



Rugby League

Parents Handbook



INTRODUCTION

This Rugby League Parents Handbook has been developed to present some key information that we believe all parents should have some knowledge of, to ensure that you are aware of the various support mechanisms and programmes that are in place, but also so you can best support your child in their Rugby League journey.

The information contained within this resource is deliberately short but contains what we believe are the key messages. We have included links which will signpost you to further details.





CONTENTS

- 4** Discrimination
- 6** Anti-Doping
- 8** Gambling
- 10** Social Media
- 12** Safeguarding
- 14** Concussion
- 17** Respect
- 20** Ages and Stages
- 22** OurLeague Active

Discrimination has a negative impact on everyone involved in Rugby League. It causes players, coaches, referees, volunteers and families to turn away from the game. We want a sport where every act of discrimination is challenged, leading to an outcome that is fair and proportionate.

Rugby League has a Zero Tolerance approach to discrimination. Zero Tolerance means the RFL policy of not tolerating Unacceptable Language and Behaviour of any type and imposing severe penalties with no exceptions. Unacceptable Language and Behaviour is defined as follows:

Unacceptable Language and Behaviour means any comments, threats, chanting, discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, bullying, victimisation, or incitement to hatred or abuse or any other action (implied, intended or unintended) which targets individuals or groups on the grounds of: age, colour, ethnic origin, disability (including physical, sensory, cognitive, intellectual, mental illness or some chronic disease), gender identity, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, nationality or national origin political persuasion, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, socio economic background or is otherwise in breach of the “Respect Policy”, “Tackle It” or the RFL’s Equity Statement.

If you witness or your child experiences discrimination as a player during a game, you can make a report to the referee. If you feel unable to do this or the incident didn’t occur during a game, you can tell us, and we will act promptly and respond appropriately. We have put together a form in the link below for you to complete and detail the incident that you would like to report

[Reporting Discrimination \(rugby-league.com\)](https://www.rugby-league.com)

Alternatively, you can make a report via email to **compliance@rfl.co.uk**

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All Community and Professional participants are subject to Anti-Doping rules, which means any one can be tested – any place, any time, even those under the age of 18.

As minors, if players are selected for testing, they will always be accompanied by a chaperone. There is more information here on rights and responsibilities and the testing process. **Testing Process for Minors | UK Anti-Doping ([ukad.org.uk](https://www.ukad.org.uk))**

Adopting a **FOOD FIRST** approach will give players the right nutrients and proteins they need, at the right time. There's some great tips and ideas here **Food-First | UK Anti-Doping ([ukad.org.uk](https://www.ukad.org.uk))**

Any positive test for banned substances (recreational, performance or image enhancing drugs) will result in the participant being banned, whether they intended to cheat or not – this is their **STRICT LIABILITY**. There are **11 Rules** which players are subject to - by adopting a nutrition-based approach the risk of breaking these rules is reduced significantly as is the risk of damage to your child's health.

Understanding times of transition for your child, will help to support them to avoid the potential temptation of doping. Times such as not getting on scholarship, being released from academies, injuries and life stresses can all be times of risk.

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Although gambling is age restricted, parents should be aware that Rugby League participants are subject to rules preventing them from betting on Rugby League matches in both the Professional and Community game.

Whilst in the younger age groups this shouldn't be an issue, please be mindful as they progress through the ages and stages of their Rugby League life that betting on Rugby League as a Rugby League participant is not permitted. The potential negative impacts of gambling and gambling addictions should also be considered.

If you are concerned about your child and gambling related harm, please [click here](#) for supporting agencies.

Good Practice Guidelines on the use of social media - The rapid rise and use of social media has been phenomenal, and it can be difficult to keep up with the new sites and/or apps. Parents have concerns around online safety for their children and clubs have both these concerns and concerns around their club image and how they are portrayed by its members.

Guidance for Parents - All people involved in Rugby League should work towards promoting the game, their club, and the sport. Negative postings about your child's club or coach could result in legal proceedings and/or expulsions. Taking to posting on social media will never sort out a problem or concern that you may have with your child's experience of Rugby League. If you have any issues or concerns, then you should address this with the Coach or Club Welfare Officer.

