

Safeguarding Athletes from Harassment and Abuse in Sport



The image shows the cover of a toolkit titled "Safeguarding athletes from harassment and abuse in sport" for International Federations (IFs) and National Olympic Committees (NOCs). The cover features the Olympic rings logo in the top right corner and a central photograph of two hands, one white and one brown, with a small amount of orange powder on the white hand. The background of the cover is dark and textured.

Safeguarding athletes from harassment and abuse in sport
IOC Toolkit for IFs and NOCs

Bronze

Silver

Gold

The International Olympic Committee (IOC)'s mission is to place athletes at the heart of the Olympic Movement, and Olympic Agenda 2020 sets out the strategic roadmap for this. This includes **Recommendation 18: Strengthen support to athletes**. Through this recommendation, the IOC has taken significant steps to safeguard athletes from harassment and abuse in sport.

Why are policies and procedures needed?

- Safeguard athletes
- Protect the integrity of sport and sports organisations
- Protect those working within sport
- Promote the values of safe sport

B

The minimum requirement as stated in the IOC Guidelines

S

Provides examples of good practice features

G

Indicates what research considers to be best practice

"IOC STATUTES – Ensure that your organisation formally rejects harassment and abuse in sport"

Consider a new article in the WSF Constitution that formally rejects harassment and abuse in sport

Example:

Badminton World Federation Constitution (2015).

BWF Constitution Article 4.3 Harassment Free Sport

All those working and participating in Badminton including players, coaches, technical officials and administrators have a right to compete, work and participate in a harassment free environment. The Federation shall use its Code of Ethics to ensure there are no forms of harassment whether that be physical, psychological or other forms of harassment. "

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WSF REPORTING POLICY:

1. All members and affiliates of the WSF must ensure that the sports environment is free from harassment and abuse. The WSF encourages all incidents of harassment and abuse to be reported.
2. Where harassment and abuse has infringed local laws, mandatory reporting to the relevant local authorities is required.

Mandatory reporting – to public authorities

Organisational Policy: Core Components

**Example Application:
Australian Sports Commission**

The following extract is from the Australian Sports Commission: Harassment-Free Sport, Protecting Children from Abuse in Sport (version dated 2000). The section focuses on ‘The law and child protection services in Australia’.

“Mandatory reporting [to public authorities] of child abuse, where some professions are legally required to report any abuse they notice, applies in all states and territories, although the professions involved are different. In New South Wales for example, legislation requires people in professions including recreational services (sporting organisations), who have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child under 18 has been abused, to report their suspicion...

Even where people aren’t required to report suspected child abuse, there may be some situations where this is the most appropriate action to take to protect the child concerned.

The law protects people who notify the authorities of suspected child abuse.”

**Example Application:
ITTF Anti-harassment policy and procedure**

The following is an extract from the ITTF Handbook (version dated 2017).

7.9. REPORTING TO HARASSMENT OFFICERS

7.9.1. Every member of the ITTF has a responsibility to play a part in ensuring that the sport environment is free from harassment.

7.9.2. The ITTF encourages all incidents of harassment to be reported, regardless of who the offender may be.

**Example Application:
World Curling Federation,
Harassment And Bullying Policy**

The following is an extract from the World Curling Federation Harassment and Bullying Policy (version dated 2016).

3.1. Managers/Supervisors have an obligation to prevent harassment/bullying and to take immediate action once it has been identified, whether or not a complaint has been made.

WSF REPORTING PROCEDURE:

1. Anyone may report an incident of harassment and abuse
2. Reports of harassment and abuse must be made in writing in English. This may be submitted in person or via email or as phone in. The designated Safeguarding Officer(s) shall ensure that such reports are documented. This documentation should include the name, title, address, contact information and signature of the reporting person. The documentation should also include information pertaining to the reasons and basis for the report, including any evidence which might suggest that harassment and abuse has occurred. The officer may engage and interview the relevant persons to establish the facts of the case. Based on the investigation as detailed in the report, the Officer will determine how to proceed with each case.

Mechanism	Potential benefits and drawbacks
Report in writing	✓ Easy, accessible, confidentiality may be offered (if handled correctly).
	✗ Can be difficult to understand. The reporting person may not know what information to include, limited ability to respond. Potentially unreliable.
Report via online form/service	✓ Easy, accessible, reliable, confidentiality may be offered, response possible.
	✗ Financial investment, internet access required, must be well advertised.
Report via email	✓ Easy, reliable, ability to respond, no extra financial investment.
	✗ Email address and internet required, the reporting person may not know what information to include.
Report in-person	✓ Possibility to ask relevant questions to obtain relevant information and provide advice/support.
	✗ Geographical restrictions, potential financial investment, person who receives the report would need to be trained, and have no conflict of interest, linguistically it may be problematic.
Report via telephone hotline	✓ Easy, accessible.
	✗ Can be difficult to understand, no layout of information required, limited ability to respond, must be well advertised.

