

Safe Sport for Children Guidelines

1.1 Guiding Statement

Athletics NZ is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children in its care. We recognise the responsibility to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm and exploitation while participating in our activities.

Staff and volunteers within the Athletics NZ community will work together to embrace difference and diversity and respect the rights of children.

For the purposes of these guidelines and associated procedures, a child is recognised as someone under the age of 18 years.

1.2 Principles

In implementing this policy, we are committed to the following principles:

1. The welfare of children is the primary concern;
2. All children, 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;
3. Child protection is everyone's responsibility;
4. Children have the right to express views on all matters which affect them, should they wish to do so; and
5. Our organisation will work in partnership with children and parents/carers to promote the welfare, health and development of children.

1.3 Guidelines Objectives

The aim of these guidelines is to promote good practice through:

1. Promoting the health and welfare of children by providing opportunities for them to take part in athletics safely;
2. Respecting and promoting the rights, wishes and feelings of children;
3. Promoting and implementing appropriate procedures to safeguard the well-being of children and protect them from harm;
4. Recruiting, training, supporting and supervising staff, members and volunteers to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children from harm and to reduce the risk of allegations or complaints against themselves;
5. Recommending that children, staff, members and volunteers adopt and abide by these child protection guidelines and procedures;
6. Responding to any allegations of misconduct or harm to children in line with these guidelines and procedures, as well as implementing, where appropriate, the relevant investigative disciplinary and appeals procedures;
7. Regularly monitoring and evaluating the implementation of these guidelines and procedures.

1.4 Code of Conduct

As an employee or contractor of Athletics NZ, and as part of the wider athletics community in New Zealand, you are expected to:

1.4.1 Apply a child-centred approach where all children are treated equally and with dignity

- Activities should be appropriate for the age and development of the children in your care.
- Ensure feedback to children is about their performance and not of a personal nature.
- Use positive and age-appropriate language when talking to children and in their presence.

1.4.2 Create a safe and open working environment that also reduces risk to staff and volunteers

- Exercise common sense
- Do not send children off to train alone and out of sight and supervision
- Ensure that children use appropriate protective gear
- Ensure that all physical contact with children is relevant and appropriate to the activity
- Seek permission to touch when doing the above
- Do not engage in any intimate, over-familiar or sexual relationships with people under the age of 18 years
- Ensure that any filming or photography of children is appropriate
- Request parental consent before transporting children in a vehicle and ensure that the vehicle is insured and has a current Warrant of Fitness and Registration
- Ensure you have parental consent to administer first aid if required
- Do not use alcohol or cigarettes in the presence of children and do not offer alcohol or cigarettes to children under any circumstances
- Do not engage in communication with a child on a one-on-one basis through social media, texting or email, other than for relevant coach/athlete feedback or administration
- Do not engage in any bullying activity or allow parents, coaches, other children, or spectators to engage in any type of bullying behaviour (this includes cyber/text bullying)

1.4.3 Avoid situations where you are alone with a child

- Avoid private or unobserved situations, including being alone with a child in the changing rooms
- Avoid entering the changing rooms that are in use by children if you must enter, knock and announce yourself and try to have at least one other adult with you
- Avoid driving a child unaccompanied. If necessary an unaccompanied child should travel in the back seat of your vehicle.
- Do not invite or encourage children to your home
- Always have another adult present when staying overnight anywhere with children
- Do not share a room with a child, other than your own

1.5 Recruitment and Training Processes for Staff and Volunteers

As part of our duty of care, Athletics NZ will ensure best effort is made to appoint and train appropriate people to work with children enrolled in an athletics programme under the jurisdiction of Athletics NZ.

1.5.1 Recruiting

- All employed and contracted staff who may work unsupervised with children in their care, will be screened (through police vetting and a criminal record check), and will undergo a rigorous interview process which will include careful attention to reference checking.
- Athletics NZ recommends that the wider athletics community follow these guidelines by reference checking and police vetting staff and volunteers who may work unsupervised with children.