Do not post photos of other players without the child and parents' permission. Check your child's accounts to ensure they are both safe and sensible in their postings and friendship groups. Be aware that children can experience online bullying and this can be a very isolating experience for a child, check that your child is safe online by visiting the thinkuknow website by clicking [here](#)

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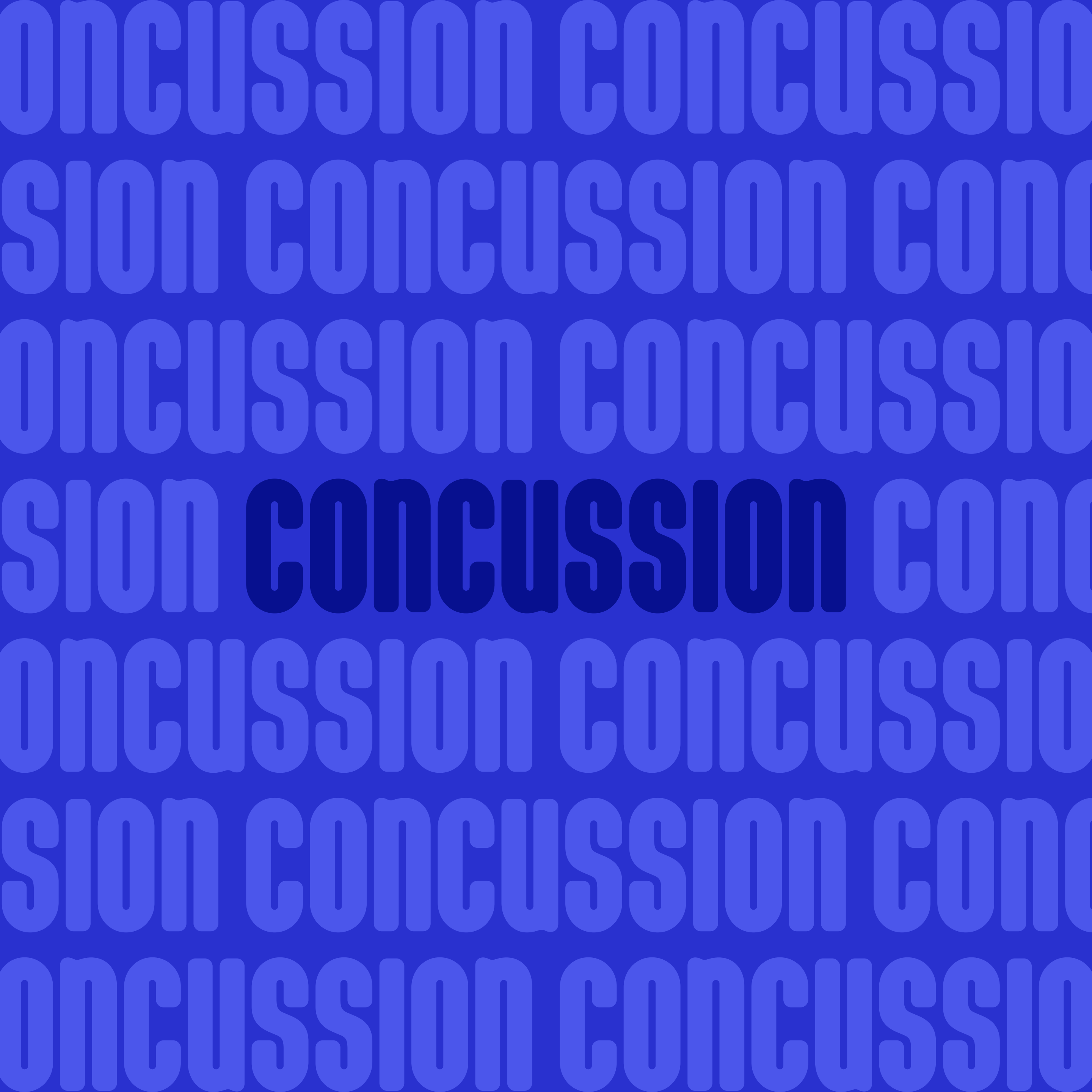
The RFL is committed to safeguarding the welfare of children in the sport of Rugby League. For over a decade we have worked closely with the Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) and NSPCC to develop robust policy and procedures to safeguard children, achieving the NSPCC & CPSU's National Advanced Standards for safeguarding and protecting children in sport in 2008. We work closely with all our clubs and statutory agencies to ensure that safeguarding children is prioritised. Any allegation, suspicion of harm, or concern is taken very seriously and responded to swiftly, fairly and appropriately.

