

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

July 2024

Contents

1. Introduction

2. Scope of Policy

3. Policy Statement of Commitment and Principles

4. Reporting of concerns

5. Codes of Conduct

6. Review

7. Monitoring

Appendix

Definitions

1. Introduction

The Oceania Athletics Association (OAA) is responsible for promoting developing and protecting athletics within the Oceania Area in accordance with its constitution and for ensuring that it is a safe environment for persons in and related to Athletics to develop their talents and achieve their goals be it as an athlete, instructor, coach, official, manager, administrator, or other sport personnel. This Safeguarding Policy (“this Policy”) establishes the responsibilities of OAA and its affiliated Member Federations to ensure that everyone can participate in or contribute to athletics safely and to have fun, enjoyable and positive experiences within the sport.

OAA recognises that abuse may be conducted by and towards men, women, or children and that it happens in every area of the world, in every sector of society, sport and organisation. OAA does not consider itself to be immune from safeguarding incidents nor exempt from the responsibility to protect participants associated with athletics at every level and form of participation.

2. Scope of this Policy

This Policy applies to the Oceania Athletics Association athletes, officials, staff, volunteers, affiliates, and any other person acting in a similar capacity at the Oceania Athletics Association. All those to whom this Policy applies must comply with this Policy as well as the World Athletics’ Safeguarding Policy. Any breaches of this Policy by these individuals will be subject to potential sanctions under the Oceania Athletics Association’s safeguarding rules and procedures.

The Oceania Athletics Association has jurisdiction for safeguarding concerns and incidents which:

- Involve members of Oceania Athletics Association staff, affiliates, athletes, or volunteer officials in any capacity.
- Take place at any meeting, conference, training/education seminars or events arranged by OAA or an Area Development Centre or under the auspices of OAA; or
- Take place at or during events or competitions organised by OAA.

The Oceania Athletics Association is responsible for dealing with concerns as outlined above. If a concern is reported to OAA but does not fall within its jurisdiction, OAA will refer it back to the appropriate Member Federation to deal with.

Member Federations are responsible for handling concerns which arise within their own territory and jurisdiction and must deal with them under the terms of their own safeguarding policy and in accordance with the World Athletics’ Safeguarding Policy. The World Athletics’ Safeguarding Policy requires concerns to be investigated and administered using a fair and clear process imposing consistent and proportionate sanctions, measures or actions taken where appropriate.

Safeguarding concerns should be reported to Edwina Ricci (edwina@totalteamsgroup.com).

Policy Statement of Commitment and Principles

This Policy is based on OAA's commitment to upholding and advancing the following principles set out below:

- **Everyone** has the right to be treated with dignity and respect, and to be free from discrimination whether it is based on sex, race, age, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, beliefs, religious or political affiliation.
- **Everyone** has the right to participate, enjoy and develop personally through athletics in a safe, inclusive environment free from all forms of abuse, harassment or exploitation.
- **Everyone** has the right to have their voices heard particularly if raising a concern about their own or another person's welfare. **Everyone** should know who to ask for help when they have a concern about an individual's behaviour.
- **Everyone**, particularly those involved in planning or delivering programmes for athletes under the age of 18, is responsible for the care and protection of those athletes, making decisions in their best interests as their welfare is paramount.

To achieve this the OAA will:

- Facilitate the provision of support, guidance and advice to its Member Federations initially by disseminating World Athletics' safeguarding materials and guidance.
- Assist World Athletics by co-operating with World Athletics to train and educate Member Federations to help them to create fulfilling and safe environments for all those participating in athletics within their territory.
- Educate and train all members of OAA staff and OAA volunteers about how to deal with safeguarding concerns and complaints.
- Have a named member of staff or volunteer who is responsible for leading on safeguarding within the territory of OAA ("Safeguarding Officer").
- Ensure that any competitions or events organised by OAA adhere to the World Athletics' Safeguarding Policy, this Policy and any additional guidance produced by World Athletics or OAA specifically for safeguarding at events and competitions.
- Deal with any concerns, allegations, and complaints which OAA has jurisdiction over (as outlined in Section 2 above) in a fair and transparent manner, confidentially and securely (to the extent permitted and required by law); and
- Carry out background checks, follow up on references and train staff and volunteers recruited and appointed to specified roles in the Area Association.

