

INTERNATIONAL BATON TWIRLING FEDERATION

IBTF CODE OF CONDUCT



AND GOOD PRACTICE IN SPORT

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INTRODUCTION

'Athlete' refers to baton twirlers and majorettes of all ages.

'Children' encompasses all ages of athlete in a sport largely with an under 18-year-old membership but includes many adult athlete members.

'Official' refers to any coach, country director, officer, volunteer, person of power or authority in a country or the federation.

'Vulnerable person' is any individual regardless of age or position, who by being under the coaching or supervision of an official, may be restricted in capacity to guard themselves from harm or exploitation, or to report such harm or exploitation due to the innate powers of the official. The term 'vulnerable' is not exclusive to individuals who live with a mental or physical disability.

There must be respect for the power dynamic of an official over athletes in any inappropriate behaviours regardless of circumstances or consent. Relationships must always remain professional. Officials should refrain from fostering relations outside of the sporting environment.

The Coaches policy is an important adjunct to the code of conduct.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

IBTF would like to extend its gratitude Susan Troy TIF executive, Linda Yeates TIF Safeguarding Director and Cycling Ireland for their development of this Code.

POLICY STATEMENT

The International Baton Twirling Federation (IBTF) is committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of its members. Every member of IBTF should, at all times, show respect and understanding for members' rights, safety and welfare and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of the organisation and guidelines contained in this Code and the Code of Ethics.

IBTF's top priority is the welfare of all athletes and vulnerable people, and we are committed to providing an environment which allows participants to perform to the best of their ability free from bullying and intimidation.

We shall take all practical steps to protect them from discernible forms of abuse, from harm, discrimination or degrading treatment and shall respect their rights, wishes and feelings.

The environment will be one that is safe and has the welfare of participants at the forefront.

IBTF recognises that it has a duty of care to protect all athletes (and vulnerable people) and safeguard their welfare, irrespective of age, disability, gender, racial origin, religious belief and sexual identity.

This Code provides principles and guidelines to be adopted when dealing with all athletes and vulnerable people.

IBTF GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS OF OUR NATIONAL MEMBER FEDERATIONS

CORE VALUES IN SPORT FOR ATHLETES AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

The work of IBTF is based on the following principles that will guide the development of our sport for all athletes. An athlete's experience should be guided by what is best for the athlete and their personal, physical and social development.

The stages of development and the ability of the athlete should guide the types of ability provided. Adults will need to have a basic understanding of the needs of the athletes, including physical, emotional and personal.

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Integrity in relationships

Adults interacting with athletes should do so with integrity and respect for the athlete. There is a danger that all sporting contexts can be used to exploit or undermine athletes.

All adult actions should be guided by what is best for the athlete and in the context of quality open working relationships. Verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse of any kind is unacceptable.

Quality atmosphere and ethos

Baton twirling and majorettes should be conducted in a safe, positive, and encouraging atmosphere. IBTF believes that a child-centered ethos should be adopted by all those involved in the promotion and development of our sport.

Equality

All athletes should be treated in an equal and fair manner regardless of age, ability, sex, religion, social and ethnic background, or political persuasion. Athletes with disabilities should be involved in an integrated way, thus allowing them participation opportunities to develop their potential alongside other athletes.

Fair Play

Fair play is the guiding principle of the Code of Practice and Safeguarding for all athletes. All activities should be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play. Fair play incorporates the concepts of friendship, respect for others and always taking part with the right spirit. Fair play is a way of thinking, not just a way of behaving.

Competition

A balanced approach to competition can make a significant contribution to the development of the athletes, while at the same time providing fun, enjoyment and satisfaction. However, competitive demands placed on athletes can result in excessive levels of pressure on them. This can contribute to a high level of dropout from the sport. Country Officials and coaches should aim to put the welfare of the athlete first and competitive standards second. A child-centred approach will help to ensure that competition and specialisation are kept in the appropriate place. This code of practice will, insofar as possible, have equal application to vulnerable people.

A MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACH

IBTF firmly believes that all our athletes should be encouraged to participate in the different modes and events the federation offers.

By doing so they will:

Learn transferable skills.

Have a healthier lifestyle.

