



# Safeguarding Policy

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## 1. Introduction

Turkish Athletic Federation is responsible for promoting athletics within Türkiye and for making it a safe environment for children and adults to develop their talents and achieve their goals; these should be fun and enjoyable experiences. This Safeguarding Policy (“this Policy”) establishes the responsibilities of Turkish and all licensed clubs to ensure that **children and adults** are able to participate in athletics safely.

Upholding this Policy and promoting the best practice principles contained within it will enable the Turkish Athletic Federation provide and create safe, happy, and inspiring environments for their communities to enjoy and participate in athletics.

Abuse may be carried out by men or women, or children. It happens in every area of the world, in every sport and organisation. No area can consider itself to be exempt or protected from its impact.

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 that and abuse, harassment or exploitation may occur. The more vulnerable an individual, whether because of age, disability, finance or status the more likely they are to be subject to abuse, harassment or exploitation.

## 2. Policy Statement of Commitment and Principles

Turkish Athletic Federation believes that **everyone** in athletics should be treated with respect and dignity and has the right to participate free from any abuse, harassment or exploitation. Turkish Athletic Federation will protect everyone within the scope of this Policy from such behaviour. Turkish Athletic Federation believes that this right is regardless of the individual's race, colour, age, disability, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion or belief. Turkish Athletic Federation is committed to preventing abuse, harassment or exploitation towards those who fall within the scope of this Policy and to creating safe environments for **all** to participate and enjoy the sport to the best of their abilities. Athletes, coaches (by which term we include all athlete support staff), officials, volunteers and board members are all protected by this Policy; they must all understand their rights as well as their duties in this arena.

The principles on which this Policy is based are:

- **Everyone** has the right to 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 participate, enjoy and develop personally through athletics in a safe, inclusive environment free from all forms of abuse, harassment or exploitation.
- **Everyone, both children and adults**, has the right to have their voices heard particularly if raising a concern about their own or another person's welfare. **Everyone** should know who to ask for help when they have a concern about an individual's behaviour.
- **Everyone** is responsible for the care and protection of children making decisions in their best interests, as their welfare is paramount.

The following items describe the principles that will be followed by Safeguarding Officers at the Turkish Athletic Federation.

- **Objectivity** guaranteed through the collaboration of 2 SGOs in respect to gender equality principle;
- **Accountability**—accountability and transparency in safeguarding practice;

- **Empowerment**—people being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions;
- **Prevention**—it is better to take action before harm occurs;
- **Proportionality**—the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk;
- **Protection**—support and representation for those in greatest need;
- **Partnership**—local solutions through services working with their communities.

In order to achieve this Turkish Athletic Federation will:

- acknowledge their board members' responsibility to implement and enforce this Policy and will appoint a "Safeguarding Champion" to incorporate the principles of this Policy into all aspects of their programmes;
- have two named members of staff or volunteers who are responsible for leading on safeguarding a "Safeguarding Officers"; in order to achieve gender equality and create a safe environment for everyone these Safeguarding officers will be a female and a male;
- ensure everyone knows this named members of staff or volunteers are the individuals they can turn to if they are worried or have a concern about another person and their behaviour;
- make sure to help Safeguarding Officers to receive necessary trainings about the updates and introduce them to the other member federations' Safeguarding officers and allow them to receive on-site Safeguarding consultations from other federations if need be;
- ensure that everyone is aware of their rights and the process that will be followed if a concern is raised;
- produce and implement policies and procedures including codes of conduct, rules and disciplinary procedures 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 with professional development programmes;
- deal with all concerns, allegations and complaints in a fair, transparent, timely and efficient manner ensuring all complainants are updated regularly;
- carry out all investigations and adjudications in a manner that ensures an appropriate level of independence to ensure there is no bias in the resulting report or risk assessment;
- deal with all information about concerns, complaints or allegations confidentially (to the extent permitted by law) and securely;

- recruit appropriate people to roles, whether staff or volunteers, carry out background checks, follow up on references and ensure that only suitable people are appointed; and
- work with local agencies, Non-Governmental Organisations and community groups providing support and guidance for social services to ensure that everyone is kept safe;
- provide guidance and trainings on gender equality, protection of children and protection of people in need.

### **3. Definitions**

#### **Abuse, harassment and exploitation**

Abuse, harassment and exploitation are described below. They can be perpetrated by both men and women and is often where one party is in a position of power over the other. Where one individual has power over another in a relationship it can lead to situations where abuse is easier to occur. Vulnerable individuals need to be protected and those in authority should ensure that appropriate safeguarding measures are put in place. It is also important to understand that coaches, officials or volunteers may be abused by others.

