



SAFE ENVIRONMENTS IN RUGBY

This guide outlines the minimum expectations and practical rules for keeping children and young people safe in both physical and online environments.

Change room protocols

Knock and announce	Adults must always knock loudly, announce themselves and wait before entering any changing facility
The “Rule of Two”	Where possible, adults should enter as a pair and must stay near the doorway. Adults must avoid one-to-one situations with a child in changing or shower areas
Separation	Adults and children must not shower, dress, or undress in the changing facilities at the same time
Visual aids	Use signage and rosters outside doors so everyone knows the rules and who is on supervision duty

Travel and transport

Parental responsibility	Parents/guardians are primarily responsible for transporting their own children to and from regular training and fixtures
Written authorisation	If a volunteer or staff member must transport a child, prior written parent/guardian authorisation is strictly required, detailing the mode of transport, route and who will be present
Avoid one-to-one transport	Always avoid a “one adult to one child” situation in a vehicle. Implement a “two-adult” or “two-child” rule where possible

Tours and overnight stays

Room allocations	Plan room allocations in advance. Children must only share rooms with others of the same gender and a similar age
Adult boundaries	An adult must never share a room or a bed with a child unless they are the child’s parent/guardian
Clear expectations	Provide a full itinerary and emergency contacts to parents, and agree on clear rules for bedtimes and supervision before departure



Digital communication and photography

Official channels only	Use official club communication channels (e.g. team apps, club emails) rather than personal accounts
No private direct messages	Adults must never communicate directly on a one-to-one basis with a junior player via electronic messages, internet chat rooms, or social media
Copy	If you must message a junior player, include a parent/guardian or another club adult in the group message
	Keep all communications strictly about rugby logistics (e.g. training times, cancellations)
Professional boundaries	Set expectations for timing (no late-night messages) and keep the tone professional Coaches must not “befriend” children they coach on personal social media accounts

Photography, video and social media

Prior consent	Always obtain informed, written consent from parents/carers (and the child, where appropriate) before taking or publishing images
No-go zones	Never take photos or videos in change rooms, toilets, or other private areas
Protect identity	Use official club accounts for posting. Do not publish personal information (like full names, addresses, or schools) alongside the images
Opt-out systems	Use a simple visual cue, like coloured wristbands, for children whose parents have not consented to photography. This helps club photographers know instantly who to exclude from pictures

Compliance and continuous improvement

Spot Checks	Build 2-3 quick compliance checks into your season (e.g. checking if change room signage is up and team communications use approved channels)
Review near misses	If a rule is breached or a near miss occurs, conduct a quick 5-minute review to identify the risk and update your controls