



Gibraltar Athletics Safeguarding Policy

2023

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1. Introduction

Gibraltar Athletics is responsible for promoting athletics within Gibraltar 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 Gibraltar and all its federated clubs and individual members 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 are considered essential to enable Gibraltar Athletics to provide and create safe, happy and inspiring environments for all in Gibraltar to enjoy and participate in athletics.

Research by World and European Athletics has established that abuse may be carried out by men, 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. It has been found that 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; hence the need for vigilance and clear and enforceable 'codes of conduct' for all participants in the sport in whatever capacity.

2. Policy Statement of Commitment and Principles

Gibraltar Athletics 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. Gibraltar Athletics will protect everyone within the scope of this Policy from such behaviours. Gibraltar Athletics believes that this right exists regardless of the individual's race, colour, age, disability, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, belief or club affiliation. Gibraltar Athletics 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, political or club 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 and, where applicable, for making decisions that are in their best interests, given that their welfare is of paramount importance.

In order to achieve this Gibraltar Athletics will:

- acknowledge their Council 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;
- establish a broadly representative 'Safeguarding Committee' (see Appendix A) to advise Council on safeguarding issues and to consider

complaints against individuals or groups of people where these contravene the Federation's 'Code of Conduct'.

- have a named volunteer from within Council who will represent it on the Safeguarding Committee and is responsible for leading on the issue of safeguarding in the capacity of "Safeguarding Officer";
- ensure everyone knows this named volunteer is the individual they can turn to if they are worried or have a concern about another person and their behaviour;
- provide support for victims of abuse via the Gibraltar Athletics Welfare Liaison Officer;
- 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 Council members and volunteers about how to deal with concerns and complaints;
- 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, carry out background checks, follow up on references and ensure that only suitable people are appointed; and
- work with local agencies, in particular the Gibraltar Sports and Leisure Authority (GSLA), Non-Governmental Organisations and community groups providing support and guidance for social services to ensure that everyone is kept safe.

3. Definitions

Abuse, harassment and exploitation

Abuse, harassment and exploitation are described below. They can be perpetrated by both men and women and often occur where inequality of power and position exists. Where one individual has power over another in a relationship it can lead to situations where abuse can more easily 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, in turn, 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 that 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, allows harm to be caused or creates 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, negligence and all other aspects of harassment, abuse or exploitation, 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 to another, due to the vulnerability of the individual who is being abused. This may be due to the person's age, ability or other vulnerability.

Abuse, harassment and exploitation often result from an abuse of authority by someone in a position of trust. It comprises the improper use of power by an individual who in a position of influence, power or authority against another person. This often occurs when there is an age difference but it can also happen between peers – or people of similar ages. There can be abuse between athletes or indeed coaches, officials or any other persons involved in athletics. This is sometimes referred to as '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.

Child

a "child" or "children" refers to an individual or group of individuals who have not yet reached 18 years of age.

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 in the sport of 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 Gibraltar Athletics, its athletes, officials, staff and any other person associated with Gibraltar Athletics. This includes officials, volunteers, members of an athlete's entourage, parents, carers and anyone associated with athletics within Gibraltar.

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.

