



SOUTH AFRICAN FIGURE SKATING ASSOCIATION

Safeguarding Policy

SAFSA SAFEGUARDING POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of the South African Figure Skating Association (SAFSA) Safeguarding Policy is to ensure that all athletes and other participants in figure skating are able to engage in the sport in a safe, respectful, and supportive environment, free from harassment, abuse, neglect, discrimination, or any form of non-accidental harm.

This policy seeks to align SAFSA with International Skating Union (ISU) safeguarding standards, international best practice, and South African law.

The key objectives of this policy are to:

- Affirm that all forms of harassment, abuse, exploitation, and discrimination are unacceptable and will not be tolerated under any circumstances.
- Ensure that any person who experiences or witnesses abuse or misconduct within figure skating is able to raise concerns safely, confidentially, and without fear of retaliation or victimisation.
- Provide a clear, coordinated, and effective response to safeguarding concerns arising at club, provincial, national, or international level.
- Establish preventative safeguarding measures, including education, training, and risk management strategies, to reduce the likelihood of harm occurring.
- Ensure that safe recruitment, vetting, and supervision practices are applied in order to prevent unsuitable individuals from working with children, young people, and vulnerable persons within figure skating.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

Abuse

Abuse refers to any non-accidental act or omission that causes, or has the potential to cause, physical, psychological, emotional, sexual, or financial harm. Abuse may occur as a single incident or a pattern of behaviour, and may occur in person or online. Forms of abuse include, but are not limited to:

- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual harassment
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Bullying or cyberbullying

Abuse may occur on any grounds, including but not limited to race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, age, nationality, socio-economic status, or athletic ability.

Adult

Any person aged 18 years or older, including persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, or mental impairments.

Athlete

Any person of any age participating in figure skating in any capacity, including training, competition, exhibitions, or development programmes.

Athlete with a Disability

An athlete with a long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairment which, in interaction with barriers, may hinder full and effective participation in sport on an equal basis with others.

Board

The duly **appointed Council Board** of the South African Figure Skating Association.

Bullying and Cyberbullying

Unwanted, repeated, and intentional behaviour that involves a real or perceived power imbalance and is intended to intimidate, humiliate, or cause distress. Bullying may be verbal, physical, psychological, social, or digital in nature.

Child

Any person under the age of 18 years, unless majority is attained earlier under applicable law.

For safeguarding purposes, children include early childhood, juveniles, adolescents, and young persons.

Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

A suitably trained individual appointed by a SAFSA-affiliated club to manage safeguarding matters at club level. Where possible, clubs should appoint both a male and a female DSO.

Harassment

Any inappropriate, unwanted, or unwelcome conduct—verbal, non-verbal, psychological, or physical—that violates dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment.

Hazing

An organised form of abuse or bullying, often associated with initiation practices, that involves degrading, humiliating, exploitative, or dangerous activities.

Neglect

The failure of a parent, caregiver, coach, or person in a position of trust to meet an athlete's basic physical, emotional, medical, or developmental needs, or to protect an athlete from harm.

Non-Accidental Harm

Any form of harm that is deliberate or preventable, including abuse, harassment, hazing, neglect, discrimination, exploitation, or emotional harm.

Officials

Any individual involved in the delivery or administration of sport, including coaches, technical officials, judges, administrators, medical staff, volunteers, or athlete support personnel.

Physical Abuse

Any intentional act causing physical injury, pain, or trauma, including inappropriate physical punishment, forced training, unsafe physical demands, or coercive behaviours.

Psychological Abuse

A pattern of repeated behaviour within a power-imbalanced relationship that undermines an individual's self-worth, confidence, emotional well-being, or sense of safety.

Safe Sport

A sporting environment that is respectful, inclusive, equitable, and free from all forms of non-accidental violence, abuse, harassment, and discrimination.

Senior Safeguarding Officer (SSO)

The individual appointed by SAFSA to lead safeguarding governance at national level and to oversee safeguarding complaints, investigations, and compliance.

Sexual Abuse

Any sexual conduct—contact or non-contact—where consent is coerced, manipulated, absent, or legally invalid.