**Psychological abuse** is an unwelcome act including vilification, belittling, rejection, confinement, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation, infantilisation or any other behaviour which may diminish an individual's sense of identity, dignity or self-worth. This is at the centre of most types of abuse as when these occur so does psychological abuse. This can often be seen as bullying or cyber-bullying.

**Physical abuse** is any intentional or unwanted act for example kicking, beating, biting or burning which causes injury or physical harm. It can include the 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. Forced or excessive training may escape notice in a sporting environment as the ambitions of both athletes and coaches, as well as peer pressure, may induce one or both to impose or take on excessive training loads and/or competition commitments. Dialogue among athletes and coaches aimed at setting mutually agreed and achievable performance goals can help define tolerable and acceptable training demands. It is up to coaches to temper ambitions that may run counter to an athlete's health and wellbeing.

**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. This can involve individuals looking at or making sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging others to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a person in preparation for abuse.

**Grooming** is the process (whether online or in person) whereby an individual builds a relationship with an athlete encouraging them to trust them so that the groomer can manipulate and exploit them for their own advantage. Grooming an athlete's family, entourage and friends often leads those individuals to believe that the groomer is dependable and trustworthy enabling the groomer to have access to the athlete. By manipulating the athlete and exploiting the relationship they will make the athlete believe they have to comply with the groomer's demands. The power a groomer has over the athlete is used to isolate them from friends and family who might otherwise warn or caution them from complying with the groomer's demands.

**Harassment** is unwanted or unwelcome behaviour which offends or makes the person feel humiliated or intimidated. Power harassment is where someone in a position of power over another individual, usually in a workplace, uses that power to physically or psychologically harass another person in a lower position. Power harassment can include exclusion, inappropriate work assignments (too little, too much or of a lower level than acceptable) as well as intrusive behaviour.

**Sexual harassment** is any unwanted or unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal, non-verbal or physical. Examples of verbal sexual harassment include unwanted or degrading intimate questions relating to body, clothes or one's private life, jokes with a sexual innuendo and proposals or demands for non-consensual sexual acts. These may be 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. Examples of physical sexual harassment are unnecessary physical contact with a sexual nature such as pinching, attempting to kiss or caress or touching.

**Exploitation** is when someone exercises control over another person and/or their assets for their own "personal gain" and without the fully informed 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 express and fully informed consent of the other person. Examples in athletics may be fraudulent misrepresentation of an athlete's age or nationality, acting on behalf of an athlete fraudulently or taking an unreasonable share of the proceeds of sponsorship or funding

arrangements. Exploitation comes in many different guises. Examples include sexual exploitation, financial exploitation and signing up athletes to long term contracts while they are still children.

**Neglect** is the failure to provide a minimum level of care either physical or emotional which causes harm, allowing harm to be caused or creating an imminent danger of harm. This usually relates to the care given by parents or caregivers to children but is also relevant to other people who have a duty of care towards another person such as a coach or team leader towards an athlete. This can include the failure to provide adequate water in high temperatures, adequate clothing in cold temperatures, suitable food, accommodation or safe travel arrangements.

Abuse, harassment and exploitation may be based on race, religion, colour, beliefs, ethnic origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, socio-economic status and athletic ability or a combination of any of these characteristics. It can be a single isolated incident or a series of events, in person or online, deliberate, unsolicited or coercive. Bullying, hazing and negligence all other aspects of harassment, abuse or exploitation and should be treated in the same way under the terms of this Policy.

Any of these forms of abuse, harassment or exploitation may include an aspect of financial abuse. It may be that an individual may be coerced into signing contracts or agreements which benefit others financially but are not necessarily of financial benefit to themselves. Any element of coercion may be abuse, harassment or exploitation if the individual is a child, if the individual has not authorised someone to act on their behalf or if the individual has not been adequately advised by an independent professional such as an accountant or lawyer on the impact of the terms of the agreement.

There may be times when actions which might not be abusive to one person may be abusive or harmful due to the vulnerability of the individual who is being abused. This may be due to the persons age, ability or other form of vulnerability.

Abuse, harassment, and exploitation often result from an abuse of authority by someone in a position of trust, meaning the improper use of power by someone in a position of influence, power or authority by an individual against another person. This is often when there is an age difference, but it can also happen between peers – people of similar ages. There can be abuse between athletes or indeed coaches, officials or any others involved in athletics. This is sometimes referred to peer-on-peer abuse. It should be dealt with in the same way as any other type of concern. Abuse can also be perpetrated by family members such as parents, partners, and siblings.

**Discrimination** – is the act and attitude related to the oppressive behaviours towards a person and/or people based on their disability, race, gender, age, religion, cultural background, sexual orientation, political convictions, or appearance.