Bronze	Establish a reporting procedure for alleged incidents of harassment and abuse, specifying the different reporting channels and designated persons through which an alleged incident of harassment and abuse may be reported to the IF or NOC, as well as the information that should be included in the report.
Silver	Good practice would indicate that the reporting system includes the following key features: <ul style="list-style-type: none">— Anonymity should be offered;— The reporting procedure should be easy to use and understand; and— The reporting procedure should be accessible and widely communicated, including informing the reporter where the report will go to.
Gold	Best practice indicates that the established reporting system should include the following key features: <ul style="list-style-type: none">— It should be reliable and secure;— Confidentiality should be ensured; and— The reporting system should be operated and managed by someone at arm's length to the organisation, to reduce the possibility of conflicts of interest.

Support for concerned persons: Key personnel

The table below uses the Bronze, Silver and Gold format to identify the IOC Guidelines note as minimum standards related to support for concerned persons (Bronze), and what best practice would indicate (Gold).

Bronze	<p>Establish appropriate mechanisms to provide support and information to persons involved in an alleged incident of harassment and abuse (“concerned persons”) including the appointment of someone who is responsible for following up on all alleged incidents of harassment and abuse (e.g. a “Welfare/Safeguarding Officer”). Such person should be trained and experienced in the field of safeguarding from harassment and abuse (e.g. medically and/or legally), and his/her responsibilities should, in particular, include playing a central role in: (i) the reporting and investigation procedures, (ii) determining whether information of a case should be disclosed to the competent local authorities, and (iii) providing support to any concerned persons throughout the reporting and investigation procedures.</p>
Silver	<p>Good practice would indicate that support for concerned persons should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The Safeguarding Officer/Ombudsman be the same person who receives the reports; and – It should be clearly communicated that there is an established person/persons who receives the reports and is responsible for the case management of reports.
Gold	<p>Best practice indicates that support for concerned persons should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – That the trained Safeguarding Officer/Ombudsman be at arm’s length to the organisation, ensuring impartiality of dealing with all reports; and – That there be both a male and female Safeguarding Officer/Ombudsman available.

Centralised person	Benefits and drawbacks
Person within the IF/ NOC administration	✓ Understanding of sports administration, connection with National Federations and grassroots.
	✗ Requires human resource input by the IF/NOC, potential conflict of interest.
Person within the IF/NOC Medical Commission	✓ Degree of independence, understanding of sports administration, medical knowledge.
	✗ Commission members usually operate on a voluntary basis, potential for conflict of interests.
Report to an independent organisation	✓ Independent from the sports organisation. Minimisation of potential conflicts of interest.
	✗ Organisation should be officially recognised as acting in this capacity.
Person within a local health authority	✓ Independent from the sports organisation. Potentially easier to access geographically if multiple qualified persons in local health authorities are identified.
	✗ An agreement would need to be formed between the local health authority and the sport/sports organisations involved.
Reports to a national charity/NGO	✓ Potential to have multiple regional centres, independent from the sports organisation.
	✗ An agreement would need to be formed between the national charity/NGO and the sport/sports organisations involved.

THE DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICER(S)

WSF:

1. Chair of Medical Commission or;
2. WSF Staff or;
3. A person with the relevant training

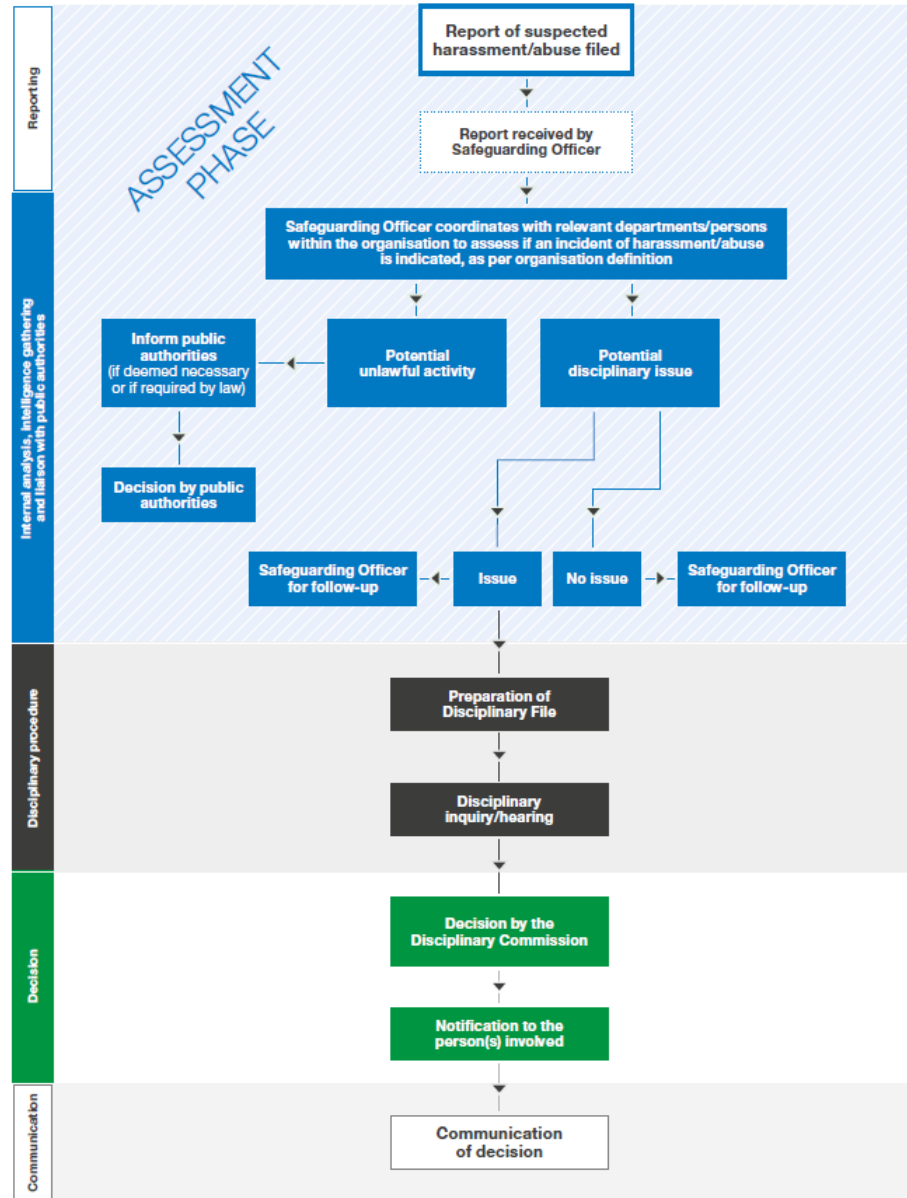
GAMES TIME:

1. NF to nominate

Support for concerned persons:

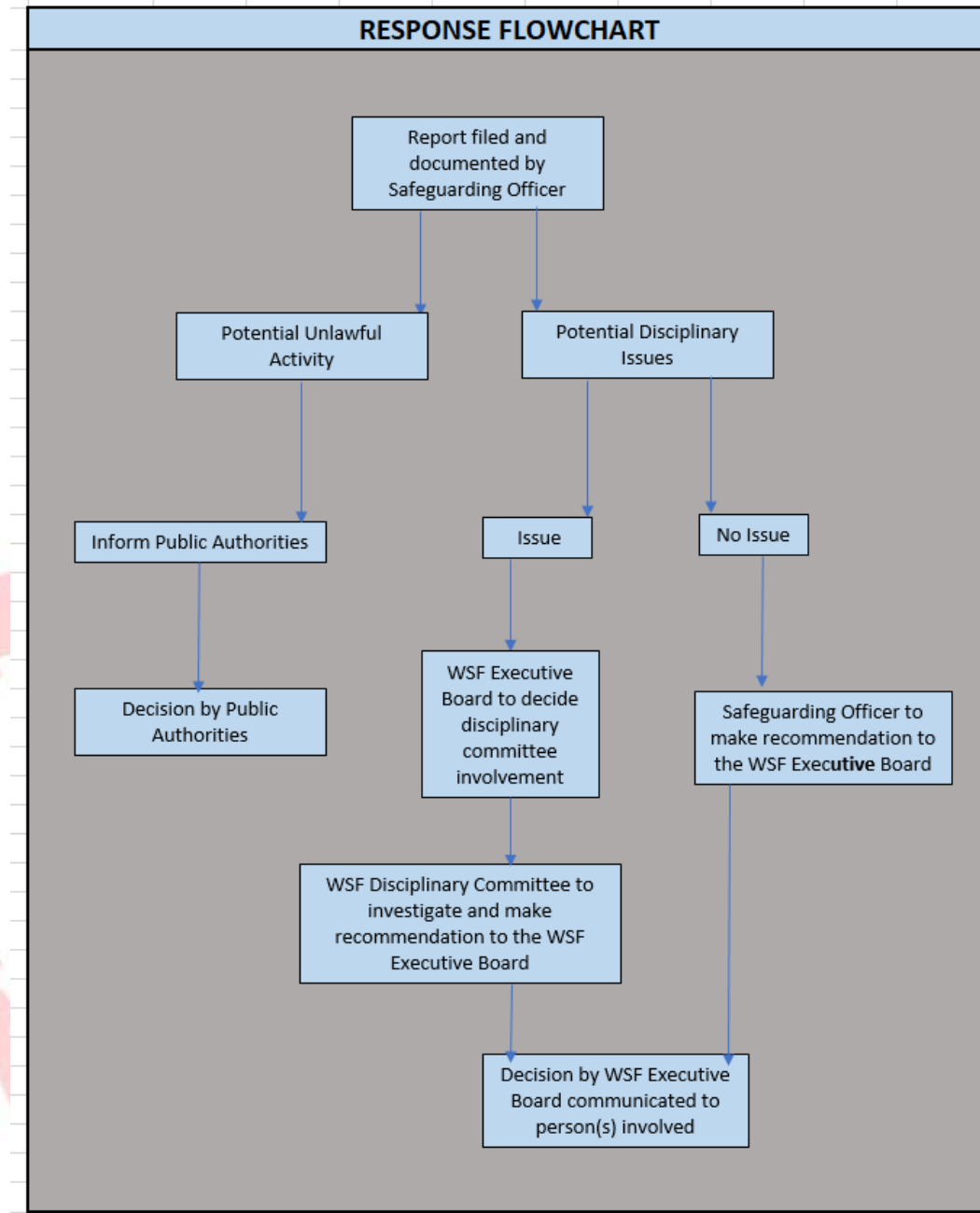
"Establish appropriate mechanisms to provide support and information to persons involved in an alleged incident of harassment and abuse ("concerned persons") including the appointment of someone who is responsible for following up on all alleged incidents of harassment and abuse (e.g. a Welfare/Safeguarding Officer"). Such person should be trained and experienced in the field of safeguarding from harassment and abuse (e.g. medically and/or legally), and his/her responsibilities should, in particular, include playing a central role in: (i) the reporting and investigation procedures, (ii) determining whether information of a case should be disclosed to the competent local authorities, and (iii) providing support to any concerned persons throughout the reporting and investigation procedures."

