

AMERICAN SAMOA'S (ASA) SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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Safeguarding Officers

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1. INTRODUCTION

ASA is responsible for promoting athletics within American Samoa, and for making it a safe environment for children and adults to develop their talents and achieve their goals. This Safeguarding Policy demonstrates the responsibility of ASA to ensure that children and adults can participate in athletics safely.

Upholding this Policy and promoting the best practice principles contained within it will enable the Member Federation to provide and create safe, happy and inspiring environments for their community to enjoy and participate in athletics. Men, women and children are capable of abuse. It happens everywhere and possibly in every sport and organization. No one is exempt or protected from its impact when it occurs.

Abuse, harassment and exploitation occur when there are power imbalances between individuals. When one individual is in a more powerful position, they can take advantage of another individual. The more vulnerable an individual, whether because of age, disability, finance or status the more likely they are to be the victim of abuse, harassment or exploitation.

2. STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT AND PRINCIPLES

ASA firmly believes that everyone in athletics should be treated with respect and dignity and have the right to participate free from any abuse, harassment or exploitation. ASA vows to protect everyone within the scope of this Policy from such behavior. ASA commits to preventing abuse, harassment or exploitation towards those who fall within the scope of this Policy and to create a safe environment for all to participate and enjoy sport. Athletes, coaches, athlete support staff, officials, volunteers and board members are all protected by this Policy. They must understand their rights as well as their duties in this area. The principles on which this Policy is based are:

- Everyone has the right to participate, enjoy, develop and be treated with dignity and respect, and to be free from discrimination whether it is based on sex, race, age, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, beliefs, religious or political affiliation;
- Everyone has the right to have their voices heard, especially concerns about their own or another person's welfare. Everyone should know who to ask for help when they are concerned about another individual's behavior.
- Everyone is responsible for the care and protection of minors, and decisions made should be in the minor's best interests;
- ASA Board members shall appoint a Safeguarding Officer from ASA members; A's programs, and enforce them;
- inform everyone connected to ASA that the Safeguarding Officer is the individual to report a worry or concern about another person's or any ASA member's behavior;
- ensure that everyone is aware of their rights and the process that will be followed if a concern is raised;
- establish, amend as allowed, and enforce policies, procedures, and rules, and keep them up to date as appropriate;
- provide support and guidance to anyone who needs it following a concern, complaint or allegation being made;
- educate and train all members of staff and volunteers about how to deal with concerns and complaints;
- deal with all concerns, allegations and complaints in a fair, transparent, timely and efficient manner ensuring all complainants are updated regularly;
- assist in all investigations and adjudications in an independent manner to ensure there is no bias in the resulting report or risk assessment;
- keep and encourage that all information about concerns, complaints or allegations be kept confidential;
- recruiting appropriate people for relevant roles, ensuring that fairness is critical;
- cooperate with local agencies, non-Governmental Organizations and community groups providing support and guidance for social services to ensure that everyone is kept safe.

3. Definitions

Psychological abuse: is an unwelcome act including vilification, belittling, rejection, confinement, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation, infantilization or any other behavior which may diminish an individual's sense of identity, dignity or self-worth. From this behavior is born psychological abuse. This can often be seen as bullying or cyber-bullying.

Physical abuse: is any intentional or unwanted physical act upon another which causes or can potentially cause physical harm. This includes 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.

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; and whether it is verbal or non-verbal. This includes having individuals watch or make sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging others to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a person in preparation for abuse. Included are 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. Under this definition, grooming is included, where an athlete's family, entourage and friends are lead to believe that the groomer is dependable and trustworthy. This trust enables the groomer to have access to the athlete, where the athlete can be manipulated, exploited, and made to feel guilty if the groomer's coaxing or demands are not adhered to.

Harassment: is unwanted or unwelcome behavior which offends or makes the person feel humiliated or intimidated. Power harassment is where someone in a position of power over another individual uses that power to physically or psychologically harass the other. Power harassment can include exclusion, inappropriate training regimens, as well as intrusive behavior. Sexual harassment is any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal non-verbal.