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Learn about diet, training and general fitness.

Be more motivated.

Learn self-discipline.

Learn to work as part of a team.

Be encouraged to remain within the sport.

COMMITMENT TO ATHLETES AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE

IBTF will endeavor to fulfil its commitments to athletes and vulnerable people by:

Recognising that all athletes have the right to be protected from harm.

Ensuring that our coaches and volunteers are carefully recruited and selected and that they accept responsibility for ensuring the wellbeing of those in their care.

Responding swiftly and appropriately to protect the welfare of those who participate in our sport and activities.

Providing parents/guardians and athletes with the opportunity to voice any concerns they may have.

Appointing children's officers in each of our countries where athletes are involved.

Ensuring that all allegations of abuse of athletes are confidentially dealt with in accordance with statutory guidelines and relevant legislation.

Reviewing the effectiveness of our Athlete Protection procedures and policies on an ongoing basis.

Ensuring that members, coaches, administrators, parents/guardians sign up to and adhere to our Code of Conduct.

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR ATHLETES

IBTF wishes to provide the best possible environment for all athletes involved in our sport. Athletes deserve to be given enjoyable, safe sporting opportunities, free of abuse of any kind. These participants have rights, which must be respected, and responsibilities that they must accept. Athletes should be encouraged to realise that they have a responsibility to treat other participants and coaches with fairness and respect.

All athletes are entitled to:

Be safe and feel safe.

Be listened to.

Be believed.

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Be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect.
Have a voice in the country's organization.
Participate on an equal basis.
Have fun and enjoy sport.
Experience competition at a level at which they feel comfortable.
Make complaints and have them dealt with.
Get help against bullies.
Say no.
To protect their own bodies.
Confidentiality.

All athletes should always:

Treat coaches/officials with respect.
Train/compete fairly at all times.
Respect team members even when things go wrong.
Abide by the rules set out by country officials and coaches at all times.
Behave in a manner that avoids bringing the sport into disrepute.
Talk to a children's officer if they have any problems.

Athletes should never:

Cheat.
Use violence of physical contact.
Shout or argue with coaches, country officials, judges, officials, opponents, or teammates.
Harm members, opponents or their property.
Bully or use bullying tactics to isolate another athlete.
Use unfair or bullying tactics to gain advantage.
Keep secrets, especially if they have been caused harm.
Tell lies about adults / young people.

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Spread rumours;

Train or practice if they feel unwell or are injured.

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR COACHES AND COUNTRY OFFICIALS

All coaches, country officials and volunteers etc., (referred to hereafter as Leaders) should ensure that all athletes benefit significantly from participation by providing a positive and encouraging ethos for all. In developing the skills levels of participants Leaders should always encourage fun and enjoyment. Leaders should remember that they are role models for the young people in their care.

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR OFFICIALS INVOLVED WITH ATHLETES AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE

This Code of Behaviour addresses the appropriate levels of behaviour, practice and conduct required from coaches, country officials and volunteers. It should be read in conjunction with the coaches policy.

IBTF recognises the key roles Leaders play in the lives of athletes in sport. All Leaders, should have as their first priority the athletes safety and enjoyment of the sport and should adhere to the guidelines and regulations set out in the Code

Leaders should be appropriately qualified and up to date with coaching methods. All Leaders must agree to undergo a vetting check through the relevant authorities.

CREATING A POSITIVE ATMOSPHERE

Leaders Must:

Never use physical punishment.

Abide by this Code of Conduct.

Avoid conflicts of interest, e.g., where a Leader is both a coach and judge, any such conflicts must be made known to IBTF.

Have athletes safety and enjoyment as their number one priority.

Remember that skills and personal development rank above winning.

Strive to create a positive environment for athletes in their care and ensure that positive and healthy experiences are provided.

Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every athlete and must treat everyone equally, regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion or ability.

Understand the developmental needs of young people and make them aware that their participation is valued. Learning appropriate skills is important and should take precedence over too much training and competition.

Be generous with praise and never ridicule or shout at athletes for making mistakes or not winning an event. We will learn by making mistakes so improvement in skills should be praised and an athlete's efforts treated with respect.

Give equal time and attention to all participants and avoid singling out any one participant for special attention or praise.

