

## **The Academy of Combined Events Child Protection Policy**

The Academy of Combined Events (ACE) has adopted the general principles of the British Athletics & England Athletics Child Protection Policy, a copy of which can be downloaded from:

<http://www.britishathletics.org.uk/governance/welfare-and-safeguarding/guidance-documents-and-resource/>

The Academy of Combined Events recognises that everyone who takes part in athletics is entitled to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment.

ACE is committed to the belief that all children are entitled to a duty of care and to be protected from abuse.

All suspicions, allegations of abuse and/or poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

### **Aims**

ACE aims to create an appropriate, safe and secure training environment for the children who attend the training sessions and it will:

- Adopt national welfare policies and procedures, adhere to the codes of conduct and respond to any suspected breaches in accordance with the Welfare Procedures.
- Appoint a Welfare Officer and ensure that they are provided with appropriate training to act as a first point of contact for concerns about welfare issues.
- Ensure that all coaches and volunteers operating within the ACE environment hold the appropriate qualifications and have undertaken the appropriate checks e.g. DBS and coaching Licence.
- Ensure that coaches and where appropriate club officers and other volunteers attend recommended training in Welfare and Safeguarding and Protecting Children.
- Liaise appropriately with parents/persons with parental responsibility, coaches, national governing bodies and other relevant people/organisations to ensure that good practice is maintained
- Ensure that information is available at ACE and to all coaches and volunteers regarding contact details for local social services, the police and the NSPCC.
- Ensure that coaches, other ACE officers and volunteers always act responsibly and set an example to others including younger members.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of everyone involved with ACE and others involved in athletics and treat everyone equally.
- Consistently promote positive aspects of the sport such as fair play and never condone rule violations or the use of prohibited or age-inappropriate substances.
- Challenge inappropriate behaviour and language by others.
- Place the welfare and safety of the athlete above other considerations including the development of performance.
- Report any suspected misconduct by ACE coaches, officers, other people involved in ACE or other people involved in athletics to ACE, Regional, National or British Athletics welfare officer as soon as possible.

**Definition of a Child** - anyone who has not reached their 18th birthday. 'Children' therefore means children and young people throughout. The fact a child has reached 16 years of age, living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody, does not change his or her status or entitlement to protection under the Children Act 1989.

All coaches will adhere to the Code of Conduct for Coaches:

**As a responsible athletics Coaches they will:**

- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every athlete and others involved in athletics and treat everyone equally.
- Place the welfare and safety of the athlete above the development of performance.
- Be appropriately qualified including obtaining DBS clearance, update their licence and education as and when required by British Athletics and adhere to the terms of the coaching licence.
- Ensure that activities they direct or guide are appropriate for the age, maturity, experience and ability of the individual athlete.
- At the outset clarify with athletes (and where appropriate, with parents or carers) exactly what is expected of them and what athletes are entitled to expect from them.
- Never try to recruit, either overtly or covertly, athletes who are already receiving coaching. If approached by an athlete receiving coaching refer immediately to the coach currently providing coaching support.
- Try to observe a recommended maximum ratio of 1 coach to 12 athletes at a training session or work in partnership with another coach/coaching assistant.
- Cooperate fully with others involved in the sport such as technical officials, team managers, other coaches, doctors, physiotherapists, sport scientists and representatives of the governing body in the best interests of the athlete.
- Consistently promote positive aspects of the sport such as fair play and never condone rule violations or the use of prohibited or age-inappropriate substances.
- Encourage and guide athletes to accept responsibility for their own performance and behaviour
- Develop appropriate working relationships with athletes based on mutual trust and respect, especially with those athletes under 18 years or vulnerable adults.
- Not exert undue influence to obtain personal benefit or reward.
- All coaches **MUST** strictly maintain a clear boundary between friendship and intimacy with athletes and must not conduct inappropriate relationships with athletes. Relationship with athletes can cause significant problems for other people, raising concerns of favouritism and/or victimisation should the relationship later end.
- In particular, coaches **MUST NOT** allow an intimate personal relationship to develop between themselves and any athlete aged under **18 years**. Any violation of this could result in a coach licence being withdrawn. It may also be a criminal offence to conduct a relationship with an athlete aged under 16 years. It may also be a violation of their coaching licence to form an intimate personal relationship with a vulnerable adult coached by them.
- It is **strongly recommended** that they do not allow intimate relationships to develop between themselves and athletes coached by them aged over 18 years.

**As a responsible coach, when participating in or attending any athletics activities, including training/coaching sessions and competition events they will:**

- Act with dignity and display courtesy and good manners towards others.
- Avoid swearing and abusive language and irresponsible behaviour including behaviour that is dangerous to themselves or others, acts of violence, bullying, harassment and physical and sexual abuse.

