



SPORTS FEDERATION & OLYMPIC COMMITTEE OF HONG KONG, CHINA

CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

1. Introduction

The Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China (the Federation) is fully committed to the safeguarding of children. All children have an equal right to protection regardless of their age, gender, ability, culture, racial origin, religious belief and sexual identity. Child abuse will not in any forms be tolerated.

This policy gives the definition of child abuse, provides guidelines and explains the principles for responding to and handling child abuse incidents, and introduces measures to enhance child safeguarding.

It applies to all persons working for the Federation or on the Federation's behalf in any capacity, including Officers, Committee Members, staff members, National Sports Associations (NSA) members involved in the business of the Federation, Members of the Hong Kong, China Delegation (e.g. Chef de Mission, headquarters officials, medical officials, sports team officials and athletes), members of staff of contractors, interns and volunteers.

2. Definition

- 2.1 Child abuse is defined as any act of commission or omission that endangers or impairs the physical / psychological health and development of an individual under the age of 18.
- 2.2 Child abuse is committed by individuals, singly or collectively, who, by their characteristics (e.g. age, status, knowledge, organizational form), are in a position of differential power that renders a child vulnerable.
- 2.3 Child abuse may take the following forms:
 - 2.3.1 **Physical harm / abuse:** This refers to physical injury or suffering inflicted on a child by violent or other means (e.g. punching, kicking, striking with an object, poisoning, suffocation, burning, etc.), where there is a definite knowledge, or a reasonable suspicion that the injury has been inflicted non-accidentally.
 - 2.3.2 **Sexual abuse¹:** This refers to forcing or enticing a child to take part in any acts of sexual activity for sexual exploitation or abuse and the child does not consent to or fully understand or comprehend this sexual activity that occurs to him/her due to mental immaturity. The sexual activity may involve physical contact (e.g. inappropriate touching) or non-contact activities (e.g. showing of pornography).

¹ For the purpose of this policy, conduct of a sexual nature which constitutes sexual harassment will also be dealt with as a child abuse incident.

- 2.3.3 **Neglect:** This refers to a severe or repeated pattern of lack of attention to a child's basic needs that endangers or impairs the child's health or development (e.g. failing to provide adequate food / appropriate medical care).
- 2.3.4 **Psychological harm / abuse:** This refers to a repeated pattern of behaviour and/or an interaction between carer and child, or an extreme incident that endanger(s) or impair(s) the child's physical and psychological health (including emotional, cognitive, social and physical development) (e.g. shaming as a form of motivation).
- 2.4 Child abuse may take the form of a repeated pattern, multiple incidents or a single but serious incident. An individual incident may also involve more than one type of harm / abuse to the child.
- 2.5 A comprehensive list of possible indicators of child abuse is provided in Chapter 4 "Case Identification, Initial Handling and Reporting" of "Protecting Children from Maltreatment – Procedural Guide for Multi-disciplinary Co-operation", which is developed by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) and is available in the following link:
[https://www.swd.gov.hk/storage/asset/section/1447/en/Procedural_Guide_Core_Procedures_\(Revised_2020\)_Eng_2Nov2021.pdf](https://www.swd.gov.hk/storage/asset/section/1447/en/Procedural_Guide_Core_Procedures_(Revised_2020)_Eng_2Nov2021.pdf).
- 2.6 Examples of good practice and risky practice when interacting with children while carrying out work or duties for the Federation are given at **Appendix I**.

3. Responding to Child Abuse

- 3.1 A person may become aware of a possible child abuse incident by:
 - 3.1.1 seeing it happen;
 - 3.1.2 hearing it from someone else;
 - 3.1.3 hearing it directly from the child concerned; or
 - 3.1.4 receiving an anonymous allegation.
- 3.2 If a person suspects or becomes aware of a possible child abuse incident, he/she should in the first instance record all the facts using the form at **Appendix II**. The completed form should be forwarded to the respective Child Safeguarding Officer, whose contact details are given in 7.1 below.
- 3.3 The safety, needs and welfare of the child concerned shall be of top priority. A person hearing the incident directly from a child should take the following steps:
 - 3.3.1 Stay calm so as not to frighten the child.
 - 3.3.2 Reassure the child that he/she did the right thing in reporting.
 - 3.3.3 Listen to the child to show that he/she is being taken seriously.
 - 3.3.4 Keep questions to a minimum so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. Only ask questions to clarify what has been said and avoid leading questions.
 - 3.3.5 Inform the child that to help stop the abuse from continuing, what he/she say will be repeated to other people.
 - 3.3.6 If the child needs urgent medical attention, take him/her to a medical professional or call the emergency services immediately.
- 3.4 While it is not the responsibility of a person to investigate or decide whether or not child abuse has taken place, all persons working for the Federation or on the Federation's behalf have the responsibility to report any suspicion of child abuse.

4. Handling Child Abuse

- 4.1 When a report of a possible child abuse incident is received, the respective Child Safeguarding Officer (please refer to 7.1 for details) will pass it to the Chief Executive in the first instance.
- 4.2 The Child Safeguarding Officer / Chief Executive will inform the parents / guardians of the child concerned immediately. The parents / guardians will be advised that the Federation will fully cooperate with any investigation and respect their right to report to the Police / SWD.
- 4.3 The incident will be reported to Child Abuse Investigation Unit (CAIU) of the Police (hotline: 3661 7100) or Family and Child Protective Services Unit (FCPSU) of SWD (hotline: 2343 2255). The Child Safeguarding Officer will coordinate with the Police / SWD for any support / follow-up.
- 4.4 Depending on the seriousness of the incident and the role of the alleged perpetrator, the Federation may take the following steps regarding the alleged perpetrator:

If the alleged perpetrator is a staff member of the Federation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. If the case is under investigation by relevant law enforcement agencies / SWD, the alleged perpetrator will be assigned other duties where he/she would not be in contact with children / the informant / other parties involved or will be suspended from duty without pay according to Sections 9 and 11 of the Employment Ordinance (Cap. 57).ii. If there is insufficient evidence to proceed with charges by relevant law enforcement agencies or the staff is acquitted from the criminal charges, but during investigation it was revealed that the staff was involved in inappropriate behaviours, the case will be recorded in the staff member's personnel file for record. In addition, his/her case will be subject to a disciplinary review according to point 17.1.4 "Staff Discipline" of SF&OC's Staff Handbook. Disciplinary sanctions will be given subject to the outcome of review. If after review, it is found that the staff member is suitable to return to work, he/she will be offered support and training, as appropriate.iii. If the alleged perpetrator is found or pleads guilty, he/she will be dismissed.
If the alleged perpetrator works for the Federation on a voluntary basis (e.g. Officer / Committee Member / NSA Member / Member of the Hong Kong, China Delegation / volunteer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. If the case is under investigation by relevant law enforcement agencies / SWD, the alleged perpetrator will be assigned other duties where he/she would not be in contact with children / the informant / other parties involved or will be suspended from his/her role.ii. If there is insufficient evidence to proceed with charges by relevant law enforcement agencies or the

	<p>alleged perpetrator is acquitted from the criminal charges, but during investigation it was revealed that he/she was involved in inappropriate behaviours, his/her case will be subject to a disciplinary review and to be endorsed by SF&OC's Board of Officers according to point 30 "Compliance with the Code" of SF&OC's Code of Conduct. Whether the alleged perpetrator could return to his/her role and complete the remaining tenure will be subject to the final decision of the Board.</p> <p>iii. If the alleged perpetrator is found or pleads guilty, his/her appointment will be terminated.</p>
<p>If the alleged perpetrator is a member of staff of a contractor of the Federation</p>	<p>i. The Federation will request the relevant company to change the staff concerned, pending the investigation outcome of the relevant law enforcement agencies / SWD.</p> <p>ii. The Federation reserves the right to terminate the contract with the relevant company if no other staff is available.</p>
<p>If the alleged perpetrator is not directly related to the Federation</p>	<p>The Federation will report the incident to the relevant law enforcement agencies / SWD for handling and follow their subsequent advice on any follow-up steps.</p>

4.5 A flow chart on handling possible child abuse incidents is provided in **Appendix III** for reference.

4.6 In case of an anonymous report, the Federation shall refer the incident to the Police / SWD for advice.

5. Principles of Handling Child Abuse

The Federation shall handle suspected incidents of child abuse based on the following principles:

5.1 **Fairness:** Enquiries and complaints should be handled in a just and impartial manner to ensure that the person reporting the incident (the informant), the alleged perpetrator, the child concerned and his/her parent(s) / guardian(s) are fairly treated, and that all parties have the chance to present their evidence.

5.2 **Confidentiality:** Assurance should be given to the informant and the child concerned that their identity and the information they provide will be kept confidential and will only be disclosed to relevant parties handling the incident (e.g. SF&OC staff, SWD, the relevant law enforcement agencies, etc.), the alleged perpetrator and the child's parent(s) / guardian(s) on a need-to-know basis.

5.3 **Promptness:** Child abuse incidents should be handled promptly because all parties concerned are under pressure. The Federation pledges to deal with incidents without any delay.

- 5.4 **Transparent procedures:** The procedures for handling child abuse incidents should be made known to all persons related to the Federation.
- 5.5 **Protection:** Informants, witnesses and the child concerned should be protected against victimization, including retaliation and discrimination. Victimization means being treated less favourably after reporting an incident or acting as witness.
- 5.6 **Avoiding conflict of interest:** If the staff member who handles the enquiry / child abuse incident is closely related to the informant, the alleged perpetrator, the child concerned or his/her parent(s) / guardian(s) (e.g. relatives), or the alleged perpetrator is the person-in-charge of child abuse incidents, the incident should be handled by another person.
- 5.7 **Discretion:** Empathy shall be shown to the feelings of the child concerned (e.g. avoid asking the child to repeat his/her story to multiple parties, appoint investigators of the same sex to interview the child, etc.) to ensure that the child would not be unnecessarily distressed or humiliated. Child abuse incidents should be handled discreetly such that related parties would not be unnecessarily distressed.

6. Measures for Child Safeguarding

- 6.1 **Awareness:** The Federation shall ensure that all persons working for the Federation or on the Federation's behalf are aware of the high standards of behaviour and conduct expected of them in child safeguarding through the following means:
 - 6.1.1 Uploading this policy onto the Federation's website for stakeholders' reference;
 - 6.1.2 Requiring all persons working for the Federation or on the Federation's behalf in any capacity to sign an undertaking to comply with this policy;
 - 6.1.3 Providing regular training to staff members who have contact with children to enhance their awareness of child safeguarding;
 - 6.1.4 Collaborating with the SWD, Plan International or other relevant organizations to provide seminars or workshops on child safeguarding to stakeholders on a need basis; and
 - 6.1.5 Encouraging NSAs to formulate a policy on child safeguarding and to make reference to the International Olympic Committee's Toolkit on "Safeguarding athletes from harassment and abuse in sport".
- 6.2 **Prevention:** The Federation shall take the following precautionary measures when employing staff:
 - 6.2.1 Making every effort during recruitment to understand candidates' attitude towards child safeguarding (e.g. asking screening questions during interviews, conducting background checks, etc.);
 - 6.2.2 Requiring all potential employees (including all coaches) who need to be in contact with children or mentally incapacitated persons at work to apply for the Sexual Conviction Record Check before offering an appointment; and
 - 6.2.3 Requiring potential employees from outside Hong Kong to provide proof issued by their previous country / region of residence to the effect that they do not have any criminal conviction records against sexual offences.
- 6.3 **Reporting:** The Federation shall ensure that all persons working for the Federation or on the Federation's behalf are clear on what steps to take where suspicions or concerns arise regarding child abuse. Furthermore, the Federation shall cultivate a culture where all

persons feel that they can openly discuss issues related to child abuse without fear of retribution.

7. Other Relevant Information

7.1 The Federation has appointed three Child Safeguarding Officers and their contact details are given below:

Division / Team	Child Safeguarding Officer	Tel. no.
Secretariat	Deputy Manager (Admin & HR)	2504 8512
Olympism Education	Deputy Manager (Education)	2504 8531
Sports Legacy Scheme	Deputy Manager (Sports Legacy Scheme)	2504 8127
Address: Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China, 2/F, Olympic House, 1 Stadium Path, So Kon Po, Hong Kong		
Email: secretariat@hkolympic.org		

7.2 This policy shall undergo review once every two years. This version was last reviewed on 1 April 2022.

Child Safeguarding Policy – Code of Conduct

Examples of good practice and risky practice when interacting with children while carrying out work or duties for the Federation are given below:

Good practice	Risky practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interact with children in a professional way directly related to one's work or duties. - Communicate with children (including through electronic means) in a transparent and accountable manner. - Use supportive language and tone. - Be responsive to a child's needs and arrange activities that are suitable to children's age and capability. - Treat all children equally and with respect and dignity. - Keep activities open to observation. - Touch should be age-appropriate and only with the necessary amount for coaching, training, safety or medical needs. - Gain written parental consent for any away trips or activities. - Ensure that if mixed-gender children are taken on away trips, they are always accompanied by staff members of both genders. - Respect the trust of children and maintain appropriate boundaries and relationship with them. - Teach children the safety rules and ensure that they understand the given instruction. - Ensure a suitable staffing ratio of adult to children in activities. - Ensure the activities' equipment is fit for purpose, safe to use and placed appropriately. - Ensure surrounding environment is appropriate and safe for children's activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interact with children in an overfamiliar way not directly related to one's work or duties (e.g. oversharing personal information). - Communicate with a child in a private and excessive manner. - Humiliate or intimidate a child (e.g. shouting or swearing). - Neglect a child's needs (e.g. assigning inappropriate activities or training loads and requiring children to participate when injured or unwell). - Discriminate against children's gender, race, sexual orientation and ability. - Unnecessarily spend excessive amounts of time alone with a child away from others (e.g. transporting a child alone in a car, entering a child's room / place of residence alone, inviting a child to one's home / place of residence alone, etc.). - Touch a child unnecessarily (e.g. touching on the face, chest or bottom, kissing and tickling). - Engage in questionable behaviours, such as flirting, joking and rough playing. - Allow children to use inappropriate language or bully others unchallenged. - Give and receive inappropriate gifts. - Take pictures with personal devices or in changing rooms and toilets. - Fail to record and act upon allegations of abuse made by a child.

Good practice	Risky practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Correct the inappropriate behaviours of children and take necessary actions immediately if there is possible safety risk. - Be attentive to children’s physical needs and offer rest time, water break and toilet break. - Create and maintain an open culture and inform children of what they can do if they encounter problems or difficulties. - No contact online between adult and children outside the virtual activities to avoid grooming² of children. - Ensure security setting are set to private and invite-only on the chosen platform for virtual activities. - Respect children’s right to privacy and confidentiality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expose children to extreme weather conditions without ensuring adequate clothing or hydration. - Encourage the use of drugs or harmful substances to enhance performance. - Hit, assault or physically discipline children in ways that are abusive. - Expose children to inappropriate materials such as pornography and violent pictures and videos. - Be under the influence of alcohol and drugs. - Be alone with a child in a changing room or toilet. - Leave venue with a child or children unsupervised.

² Sexual grooming refers to designedly establishing a relationship / an emotional connection with a child by various means for gaining his/her trust with an intent to sexually abuse him/her (e.g. communicating with a child through mobile phone or the Internet).



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Allegation of Child Abuse Report

Person reporting the incident (informant)		
Name of informant:	Role of informant:	
Contact details of informant:	Report time & date:	
Child concerned (victim)		
Name of victim:	Date of birth / age of victim:	
Contact details of victim:	Name of parent / guardian (specify relationship):	
Details of the incident(s)		
Date / time (or frequency):	Location:	
Name of alleged perpetrator:	Role of alleged perpetrator:	
Description of the incident(s):		
External parties contacted (if applicable): <input type="checkbox"/> Social Welfare Department <input type="checkbox"/> Police <input type="checkbox"/> Medical professional / emergency services <input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____	Advice provided by the external parties contacted (if applicable):	
Signatures:		
Informant	Child Safeguarding Officer	Chief Executive
Name:	Name:	Name:
Date:	Date:	Date:
Follow-up actions (to be completed by respective Child Safeguarding Officer)		
Actions taken: <input type="checkbox"/> Prosecution: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Case Result: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Disciplinary Review/Result: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Action: _____		

**Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China
Flowchart on Handling Possible Child Abuse Incident**

The Federation should play a monitoring role on the case and report to the Board regularly.

