



Scottish Athletics Ltd

Child Protection Policy



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Introduction:

Athletics is one of the most successful and fastest growing sports in Scotland. All children who takes part in athletics are entitled to participate in a fun and safe environment, and we believe that everyone involved in our sport can play a part to ensure the wellbeing and protection of children.

UK Athletics Limited (UKA), and the governing bodies of athletics in the four home nations, are committed to establishing and implementing policies and procedures to ensure a safe athletics environment.

Scottish Athletics works in partnership with Sport Scotland, Children 1st, Disclosure Scotland and Volunteer Scotland Disclosure Services, to continuously improve knowledge and practice in child wellbeing and protection at all levels of our sport.

This policy and related documents reflects our commitment to providing a safe sporting environment for everyone and we will always act in the best interest of children.

Policy Statement:

All children and young people have the right to be cared for, protected from harm and abuse, and to participate in a sporting environment which is safe, and in which their rights are respected, and their needs met. Children and young people should get the help they need, when they need it and their safety is always paramount.

Scottish Athletics recognises its responsibility to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation. Our Staff and volunteers will work together to embrace difference and diversity and respect the rights of all children and young people.

This policy and associated documents lays out Scottish Athletics commitment to protecting children and young people and the expectations we have for our affiliated clubs. It reflects Scottish legislation, policy and guidance on child wellbeing and protection, and complements UKA policy and guidance on safeguarding.

Definition of a child:

For the purposes of this policy a child means a person who has not attained the age of 18 years.

Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007
Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

If you have an immediate and serious concern about the safety of a child, contact the police on either 101 or 999, and/or social work services. Contact details of your local social work team can be found on the relevant local authority website.

Key principles:

- The welfare of children is the primary concern
- The protection and wellbeing of all children in our care is everyone's responsibility
- A child, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from all forms of harm and abuse
- A child has the right to express views on all matters that affect them, should they wish to do so
- A child's rights, wishes and feelings should be respected and promoted
- The best way to promote the wellbeing, health and development of a child is to work in partnership with the child, parents/carers and other relevant organisations

To keep children safe, we will:

- Promote the wellbeing of children through opportunities to take part in athletics safely
- Put in place policies and procedures to promote the wellbeing and protection of children
- Seek to prevent and address bullying through the development and implementation of effective anti-bullying policies and practices
- Appoint a national welfare officer
- Recruit, train and support our volunteers/staff to prioritise the wellbeing of children who take part in our activities and protect them from harm
- Require volunteers/staff to adopt and abide by the child protection policy and procedures including the Codes of Conduct for working with children
- Respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of children
- Respond to any child wellbeing or protection concerns in line with our policy and procedures.
- Monitor, review and evaluate the implementation of the child protection and wellbeing policy and procedures regularly

Our clubs will:

- Adopt the Child Protection Policy
- Implement national guidelines and procedures related to this policy
- Appoint a Club Welfare Officer
- Safely recruit club volunteers/staff in accordance with the recruitment guidance
- Promote best practice and establish and implement club guidelines
- Ensure all volunteers, coaches, athletes and parents agree to and sign the club's code of conduct
- Accept that all office bearers and committee members have a responsibility for child wellbeing and protection and are prepared to respond to any indication of abuse or poor practice
- Challenge and change poor practice
- Implement any recommendations of Scottish Athletics relating to this policy area
- Promote an environment where all legitimate concerns can be raised without fear of victimisation or reprisal
- Recommend to all those working with children to attend a SCUK Safeguarding & Protecting Children workshop

Equality:

The Equality Act 2010 provides a basic framework of protection against direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation in services and public functions, as well as providing protection for people discriminated against because they are perceived to have, or are associated with someone who has, a protected characteristic.

Scottish Athletics endorses the principle of equality and will strive to ensure that everyone who wishes to be involved in athletics (in all its disciplines and forms), whether as athletes, casual participants, club members, officials, volunteers, coaches, office-bearers in clubs or those within the governance structure of **scottishathletics**:

- Has a genuine and equal opportunity to participate to the full extent of their own ambitions and abilities, without regard to their age, sex, gender identity, disability, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, religion, race, socioeconomic status or sexual orientation; and,
- Can be assured of an environment in which their rights, dignity and individual worth are respected and in particular, that they are able to enjoy their sport without the threat of intimidation, victimisation, harassment or abuse.

Policy Review:

This policy and associated procedures will be reviewed every 3 years. In all other circumstances, it will be updated in accordance with changes in legislation and guidance on the protection of children, or following any changes within Scottish Athletics. It will also be reviewed following any concerns raised about the protection of children within Scottish Athletics.

This policy addresses the following forms of Harm:

- a) Practice concerns
- b) Wellbeing concerns
- c) Child abuse

Practice concerns:

Practice concerns include any behaviour by members of staff, coaches, volunteers, officials, or a club and its members, that may contravene this policy, or any associated procedures and guidelines in particular the codes of conduct. It is behaviour that falls short of abuse but is still considered unacceptable.

Examples of practice concerns may include;

- A club not responding appropriately to a wellbeing or protection concern.
- Coaches who ignore recognised good practice guidelines, breach the codes of conduct, or the terms of their UKA licence.
- Individuals engaging in practices that are known to be risk factors in cases of abuse.

For further information on practice concerns see the welfare section of the Scottish Athletics website.

