



Intervention by Referees in Youth Rugby.

The incidence of adults intervening in issues relating to the discipline of children on the playing field has increased over the last few years.

The RFU has a very clear stance on this matter. Discipline on the field of play is the responsibility of the players. Coaches, team managers and parents must always promote good discipline amongst their players, both on and off the field. Penalising lack of discipline on the field of play which contravenes the laws of the game is the responsibility of the referee. Coaches, team managers and parents should not intervene or enter the field of play.

Physical intervention by the referee should always be avoided unless it is absolutely necessary to prevent a child injuring themselves or others. Physical restraint to prevent or stop something happening should always be a conscious decision i.e. the referee should ask themselves if this is the only option to manage the situation.

If referees find themselves in a situation where they need to intervene in order to prevent a child being injured or injuring themselves or others they should follow the following guidance:

➤ **Consider your own safety**

➤ **Use your voice first:**

Verbal instructions should be given before and during any physical intervention.

➤ **Use force only when necessary to resolve the incident:**

This should be the minimum force required, lasting for the shortest practicable time – the purpose should be restraint and the reduction of risk.

➤ **Do not strike blows, act with unnecessary force or retaliate:**

To do so would create a significant risk of an allegation of assault being made.

➤ **Avoid contact with buttocks, genitals and breasts where reasonably practical:**

This should minimise the risk of a person interpreting your behaviour as sexual

➤ **Avoid contact with the head and the neck where reasonably practical:**

This should minimise the risk of injury to the child.

Any form of physical intervention should be in order to achieve an outcome that is in the best interests of the child whose behaviour is of immediate concern and/or other children involved in the incident. It must never be used as a form of punishment.

The possibility that a complaint may be lodged by a parent whose child has been physically restrained cannot be ruled out. In order to minimise the risks arising from this, physical intervention should always be recorded on a Restraint Incident Report Form which is available for download at <http://www.rfu.com/TakingPart/Referee/ArticlesAndResources.aspx> and sent to the RFU's Safeguarding team at Rugby House, Rugby Road, Twickenham, TW1 1DS as soon as possible with a copy to your Referee Society, if applicable.

RESTRAINT – INCIDENT REPORT FORM

1. Basic Information

Name of Club:

Name of Child:

Age:

Name of Coach:

Name of Team Manager:

If you have the team sheet then please attach it to the Incident Report Form

2. Events Leading to the incident

2.1. Where did the incident occur?

2.2. When did the incident occur?

2.3. How did the incident begin?

3. Describe the incident

3.1. What was happening at the time?

3.2. Who else was involved?

3.3. Who else witnessed what happened? (give details).

3.4. What did you do to try to resolve the situation before using restraint?

3.5. How did you restrain the child?

4. Injuries Sustained

Was anyone injured? Yes/No

If yes, give details.

5. Follow Up Action

5.1. The incident was reported by:

5.2. The parent or carer was informed by:

Incident form completed by:

Name:

Address:

Dated: