Who will meet the ambulance?
- How will everyone know who is in charge?
- Who will have the responsibility of informing parents, next of kin etc?
- How will you debrief after an emergency?
- Who will record information about the incident and where will it be stored?

Local Hospitals

- Where is the nearest A&E?
- Where is the nearest minor injuries hospital?

Communication and Information.

- Where is the MEAP information located?
- How does everyone know about the MEAP and what to do?
- Does everyone know where the first aid equipment is located?

INCIDENT & INJURY RECORDING/ REPORTING

Monitoring of Injuries

As is commonplace in schools, the RFU recommends that any organisations that run rugby activity keep a record of any incidents and/or injuries.

School should carry out a regular injury audits to identify any regular patterns or trends of injuries, inform future risk assessments and make recommendations to improve safety if appropriate. For example, number of contact training sessions. This record book is not the same as the statutory accident book required under the H&SAW Regulations, although the two can be combined. Any other injuries (such as off-pitch incidents) should be recorded in a school or college's accident book.

An example template of an Accident/Incident Form can be found in Appendix 4 of this document

Schools/colleges should have a policy in place for communicating any injuries with parent/guardian(s) and school medical staff (if relevant) to ensure the appropriate action is taken and record of incident is made to the child's school/colleges medical record.

Schools/colleges will have their own policy however if there is any suggestion that the injury is not an accident, the RFU recommends records should be kept in case a claim is ever brought against the school, a teacher or referee. In most cases, records should be kept for three years, but if the injury is to a child they should be kept for 15 years.

Serious Injury Reporting

So that the RFU can take an active role aiding in the care and rehabilitation of seriously injured players, it is vital that the RFU is notified of all injuries that qualify in the reportable category set out below. In order to simplify the reporting process and ensure that the injury data that is collated is valid, schools/colleges need only report the following Reportable Injury Events. Wider ranging detailed injury surveillance data will be collected independently from a representative sample of nominated clubs and schools.

Reportable Injury Events are defined as:

- An injury which results in the player being admitted to a hospital (this does not include those that attend an Accident or Emergency Department and are allowed home from there).
- Deaths which occur during or within 6 hours of a game finishing.
- Injuries which occur due to the use of artificial grass pitches or equipment or player clothing, such as sports goggles.

In the event of a serious injury occurring, which fulfils one of the above definitions, after providing immediate first aid and arranging transport by ambulance to hospital, the following protocol is to be followed:

1. A school representative must phone the Sports Injuries Administrator Helpline 0800 298 0102, as soon as the seriousness of the player's condition is confirmed and certainly within 48 hours of the game or training session.
2. Please have a pen and paper ready, and the details of the incident. Out of working hours there will be a recorded message providing contact details of the Injured Player Welfare Officer (IPWO). The IPWO will only respond out of hours in the event of a potentially catastrophic injury or fatality. You will be asked to complete and return an Injury Report Form available at www.englandrugby.com/rugbysafe/injury-reporting (see Appendix 5)
3. The IPWO will then establish contact with the school and player, or their family, in order to confirm the injury, initiate the Pastoral Support Programme and collect additional information about the injury.
4. The school must notify their insurers (the RFU insurer is: Perkins Slade Tel: 0121 698 8043 Email: rfuclaims@perkins-slade.com)
5. They must also record witness statements. Where a potential insurance or personal injury claim may arise, clubs and schools are advised to retain on file witness statements. These statements must confine themselves to the facts and not include opinion or hearsay, or apportion or infer blame. They must be signed and dated by the person making them.

Contact Details:

Sports Injuries Administrator (SIA): Rugby House, Twickenham Stadium, 200 Whitton Road, Twickenham, TW2 7BA Tel: 0800 298 0102 Email: sportsinjuriesadmin@therfu.com

RFU IPF – Injured Player Welfare Officer (IPWO):

Dean Holder

Tel: 07894 489 716

Email: deanholder@rfu.com

Detailed information on incident and injury reporting can be found at www.englandrugby.com/rugbysafe/injury-reporting

Injured Players Foundation

The IPF provide support and information to rugby players in England who sustain a serious and catastrophic injury.

They also help prevent future injuries through research and education.

For more information go the IPF website: www.rfuipf.org.uk

MANAGEMENT OF SUSPECTED CONCUSSIONS

Schools/colleges should ensure that all coaches and referees are aware of and follow the Department of Education Guidelines which are in line with the RFU's HEADCASE programme guidelines. This means that any child/player who is concussed or suspected of being concussed should undertake a minimum rest period as stated in the Return to Play Programme and go through an appropriate Graduated Return to Play.

(Age Grade RTP image)

Schools/Colleges should have there is a process in place to ensure that parents are informed if a pupil is suspected of suffering from concussion. Parents should also be asked to inform the school/college their child has suffered concussion outside of School.

It is important to be aware that there is **NO** Head Injury Assessment (HIA) process in the community game this includes all school/college games and competitions. HIA can only be carried out during elite level competitions and matches, that have been approved by World Rugby. If a player is suspected of having a concussion they must be removed from play immediately and not return to the game - **"If in doubt, sit them out"**. This must be adhered to irrespective of the qualification/profession of the individual providing the pitch-side first aid and/or immediate care provision.

HEADCASE is the RFU's concussion awareness programme that aims to increase understanding and provide information on concussion and other related topics, including how to prevent and manage suspected concussions. The **HEADCASE** webpages have numerous resources including for resources and advice for coaches, match officials, players, parents, clubs and schools.

For more information, please go to: www.englandrugby.com/headcase

Hard copies of the HEADCASE posters and pitch-side advice cards are available for free upon request; please send your name, delivery address and the amount needed to rugbysafe@rfu.com

RUGBYSAFE BEST PRACTICE

School and college rugby programmes can vary greatly. The following guidance is deemed as best practice and it is recommended that schools/colleges aim to implement the practices and apply policies where possible and appropriate. However, it is recognised that not all the information will be relevant to every school or college.

Communication

Teachers/coaches should communicate regularly with parent/guardian(s) and work closely to support any children with pre-existing medical conditions. It is important everyone is clear what (if any) particular accommodations should be taken to consider safety and ensure that the experience is a positive one for the player and others involved. Coaches should consider using different methods and approaches that meet the needs of the individual and the group of players they are working with.

Schools/colleges should consider providing information to parents each season which outlines any measures that the school/college has put in place to protect the safety of young players (e.g. HEAD-CASE online module training, first aid training).

Staff meeting

It is recommended that those responsible for the school's rugby programme (e.g. Head of Rugby) host a meeting with all teachers, staff and coaches involved in the schools rugby programme. To ensure there is a clear understanding of standards including policies, risk assessment and all schemes of work.

Giving Pupils a choice

As with any subject and sport, young people will have different abilities and motivation levels when it comes to rugby. Providing different formats of the game such as touch, conditioned games etc. provides pupils with the opportunity to still participate in the game at a level that is appropriate to their ability and motivation. Pupils are more likely to enjoy the game and stay involved if they experience a game they enjoy.

Students with specific medical Needs

In general participation in rugby of pupils can provide fitness and wellbeing benefits; however, for some young people with certain medical conditions, participating in strenuous exercise and contact sports such as rugby may not be appropriate.

The RFU recommend that anyone with a medical condition that may be affected by strenuous exercise, or the physical nature of a sport like rugby, should seek medical advice before participating in any rugby union activity. The decision on whether an individual can play rugby and in what format (e.g. contact, touch rugby) needs to be on the basis of medical advice by an appropriate expert. The parent/guardian(s) should be asked to confirm in writing that their child has been medically assessed.

Teachers and school rugby coaches should communicate regularly with parent/guardian(s) and work closely with school medical staff (where appropriate) to support any children with pre-existing medical conditions. It is important everyone is clear what (if any) particular accommodations should be taken to consider safety and ensure that the experience is a positive one for the player and others involved. Teachers/coaches should consider using different methods and approaches that meet the needs of the individual and the group of players they are working with.

Teachers/coaches should ensure the match official is appropriately briefed regarding any players with a pre-existing medical condition/injury.

First Aid Refresher Training

An Emergency First Aid qualification is valid for 3 years, however it is recommended that schools/colleges organise more regular training opportunities for first aiders to refresh their skills. This could be formally with a tutor or on a more informal basis, for example, the in-set training days whereby all the first aiders are invited to practice their skills.

There is a series of training videos that complement the RFU's Emergency First Aid in Rugby Union course, these are free to access and could be used as part of a refresher training session.

The EFARU videos can be accessed via the RugbySafe pages at www.englandrugby.com/rugbysafe

Activate

Activate is an evidenced-based injury prevention exercise programme that can be integrated into training and pre-match sessions. The exercises included in the programme are designed to improve functional strength, balance and agility and have been shown to reduce the risk of injury.

Activate Infographic

Coaches are encouraged to use Activate as part of the training sessions and match-day warm-ups to help prepare player in dealing with the physical demands of the game.

