



Warriors Rugby Club

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Plan

Adopted February 24, 2024 at the Warriors Annual General Meeting.

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Introduction

Rugby is played by eight million people in over 100 countries around the world, including Finland. World Rugby, the international governing body of rugby and Suomen Rugbyliitto, the Finnish Rugby Federation, promote values of integrity, respect, solidarity, passion, and discipline.

Since our founding in 2001, Warriors Rugby Club has strived to embody these values in our culture and in Finland. We founded the first official rugby club for women in Finland, have built a strong program for youth, and are consistently growing across all levels.

This document has been drafted by Warriors Rugby Club to promote inclusivity and equality throughout the club. The purpose of equality promotion is to ensure that everybody genuinely has equal opportunities within the club and that we continue to become more equal, equitable and inclusive.

Throughout this equality and inclusion plan, we outline some suggested broader objectives as well as specific action items to help us stay on track. This document is not intended to be a one-time only publication, but rather it is a living document that will grow and change as we establish new goals and face new challenges.

Background & timeline

Warriors Rugby Club has always had an inclusive culture – we're very proud of that and wish to maintain that moving forward as our club grows. We have big goals to recruit new members and expand our membership base in the years to come. This means that having a written resource that members can refer to is important.

Additionally, the importance of equality and non-discrimination in sports is addressed in Finnish law in the Act on the Promotion of Sports and Physical Activity. According to the Act, when assessing the amount of state aid (money) given to sports federations and organisations, the ways in which the association promotes equality and non-discrimination are taken into account. This is why all sports and physical activity organisations applying for state aid are required to have a non-discrimination and equality plan.

The process of developing a more formal equality plan began already in 2022, with several club members going through several resources and checklists to establish a baseline of our current activities. These allowed us to spot what we're currently doing well and find areas for improvement. Additionally, a workshop was held on January 27, 2024 to discuss and update the equality plan. All club members were welcome to attend. 10 members participated in the workshop.

Resources we check to promote equality in sport:

<https://monimuotoisuusarviointi.fi/en/>

<https://www.engso-education.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/EQUIP-Equality-Action-Plan-Design-Guide.pdf>

From there, the aim is to create a resource that promotes inclusion, equity, and fairness.

This version of the Equality Plan was approved for adoption on February 24, 2024 at the Warriors Annual General Meeting.

Club-wide equality objectives

Based on the situational analysis with the resources above, we have drafted three main long-term equality and inclusion objectives. Club-wide, we will work to:

1. Ensure equality and inclusion are embedded throughout club policies, rules, and values
2. Promote inclusion of all members of society in club activities
3. Commit to principles of fair play at all levels of rugby

By committing to these objectives, we aim to create a welcoming environment that demonstrates the values of rugby, both on and off the pitch.

Equality and Inclusion Actions

Achieving these objectives will not be easy. It will require on-going effort from all club members, including players, coaches, board members, and spectators. Below, we have outlined specific actions to support these objectives, as well as indicators against which to benchmark our progress.

This is not an exhaustive list of indicators, as well will continue to monitor progress and add action points and indicators as we work towards greater equality and inclusion.

We aim to complete these actions by the end of 2024, however our work towards the objectives will not end simply because certain boxes have been checked, it's an ongoing process and needs to be monitored and reviewed periodically.

The equality, diversity and inclusion plan will be reviewed in whole in January 2025, in an event open to all club members.

Ensure equality and inclusion are embedded throughout club policies, rules, and values

We aim to integrate the principles of equality and inclusion throughout the official policies, rules and values of Warriors Rugby Club. Through this, we make a clear statement of what is acceptable and what is not, provide avenues of support, and codify our commitment to equality and inclusion.

1. **Specific action 1: Publication of equality and inclusion statement** (e.g. [Wimbledon RFC](#))

- a. The equality and inclusion statement will be easily accessible on the website in both Finnish and English.
- b. Indicator: Equality and inclusion statement is published on the WRC webpage.

2. **Specific action 2: Create harassment reporting and investigation procedure.**

- a. Procedure for harassment reporting and investigation is defined and clearly published on the website.
- b. Indicator: Harassment reporting and investigation procedure is published on the WRC webpage.

3. **Specific action 3: Develop, review and update club rules to include a clear zero tolerance policy.**

(Zero-tolerance approaches are grounded in mediation, information gathering and fairness. They are not reactionary, and work in a way that ensures all parties are given a chance to give their version of events. Cases are handled on a case by case basis, with the outcomes handled privately and securely within the club.)

