



HERTS RUGBY

Hertfordshire Rugby Football Union



RUGBY TOURS, TRIPS AND OVERNIGHT STAYS

**Approval protocol for 'outgoing' and 'incoming' tours
and statement of expectations for 'in-union' tours**

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Document control

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Introduction

Purpose of this document

The RFU updated the 'Trips, Tours and Overnight Stays' (TTOS) guidance during the second half of the 2024 season, which clarifies the definition of a 'rugby tour'. The TTOS guidance sets out expectations for clubs in planning and undertaking rugby tours, and on constituent bodies (CBs) for granting approvals.

The purpose of this protocol and statement of expectations is:

- To describe the Hertfordshire CB roles and responsibilities for granting approvals, for incoming and outgoing rugby tours (out of the England Rugby Union) for adult and age-grade rugby;
- To set out the CB's expectations of clubs for approving age-grade teams to travel and play rugby out of the CB's area but within the union.

How to use this document

Each section can be read as a standalone set of instructions for the specific process the section describes. The three sections are for [outgoing tours](#), [incoming tours](#) and [age-grade tours in union](#). Each section can be accessed using the (ctrl click) interactive contents page above.

The language used in this document to describe process steps or activities is phrased as **MUST** (mandatory), **SHOULD** (not mandatory but expected best practice) and **COULD** (advisory or suggestive).

You need only follow the instructions that correspond to the nature of the tour you are planning and use the corresponding resources that are signposted.

Herts RFU tour resources

There are several documents that Herts RFU have devised that will help you to plan and undertake a safe and successful rugby tour. These are:

The '**Outgoing tour application form**' and the '**Incoming tour application form**'. These documents contain their own sets of instructions. They are 'Word' documents, and they **MUST** be used for all Herts clubs, instead of the PDF forms on the RFU website, when seeking approval for an outgoing or incoming tour.

The '**Tour planning and risk assessment template**' is a spreadsheet that you **COULD** use to help you plan a safe tour and to assess risks effectively. It can be edited to suit your needs. This template develops the RFU's tour checklist and risk assessment from the TTOS guidance. You do not have to use this particular template, it is intended as a 'use it if you wish' template, but be advised that you **MUST** do a risk assessment for outgoing and incoming tours.

The '**Consent for a rugby tour**' template is an editable word document that you **COULD** use to obtain parental consent for age-grade tours for individual children. This is an expansion of the consent form in the RFU tours resources. Again, you do not have to use this particular form, as it is also a 'use it if you wish' resource, but be advised that consent is something you **MUST** obtain in every case. See also under '[record keeping](#)' below regarding retention of forms with confidential personal information.

Related policy and regulations

This document should read across to the following (hyperlinked) documents:

- RFU Guidance on [Trips, Tours and Overnight Stays](#)
- RFU [Regulation 10](#)
- RFU [Safeguarding Children Policy](#)
- RFU [Age Grade Codes of Practice](#)
- RFU [Tour resources and forms](#) (although Herts tour resources are designed to replace some of these – see above)
- [Herts RFU tour resources](#) (see adjacent resources on [Herts Rugby Football Union](#))

Outgoing rugby tours

Any party of players travelling to any location outside of the England Rugby Union (including Scotland, Wales, Ireland and Northern Ireland) to play rugby is an 'outgoing tour' and requires approval by the CB prior to travel.

This approval is required for both age-grade and adult rugby regardless of the means of travel or the nature of the overnight accommodation, and regardless of any other non-rugby related activity taking place. For age-grade rugby this also applies whether the players' parents accompany the travelling party or not.

CB authorised signatory

- The CB Safeguarding Manager (CBSM) for age-grade tours, and
- The CB Secretary for adult tours.

The application / approval process

- Applications to tour **MUST** be sent to the CBSM or the CB Secretary within good time to enable the approver to review it and make additional recommendations or requirements, but **SHOULD** be made at least six-weeks in advance of the date of travel unless good reasons are outlined with the application.
- Applications **MUST** be made on the '**Outgoing tour application form**' (NB: See above under [Herts tour resources](#)).
- Applications **SHOULD** be made by the tour leader or organiser but **MUST** be reviewed and signed off by a club senior officer with delegated authority to approve tours on behalf of the club.
- Applications to the CB **MUST** be accompanied by a risk assessment. Any application that is not accompanied by a risk assessment will not be approved.
- Risk assessments **SHOULD**, as a minimum, be based on the risk assessment template set out in the RFU TTOS guidance. (NB: See the suggested tour planning and '**risk assessment template**' above under [Herts tour resources](#)).
- Risk assessments **COULD** be most valuable when they are used as a planning tool and are subject to ongoing review and revision during the planning process.
- The CB will need to be satisfied that there is adequate insurance coverage in place for travelling, for playing rugby and for any non-rugby activities.
- When granting approvals for outgoing tours, the CBSM or CB Secretary may make time-bound requirements for additional actions to address any other risks.

Additional requirements for age-grade tours (including where 17-year-olds are travelling with senior teams)

- Before signing off any outgoing tour application, the club senior officer **MUST** consult with the Club Safeguarding Officer (CSO) to ensure safeguarding risks have featured during planning and have been properly addressed, and that safeguarding arrangements are in place whilst away.
- The CBSM **SHOULD** be satisfied that appropriate consents have been obtained from players and their parents. (NB: See the suggested consent for a rugby tour form above under [Herts tour resources](#)). Written consents from parents of age-grade players **MUST** be obtained whether the parents travel with the players or not.

