

Guidance on Conduct

The Schools' Committee of the Ulster Branch (IRFU) is committed to the promotion of personal, physical, social and moral development of schoolchildren through the sport of rugby football. It is the responsibility of each individual school to ensure that the behaviour of staff, coaches, players and spectators actively supports these aims. In particular, all players, coaches, spectators and parents are expected to display the highest standards of behaviour. Additionally all staff, whether they be full-time or part-time members of staff or external sports coaches, should be fully aware of the ethos and culture of Schools' rugby.

Schools are currently required to adhere to the IRFU Codes of Conduct and it is in this context that the Schools' Committee has published a "Code of Conduct", which encompasses these regulations, and which could be communicated clearly, through each affiliated school, to pupils, staff and parents. This guidance is offered in that context.

The published "Code of Conduct" contains

- (i) Code of Conduct for Parents
- (ii) Code of Conduct for Spectators
- (iii) Code of Conduct – Abuse of Match Officials .

The Schools' Committee may wish to publish the Codes of Conduct or amend to a version for schools.

Individual schools may wish to publish additional guidance pertaining to their own specific circumstances and will wish to consider how best to address breaches of the "Code of Conduct" within their own policies and procedures.

The Schools' Committee fervently hope that all concerned will take their responsibilities seriously in the best interests of the game of Rugby Football in all our schools.

Appendix A

Code of Conduct for Parents

1. Remember, young people play rugby for their enjoyment, not only yours.
2. Encourage your child always to play by the Laws of the Game.
3. Teach young children that honest endeavour is as important as winning, so that the result of each game is accepted with good grace.
4. Help young people to work towards skill improvement and good sportsmanship.
5. Set a good example by applauding good play on both sides.
6. Never ridicule, humiliate or shout at young players for making a mistake or losing a match.
7. Do not place emphasis on winning at all costs.
8. 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.
9. Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from rugby.
10. As a spectator do not use profane language or harass referees, coaches or players.
11. Do not publicly question the referee's judgement and never his honesty.
12. Recognise the value and importance of volunteer referees and coaches.
13. Identify and acknowledge the good qualities of the game of rugby and uphold these values.
14. Remember you and your child's contribution to the game of rugby is very important to the IRFU and be proud of your contribution.
15. Understand the value of team sport and its importance.

Appendix B

Code of Conduct for Spectators

1. Remember that although young people play organised rugby they are not “miniature internationals”.
2. Be on your best behaviour and lead by example. Do not use profane language or harass referees, players or coaches.
3. Applaud good play by the visiting team as well as your own.
4. Show respect for your team’s opponents *and behave accordingly especially during kicks at goal.*
5. Condemn the use of violence in all forms at every opportunity.
6. Verbal abuse of players or referees cannot be accepted in any form.
7. Players or referees are not fair targets for ignorant behaviour.
8. Encourage young players to play by the Laws of the Game.
9. Spectators can contribute to the enjoyment of the event and all involved.
10. Be proud of your school and the Game of Rugby.

Appendix C

Code of Conduct – Abuse of Match Officials

Schools are responsible for the behaviour of their players, coaches and supporters towards Match Officials and are expected to take steps to protect Officials from any form of Abuse. Abuse of Match Officials is defined as;

“Individual perception of personal degradation be it mental or physical, before, during and after the game including (but not limited to)

- verbal or physical assault
- intimidatory conduct
- racial or sexual harassment”

The IRB Code of Conduct Regulation states that a person

- “shall not abuse, threaten or intimidate a referee, touch judge or other Match Official, whether on or off the field of play (20.1.10) and
- Shall not use crude or abusive language or gesture towards referees, touch judges or other Match Officials or spectators (20.1.11)”

Failure to comply can result in the player (if during the match) or the schools (if coaches, players off the field or supporters) being referred to the Schools’ Committee for possible disciplinary action.

Schools should make all players, coaches and regular supporters of schools aware of the provisions of this Code and may wish to remind them that abusive behaviour can be harmful to the reputation of the school.

Schools are expected to adhere to the Code. In so doing, schools will commit themselves to take all reasonable steps to ensure that Match Officials are protected from abuse. These steps should include

- preventing spectators from being in close proximity to touch lines by means of temporary barriers, if appropriate
- ensuring that replacements, coaches and medics comply with game regulations in respect of technical areas
- having a designated member of staff who will take responsibility to deal with any inappropriate behaviour which has been reported or witnessed.

Encroachment by spectators onto the playing area during the game cannot be permitted. In such an eventuality, the game will be stopped by the referee and will not resume until he is satisfied that the game can continue without interruption. Schools’ Committee and the Ulster Branch (IRFU) would view any such encroachment very seriously and would require schools to take a similar view within their policies and procedures.