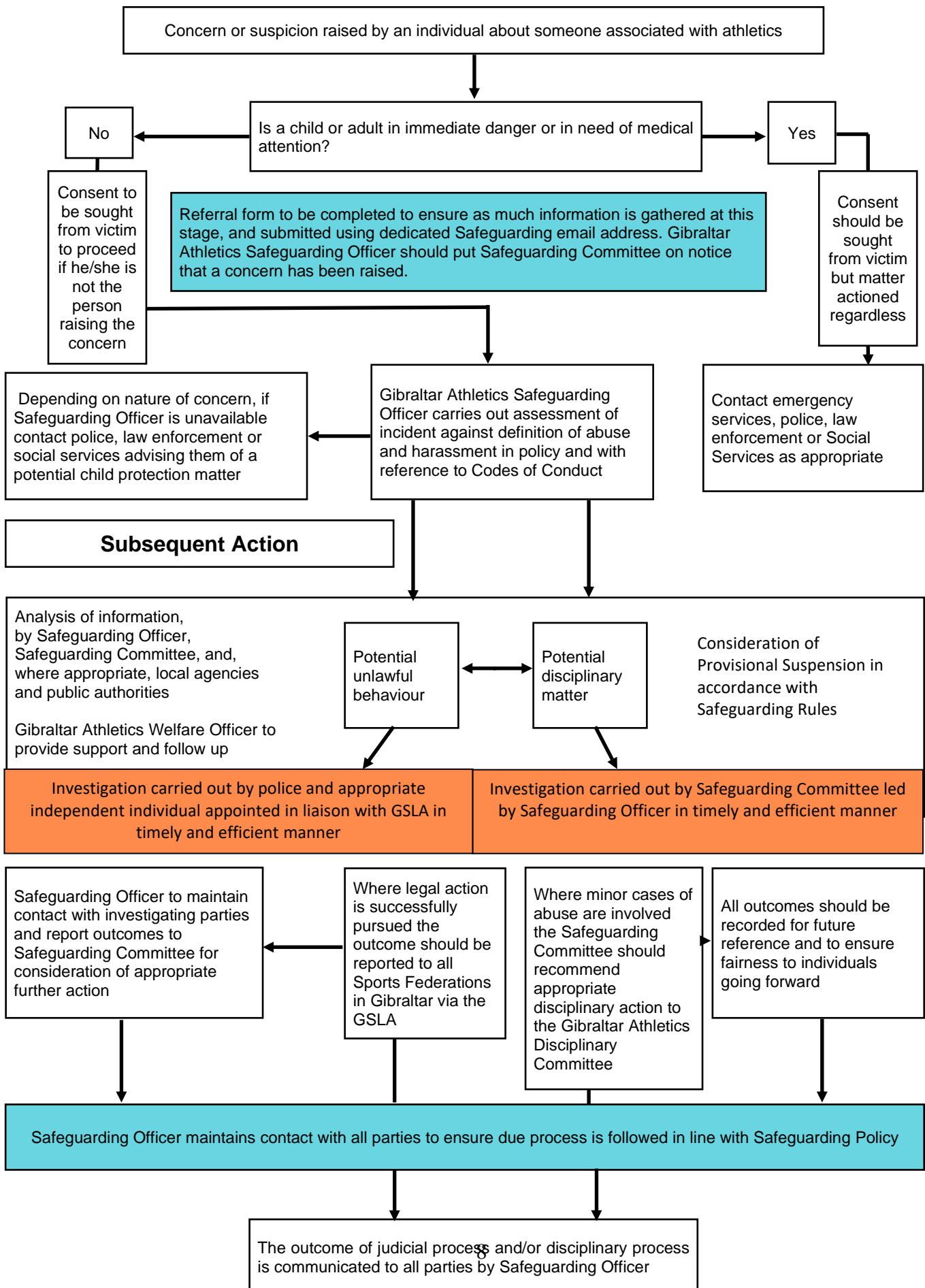
5. Reporting of concerns

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 Gibraltar Athletics Safeguarding Officer via the dedicated e-mail address **(Gib3AsSafeguardingOfficer@gmail.com)**, and using the form attached to this policy document as Appendix B, 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 the Gibraltar Athletics Safeguarding Officer will arrange 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 the person's age and mental capacity. The capacity for consent of a child under the age of 12 is different from that of a child between the ages of 12 and 18 and again between a child and an adult. If an individual refuses to give consent, the matter may still need to be reported. In such cases The Safeguarding Officer should bring the matter to the Federation's Safeguarding Committee which should decide on the necessity to proceed with reporting to the relevant legal, medical or other professional body. If the person involved is an adult, a judgement should be based on whether the alleged abuse involves illegal activity, whereas, in the case of a minor, the judgement should additionally consider whether the individual is at risk of significant harm. In all cases the welfare of the individuals at risk should be the primary consideration. Where doubts exist, the Safeguarding Committee should consult with Gibraltar Athletics' lawyers.

Concerns, allegations and other matters reported to Gibraltar Athletics 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 Gibraltar Athletics if it is a "low level concern". Such investigations should be led by the Federation's Safeguarding Officer or the Welfare Officer. The more serious the concern or allegation, the more necessary it is for the individual investigating it to be separate from Gibraltar Athletics. If a concern is referred to the police, they will be responsible for carrying out the investigation. Any investigation Gibraltar Athletics carries out for a serious concern should be done by an individual who is not connected to Gibraltar Athletics and is contracted specifically for this purpose. This will ensure that the investigation will be carried out without bias, efficiently and as quickly as is possible. The support of the Gibraltar Sports and Leisure Authority should be sought in identifying a suitable individual or team to carry out the required investigation.

6. Reporting flowchart



7. Codes of Conduct

Gibraltar Athletics has distinct codes of conduct that should be used to govern the actions of individuals involved in the sport of athletics in whatever capacity. These are divided into the following categories:

- Gibraltar Athletics Council members;
- Coaches and other athlete support staff;
- National Coach;
- Athletes;
- Officials and volunteers;
- Parents and carers of junior athletes.