Example flowchart demonstrating harassment and abuse report response



Please note: disciplinary procedures and procedures before public authorities can go in parallel

RESPONSE FLOWCHART



INVESTIGATION PROCEDURE

MEASURES AND SANCTIONS

1. To be discussed and decided by the EB.
2. Cases that are unlawful will be referred to the relevant public authorities and disciplinary infringements will be referred to the Disciplinary Commission.
3. Only all other cases, the Safeguarding Officer will make a recommendation to the EB and for the EB to make a decision.
4. Measures and sanctions must respect the principle of proportionality, be in proportion to the severity of the behavior and consistent with applicable laws.
5. The following factors should be taken into consideration when determining proportionality: the nature and severity of the violations; the number of violations; any other relevant circumstances (e.g. when the abused or harassed person is a minor).

FAIR PROCESS

Provide the responding party with fair process, including notice and the right/opportunity to be heard before applying any measure or sanction.

INVOLVEMENT OF RELEVANT PUBLIC AUTHORITIES AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS

"Consistent with applicable laws, inform the relevant public authorities about potential criminal cases. If the IF or NOC is unable (e.g. because it does not have the financial or human resources) to adopt and/or implement the above-described safeguarding measures, assistance and support could be sought from relevant public authorities or other organisations."

CONFIDENTIALITY

1. "All matters pertaining to an alleged incident of harassment and abuse, in particular reports of harassment and abuse, personal information of the concerned persons, other information gathered during investigations and results of investigations ("Confidential Information") shall be regarded as confidential.

2. The WSF may disclose Confidential Information to appropriate persons or authorities if:
 - (i) a failure to disclose such information may cause harm to someone,or
 - (ii) such information relates to a potential criminal act that comes to the attention of the WSF.

1. When disclosing such decisions, the WSF shall:
 - (i) not include any personal information of the victim without obtaining the victim's consent, and
 - (ii) anonymise personal information of other concerned persons in certain cases, taking into consideration the privacy interests of such concerned persons."

INVOLVEMENT OF ATHLETES

1. To collaborate with the Athlete's Commission.
2. The IOC recommendation on Involvement of athletes: As noted in the IOC Guidelines, it is recommended that athletes are involved in the development of safeguarding policies. You may want to collaborate through your organisation's Athletes' Commission. It is essential that the athletes' voices and opinions are taken into account."

FURTHER WORK REQUIRED

To increase the effectiveness and reach of the athlete safeguarding policy, the WSF should consider its overall athlete safeguarding strategy. Principally this means that the WSF should consider its approach to athlete safeguarding in three areas:

SCOPE COVERED :

1. Development of policies and procedures;

FURTHER WORK REQUIRED:

2. Prevention mechanisms and;

3. Management of reports of harassment and abuse

A large, stylized graphic made of thick red brushstrokes, resembling a large letter 'A' or a similar shape, dominates the background of the slide. The strokes are textured and vary in opacity, creating a sense of movement and energy.

THANK YOU

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