



# RISBOROUGH RANGERS JUNIOR FOOTBALL CLUB



Many of you may be worried on reading the recent reports in the news regarding historic child abuse in the football community. We are writing to everyone in the club now to explain what measures our club, Risborough Rangers Junior Football Club, takes in order to ensure the wellbeing and safety of your children during their time with us.

Let us remember that many of the incidents currently being reported occurred 20 or more years ago at a time when few organisations had established procedures for dealing with such matters and there was little structure or support for anyone experiencing such abuse.

It is also worth remembering that many of the incidents reported so far occurred at football academies where children may not have been with or near their parents during training sessions, either in changing rooms, enclosed training spaces or travelling away. Here at Risborough Rangers, all parents should be able to see their children at all times, even during indoor training sessions.

Nothing excuses such shocking tales of abuse but child protection is now a serious, recognised matter.

As a club, Risborough Rangers has always had a high commitment to welfare and safety. That commitment was one of the factors that helped us to achieve FA Charter-Standard club status.

The FA Charter Standard kitemark is awarded to football clubs who provide a high quality football experience – such clubs are proven to be well run, sustainable, and importantly place child protection, quality coaching and safety paramount. This means we are required to have

- a trained Welfare Officer,
- CRC-checked volunteers (CRC = Criminal Record Check)
- Emergency Aid-trained volunteers linked to each team,
- Respect programme sign-up,
- a Level One coach for each youth team,
- appropriate club administration in place
- a volunteer co-ordinator

Risborough Rangers has around 90 individuals who give their time voluntarily to manage and coach. All of these individuals are currently or in the process of being CRC checked as we endeavour to renew our CRC every 3 years. Risborough Rangers is also committed to ensuring that all of these individuals attend FA run 'Safeguarding Children' courses, also requiring renewal every 3 years.

Whilst the FA recommends that this happens, Risborough Rangers JFC is also aware that our commitment to this is one of the reasons that the club won the Berks and Bucks Charter Standard Club Award in 2015 and the Berks and Bucks Welfare Officer Award also in 2015.

Risborough Rangers JFC has also embraced the FA Respect Campaign and we have enshrined the FA Code of Conduct into our registration process. You may remember that, when you registered your child with the club, you were asked to provide ample contact details, relevant information relating to health issues and to sign your consent to any filming or photography. This information is confidential and can only be accessed by our a few members of the club committee (such as the Club Secretary and the Welfare Officer) and by the relevant age group manager.

Your child will also have been asked to sign a 'Training Code Of Conduct' – one for each team and this lays down both our expectations of the players themselves but also our expectations of our coaching staff.



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As a club, we hold monthly committee meetings at which Child Welfare and First Aid reports are regularly shared and this is also an opportunity to raise specific issues that may have arisen, either within the club or nationally. At these meetings, we have previously discussed such matters as respect towards officials & referees and the use of social media, either as a mechanism to communicate with the team and what are the signs to watch out for when children are exposed to problems via social media.

In October this year, we held a one-off Respect Evening during which we had a presentation from the Club Welfare Officer, the Berks and Bucks FA Welfare Officer as well as the local Emergency Responders. All club volunteers were asked to attend and we had a turnout of around 60+ people.

So, we have put in place a number of mechanisms to prevent problems from arising. Unfortunately, it is not always possible to detect problems or prevent them from happening. We have, therefore, a formal process to deal with any form of complaint or disciplinary issue relating to one of our players or members or where a complaint has been lodged against Risborough Rangers. Thankfully, these are few and far between and, to date, have all been relatively minor issues. Nonetheless, this means we are familiar with and trained to respond to any complaint or problem that arises.

These processes are detailed in our Club Handbook which you can review on the website along with our Respect Pages and Code of Conduct Standards.

We hope you feel reassured that the club is doing its utmost to provide a safe and enjoyable environment for your child to enjoy and develop their football. We are entirely run by volunteers who give their own time to coach football but also to develop and understand the necessary techniques for ensuring the safety of the children in our care.

Nonetheless, we would still always ask parents to remain vigilant to the wellbeing of their own children and, if you have any concerns about any issue, please do feel that you can or your child can speak to any of the following people about anything:

- Club Welfare Officer: Jo Mirzoeff
- Club Chairman: Andy Quigley
- Club First Aid Officer: Andy Woodward
- Your age group Manager

All of our contact details are also on the website.

Finally, here are a few tips to remember to help keep your child safe.

- Stay pitchside and watch your child play. Enjoy it with them!
- Speak to your child if they seem uneasy or troubled following training or a match.
- Managers and coaches are aware that they should not be left in a 1:1 situation with a child.
- If your child gets a lift to a match or training, be sure that you know who is taking them and that you have given permission for this. The club cannot encourage, endorse or arrange lift sharing for you.
- All communication regarding football should go via the parent and never via any child's personal telephone or email address.



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- No team should be using social media sites to arrange matches and invite players. All Managers should either be emailing parents directly to arrange training and matches or using a dedicated site such as Teamer where there is clear visibility and no private conversations. Our Pan-Disability is the only exception where we have allowed Facebook to be used to promote the team but not to identify or show any of the players.
- We ask all of our volunteers to also not post photographs or to name players on their own personal social media sites. We would ask you to do the same – obviously you can post photos about your own children if you wish but please respect the privacy of others.

We hope this has been helpful but please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

Jo Mirzoeff

Welfare Officer