3. Reporting of concerns

Everyone is responsible for ensuring that no one suffers abuse, harassment, or exploitation. Where OAA has jurisdiction, as outlined above, the matter will be referred to the OAA's Safeguarding Officer. If OAA does not have jurisdiction, any concerns, or suspicions that someone may have been subject to abuse, harassment or exploitation or about the behaviour of another person will be reported to the appropriate Member Federation and its Safeguarding Officer for them to deal with appropriately including reporting to the police or other authorities in the jurisdiction where the incident took place if appropriate.

OAA must also provide any information relating to any safeguarding issues, concerns or suspicions to World Athletics where the nature of the issue, concern or suspicion relates to something may be under the jurisdiction of World Athletics.

If an individual is at immediate risk of serious harm, OAA will report the matter to local emergency services. Local laws may influence whether OAA requires the consent of the individual who has been harmed to report a matter to the police and other agencies, and whether a report to police is required even if an individual refuses to give consent. If OAA has reason to believe that an alleged perpetrator might put others at immediate risk a report will be made by OAA to the relevant Member Federation and the local authorities of the country where the alleged perpetrator is resident or is affiliated/engaged with athletics. This will enable the Member Federation and/or the local authorities to take any appropriate action necessary to protect others in the territory.

4. Codes of Conduct

The Oceania Athletics Association may develop codes of conduct for use at OAA events, competitions and for their own staff and volunteers including leaders, administrators, coaches, technical officials, and athletes. Codes of Conduct are designed to provide everyone within athletics with a guide to expected standards of behaviour.

If an individual is aware of any other person breaching the relevant Code of Conduct, then this should be referred to the Safeguarding Officer as a concern for investigation and potential disciplinary action.

5. Review of this Policy

This Policy will be reviewed on a regular basis (at least every other year).

6. Monitoring

The monitoring of this Policy and the implementation of it will be conducted regularly as appropriate by the Oceania Athletics Association or an independent safeguarding authority with the necessary expertise to perform this task.

APPENDIX

Definitions

Abuse, harassment and exploitation

Abuse, harassment, and exploitation are described below. They can be perpetrated by both males and females and is often where one party is in a position of power over the other.

Psychological abuse is an unwelcome act including vilification, belittling, rejection, confinement, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation, infantilisation or any other behaviour which may diminish an individual's sense of identity, dignity, or self-worth. This is at the centre of most types of abuse as when these occur so does psychological abuse. This can often be seen as bullying or cyber-bullying.

Physical abuse is any intentional or unwanted act, for example kicking, beating, biting or burning which causes injury or physical harm. It can include the forced consumption of alcohol or systematic doping practices. It can also be any forced or inappropriate physical activity such as training which is unsuitable for the age or physique of the athlete. Forced or excessive training may escape notice in a sporting environment as the ambitions of both athletes and coaches, as well as peer pressure, may induce one or both to impose or take on excessive training loads and/or competition commitments. Dialogue among athletes and coaches aimed at setting mutually agreed and achievable performance goals can help define tolerable and acceptable training demands. It is up to coaches to temper ambitions that may run counter to an athlete's health and wellbeing.

Sexual abuse is any conduct of a sexual nature, either contact (penetrative or non-penetrative) or non-contact, where consent is not given, cannot be given, is coerced, or manipulated. This can involve individuals looking at or making sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging others to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a person in preparation for abuse.

Grooming is the process whereby an individual builds a relationship with an child encouraging them to trust them so that the groomer can manipulate and exploit them for their own advantage. Grooming an athlete's family, entourage and friends often leads those individuals to believe that the groomer is dependable and trustworthy enabling the groomer to have access to the athlete. By manipulating the person and exploiting the relationship they will make the person believe they have to comply with the groomer's demands. The power a groomer has over the child is frequently used to isolate them from friends and family who might otherwise warn or caution them from complying with the groomer's demands.

