

# IOC GUIDELINES FOR INTERNATIONAL FEDERATIONS (IFs) AND NATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEES (NOCs) RELATED TO CREATING AND IMPLEMENTING A POLICY TO SAFEGUARD ATHLETES FROM HARASSMENT AND ABUSE IN SPORT

(HEREAFTER THE “GUIDELINES”)

## PREAMBLE

The International Olympic Committee (“IOC”) Consensus Statement: Sexual Harassment and Abuse in Sport (2006) states that *“Sexual harassment and abuse occur worldwide. In sport, they give rise to suffering for athletes and others, and to legal, financial and moral liabilities for sport organisations. No sport is immune to these problems which occur at every performance level. Everyone in sport shares the responsibility to identify and prevent sexual harassment and abuse and to develop a culture of dignity, respect and safety in sport. Sport organisations, in particular, are gatekeepers to safety and should demonstrate strong leadership in identifying and eradicating these practices.”*

According to the IOC Consensus Statement: Harassment and Abuse in Sport (2016), *“[I]t is incumbent upon all stakeholders in sport to both adopt general principles for safe sport... and to implement and monitor policies and procedures for safe sport... which state that: all athletes have a right to be treated with respect, protected from non-accidental violence...”* and that *“the welfare of athletes is paramount.”*

These Guidelines have been established by the Athletes’, Athletes’ Entourage and Medical and Scientific and Women in Sport Commissions of the IOC pursuant to Olympic Agenda 2020, Recommendation 18: Strengthen support to athletes, and the 2015 7<sup>th</sup> IOC International Athletes’ Forum, Recommendation 2d: Development of education materials on all issues of athlete welfare, including non-discrimination, prevention of harassment and abuse in sport.

The IOC, which has adopted and implemented the *“IOC Framework for safeguarding athletes and other participants from harassment and abuse in sport (Games-time period)”*, recommends that IFs and NOCs adopt and implement a similar policy to safeguard athletes from harassment and abuse in sport.

In an effort to assist IFs and NOCs, the IOC has prepared these Guidelines, which are intended to serve as minimum standards when adopting and implementing safeguarding policies related to harassment and abuse in sport. It is the responsibility of each IF and NOC to adopt and implement such safeguarding policies. The IOC will also develop and make available educational material, best case studies as well as other practical information to further assist IFs and NOCs.

## 1. DEFINITION

For the purpose of these Guidelines:

**“Harassment”** as stated in Article 1.4 of the IOC Code of Ethics or **“harassment and abuse”** includes psychological abuse, physical abuse, sexual harassment and neglect. These forms of harassment and abuse may occur in combination or in isolation.

**“Psychological abuse”** means any unwelcome act including confinement, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation, infantilisation, or any other treatment which may diminish the sense of identity, dignity and self-worth.

**“Physical abuse”** means any deliberate and unwelcome act - such as for example punching, beating, kicking, biting and burning - that causes physical trauma or injury. Such act can also consist of forced or inappropriate physical activity (e.g., age-, or physique- inappropriate training loads; when injured or in pain), forced alcohol consumption, or forced doping practices.

**“Sexual harassment”** means any verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, which is unwelcome, or where consent is coerced, manipulated or cannot be given. Sexual harassment can take the form of sexual abuse.

**“Neglect”** within the meaning of these Guidelines means the failure of a coach or another person with a duty of care towards the athlete to provide a minimum level of care to the athlete, which is causing harm, allowing harm to be caused, or creating an imminent danger of harm.

Harassment and abuse can be based on any grounds including race, religion, colour, creed, ethnic origin, physical attributes, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, socio-economic status and athletic ability. It can include a one-off incident or a series of incidents. It may be in person or online. Harassment may be deliberate, unsolicited and coercive.

Harassment and abuse often result from an abuse of authority, meaning the improper use of a position of influence, power or authority by an individual against another person.

Further details and examples of what can constitute harassment and abuse can be found in the IOC Consensus Statement: Harassment and Abuse in Sport (2016).

## **2. IF/NOC SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

When adopting and implementing a safeguarding policy, the IOC recommends that IFs and NOCs take the following into consideration:

### **2.1 Definition of Harassment and Abuse**

Develop a clear definition of the term “harassment and abuse”, which is consistent with the definition in Section 1 and with applicable laws.

### **2.2 Scope of Application**

Apply the safeguarding policy to all persons affiliated with the IF or NOC, including athletes.

### **2.3 Education and Prevention**

Inform all athletes, their entourages, coaches, officials as well as other relevant persons on what may constitute harassment and abuse and where they may seek further information, advice and support, e.g. by organising training or by making available educational material.

Provide for mechanisms to prevent involvement of known offenders in the IF’s or NOC’s activities.

### **2.4 Reporting Procedure**

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.

### **2.5 Investigation Procedure**

Establish an investigation procedure to respond to alleged incidents of harassment and abuse which aims to assemble comprehensive information on the alleged incident.

### **2.6 Support of 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/Support 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.

### **2.7 Disciplinary Procedure**

Establish a disciplinary procedure for alleged incidents of abuse and harassment, which includes, in particular, disciplinary decisions, measures and sanctions.

### **2.8 Measures and Sanctions**

Establish guidelines on measures and sanctions detailing how incidents of harassment and abuse should be sanctioned. Measures and sanctions must respect the principle of proportionality, be in proportion to the severity of the behaviour and consistent with applicable laws. 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).

### **2.9 Fair Process**

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

### **2.10 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.

### **2.11 Confidentiality**

Establish a confidentiality policy, which states that an alleged incident of harassment and abuse be regarded as confidential, and that personal information (including in particular name, date of birth, address, identification numbers) should not be disclosed, except, for example, if the concerned person gives his/her prior consent, if disclosure is necessary to protect someone from harm or if a potential criminal act comes to the attention of the IF or NOC.

### **2.12 Involvement of athletes**

Involve athletes in the development of safeguarding policies.

*These IOC Guidelines for IFs and NOCs related to creating and implementing a policy to safeguard athletes from harassment and abuse in sport were approved by the IOC Executive Board on 2 June 2016, in Lausanne*