

Newforge Taggers – Volunteer Policy

Newforge Taggers values volunteers because of the experience, skills, enthusiasm, and time they commit to the club. We seek to create a climate whereby everybody involved enjoys their volunteer experience in a safe, friendly and neutral environment.

This policy aims to provide relevant information to those who may wish to volunteer at Newforge Taggers and to ensure a fair and consistent ‘recruitment process’ for volunteers. The personal and professional development of all volunteers at the club is an important objective of this policy.

The policy will be reviewed on a regular basis, at least every 3 years.

Newforge Taggers – Background Information

Newforge Taggers is a Tag Rugby Football Club for children and adults with learning disabilities (club members are from age six with no upper age limit). The Taggers, formed in 2006, are the junior section of the Police Service of Northern Ireland RFC and as such are affiliated to the IRFU (Ulster Branch).

The club meets every Sunday morning (10 – 11.15am) for training and games. Our season runs from September through to December, and March through to June.

The club is volunteer-led, depending on the goodwill and skills of a diverse group of volunteers, in order to operate successfully. All of the volunteers at Newforge Taggers share the common goals of developing the players’ skills and improving their social interactions, in a safe and fun environment for everybody involved.

Newforge Taggers - Aims and Objectives

The club was established to promote healthy recreation for all its members, through the playing of tag rugby, and in some small way, improve their life experiences and their health. The club aims to promote the social wellbeing of adults and children with learning disabilities, without regard to age, gender, sexual orientation, ability, disability, ethnic identity, nationality, religion or political opinion.

The objectives of the club are to provide: tag rugby training; participation in tag tournaments and competitions and a safe and enjoyable environment for all our players.

Volunteering - Recruitment

Newforge Taggers implement a fair, effective and open system in the recruitment and selection of volunteers. We treat all information collected in this process confidentially. All prospective volunteers must complete the Volunteer Application Form and this will be the basis for selection by the committee.

Please note that all applicants may not be successful

From time to time we are oversubscribed with prospective volunteers and it is not possible to involve everyone. At this stage we will offer to place them on a “waiting list” and inform them when a position becomes available.

Volunteering – Getting Started

The club will appoint Volunteer Coordinators, who will have the responsibility of supervising the volunteers and integrating them into the club and explaining the role they will play within the coaching set up.

At present, volunteers are divided into two groups. Young Volunteers (those aged 16 – 18) and Adult Coaches (those over 18). The need for this definition is that teenagers between 16 and 18, are defined as a ‘young person’ and as such are deemed to be the responsibility of the Adult Coaches. Prior to starting with the club, **all** volunteers must successfully complete an Access NI check to ensure that they are suitable to work with children and vulnerable adults.

All volunteers are provided with an induction to the club. This aims to ensure a warm welcome to the club and provides an introduction to the tasks required of volunteers. By providing some background history of the club, it is hoped to highlight the various roles that volunteers may be asked to fulfil and the support network provided by the senior coaches. As part of induction volunteers will be given a copy of the IRFU Safeguarding Policy and will be asked to complete the ‘Declaration of Intent’ to show that they agree to adhere to the Policy and Codes of Conduct contained within.

Volunteering – Support

Volunteers will have a settling-in period, the length of this will be agreed between the club and individual volunteers as they start. The purpose of this is to establish that the volunteer is comfortable with the coaching environment and is committed to the role.

When volunteers are recruited, they will be partnered with an existing volunteer, who will act as a mentor and will be the person to whom the volunteer can approach for support or to whom they can make a complaint.

During the course of their volunteering, the volunteer will be encouraged to undertake the following courses:

- Safeguarding Awareness (IRFU Level 1)
- Health & Safety Awareness
- World Rugby Concussion Management (online)
- Manual Handling
- Leprechaun Rugby
- Disability Awareness training
- First Aid Course
- Makaton course (sign language)

All of these courses are important in supporting the volunteers to fully understand and carry out their role and are offered at no cost to the volunteers.

Volunteering – Resources

To help volunteers to carry out their role, the club will endeavour to provide adequate and appropriate information (through our policies and procedures), facilities, equipment and resources. All volunteers must be willing to adhere to the policies and procedures of the club and to ask for support where needed.

