



Exeter Saracens RFC Code of Conduct

Introduction

At Exeter Saracens RFC, we are committed to fostering a safe, respectful, and enjoyable environment for all members, including players, coaches, officials, parents, and spectators.

This Code of Conduct outlines the standards of behaviour expected from everyone involved in our club, rooted in the RFU's core values:

- **Teamwork:** Working together to achieve common goals.
- **Respect:** Treating others with dignity and consideration.
- **Enjoyment:** Ensuring that everyone has fun and enjoys their rugby experience.
- **Discipline:** Maintaining self-control and adhering to rules and regulations.
- **Sportsmanship:** Playing fairly and with integrity.

Application

The Code of Conduct applies to all Club Members and applies at all times whilst on club premises; when representing the Club (e.g., at an away game); and / or when it is reasonable to associate persons with the Club (e.g., when socialising away from the Club whilst wearing Club wear or as a team).

General Conduct

1. **Respect for Others:** Treat all individuals with respect, regardless of age, gender, race, religion, or ability.
2. **Positive Behaviour:** Always encourage positive behaviour and sportsmanship.
3. **No Discrimination:** Do not engage in any form of discrimination, harassment, bullying, or abusive language or behaviour.
4. **Compliance with Rules:** Follow the rules and regulations of the game and the club.
5. **Responsibility:** Take responsibility for your actions and their impact on others.

RFU Safeguarding Procedures

To ensure a safe environment for the enjoyment of everyone, Exeter Saracens RFC adheres to RFU Safeguarding procedures and processes set out in Regulation 21.

1. **Reporting Concerns:**
 - Any incidents and safeguarding concerns should be immediately reported to the **Club Safeguarding Officer (CSO)** and/or the **Club Rugby Safe Lead (RSL)**.
 - They will review the information, liaising with County officials where necessary for the avoidance of doubt, which will inform the appropriate course of action.
2. **Referral Process:**
 - If deemed necessary, or best practice, the CSO will escalate the concern to the RFU Safeguarding Team.

- This referral will determine how the incident is processed, whether through the RFU or external authorities.
3. **Guidance and Support:**
- The CSO and RSL will provide guidance for individuals on further steps and support them throughout the process.
 - All concerns will be handled with strict confidentiality, following RFU guidelines.
-

Roles and Responsibilities

Committee Members Conduct

1. **Leadership:** Lead by example and uphold the values and integrity of the club.
2. **Transparency:** Conduct club affairs with transparency and accountability.
3. **Decision Making:** Make decisions that are in the best interest of the club and its members.
4. **Communication:** Maintain open and clear communication with all club members.
5. **Conflict Resolution:** Address conflicts and issues promptly and fairly.
6. **Support:** Provide support and guidance to players, coaches, and other members.
7. **Confidentiality:** Maintain confidentiality in club matters as appropriate.

Player Conduct

1. **Commitment:** Attend training sessions and matches regularly and be punctual.
2. **Effort:** Give your best effort during training and matches.
3. **Teamwork:** Work collaboratively with teammates and coaches.
4. **Respect for Officials:** Respect the decisions of match officials and accept them without argument.
5. **Sportsmanship:** Play fairly and accept the outcome of matches graciously.

Coach Conduct

1. **Professionalism:** Always conduct yourself in a professional manner.
2. **Positive Role Model:** Serve as a positive role model for players.
3. **Safety First:** Prioritise the safety and well-being of players.
4. **Fair Play:** Promote fair play and respect for opponents.
5. **Continuous Improvement:** Strive to improve your coaching skills and knowledge.

Parents and Spectator Conduct

1. **Supportive Environment:** Create a supportive and encouraging environment for players.
 2. **Respect for All:** Respect the efforts of all players, coaches, and officials.
 3. **Positive Reinforcement:** Offer positive reinforcement and constructive feedback.
 4. **No Aggression:** Avoid aggressive behaviour or language.
 5. **Compliance with Club Rules:** Follow the club's rules and guidelines.
 6. **Safeguarding Awareness:** Report any safeguarding concerns promptly.
-

Disciplinary Procedures

To ensure the highest standards of behaviour and conduct, Exeter Saracens RFC has established the following disciplinary procedures in the event of a breach of this Code of Conduct:

1. **Reporting:** Any suspected breach of the Code of Conduct should be reported to a club official, coach, or committee member as soon as possible.
2. **Investigation:** Once the Club has received confirmation that the matter is not being progressed as a safeguarding concern, the club's disciplinary committee will investigate all reported incidents. This may include gathering statements from those involved and any witnesses.
3. **Hearing:**
 - A disciplinary hearing will be scheduled, where the individual(s) involved can present their account of the incident. Parents or guardians must accompany minors.
 - The Club will strive to convene Panel Members who are as diverse as possible and who have no direct involvement in the incident.
4. **Decision:** The disciplinary committee will base their decision on the evidence presented. Possible outcomes may include:
 - **Verbal Warning:** A verbal notice to correct behaviour.
 - **Written Warning:** A formal written notice regarding the violation.
 - **Training or Counselling:** Requiring participation in training or counselling sessions.
 - **Suspension:** Temporary suspension from training sessions, matches, or club premises.
 - **Probation:** Being placed on a probation period with conditions.
 - **Community Service:** Participation in club-related community service activities.
 - **Expulsion:** Permanent removal from the Club and club premises.
 - **Ban from Events:** Prohibition from attending club events.
 - **Fines or Restitution:** Payment of fines or restitution for damages caused.
 - **Referral:** to Safeguarding Teams or Authorities

NB: The panel reserves the right to apply additional / alternative sanctions as appropriate.

5. **Outputs:**
 - **Monitoring Compliance:** Regular checks to ensure adherence to the decision.
 - **Follow-Up Meetings:** Scheduled follow-up meetings to review progress or compliance.
 - **Reintegration Support:** Providing support for individuals returning from suspension or probation to ensure smooth reintegration.
 - **Feedback Collection:** Collecting feedback from involved parties to improve the disciplinary process.

Appeals Procedure

1. **Right to Appeal:** Individuals have the right to appeal any disciplinary decision made by the club.
2. **Submission of Appeal:** Appeals must be submitted in writing to the club committee within seven days of the disciplinary decision.
3. **Appeal Hearing:** An appeal hearing will be arranged, where the appellant can present their case. The hearing panel will consist of club official(s) who were not involved in the original disciplinary decision.
4. **Decision on Appeal:** The appeal panel will review all evidence and make a final decision. This decision will be communicated in writing to the appellant.
5. **Finality:** The decision made by the appeal panel is final, and no further appeals will be entertained.

Reporting Concerns If you witness or experience any behaviour that violates this Code of Conduct, please report it to the club committee, a member of staff, or the RFU via their Speak Up Policy.

Conclusion By adhering to this Code of Conduct, we can ensure that Exeter Saracens RFC remains a safe, respectful, and enjoyable place for everyone involved in rugby. Let's work together to uphold these values and make our club a model of sportsmanship and integrity.

Appendix A:

Examples of Breaches of the Code of Conduct

- **Disrespectful Behaviour:** Using offensive language or making derogatory remarks towards others.
- **Unsportsmanlike Conduct:** Cheating, deliberately injuring another player, or disrespecting match officials.
- **Harassment or Bullying:** Any form of bullying, intimidation, or harassment, whether verbal, physical, or online.
- **Discrimination:** Discriminatory behaviour including discrimination against protected characteristics or ability.
- **Violating Club Rules:** Ignoring safety protocols, failing to comply with club policies, or damaging club property.
- **Aggressive Behaviour:** Physical or verbal aggression at any time to any persons whilst representing, or readily associated with, the Club.
- **Non-Attendance:** Repeatedly missing training sessions or matches without valid reasons.
- **Substance Abuse:** Possession and/or use of illegal substances, or misuse of alcohol during club activities or whilst on club premises.
- **Misconduct:** Any behaviour on or off club premises that brings the club into disrepute.