



20th September 2022

Dear Higher Education Colleagues,

RUGBY UNION CULTURE AND CONDUCT

As we approach the start of the 2022-23 academic year, we wanted to communicate our shared expectations of standards of behaviour across the game, both on and off the pitch, and reiterate how we all contribute to making rugby a safe and inclusive sport for all.

Bullying and coercion in the name of initiations, anti-social activity by Higher Education rugby clubs and abuse of match officials, spectators and opponents are simply not to be tolerated. Neither is lack of leadership, challenge or immediate action by institutions. No player should be questioning whether they play our sport because of what they fear or experience in Higher Education rugby.

We acknowledge that this is not just a rugby problem or always easy to control, but we are determined not to stand by and ignore it. It is everyone's responsibility to make our sport inclusive, modern, friendly and enjoyable. Any students and/or Higher Education Institutions undermining efforts to achieve this must expect to be challenged. We believe every rugby-playing student should have this and the potential consequences clearly set out to them at the start of every season.

The RFU's values of teamwork, respect, enjoyment, discipline and sportsmanship are what makes the game special and these are supported by BUCS. A positive experience with a Higher Education rugby club can significantly contribute to an increased sense of belonging for students who participate. We expect all those involved in the game, staff, students, volunteers and spectators to behave in ways that demonstrate, not undermine, these values, and appreciate your support in achieving this.

This season the positivity of the game will be showcased for the hundreds of thousands of players, volunteers and fans, with a women's World Cup and a full season of activity including BUCS' competitions, which do gain significant coverage. We want to be able to maximise these opportunities for the game as a whole and highlight this within the Higher Education element of rugby. We also do not want the impact to be weakened by the actions of a few.

We continue to work as a partnership (The RFU, Students RFU, Higher Education rugby clubs and BUCS) to address these issues, through education, accountability, leadership and collaboration. We actively encourage people to safely report incidents through one of the partners in the safe knowledge that it will be dealt with thoroughly and robustly.

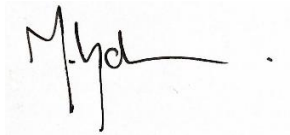
If you would like to discuss, please get in touch with any of the partners listed above.

Rugby is an amazing platform for students to perform, make friends for life and learn skills, behaviours and values which will serve throughout their life. We hope you will join us in making their experience whilst in Higher Education a positive one.

Yours sincerely,



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