There are free online resources including cue cards and videos, however it is highly recommended that coaches attend the face-to-face session - courses can be requested through your local Rugby Development Officer or Community Rugby Coach.

For more information and to access the free Activate resources, please visit: www.englandrugby.com/activate

Supplement and Nutrition Awareness

Schools/colleges may want to consider ways to raise awareness of anti-doping and proper sports nutrition amongst its staff and students. The RFU's supplement and nutrition advice is available at: www.foodforrugby.org

Age Grade Rugby Codes of Practice

The Codes of Practice provide practical support and best practice to those delivering the Age Grade game. The Codes give practical advice on how to adopt a safe, player-centred and holistic approach to rugby and support the application of Regulation 15. They address topics such as the purpose of Age Grade rugby, competition banding, training activities according to a player's age, playing frequency, over and under-playing players, out-of-season activities, player grouping and the minimum standards required for coaches/teachers.

Schools/colleges with age grade rugby, are encouraged to apply the Codes of Practice, as they provide a foundation for how a rugby coach/teacher should approach the development of young players. The Codes of Practice aim to help coaches recognise their responsibilities so that they can put into place a safe, progressive and monitored coaching policy.

For more information on the Code of Practice, please to go: www.englandrugby.com/my-rugby/players/age-grade-rugby/codes-of-practice

Managing Contact

Session plans should involve all aspects of the game including skill development, position specific skills and contact. Contact should be built in a gradual process and consideration should be taken to the amount of contact activity during each session and across a week, taking into account the age, strength, experience and ability of the children.

Safe Fixtures

Schools should consider their fixture list; players will achieve more from appropriately competitive games. Whilst history and tradition can play an important role in a school's annual fixture list it is also important that schools work together to provide a safe and enjoyable playing environment. Different formats and/or reasonable adjustments may need to be considered, the age grade rules and codes of practice will help determine these.

Match Protocols Safety

Teachers/coaches from the different schools/colleges and match official should communicate before the game to discuss any potential safety issues and if necessary any reasonable adjustments.

For example:

- Matching teams accordingly
- Play four quarters
- Play a conditioned/non-contact game (in line with RFU age grade rules)
- Shorten or stop the game if necessary
- Ensure 'zero tolerance' of dangerous infractions.

Research and Injury Surveillance

As part of making the game as safe as possible, the RFU are undertaking ongoing surveillance understand and manage the injury risks involved. Schools play a major part in helping us achieve this. Every year we need schools to be involved in a research study that will investigate the number of injuries that occur during schools rugby matches.

For more information on how your school can get involved please go to: <http://www.englandrugby.com/rugbysafe/research>

PLAYER SAFETY INFORMATION

The RugbySafe A-Z of Essential Guides and FAQs provide information and answers on numerous player welfare topics including playing with Asthma, Epilepsy and other medical conditions, and guidance on clothing, protective equipment and studs.

Key Link: For more information, please visit: www.englandrugby.com/rugbysafe/guides-and-faqs/

Below is information on some of the most popular topics:

Mouthguards

The RFU strongly recommends that mouth guards (also referred to as gum shields) are worn for any contact rugby activity (both training and matches). The use of mouthguards can help to protect the teeth and face. However, there is currently no conclusive evidence that mouth guards reduce the risk of concussion.

It is recommended that mouthguards are custom-fitted. There are alternatives available, such as boil in the bag or pre-moulded mouth guards, which generally provide a reduced level of fit and protection, so this should be a consideration when making a decision on which type to buy. There is currently no recognised British Standard kite-mark for mouth guards but they are classed as items of personal protective equipment (PPE) and therefore should have a CE mark. This means that the mouth guard is compliant with appropriate British and EU testing and standards.

Dentists usually offer a custom-fit mouth guard provision and there are also a number of companies who provide this service. Schools should ensure that these companies are reputable and provide an appropriate service. In any case, it is important that mouth guards have a CE mark.

Schools may choose to make the wearing of mouthguards by players compulsory. Where this is the case, they should have a clear policy around checking whether a player may participate if they don't have one available.

Head Guards

Head guards (sometimes called scrum caps) can help to protect the head from cuts and abrasions, and prevent the development of cauliflower ears. Wearing headguards is sanctioned on the basis that they should not cause harm or injury to any player and meet World Rugby standards (see regulation 12). However, padded headgear has never been approved or marketed by World Rugby or the RFU to reduce the risk of concussion and there continues to be no conclusive evidence that wearing head guards reduces the chances of sustaining a concussion while playing or training.