Sexual Harassment

Any unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature—verbal, non-verbal, or physical—that creates discomfort, intimidation, humiliation, or distress.

Staff and Volunteers

All persons, whether paid or unpaid, who perform duties or services within SAFSA or any SAFSA-affiliated structure.

Young Adult

A person over the age of 18 transitioning from childhood to adulthood who may be at increased risk due to limited life experience, dependency, or power imbalance.

ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, PROCEDURES AND RELATED POLICIES

1. SAFEGUARDING GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

1.1 Senior Safeguarding Officer (SSO): Expectations and Responsibilities

The **Senior Safeguarding Officer (SSO)** is appointed by SAFSA and is responsible for **national safeguarding leadership and oversight**.

The SSO shall:

- Act as the **primary safeguarding authority** within SAFSA
- Provide **independent advice** to the SAFSA Board on all safeguarding matters
- Receive, assess, and manage safeguarding reports escalated from:
 - Club Designated Safeguarding Officers
 - Provincial structures
 - Direct complainants
- Ensure that all allegations that may constitute a criminal offence are **reported to the SAPS and relevant statutory authorities without delay**
- Oversee safeguarding-related disciplinary processes and make recommendations to the SAFSA Judicial Body
- Ensure **fair process, protection of complainants, and confidentiality**
- Liaise with **ISU, SASCOC, safeguarding partners, and international bodies** where required
- Monitor national safeguarding compliance and risk trends
- Approve safeguarding plans for national and international events, tours, and competitions

The SSO must be **independent of selection, performance, or coaching decisions**.

1.2 Provincial Affiliates: Appointment of DSOs

Each **provincial affiliate of SAFSA** shall:

- Appoint at least **one qualified Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)** (preferably one male and one female)
- Ensure the DSO is:
 - Trained and competent
 - Known and accessible to clubs and athletes
- Act as an **intermediate safeguarding channel** between clubs and the SSO
- Monitor safeguarding compliance of clubs within the province
- Support clubs with safeguarding implementation and reporting

1.3 Club Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs): Expectations

Each SAFSA-affiliated club **must appoint a Designated Safeguarding Officer**.

The Club DSO shall:

- Be the **first point of contact** for safeguarding concerns at club level
- Ensure all safeguarding policies are **implemented, visible, and enforced**
- Receive safeguarding reports and:
 - Record them accurately
 - Escalate serious matters immediately to the SSO
- Ensure members complete:
 - Safeguarding Awareness Training
 - Vetting and clearance requirements
- Ensure compliance with all safeguarding-related policies, including:
 - Change room use
 - Travel and transport
 - Photography and media use

- Support complainants during reporting and proceedings
- Ensure access to online reporting platforms
- Maintain secure safeguarding records

2. RESPONSIBILITIES OF SAFSA-AFFILIATED CLUBS

All SAFSA-affiliated clubs must:

- Adopt and implement this Safeguarding Policy
- Display safeguarding information prominently at club facilities
- Maintain updated contact details for:
 - Club DSO
 - Provincial DSO
 - SAFSA SSO
- Ensure clear safeguarding procedures for:
 - Training
 - Competitions
 - Tours and events
- Promote a **culture of respectful, safe sport**

3. REPORTING SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

3.1 Legal Responsibility When Reporting

All SAFSA staff, volunteers, officials, and members have a **legal and ethical duty** to report:

- Actual or suspected child abuse
- Serious safeguarding concerns
- Sexual offences or criminal conduct

Failure to report may result in **disciplinary action and legal consequences**.

3.2 Reporting Process

Safeguarding matters **must not be reported anonymously**, as anonymity prevents proper investigation and due process.

All reports shall be made:

- Via the **Online Safeguarding Reporting Platform** (as referenced in Annexures), or
- Directly to the Club DSO or SSO using the **REPORTING FORM (Annexure A)**

Complainant information will be:

- Kept confidential
- Shared strictly on a **need-to-know basis**
- Protected against retaliation

3.3 Protection of Information

Safeguarding information shall:

- Be securely stored
- Only be accessed by authorised safeguarding officers
- Never be used to intimidate, silence, or retaliate
- Be handled in compliance with **POPIA**

4. GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING DISCLOSURE

When a disclosure is made:

- Remain calm and listen carefully
- Do not interrogate, investigate, or express disbelief
- Do not promise secrecy
- Reassure the person that the concern is taken seriously
- Explain the need to report the information
- Report immediately to the DSO or SSO

The safety and wellbeing of the affected person is always the priority.