Exploitation: is when someone exercises control over another person and/or their assets for their "personal gain" without the 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 informed consent of the other person or their parents/legal guardian.

Neglect: is the failure to provide a minimum level of physical or emotional care which causes harm, allows harm to be caused or creates an imminent danger of harm.

Child/Minor: "Child", "Minor" or "children" refers to an individual or group of individuals who have not yet reached the age of 18 years old.

Victim: the individual who has been negatively affected or harmed by the actions/inactions of another.

4. Scope of this Policy

This Policy applies to ASA, its athletes, officials, staff and any other person associated with ASA, and compliance is mandatory. Any violation of this Policy will result in disciplinary action or referral to the Case Management Group for processing.

5. Reporting of concerns

If anyone has any suspicions that a child or adult may be the subject of abuse, harassment or exploitation in any form, they must report these concerns to ASA's Safeguarding Officer so that they can be assessed and dealt with appropriately. If the Safeguard Officer ascertains that a law may have been violated and/or a minor's person is negatively affected or harmed, the Safeguard officer must contact the Department of Public Safety or Social Services. The Safeguard Officer should be learned in local abuse, harassment and exploitation laws, which will assist the Safeguard Officer in determining whether to report the matter to the authorities. Consultation with ASA's Directors and Officers is appropriate. Prior to taking legal action, the Safeguard Officer must obtain the consent of the individual and/or the parent if the victim is a minor. It is crucial that the Directors appoint an "acting" Safeguard Officer if the issue/victim is connected to the current Safeguard Officer in any way.

6. Code of Conduct

ASA has a Code of Conduct for everyone involved with ASA. It is housed with ASA's Secretary General and is available for review or copying upon request. The Code is designed to inform everyone associated with athletics with the behavior that is expected of them by ASA. These codes should form part of any training program to ensure that everyone is aware of the existence of the codes, the expectations of ASA, and the possibility of disciplinary action if they are not adhered to.

7. Recruitment

All people intending to join ASA must submit a written notice of desire to join ASA, their contact information, the role they intend to play, what they can contribute to ASA, and the contact information of the referral person or organization. ASA must check the background of the applying individuals to assure that the persons in the organization will be safe in and around this individual, and that ASA will benefit from the individual's proposed participation.

8. Training and Education

All members of ASA will be given safeguarding training relevant to their role within ASA, including working with children. Safeguarding training should be undertaken regularly at least every two years, although every new member will be trained upon registration with ASA.

9. Disciplinary Procedure

Breaches of this Policy and ASA's Safeguarding Rules will be dealt with in accordance with ASA's Safeguarding Rules, local statutes, and/or ASA's Daily Disciplines listed here; depending on the seriousness of the matter.

- a. Any violation of ASA's Safeguarding policy or conduct rules, when made aware, the Officers and/or Directors may immediately suspend the involved individual(s) pending further review in protection of ASA and its members;
- b. The Safeguarding Officer must be informed, and if in his/her informed review, the matter warrants referral to the Case Management Group, then the matter will be given to the Case Management Group to continue the process as set forth in ASA's Safeguarding Policy. In the event the Safeguarding Officer determines that the issue is resolved, can be resolved by intervention of the Safeguarding Officer, or with the assistance of other members of ASA, both parties involved must sign (parental signature for minors) a written agreement that the issue is resolved and will not occur again. If either party refuses to sign the agreement, the suspension will continue, and the matter will be turned over to the Case Management Group.
- c. These disciplinary violations include those members of ASA who spread negative information to one or more individuals that place ASA in a negative light; that could cause anyone in the world to doubt the credibility of ASA.

10. Review & Monitoring of this Policy

ASA's Board of Directors will review this Policy every three years; sooner if issues not included arise. Implementation of it will be carried out regularly as appropriate by ASA or an independent safeguarding authority.

11. Reporting Flowchart

