



Creggs Rugby Football Club

Code of Ethics



1. Glossary of Terms

- (1) "The Club" Creggs Rugby Football Club, an esteemed organization dedicated to promoting the values and principles of Rugby within the community.
- (2) "Members" All Officers, Players, Team Officials, and Social or Associate Members affiliated with Creggs Rugby Football Club, reflecting the diverse and committed individuals within the club's community.
- (3) "Players" All participants engaged in team activities, spanning competitive matches, friendly games, structured practices, and training sessions, embodying the spirit of teamwork and sportsmanship.
- (4) "Team Officials" A vital component of the club, including coaches, management teams, and physio teams actively involved with one or more teams within Creggs Rugby Football Club, contributing to the success and development of the players.
- (5) "Social or Associate Members" Individuals who have contributed a reduced subscription to join the club and participate in its social events, despite not actively engaging in the game of Rugby.
- (6) "Members and Guests" A broad spectrum of individuals associated with Creggs Rugby Football Club comprising of members, officers, guests of members and officers, as well as spectators, attendees, participants, and officials involved in matches hosted by the Club.
- (7) "Implicated Person" An individual who has been sent off by a referee, implicated in a complaint, or subject to disciplinary action for violating the Club's Code of Ethics or engaging in behaviour deemed inappropriate by the Committee of Creggs Rugby Football Club.
 - This Code of Ethics applies to "Members, Players, Team Officials, Social Members and Guests" in any context mentioned or alluded to throughout this document, emphasizing accountability, respect, and integrity within the club's environment.

2. Introduction

Creggs Rugby Football Club upholds a strong commitment to maintaining the highest standards of behaviour and conduct among its members. It is expected that individuals representing the Club will extend their support to Coaches and Captains while responding positively to leadership, thereby contributing to the Club's esteemed reputation. The Committee of the Club holds the ultimate responsibility for overseeing the behaviour of its members, ensuring adherence to these standards even when playing on opposing grounds or participating in representative teams. These regulations are applicable to all matches, whether competitive or friendly, organized practices, training sessions, as well as any instances where members are representing the Club in a social capacity.



3. General Rules of Behaviour

All members and guests associated with Creggs Rugby Football Club are required to:

- Respect the rights, dignity, and worth of every individual within the framework of Rugby.
- Treat everyone with equality and refrain from discrimination based on various factors such as age, gender, disability, race, ethnic origin, nationality, colour, parental or marital status, religious belief, class or social background, sexual orientation, or political affiliation.
- Report any discrimination witnessed and not allow it to go unchallenged.
- Uphold and exhibit exemplary standards of behaviour.
- Advocate for the positive values of Rugby, such as fair play, respect, and camaraderie.
- Adhere to the Codes of Conduct set forth by IRFU and Connacht Rugby Branch (Ref to Appendix 1).
- Encourage all participants to familiarize themselves with the Laws and Regulations of Rugby, (IRB World Rugby Laws) respecting the decisions of match officials.
- Actively discourage unfair play, breaches of rules, and disputes with match officials actively.
- Acknowledge and appreciate good performances, valuing not just match outcomes.
- Ensure that activities are suitable for individuals based on their age, maturity, experience, and skill level.
- Respect the opinions of young individuals regarding their involvement in Rugby.
- Refrain from smoking, drinking, or using prohibited substances while working with young individuals in the Club.
- Abstain from alcohol consumption before coaching sessions, during events, or trips involving young individuals.
- Not provided young individuals with alcohol, tobacco, or any prohibited substances while they are under the Club's care.
- Adhere to the guidance outlined in the Irish Sport Council's "Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Children's Sport in Ireland," IRFU Code of Conduct, Safeguarding Policy, IRFU Spirit of Rugby Guidelines, and any other pertinent directives.



4. **Bullying**

Creggs Rugby Football Club has an Anti-Bullying Policy to address and prevent instances of bullying within the organization. In cases of bullying or suspected bullying, it is imperative to report such incidents promptly to the Secretary or the Cub Committee for necessary action.

Upon conducting a thorough investigation and confirming a case of bullying, appropriate measures will be implemented immediately. These measures may include disciplinary actions and, if warranted, expulsion from the Club, in addition to following the Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure outlined below.

Types of bullying may include but are not limited to:

- Name-calling
- Spreading harmful rumours about others
- Exclusion from Club activities
- Intentionally isolating individuals from conversations or activities
- Threatening or intimidating behaviour
- Theft or damage of property or possessions
- Physical assault or causing harm to others
- Coercing individuals into actions against their will
- Engaging in threatening or abusive text messaging or utilizing social networking and online platforms inappropriately towards individuals, players, members of Creggs Rugby Football Club, or any associated titles.

