

Communication No. 2828

ISU Safeguarding Policy

In accordance with the ISU Constitution, the ISU Council has considered and adopted a revised version of the ISU Safeguarding Policy.

This Communication contains the ISU Safeguarding Policy and replaces Communication 2479 with immediate effect.

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ISU Safeguarding Policy

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INTRODUCTION

The International Skating Union (ISU) believes that everyone involved in Skating has the right to participate and develop in sport in a safe, inclusive and respectful environment, free from all forms of discrimination, harassment and abuse, violence, neglect, and exploitation. For children and minors, these rights are paramount (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child).

Everyone involved in the ISU sports has a role to play in making sure they actively safeguard athletes and others from abuse, harassment and exploitation. The ISU is committed to ensuring that everyone within the jurisdiction of the ISU understands their responsibility to safeguard athletes and participants during the period of ISU Events and activities, to abide by the ISU Code of Ethics, and to report any concerns about their welfare through the procedures established in the ISU Code of Ethics, Article 7. The ISU Code of Ethics is the governing authority with respect to reporting concerns and complaints of abuse and harassment within the jurisdiction of the ISU.

The [ISU Code of Ethics](https://www.isu.org) can be found on the ISU website www.isu.org.

The aim of the ISU Safeguarding Policy is to raise awareness of the existence of abuse and harassment in sport and to promote good practice to prevent, monitor and address all forms of harassment and abuse of athletes and others of all ages while participating in ISU Events and activities, and further, to raise awareness that abuse and harassment violations are prohibited by the ISU Code of Ethics and to report concerns and incidents of abuse and harassment to the Skating Integrity Unit. In accordance with the ISU Constitution (Articles 12h and 35), the Skating Integrity Unit is the operationally independent body responsible for investigating alleged violations to the ISU Code of Ethics. The Skating Integrity Unit Regulations can be found on the ISU website, www.isu.org.

ISU Members

The ISU requires that at a minimum the following must be implemented by all ISU Members:

- i) Adoption of a Safeguarding Policy.
- ii) Creation and implementation of Safeguarding Procedures to implement the Safeguarding Policy.
- iii) Identification and training of a Safeguarding Lead within the ISU Member, who shall have completed appropriate Safeguarding training.
- iv) Creation of a communication plan to raise awareness of Safeguarding matters within the ISU Member, including among Skaters, Coaches and Athlete Support Personnel, Officials, and federation staff members who have direct contact with Skaters. The communication plan must include how to report incidents of suspected or observed abuse or harassment to the ISU Member federation.

- v) Safeguarding Education for Skaters, Coaches and other Athlete Support Personnel (such as medical staff, Team Leaders etc.), and Skaters' parents.

ISU Members can find templates and resources to support the development of their Safeguarding activities on the Athlete Welfare and Skating Integrity Unit sections of the ISU website and on eRink.

Athletes Committee

The ISU recognises that athletes are the primary beneficiaries of a first class Safeguarding Policy and practices and is committed to consulting widely with athletes on such matters.

Athletes may at any time contact the ISU Athlete Welfare Unit for guidance and support in matters related to the ISU Safeguarding Policy.

Ethical Standards - background

Embraced by the ISU, Article 1.4 of the [IOC Code of Ethics](#) (2026) states:

"Respect for international conventions on protecting human rights insofar as they apply to the Olympic Games' activities and which ensure in particular:

- respect for human dignity;
- rejection of discrimination of any kind on whatever grounds, be it race, color, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status;
- rejection of all forms of harassment and abuse, be it physical, professional or sexual, and any physical or mental injuries."

ISU Code of Ethics

The fundamental principles which govern all ISU activities, decisions, processes and regulations are set forth in the ISU Code of Ethics. The [ISU Code of Ethics](#) can be found on the ISU website www.isu.org.

Who does the ISU Safeguarding Policy apply to?

The ISU Safeguarding Policy applies to all persons who involve themselves with the ISU in any capacity, claiming or seeking standing as current or prospective participants in any ISU Event or activity, in particular, but not limited to: all ISU Office Holders; ISU Officials; staff, office holders, consultants, athletes and coaches of ISU Members and any affiliated clubs (when participating in an ISU Event or activity); ISU employees and consultants; Organizing Committees for ISU Events and their Officials, volunteers and staff; athletes; coaches, doctors, team leaders and any other Athlete Support Personnel; as well as any other persons who engage in any conduct or activity in relation to the ISU.

This Safeguarding Policy does not apply to national, internal ISU Member matters which do not occur on-site during an ISU Event or activity, i.e. during the period from the arrival at the ISU Event/activity location until departure from the location.

Safeguarding Athletes and Participants at ISU Events and Activities

The ISU is committed to creating an atmosphere in which all athletes and other persons who participate in ISU Events and activities may have a safe, inclusive, respectful, and positive experience. All athletes and participants taking part in ISU Events and activities should feel safe and supported, and have their rights, wishes and feelings respected without fear of discrimination or degrading treatment. Their needs and welfare are paramount.

The ISU requirements and procedures to safeguard athletes and participants, and to report and address incidents of harassment and abuse, while they participate in ISU Events and activities are set forth in Articles 6 and 7 of the ISU Code of Ethics. If requested, the ISU Athlete Welfare Unit will offer support to ISU Members that organize ISU Events to assist them in developing policies and procedures to safeguard athletes and participants against harassment and abuse while at the ISU Event, and to set up procedures for prompt reporting of an incident of harassment and abuse that occurs during an ISU Event or activity to the Skating Integrity Unit.

International Safeguards – Background

Working with more than 50 organizations, the International Safeguarding Children in Sport Founders Group has developed the [International Safeguards for Children in Sport](#). These safeguards set out the actions that all organizations working in sport should have in place to ensure children/minors (and all athletes) are safe from harm. The eight safeguards are:

1. Developing your safeguarding policy
2. Procedures for responding to safeguarding concerns
3. Advice and support
4. Minimizing risks to children/minors/athletes
5. Guidelines for behavior
6. Recruiting, training and communicating
7. Working with partners
8. Monitoring and evaluating

These eight pillars of safeguarding equally apply to athletes of all ages.

The following resources are also available:

[United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
[International Safeguarding Children in Sport Working Group Safesport – Where your game plan starts](#)

Defining Harassment and Abuse

In the Code of Ethics, the ISU has adopted the definitions of the various forms of harassment and abuse as below. Harassment and abuse can be expressed in (but not necessarily limited to) the following categories which may occur in combination or in isolation. These categories are i) sexual harassment, ii) sexual abuse, iii) sexual exploitation iv) physical abuse, v) psychological or emotional abuse (including online abuse), vi) bullying, vii) hazing, and viii) neglect or negligence. These categories are defined in the ISU Code of Ethics, Article 6 as:

- **Sexual harassment** means any unwanted and unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, whether, verbal, non-verbal or physical. Sexual harassment can take the form of sexual abuse. Sexual harassment can take place in person or online.
- **Sexual abuse** means any conduct of a sexual nature, whether non-contact, contact or penetrative, where consent is coerced, manipulated, is not or cannot be given, or is obtained based on a relationship of dependency.
- **Sexual exploitation** means actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual reasons.
- **Physical abuse** means any non-accidental trauma or physical injury caused, without limitation, by punching, beating, kicking, biting, or burning or otherwise physically harming an athlete. This can include forced or inappropriate physical activity (e.g. age- or physique-inappropriate training loads when injured or in pain, or hazing), forced alcohol consumption, or forced or systemic doping practices.
- **Psychological or emotional abuse** means the regular and deliberate use of a range of words and non-physical actions to manipulate, coerce, hurt, weaken or frighten a person mentally and emotionally; and/or to distort, confuse or influence within a power differentiated relationship that could cause physical or psychological harm. This can consist of any unwelcome act including confinement, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation, infantilization, or any other treatment which may diminish the sense of identity, dignity and self-worth. This form of abuse is at the core of all other forms of abuse that may take place in different forms in person or online.
- **Bullying** (or cyberbullying if conducted online) means unwanted, repeated and intentional behavior which may be aggressive in nature, usually among peers, and can involve a real or perceived power imbalance. Bullying can include actions such as making threats, spreading rumours or falsehoods, attacking someone physically or verbally and deliberately excluding someone.
- **Hazing** means an organised, usually team-based, form of bullying, involving degrading and hazardous initiation of new team members by veteran team members.

- **Neglect or negligence** means the failure of a Coach or another person with a duty of care towards an athlete to provide a minimum level of care to meet a person's basic physical, emotional, social or psychological needs, which is likely to result in an impairment of the person's well-being thereby causing harm, allowing harm to be caused or creating an immediate danger of harm. Neglect or negligence can consist of acts of omission regarding athlete safety and can include depriving an athlete of food and/or drink; insufficient rest and recovery; failure to provide a safe physical training environment; or developmental age-inappropriate or physique-inappropriate training methods.
- **Online abuse** is a type of psychological or emotional abuse, including cyber-bullying. Online abuse encompasses various forms of harmful behavior on digital platforms. It entails the use of violent, aggressive hate speech, directed at an individual or a specific subgroup sharing a common identity. It is typically rooted in factors like race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, or is sexualized in nature. The most common forms of Online abuse in sport are:
 - Flaming:** Flaming is the sending of threatening, abusive or rude messages to an identified target.
 - Harassment:** In the context of the internet, harassment can involve abusive, threatening, or intimidating messages to an individual or group or making such posts on a social media platform(s) that cause harm. This behavior can include stalking, cyberbullying, or making unwelcome, non-consensual sexual or intimate advances, images or videos.
 - Denigration:** Denigration is the act of unfairly or maliciously damaging someone's reputation or character with the intention of undermining their credibility or social standing.
 - Outing:** Outing is the unauthorized disclosure of someone's private or confidential information, including but not limited to photos, videos, or screenshots, particularly relating to their personal identity, sexual orientation, or activities.
 - Cyberstalking:** Cyberstalking is the use of electronic communication or internet services to repeatedly harass, intimidate, or threaten an individual. It often involves monitoring someone's online activity, sending unwanted messages, or making malicious comments with the intent to instill fear or distress. Cyberstalking can escalate to offline harassment or even physical harm.

Studies have confirmed that elite, disabled, child, and LGBTQIA+ (lesbian/gay/bisexual/trans-sexual/transgender, queer/and or questioning, intersex, and asexual) athletes are at particular risk of harassment and abuse, that psychological (emotional) abuse is at the core of all other forms of abuse, and that fellow athletes can also be perpetrators. There are particular risks in dealing with minors and children; and evidence also suggests that girls are at greater risk of sexual violence, harassment and exploitation.

Abuse occurs where there is an abuse of power between an individual and the perpetrator and is caused by the exploitation or misuse of authority or influence by individuals in positions of power, to unfairly benefit oneself, coerce others, or to cause harm. Abuse of power is a primary enabler of all forms of abuse in sport. Research has shown that no sport is exempt from harassment and abuse, and that no country is exempt.

Impact of Harassment and Abuse

The impacts of all forms of harassment and abuse on an individual are serious, often extensive, and may be devastating and long term. These impacts may include injuries, illnesses, impaired physical development, disability, distorted body image, eating disorders, malnutrition, loss of self-esteem, social exclusion, poor academic and sporting performance, self-harm, depression, anxiety, substance use disorders, and even death (including suicide). These impacts may affect their relationships with family, teammates, colleagues and friends, and may persist long after the individual has left the sport.

Minors (Children), and Vulnerable Adults

In line with the definition of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child, a minor (a child) is any person under the age of eighteen.

A vulnerable adult (adult at risk) is a person aged eighteen or over belonging to a special attention group who under certain conditions, or environments may be particularly at risk of abuse, discrimination or neglect.

Recognition

All those involved in the ISU sports have a responsibility to learn how to recognize and respond to signs of harassment and abuse. It is also incumbent upon all those involved to act on and report concerns that harassment and abuse of an athlete and others that may be taking place. There may be times when abuse is reported from outside the sporting arena.

Anyone who has a concern should make a report via the [Skating Integrity Reporting Platform](#) as per Article 7 of the ISU Code of Ethics.

Affected athletes, participants and whistleblowers

The [Skating Integrity Reporting Platform](#) is a confidential reporting system that can be used by anyone to make a report. Reports will be treated confidentially and may be made anonymously if you prefer. The ISU believes it is important for anyone who has concerns to speak up ("if you see something, say something") and the ISU encourages anyone who has such concerns to make a report promptly to the Skating Integrity Unit, to help prevent continuing harm to an athlete or participant. In the case that the person(s) affected are in immediate danger or risk of harm, please contact the local emergency services.

ISU SAFEGUARDING POLICY

1. General

1.1. Safeguarding

The ISU acknowledges its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of athletes and participants while they are participating in ISU Events and activities and is committed to ensuring that its safeguarding policy and provisions of the ISU Code of Ethics comply with best practice.

The ISU has established an operationally independent Skating Integrity Unit and an Athlete Welfare Unit.

In accordance with the ISU Code of Ethics and Skating Integrity Unit Regulations, the Skating Integrity Unit will:

- Communicate the procedures for reporting incidents of harassment and abuse via the [Skating Integrity Reporting Platform](#).
- Receive, investigate, and take action on reports of alleged harassment and abuse.
- Ensure all reported cases of misconduct that may constitute a criminal offense are referred to the local statutory authorities (crime and child protection agencies) where appropriate. However, where the reporting person is the alleged victim, the Skating Integrity Unit shall forward the report only with their explicit written consent, unless disclosure is required under applicable law, including any mandatory reporting.
- Refer investigated complaints to the ISU Disciplinary Commission when appropriate.
- Keep ISU Members informed where necessary about persons who are suspended or disqualified permanently from participation in ISU Events and activities.
- In cooperation with relevant ISU Bodies, assist in the development of education and training for ISU Office Holders, Officials, employees, and ISU Member federations regarding safeguarding.
- Recommend to the Council updates to the Code of Ethics and Safeguarding Policy.

The Athlete Welfare Unit will:

- Provide welfare support, if requested, to athletes who are victims of harassment and abuse, who report harassment and abuse of others, or who are alleged to have harassed or abused others.
- Support individuals to access support through relevant services, if requested.

- In cooperation with the Skating Integrity Unit, develop safeguarding education and training for ISU Office Holders, Officials, employees and ISU Member federation leaders.

The ISU Disciplinary Commission will:

- Consider Statements of Complaint and render decisions in accordance with the ISU Disciplinary Procedures.

The ISU encourages all individuals to report incidents of harassment and abuse (or suspected harassment and abuse) that occur at an ISU Event or activity, regardless of who the offender may be.

The ISU will not investigate or attempt to resolve a reported incident of harassment and abuse when a charge of a criminal offence is pending against the accused involving the same alleged incident(s) of harassment and abuse. Information received by the ISU relating to such reported incidents will be provided by the ISU to the relevant public authorities.

1.2. ISU Commitment

The ISU is committed to ensuring that:

- All reports of concerns and allegations of abuse and harassment are taken seriously and responded to appropriately in accordance with the ISU Code of Ethics and as promptly as reasonably possible.
- All those in a position of responsibility within the ISU recognize it is not their responsibility to investigate and determine if abuse has occurred, but it is their responsibility to act and report promptly any concerns they have.
- The responding party will be provided with a fair process in accordance with the applicable provisions of the ISU Code of Ethics, the ISU Constitution and ISU Disciplinary Procedures and any other applicable rules or regulations; notice will be provided to the individual/individuals concerned, and they will be given the right to respond before any decision is taken or sanction is imposed.

The ISU Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed at least every 2 years or whenever there is a major change in the organization, relevant legislation, or to address evolving safeguarding best practices in sport.

The ISU Code of Ethics and the ISU Safeguarding Policy and all subsequent updates will be communicated effectively to all the various ISU Office Holders, ISU Officials, ISU Committees, ISU employees, and ISU Members. The ISU will encourage all Committees to list safeguarding as a regular agenda item and record discussions in the minutes.

2. Confidentiality

Reports of abuse and harassment often contain extremely sensitive information, and athletes may fear coming forward with information.

Anyone who is concerned about a possible alleged incident of harassment and abuse is assured that personal information will not be disclosed by the Skating Integrity Unit, except, for example, if the concerned person gives prior consent, if disclosure is necessary to protect someone from harm, or subject to mandatory reporting in accordance with national legislation or law. The [Skating Integrity Reporting Platform](#) is secure and confidential, and the Skating Integrity Unit maintains secure storage of records.

3. In-Competition Safeguarding Policy at ISU Events

The reporting framework for ISU Events set forth in Article 7 of the ISU Code of Ethics underlies the commitment of the ISU to ensure that athletes and participants are aware that their safety and welfare are of paramount importance. The ISU strongly believes that these measures are essential to ensure safe sport for all participants at ISU Events.

4. ISU Members

All ISU Members providing services, events or activities for athletes must have a written safeguarding policy that is accessible to and easily understood by all and actively promoted within the ISU Member's federation. The safeguarding policy should be approved and endorsed by the relevant governance body of the ISU Member and reviewed appropriately.

