

# RFU Guidance on Third Party Rugby Activity Providers

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This guidance sets out the Rugby Football Union's (RFU) position in relation to the provision of rugby activity by organisations and individuals that are not RFU member clubs/ organisations and are not otherwise operating within RFU-regulated structures.

The RFU recognises that a growing number of third-party providers offer additional rugby activity, including coaching, camps, festivals, academies and skills sessions, particularly for age-grade players. Whilst such activity may, in some cases, offer additional playing or training opportunities, it is important that clubs, parents, carers, volunteers, coaches and players understand the regulatory status of these providers and the considerations that arise when engaging with them.

This guidance is intended to support informed decision-making and to promote player safety, welfare and good governance.

## Status of Third Party Providers

Third party rugby activity providers operate independently of the RFU. They are:

- Not RFU member clubs/ organisations
- Not regulated, endorsed or overseen by the RFU
- Not part of any recognised England Rugby player pathway
- Not authorised to represent any future selection, progression or advantage within RFU pathways

Participation in activity delivered by third party providers does not form part of, nor influence, any RFU or England Rugby development, representative or selection process.

## Responsibility for Due Diligence

Where clubs, parents, carers or players choose to engage with third party rugby providers, responsibility for assessing the suitability and safety of that provision rests with those making the decision.

The RFU encourages clubs, coaches, parents, carers and volunteers to undertake appropriate due diligence before allowing or facilitating participation in any rugby activity delivered outside RFU-regulated environments.

Persons should be aware that the RFU may not be able to take disciplinary or regulatory action in relation to incidents that occur during activities or events provided by Third Parties.

## Key Considerations When Assessing Third Party Provision

### **1. Coaching Qualifications**

Third party providers should be able to evidence that all coaches involved in delivery hold appropriate and current rugby coaching qualifications, such as:

- An England Rugby Coaching Award (ERCA) or an equivalent recognised qualification
- Up-to-date Headcase (concussion awareness) training
- Other CPD certification where applicable

### **2. Safeguarding Arrangements**

All individuals working with children or young people should have:

- An enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check
- Appropriate and current safeguarding training relevant to working with children

Providers should be able to clearly explain, and provide written copies of, their safeguarding policies, reporting arrangements and welfare management processes.

### **3. Discipline and Misconduct**

All discipline, behaviour or misconduct concerns arising from activity delivered by a third party provider must be reported directly to that provider. The provider is responsible for ensuring that any such matters are appropriately managed, investigated and resolved.

Parents/carers and participants should confirm that the provider has:

- A documented incident or misconduct log
- Clear disciplinary and investigation procedures, with a written copy available on request
- Defined timescales and decision-making arrangements
- A transparent review or appeal process for complaints or disciplinary outcomes

### **4. Player Welfare and Safety**

Providers should demonstrate clear and credible player welfare standards, including:

- Appropriate first aid provision and pitch-side medical arrangements
- Safe and suitable coach-to-player ratios for the age and activity involved
- Documented risk assessments for all activities, particularly contact elements

## **5. Insurance Cover**

Clubs and parents, carers should confirm that any third party provider holds adequate and appropriate insurance cover.

Standard RFU arranged insurance does not apply to rugby activity delivered outside RFU-sanctioned environments. Providers should be able to confirm and evidence that they hold:

- Personal Accident (PA) insurance; and
- Public and employer liability insurance that is explicitly appropriate for contact Rugby Union and the activities that are being undertaken.

Copies of relevant insurance policies/certificates should be made available on request.

## **Additional Considerations**

This guidance is not exhaustive. Depending on the nature of the activity, additional factors may be relevant, including player workload management, medical oversight, age-grade regulations, and alignment with recognised player welfare principles.

Clubs should remain mindful of their responsibilities under RFU Regulations when signposting, hosting or otherwise connecting with third party activity.

## **RFU Position**

The RFU recognises that many families seek additional opportunities for enjoyment and development within the game. However, safeguarding, welfare and good governance remain paramount.

Clubs and parents, carers or other participants are strongly encouraged to carefully consider the matters set out in this guidance before engaging with any rugby activity delivered outside RFU-regulated structures.

### **Further Information**

Further information on RFU regulations, safeguarding requirements and player welfare standards is available on the RFU website.