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TEAM ATHLETICS ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Introduction

Team Athletics St. Vincent and the Grenadines (TASVG) is dedicated to promoting athletics within St. Vincent and the Grenadines while ensuring a safe and supportive environment for children and adults to develop their talents and achieve their goals. The experience should be enjoyable and empowering for all participants. This Safeguarding Policy (“this Policy”) establishes and outlines the responsibilities of Team Athletics St. Vincent and the Grenadines and its affiliates to ensure that children and adults can participate in athletics safely.

By adhering to this Policy, and embracing and promoting the best practice principles it recommends, Team Athletics St. Vincent and the Grenadines will help create safe, positive and motivating environments for individuals and communities to engage in and enjoy athletics.

Abuse can be perpetrated by individuals of any gender (male or female) or age, and it can occur in any part of the world, across all sports and organizations. No community or area is immune to its impact. Abuse, harassment, and exploitation tend to happen when there is an imbalance of power between individuals. When one person holds more power or authority, they may exploit that position, leading to situations of abuse or mistreatment. Vulnerable individuals—whether due to age, disability, financial situation, or social status—are particularly at risk and more likely to experience such harm.

Policy Statement of Commitment and Principles

Team Athletics St. Vincent and the Grenadines 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. TASVG will protect everyone within the scope of this Policy from such behaviour. TASVG believes that this right is regardless of the individual’s race, colour, age, disability, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion or belief. TASVG 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.

To achieve this Team Athletics St. Vincent and the Grenadines will:

- Acknowledge their board members’ responsibility to implement and enforce this Policy and will appoint a “**Safeguarding Lead**” to incorporate the principles of this Policy into all aspects of their programmes;
- have a named member of staff or volunteer who is responsible for leading on safeguarding a “**Safeguarding Officer**”;
- ensure everyone knows this named member of staff or volunteer is the individual they can turn to if they are worried or have a concern about another person and their behaviour;
- 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;
- 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.

Definitions

Definitions of some key safeguarding terminology

- **Abuse**
Abuse is the deliberate act or series of actions that lead to harm. This includes but is not limited to, verbal, physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse.
- **Additionally vulnerable**
Athletes who do not have access to the same choices as others due to dependency on

others and/or an impaired ability to resist, avoid or understand abuse. This term is commonly used to refer to disabled and deaf athletes.

- **Child**
According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is anyone under the age of 18.
- **Child Protection**
Child protection is the set of actions implemented when a child is identified as being at risk of being harmed, abused, neglected or exploited. It should be seen as an element of child safeguarding.
- **Child Safeguarding**
Child safeguarding is the set of actions, measures and procedures taken to ensure that all children are kept safe from harm, abuse, neglect or exploitation whilst in care.
- **Exploitation**
Exploitation refers to using an individual for one's benefit, gratification or satisfaction.
- **Harm**
Harm is a negative impact on an individual's physical, emotional or behavioural health and well-being. Violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation often lead to an individual being harmed.
- **Human Trafficking**
The act of recruiting, transporting, transferring, harbouring, or receiving persons by threat, coercion, abduction, fraud, or deception. An abuse of power or a position of vulnerability, or the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to get someone to consent to something, to be exploited.
- **Grooming** It occurs when someone gains a child's trust for abuse purposes, such as sexual abuse (online or in person), exploitation, or radicalization.
- **Neglect**
Neglect manifests itself in not reacting, either deliberately or through carelessness, to an act or series of actions or events which lead to harm.
- **Psychological Abuse**
Any unwelcoming act such as confinement, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation, infantilization, or any other treatment which may diminish the sense of identity, dignity, and self-worth.
- **Physical Abuse**
Any deliberate and unwelcome act – such for example punching, beating, kicking, biting and burning – that causes physical trauma or injury.

Such an 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.

- **Power Imbalance**

A power imbalance exists when one person holds authority over the other. In sports, power imbalances can occur among athletes and between athletes and their coaches, trainers, and medical/ administrative professionals.

- **Safeguarding**

Enabling a secure and comforting environment where everyone is respected and valued. refers to the actions we take to ensure ALL athletes are safe from harm when involved in sports.