Incoming rugby tours

Any party of players travelling from outside of the England Rugby Union to play rugby at any club within Hertfordshire is an 'incoming tour' and will require approval by the CB prior to the club hosting the event.

This approval is required for both age-grade and adult incoming tours.

CB authorised signatory

- The CB Safeguarding Manager (CBSM) for age-grade tours, and
- The CB Secretary for adult tours.

The application / approval process

- Applications to host a touring team MUST be sent to the CBSM or the CB Secretary within good time to enable the approver to review it and make any additional recommendations or requirements. Applications SHOULD be made at least six-weeks in advance of the date of the start of the hosted tour unless good reasons are outlined with the application.
- Applications MUST be made on the '**Incoming tour application form**'. (NB: See above under [Herts tour resources](#)).
- Applications SHOULD be made by the club's designated tour liaison officer but MUST also be reviewed and signed off by a club senior officer with delegated authority on behalf of the club. (NB: Clubs COULD benefit from appointing a dedicated tour liaison officer whose role would be to facilitate the arrangements for playing rugby and to liaise with and enhance the experience of the visiting club).
- As with outgoing tours, any application to the CB to host an incoming tour MUST be accompanied by a risk assessment. This SHOULD, as a minimum, be based on the relevant sections of the risk assessment template in the RFU's TTOS guidance but clubs COULD edit and use the Herts RFU '**Risk assessment template form**'. (NB: See above under [Herts tour resources](#)).
- Risk assessments COULD be most valuable when they are used as a planning tool and are subject to ongoing review and revision during the planning process.
- As well as being satisfied that a risk assessment has been completed, the CBSM or CB Secretary will also need to be satisfied that the visiting team have been granted corresponding approval for them to travel to England by their own union, that this is noted on the application form and evidence seen (email or letter for example).
- When granting approvals for incoming tours, the CBSM or CB Secretary may make time-bound requirements for additional actions to address any other risks.

Additional requirements for age-grade tours (including where 17-year-olds are intending to play with senior teams)

- Before signing off the application form for an incoming age-grade tour, the club senior officer MUST consult with the CSO to ensure safeguarding risks have featured during planning and have been properly addressed. For example, to ensure there is safeguarding coverage for matches and that incident reporting arrangements are agreed.
- The club MUST also ensure that the visiting team agree to follow England Rugby Age-Grade playing requirements set out in Regulation 15, and that this is acknowledged by a signature from an adult tour representative on the '**Incoming tour application form**' on behalf of the named players.

Age-grade trips and overnight stays within the RFU but outside the CB

Although regulation 10 applies to rugby tours outside of, or coming into the union, the chain of authority and accountability as applied to those tours is usefully replicated for trips that do not come under regulation 10.

In which case, Hertfordshire Rugby makes these following **statements of expectation** for the planning and undertaking of all trips and overnight stays within England that involve age-grade players and their families. The forms and resources as set out above under [Herts tour resources](#) which can be edited or adapted to suit the nature of the tour).

- Clubs SHOULD adopt a formal application and approval process that replicates the process for tours travelling out of union.
- Tour organisers SHOULD make a formal application to the club senior executive for permission to travel to play age-grade rugby. An adapted or edited '**Outgoing tour application form**' COULD be used by clubs as part of this internal process.
- The club SHOULD delegate a senior signatory to approve all applications for trips and overnight stays.
- The CSO MUST be part of any internal approval process to ensure safeguarding risks have been considered and there are adequate safeguarding arrangements whilst away.
- Parental consent MUST be obtained for all trips and overnight stays regardless of whether parents accompany the players or not. The '**Consent for a rugby tour form**' can be edited or adapted to suit the nature of the tour.
- Risk assessments SHOULD feature as part of the planning processes for all tours and SHOULD be a requirement for internal approval processes. Risk assessments SHOULD, as a minimum, be based on the risk assessment template set out in the RFU TTOS guidance. The '**Tour planning and risk assessment template**' can be edited or adapted to suit the nature of the tour.
- Clubs COULD benefit from having routine tours and trips processes and consistent personnel in place to build expertise and experience. For example, establishing a regular tour committee to oversee and direct planning activity. This COULD especially be of benefit if a club is running more than one trip in each season.

Record Keeping

- Applications for tours out of or into the union will be managed on a single email chain with forms attached at each stage. The application forms will remain as editable 'Word' documents until approved at which point they will be converted to PDF.
- Records relating to all applications and approvals involving the CB will be held on the CB's secure SharePoint system (in compliance with regulation 10.7).
- Records will be retained until the end of the season that follows the season during which the tour took place unless there is a reasonable need to retain them for longer. This is to ensure they can be retrieved if the need arises to demonstrate accountable decision making.
- Records will be routinely weeded from the system after this period.
- This retention period may be extended on a case-by-case basis depending on any specific circumstances.
- Records for applications not involving the CB should be retained securely on club systems for a time specified by the club.
- Clubs should make arrangements to ensure that forms containing confidential personal information (e.g. consent forms) are held on a secure system that can be accessed by only those for whom it is essential (such as tour leader or tour first aider). Once the tour has concluded, and unless there is a need to retain any confidential personal information (e.g. because of an ongoing safeguarding issue), records containing personal information should be securely disposed of straightaway.

Summary

This protocol and statement of expectations is designed to support clubs to plan and undertake trips, tours and overnight stays that are safe and enjoyable for all players and (where appropriate) their families.

Any questions about this guidance can be directed to the CB Secretary or CB Safeguarding Manager.

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