ISU Members should first research what their legal obligations are in their country with respect to mandatory reporting to public authorities or duty to warn within their country/region.

In developing their safeguarding policies, ISU Members should include clear and easily understood safeguarding standards and procedures relating to:

1. Expected standards of behavior towards athletes, participants and volunteers (including a code of conduct, an explanation of discrimination and abusive behavior, how to deal with unacceptable behavior by or towards athletes, the use of sanctions/discipline and positive ways of managing the behavior of athletes that do not involve physical punishment or any other form of degrading or humiliating treatment and are age and gender appropriate).
2. Identifying signs of abuse, harassment, bullying, hazing, psychological stress, burnout and dropout (including appropriate definitions and/or indicators of such behavior).

3. Taking athletes (especially young athletes) away on trips, tours or to competitions (including in relation to transport and lodging arrangements, insurance cover, venue safety and possible chaperones of young athletes aged under 18).
4. The use of mobile phones, information technology (such as email and the internet) and social media platforms.
5. The actions that should be taken on a step-by-step basis in the event of any incident, report or grounds for concern about abuse (including any relevant contact details for local police, social services departments etc.).
6. Identifying applicable laws regarding disclosure of information – mandatory reporting of suspicions of abuse is a legal requirement in some countries.
7. Procedures for reporting and addressing complaints about abuse by individual(s) including clear timelines and incorporating any disciplinary procedures (where appropriate) as well as appeal procedures.
8. Providing appropriate support to the individual(s) who raise, report or disclose concerns or incidents of abuse (on an anonymous basis or otherwise).
9. Ensuring the appointment of a Safeguarding Officer (or similar title) responsible for the implementation and subsequent management and review of the safeguarding policies and procedures; also ensuring that every group and individual member is aware who this person is and how to contact them.
10. Assessing the suitability of all individuals who have contact with athletes through self-declarations, references and background checks where possible.
11. Ensuring that all individuals acting for and on behalf of and/or with ISU Members (whether as an employee, official, coach, volunteer, parent volunteer, contractor, agent or otherwise) and their members themselves understand their role and responsibilities in regard to safeguarding and any code of conduct or code of ethics and are provided with appropriate training opportunities regarding the safeguarding policy, the code of conduct and how to recognize, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to athletes.
12. Ensuring that staff and volunteers with special responsibilities in relation to safeguarding athletes receive appropriate training on recruitment practice, reporting of complaints and disciplinary processes and update their knowledge and understanding regularly.
13. The secure storing of confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns.

14. Ensuring that all safeguarding arrangements (including training), procedures and policies are monitored, reviewed and updated as appropriate, including when there is a major change in any relevant law or customs, guidance, experience or needs.
15. Amending, as necessary, its constitution or bylaws to reflect its responsibility for overseeing the adoption and implementation of safeguarding measures.

5. Who is Responsible and When?

5.1. ISU – matters related to incidents that occur during the period of ISU Events and Activities

The procedures for reporting a concern or complaint that relates to an incident of observed or suspected abuse or harassment that occurs during an ISU Event or activity are set forth in the ISU Code of Ethics, Article 7.

5.2. ISU Members - national related matters

ISU Members are responsible for handling reported safeguarding concerns and complaints involving abuse and harassment that are raised in relation to persons and associations that fall within the ISU Member's jurisdiction, which jurisdiction includes the ISU Member's regional bodies and clubs, athletes, coaches, officials, staff, and volunteers.

6. Education and References

ISU Members can find templates and resources to support the development of their Safeguarding activities on the Athlete Welfare and Skating Integrity Unit sections of the ISU website and on [eRink](#).

The IOC has developed a number of on-line educational tools related to safeguarding. They are free and accessible for all athletes and entourage members. The ISU encourages all athletes and entourage members to work through the following module:

IOC Athlete Learning Gateway – [Safeguarding Athletes from Harassment and Abuse](#) bite-sized course delivered by Dr Margo Mountjoy and Sheldon Kennedy (former athlete / survivor):

ISU Members are advised to read and utilize the IOC Toolkit '[Safeguarding Athletes from Harassment and Abuse in Sport](#)' as a starting point when drafting their policies and procedures:

[IOC Safe Sport](#) website.