



Lymm RFC Safeguarding

At Lymm we operate a 3-tiered approach to ensuring we deliver consistently high standards in the support and safeguarding of our minis & juniors' section, with player welfare paramount. This is entirely led by volunteers primarily Will Hind (Minis & Junior chair), Ian Cope (Minis chair), Adam Breeze (Coach Coordinator) and Ralph Tucker (Safeguarding and Rugbysafe lead). All give at least half a day to a day a week of time to ensure this is delivered for our 92 volunteer coaches who are also giving up many hours each week to help develop the 425 children in our minis and junior section.

1. Foundational Safeguarding

Each of our 92 volunteer coaches must take and pass an introduction to safeguarding course and pass a DBS check before they are allowed to coach any team in the mini & juniors section. The course is redone annually and their DBS, every 3 years. This means on any week there are at least one or two coaches who require checking and completing their application by the safeguarding lead.

All parents, children and coaches are encouraged to raise any worries or concerns about safeguarding issues that they may have in a confidential and safe environment. These can range from poor parent conduct having an impact on a child to more serious issues and, whilst we have been thankfully free of anything too serious at the club, every issue raised is fully and objectively investigated by the safeguarding lead. We also help other clubs with advice and guidance should the need arise.

We have encouraged many of our more senior coaches across all age groups to attend the 'Play it Safe' RFU led in-depth safeguarding course, with ~25 of our coaches having attended in the last few years.

Our safeguarding approach is assessed in an annual update we produce for Cheshire RFU.

2. Rugbysafe

As a club we also have a responsibility to ensure our children are safe on the playing field. We ensure every team has at least one qualified 1st aid volunteer who has attended in-depth training in how to respond to an injury on the field from a bloody nose to a heart attack (the club has added a second defibrillator to allow quicker access when games are played on the lower pitches).

We also ensure that most coaches have completed the headcase concussion course, given this is one of the most serious injuries and an area where protection of the children is paramount. All teams follow strict concussion protocols to ensure any injury is allowed to recover fully before a return to play and our safeguarding lead oversees this.

As a club we are also leading in our use of Activate. This injury prevention exercise programme has been developed by the RFU in conjunction with the University of Bath and has been shown to reduce injuries in school age children playing contact by 72% and concussions by 59%. Whilst not yet mandatory in rugby, we have taken a proactive approach and are training it in and utilising it across relevant age groups.

We also have injury reporting protocols in place so we can assess any trends and training requirements for a particular age group.

Finally, our Rugbysafe approach is again assessed by the RFU annually and we complete risk assessments across all areas of the club to ensure the environment is safe in every aspect from changing room usage to equipment and pitches.

3. Coaching Competence

The final tier of our safeguarding approach is to ensure our volunteer coaches and referees are trained to the highest standard. This is led by our coach coordinator and is shown in more detail in our comprehensive coaching handbook accessible on our club site (see link below).

The club has hosted numerous coach development sessions in the last year, including technical skills with Sale RFC and our own 1st team coaching leadership and several rugby specific 1st aid sessions. We also actively encourage coaches to attend RFU led coach development courses from entry level tag and tacklesafe sessions to more advanced England Rugby Coaching and Refereeing Awards (here coaches giving up several days and nights to complete) and several of our coaches in older age groups are attending the Sale RFC Elite Coach Development Programme and assisting the county and development pathway training sessions on top of their time with the club itself.

Given one of our stated objectives is for every age group to finish a season with more children playing than they started with, we also help at local primary schools with introductory sessions and with the older age group teams at the local high school. Again, all this time is given up freely by our coaching volunteers.

<https://www.lymmrugby.co.uk/minis-juniors-colts/mj-coaching-information/>