Act quickly and appropriately if any form of bullying is identified whether from other athletes, leaders, competitors, parents/guardians.

Act within the rules of the sport and ensure that participants understand the rules.

SETTING A GOOD EXAMPLE

Leaders should:

Act as role models. They must promote the positive aspects of sport and maintain the highest standards of personal conduct.

Avoid smoking when working with young people and do not take alcohol or non-prescribed drugs before or during sessions. Avoid consuming alcohol in view of athletes.

Treat other officials with respect and encourage young athletes to do likewise and accept decisions made by officials in a sporting manner.

Ensure that their language and gestures are appropriate avoiding foul, racist, sectarian remarks or signs.

Promote a sense of fair play and appreciation/respect for the skills of other athletes.

Involve parent/guardians in the activities and keep them informed of what is going on;

Act in a professional manner at all times.

If participants are of mixed gender, ensure that there are leaders of all sexes present at sessions where possible.

Best Practice Guidelines for Leaders

Ensure that participants are suitably and safely attired for all training sessions and competitions and other events.

Keep a record of attendance at training sessions.

Always have a minimum of 2 adults attend each training session. Where there are mixed clubs, there should be coaches/country officials from all clubs present. Avoid being alone with an athlete.

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For away/overnight trips inform parents/guardians. Always apply sensible rooming arrangements (adults do not share with children) unless they are the parent/guardian of that child/children. Refrain from smoking, drug/alcohol consumption.

In changing rooms ask officials to supervise, if not possible supervise in pair of appropriate gender only where children require assistance.

Ensure that adequate insurance cover is in place.

Record any accidents and actions taken. Ensure that another coach/country official witnesses the actions.

Be generous with praise for the efforts of the athletes in your care.

Ensure that there is a First Aid kit at all sessions.

Do not allow athletes to compete or take part in activities when they are ill or injured.

Have a list of contact numbers and a record of any medical conditions for each athlete. Do not disclose any medical condition or confidential information unless it is in the best interest of the athlete to do so.

Set realistic and achievable goals for young athletes.

SAFEGUARDING YOURSELF (PRACTICES TO BE AVOIDED)

Physical punishment or physical force must never be used. Never punish a mistake by verbal means, physical means, or exclusion.

Avoid one to one coaching sessions or situations where you are alone with an athlete and ensure there is adequate supervision for all.

Avoid taking athletes to your own home or involving them in your personal life.

Avoid individual texting or emailing of athletes.

Avoid over familiar behaviour which can be misinterpreted by others.

Avoid exposing an athlete intentionally or unintentionally to embarrassment or disparagement by use of sarcastic or flippant remarks about the athlete or his/her family.

Avoid transporting athletes. When this is unavoidable ensure that someone else accompanies you and the athlete is in the back of the vehicle, securely strapped in. Be aware of legislation regarding the use of booster seats. Ensure that insurance cover is in place.

Avoid giving advice of a personal or medical nature if you are not qualified to do so;

Do not compare the performance or commitment of one athlete over another in their presence.

Do not criticise other coaches/country officials etc., in public.

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Physical Contact

Baton Twirling and Majorettes requires a 'hands on approach', from time to time. For example, it may be necessary to support an athlete learning a new move, but the following should be taken into consideration:

Avoid unnecessary physical contact.

Any necessary contact should be in response to the needs of the athlete and not the coach.

It should be in an open environment with the permission and understanding of the athlete.

It should be determined by the age and developmental stage of the athlete – don't do something that an athlete can do for themselves.

If physical contact is required, ensure that the athlete and parent/guardian are aware of this.

Never engage in inappropriate touching.

Ensure the athletes and their guardians are aware of the need for physical contact from time to time and they are comfortable with what is required.

Unacceptable Practices

In the context of your role within IBTF, the following practices will never be endorsed:

Engaging in sexually provocative games, including horseplay.

Physical/verbal/emotional abuse or exclusion to punish mistakes.

Forming intimate emotional, physical or sexual relationships with athletes.

Allowing or engaging in touching an athlete in a sexually suggestive manner.

Allowing athletes to swear or use sexualised language unchallenged.

Making sexually suggestive comments to an athlete, even in fun.