Wearing a head guard should be the choice of the player/parent. While it can provide some protection (e.g. covering the ears) and confidence (e.g. when introducing players to contact); wearing protective

equipment has also been found to change a player's behaviour, sometimes encouraging them to neglect technique, increasing their risk of injury, including concussion. It is, therefore, important that players are aware of the purpose of head guards and their limitations.

Shoulder Pads

Shoulder Pads Shoulder pads (also referred to as body armour) can help to reduce the impact of a tackle, by absorbing and dispersing the force. They do not increase the power of the tackler in any way. Shoulder pads are approved by both WR and the RFU and, like all other wearable protective equipment worn during rugby activity, they should be World Rugby compliant (see regulation 12). There are no mandates set by the RFU on making players wear any specific protective clothing; whether they are worn should be the decision of the player/parent. While they can provide some benefit (e.g. absorbing the force) and develop confidence (e.g. when introducing players to contact); wearing protective equipment can also give a player a false sense of security that can lead to reckless tackles and behaviour. It is important that players are aware of the purpose of shoulder pads (and other similar body armour products) and their limitations.

Base Layers

Upper body base layers are allowed in both adult and age grade rugby, providing the design and material complies with the criteria set out in WR regulation 12 and Law 4.

Age grade players are permitted to wear base layers leggings/tights, provided they comply with the WR regulation.

Tights are listed as a recognised additional item of clothing for women for modesty and religious reasons; these must be cotton blend long tights, with a single inside leg seam and be worn under shorts and socks. Base layer leggings/tights are not approved for use in adult men's rugby.

The A-Z of Essential Guides and FAQs includes:

Artificial Grass Pitches	First Aid Equipment and Treatment
Asthma	Goggles and Eyewear
Automated External Defibrillators	Hearing Aids
Bleeding Disorders	Ice Treatment
Boots and Footwear	Prosthetic Limbs
Cerebral Palsy	Protective Equipment
Cerebral Palsy	Stretchers, Spinal Boards and Scoops
Diabetes	Transgender and Transsexual
Epilepsy	

APPENDIX 1: RECOMMENDED MINIMUM LEVELS OF IMMEDIATE CARE AND/OR FIRST AID COVER FOR RUGBY UNION MATCHES AND TRAINING

Below are the recommended MINIMUM levels of cover and the actual provision MUST be based on a formal RISK ASSESSMENT, especially for festivals

Type of Training	Minimum Level of Cover
Non-Contact	Emergency First Aider
Contact (any session where >50% involves full contact, and any session with live scrummaging)	As for match cover (see below)

Level/Event	Immediate Care Practitioner	First Aid Trained Therapist/HCP	Emergency First Aid Aider
Adult Men			
Level 3 & 4 (1st XV)	1 per team		
Level 5 - 7 (1st XV)		1 per venue	1 per team
Level 8 & below			1 per team +venue First Aider
2nd and Lower XVs (see note 3 below)			1 per team
FE and HE establishments outside club leagues			1 per team +venue First Aider
7s/10s Tournament/ Festival (see notes 6&7)	1 per venue		1 per team
Touch/Tag			1 per pitch
Adult Women			
Premiership/ Championship/Divisions	1 per team		
Leagues, 2nd and LowerXVs			1 per team
FE and He establishments outside club leagues			1 per team 1+ venue First Aider
7s/10s Tournament/ Festival (see notes 6 &7)	1 per venue		1 per team
Touch/Tag			1 per team

Level/Event	Immediate Care Practitioner	First Aid Trained Therapist/HCP	Emergency First Aid Aider
Age Grade Rugby			
Club/FE College/School U18			1 per team +1 venue First Aider
Club/School U14 - U16			1 per team + venue First Aider
Club/School U7 - U13			1 per team + venue First Aider
7s/10s Tournament/ Festival (see note)	1 per venue		1 per team
Tag/Touch			1 per venue
Other Tournament/ Festival	1 per venue		1 per team
Representative - CB/County/Division			
Adult	1 per team		1 per team
U18	1 per team		1 per team
U16	1 per team		1 per team
U15 and below		1 per team	
England Rugby DPP (Matches only)	1 per team		

Notes:

1. Where matches or training are on more than one site then each site will require the appropriate level of cover.
2. Where the guidelines indicate that a venue First Aider may cover more than one pitch, Emergency First Aiders provide pitch side cover, with the venue First Aider available and easily contactable by radio or mobile telephone.
3. Club 2nd XVs to adopt minimum criteria of 2 League Levels below their 1st XV. Club 3rd & subsequent XVs adopt one level lower respectively
4. Schools, FE Colleges and Universities have their own regulations provided by local/national Government, which they must comply with if it is of a higher level.
5. Additional standards may be applicable to some schools, this should inform their risk assessment and thus their level of provision.
6. Tournaments and festivals should have a dedicated First Aid Room or Tent.
7. Where "1 per venue" is listed, this role is in an overseeing capacity (i.e. covering the whole event) and should not be attached to a specific team.