Everyone shares the responsibility for safeguarding and creating safe environments in Rugby League whether as a parent, coach, spectator, or club official. This means that everyone should operate and demonstrate exemplary behaviour to both safeguard children and protect all personnel from allegations of abuse or poor practice.

The RFL Safeguarding Policy can be found [here](#)

The safeguarding team can be contacted on Safeguarding@rfl.uk.com

For more information on Safeguarding please [click here](#)



Rugby League is a contact sport and so the risk of concussion is high.

Parents should recognise the signs and symptoms of concussion and follow the **Sport and Recreation Alliance guidelines** for its management both at matches, training, and whilst resting and recovering at home.

The key messages are:

- **IF IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT** (remove from the field and stay off)
- Call 111 or see a doctor in the 24 hours following concussion
- Don't leave your child unattended and ensure they rest appropriately in the 24 – 48 hours following injury (avoiding screen time and physical activity)
- Return to sport takes a minimum of 3 weeks, even when symptoms resolve quickly.

No player should return to any sport (not just Rugby League) until symptoms have subsided and a graduated return to normal (school or work life) has been followed. Returning to school or work must be prioritised ahead of the return to sport.

Returning early carries the risk of prolonged recovery, further injury, worsening symptoms or second impact syndrome, which can be fatal. Coaches and First Aiders are aware of signs and symptoms and the requirement to remove a player from the field, but you have a role to play here too – you know your child best.

It's important to look after your child's brain health, encourage them to share symptoms, leave the field if they don't feel right and be patient with their return to sport.

If symptoms have not eased or have worsened 4 weeks post injury – take your child to see your GP.

In addition, we have created a resource to help Players understand the concussion protocols within the Community Game.

The concussion passport has been designed to help support players look after their brain health following a concussion, allowing appropriate time for the brain to recover in line with Sport Recreation Alliance and Rugby Football League (RFL) protocol. The document explains in detail what a player must do if they have suffered a head injury, including recognising additional symptoms, how they report this, confirmation of a head assessment (after contacting NHS 111) and the graduated return to activity table. The passport can be found [**HERE**](#)

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RESPECT is a game-wide campaign from the community level up to Super League, promoting positive environments for all participants in our sport and combatting anti-social or discriminatory behaviours.

The campaign has game-wide support – from players at the very top of the game who feature in the **campaign launch video**, and from professional club foundations such as Leeds Rhinos who have made **this brilliant short film** capturing the ups and downs of young people involved in our game.

Put simply, RESPECT means treating others how we would wish to be treated ourselves. And respect for each other makes Rugby League an even greater game. At **rugby-league.com**, you'll find more information about RESPECT and a wide range of campaign assets to download, including the parents' code of conduct and the 'Great rugby parents play by the rules' poster.

Please see below the parent/spectator code please which you should familiarise yourself with:

- Encourage all people involved in the sport to abide by the General Principles and challenge behaviours that do not do this.
- Do not force an unwilling child to participate in sport.
- Remember that children participate in Rugby League for their own enjoyment, not yours!
- Understand that sport is part of a total life experience, and the benefits of involvement go far beyond the final score of a game.
- Condemn all violent or illegal acts, whether they are by players, coaches, officials, parents, or spectators.
- Respect the match official's decisions – don't complain or argue about decisions during or after a game.

- Behave! Unsporting or discriminatory language, harassment or aggressive behaviour will not be tolerated.
- Encourage players to play by the rules and to respect opposition players and officials.
- Never ridicule or scorn a player for making a mistake – respect their efforts.
- Participate in positive cheering that encourages all the players in the team; do not engage in any jeering that taunts or intimidates opponents, their fans, or officials.
- At all times, follow the directions of the Ground Manager and/or other match day staff.
- Never arrive at a game under the influence of alcohol, never bring alcohol to a game, and only drink alcohol, if it is available at the ground, in the designated licensed area.