The above list is not exhaustive but serves as a guiding reference to identify various forms of bullying behaviour that are unacceptable within Creggs Rugby Football Club. The Club remains committed to fostering a safe and respectful environment for all individuals associated with its activities, ensuring that bullying incidents are addressed promptly and effectively in alignment with the Anti-Bullying Policy and relevant disciplinary procedures.



5. **Additional Rules of Behaviour While Playing**

- The Captains and Team Officials bear the responsibility of ensuring that gameplay aligns with the spirit of rugby and complies with the Laws of the game (IRB world Rugby Laws)
- Players and Team Officials are expected to conduct themselves in a manner befitting a player or team official, refraining from actions that could discredit the game.
- Intimidating, assaulting, or attempting to intimidate or assault a referee, another player, or a spectator is strictly prohibited for Players and Team Officials.
- The use of crude or abusive language, making offensive gestures, or excessively appealing is not tolerated.
- Players and Team Officials must refrain from making public statements or comments that could harm the game or Club's reputation.
- Captains and Team Officials must actively ensure that members and supporters behave appropriately towards referees and all players.
- Prioritize the safety and well-being of all players over performance development.
- Adults and children should not change or shower simultaneously in the same facilities.
- Do Not Use cameras or any recording equipment inside changing rooms.
- Children should not feel pressured to change or shower at the Club if uncomfortable.



6. Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures

The Club's Committee is empowered to enforce disciplinary actions against individuals found to be in violation of the Club's Rules and Code of Conduct.

In the event of receiving a complaint that contradicts the Club's Code Of Ethics or Code of Conduct, the following Grievance and Disciplinary procedures will be followed:

(a) Grievances

- Complaints may pertain to personal grievances, collective grievances, allegations of breaching the Creggs Rugby Football Club Code of Ethics (including bullying), or other serious matters.

(b) Informal Issue Resolution

- Most issues can be resolved at the local level through informal discussions between the parties involved, such as Members, Captains, or Committee members.

- When an issue is raised informally it should be addressed promptly, as they can often be resolved swiftly and with minimal escalation. This approach is particularly crucial when someone experiences repeated behaviours that undermines their dignity, such as bullying.

- If informal resolution attempts are ineffective, further steps outlined in the Grievance and Disciplinary procedures will be initiated to address the concerns raised with appropriate seriousness and diligence.

(c) Formal Grievances

In the event that informal resolution attempts fail to satisfactorily address an issue or are inappropriate, the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

- A formal grievance should be submitted in writing to the Club Secretary or the Child Welfare Officer (in cases related to youth rugby), outlining the issue and relevant details. Efforts made to resolve the matter locally should be documented where applicable. Complaints implicating another member in alleged violations of the Creggs Rugby Football Club Code of Ethics or other serious matters warranting disciplinary action will be handled through the disciplinary procedure.

- Any other formal complaint will be reviewed by the Club Secretary (or Child Welfare Officer) and the Club Committee, who will strive to resolve the issue with all concerned parties. The complainant will be promptly notified of the outcome and the underlying reasons, ideally within 21 days of receipt.

- The complainant retains the right to appeal the decision by submitting a written request to the Club Secretary (or Child Welfare Officer) for reconsideration. The disciplinary committee will then examine the complaint and present its findings to the Club Committee for a final decision. A response outlining the decision will be communicated to the complainant within 21 days.



(d) Disciplinary Procedure

- The disciplinary procedure is intended for cases that cannot be resolved locally among captains, committee members, or members themselves. However, all written complaints will be duly considered.
- The objective of this procedure is to ensure that the Club effectively manages its players and members, upholding the good reputation of the Club and the sport of rugby.

(e) Formal Procedure

- Any alleged breach of the Creggs Rugby Football Club Code of Ethics or a matter that could potentially harm the Club's or rugby's reputation must be promptly reported in writing ('a Complaint') by the relevant member or any other person to the Club Secretary or Child Welfare Officer, particularly in cases concerning youth rugby, within 21 days of the incident.

- Complaints should ideally be submitted within the specified timeframe; however, later complaints will be accommodated in circumstances of serious allegations or involving youth members.

- Upon receiving a complaint, the Club Committee will expeditiously conduct a thorough review and take necessary actions in accordance with the Club's disciplinary processes.

