



Sustaining Women's leadership

SAFEGUARDING *In Sports*





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Introduction

SAFEGUARDING *In Sports*

Safeguarding refers to the process of protecting children (and adults) to provide safe and effective care. This includes all procedures designed to prevent harm to a child. The behaviour of an adult towards a child (coach or administrator or officials towards an athlete). The behaviour of an athlete towards other athletes, including bullying Risks identified through recruitment processes, such as criminal records information and Information about an individual provided by statutory agencies, other sports or identified through the press.

This includes all procedures designed to prevent harm to a child...



Concerns About Harm to **A CHILD OUTSIDE SPORT**

GROOMING

This is where somebody builds an emotional connection with an athlete and gains their trust, usually for sexual abuse and exploitation.

NEGLECT

This is where an athlete's basic physical or psychological needs are not met; exposing them to unnecessary risk of injury by ignoring safe practice guidelines and; failing to ensure the use of safety equipment, or requiring young people to participate when injured or unwell. It includes a coach failing to ensure that athletes are safe.

PEER-ON-PEER ABUSE

This includes bullying or harmful sexual behaviour directed towards an athlete by their peers. Harmful sexual behaviour is behaviour which is inappropriate, abusive, and violent, such as sexual harassment, sexual assault, or rape.

PEER PRACTICES

Poor practice is the behaviour of staff or volunteers that falls below the required standard set out in your organisation's code of conduct, such as turning up drunk, smoking and swearing in front of athletes, and favoring or picking on an athlete. It could lead to an environment which is prone to more serious abuse.

Safeguarding Principles



Examples of safeguarding principles include:

- Athletes have the right to participate in sports in a safe and enjoyable environment.
- Safeguarding athletes is everyone's responsibility.
- Athletes' best interests are at the heart of each step of the case management process.
- Individuals who face safeguarding concerns have the right to a fair and transparent process.

RECOGNIZING AND RESPONDING TO SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS: *Participating in sports should be a positive experience and athletes have the right to feel safe when participating. Do you feel safe? There is a need of systems to minimise the risks to children.*

REPORTING CHANNELS:

Anyone can report a safeguarding incident or irregularity they observed; or voice a concern, complaint, compliment or suggestion; there should be a safe and secure avenue for one to do so: Reporting mechanisms available to everyone:

- Safeguarding process.
A whistle-blower system.
- Using a form used for anonymous reports.
- An in-person visit to the Safeguard officer Feedback and complaints mechanism.
- If you need to remain anonymous, then you may report the safeguarding incident through the whistle-blower system.

Reporting Safeguarding Concerns



UNDERSTAND THAT NOT REPORTING IS NOT AN OPTION

If a safeguarding concern is brought to your attention, you must report it. It is not up to you to decide whether or not a child is abused; you simply have to pass the information and report to the relevant authority.

WHO TO REPORT TO:

In cases where an athlete has experienced or is at risk of experiencing significant harm (e.g. a crime has been committed), you should call the police. In other cases, always speak to your Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible, who'll decide what response is necessary.

You should also speak to the athlete's parents or guardian about the concern if doing so wouldn't put the child or anyone else at further risk.

Athletics

Safeguarding Tips

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- ✔ Sport is a typical hunting ground for perpetrators of abuse. Athletes should therefore contribute to safe sports working environment for them to enjoy the sport. They need to challenge inappropriate conduct directly. In addition, report all concerns to the Safeguarding Officer or via concerns avenues. Athletes should communicate to the abuser that his/her behaviour is unwelcome, unacceptable, and offensive. Be as direct as they can, particularly when the alleged abuser may have reasons to believe that the behaviour is welcomed, normal or appropriate.
- ✔ Witnesses should report non-accidental harm to a Safeguarding Officer, third party and the appropriate authorities.
- ✔ Athletes need to be aware of the ethical boundary – the line between strict and discipline by a coach and abusive behaviour from the coach.
- ✔ Remain calm and be assured you have done the right thing by speaking up.
- ✔ Understand that not reporting is not an option.
- ✔ Know that only the professionals who need to know will be informed of your case.



Athletes should know that when reporting; one will not be stopped when freely recalling significant events. What one discloses will not be dismissed. . Know that information will only be passed to those who "need to know". The alleged abuser will not be contacted to verify their story, we will believe them. They will not be judged.



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ATHLETES MUST: Contribute to a safe sports working environment.

- Not engage in or condone any form of harassment, intimidation, abuse or exploitation.
- Not engage in or condone any behaviour that is illegal or could in any way bring the organisation into disrepute.
- Understand that making intentionally false or misleading allegations against a colleague is a serious matter and could result to disciplinary action Promote ownership of safeguarding agenda.