Grooming can take place online as well as in person; online grooming is often much quicker often due to the groomer pretending to be younger and sometimes a different gender than they are in reality. Groomers may provide advice to a child as well as offering gifts or attention.

Harassment is unwanted or unwelcome behaviour which offends or makes the person feel humiliated or intimidated. Power harassment is where someone in a position of power over another individual, usually in a workplace, uses that power to harass another person physically or psychologically in a lower position. Power harassment can include exclusion, inappropriate work assignments (too little, too much or of a lower level than acceptable) as well as intrusive behaviour.

Sexual harassment is any unwanted or unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal, non-verbal or physical. Examples of verbal sexual harassment include unwanted or intimate questions, which may be degrading, relating to body, clothes or one's private life, jokes with a sexual innuendo and proposals or demands for non-consensual sexual acts. These may be unwanted text messages, telephone calls, letters, or other forms of communication with sexual content. Non-verbal examples may include staring, gesticulation, or sharing photographs or pictures with sexual allusions. Examples of physical sexual harassment are unnecessary physical contact with a sexual nature such as pinching, attempting to kiss or caress or touch.

Exploitation is when someone exercises control over another person and/or their assets for their own "personal gain", sometimes without the fully informed consent of the person. Personal gain may be psychological, reputational, or commercial and constitutes exploitation when the rights of a person are sold or negotiated without the express and fully informed consent of the other person. Examples in athletics may be fraudulent misrepresentation of an athlete's age or nationality, acting on behalf of an athlete fraudulently or taking an unreasonable share of the proceeds of sponsorship or funding arrangements. Exploitation comes in many different guises. Examples include sexual exploitation, financial exploitation and signing up athletes to long term contracts while they are still children.

Neglect is the failure to provide a minimum level of care either physical or emotional which causes harm, allowing harm to be caused or creating an imminent danger of harm. This usually relates to the care given by parents or caregivers to children but is also relevant to other people who have a duty of care towards another person such as a coach or team leader towards an athlete. This can include the failure to provide adequate water in high temperatures, adequate clothing in cold temperatures, suitable food, accommodation, or safe travel arrangements, or even to provide the services of a chaperone to minor athletes at a competition.

Abuse, harassment, and exploitation may be based on race, religion, colour, beliefs, ethnic origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, socio-economic status and athletic ability or a combination of any of these characteristics. It can be a single isolated incident or a series of events, in person or online, or deliberate, unsolicited, or coercive. Bullying, hazing and negligence, all other aspects of abuse, harassment or exploitation should be treated in the same way under the terms of this Policy.

Any of these forms of abuse, harassment or exploitation may include an aspect of financial abuse. It may be that an individual may be coerced into signing contracts or agreements which benefit others financially but are of limited financial benefit to themselves. Any element of coercion may be abuse, harassment or exploitation if the individual is a child, if the individual

has not authorised someone to act on their behalf or if the individual has not been adequately advised by an independent professional such as an accountant or lawyer on the impact of the terms of the agreement.

There may be times when actions which might not be abusive to one person may be abusive or harmful due to the vulnerability of the individual who is being abused. This may be due to the person's age, ability or other form of vulnerability.

Abuse, harassment and exploitation often result from an abuse of authority by someone in a position of trust, meaning the improper use of power by someone in a position of influence, power or authority by an individual against another person.

Child - a "child" or "children" refers to an individual or group of individuals who have not yet reached the age of 18 years old.

Safeguarding - is the process of protecting children and adults involved in athletics from abuse, harassment, and exploitation. Creating a safe and welcoming environment where everyone is respected and valued is at the heart of safeguarding. Everyone involved with athletics has a role to play in making sure they actively prevent abuse, harassment, and exploitation, listen to accounts from children and adults of their experiences and respond safely and fully if there is a problem.

Reporting Flowchart

