

# CODE OF ETHICS - OUGHTERARD RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB



## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

(1) "The Club" - shall mean Oughterard Rugby Football Club

(2) "Members" - shall mean all Officers, Players, Team Officials and Social Members of Oughterard Rugby Football Club

(3) "Players" - shall mean all those taking part in team participation whether competitive, friendly, organised practice and training sessions.

(4) "Team Officials" - shall mean all coaches, Management teams, physio teams involved with one or more teams within the Club.

(5) "Social Members" - shall mean any person or persons who have paid a subscription to the Club to become a member but not actively involved in the game of Rugby.

(6) "Members and Guests" - include all members and officers of the Oughterard Rugby Football Club, and all guests of those members and officers, as well as all individuals who watch / attend / participate / officiate in matches hosted by the club in whatever capacity.

*For clarity and avoidance of doubt, this Code of Ethics refers to "Members, Players, Team Officials, Social Members, Members and Guests", whether individually, collectively or specifically referred to or not within this document.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Oughterard Rugby Football Club is committed to maintaining the highest standards of behaviour and conduct. Members representing the club are expected to support their Coaches and Captain and respond to leadership in a positive fashion in order to ensure the good standing of the club.

The Executive Committee of the Club has the overall responsibility for the behaviour of its members. Members remain under the jurisdiction of these rules when playing on an opponent's ground or when appearing in a league representative side.

These rules shall apply in all matches played by the club, whether competitive or friendly, and all organised practice and training sessions and whilst present in or representing the Club in a social capacity.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

**All members and guests of Oughterard Rugby Football Club will:**

- Respect the rights, dignity, and worth of every person within the context of the game of Rugby.
- Treat everyone equally, and not discriminate on the grounds of age, gender, disability, race, ethnic origin, nationality, colour, parental or marital status, religious belief, class or social background, sexual preference or political belief.
- Not condone, or allow to go unchallenged, any form of discrimination if witnessed.
- Display high standards of behaviour.
- Promote the positive aspects of Rugby e.g. fair play.
- Abide by the IRFU and Connacht Branch Code of Conduct when participating in league matches.
- Encourage all participants to learn the Laws and rules and play within them, respecting the decisions of match officials.
- Actively discourage unfair play, rule violations, and arguing with match officials.
- Recognise good performance not just match results.
- Ensure that activities are appropriate for the age, maturity, experience, and ability of the individual.
- Respect young people's opinions when making decisions about their participation in Rugby.
- Not smoke, drink or use banned substances whilst actively working with young people in the Club.
- Avoid the use of alcohol before coaching, during events and on trips with young people
- Not provide young people with alcohol, cigarettes or any banned substance when they are under the care of the Club.
- Follow **Irish Sport Council's, Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport in Ireland'** and **IRFU Codes of Conduct and Good Practice for Youth Rugby** and any other relevant guidelines issued.
- Not take Photographs / Images of children at Matches, Training or Club Functions without the prior permission of the parents/carers of the children.

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### **BULLYING**

Oughterard Rugby Football Club operates a very clear anti-bullying Policy.

All cases of bullying or suspected bullying should be reported immediately to the Secretary or President of the Club at the time

Following appropriate investigation, where a case of bullying is identified, notwithstanding the Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure referred to in Appendix 2 hereof, appropriate sanctions will be put in place immediately, including but not limited to disciplinary action and where deemed appropriate, immediate expulsion from the Club.

**Types of bullying** (this list is non-exhaustive and serves only as a guide)

- (a)** Name calling.
- (b)** Spreading harmful rumours about others.
- (c)** Exclusion from activities.
- (d)** Intentionally isolating another person from conversation or during activity.
- (e)** Threatening or intimidating behaviour.
- (f)** Taking or damaging property or belongings.
- (g)** Physical assault or causing physical harm.
- (h)** Making a person do things they don't want to.
- (i)** Threatening or abusive text messaging and or use of social networking or social media internet sites in such a manner so as to be deemed inappropriate against an individual, individuals, players, members or the name of Oughterard Rugby Football Club, Oughterard RFC or any other title associated with the Club at any given time.