APPENDIX 2: EXAMPLE SCHOOL/ COLLEGE SEASON RUGBYSAFE CHECKLIST

Action	
All staff coaching or refereeing contact rugby to have completed the Teacher HEADCASE Concussion Awareness Module.	
All players in extra-curricular contact rugby in Year 10 and above to have completed the Players HEADCASE Concussion Awareness Module.	
All players in curricular rugby in Year 7 and above to have watched the HEADCASE Concussion animation video.	
Rugby parents in the school to have been signposted to the HEADCASE website and Parents Concussion Awareness module.	
All coaches to have the necessary qualifications to coach Rugby Union (based on RFU guidelines).	
Audit those players playing in clubs, DPP, County, Regional, Academy, other playing environments and other sports (where appropriate). Plan in place to manage the playing programs and communication pathway with relevant bodies (e.g. clubs and academies for example) in place.	
Injury surveillance and injury recording program in place. To track injuries, assess recovery and return players back to play.	
Assessed and understood the refereeing requirements for the season. Schedule in place to ensure a qualified referee is present at all 15 a s side games.	
Teacher training and CPD calendar in place.	
Appropriate pitch-side first aider provision for all games (RFU minimum operating standard)	
Rugby union risk assessment process undertaken and linked as part of the whole school risk mitigation procedures.	

APPENDIX 3: EXAMPLE MEDICAL EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN



The information in this plan should be shared with all teachers coaches and all visiting teams.

School/College Name:	
Address & Postcode:	
Sat Nav Postcode / Additional details for Emer- gency Services:	
First Aid Coordinator (main contact):	
Age Group First Aiders	
Name	Contact Number
Ambulance Access Point	
Pitch Side	
First Aid Room	
Club House	
First Aid Equipment Location	
First Aid Kitt	
Defibrillator (AED)	
Stretcher (for use by trained individuals only)	
Location of Local Hospitals/Services	
Accident & Emergency	
Minor Injuries	
Pharmacy	
Other Relevant Information	

In the event of a Medical Emergency call the Emergency Service as quickly as possible on 999/112 giving as many details as possible

APPENDIX 4: INCIDENT REPORT FORM EXAMPLE

APPENDIX 5: RFU REPORTABLE INJURY EVENT FORM

SIGNPOSTING AND USEFUL INFORMATION

Player Welfare

RugbySafe

RugbySafe is RFU's overarching player welfare campaign to support clubs, schools, colleges, universities and participants at all levels of the game. It provides information and guidance on how the game should be played and managed to ensure that rugby is as safe as possible.

www.englandrugby.com/rugbysafe

Follow RugbySafe on Twitter

[@RugbySafe](https://twitter.com/RugbySafe)

twitter.com/RugbySafe

HEADCASE: www.englandrugby.com/headcase

Activate Injury Prevention Programme: www.englandrugby.com/activate

Player Welfare and Safety enquiries should be sent to: rugbysafe@rfu.com

Age Grade Rugby Codes of Practice:

www.englandrugby.com/my-rugby/players/age-grade-rugby/codes-of-practice

Email: agegraderugby@rfu.com

Kids First

Kids First puts children first. Aimed at U7-U13 boys and girls, it upskills coaches and creates a great rugby environment, so that everyone stays in the game for longer

www.englandrugby.com/my-rugby/players/kids-first-rugby

Safeguarding: www.englandrugby.com/safeguarding Email: safeguarding@rfu.com

RFU Regulations: www.englandrugby.com/regulations

Insurance and Risk Assessments: www.englandrugbyinsurance.co.uk

Running a safe school rugby programme

Risk Assessment

- Templates
- Annual Review (prior to Pre-Season Rugby Training) & on-going review
- Updating Policy and all schemes of Work etc...

Teacher / Staff Training

It is highly recommended that before an individual coaches, referees or manages a :

- The Head of Rugby keeps a record of all Sports Department Training and will remind coaches when their coaching is due for renewal.
- Minimum requirements for membership EFSRU
- HEADCASE
- Qualified Coach
- MO – ECRA / Refereeing Children
- Inside 7s

Kids First Age Grade CPD U7 – U14

