



VALLEY FORT



CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

It is the responsibility of all those involved with rugby in Hong Kong to provide a safe environment for children and young people to enjoy the game. The Valley Fort Rugby Football Club Limited (“Valley Fort”) strongly believes that the welfare of all children and young people is paramount; that all children and young people have an equal right to protection from harm; and that all forms of discrimination, prejudice, oppressive behaviour and language are unacceptable. These beliefs form the core principles of this Safeguarding Policy (“**Policy**”) which is also in line with the HKRU Safeguarding Policy.

For the purposes of this Policy, a “child” or “children” refers to someone under the age of 16 years and a “young person” or “young people” refers to someone aged 16 years or older but less than 18 years of age.

Valley Fort aims to safeguard children and young people playing rugby in Hong Kong by:

1. Establishing and enforcing a vetting procedure for all coaches, managers, referees, administrators and volunteers who intend to work closely with children and young people through rugby.
2. Setting safeguarding guidelines and educating members on how to uphold these, through publications and training.
3. Appointing a safeguarding officer who will govern this Policy and identify and report breaches through established reporting lines.
4. Enforcing this Policy and acting swiftly where breaches of it are reported.

All those whose activities are governed by this Policy should familiarise themselves and comply with its requirements. Failure to comply with this Policy may result in barring or suspension from rugby in Hong Kong. More serious and criminal activity may in addition be reported to the police. All others involved in rugby in Hong Kong (including but not limited to parents, spectators, athletes and the media) are strongly encouraged to adhere to and uphold this Policy, in order to provide a safe environment for children and young people to enjoy the game.

1. RECRUITMENT

When Valley Fort recruit or engage employees, independent contractors and volunteers, we will follow the recruitment guidelines set out below.

Recruitment Process

1. When recruiting for a relevant role, the club will take reasonable steps to be satisfied that any individual offered such a role is suitable to work closely with children and young people.
2. In order to satisfy this requirement, any individual who is likely to be employed or engaged in a relevant role will be:
 - a. provided with and required to confirm that they have read, and understand this Policy;
and



VALLEY FORT



CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

- b. requested to complete and sign the HKRU Safeguarding Declaration form, confirming their suitability to work with children and young people (the “**Declaration**”) prior to their employment or engagement as an employee, independent contractor or volunteer.
- 3 If an incomplete Declaration form is provided, Valley Fort may require that the applicant attend an interview with the club’s Child Safeguarding Officer (CSO) to explain why they were unable to complete the Declaration. The CSO of the club shall have the final say on whether the applicant is suitable for a Regulated Role.
- 4 Where Valley Fort is employing an individual in a relevant role, it will additionally require them to complete a Sexual Conviction Record Check with the Hong Kong Police prior to the commencement, and as a condition of, their employment. Applicants may also be required to provide personal references.

Valley Fort Safeguarding Officer (“CSO”)

The CSO is responsible for administering this Policy and handling the Personal Data provided by those in relevant roles within the club. The information provided by those in relevant roles is Personal Data and will be handled in accordance with the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance.

The CSO is the first point of contact at the club for anyone who wishes to report abuse against a child or young person. The contact details of the clubs CSO can be found at the end of this document.

The CSO is responsible for administering the Child Safeguarding Policy and its related procedures. The contact details of the Valley Fort CSO can be found at the end of this document.

2. SAFEGUARDING GUIDELINES

The following is a guide on the acceptable conduct to adopt in common situations that may arise when working with children and young people in rugby. These guidelines represent a minimum standard that Valley Fort believes is acceptable.

General Policy

The aim of Valley Fort is to provide a safe and enjoyable environment for children and young people to enjoy playing rugby. The welfare and happiness of all children and young people is paramount and all children and young people have an equal right to protection from harm.

Inappropriate Relationships with Children and Young People

An adult must not enter into a sexual relationship with a child. Sexual intercourse, sexual activity, or inappropriate touching by an adult with a child under the age of 16 years is a criminal offence in Hong Kong.