- **Sexual Abuse**

Any conduct of a sexual nature, whether non-contact, contact or penetrative, where consent is coerced/manipulated or is not or cannot be given.

- **Sexual Harassment**

Any unwanted and unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal, non-verbal or physical. Sexual harassment can take the form of sexual abuse.

- **Violence**

This refers to all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse.

Scope of Policy

This Policy applies to TASVG, its athletes, officials, staff and any other person associated with TASVG. This includes officials, volunteers, members of an athlete's entourage, parents, carers and anyone associated with athletics within St. Vincent and the Grenadines. 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.

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 TASVG'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 TASVG'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. In keeping with the Children Care and Adoption Act of 2010, the age of consent is 15. Moreover, any person who has the responsibility for children is considered a Mandatory reporter.

Concerns, allegations and other matters reported to TASVG should be investigated by someone who is not connected to the matter in any way. An investigator doesn't need to be entirely separate from TASVG 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 TASVG. If a concern is referred to the police, then they will carry out an investigation. Any investigation TASVG carries out for a serious concern should be done by an individual who is not connected to TASVG and is contracted to do the investigation ensuring it will be carried out without bias, efficiently and as quickly as possible.

Confidentiality

Safeguarding Officers play a critical role in protecting the privacy and confidentiality of all individuals involved in sports, including athletes, coaches, and staff. They are entrusted with sensitive information such as personal details, medical history, and any issues related to safety or well-being. It is their responsibility to ensure that this information is treated with the highest level of confidentiality, safeguarded against unauthorized access, and shared only when necessary.

When the need arises to share information—whether with other staff members, medical professionals, or authorities—it must be done in a controlled, appropriate manner, and only with those who have the proper authorization to receive it. This is crucial for maintaining trust and ensuring the safety and well-being of all participants. Safeguarding Officers must also be mindful of the legal and ethical obligations around data protection, ensuring that all personal information is handled following relevant laws, such as privacy and data protection regulations. By upholding these standards, Safeguarding Officers help create an environment where individuals feel safe, respected, and supported, knowing their personal information is in trusted hands.

Breach of Confidentiality

Any breach of confidentiality, including the unauthorized disclosure of personal or sensitive information, will be considered a serious violation of duties. Such actions compromise the integrity of the safeguarding process and the trust placed in the Commission.

If confidentiality is breached, it will trigger an investigation. This may involve disciplinary action, legal consequences, and measures to prevent similar incidents in the future. Suspension of the member

National Representation

All individuals representing Team Athletics St. Vincent and the Grenadines in roles such as coaches, administrators, athletes, and chaperones are required to complete an online safeguarding induction session. This training is designed to ensure that everyone involved understands their

responsibilities in creating a safe and supportive environment for all participants. The induction covers essential topics such as recognizing signs of abuse, understanding appropriate behaviour, and following the proper procedures for reporting concerns. By completing this training, all representatives of Team Athletics St. Vincent and the Grenadines will be better equipped to protect the well-being of those involved in athletics and uphold the organization's commitment to safeguarding.

The session will cover topics such as how to identify warning signs of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, the principles of good practice in creating a respectful environment, and the procedures for responding to and reporting safeguarding issues. Additionally, it will outline the specific responsibilities each individual has in ensuring that the safety and well-being of all participants—especially young people—are prioritized at all times.

By ensuring that every person in a position of responsibility within Team Athletics St. Vincent and the Grenadines completes this safeguarding induction, the organization is reinforcing its commitment to creating a secure, trustworthy, and respectful environment. The training will equip all representatives with the knowledge and tools they need to recognize potential risks, handle sensitive situations appropriately, and take immediate action when necessary, helping to prevent any form of abuse or harm. Ultimately, this ensures that every athlete, coach, and staff member can participate in the sport with confidence, knowing that their safety is a top priority.

Review

This Policy will undergo a formal review every two years (biennially) to ensure its continued relevance, effectiveness, and alignment with best practices in safeguarding. During each review, the policies and procedures outlined will be carefully assessed to determine whether they adequately address emerging risks, evolving legal requirements, or changes in the sporting landscape. The review process will involve consulting relevant stakeholders, such as safeguarding officers, coaches, athletes, and legal experts, to gather feedback and identify areas for improvement. Any necessary updates or revisions will be made to strengthen the policy and maintain a safe environment for all participants. By conducting regular reviews, Team Athletics St. Vincent and the Grenadines reaffirms its commitment to safeguarding and ensuring that all involved in athletics are protected and supported.