Coaches

Safeguarding Tips

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- ✔ It is important that coaches are aware of the legal responsibilities that come with their position of authority. A coach's legal responsibility to the athletes in their care involves giving appropriate advice, support and guidance.
- ✔ They should not offer any advice outside their level of qualification and should always refer to the relevant authorities
- ✔ Ensuring your players' emotional and physical safety are the top priorities for a coach. Players should feel comfortable, cared for, and protected.

- ✔ It is important for coaches to support the use of motivation and training methods that avoid misconduct.
- ✔ Coaches must also ensure that all equipment is safe and appropriate for the intended use, that people have been fully introduced to all equipment, and that they understand how to use it in a safe manner.
- ✔ Coaches have a responsibility to protect those in their charge from the four main types of abuse: Neglect; Emotional abuse; Sexual abuse; Physical abuse. Protection from abuse also encompasses protecting all children from harassment, discrimination and bullying.
- ✔ When running sports sessions, coaches must also ensure that athletes are always matched appropriately in terms of size and ability.



Safeguarding Lead Officers Tips

Your organisation must set out the procedures you will take to safeguard children – from preventative measures and a code of conduct to naming a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) whom everyone can report safeguarding concerns to. Coaches, administrators, managers, Staff, volunteers, parents, and athletes should all be given copies of the policy and code of conduct to familiarize themselves with the procedures. You must ensure that everyone follows the procedures you have agreed upon in this document. Create a safe environment in the organisation, where everyone understands how to report safeguarding concerns and knows they will be taken seriously. Ensure there are procedures for safe recruitment and a thorough selection process is carried out to screen out unsuitable individuals. Have zero tolerance for anyone mocking an athlete, picking on an athlete, making racist or sexist remarks, or acting inappropriately with them.

Parents Safeguarding Tips

What should all parents know about Safeguarding in Sports because it's known that abuse of children does still happen – and will continue to happen until all stakeholders are involved in preventing and addressing abuse. A named member of the safeguarding team or a Safeguarding officer and their contact details. Safeguarding Officers to meet each other face-to-face if possible and introduce yourself so that you make parents feel more comfortable contacting them should you need to. The club's safeguarding policy. Parents should have copies or be able to view this at any time. Most clubs should have it available on their website.

Parents should know the procedure to follow if they have a concern or question, no matter how small. Parents or Guardian of an athlete should be part of safeguarding training: the topics of child protection and safeguarding can often seem frightening and overwhelming, but they can contribute by being knowledgeable and empowered.

Sport Organisation Safeguarding Tips

National Sports Associations have a duty to ensure that athletes and everyone participating in sports do so in an environment that is both enjoyable and safe. Your policies and procedures should support the five Rs. There will be varying levels of controls depending on your organisation's size and type: Recommendation; Respond; Report; Record; and Refer. Organisations need to have procedures in place to prevent pedophiles or other undesirable people from being involved with officiating, coaching, or supervising children or athletes.

Have guidelines that enable athletes to seek help and/or support on a confidential basis for any issue relating to child protection. Any initiative aiming to prevent harassment and abuse should take into account the particular cultural context of our society and the sport; culturally tailored education for athletes, parents, managers, sports administrators, fans, and sponsors.

Safeguarding and Vulnerable Communities in Sports

Vulnerable athletes are those that do not always have access to the same choices due to a disability or impairment; a situation that results in an increased risk of experiencing harm or abuse. Various international studies have demonstrated that athletes with disabilities are three to four times more likely to be abused while participating in sports than other athletes. Harm, that results not only from sexual abuse but also: Physical and verbal abuse and Joking and unchecked bullying from teammates.

Coaches and clubs overly fixated on integration or the disability several studies have shown that disabled athletes are not only additionally vulnerable but also experience more harm and abuse. The result is that special measures need to be implemented to effectively safeguard this group.





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Inclusion **in Safeguarding**

It is important for vulnerable people's needs to be considered including access to the venue, modification of rules for specific competitions and appropriate sports equipment. Some examples include referees who use a flag in addition to the traditional whistle to include deaf athletes in football and the incorporation of sitting volleyball competitions into sporting schedules.

Case Management

Case management refers to the process used by organisations to address safeguarding concerns. A case refers to any safeguarding concern. It may have come from within sport and physical activity or away from it.

Organisations need to follow a case management process when dealing with these concerns to fulfil their responsibilities around duty of care. How a case is managed can directly impact the safety and welfare of an athlete, from the response of teammates and other club members to the impact of appearing before a panel. Steps should be taken to guard against the risk of causing unnecessary distress or re-traumatizing athletes during the process. Athletes and their families should be kept informed throughout the case management process.