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### APPENDIX 1: - WHILE PLAYING:

- The Captains and Team Officials are responsible at all times for ensuring that play is conducted within the spirit of the game as well as within the Laws.
- Players and Team Officials shall not at any time engage in conduct unbecoming to a player or team official, which could bring the game into disrepute.
- Players and Team Officials shall not intimidate assault or attempt to intimidate or assault an umpire, another player or spectator.
- Players and Team Officials shall not use crude or abusive language (known as “sledging”) nor make any offensive gestures, nor appeal excessively.
- Players and Team Officials shall not make any public pronouncement or comment, which is detrimental to the game, in question.
- The Captain and Team Officials must take adequate steps to ensure the good behaviour of their members, and supporters towards players, and umpires.
- Place the well-being and safety of all players above the development of performance.
- Adults must not change or shower at the same time using the same facility as children.
- If Adults and children need to share a changing facility, the Club must have consent from the Parents that their children can share a changing room with Adults in the club.
- Cameras and any other recording Equipment must not be used in the changing room.

*\*Please note that if children are uncomfortable changing or showering at the Club, no pressure should be placed on them to do so.*

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### APPENDIX 2 - GRIEVANCE AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

The Executive Committee shall be empowered to take disciplinary action against any Member who is found to be in breach of the Rules and Code of Conduct of the Club.

In the event of a complaint being made to the Club in respect of any matter which would be deemed to contravene the Rules and Code of Conduct of the Club, the following Grievance and Disciplinary procedures shall be followed: -

**(a) Grievance Procedure** A complaint may relate to a personal grievance, a collective grievance or an alleged breach of the Oughterard Rugby Football Club Code of Conduct (including bullying) or other serious matter. A separate set of procedures is in place for dealing with concerns relating to child protection and can be found under the **Oughterard RFC Youth Code of Practice**.

**(b) Raising an issue informally** It is anticipated that most issues can be resolved at local level between the parties involved, i.e. between members themselves, with the captains or the appropriate member of the committee. The sooner an issue is raised informally the better as it can often be resolved quickly and in a low-key manner. This is the case also when a person feels they are being subject to repeated behaviour that is an affront to their dignity (i.e. bullying behaviour). However, where this is not possible/appropriate or where such an approach fails to address the matter satisfactorily, the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

**(c) Formal Grievances** A formal complaint should be sent to the Club Secretary or the Child Welfare Officer (where the complaint relates to youth rugby) in writing setting out the issue and the relevant details. The complaint should identify any efforts (if appropriate) that were made to try and resolve the matter at a local level. Complaints relating to another player, captain or officer that allege a breach of the Oughterard Rugby Football Club code of conduct or other serious matter that could potentially lead to disciplinary action will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure. Any other formal complaint will be considered by the Club Secretary (or Child Welfare Officer) and one other member of the committee, who will seek to resolve the matter with the relevant parties. Having done so a response will be sent to the complainant informing them of the outcome and reasons in as timely a fashion as possible (preferably within 21 days) The complainant may appeal this decision in writing to the Club Secretary (or Child Welfare Officer) requesting the matter be reconsidered. At this stage the Club President will appoint two other members of the committee to review the complaint and the outcome. A written response outlining the decision will be sent to the complainant in as timely a fashion possible (preferably within 21 days). This decision shall be final and binding.

**(d) Disciplinary Procedure** This procedure is intended to be used only where issues cannot be resolved at local level with captains or other members of the committee or between players themselves. Notwithstanding this all complaints brought in writing will be given due consideration. The aim of this procedure is to ensure that the club properly controls its player or players or members (hereafter referred to as "the Player") and to ensure that the Club acts in a manner designed to protect the good name of the Club and of the game of rugby generally.

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**(e) Formal Procedure** Any alleged breach of Oughterard Rugby Football Club code of conduct or serious matter that can be reasonably shown as something that could bring the club or the game of rugby into disrepute shall be notified in writing (to be known as 'a Complaint') by the relevant captain (or any other person) to the Club Secretary or the Child Welfare Officer (where the complaint relates to youth rugby) as soon as possible (but, where possible, within 21 days\*) following the alleged breach taking place. **\*Note:** *In the interests of fairness, complaints should be submitted within these timeframes. However, later complaints will be considered where the allegation is of a serious nature or where it involves a youth member.* Any complaint so initiated must be referred to the Club President. Upon receipt of such complaint, and as soon as reasonably practicable, the Club President and Secretary (or the Child Welfare Officer\*\*) shall consider the complaint and refer the matter to a Disciplinary Committee which shall be convened as soon as practicable. **\*\*Note:** *The Child Welfare Officer and/or designated contact person should always be consulted on any complaint/issue that involves a person under the age of 18 so they can provide guidance. Allegations of child abuse/child protection issues must be reported to the relevant authorities.*

