

## SAFEGUARDING UPDATE – September 2017

### **Concussion**

We have had a couple of concussions already this season so it seems appropriate to remind you about the concussion protocols.

If you have a player with suspected concussion they should be removed immediately from training / play. If a referee has not already stopped play to check for concussion, as a coach you can approach the referee to urgently request that he / she does so.

There is a standard letter for you to give to the player or their parents in the Junior Rugby pigeon hole (left side of the bar as you look from the tennis courts) which outlines what they need to do before they can come back to rugby.

Each age group should have a “Headcase” leaflet in your kitbag providing more information on symptoms of concussion – please let me know if yours is missing or you need extra copies.

Note that all policy documentation is available in the club Dropbox folder. Additionally, all lead coaches have been emailed a link to the RFU’s concussion website and have been asked to forward this to all parents. Links have also been provided to the online location of the ‘Pocket SCAT’ document.

### **Playing up between age groups**

While occasional games with a higher age group can be good for player development, arrangements for playing up are rigidly controlled and policed. It is an RFU requirement that any plan to play in an older age group is properly risk-assessed and that written permission is granted from their parents and the coaches of their natural and targeted age group.

Risk- assessment will involve assessing that the player has the physical capability to train and play matches at the higher age group and the rugby technique to cope with harder physical contact. It will also consider the impact on the player’s current age group of their moving up.

If you have a player who is keen to play up – or if you are a coach looking to fill gaps in your squad for a particular match – first step is to contact Will or myself to sort out the required RFU paperwork – NO PAPERWORK NO PLAY!

The consequences of getting this wrong are severe – both for the safety of the player concerned and for the club. A typical RFU penalty for abusing this requirement is 20 points deducted from the offending club’s first team’s league score!!

### **1<sup>st</sup> Aid**

Each age group was issued with a first aid kit last season. Could coaches:

1. Check that the kit is still there – let me know if not.
2. Check that it is properly stocked and let me know if there are any items that need re-stocking.

The club is also arranging a First Aid course to be arranged by the RFU and delivered for club Coaches and Team Managers only. This is scheduled for Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> November. First aid cover is provided by XX for Colts and by Dave Panes for all other age groups when playing at home.

## **Social media groups**

Devizes RFC recognizes that social media channels are useful options for coaches and team managers to manage the administration of age group training and fixtures and are popular with parents. However, we are now required to have a club social media policy, given the obvious safeguarding risks in use and abuse of social media and our aim is for social media groups run for club or age group administration at Devizes RFC to be established with:

- A clear, club rugby-connected purpose.
- Controlled access to membership for adults only – e.g. coaches and parents, coaches only.
- For groups for parents, open access to all parents within the age group – including both parents involved in child custody arrangements – but with an alternative communication for those who want to opt out.
- A clearly identifiable administrator / monitor with control of access rights to the group who is also an age group team manager, coach or parent.
- All group members being easily visible to all other members.

Good uses of social media groups are:

- Administration of training and fixtures
- Planning and review coaching sessions
- Planning tours and social events
- Sharing pictures of players playing rugby

Social media groups should not be used as a forum for:

- Exchanging children's personal data.
- Criticism of officials
- Criticism of individual players.
- Discussion of children's lives outside of rugby.
- Sharing of non-rugby images of children.

We strongly recommend that Devizes coaches do not become Facebook friends etc. with the children they coach.