- Challenge inappropriate behaviour and language by others.
- Be aware that their attitude and behaviour directly affects the behaviour of athletes under their supervision.
- Never engage in any inappropriate or illegal behaviour
- Ensure that at all times they work within their professional capacity, under no circumstances offering services they are not qualified to conduct.
- Avoid destructive behaviour and leave athletics venues as they found them.
- Not carry or consume alcohol to excess and/or illegal substances.
- Avoid carrying any items that could be dangerous to themselves or others excluding athletics equipment used in the course of their athletics activity.

**In addition, coaches should follow these guidelines on best coaching practice:**

- Avoid critical language or actions, such as sarcasm which could undermine an athlete's self esteem.
- Avoid spending time alone with young athletes unless clearly in the view of others to protect both themselves and the young athlete. In special circumstances, for example when coaching elite young athletes, one to one coaching sessions may form part of the required training schedule. In this circumstance, parental/guardian consent must be sought and obtained prior to sessions taking place. The coach must inform the parent/guardian of the venue for training and an emergency contact number should be provided by both the coach and parent/guardian.
- Avoid taking young athletes alone in their car.
- Never invite a young athlete alone into their home
- Never share a bedroom with a child.
- Always explain why and ask for consent before touching an athlete
- Ensure that parents/carers know and have given consent before taking a young athlete away from the usual training venue.
- Work in same-sex pairs if supervising changing areas.
- Respect the right of young athletes to an independent life outside of athletics.
- Report any accidental injury, distress, misunderstanding or misinterpretation to the parents/carers and the ACE Welfare Officer as soon as possible.
- Report any suspected misconduct by other coaches or other people involved in athletics to ACE, Regional, National or British Athletics Welfare Officer as soon as possible.

**Actions by Child Protection Officer or (if absent) any officer of ACE**

Whilst it is not the responsibility of coaches, volunteers or others associated with ACE to decide whether a concern constitutes abuse, it is their responsibility to report any concerns about the welfare of a child. These concerns may arise due to:

- An individual disclosing that they are being abused.
- The behaviour of an adult towards a child.
- A number of indicators observed in a child over a period of time

When responding to a disclosure, the person involved should not:

- Probe for more information than is offered.

- Speculate or make assumptions.
- Show shock or distaste.
- Make comments about the person against whom the allegations have been made.
- Make promises or agree to keep secrets.
- Give a guarantee of confidentiality.

All suspicions and disclosures must be reported appropriately. It is acknowledged that strong emotions can be aroused particularly in cases of possible sexual abuse or where there is a misplaced loyalty to a colleague.

#### **What to do:**

1. Advise the child that you will not be able to maintain confidentiality.
2. Listen to the child rather than question him/her.
3. Never stop a child who is freely recalling significant events.
4. As soon as is practicable following disclosure, make a note of what is said, taking care to record the time, date, setting and people present.
5. Any person with a suspicion or allegation of child abuse shall report this to the ACE Welfare Officer.
6. The person reporting the suspicions or making the allegations must be prepared to speak to the appropriate authorities to clarify their concerns.
7. Any person suspected of abusing a child should not be approached by another member of ACE concerning the abuse issue.
8. Other ACE officials should deal with matters if the person who would otherwise deal with the matter is compromised by a relationship or friendship with the person against whom the suspicion has emerged.
9. Any child, parent or person is encouraged to contact the Social Services or the police local to them, directly, without referring the matter to ACE's Welfare Officer.
10. Any coach or member of ACE who has been accused of abusing a child will be suspended by ACE without prejudice pending the investigation.
11. If the person under investigation is found guilty by law in any child related crime, the person will not be allowed to continue his/her activity at ACE and will not be allowed to be associated with ACE. If the person under investigation is not found guilty by law but gross neglect or serious unacceptable behaviour according to ACE's constitution is suspected, the person will be suspended temporarily or permanently based on the ACE's Management Committee decision. The relevant governing bodies of athletics will be informed by ACE if the person is found guilty by law of any child related crime.
12. When making a referral, the following information should be supplied:
  - a) Factual information about the child and his/her family.
  - b) Be clear about what your involvement is with the child and their family

- c) What is the source of your concern? Is it something you have seen, something the child has said? Is it based on the concern of others and if so, whom?
- d) Why are you concerned? Is it based on the child's behaviour, an injury, what the child said? Has the concern developed over time or just today?
- e) What evidence, if any do you have to support your concern? This may include what the child has said to you directly. If so - are you aware of anyone else the child has spoken to?
- f) Whom do you believe to be the source of harm/potential harm to the child?
- g) Are there other children in the family or other children about whom you have concerns?
- h) In your opinion does this child need protection and, if so, why?

*Always record the reason for your concern and any action taken prior to your referral.*

*Always ensure your referral is followed up in writing.*

#### **Child abuse definitions:**

Abuse can occur wherever there are children. There are four main types of abuse:

- **Physical abuse** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.
- **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express his/her views, deliberately silencing him/her or 'making fun' of what he/she says or how he/she communicates. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, which especially applies to when a child shares a protected characteristic e.g. racist, sexual or homophobic bullying or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
- **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching

sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children

- **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs