Rickmansworth HC U18 Transport & Lift-Sharing Policy

Effective Date: 20/11/2026
Review Date: 20/11/2027
Club Welfare Officer: Penny Lawrence 07717037543

1. Purpose

Rickmansworth HC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all young people (under the age of 18) participating in hockey. This policy sets out clear expectations and procedures for transporting U18 players to and from training, matches, and club events in line with **England Hockey SafeGuard** guidance.

2. Parental Responsibility & Private Lift-Sharing

- **Primary Responsibility:** Parents and legal guardians are responsible for arranging safe transport for their U18 children to and from all training sessions, home and away fixtures, and club events.
- **Private Arrangements:** Lift-sharing arranged directly between parents/guardians (outside of official club coordination) is a private matter. The club does not vet private family arrangements, though we strongly encourage parents to confirm who is driving, ensure valid insurance and seatbelts, and verify drop-off plans.
- **Collection Times:** Parents/guardians must collect their child promptly at the advertised end time of training or the agreed return time from an away fixture.

3. Club-Arranged Transport

Where Rickmansworth HC formally coordinates transport (such as a club minibus, hired coach, or team-managed car pool), the following rules apply:

- **Written Consent:** Prior written consent from a parent/guardian is required before an U18 travels in club-arranged transport.
- **Driver Requirements:** Drivers acting on behalf of the club must hold a full, valid driving licence, drive a roadworthy vehicle with functioning seatbelts for every occupant, carry appropriate motor insurance, and hold an active **England Hockey DBS check**.
- **Zero Alcohol & Drugs:** Anyone driving U18 players in a club capacity must not consume any alcohol (including at post-match teas) or substances that could impair driving prior to or during the journey.
- **Supervision:** On hired coaches or minibuses, at least two DBS-checked adults must accompany the group, maintaining appropriate ratios for the age group.

4. The "Never Alone" Rule (Adult Drivers & U18s)

In strict accordance with England Hockey's *Good Practice* safeguarding guidelines:

- **No One-to-One Journeys:** Coaches, captains, team managers, volunteers, and senior players (aged 18+) **must not** transport an U18 player alone in a vehicle, regardless of how short the journey is.
- **Group Travel & Seating:** Where an adult driver transports U18s in a club capacity, there must always be at least two U18 players or two adults in the vehicle. U18 passengers must sit in the rear seats.
- **Drop-Off Order:** Routes should be planned so that no U18 is left as the sole passenger for the final leg of a journey unless prior, explicit parental consent has been obtained and documented.

5. U18s Playing in Senior Teams

- **Captain & Manager Duty of Care:** When U18s play in adult teams, the Team Captain or Manager must confirm before the fixture how each U18 is travelling to and from the venue.
- **Communication Boundaries:** Captains, coaches, and senior teammates must not message U18 players directly via private text, WhatsApp, or social media to arrange lifts. All travel logistics must go through the parent/guardian or a club-approved team channel that includes the parent/guardian.

6. Late Collection & Emergency Protocol

If a parent/guardian is delayed, a lift falls through, or an emergency occurs:

- **Never Leave a Child Unsupervised:** The coach, captain, or team manager must remain with the U18 until they are safely collected by their parent/guardian or an approved emergency contact.
- **Stay in a Public Area:** Wait in an open, visible, and supervised space (such as the clubhouse reception or pitchside with other players/adults present). Do not wait alone with an U18 in a private car or empty changing room.
- **Contact Parents Immediately:** Call the primary parent/guardian, followed by the secondary emergency contact listed on [Club Management System, e.g., Pitchero/Teamo/Spond].
- **Emergency Lifts:** In an unavoidable emergency where a solo lift is the only safe option, the driver must obtain **explicit verbal or written permission from the parent/guardian before setting off**, seat the player in the back, and notify the **Club Welfare Officer** as soon as possible.

7. Breaches & Reporting Concerns

- Any breach of this policy (such as an unapproved one-to-one lift or direct private messaging to an U18) will be treated as poor practice or misconduct and addressed by the Club Welfare Officer and Committee.
- If anyone has a concern about the safety or conduct of an adult or young person during travel, they must report it immediately to the **Club Welfare Officer** ([Insert Email/Phone]) or directly to the **England Hockey Safeguarding Team** via the England Hockey Safeguarding Reporting Procedures.