**Child** - a “child” or “children” refers to an individual or group of individuals who have not yet reached the age of 18 years old.

**Safeguarding** - is the process of protecting vulnerable persons, children and adults from abuse, harassment and exploitation. Creating a safe and welcoming environment where everyone is respected and valued is at the heart of safeguarding. Everyone involved with athletics has a role to play in making sure they actively prevent abuse, harassment and exploitation, listen to accounts from children and adults of their experiences and respond safely and fully if there is a problem.

#### **4. Scope of this Policy**

This Policy applies to Turkish Athletic Federation, its athletes, officials, staff and any other person associated with Turkish Athletic Federation. This includes officials, volunteers, members of an athlete’s entourage, parents, carers and anyone associated with athletics within Türkiye. All those to whom this Policy applies must comply with the Policy. Any breaches of this Policy by these individuals will be subject to potential disciplinary action.

#### **5. Reporting of concerns**

Everyone is responsible for ensuring that no one suffers abuse, harassment or exploitation. Therefore, if anyone has any suspicions that a child or adult may have been subject to abuse, harassment or exploitation in some form or about the behaviour of another person they must report these concerns to Turkish Athletic Federation’s Safeguarding Officer so that they can be assessed and dealt with appropriately. It may also be necessary for the police or social services to be involved and Turkish Athletic Federation’s Safeguarding Officer will do this and coordinate the actions required.

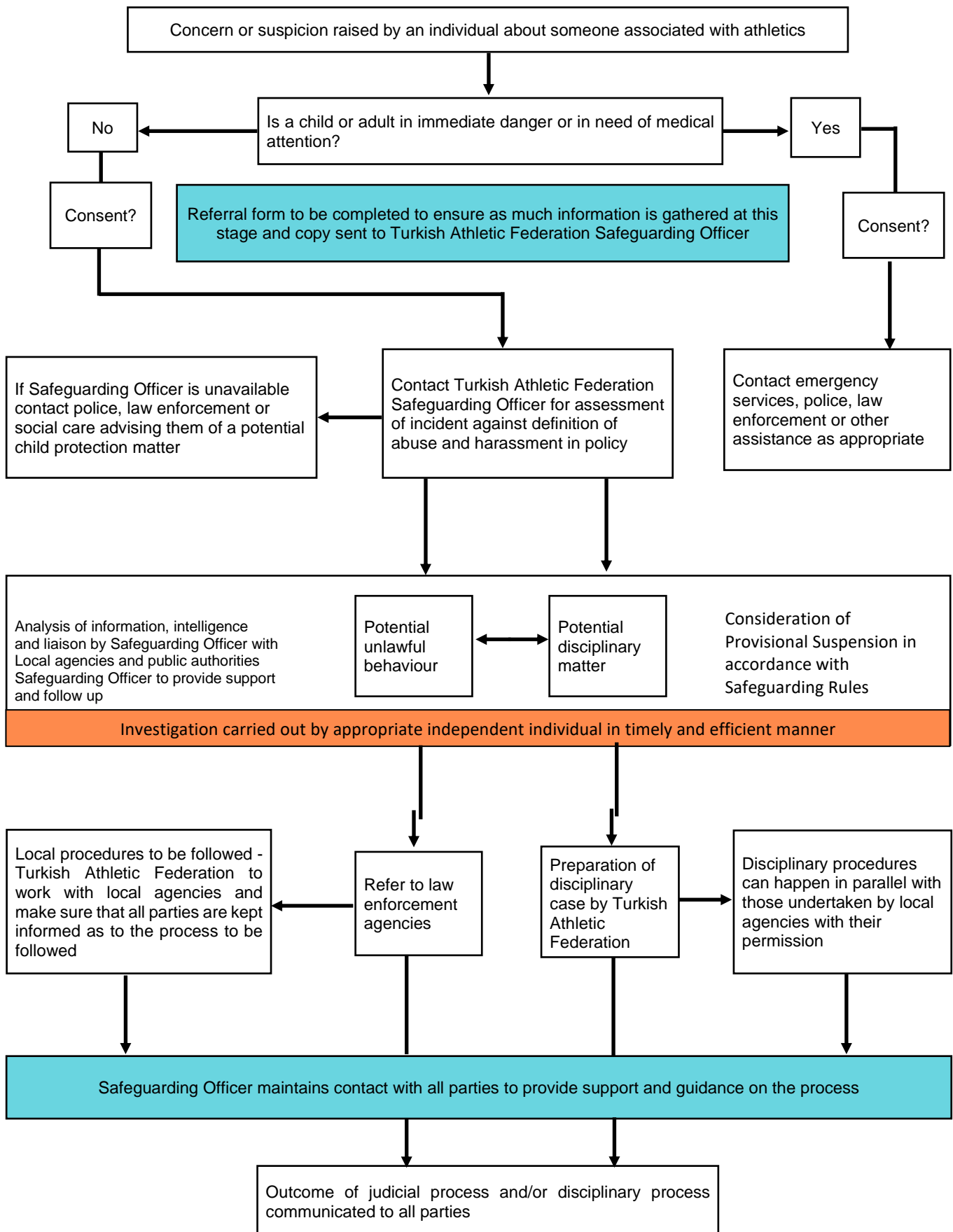
If an individual is at immediate risk of serious harm, there should be no delay in reporting a matter to the emergency services. There are occasions when the consent of the individual to report a matter