Monitoring

The monitoring of this Policy and the implementation of it will be carried out regularly as appropriate by TASVG or an independent safeguarding authority with the necessary expertise to do this task.

Appendix

Code of conduct for national representation

Team Athletics St. Vincent and the Grenadines

This Code of Conduct sets out the expectations for the behaviour of all athletes, coaches, officials, and team members representing Team Athletics St. Vincent and the Grenadines. By participating in the national teams, individuals agree to adhere to these guidelines to maintain a safe, respectful, and positive environment for all.

1. Respect and Fairness

- Treat all individuals with respect, fairness, and dignity, regardless of their background, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or disability.
- Display good sportsmanship, both on and off the field, and avoid any form of discriminatory behaviour or language.
- Show respect for coaches, officials, teammates, opponents, and supporters, and always promote a positive image of the sport.

2. Integrity and Responsibility

- Uphold the values of honesty, integrity, and accountability in all actions and decisions.
- Never engage in any form of dishonesty, including cheating, doping, or manipulation of results.
- Take personal responsibility for actions, both in and out of competition, understanding that behaviour reflects on the reputation of the national team and the sport.

3. Safeguarding and Well-Being

- Adhere to all safeguarding policies and procedures, ensuring that the safety and well-being of all participants, especially minors, are always prioritized.
- Avoid situations that could compromise the safety or welfare of any individual, and report any concerns related to abuse, neglect, harassment, or exploitation immediately to the designated Safeguarding Officer or other relevant authorities.
- Ensure that all communications and interactions with minors are appropriate, respectful, and in line with safeguarding protocols.

4. Professional Conduct and Discipline

- Maintain a high standard of personal conduct at all times, including at training sessions, competitions, and any events associated with the national team.

- Follow the rules and guidelines set out by Team Athletics St. Vincent and the Grenadines and relevant sporting bodies, including respect for anti-doping regulations and fair play.
- Refrain from any actions or behaviour that could be seen as bullying, harassment, or inappropriate.
- Be punctual, prepared, and dedicated to training and competition, displaying a positive attitude toward the sport and teammates.

5. Social Media and Public Behaviour

- Be mindful of your conduct on social media, as public behaviour reflects on the reputation of the national team. Avoid posting content that is discriminatory, offensive, or harmful to others.
- Always think before sharing any information related to the national team or its members. Ensure that any posts or content shared align with the values and image of Team Athletics St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

6. Confidentiality and Privacy

- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of all team members, coaches, and other stakeholders.
- Share sensitive information, such as personal details or medical information, only with those who have the appropriate authority and need to know for safeguarding or team-related purposes.

7. Conflict Resolution

- Address any disagreements or conflicts respectfully and constructively.
- Always follow the appropriate channels for resolving issues, whether related to team dynamics, coaching, or other aspects of the national team experience.
- Avoid any behaviour that may escalate conflicts or create a toxic environment within the team.

8. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

- Commit to improving personal skills and knowledge, both in athletics and in understanding the importance of safeguarding practices.
- Support teammates in their development, encourage growth, and help create a positive and motivating environment for everyone involved.

Consequences of Violating the Code of Conduct

Any individual who breaches this Code of Conduct may face disciplinary action, which could include suspension or removal from the national team, depending on the severity of the violation.

Serious breaches, such as incidents of abuse or harassment, may result in legal action or permanent exclusion from participation with Team Athletics St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Acknowledgement

By signing below, I confirm that I have read, understood, and agree to abide by the Code of Conduct for National Team Representation. I acknowledge that failure to adhere to these principles may result in disciplinary action.

Name: _____
Role **(Athlete/Coach/Official/Other):** _____
Signature: _____
Date: _____

This Code of Conduct is designed to ensure that all individuals representing Team Athletics St. Vincent and the Grenadines understand their roles and responsibilities, particularly concerning safeguarding and helping create a safe, respectful, and positive environment for everyone involved.

Flowchart