**(f) Disciplinary Committee** The Club President shall appoint a disciplinary committee and arrange a hearing as soon as is practicable but where possible within 21 days of the decision to refer. Any adjournments may be granted at the discretion of the Chairman of the Disciplinary Committee. The Disciplinary Committee shall consist of not less than three persons, none of whom shall be connected with the player at the time of the alleged breach. Where possible one member of the committee shall be an Officer of the club and another shall be a captain of an adult team. Where the disciplinary matter involves a player under 18 the Child Welfare Officer or a youth team manager will be a member of the committee to ensure adherence to the Youth Code of Ethics and Good Practice. In any case which is referred for a Disciplinary Hearing, at least seven days' notice in writing of the hearing and of the offence(s) alleged shall be given to the player. The player shall be entitled to attend the hearing, state their case, be informed of the evidence provided by others and shall be given the opportunity to refute charges against him or her. The player shall be entitled to be supported by a colleague, friend or parent and to call witnesses. The purpose of the Disciplinary Hearing shall be to establish the facts and the committee having considered all the evidence shall make a finding.

**(g) Penalties** If the Disciplinary Hearing finds the misconduct proved, they shall have the following powers:

- To require the player to write letter(s) of apology within a specified time.
- To record a reprimand and to give a warning as to future conduct.
- To suspend the player's right to be considered for selection by the club to play in one or more matches.
- To suspend the player's membership of the club for a period.
- For the same offence the hearing may, if it is thought fit due to the seriousness of the offence, impose more than one of the above penalties.
- Where the conduct constitutes gross misconduct the hearing shall have the power to terminate the player's membership forthwith.

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The Disciplinary Panel shall have the power to suspend the operation of any part, or all, of the penalty it imposes for such period and subject to such terms and conditions it deems appropriate. Decisions of the Disciplinary Panel (a finding that a complaint is proved or not proved or a decision on penalty) shall be by majority vote; where necessary the Disciplinary Panel Chairman shall have a casting vote. The player will be notified by the Club Secretary in writing of the decision and any penalties, if any, imposed by the Disciplinary Panel within seven days of the decision being made.

**(h) Appeals Procedure** The player shall have the right to appeal to the President of the Club or to the President's nominee for a review of the findings of the Disciplinary Hearing and of the penalty or penalties imposed. If Notice of Appeal is given the penalty shall not take effect pending the hearing of the Appeal, which shall take place as soon as is practicable. The Appeal shall be by way of re-hearing before a different Panel. The composition of the Appeals Panel shall be at the discretion of the Club Chairman and shall consist of not less than three persons, none of whom shall be connected with the player at the time of the alleged breach. The player shall have the same rights of attendance and representation, and to call witnesses as they had before the Disciplinary Panel. The Appeals Panel may confirm, vary or reverse the decision of the Disciplinary Panel and it shall have the power to increase the penalty and award costs of the Appeal hearing. Decisions of the Appeal Panel shall be by majority vote; where necessary, the Appeals Panel Chairman shall have a casting vote. The player will be notified by the Club Secretary in writing of the decision and any penalties, if any, imposed by the Appeals Panel within seven days of the Appeals decision having been made. The decision of the Appeals Panel or, if no appeal, of the Disciplinary Panel, in all cases shall be final and binding.



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### **APPENDIX 3 - Code of Conduct Connacht Branch IRFU**

A person shall not abuse, threaten or intimidate a Player, Referee, Touch Judge or other Match Officials (including Stewards), whether on or off the field of play and on Club grounds.

A person shall not use racial, crude or abusive language or gesture towards Players, Match Officials or spectators.

All Clubs and Schools registered with the Connacht Branch IRFU reserve the exclusive right to refuse admission to fixtures and Club Officials and Stewards shall be entitled to request any individual to leave the Club grounds for behaviour that they deem to be inappropriate or in breach of the Code of Conduct.

*[Connacht IRFU Disciplinary Regulations may be read/downloaded from Connacht Branch website]*