- a. Club rules will be updated to include a clear zero tolerance policy for harassment. The club rules will be made easily available in both English and Finnish, and the changes will be communicated to all club members.
- b. Current club rules are available on the website (<https://clubee-storage-prod.s3.eu-central-1.amazonaws.com/4672/files/application/6343181215eb4.pdf>), but do not clearly outline proper behavior and how to address harassment.
- c. Indicator: Club rules are easily accessible in both English and Finnish.

4. **Specific action 4: Adopt and communicate club-specific values.**

- a. Currently, general rugby values are shared on the club website. We aim to establish our own values that emphasize what is important to the Warriors Rugby Club as a team. This is to be co-created with input from the whole club.
- b. Indicator: Club values will be published on the WRC website.

5. **Specific action 5: Adopt and communicate team rules, specific to each team within the WRC organization.**

- a. WRC is made up of several teams (juniors, Women's, Men's, 7's, 15's, in various combinations). To ensure clear communication, teams will set their own rules, targets and game plans to meet their needs and goals. These rules will also make it easier for team members to understand what is expected of them, to make it easier to participate, and to know who they can communicate with if they have issues (e.g. coaches, captains).

- b. These rules will not be determined by the board, but are instead the product of internal team discussions.

Promote inclusion of all members of society in club activities

While the codification of inclusion in our first objective is significant, these commitments must translate into action. We aim to create an environment where people from all walks of life, regardless of their background, race, gender, age, ability, or any other characteristic, feel welcome and have the opportunity to participate in and enjoy club activities. We recognize that not all members come to Warriors from the same starting point, and some may need more support than others.

This objective focuses on fostering diversity, equity, and inclusivity within the club, ensuring that everyone has equal access and opportunities to engage in the club's activities without facing discrimination or barriers. It reflects a commitment to embracing a wide range of perspectives and experiences while eliminating exclusions or biases that might exist within the club.

1. Specific action 1: Active commitment to (gender) equality in all materials, facilities, and equipment, including social media.

- a. The club has already combined social media into one account, rather than dividing by gender. This is part of our on-going efforts to ensure all content and materials promote and uphold gender equality, and does not contribute to un-balanced representation.
- b. This includes images, language, and content.
- c. Indicators: We are making a conscious effort to fairly represent teams and people in our whole marketing strategy, meaning no team or group of people is represented as whole more than the other, and we celebrate and promote the accomplishments of team members of all genders equally.

This doesn't necessarily mean that every post needs to be diverse and highlight all teams, but that as a whole, we aim to equally promote the teams and also strive to highlight people from different backgrounds as a part of our marketing strategy.

- d. Indicators: Use of inclusive language in all written content, including social media and promotional materials.

2. Specific action 2: Regularly investigate barriers to inclusion within the club.

- a. Creating an inclusive environment requires both the efforts to *include*, as well as the dismantling of *obstacles* to inclusion. This means we must identify root causes of these barriers and obstacles and take action to remove or reduce them.

- b. Indicators: Establish feedback mechanisms for club members to report barriers to inclusion, and that club members feel comfortable sharing these concerns. In order to avoid bias, it's important to hear the opinions and experiences of people from different backgrounds in order to improve our actions. This should also include the experiences and opinions of both *new* and *current* members of the club.
- c. Indicators: Periodically review and assess the club rules, values, and status of the equality plan to identify missed or emergent barriers.
- d. Indicators: Continue providing mentorship and support for newcomers to help integrate them and address potential inclusion barriers.

3. Specific action 3: Provide equal opportunities for all genders to participate across all club levels.

- a. The club actively provides opportunities for individuals of all genders to have fair and equitable access to club activities, teams, and leadership positions regardless of their gender.
- b. Indicators: Recruitment processes will be made open and transparent.
- c. Indicators: Monitor and compare participation rates of men and women across all club levels.
- d. Indicators: Ensure all club members have equal access to playing and training facilities, locker rooms, and other equipment and resources needed to participate.
- e. Indicators: Actively recruit to maintain gender balance in club leadership, including the board. The best way to tackle barriers to inclusion is to hear the voices and opinions of people from different backgrounds who have different experiences.

4. Specific action 4: Ensure recruitment efforts target all members of society.

- a. Recruitment events should be open to all ages, backgrounds, and genders, and marketing materials should actively promote the diversity of the club.
- b. Additionally, the club will continue its practice of providing reduced or low cost membership, as we believe cost should never be a barrier to playing rugby.
- c. Indicators: Implement outreach programs across a wide range of groups, including schools and youth facilities throughout the city.

- d. Indicators: Collaborate with organizations that specialize in promoting diversity and inclusion to tap into their networks and resources for recruitment.
- 5. Specific action 5: Provide safe and accessible physical facilities for all club activities.**
- a. Warriors Rugby Club is committed to ensuring that the physical spaces and facilities used for club activities are both safe and accessible to all members, regardless of their abilities or needs.
 - b. Indicators: For sports activities, this includes (where possible) providing private changing areas through the provision of separated locker rooms at games, and the purchase of a privacy tent for practices. Information on the private changing areas must also be provided in a timely fashion to players.
 - c. Indicators: For social activities, this includes ensuring that events are hosted in locations that reflect our commitment to equality and inclusion.

Commitment to principles of fair play at all levels of rugby

Fair play refers to the ideas of integrity and respect within sports. In rugby, this means a commitment to playing fairly and respecting the rules and values of the game. It also requires a commitment to fair play off the pitch. By committing to the principles of fair play, we create an environment of respect for our players, our coaches, referees and competitors.

1. Specific action 1: Highlight fair play in our activities

- a. Fair Play International outlines clear values of play play in their own documentation.
- b. Indicator: Fair play is included in club materials.

2. Specific action 2: Promote fair play principles in all youth activities.

- a. Introducing the principles of fair play to young people and why they're important.
- b. Indicators: Coaches and parents are made aware of fair play principles.
- c. Indicators: Parents and youth players are made aware of club rules, how to access them, and who to contact in case of questions. This means parents and youth players are also made aware of who to contact with problems or concerns.
- d. Indicators: Coaches embody fair play principles in their coaching, playing and actions.

3. Specific action 3: Enforce rules of rugby, including issues of player safety.

- a. Warriors Rugby Club is already committed to ensuring that players understand the rules of rugby and comply with safety guidelines, particularly related to head injuries and doping.
- b. Indicator: Information on safety is offered to all club members and accessible on the website.
- c. Indicator: Team managers ensure that all players have completed mandatory rugby ready, head injury and anti-doping training.

4. Specific action 4: Provide educational materials for players and coaches to raise awareness of fair play principles, including respecting opponents, referees, and the spirit of the game.

- a. To ensure that fair play is understood across the team, we must provide opportunities for players, coaches and parents to educate themselves on what fair play means.
- b. Indicators: Resources for fair play principles and coaching materials are shared within the club and accessible on the webpage.

Conclusion

In developing this Equality Plan, Warriors Rugby Club hopes to highlight our commitment to rugby and, more importantly, to equality, inclusion, and the safety and wellbeing of our members. Rugby is more than just a game; it's a community, where individuals of all backgrounds, genders, and abilities come together to share in the joys and challenges of the sport. We firmly believe that the true spirit of rugby lies in fostering an environment where everyone feels respected, valued, and empowered to participate at all levels.

Through this plan, we have drafted a broad set of objectives as well as specific actions and indicators to guide us forward in building a more equitable club.

Appendix: Outline of action items

Objective	Specific Actions	Status (as of 14/3/2024)
Ensure equality and inclusion are embedded throughout club policies, rules, and values	Publication of equality and inclusion statement.	
	Create harassment reporting and investigation procedure	
	Review and update club rules to include a clear zero tolerance policy.	
	Adopt and communicate club-specific values.	Workshop held on 27/1/2024. Next steps in progress
	Adopt and communicate team rules, specific to each team within the WRC organization.	
Promote inclusion of all members of society in club activities'	Active commitment to (gender) equality in all materials, including social media	On-going
	Regularly investigate barriers to inclusion within the club.	
	Provide equal opportunities for all genders to participate across all club levels.	On-going
	Ensure recruitment efforts target all members of society.	On-going
	Provide safe and accessible physical facilities for all club activities.	
Commit to principles of fair play at all levels of rugby	Highlight fair play in our activities	
	Promote fair play principles in all youth activities.	On-going
	Enforce rules of rugby, including issues of player safety.	On-going
	Provide educational materials for players and coaches to raise awareness of fair play principles, including respecting opponents, referees, and the spirit of the game.	