1.5.2 Appointing a Child Protection Officer (CPO)

It is recommended that all organisations within the wider athletics community appoint a CPO.

The primary role of the CPO is to manage child protection issues. Their main duties/responsibilities would include:

- Ensuring that child protection procedures are understood and adhered to by all members
- Organising promotional activities, training and raising awareness of child protection within the organisation
- Establishing and maintaining the complaints procedure
- Reporting to the Board/Executive Committee/Management as appropriate
- Acting as the main contact and support for child protection matters
- Maintaining confidential records of reported cases and any action taken
- Regularly monitoring and reviewing existing policies and procedures

1.5.3 Education and Training of Staff and Volunteers

Education and training is recommended to help staff and volunteers:

- Recognise the risks inherent in the sport;
- Recognise when children are at risk and from what;
- Take appropriate precautions to manage and limit identified risks;
- Limit the risk of being the target of allegations and complaints;
- Respond in an appropriate manner to children who have been harmed or are suspected of being harmed; and
- Understand responsibilities in relation to keeping children safe both in terms of prevention and management of cases that may arise

1.6 The Complaint and Investigative Process

1.6.1 Reporting poor practice or breaches of codes of conduct

Poor practice involves actions that are contrary to the good practice guidelines provided by Athletics NZ in section 1.4 and increase the risk of harm to children.

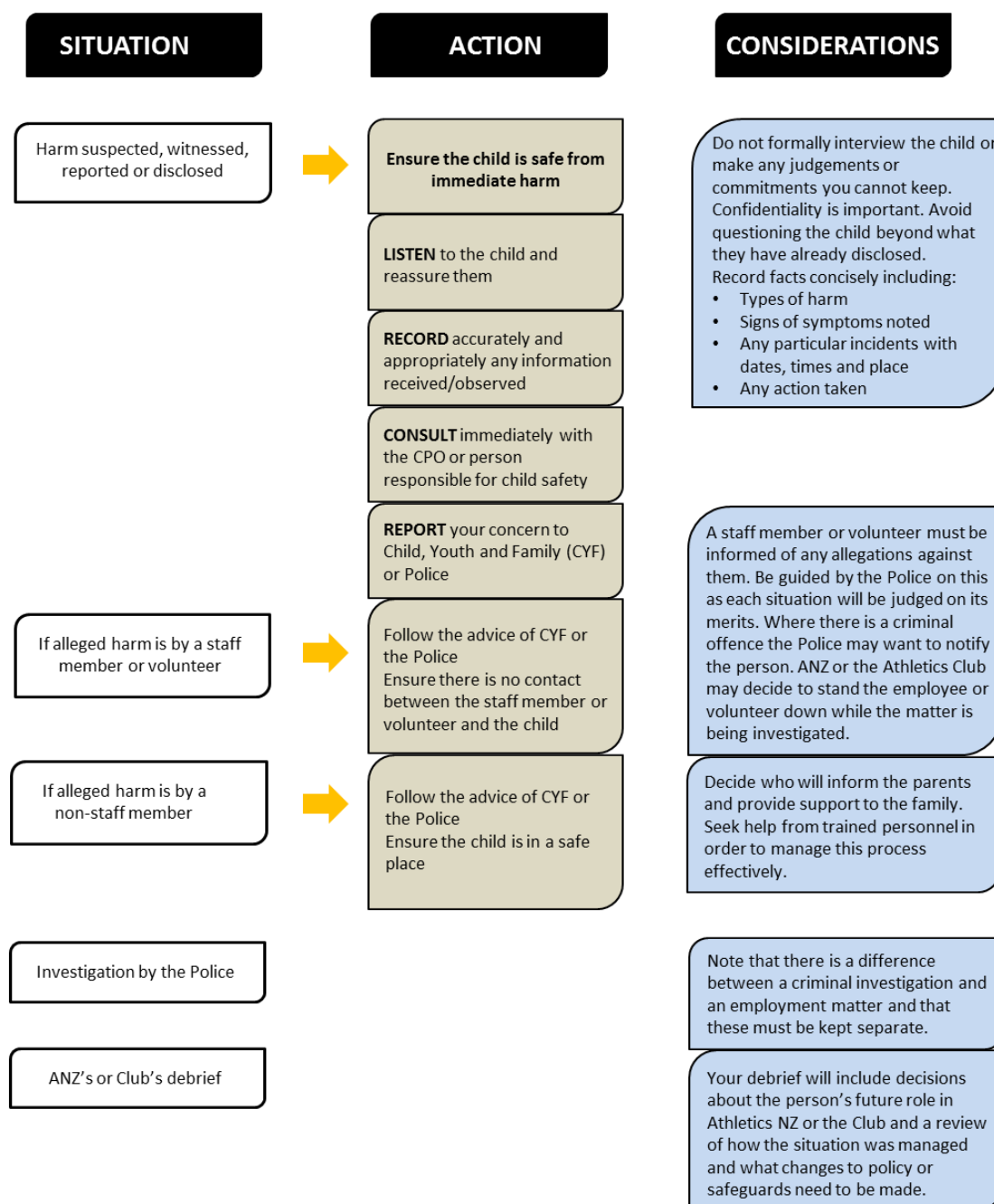
- Initial concerns should be discussed with the 'Child Protection Officer' (CPO) within your organisation and recorded accurately and appropriately:
 - Athletics NZ staff and contractors should refer matters to the **Athletics NZ CPO** and/or CEO
 - Members of the wider athletics community / athletics clubs should refer matters to their assigned CPO or Club President
- When a complaint is received first ensure the child is safe from immediate harm
- The relevant CPO will consider the allegation and where there is a legitimate concern, provide a written notice to the individual(s) involved of the complaint and/or information received
- The alleged offender should be given a fair opportunity to respond and be heard
- Clubs and Regional Associations should deal with any formal complaints in line with their guidelines for investigation and response if the complaint is regarding a local issue. Athletics New Zealand should be informed of any disciplinary procedures implemented as a result of confirmed allegations. At all times the confidentiality of all parties involved must be ensured
- Depending upon the seriousness of the poor practice, if it continues or there is repeated poor practice following a written notice, disciplinary procedures will be enacted. This may include termination of employment, contract or membership with the athletics association.
- In some cases, one instance of poor practice may warrant an immediate penalty which, in some cases, might be termination of employment, contract or membership.