All these codes of conduct are focused upon 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 level of treatment that is required by Gibraltar Athletics. These codes should form part of any training programme for these groups to ensure that everyone is aware of their existence and content, the expectations of Gibraltar Athletics 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.

The importance of the Codes of Conduct cannot be overstated since, in the case of serious breaches of behaviour that require Police intervention, they will allow the federation to act in defence of alleged victims whilst the necessary legal process is followed.

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 if there are no specific safeguarding rules in use by Gibraltar Athletics.

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. In addition any individuals involved in the coaching of minors must ensure they meet the following GSLA requirement in order to practice:

All recognised and registered Sports Associations must ensure that all their coaches, leaders and volunteers working with children and young people in HMGOG sport & leisure facilities

hold a recognised level 1 qualification (or equivalent) in the coaching of their sport, physical or leisure activity. They must also be Royal Gibraltar Police Vetted or

produce recent vetting documentation from their country of origin. They must also have taken part in a recognised safeguarding and protection children workshop.

(GSLA Safeguarding Instructions to Affiliated Sports Federations)

In the event of Gibraltar Athletics employing any individuals to work with children or athletes, 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 volunteers and officials of Gibraltar Athletics, including members of the Governing Council, 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.

Safeguarding training should be undertaken regularly; at least every five years.

10. Disciplinary Procedures

Breaches of this Policy and Gibraltar Athletics' Safeguarding Rules will be dealt with under Gibraltar Athletics' Disciplinary Procedures which should be referred to for further guidance.

11. Review of this Policy

This Policy will be reviewed on a biennial basis.

12. Monitoring

The monitoring of this Policy and the implementation of it will be carried out regularly as appropriate by Gibraltar Athletics.

Appendix A

Composition of Safeguarding Committee

The Safeguarding Committee will comprise the following:

Chairperson

Gibraltar Athletics Safeguarding Officer

Members

Gibraltar Athletics Welfare Liaison Officer

Gibraltar Athletics Council Representative

One representative from each affiliated club which has at least five athletes registered with Gibraltar Athletics.

A parent of an active, junior athlete.

- When new clubs join the Federation, they will be entitled to a seat on the Safeguarding Committee once they meet the above condition.
- The Gibraltar Athletics Council member should **not** be an athlete who is currently competing in local competitions, or aspires to be selected to represent Gibraltar in International competition, because of the possible conflict of interest.

Appendix B

When to raise a concern and how to do it.

Follow the stages outlined in the chart below if you have any concerns regarding the safety or welfare of a child or adult who is, in any way, involved in the sport of Athletics.

Remember that **you** have a responsibility to report anything that you feel puts anyone at risk; don't presume that somebody else will do it.



You have concerns about the safety of welfare of a child or adult at risk as a result of something you have seen, heard or been told about.



If the child or adult seems to be in immediate danger, contact the police on Tel 20072500, or Social Services on Tel 20048472



Contact the Gibraltar Athletics Safeguarding Officer using the dedicated e-mail G3AsSafeguardingOfficer@gmail.com and form available at gibraltarathletics.com

If you are unsure whether or not to report your concerns – contact the Gibraltar Athletics Safeguarding Officer to discuss the situation and to get advice on what to do next.

The Gibraltar Athletics Safeguarding Officer will assess the available information and inform the Gibraltar Athletics Safeguarding Committee that a concern has been raised.

More serious concerns involving possible criminal behaviour will be referred to the Police and Social Services; whilst more minor concerns will be investigated and dealt with by the Gibraltar Athletics Safeguarding Committee.

The Gibraltar Athletics Safeguarding Officer will provide advice about the support that is available to the child/adult at risk, as well as to the person reporting the concern. They will be put in contact with the Gibraltar Athletics Welfare Officer who can help arrange access to any required, relevant professionals .

Form to be used to report a safeguarding concern regarding an individual or individuals.

Safeguarding Concern Reporting Form

Your Information

Name	
E-mail Address	
Mobile phone Number	
Date of Report	

Nature of Concern

Where concern relates to a safety/safeguarding issue involving a junior athlete or vulnerable individual:

Details of child or adult to whom the concern relates

Name of child or adult you are concerned about	
Gender	
Age of person (if not an adult)	
Please describe the nature of your concern and whether it relates to a single incident or an ongoing situation.	

Where concern relates to a possible breach of the Gibraltar Athletics Codes of Conduct by an individual or individuals:

Details of person or persons to whom the concern relates

Name(s) of person(s) you are concerned about	
Gender	
Age of person(s) (if not an adult)	

Please describe the nature of your concern and whether it relates to a single incident or an ongoing situation. **Your concern must refer to the specific 'code of conduct' that has been contravened.** Also include the names of any other persons who witnessed the incident, or are aware of an ongoing situation.