Reducing an athlete to tears as a form of control.

Allowing allegations made by an athlete to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.

Exert undue influence over a participant to obtain personal benefit or reward.

Take measurements or engage in certain types of fitness testing that involves touching, photographing or videotaping children without the presence of another adult.

Undertake any form of therapy in the training of children.

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Inviting or allowing children to stay with you at your home.

Share a room alone with an athlete for sleeping accommodation on trips.

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR PARENTS

IBTF believes that parents/guardians have an important role in the athletes enjoyment of baton and majorette activities and their continued development and involvement in the sport.

Parents should:

Be a role model for their children and maintain the highest standards of conduct when interacting with children, other parents, officials and event organisers.

Always behave responsibly and not seek to unfairly affect the outcome of an event.

Never intentionally expose any participant to embarrassment or disparagement with the use of flippant or sarcastic remarks;

Always recognise the value and importance of the volunteers who provide sporting/recreational opportunities for the athletes. Do not publicly question the judgement or honesty of judges, coaches or organisers.

Encourage their children to compete by the rules of the sport and understand that honest endeavour is as important as winning.

Encourage good sportsmanship.

Set a good example by applauding good performances even by rival competitors.
Encourage mutual respect for teammates and opponents;

Support all efforts to remove abusive behaviour and bullying.

POLICY FOR THE SELECTION AND APPROVAL OF VOLUNTEERS

IBTF has a responsibility to the athletes and to their parents and guardians to ensure that those that work with all athletes, on behalf of IBTF, are selected in a careful, sensible and effective manner.

IBTF will take reasonable steps to ensure that people working with the athletes are suitable and appropriately qualified. IBTF expects that countries will apply this Code of Conduct at local level. IBTF will apply the Code of Conduct to national level volunteers.

People working with athletes are required to:

Agree, in writing to abide by the Code of Conduct.

Attend a Child Protection/Safeguarding workshop.

Subject themselves to clearance from the relevant authorities.

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IBTF's Safe Sport Compliance Officer will maintain a database of suitable qualified coaches/country officials/volunteers.

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS REGARDING REQUESTS FOR DISCLOSURES

IBTF expects its national member federations to administer Vetting/Background checks. IBTF will request a copy of vetting checks taken by each country. Checks are carried out on all people who on behalf of the organisation, work in any capacity with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

VETTING

Vetting, which is the pre-checking of an applicant's background for criminal convictions or prosecutions, is recommended.

These checks will inform us:

If the applicant has a criminal record.

If their name is included on the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) Disqualification for Work with Children List or similar.

If they are included on the Department of Education List and/or the DHSSPS Disqualification from working with Vulnerable Adults List.

Any information received will be treated confidentially and is subject to applicable Data Protection Acts.

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

What is bullying?

Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression, either verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others.

It is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and occurs mainly in social environments such as schools, countries and other organisations working with athletes. It includes behaviours such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting and extortion behaviour by one or more athletes against a victim.

How would you know if someone is being bullied?

All bullies operate using furtiveness, threats and fear. Bullying can therefore only survive in an environment where the victim does not feel empowered to tell someone who can help or in which it is not safe to do so.

The following indicators are warning signs that an athlete might be getting bullied:

Reluctance to come to a venue or take part in activities;

Physical signs (unexplained bruises, scratches, or damage to belongings);

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Stress caused illness – headaches, and stomach aches which seem unexplained;
Fearful behaviour (fear of walking to a meeting, going different routes, asking to be driven);
Frequent loss of, or shortage of, money with vague explanations;
Having few friends;
Changes in behaviour (withdrawn, stammering, moody, irritable, upset, distressed);
Not eating;
Attempting suicide or hinting at suicide;
Anxiety (shown by nail-biting, fearfulness, tics).

Who should deal with bullying?

While the more extreme forms of bullying would be regarded as physical or emotional abuse and are reported to the health board or the Police, dealing with bullying behaviour is normally the responsibility of all coaches/country officials/volunteers within a country/IBTF.

How can it be prevented?