should be sought, taking into account their age and mental capacity. The Turkish legislation system and laws dictate that a child under 18 is considered a minor and a child. Over 18 is considered adults.

Concerns, allegations and other matters reported to Turkish Athletic Federation should be investigated by someone who is not connected to the matter in any way. It is not necessary for an investigator to be entirely separate from Turkish Athletic Federation if it is a “low level concern”. The more serious the concern or allegation the more necessary it is for the individual investigating it to be separate from Turkish Athletic Federation. If a concern is referred to the police, then they will carry out an investigation. Any investigation Turkish Athletic Federation carries out for a serious concern should be done by an individual who is not connected to Turkish Athletic Federation and is contracted to do the investigation ensuring it will be carried out without bias, efficiently and as quickly as is possible.



## 6. Reporting flowchart



## **7. Codes of Conduct**

Turkish Athletic Federation has the following codes of conduct:

- coaches;
- athletes;
- technical officials;
- volunteers;
- federation staff;
- medical staff;
- safeguarding officers;
- parents and carers
- and others

All these codes of conduct are about treating others with respect, dignity, equality and integrity and are based on the principle that everyone has value and is worthy of respect. They are designed to provide everyone associated with athletics with the behaviour that is expected of them Turkish Athletic Federation. These codes should form part of any training programme for these groups to ensure that everyone is aware of the existence of the codes, the expectations of Turkish Athletic Federation and the possibility of disciplinary action if they are not adhered to. The codes have been developed following consultation with the groups involved and will be regularly reviewed.

Codes of conduct will be made available to the relevant groups and displayed on any noticeboards, websites or on paperwork such as membership renewal forms.

If an individual is aware of any other individual breaching the relevant code of conduct then this should be referred to the Safeguarding Officer as a concern for investigation and potential disciplinary action. Breaches of any of the codes of conduct may be dealt with under disciplinary procedures.

## **8. Recruitment**

All applicants for any roles, whether staff or volunteers that work closely with children will be required to undertake background checks/criminal records checks. All applicants will be required to attend an interview, provide two references and once appointed will attend an induction session. An interview will include questions about the individual and their experience as well as their knowledge

of safeguarding. References will be verified for their veracity and should be from an employer, either current or previous, and another individual who has experience of the applicant's work with children or in sport. Induction sessions will ensure that the successful applicant is aware of their role and responsibilities as well as information about safeguarding policy and procedures.

## **9. Training and Education**

All members of staff of Turkish Athletic Federation, volunteers and officials will be given safeguarding training relevant to their role within the organisation. Those working with children will be given specialist training specifically relating to their responsibilities for the children in their care. Also, parents and/or carers of the children will be trained and informed about how and where they can contact the Safeguarding official. Safeguarding officials will be sent to other countries federations to have hands-on learning opportunities and experiences, and to observe the policies and procedures carried out by the other countries' federations.

Safeguarding training should be undertaken and updated annually.

## **10. Disciplinary Procedure**

Breaches of this Policy and Turkish Athletic Federation's Safeguarding Rules will be dealt with under Turkish Athletic Federation's Disciplinary Procedures and should be referred to for further guidance.

The stages of disciplinary procedures are as follows:

- Verbal warning,
- Written warning,
- Final written warning
- Dismissal.

To achieve a fair evaluation of the situation, the following steps will be implemented:

1. Understand the issues correctly,
2. Follow a fair procedure,
3. Investigate and evaluate thoroughly,
4. Refer the case to the disciplinary committee,
5. Prepare for a disciplinary hearing/meeting and hold one,
6. Inform the person(s) concerned about the outcome,

7. Allow follow-up after the Disciplinary Procedure.

## **11. Review of this Policy**

This Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

## **12. Monitoring**

The monitoring of this Policy and the implementation of it will be carried out regularly as appropriate by Turkish Athletic Federation and the Safeguarding Officers.