****Note:** The Club's Child Welfare Officer or designated contact should be involved in addressing any complaint or issue involving individuals under the age of 18 to provide appropriate guidance. In cases of child abuse or child protection concerns, authorities will be notified without delay.

(f) Disciplinary Committee

- At the Annual General Meeting (AGM), the Club will appoint a Disciplinary Officer (Chairperson of Disciplinary Committee). The Disciplinary Officer will be a member for the Club's Committee or will be co-opted if not a member.

The other members of the Disciplinary Committee panel (minimum 3 additional persons) will not be a member of the Club's Committee and will possess a distinguished standing within the Club or community. Ratification of the Disciplinary Committee panel will be made by the Club's Committee on the first general Committee meeting post AGM.

Upon receipt of a complaint, the Disciplinary Officer will arrange a hearing promptly, any adjournments may be authorized at the discretion of the Disciplinary Committee.

Disciplinary Committee members must not have affiliations with the implicated individuals at the time of the complaint or alleged breach. If any member has a connection with the implicated party, they must excuse themselves during the adjudication process. In cases involving players under 18, the Child Welfare Officer will be consulted to ensure compliance with safeguarding regulations and laws.



- The implicated individual should be provided with comprehensive written notice of the hearing and alleged offenses. They have the right to attend, present their case, review evidence, refute charges, be accompanied by a colleague, friend, Child Welfare Officer, or parent, and call upon witnesses.

- The objective of the Disciplinary Hearing is to ascertain the facts, following which the Disciplinary Committee will deliberate and provide recommendations to the Club Committee for approval. The Disciplinary Committee is permitted to communicate with the implicated person to schedule hearings, etc., but official findings and conclusions will be communicated solely through the club Committee.

(g) Red Cards / Sending-Off / Citing

- Individuals (players, coaches, members, or spectators) receiving a red card /Citing during or after a game are subject to immediate suspension. In all cases a Club Disciplinary hearing will be held as soon as possible (if schedules allows) be held before any Connacht Rugby Branch or IRFU hearing.

The Disciplinary panel will, if possible, determine any sanctions that may be necessary and inform the implicated person and the Connacht Rugby Branch or IRFU of the outcome in advance of the Connacht Rugby Branch or IRFU Disciplinary Hearing.

(h) Penalties

If misconduct is established, the Club may impose various sanctions, including but not limited to:

- Requiring a person to issue written apologies within a specified timeframe.
- Recording a reprimand and issuing a warning concerning future conduct.
- Suspending a player's eligibility for selection by the Club for one or multiple matches.
- Suspending a person's membership for a specific period.
- Suspending a person from attending matches for a specific time.
- Enforcing a penalty handed down by the Connacht Rugby Branch or IRFU.
- Imposing more than one of the above penalties.
- Termination of the person's membership forthwith.

Decisions made by the Disciplinary Panel, including findings on complaints and penalties, will be determined by a majority vote. The Disciplinary Panel Chairperson will cast a deciding vote when necessary.

The Club Secretary will officially notify the involved party in writing of the decision and any penalties imposed within seven days of the decision being reached.



(i) Appeals Procedure

The implicated party retains the right to appeal to the Club's Committee for a review of the Disciplinary Hearing findings and penalties. Should an appeal be lodged, the penalty will be suspended pending the appeal hearing, held at the earliest convenience.

The appeal will involve a re-hearing by a separate Appeals Panel, composition decided by the Club's Committee. The Appeals Panel, comprising a minimum of three individuals unaffiliated with the player during the alleged breach, will afford the implicated person the same rights of attendance, representation, and witness testimony as in the Disciplinary Panel process.

The Appeals Panel is empowered to affirm, modify, or overturn the Disciplinary Panel's decision and holds authority to increase penalties. The Appeals Panel decisions will be made via majority vote, with the Appeals Panel Chairperson having a casting vote when required.

To clarify, the Appeals Panel is permitted to engage with the implicated individual to coordinate hearings and related matters; however, all communication of hearing outcomes and investigation findings must be channelled through the Club Committee exclusively.

The Club Secretary will formally inform the player in writing of the Appeals Panel's decision and any associated penalties within seven days of the Appeals outcome being finalized.

The ruling of the Appeals Panel is conclusive and mandatory, marking the conclusion of the appeals process.