Ensure that all members follow the Code of Practice and Safeguarding for Athlete, which promotes the rights and dignity of each member;

Deal with any incidents as they arise;

Use a whole group policy or 'no blame approach', i.e., not 'bullying the bully' but working with the bullies and the group of athletes, helping them to understand the hurt they are causing, and so make the problem a 'shared concern' of the group.

Reinforce that there is a 'permission to tell' culture rather than a 'might is right';

Encourage athletes to negotiate, co-operate and help others, particularly new or different athletes;

Offer the victim immediate support and put the 'no blame approach' into operation.

Never tell an athlete to ignore bullying, they can't ignore it, it hurts too much;

Never encourage an athlete to take the law into their own hands and beat the bully at their own game;

Tell the victim there is nothing wrong with them and it is not their fault.

What is the 'No Blame' Approach?

Step 1 –Discuss with the victim.

If you find that there has been an incident of bullying, first talk to the victim. At this stage find out who was involved and what the victim is now feeling. Try asking the following questions:

Was it verbal or physical intimidation?

How hurt is the victim?

Was it within his/her own peer group?

Ensure the victim that his/her name will not come out in the investigation;

Actively listen.

Step 2 – Meet with all involved.

Arrange to meet with all those involved; this should include some bystanders, those who may have colluded, those who joined in and those who initiated the bullying.

Have a maximum of six to eight in the group – keep the number controllable;

Make a point of calling a 'special' meeting;

Ensure the severity of the topic is understood by all;

Speak only of the hurt caused in general terms with no reference to the victim;

Play on the conscience of all – ask questions like: how would you feel? Would you like this done to you?

Step 3 – Explain the problem.

The distress being suffered as a result of the bullying incident is explained. At this stage the details of the incident or the allocation of the blame are not discussed. Explain the feelings of loneliness, feeling left out, rejected, laughed at. Try asking questions:

Would they like it if it happened to them?

“Someone here in this group was bullied by someone within the group, what could we do to see it does not happen again?”

Listen, watch out for reactions, and pick up on any without isolating anyone.

Step 4 – Share the responsibility.

Explain what steps /controls may have to be introduced to prevent further incidents and how everyone will lose out as a result.

Step 5 – Ask the group for their ideas.

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At this stage the group is encouraged to suggest ways that would make the victim feel happier. All positive responses are noted. Use phrases “if it were you” to encourage a response. Listen to all suggestions and note them.

Step 6 – Leave it to them.

Now the problem has been identified, solutions suggested, the problem is now handed over to the group to solve. Arrange to meet again in a week’s time. Pass responsibility over to the group and give a time frame within which something must be done.

Step 7 – Meet them again.

Each member of the group, including the bully, discuss how things are going, who is doing what and have there been other incidents. This allows for continual monitoring and keeps all involved in the process.

Again, enforce the idea of the ‘team’ looking after each other at regular intervals to ensure it is known that bullying, or intimidating behaviour will not be tolerated.

GUIDELINES ON USE OF PHOTOGRAPHIC AND FILMING EQUIPMENT

IBTF has adopted a policy in relation to the use of images of athletes on their websites and in other publications, as there have been concerns about the risks posed directly and indirectly to athletes through the use of photographs on sports websites and other publications. This reduces the risk of inappropriate, unsolicited attention from people within and outside the sport.

Photography and the recording of images in a public place do not generally require explicit or prior consent. In a controlled environment, such as at a training session, seminar or competition, consent and video passes are a requirement.

From time-to-time athletes are presented with an award or achievement. If these events are photographed, prior consent should be sought to name these individuals in media or website reports.

Countries, coaches and volunteers should be permitted to use video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid and as a means of recording special occasions; however, care should be taken in the dissemination, storage and use of such material.

Professional Photography

When commissioning professional photographers or inviting the press to an activity or event, aim to ensure they are clear about our expectations of them in relation to safeguarding. Professional photographers/film/video operators wishing to record an event or practice session should seek accreditation with the Children’s/Safeguarding Officer or event organiser by producing their professional identification for the details to be recorded.

The photographer will be issued with identification which must be worn at all times;

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Keep a record of accreditations;

Inform athletes and parents that a photographer will be in attendance at an event and ensure they consent to both the taking and publication of films or photographs;

Not allow unsupervised access to athletes or one to one photo sessions at events;

Not approve/allow photo sessions outside the events or at an athlete's home.