For more information, please visit

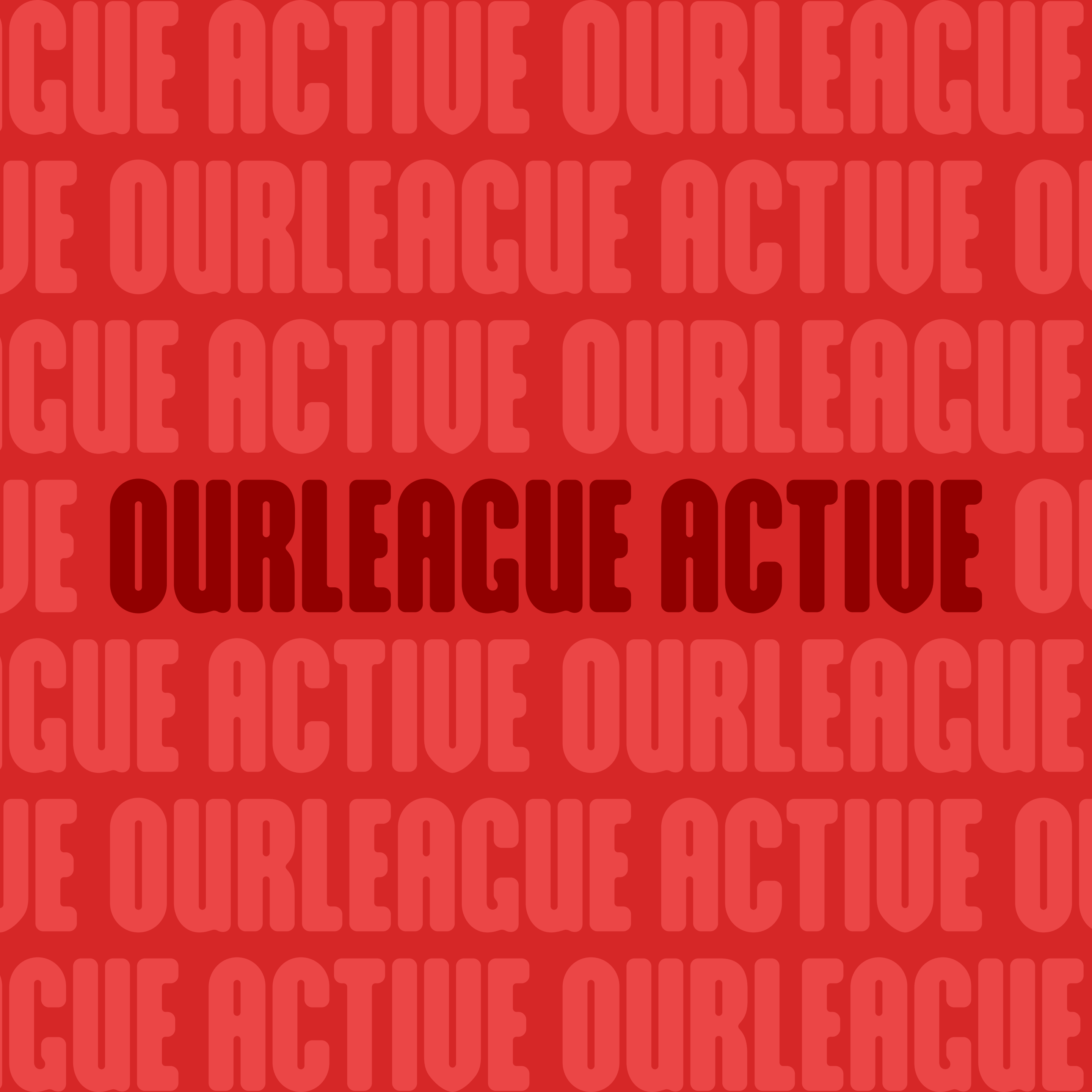
<https://www.rugby-league.com/governance/inclusion-diversity/respect>



There are lots of ways to get involved with our sport, regardless of your age, gender, physical ability and much more.

Ages and Stages is the easy way to find out which form of Rugby League is best suited to you and your child and has lots of different resources and downloads to support your participation in the sport. Even if you are already at a club there are lots of coaching and development aids available on the page.

Please check out <https://www.rugby-league.com/ages-and-stages> for further information.



By registering as a Rugby League player, they are covered by the RFL Operational Rules and the policies and standards that form part of that, such as the medical standards, safeguarding support as mentioned above, player insurance and support and guidance from experts in the fields listed in this document.

In addition, other benefits of membership include, ticket offers, personal dashboards, prize draws and access to the Rewards4 Rugby League rewards scheme which can earn you money to offset your annual membership fee.

For further information please visit

<https://www.rugby-league.com/support/our-league-active>