



VERBAL ABUSE POLICY

1. Objective of this policy

To provide guidance on how to report any incidents of verbal abuse in and around playing the Game and provide an overview how complaints will be handled by the RFU, Middlesex Constituent Body ('Middlesex CB') ('County') and clubs.

There is simply no place for any form of verbal abuse in our sport. The RFU, and the Middlesex CB take a very dim view of this and will take all actions possible to remove it or any sign of it from our Game.

2. Scope

Covers all complaints where verbal abuse has or has been perceived to have occurred.

3. Audience

All members of the Middlesex Rugby community.

4. World Rugby Law 9.12

World Rugby law 9.12 states that:

'A player must not verbally abuse anyone. Verbal abuse includes, but is not limited to, abuse based on religion, colour, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation'.

5. Abuse by another player

5.1 Abuse by another player – witnessed by Referee

If a player is verbally abused on the field of play by another player, the Referee should immediately be informed of the incident. If the Referee witnesses the incident then they should apply the most appropriate sanction, i.e., normally issue a Red Card.

If a Red card is issued, then the Referee's report needs to include details of the incident and the player who received the Red Card will be required to attend a Disciplinary hearing.



5.2 Abuse by another player – NOT witnessed by Referee

If the Referee did not witness the incident, they should after being informed of what has allegedly taken place, speak to both teams and inform them a complaint has been received, reiterate that there is no place in our Game for verbal abuse of another player and confirm that the incident will be included in their post-match report.

5.3. Expectations of Club

Where possible, a senior Club official from the Club to which the accused person belongs should be made aware of any incident of verbal abuse. This will allow the Club to begin their own investigation into the matter. For the avoidance of doubt, if the opposition club is not informed of the incident and it is referred straight to the CB or the RFU, this does not prevent any charges being issued.

It is expected that a club Disciplinary Panel will convene a disciplinary hearing for the matter and produce a written judgment that will be made available to the Middlesex CB or RFU Disciplinary Panel.

The club must inform that Middlesex CB Discipline Secretary will 48 hours confirming:

- The date of the fixture
- The location of the fixture
- The teams in the match
- The player's name, date of birth and RFU registration number
- The referee's name
- Will the player plead guilty or not guilty to the offence

If the player concerned is not registered, then they must be registered as soon as possible after the Red Card so that they can be logged onto GMS.

In nearly all cases, the player will be required to attend a Discipline Hearing.

The CB Disciplinary Panel will determine whether the case will be heard by the RFU Panel. If any individual is found guilty of an offence, they will be sanctioned in accordance with the prescribed sanction table.

6. Citing

Where a club believes one of their players has been verbally abused, then they should consider bringing a formal citing against the individual who committed the abuse. It is recommended that witness statements be collected as soon as possible after the match.

The citing must be made within 14 days of the match to the Middlesex CB Discipline Secretary, and include the following:

- Details of the incident and the name/ number of the player who allegedly committed the offence
- Any supporting witness statements from players, officials or spectators.

Upon receipt of the Citing submission relating to verbal abuse, the Middlesex CB Discipline Secretary, in accordance with RFU Regulation 19.1.14, must inform the RFU Discipline department of the incident. The RFU Head of Discipline will then determine if the case is to be heard by a CB Disciplinary panel or by an RFU Disciplinary Panel.

As the incident is a Citing, it will be the responsibility of the Club bringing the Citing to present the case to the Disciplinary Panel and to determine what witnesses they would like to call for the hearing.

After the hearing the Disciplinary Panel (RFU or CB, as relevant) will determine the outcome on the balance of probabilities and if the case is proved, will issue the relevant sanctions.

7. Abuse by a Spectator And/or Another Individual

If a player is abused by a spectator (or anyone else) not playing during the match, this should be immediately reported to the Referee. The Referee will manage the situation, in accordance with the agreed protocols and will include a description of the incident within their post-match report.

As soon as possible after the incident, members of the club whose player was subjected to the abuse should collect statements from any witnesses. These statements should then be made available for any discipline investigation.

On receipt of the post-match report and any other evidence, the local club disciplinary officer will determine if there has been a breach of RFU Rule 5.12: conduct that is deemed to not be in the interest of the Union or the Game and decide whether this needs to be referred to the CB Discipline Secretary. The CB Discipline Secretary will decide whether the matter needs to be reported to the RFU Discipline department.

8. Verbal Abuse Incident in Age-Grade Rugby

Any incidents that occur within the Age-Grade Game, i.e. involving players under 18 years of age will be fully investigated and will follow the Age-Grade Disciplinary process outlined in RFU Regulation 19, Appendix 6 ([Age-Grade Discipline Regulations](#)).

9. Publication of Judgments

The RFU is committed to an open and transparent disciplinary process. For all cases that are heard by an RFU panel, the written judgment will be published in full on the RFU website.

10. Contact Details

If you would like to report any verbal abuse incident or discuss any part of the process, please contact:

RFU Discipline Department	DisciplineRFU@Rfu.com
RFU Age-Grade Discipline Department	Agegradediscipline@RFU.com
CB Discipline Secretary	John Orr Discipline@middlesexrugby.com
CB Age-Grade Discipline Secretary	Caron Evan-Evans cree@mtsn.org.uk

11. Owner of this Policy

This policy is owned by the Secretary and approved by the Middlesex Management Board. This policy will be reviewed and updated annually.

12. Document Approval History

Date	Version	Document Approver	Comment
30 December 2020	Version 1	Middlesex Management Board	To be reviewed in December 2021