Wellbeing concerns:

The Scottish National approach to child protection and wellbeing is called; Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC). **GIRFEC** is underpinned by national guidance and in legislation via the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

Wellbeing: under Section 96(2) of the 2014 Act, wellbeing is defined using eight indicators which are considered essential to enable children to flourish. These eight indicators are known by the acronym **SHANARRI**:

Safe

Healthy

Achieving

Nurtured

Active

Respected

Responsible

Included

SHANARRI indicators provide a common language for people working and volunteering with children and young people and help to identify wellbeing concerns, including those that may require a targeted intervention.

Whilst most children's wellbeing needs will be met by their parents and carers, it is acknowledged that participation in sports can support and promote a child's wellbeing. The National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (Scottish Government 2014), recognises that sports clubs and their staff and volunteers are often significant role models and trusted people in children's life's. They are therefore well placed to identify a child whose wellbeing is, or is at risk of, being adversely affected by any matter and to act in the child's best interests.

A wellbeing concern may be identified in different circumstances. For instance;

- A child may tell you that they are worried, anxious or upset about an incident, or set of circumstances, either within or outside the club,
- you may have noticed a change in a child's behaviour, demeanour or developmental progress,
- You may have concerns about the impact on the child of an incident or set of circumstances whether within or outside the club,
- You may have concerns for a child's health.

For further information on GIRFEC and the wellbeing indicators refer to the welfare section of the Scottish Athletics website.

Child abuse:

What is Abuse?

There are four main categories of abuse:

Physical,

Sexual,

Emotional, and;

Neglect.

The following definitions are taken from the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland.

Physical Abuse:

Physical abuse is the causing of physical harm to a child or young person. It can include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a carer or parent fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child in their care.

Sexual Abuse:

Sexual abuse is any act that involves the child in any activity for the sexual gratification of another person, regardless of whether it is claimed that the child consented or assented.

It involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, indecent images, or in watching sexual activities, using sexual language towards a child or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Sexual abuse is not only committed by men; women can also sexually abuse children, as can other children.

Neglect:

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

It may involve failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, to protect a child from physical harm or danger, to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or failure to respond to, a child's emotional needs.

Neglect may result in a child's failure to thrive or to meet normal weight and growth developmental milestones.

It is important that if you have concerns that a child is experiencing neglect that you speak to the club welfare officer. Remember that to ensure a child's wellbeing we all have a responsibility to report concerns that we have.

Emotional:

Emotional abuse is persistent emotional neglect or ill treatment that has severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It may involve saying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve the imposition of age, or developmentally inappropriate expectations on a child or causing them to feel frightened or in danger, or exploiting or corrupting children. Some level of emotional abuse is present in all types of ill-treatment of a child. It can also occur independently of other types of abuse.

Bullying:

Bullying is a breach of children's rights under several articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In Scotland, bullying is defined as both behaviour and impact; the impact is on a person's capacity to feel in control of themselves. This is what is termed as their sense of 'agency'. Bullying takes place in the context of relationships; it is behaviour that can make people feel

hurt, threatened, frightened and left out. This behaviour happens face to face and online (Scottish Government 2017).

This policy relates to both online and face to face bullying. We do not accept that bullying that happened online is something that happened 'outside' of our sport. Bullying in any form is behaviour that happens 'to' someone and it will have an impact upon them.

Scottish Athletics is committed to challenging all types of prejudice-based bullying and language including bullying based on the protected characteristic listed in the Equality Act 2010.

We expect that all volunteers and staff will work together to prevent and reduce bullying and prejudice amongst children and young people by:

- Developing positive relationships amongst children, young people and adults which are mutually respectful, responsible and trusting
- Building capacity, resilience and skills in children and young people, and parents and carers to prevent and deal with bullying
- Preventing bullying of children and young people through a range of strategies and approaches
- Supporting children, young people and their parents and carers who are affected by bullying

For more information and links to specific advice on how to recognise and respond to bullying see the welfare section of the Scottish Athletics website.

Children and Young People with a Disability:

Whilst disabled children are likely to suffer the same type of abuse as other children, research suggests that children with a disability are 3 to 4 times more likely to be abused than non-disabled children (Scottish Government 2014a). Research has also shown that children with communication impairments, behavioural disorders, learning disabilities and sensory impairments are particularly vulnerable.

The most common forms of abuse experienced by disabled children are neglect and emotional abuse, although they may experience multiple abuses.

Communicating abuse is difficult for any child. They may be confused, fearful, traumatised and uncertain about what has happened and what might happen in the future. Not every child will disclose abuse or harm and there should be no greater expectation that disabled children will disclose more readily than any other children. Disclosing abuse can be more difficult for children who have a wide range of communication styles, and this can be more problematic if the perpetrator is also in a trusted role.

References:

Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014;

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/8/contents/enacted>

Data Protection Act 1998; <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/29/contents>

Protecting Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007;

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2007/14/contents>

Scottish Government (2014) National Guidance on Child wellbeing and Protection, Scottish Government, Edinburgh.

Scottish Government (2014a) National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland, Additional Notes for practitioners: Protecting Disabled Children from Abuse and Neglect, Scottish Government, Edinburgh.

Scottish Government (2017) Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People, Scottish Government, Edinburgh.

The Equality Act 2010. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>