Videoing as a Coaching Aid

The use of video or digital recording is now a recognised training aid in developing the skills, knowledge, technique etc., of athletes and increasingly coaches are using these tools and are a legitimate coaching aid. However, permission should first be obtained from the athlete and their parent.

Reporting Concerns

Anyone concerned about any photography taking place at events or training sessions can contact the Children's/Safeguarding Officer/designated person and ask them to deal with the matter.

It should be noted that we have little or no influence on what photographs may be taken and published in local or national newspapers as such photography is covered by a different set of guidelines.

WEBSITE USAGE

IBTF and many of its countries have well established websites that enable the publishing of activities, improving communication with members and the general public and as a general publicity forum for local, national and international use.

The internet is an exciting and user-friendly communication outlet for athletes and it is therefore important that we attempt to engage with our athletes in an equally user friendly manner and publicise the sporting activities as being important and interesting. Websites are regularly used by athletes, so it is important that guidelines are put in place.

Website Guidance for Countries

Agree a country website policy also known as an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) following discussions at your country committee meetings and with members, including junior country members. This AUP will promote your strategy on the safe use of the Internet and also outlines the parameters of behaviour and specifies the consequences of breaching those parameters.

Decide at the outset what purpose your website serves.

Appoint a web master to manage your website on behalf of the country.

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Ensure that the web master is answerable to a member of the country's committee, such as the Country Director.

The country committee should agree at the outset, the style, design and content policy of the website with the appointed web master, prior to going on-line.

Agree if you will have a specific youth section and if so, also agree the extent and the limitations on its content etc.

Decisions on the appropriate use of photographic images and other similar content should be in accordance with the Guidelines for Photographic/Recorded Images as outlined already in this document.

Consider the age of the athletes when deciding on the web site's policy.

Consult with the country's children's officer when designing the website and agreeing the usage policy and content material.

Agree to review the overall maintenance and upkeep of the website at regular intervals.

Agree a procedure in the country for dealing with any complaints or concerns that may be raised about the content of your website.

Message Boards and Public Forums

Increasingly, country websites now include a message board or other form of public forum. Such boards can add interest to a website and promote social networking, country camaraderie and interesting debates. However, they are not without their dangers and countries should be aware of this and make decisions on accessibility to such forums.

Posters on such boards often use inappropriate language which is read by younger members. Derisive statements or criticism of younger participants can be very hurtful and may be seen as a form of bullying.

Guidelines for Message Boards

Decide if the forum is open to all or is only for registered members.

Ensure that moderators are appointed with the ability to delete inappropriate material.

Set out clear parameters for what is acceptable or not acceptable.

Appoint a person to deal with any complaints which may be brought by parents or athletes in regard to published material.

Have systems in place to ban abusers of the board.

Use of Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are often given to athletes for security, enabling parents to keep in touch and make sure they are safe. Athletes value their phones highly as they offer a sense of

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independence. In addition, mobile phones allow quick and easy access which can make for safe and efficient way to carry out country business. However, such technology has also allowed an increase in direct personal contact with athletes, in some cases used to cross personal boundaries and cause harm to athletes. Within countries there is a need to encourage responsible and secure use of mobile phones by adults and young people.

As an athlete, remember:

If you receive an offensive photo, email or message do not reply, save it, make a note of times and dates and tell a parent of Children's Officer/Safeguarding Officer within the country;

Be careful about who you give your number to and don't respond to unfamiliar numbers;

Change your phone number in cases of bullying or harassment;

Do not use your phone in certain situations – inappropriate use of your camera phone may cause upset or offence to another person, e.g., in changing rooms etc.;

Treat your phone as you would any other valuable item and protect from theft.

As a country official/coach:

Use group texts for communication among athletes and inform parents of this throughout your twirling year.

It is not appropriate to have constant one-to-one communication with individual athletes;

Do not use your phone in certain situations – inappropriate use of your camera phone may cause upset or offence to another person, e.g., in changing rooms etc.

Use of Social Networking Sites

Social networks such as Snapchat, Instagram and Facebook are becoming increasingly popular.

They provide a quick and easy method of communication and allow people to chat to each other.