During training sessions Young Volunteers will be asked to wear a light blue training bib, to help the Adult Coaches to identify them on the training pitch whereby they can offer appropriate support and supervision.

At this stage the club is unable to offer out-of-pocket expenses, however where this would be a significant barrier preventing someone from becoming a volunteer the committee will discuss this on an individual basis.

Volunteering – Reward & Recognition

Newforge Taggers will endeavor to identify opportunities to recognise and reward all of their volunteers from saying ‘thank you’ to invitations to the Christmas Party, to nominating them for external awards or entering them into draws where Ulster or Ireland tickets are available.

For our Young Volunteers and adult coaches (aged 16 – 24) we offer the opportunity to participate in the GoldMark programme, delivered in partnership with Ulster Rugby. This programme is designed to promote and recognise sports volunteering among young people aged 16 - 24 years old. It involves the participants completing either 50, 100 or 200 hours of quality sports volunteering. Being part of the GoldMark programme will:

“enable you to develop your learning skills, provide recognition for the volunteering that you do and give you the opportunity to make new friends, gain confidence and make a difference.” (Volunteer Now)

Volunteering – Saying Goodbye

We understand that volunteers move on for a variety of reasons. However the relationship ends, we hope that volunteers enjoy their experience with us. We would like to gain feedback when volunteers leave so that we know what went well, what not so well and understand why the relationship has ended.

Volunteer Agreement

Volunteers are an important and valued part of our organisation. We hope that you enjoy volunteering with us and feel part of our team. This agreement tells you what you can expect from us and what we hope from you.

Part 1: Newforge Taggers

We will do our best:

- to introduce you to the organisation, how it works and your place in it.
- to provide any training that will support you to carry out the role effectively.
- to understand your motivation for volunteering and to respect your skills and experience.
- to match you with an experienced volunteer who will provide support for you in your role.
- to consult with you and keep you informed of possible changes that may impact on your volunteer role.
- to define appropriate standards for all volunteers that will help to ensure that you and Newforge Taggers get the best out of your volunteering experience.
- to provide adequate insurance cover for you while carrying out your role.
- to recognise the valuable contribution that volunteers make to our organisation on a regular basis.
- to try to resolve any problems, grievances or difficulties which may occur in the course of your volunteering.

Part 2: The Volunteer

I (name of volunteer) _____ agree to do my best:

- to perform my volunteering role to the best of my ability and to attend training that has been identified as important for the role.
- to meet the time commitments and standards that have been mutually agreed to and to give reasonable notice so that other arrangements can be made when this is not possible (please see section on Communication below).
- to be a good ambassador for Newforge Taggers and to follow any rules, procedures, standards and Codes of Conduct that are in place for the safety and enjoyment of everyone involved in the club.
- to treat fellow volunteers and players of all abilities with courtesy and respect.
- to be open and honest in all of my dealings with the club.

Communication

The success of the club depends on good communication both on and off the field of play. As highlighted above it is important to meet the time commitments that have been agreed to. In order for the Director of Rugby to organise safe, efficient and enjoyable training sessions it is vital for them to know how many Adults Coaches and Young Volunteers are available in advance of each session.

If a volunteer is unable to attend a training session they need to let the relevant person know as early as possible. Young Volunteers should inform their mentor, a Volunteer Coordinator or a Committee Member. Adult Coaches should inform the Director of Rugby or his Assistant.

In the event of a volunteer missing 3 training sessions, without good reason, they may be asked to confirm whether or not they can still make a commitment to the club. If they do not respond to attempts made to contact them, the club will make the assumption that they are no longer available to volunteer and will offer their place at the club to someone else.

From time to time the Volunteer Coordinators will be in communication with the volunteers about courses, extra training sessions or a variety of events that the club organises throughout the season. It is vital that, where an answer is required to the communication, the volunteer does this at the earliest opportunity.

This agreement is binding in honour only and is not intended to be a legally binding contract of employment. The agreement may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either the organisation or the volunteer.

I confirm that I have received, read and understood this Volunteer Agreement.

Signature: _____

Date: _____