

RCPCH responds to letter calling for ban on school rugby

More than 70 health experts have written to the Government calling for a ban on tackling in school rugby games. They warn of a high risk of serious injury among under-18s from playing rugby and said schools should move to touch rugby and non-contact rugby.

In the open letter, which is addressed to ministers, chief medical officers and children's commissioners, rugby is described as a "high-impact collision sport".

The letter said studies show that the risks of injuries for those aged under 18 "are high and injuries are often serious".

Responding to the call to end tackling in school rugby, Prof Russell Viner, Officer for Health Promotion at the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health said:

"It is vital that we work to address the problems of injury to children when playing sports. We note that there have already been changes to address issues of safety in school rugby, and it is important we now give these changes time to bed in.

"However it is as equally vital that we appreciate the benefits gained from children playing sports in school. Currently around 1 in 3 children aged between 2 and 15 in the UK are overweight or obese, making it imperative that we make as much effort as possible to encourage more children and young people to take up regular exercise.

"Although there are risks attached to any sport, it is imperative that we don't let this prevent our children from getting out and taking part in much needed physical activity."

Last published on 2 March 2016

<http://www.rcpch.ac.uk/news/rcpch-responds-letter-calling-ban-school-rugby>