VALLEY FORT



CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

An adult in a position of trust must not enter into a sexual relationship with a young person in their care. A sexual relationship between an adult in a position of trust and a young person over 16 years of age is a breach of trust and an abuse of the adult's position. Whilst it may not be a criminal offence, it will be treated very seriously and may result in disciplinary action, including suspension or barring from all rugby related activities.

No one in a position of trust should encourage a physical or emotionally dependent relationship to develop between them and a child or young person in their care; this is often referred to as "grooming".

Photography, Internet and Social Media

Rugby is a public sport. All media that is recorded by the public while children or young people are playing rugby in public is in the public domain, and not the responsibility of Valley Fort.

However, those who are bound by this Policy, including those taking photographs or media for Valley Fort's use, must abide by the following media guidelines when taking, sharing or using photographs or media in relation to rugby in Hong Kong:

Photography:

- 1. The use of camera phones, videos, recording devices and cameras inside changing areas, showers and toilets is strictly prohibited at all times.**
2. All photos and media of children and young people should be respectful, appropriate, relevant to the nature of rugby, and not in any way disparaging or humiliating.
3. Children and young people must be appropriately dressed when being photographed. It is never acceptable to capture any images in changing rooms, showers or at any time when children or young people are dressing. Images should be neither sexual, of an exploitative nature nor open to misinterpretation or misuse.
4. As a guide, it is inappropriate to take photographs of children or young people who are not your own, without express parental consent.
5. Should a child, young person or the parents of a child or young person wish to not have their photo taken or published, their wishes should be upheld where it is within the club's ability to do so.

Social Media and the Internet:

- 6. Adults must never send children or young people inappropriate or sexually provocative messages or images.**
7. Parents are encouraged to review their privacy settings on social media prior to posting pictures of children and young people, including their own.
8. Personal information in a photograph which can lead to a child or young person being identified should never be published or uploaded in any way.
9. The use of social media and the internet in relation to rugby in Hong Kong should always be respectful and appropriate and should not in any way disparage or humiliate children or young people.



VALLEY FORT



CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Tours

To the extent permissible by local laws, this Policy continues to apply when a team is on tour outside of Hong Kong.

Transparency

Reasonable efforts will be made to educate members on what behaviour is acceptable and what is not. As a bare minimum, this Policy will be available to all members via the club website and other social media channels. The contact details of the club CSO will be readily available to all members and those who report suspicions and concerns should be confident that these will be treated seriously and confidentially.

Training Sessions and Games

Rugby is a contact sport and physical contact between participants including coaches is likely and unavoidable. Reasonable care must be taken to ensure the physical safety of participants. Coaches should not fear the repercussions of acceptable and appropriate levels of physical contact with their players who are children or young people in the course of rugby training. However, training sessions should be planned to avoid contact between coaches and players who are children or young people unless necessary for their safety or the proper demonstration of a skill or drill. For example, when teaching contact skills including tackling.

Where possible, coaching teams should consist of a minimum of two coaches. Coaches should avoid situations where they are the only adult supervising/coaching a session where children or young people are involved.

3. IDENTIFYING AND REPORTING

Definitions of abuse

There are four main types of abuse: physical, sexual, emotional, and neglect. An individual may abuse or neglect a child or young person directly, or may be responsible for abuse by failing to prevent another person harming that child or young person.

- Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or young person.

Examples of physical abuse in sport include extreme physical punishments; forcing a child or young person into training and competition that exceeds the capacity of his or her immature and growing body or limitations of a disability; assaulting a person; or where the child or young person is given drugs to enhance performance or in the case of a child, delay puberty.



VALLEY FORT



CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

- Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, which may involve inappropriate touching, penetrative or non-penetrative sexual acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children or young people in looking at, or in the production of, sexual photographic or online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children or young people to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

- Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent maltreatment of a child or young person such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their development. It may involve conveying to children or young people that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed. These may include interactions that are beyond their developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing them from participating in normal social interaction.

Emotional abuse may involve a child or young person seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another as well as serious bullying, causing children or young people to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children or young people. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child or young person, though it may also occur alone.