1.6.2 Suspecting and reporting harm in the form of physical or sexual abuse

Records should be factual (not opinion or hearsay) and concise and include:

- The nature of the allegation
- Who noticed/disclosed the harm and their relationship to the child
- Details of any witnesses
- Signs and symptoms noted (including behavioural change)
- Any particular incidents with dates, times and places (if possible)
- Photos where there is any visible physical evidence

A more detailed process in relation to suspected or reported physical or sexual abuse is provided below.



1.6.3 Allegations or complaints that are frivolous, malicious or vexatious

In instances where an allegation or a complaint is made that, after investigation, is found to be frivolous, malicious or vexatious, the organisation dealing with the complaint will consider any necessary action against the person(s) who made the complaint.

1.7 Potential Disciplinary Outcomes

Possible outcomes of the disciplinary process include:

- A satisfactory mediated outcome
- Disciplinary action imposed for a breach of these guidelines
- No action taken due to a finding of no breach of the guidelines or insufficient evidence
- Action against the complainant (or other person) due to a finding of frivolous, malicious or vexatious allegation
- Referral to another agency i.e. Police

Types of action or penalties that could be imposed are:

- Written warnings;
- Suspension or termination of a person from a role they hold with Athletics NZ or with an Athletics Club;
- Banning of a person from activities held by or sanctioned by Athletics NZ or Athletics Club;
- A direction to complete a reasonable task i.e. letter of apology or corrective action; or
- Referral of the matter to an appropriate authority i.e. Police

1.8 Guidelines Review

These guidelines will be reviewed:

- Automatically every 12 months after adoption
- After any information results in the initiation of an investigative process