APPENDIX 1 - Code of Conduct

Code for Players

- ✓ Play for enjoyment and become part of the rugby family.
- ✓ Respect the "Game of Rugby" and play within the laws of the Game.
- ✓ Accept the referee's decision and let your captain or coach ask any relevant questions.
- ✓ Play with control. Do not lose your temper.
- ✓ Always do your best and be committed to the game, your team, and your club.
- ✓ Be a "good sport". Applaud all good play whether by your team or the opposition.
- ✓ Respect your opponent. Treat all players as you would like to be treated. Do not "bully" or take advantage of any player.
- ✓ Rugby is a team sport so make sure you co-operate with your coach, teammates, and members of your club.
- ✓ Remember that the goals of the game are to have fun, improve your skills and feel good.
- ✓ At the end of the match thank your opponents and the referee for the match.
- ✓ Always remember that you owe a duty of care to your opponents. Tackle hard but fairly, do not intend to hurt your opponent.
- ✓ Winning and losing is part of sport: Win with humility lose with dignity.
- ✓ As part of the team, it is important that you attend training regularly and listen to your coach and help your team.
- ✓ As a team sport, it is important to understand that all members are important to the team!
- ✓ Remember you are representing your team, club, family, and the Game of Rugby.



Code for Parents

- ✓ Remember, young people play rugby for their enjoyment, not only yours.
- ✓ Encourage your child always to play by the Laws of the Game.
- ✓ Teach young children that honest endeavour is as important as winning, so that the result of each game is accepted without disappointment.
- ✓ Help young people to work towards skill improvement and good sportsmanship.
- ✓ Set a good example by applauding good play on both sides.
- ✓ Never ridicule, humiliate, or shout at young players for making a mistake or losing a match.
- ✓ Do not place emphasis on winning at all costs.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from rugby.
- ✓ As a spectator do not use profane language or harass referees, coaches or players.
- ✓ Do not publicly question the referees' judgement and never their honesty.
- ✓ Recognise the value and importance of volunteer referees and coaches.
- ✓ Identify and acknowledge the good qualities of the Game of Rugby and uphold these values.
- ✓ Remember you and your child's contribution to the Game of Rugby is very important to the IRFU and be proud of your contribution.
- ✓ Understand the value of team sport and the importance thereof.



Code for Coaches

- ✓ Lead by example, Young people need a coach whom they respect.
- ✓ Be generous with your praise when it is deserved. Never ridicule or shout at players for making mistakes or losing a match.
- ✓ Teach your players that the Laws of the Game are mutual agreements which no one should evade or break.
- ✓ Ensure that all players participate in matches. The "average" players deserve equal time.
- ✓ Remember that young players play for fun and enjoyment and that skill learning and playing for fun have priority over highly structured competition. Winning is not the only objective.
- ✓ Develop player and team respect for the ability of opponents, as well as for the judgement of referees and opposing coaches.
- ✓ Insist on fair play and disciplined play. Do not tolerate foul play, fighting or foul language. Be prepared to take off an offending player.
- ✓ Create a safe and enjoyable environment in which to train and play.
- ✓ Do not over burden younger players with too much information.
- ✓ Be aware of the effect you have on growing children.
- ✓ Never criticise the referee or touch judges during or after a match in front of players or spectators.
- ✓ Always thank the match officials and if they have made decisions which require clarification, discuss the problems after everyone has changed.
- ✓ Seek and follow the advice of a doctor in determining when an injured player is ready to play again.
- ✓ Be responsible and ensure you uphold the ethos of the game and the IRFU.
- ✓ Support the Code of Ethics and all policies regarding Children in Sport.
- ✓ Ensure you and your players are proud of your team, Club and efforts during the season.
- ✓ Remember that as a coach of an "age grade team" you are to act in "loco parentis" and to that extent your duty of care is more onerous than that of a coach to an adult team.



Code for Spectators

- ✓ Remember that although young people play organised rugby they are not "miniature internationals".
- ✓ Be on your best behaviour and lead by example. Do not use profane language or harass referees, players or coaches.
- ✓ Applaud good play by the visiting team as well as your own.
- ✓ Show respect for your team's opponents. Without them there would not be a match.
- ✓ Condemn the use of violence in all forms at every opportunity.
- ✓ Verbal abuse of players or referees cannot be accepted in any shape or form.
- ✓ Players or referees are not fair targets for ignorant behaviour.
- ✓ Encourage young players to play by the Laws of the Game.
- ✓ Spectators can contribute to the enjoyment of the event, and all involved.
- ✓ Be proud of your club and the Game of Rugby

(Connacht Rugby Branch and IRFU Disciplinary Regulations may be read/downloaded from the Connacht Rugby Branch and IRFU websites]