However, they are not without problems and all country officials/coaches should be aware of the following:

They should not engage in any inappropriate chat with athletes nor should use such sites to criticise an athlete's performance or skills development;

Inappropriate, derogatory or defamatory remarks or unseemly language should never be used;

Inappropriate, derogatory or defamatory remarks or unseemly language should not be posted on Walls or replies sent which are seen by others;

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Country officials/coaches and mentors should also warn athletes about the language and remarks which they say on these sites;

Many funding bodies and external partners or sponsors access sites like this on a regular basis;

Athletes may do themselves a disavour if they are not careful about what they post.

ATHLETE WELFARE AND PROTECTION PROCEDURES

IBTF accepts that organisations, which include all ages among its members, are vulnerable to the occurrence of child abuse. Below are the procedures for dealing with any welfare or protection issue that may arise. Athlete welfare and the protection of athletes is the concern of all adults at all times, irrespective of their role within the organisation.

If there are grounds for concern about the safety or welfare of an athlete, you should react to the concern. Persons unsure about whether or not certain behaviours are abusive and therefore reportable, should contact the duty social worker in the local health board or social services department where they will receive advice. Grounds for concern include a specific indication from an athlete, a statement from a person who witnessed abuse or an illness, injury or behaviours consistent with abuse.

A report may be made by any member in the country but should be passed on to the Country Children's Officer who in turn has to pass the concern to the local Statutory Authorities. At national level such concerns should be passed to the National Children's Officer. It is not the responsibility of anyone working within IBTF, in a paid or voluntary capacity, or those working in affiliated organisations, to take responsibility or decide whether or not child abuse is taking place. That is the job of the home countries statutory authorities. However, there is a responsibility to protect athletes by assisting the appropriate agencies so that they can then make enquiries and take any necessary action to protect the athlete.

Everyone should follow the procedures outlined below, firstly the procedure for responding to an athlete in distress and secondly the procedure for reporting the concern.

Response to an Athlete Disclosing Abuse

When an athlete discloses information of suspected abuse you should:

Deal with any allegation of abuse in a sensitive and competent way through listening to and facilitating the athlete to tell about the problem, rather than interviewing the athlete about details of what happened;

Stay calm and not show any extreme reaction to what the athlete is saying. Listen compassionately, and take what the athlete is saying seriously;

Understand that the athlete has decided to tell something very important and has taken a risk to do so. The experience of telling should be a positive one so that the athlete will not mind talking to those involved in the investigation;

Be honest with the athlete and tell them that it is not possible to keep information a secret;

Make no judgmental statements against the person whom the allegation is made;

Not question the athlete unless the nature of what they are saying is unclear. Leading questions should be used such as “Can you explain to me what you mean by that?”

Check out the concerns with the parents/guardians before making a report, unless doing so would endanger the athlete;

Give the athlete some indication of what would happen next, such as informing parents/guardians, health board or social services. It should be kept in mind that the athlete may have been threatened and may feel vulnerable at this stage;

Carefully record the details;

Pass on this information to the National Child Protection/Safeguarding Director for IBTF;

Reassure the individual that they have done the right thing in telling you.

Responding to Disclosure Check List

Country Officials, Coaches and trainee Coaches often share a very close and trusting relationship with their athletes, and this might result in the coach being just the sort of person to whom an individual might disclose that he or she is being abused. Although false allegations of abuse do occur, they are rare and if an athlete says or indicates that he or she is being abused, or information is obtained which gives concern that an athlete is being abused, action must be taken immediately.

Actions to Take	Actions to Avoid
<p>The person receiving the disclosure should:</p> <p>React calmly so as not to frighten the athlete</p> <p>Tell the athlete he/she is not to blame and was right to tell</p> <p>Take what the athlete says seriously</p> <p>Keep questions to the absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said</p>	<p>The person receiving the disclosure should not:</p> <p>Panic</p> <p>Allow expressions of shock or distaste to show</p> <p>Probe for more information than is offered</p> <p>Speculate or make assumptions</p> <p>Make negative comments about the alleged abuser</p> <p>Approach the alleged abuser</p>