Examples of emotional abuse in sport include subjecting children or young people to constant criticism, name-calling, and sarcasm or bullying. It could also include their regular exclusion from an activity, non-selection for a team, failing to rotate squad positions or more subtle actions such as staring at or ignoring a child or young person. Putting players under consistent pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards is also a form of emotional abuse.

- Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child or young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development. Neglect may involve a parent failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment), failing to protect a child or young person from physical and emotional harm or danger, or to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers) or to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child or young person's basic emotional needs.

Examples of neglect in sport could include not ensuring children or young people are safe; exposing them to undue cold or heat or unsuitable weather conditions, or exposing them to unnecessary risk of injury.

- Bullying

Bullying is often considered to be a fifth type of abuse but when it does occur it usually has elements of one or more of the four categories identified. The bully can be a parent who pushes too hard, a coach or manager with a 'win at all costs' attitude or another intimidating child or young person. It



VALLEY FORT



CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

should also be recognised that bullying can take place in the virtual world of social networking sites, emails or text messages.

Bullying should not be ignored, and the victim should be supported through what can be a traumatic experience. Bullying will not just go away. Bullies can be very cunning and develop strategies to avoid it being seen by anyone but the victim.

Bullying takes many forms but ultimately it is the perception of the victim that determines whether or not they are being bullied rather than the intention of the bully.

- Poor Practice

Incidents of poor practice arise when the needs of children or young people are not afforded the necessary priority, compromising their wellbeing. Poor practice can easily turn into abuse if it is not dealt with as soon as concerns are raised or reported.

Examples of poor practice may be shouting, excessive training, creation of intra-Club 'elite squads', ridicule of players' errors, and ignoring health and safety guidelines.

The following guidelines are possible signs of harm and abuse to a child or young person. These may include a child or young person:

- changing their usual routine;
- beginning to be disruptive during training sessions;
- becoming withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence;
- having possessions going missing;
- becoming aggressive or unreasonable;
- starting to stammer or stopping communicating;
- having unexplained cuts or bruises;
- starting to bully other children;
- being frequently dirty, hungry or inadequately dressed;
- displaying sexual behaviour or using sexual language inappropriate for their age;
- seeming afraid of parents or carers;
- stopping eating;
- being frightened to say what is wrong;
- not wanting to attend training or Club activities, or even leaving the Club.

Some children or young people may be particularly vulnerable to abuse. These may include those with learning and/or physical disabilities. Particular care should be taken when dealing with such children or young people and where possible, specialist assistance from those with experience in dealing with such individuals should be sought.

All these forms of abuse are unacceptable and may result in barring or suspension from rugby in Hong Kong. More serious and criminal activity may in addition be reported to the police.



VALLEY FORT



CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Reporting abuse

The above indicators should always be taken seriously, and any concerns should be reported to the club CSO. If you have a concern or are approached by anyone about a suspicion or allegation of abuse, you should immediately report it. If you believe that a child or young person is in immediate danger you should call the police. In their absence Valley Fort Executive Committee or the HKRU CSM (Child Safeguarding Officer – details below) should be informed at the earliest possible opportunity.

Contact Details

Valley Fort Child Safeguarding Officer

Name: Nick Ritter

Email: nick.ritter@moorecap.hk

Phone: +852 6017 9593

HKRU Child Safeguarding Manager

Name: Lucy Clarke

Senior Manager, Player Welfare & Medical

Email: lucy.clarke@hkrugby.com

Mobile: +852 9137 7410

Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy:

1. An **employee** means a person employed by any Rugby Body under a contract of employment, whether part-time or full-time, and who is based in Hong Kong.
2. An **independent contractor** means a person who is engaged by any Rugby Body under a contract to provide services to any Rugby Body in Hong Kong and is not an employee of that Rugby Body.
3. A **volunteer** means a person who willingly provides services to any Rugby Body without remuneration, including any coaches, managers and Board/Committee members who are neither employees nor independent contractors.