

PARENTAL ATTENDANCE AT RUGBY

Clubs should feel confident in encouraging parents to stay at rugby activities while their child is there, as transporting children and adults at risk from their rugby activities can be demanding for clubs to manage. Clubs should develop a transport policy publicised to parents/guardians via the club welcome pack and club website advising on the club views on dropping off and collecting children, to ensure parents/guardians are aware of their expectations and responsibilities.

RESPONSIBILITIES

While all parents/guardians should remain on the premises throughout a session, it is particularly important for children up to and including the age of under 11s. Parents play a big role in encouraging children to take part, and stay, in rugby. A parent/guardian's input can be incredibly influential in helping their child to live a healthy and active lifestyle. The presence of parents/guardians can also help children feel safer at their club.

In most instances, it is the responsibility of the parents/guardians, not the club, to transport the child or adult to and from rugby activities, whether that be training or home and away matches. We recognise that parents make private arrangements between themselves to help manage collection duties. For example, this could include parents arranging to drop off their friend's children, or vice versa. These arrangements are made solely at the discretion of the parents and carers involved, and it would be best practice to ensure that coaches, and all staff/volunteers involved in collection, are aware of such arrangements.

If parents/guardians make arrangements that involve their child being picked up or dropped off by someone other than themselves, they must then ensure that the club has sufficient contact details for them, as well as emergency and secondary contact details.

LATE COLLECTION

If parents/guardians are late to collect their child, they should ensure they make every effort to contact the club to let them know of their delay, and when they are expecting to arrive. This should be done as soon as the parent/guardian is aware they are going to be late. We understand that this may not always be possible. However, clubs should ensure that they have appropriate emergency contact details, and secondary details, for all children and adults at risk.

If the parent/guardian is late to collection, and the coach (or individual) responsible to supervise the child/adult at risk until their parent/guardian arrives has not been made aware, we suggest that they:

- attempt to contact the parents/guardians directly
- wait with the child/adult at risk, preferably in the company of others
- notify the Club Safeguarding Officer or another club official
- remind parents/guardians of their responsibility to collect their child/adult promptly when they do ultimately make contact or arrive

Clubs should make note of any pattern of late collection and report this to the Club Safeguarding Officer, as this could be signs of neglect towards the child.

Clubs should communicate their expectations regarding drop off, collection, and late collection of a child as early in the season as possible to ensure all parents/guardians understand their responsibilities.

In some instances, older children may make their own way to and from training or matches. It is important that parents have given consent and children are comfortable with this arrangement. The responsibility for a child's safety and wellbeing when travelling rests with the parent/guardian and they should ensure that they are available in case of emergencies.

NO COLLECTION

In some instances, children's parents/guardians may not show up at all to collect their child from rugby. Once the club have exhausted all steps they would take when dealing with a late collection, the club must consider making a call to Children's Social Services to explain that they have a possible abandoned child.

While the club are waiting for the child to be collected, it is important that they ensure supervision of the child, and should also offer support to the child, as the situation may be distressing for them. Where possible, the club should also check with the child if they have anyone else they can contact, such as relatives or close friends.

Once the club have spoken to Children's Services, they should liaise with them regarding the collection of the child. It is important that during these instances, the club is recording all steps taken, as well as timings to show when rugby finished, how long the child has been waiting for collection and when the call to Children's Services was made.

If the club have any initial safeguarding concerns about the child and their parents/guardians, these concerns should be made known to Children's Services. The RFU Safeguarding Team should be made aware of any instances where Children's Services were contacted.

NON-ENGAGING PARENTS/GUARDIANS

In some instances, clubs may find it challenging to engage with certain parents/guardians, and this can make arranging prompt collection of children very difficult. Clubs should make sure that every effort is made to bring these parents on board so that they can share their child's rugby experience. However, we do recognise that on occasion this may be difficult. If parents/guardians are persistently non-engaging with the club, they should be encouraged to make arrangements with other parents, to relieve the burden placed on the club, and communicate this with them at the earliest opportunity.

Clubs should take into consideration that where it becomes accepted practice that children will be able to get a lift from other parents, it makes it easier for parents to opt-out of supporting their own child at the club.

Where a parent does not engage, or is unable to make their own private arrangements, it should not be assumed that coaches will step in to transport children.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO NON-ENGAGING PARENTS

To help bridge gaps between clubs and parents, we would always encourage clubs to be proactive in communication and engagement with them. Clubs can play an important role in helping parents understand just how impactful they are on their child's development. Encouraging parents to be present at training, and not to use rugby as a 'childminding' service, will be of huge benefit to the child.

The CPSU have a list of ways parents can support their child in sports, and if parents are not engaging with the club, it may be worth sharing the [CPSU 'Information for Parents'](#) with them.

If clubs are facing routine instances of non-engaging parents or have several parents who have limited access to vehicles, or who work demanding schedules, there are steps clubs can put in place to ensure that children are not missing out on rugby while balancing safe transportation procedures. This could involve clubs carrying out the following steps:

1. Only in exceptional cases where a child might be excluded should a club manage the child's transportation and then only if the child **and** parent consent. This should not be routine practice
2. If a club is permitting coaches to drive players who do not have their own transport arrangements, coaches should ensure there is consent from parents who have the full facts about where they will be going, who is driving, and who will be accompanying the child
3. Coaches transporting children must not travel alone with a child
4. Emergency contact details must be available for all children
5. There should not be an assumption that coaches will routinely transport children

CONTACT US

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**[www.englandrugby.com/
governance/safeguarding](http://www.englandrugby.com/governance/safeguarding)**