



St Martin's School

N O R T H W O O D

11f Rugby Safety Policy

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Introduction

This policy outlines St Martin's School's procedures to ensure that all staff, pupils and visiting coaches can enjoy rugby which adheres to the highest standards of safety.

Coaches of Teams

U13A	Mr J PAWSON
U12A	Mr T MCGEE
U11A	Mrs A LEITAO
U11B	Mr R KOYA
U10A	Mr M BELL
U10B	Mr C WARD
U9A	Mr T MCGEE
U9B	Mr J PAWSON

Staff Training

Before either coaching a school team or refereeing and managing matches against other teams, the School's Director of Sport ensures that all school coaches have in place the following Pre-Season Rugby Staff Training:

Training	Frequency of update
RFU HEADCASE Concussion Awareness Online Course - Headcase Concussion Awareness Training - Open Access (e.g. for parents, school children) - Overview Rise 360 (articulate.com)	Annual

The Director of Sport will keep a record of all sports department training and will remind coaches when their coaching is due for renewal.

Risk Assessment

This Policy is to be read in conjunction with the Rugby Risk Assessment, which is reviewed annually by the Director of Sport. All staff involved in rugby are to have read and understood the Risk assessment.

Review

Prior to the start of pre-season rugby training, the Director of Sport reviews and updates the St Martin's safety policy in preparation for the forthcoming season. He circulates these to all Rugby coaches, asking for their feedback at the departmental meeting.

Departmental Meeting

The focus of this meeting will be to ensure how the department can improve standards of child-centred rugby safety in school. The Director of Sport asks for feedback on the St Martin's safety policy, working these ideas into the document as appropriate, notifying the First Aid department of these actions annually.



Communication

Prior to every year's pre-season training, the Director of Sport writes to all parents providing them with a link to the St Martin's safety policy on the school intranet. A covering letter may outline new measures that the school has put in place to protect the safety of young players when rule changes occur.

Pre-Season Rugby Training

Pre-season rugby training usually takes place during the last two or three weeks of the autumn term and provides the School's Director of Sport with the opportunity to ensure that all coaches:

- Assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of their teams.
- Emphasise safety with all pupils, managing concerns sensitively.
- Teach pupils to manage contact safely.
- Improve pupils' strength, fitness and contact skills prior to matches taking place.

Managing Contact

The Director of Sport will ensure that contact will be built in a gradual process and ensure that all coaches monitor the time spent on contact during any one session, taking into account the age, strength, experience and ability of the children. Where appropriate the coach will employ the following strategies to ensure safe contact:

- Teach safe techniques.
- Place constraints on contact e.g. 1 v 1, 2 v 2 in a ruck or maul depending on the age group.
- Stopping a contact situation if it looks like it is becoming dangerous.
- Matching ability between pupils who are involved in contact together.

Safe Fixtures

When creating fixtures, the Director of Sport will discuss each team's strengths and weaknesses with the opposition school concerning size, weight and levels of rugby experience. They will agree reasonable adjustments to reduce the likelihood of injury. Prior to fixture day, they will confirm the fixture and initiate a discussion with the opposition school to make any changes to the initial agreement.

Match Protocols

Safety

The Director of Sport will ensure that, prior to all matches starting, St Martin's coaches initiate safety discussions with their opposition coaches and agree where relevant any reasonable adjustments to reduce the likelihood of injury. If either coach raises safety concerns, one or more of the following actions (known as creative refereeing) may be taken:

- Match teams accordingly where possible a weaker B team playing a stronger C team.
- Weaken one of the teams (perhaps by rotating players).
- Play four quarters, monitoring the first quarter very closely.



- Play to rules but blow whistle early to avoid possible injury e.g. before maul collapses.
- Play a non-contact game (for lower teams).
- Remove pushing in the scrum (if applicable).
- Shorten or stop the game if necessary.

All St Martin's coaches ensure 'zero tolerance' of dangerous infractions.

Studs

St Martin's coaches ensure that referees, including those from opposition schools or visiting referees, check all players' studs before each session. Players with unsafe studs are not permitted to play. The IRB states:

'Referees and touch judges will inspect boots only to check that they are safe to play in. They will check that there are no sharp edges or burring etc.'

'Referees and touch judges will not be looking for kite marks or similar approval markings or manufacturers details.'

Mouth guards

St Martin's coaches ensure that referees check that all players wear a mouthguard. The type of mouthguard is a matter for each individual school. If an opposition school allows its pupils not to wear a mouthguard, their Director of Sport will need to provide confirmation that this is the case and accepting responsibility for any injuries that might result accordingly.

Glasses

St Martin's coaches ensure that referees check that no players are wearing glasses. (Sports goggles are acceptable).

Pitch Safety

The Director of Sport will liaise with the Head Groundsman prior to matches to ensure pitches are marked and free of any debris. Each St Martin's coach refereeing home matches should ensure they check pitches are free of any debris before matches start.

Injuries

Concussion or suspected concussion

Please see separate '11g Concussion Policy 2023-2024'

Medical Needs

Rugby coaches work closely with the First Aid department to support any pupils with pre-existing medical conditions. Coaches of pupils from other schools are expected to tell the referee if they have a pupil with a pre-existing injury. The medical bag, containing specific medicines, should be taken to away matches by the coaches of the away teams and returned when back from a fixture.



Monitoring of Injuries

If a St Martin's pupil requires first aid treatment at an away fixture, on their return the coach will fill out an injury form giving details of the incident (found in the first aid bag taken on away fixtures). The First Aid department will follow this up with the pupil's parents as soon as possible, and record the incident in the pupil's medical record.