5. SPECIFIC SAFEGUARDING POLICIES

5.1 Discipline vs Punishment Policy

- Discipline must be **developmental, restorative, and respectful**
- Punishment that humiliates, degrades, frightens, or physically harms is prohibited
- Corporal punishment is strictly forbidden
- Discipline must never involve:
 - Physical force
 - Public humiliation
 - Denial of food, rest, or medical care

5.2 Change Room Policy

- Children must not share change rooms with adults
- Supervision must be:
 - Age-appropriate
 - Same-gender
 - Minimally intrusive
- No photography, video recording, or mobile phone use is permitted
- Clear signage must be displayed in all change rooms

5.3 Child Collection Policy

- Children may only be collected by:
 - Parents or legal guardians
 - Pre-authorised persons (with ID confirmation)
- If a child is not collected:

- Parents must be contacted
- The DSO must be informed
- Releasing a child to an **impaired adult is prohibited**
- Incidents must be recorded using:
 - **Checklist for Intoxication (Annexure D)**

5.4 Travel and Tour Policy (Including International Travel)

- All trips require DSO approval
- **Trip/Tour Checklist (Annexure F)** is mandatory
- Safeguarding plans must include:
 - Supervision ratios
 - Accommodation arrangements
 - Medical and emergency planning
 - International travel safeguards
- Separate sleeping arrangements for minors are compulsory

5.5 Transport Policy

- Vehicles must be roadworthy, insured, and legally compliant
- Drivers must be licensed and vetted
- No child may be left alone in a vehicle
- Emergency contact and first aid provision is mandatory

5.6 Sexual Harassment Policy

SAFSA adheres to **zero tolerance** for sexual harassment.

- All complaints are treated seriously and confidentially
- No retaliation is permitted

- Allegations involving children require **immediate removal of interaction** pending investigation

5.7 Anti-Bullying Policy

Bullying, including cyberbullying and hazing, is prohibited.

Clubs must:

- Promote respectful conduct
- Encourage reporting
- Address behaviour promptly
- Support both victims and perpetrators through education

5.8 Drug and Substance Abuse Policy

- SAFSA clubs are **drug-free environments**
- Possession, use, or distribution of prohibited substances is forbidden
- Children are managed with a **rehabilitative focus**
- Searches and testing must comply with legal and procedural safeguards

5.9 Service Provider Policy

Service providers must:

- Be vetted if engaging with children
- Never be alone with a child
- Comply with photography, alcohol, and conduct restrictions
- Report safeguarding concerns immediately

5.10 Recruitment and Vetting Policies

SAFSA requires compliance with:

- **Recruitment Policy**

- **Sexual Offences Register Policy**
- **Child Protection Register Policy**
- **Criminal Check Policy**

No person may engage in regulated roles without clearance.

5.11 Photography, Videography and Media Policies

- **Photography & Interview of Children Application (Annexure B)** required
- **Interview & Photography Consent Form (Annexure C)** required
- No filming in private areas
- Children's identities and dignity must be protected at all times

5.12 Confidentiality Policy

- Safeguarding information is confidential
- Whistleblower identities are protected
- Disclosure occurs only where necessary to protect safety or comply with law

5.13 Retention of Records Policy

- Safeguarding records retained securely
- Serious matters retained for **minimum 5 years**
- Other records retained for **minimum 3 years**

5.14 Acceptance of Rules and Protocols

All SAFSA affiliates must:

- Read and acknowledge the Safeguarding Policy
- Sign the **Acknowledgement of Safeguarding Regulations**
- Accept disciplinary consequences for breaches

6. DISCIPLINARY PROCESS (SAFSA)

- Safeguarding matters follow the SAFSA Disciplinary Procedures
- Investigations are impartial and fair
- Sanctions may include:
 - Warnings
 - Suspension
 - Termination
 - Lifetime bans
- Criminal processes proceed independently of disciplinary action