



WCF Policy

Safeguarding Participants in Curling from Harassment and Abuse

1. Introduction

The World Curling Federation (WCF) believes that it is a fundamental right of all athletes, staff and volunteers to be able to participate and develop in a non-violent, safe and respectful environment, free from all forms of discrimination, violence, neglect and exploitation.

All forms of harassment and abuse, especially against participants with vulnerabilities, such as juniors, para-athletes and minorities, constitute a violation of the WCF Code of Ethics and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Code of Ethics.

The WCF acknowledges its duty of care in this regard and is committed to creating and supporting an environment, and a culture, free from harassment and abuse. The welfare of all individuals involved with the WCF is paramount and behaviour and actions that constitute harassment and abuse will not be tolerated.

The WCF has developed this policy to promote good practice; to provide athletes of all ages with appropriate safety and protection whilst involved in curling activities, and to allow staff and volunteers to make informed decisions to specific safeguarding issues.

2. Purpose of the Policy

The WCF Policy on Safeguarding Participants in Curling from Harassment and Abuse aims to:

- a) Provide a framework for promoting the prevention of harassment and abuse
- b) Raise awareness of, and provide clarity on, what constitutes harassment and abuse
- c) Outline the process for reporting incidents and case management of harassment and abuse

Thereby promoting a safe environment for all involved in the sport of curling.

3. Scope of the Policy

This Policy applies to all individuals involved with the WCF, or who are a member of the WCF, including:

- a) Athletes
- b) Coaches, medical personnel and athlete entourage
- c) WCF Staff & Consultants
- d) WCF Board & Commission members
- e) All persons participating in WCF activities including representatives of Member



Associations, Organising Committees for WCF events, subcontractors and volunteers.

All of the above individuals shall be referred to as 'Participants', are bound by the principles of this Policy, and are deemed to have agreed to comply with its terms.

4. Definition of Harassment and Abuse

The WCF has adopted the definitions of harassment and abuse as set out in the IOC Consensus Statement 2016 (www.olympic.org/athlete365/library/safe-sport/):

"Harassment and abuse can be expressed in five forms which may occur in combination or in isolation. These include a) psychological abuse, b) physical abuse, c) sexual harassment, d) sexual abuse, and e) neglect.

These forms of abuse are defined here as:

- a) **Psychological abuse** — means any unwelcome act including confinement, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation, infantilisation, or any other treatment which may diminish the sense of identity, dignity, and self-worth of a participant
- b) **Physical abuse** — means any deliberate and unwelcome act – such as punching, slapping, 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
- c) **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
- d) **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
- e) **Neglect** — within the meaning of this document means the failure of a coach or another person with a duty of care towards the participant to provide a minimum level of care to the participant, which is causing harm, allowing harm to be caused, or creating an imminent danger of harm

Harassment and abuse can be based on any grounds including race, religion, colour, creed, ethnic origin, physical attributes, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, socio-economic status and athletic ability. It may be in person or online.

Harassment and abuse often result from an abuse of authority, meaning the improper use of a position of influence, power or authority by an individual against another person.

The IOC Consensus Statements 2008/2016, consider that harassment and abuse are on a continuum and, therefore, should not be separated."

Harassment and abuse can include a one-off incident or a series of incidents but to be actionable, harassment should be shown to be severe or repeated.

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All ages and types of participants are susceptible to the various forms of harassment and abuse with elite, disabled, child and LGBT participants being of highest risk.

Research has shown that no sport is exempt from the incidence of harassment and abuse and that no country is exempt.

Additional specific definitions can be found in Section 9.

5. Impact on Participants

The impact of the various forms of harassment and abuse on a participant may include any or all:

- **Physical** e.g., illnesses and injuries, loss of performance, eating disorders, sexually transmitted infections, post-traumatic stress disorder
- **Emotional** e.g., volatile mood states
- **Behavioural** e.g., drop out of the sport / competition, potential for cheating
- **Mental Health / Cognitive** e.g., anxiety, depression, self-harm, suicide, low self-esteem
- **Effect on relationships** e.g., belittling, social exclusion

6. Young Participants (Under 18)

The physical and mental impacts of all forms of harassment and abuse on participants under the age of 18 are likely to be greater on developing young participants as they possess unique physical and psychological vulnerabilities. Particular care, therefore, needs to be taken in relation to their protection.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 WCF responsibilities:

- a) Implementing this Policy and appointing a Lead Welfare Officer (see Section 9 - Definitions)
- b) Raising awareness of this Policy and the procedure for reporting an incident of harassment and abuse, across all participants in WCF activities – i.e., that there is an established pathway for reporting
- c) Ensuring that reports of harassment and abuse that are brought to its attention are managed in a timely, fair and responsible manner
- d) Providing appropriate support to concerned participants of an alleged incident of harassment or abuse
- e) Providing reassurance to those who are concerned about a possible alleged incident that personal information will not be disclosed, except, for example, if the concerned person gives their prior consent
- f) Guaranteeing secure storage of records for 10 years, counted from the



conclusion of the assessment procedure

- g) Imposing appropriate disciplinary or corrective measures when there has been a violation of this Policy
- h) Ensuring that there is a safeguarding plan and reporting procedure in place at all WCF managed events underlining the commitment of the WCF to ensure that participants know that their safety and welfare are of paramount importance
- i) Ensuring that at WCF sponsored events, a WCF Technical Delegate, who has undergone specific safeguarding training, will be appointed as Event Welfare Officer, reporting to the WCF Lead Welfare Officer. This Event Welfare Officer will be named in all pre-event information and at the team meeting before competitions and should be available to be contacted throughout the duration of the event
- j) Providing and raising awareness of suitable educational resources and training opportunities for participants
- k) Maintaining a register of suspended, disciplined and disqualified individuals
- l) Actively promoting best practice in this field
- m) Updating the Policy and related procedures when appropriate

7.2 Member Associations' responsibilities:

It is recommended that all MAs should have a written safeguarding policy or officially adhere to the one of its National Olympic Committee that is accessible and easily understood by all their members as well as being actively promoted. Member Associations should also research what their obligations are in relation to mandatory reporting to public authorities within their country and are responsible for:

- a) Defining and implementing their own policies and procedures, having been adapted to their own national legal framework and consistent with this Policy, to protect their athletes, staff and volunteers from harassment and abuse. In compiling such policies, Member Associations should include understandable procedures relating to:
 - 1. Expected standards of behaviour towards participants
 - 2. The identification of signs of abuse, bullying, psychological stress etc., and include the relevant definitions
 - 3. Taking participants away on trips / tours
 - 4. The use of mobile equipment, information technology and social media (e.g., email / internet / Facebook)
 - 5. The actions that will be taken in the event of an incident or grounds for concern
 - 6. The identification of applicable laws regarding disclosure of information
 - 7. How complaints will be dealt with, associated timescales and disciplinary process
 - 8. The appointment of a Safeguarding Officer
 - 9. Ensuring that all participants understand their role and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding
 - 10. Ensuring that participants receive necessary training



11. The secure storage of records of all safeguarding concerns
- b) Managing reports of alleged incidents of harassment and abuse relating to persons that are members of their national association, through their regional bodies or clubs, including athletes, staff, and volunteers
 - c) Ensuring all participants, representing their federation in a WCF managed activity, are aware of, and understand, the WCF Policy on Safeguarding Participants in Curling from Harassment and Abuse
 - d) Advising the WCF of any formal disciplinary sanctions relating to harassment and abuse imposed by the member association, and of any suspensions where the individual may present a risk to WCF participants at that time or in the future

7.3 Participants' responsibilities:

- a) Taking action to safeguard others against harassment and abuse in curling and for taking immediate action once it has been identified regardless of whether a complaint has been made
- b) Reporting their concerns to the Lead or Event Welfare Officer where they have reason to believe that another participant has experienced or is experiencing harassment and abuse. Information should be shared on a 'needs to know' basis only. The person making a report should keep a confidential note of the information they have passed on, when and to whom.
- c) Advising WCF of any formal disciplinary sanctions relating to harassment and abuse that they have received

All those involved in WCF activities have a responsibility to learn how to recognise and respond to signs of harassment and abuse as well as reporting and acting on any concerns.

If any participant has concerns about a child or a vulnerable adult, which could be from their own observations or from someone who has shared a concern, should be able to carry out the following, as a minimum standard:

1. Does the child or vulnerable adult need urgent medical or police attention?
2. If **yes**, contact emergency services immediately
3. If **no**, report the concern to the relevant Welfare officer
4. Complete the Incident Form (Appendix A) within 24 hours
5. The safeguarding officer should ensure a disciplinary panel is established to consider the complaint / concern

8. Educational & Related Resources

The IOC Safeguarding Toolkit has been created to assist the Olympic Movement to develop and implement athlete-safeguarding policies and procedures



(www.olympic.org/athlete365/safeguarding/).

To complement the toolkit and ensure that athletes, their entourage and other individuals understand the core components of this sensitive topic, a free bite-size IOC Athlete Safeguarding e-learning course has been developed and launched on the IOC Athlete Learning Gateway (<http://onlinecourse.olympic.org/course/baseview.php?id=39>).

Additional resources:

- a) [WCF Code of Ethics](#)
- b) [IOC Code of Ethics](#)
- c) [IOC Consensus Statement 2016: Harassment and Abuse in Sport](#)
- d) [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
- e) [International Safeguarding Children in Sport guidelines](#) (in several languages)
- f) [The Council of Europe](#): Article 1. (ii) of the European Sports Charter (version dated 2001)
- g) [UNESCO](#): Article 10.1 of the Revised International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport (version dated 2015)
- h) [UN Declaration of Human Rights](#)
- i) [Safe Sport International](#)

9. Definitions

Athletes with disabilities – those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments that may hinder their full and effective participation in society

Abuse - Abuse is defined as any action that intentionally harms or injures another person. Abuse is sometimes also referred to as non-accidental violence.

Bullying – Bullying (or cyber – bullying if conducted online) is unwanted, repeated, and intentional, aggressive behaviour. Bullying can include actions such as making threats, spreading rumours or lies, attacking someone physically or verbally.

Child - The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child defines child as "a human being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier". Early childhood relates to those below 8 years of age. Juvenile or young person and adolescents are 10–19 years of age.

Child Protection - UNICEF uses the term 'child protection' to refer to preventing and responding to violence, exploitation, and abuse against children. Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child provides for the protection of children in and out of the home.

Designated Person – A Designated Person is an appropriately trained person who oversees safeguarding responsibilities at a WCF event and reports to the Safeguarding Officer.

Event Welfare Officer – Core responsibilities include: responsibility for the safeguarding of all participants; being a central point of contact for anyone who has safeguarding



concerns; ensuring incident forms are completed where necessary with a copy being forwarded to the Lead Welfare Officer; being vigilant and aware of any unexpected or unprofessional approach to participants; providing appropriate support to anyone who reports possible abuse; ensuring concerns are dealt with in an appropriate and confidential manner

Homophobia – Is antipathy, contempt, prejudice, aversion or hatred towards lesbian, gay or bisexual individuals

Lead Welfare Officer - The Lead Welfare Officer is the principal person in the WCF that receives reports concerning the welfare of participants, that coordinates the management of the reports and responds to queries in relation to this Policy. They will take the lead role in the development and establishment of the WCF's approach to safeguarding participants. They will take the lead role in the production and updating of this Policy. The incumbent of this role will liaise with local organising committees at WCF managed events to ensure that all participants have received the right education ahead of the event starting

Safeguarding – Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of vulnerable adults or children and protect them from harm, including protecting them from harassment and abuse.



Appendix A – Incident form for reporting concerns

Date / Time of Concern	
Details of Child or Vulnerable Adult	
Name	
Age / Date of Birth	
Do they have a disability, impairment or other special needs?	
Gender	
How do you know them?	
Next of Kin contact details	
Details of person raising the concern	
Name	
Contact details	
Details of the concern	
Nature of the concern including date, time of any specific incidents	
Name of any person (s) alleged to have been involved in or causing the concerns	
Contact details of any person(s) alleged to have been involved in or causing the concerns	
Details of action taken	
Details of person reporting the concern	
Name	
Role	
Email address	
Phone Number	
The following boxes should be completed by the Lead Welfare Officer	
Confirm appropriate action has been taken to respond to the report of a concern	
Date case closed	

Once completed, this form to be emailed to the Lead Welfare Officer (insert email address)