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Reassure the athlete but do not make promises of confidentiality that cannot be kept Make a full report of what has been said, heard and/or seen (fact and not opinion) as soon as possible.	Make promises that cannot be kept or agree to keep secrets.
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Reporting Suspected or Disclosed Abuse

The following steps should be taken in reporting abuse to statutory authorities:

Observe and note dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident occurred, or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information;

Report the matter as soon as possible to the Country's SafeSport Officer and then the National Children's Officer. If the Country/National Children's Officer has reasonable grounds for believing that the athlete has been abused or is at risk of abuse, she/he will make a report to the health board/social services who have statutory responsibility to investigate and assess suspected or actual abuse;

In cases of emergency, where an athlete appears to be at immediate and serious risk and the Designated Person is unable to contact a duty social worker, the police authorities should be contacted. Under no circumstances should a athlete be left in a dangerous situation pending intervention by the Statutory Authorities;

If the Designated Person is unsure whether reasonable grounds for concern exist she/he can informally consult with the local health board/social services. She/he will be advised whether or not the matter requires a formal report.

A Designated Person reporting suspected or actual abuse to the Statutory Authorities will first inform the family of their intention to make such a report unless doing so would endanger the athlete or undermine an investigation.

Guidelines on Allegations Against Country Officials/Coaches

Allegations concerning failure to observe this Code against Officials/Coaches are subject to IBTF's disciplinary procedures. Country Officials/Coaches subject to allegations will be suspended from activities involving athletes/vulnerable people pending the conclusion of the disciplinary procedures.

Special Considerations

The following points should be considered

The safety of the athlete making the allegation and any others who are/may be at risk should be ensured and this should take precedence over any other consideration. In this regard, the country should take any necessary steps which may be immediately necessary to protect the athlete

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If a Country Officials/Coaches is the subject of the concern s/he should be treated with respect and fairness. Where reasonable grounds for concern exist the following steps should be taken by the Country:

Advice should be sought from the local duty social worker with regard to any action by the country deemed necessary to protect the athlete/athletes who may be at risk

The matter should be reported to the local statutory authorities following the standard reporting procedure outlined above

In the event that the concern is connected to the actions of a Country Official/Coach in the country, the Country Officials/Coaches involved in the concern should be asked to stand aside pending the outcome of any investigation by the Statutory Authorities. It is advisable that this task be undertaken by a senior office holder other than the designated person/children's officer who takes the responsibility for reporting

When the Country Official/Coach is being privately informed by the senior officer of:

- a) the fact that an allegation has been made against him/her and
- b) the nature of the allegation, s/he should be afforded an opportunity to respond. His/her response should be noted and passed on to the statutory authorities.

All persons involved in a child protection process (the athlete, his/her parents/guardians, the alleged offender, his/her family, Country Officials/Coaches) should be afforded appropriate respect, fairness, support and confidentiality at all stages of the procedure. If concerns remain, refer to the countries disciplinary process.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality should be maintained in respect of all issues and people involved in cases of abuse, welfare or bad practice. It is important that the rights of both the athlete and the person about who the complaint has been made are protected.

The following points should be kept in mind:

A guarantee of confidentiality or undertakings regarding secrecy cannot be given, as the welfare of the athlete will supersede all other considerations;

All information should be treated in a careful and sensitive manner and should be discussed only with those who need to know;

Information should be conveyed to the parents/guardians of the athlete in a sensitive way;

Giving information to others on a 'need to know' basis for the protection of an athlete is not a breach of confidentiality;

All persons involved in a child protection process (the athlete, his/her parents/guardians, the alleged offender, his/her family, Country Officials, Coaches) should be afforded; appropriate respect, fairness, support and confidentiality at all stages of the procedure;

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Information should be stored in a secure place, with limited access only to designated people;

The requirements of the Data Protection laws should be adhered to;

Breach of confidentiality is a serious matter

Anonymous Complaints

Anonymous complaints can be difficult to deal with but should not be ignored. In all cases the safety and welfare of the athlete/athletes is paramount. Any such complaints relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Country/National Children's Officer. The information should be checked out and handled in a confidential manner.

Rumours

Rumours should not be allowed to hang in the air. Any rumours relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Country/National Children's Officer and checked without delay.