Case management groups

Case management groups ensure that all allegations, incidents or referrals are dealt with fairly, equitably

and within appropriate timescales. These groups are made up of a small number of individuals with identified skills, knowledge and experience and include at least one member with independent child protection expertise. The group's role and decision-making powers should be embedded within the organisation's governance structure. Be linked to organisational functions such as codes of conduct and disciplinary policy and procedures. Agreeing actions were taken by the safeguarding lead officer assessing and agreeing on the initial response Identifying the appropriate 'route' for the case deciding the level at which the organisation will deal with the concern Issuing or recommending temporary or interim suspension orders. Reviewing the progress of cases Identifying and communicating learning.



“ Case management groups ensure that all allegations, incidents or referrals are dealt with fairly, equitably and within appropriate timescales. ”



Roles of a Case Management Group

The tasks of a case management group include:

- Agreeing actions were taken by the safeguarding lead officer.
- Assessing and agreeing on the initial response
- Identifying the appropriate 'route' for the case deciding the level at which the organisation will deal with the concern
- Issuing or recommending temporary or interim suspension orders
- Reviewing the progress of cases Identifying and communicating learning.

For Athletes to Consider



Anti-Bullying - Stop Abuse

Take all signs of bullying abuse seriously and report, however small.



Make your Voice Heard

Be involved in decisions making that directly affect you and act responsibly. Your voice contributes to making sport a safe environment



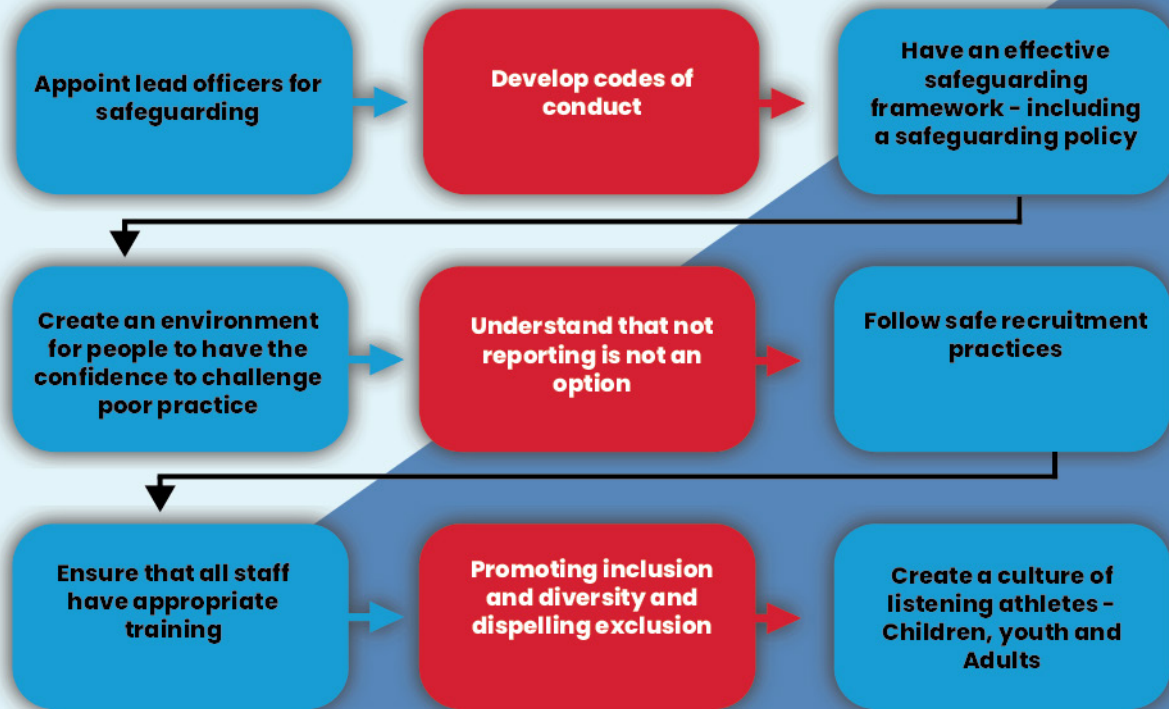
Diversity and Inclusion

Make sure potential obstacles to participation are overcome, be inclusive, acknowledge and appreciate differences between you and other athletes.



Different athletes; gymnast and runner, boxer and figure skater, basketball player and hockey player

Creating a Strong Safeguarding Culture in a Sport Organization



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