

INTERNATIONAL BATON TWIRLING FEDERATION

IBTF CODE OF CONDUCT



**AND GOOD PRACTICE IN
CHILDRENS' SPORT**

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POLICY STATEMENT

The International Baton Twirling Federation is committed to safeguarding the well-being 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 of Conduct and Good Practice for Children's Sport.

IBTF's first priority is the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults 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 practicable 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 young people (and vulnerable adults) 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 young people and vulnerable adults.

IBTF GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS OF OUR NATIONAL MEMBER FEDERATIONS

CORE VALUES IN BATON TWIRLING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

The work of IBTF is based on the following principles that will guide the development of baton twirling for young people. Young people's experience of baton twirling should be guided by what is best for the young person and their personal, physical and social development.

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

1. Integrity in relationships

Adults interacting with young people in baton twirling activities should do so with integrity and respect for the child. There is a danger that all sporting contexts can be used to exploit or undermine children.

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

2. Quality atmosphere and ethos

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

3. Equality

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

4. Fair Play

Fair play is the guiding principle of the Code of Practice and Safeguarding for young and vulnerable Baton Twirlers. All children's partaking in baton twirling 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.

5. Competition

A balanced approach to competition can make a significant contribution to the development of young people, while at the same time providing fun, enjoyment and satisfaction. However, competitive demands placed on children can result in excessive levels of pressure on them. This can contribute to a high level of drop out from the sport. Club Directors and coaches should aim to put the welfare of the child 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 adults.

A MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACH

The IBTF firmly believes that our young baton twirlers should be encouraged not only to participate in the different modes and events that baton twirling has to offer, but also in other sports.

By doing so they will:

- Learn transferable skills
- Have a healthier lifestyle
- 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

The IBTF will endeavour to fulfil its commitments to young people and vulnerable adults by:

- Recognising that all young people 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 children with the opportunity to voice any concerns they may have;
- IBTF encourages each National Federation appoint a Safe Sport officer whose contact details will be provided to IBTF. .
- Ensuring that all allegations of abuse of young people are confidentially dealt with in accordance with statutory guidelines and relevant legislation;
- Reviewing the effectiveness of our Child Protections 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 YOUNG/VULNERABLE BATON TWIRLERS

The IBTF wishes to provide the best possible environment for young people involved in the sport of baton twirling. Young people 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. Young people should be encouraged to realise that they have responsibilities to treat other participants and leaders with fairness and respect.

Young baton twirlers are entitled to:

- Be safe and feel safe;
- Be listened to;
- Be believed;
- Be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect;
- Have a voice in the club/organisation;
- 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.

Young baton twirlers should always:

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

Young baton twirlers should never:

- Cheat;
- Use violence or physical contact;
- Shout or argue with, coaches, club directors, judges, officials, opponents, or team mates;
- 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;
- Spread rumours;
- Train or practice if they feel unwell or are injured.

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR BATON TWIRLING COACHES AND CLUB DIRECTORS

All coaches, club directors, officials and volunteers etc, (referred to hereafter as Leaders) should ensure that young people benefit significantly from participation in baton twirling 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 FOR MEMBER FEDERATIONS'S OFFICIALS INVOLVED WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS.

This Code of Behaviour compliments the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport and addresses the appropriate levels of behaviour, practice and conduct required from coaches, club directors, officials, and volunteers.

IBTF recognises the key roles Leaders play in the lives of children in sport. All Leaders, should have as their first priority the children's 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 Practice;
- 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 children's safety and enjoyment as their number one priority;
- Remember that skills and personal development rank above winning;
- Strive to create a positive environment for children in their care and ensure that positive and healthy experiences are provided;
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every child 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 young 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 baton twirling 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 young people;
- 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 both 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;
- Clearly state the start and end time of each session;
- Always have a minimum of 2 adults attend each training session. Where there are mixed clubs, there should be coaches/club directors from both genders present. Avoid being alone with a child;
- 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 parent 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/club director witnesses the actions;
- Be generous with praise both for the efforts of the athletes in your care;
- Ensure that there is a First Aid kit at all sessions;
- Do not allow children 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 a young person and ensure there is adequate supervision for all;
- Avoid taking young people to your own home or involving them in your personal life;
- Avoid individual texting or emailing of young people;
- Avoid over familiar behaviour which can be misinterpreted by others;
- Avoid exposing a child intentionally or unintentionally to embarrassment or disparagement by use of sarcastic or flippant remarks about the child or his/her family;
- Avoid transporting young children. When this is unavoidable ensure that someone else accompanies you and the young person 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/club directors etc., in public.

Physical Contact

Baton Twirling requires a 'hands on approach', from time to time. For example, it may be necessary to support a child 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 child and not the adult'
- 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 a child can do for themselves;
- If physical contact is required, ensure that the child and parent/guardian is aware of this;
- Never engage in inappropriate touching.

Ensure the parents 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 children;
- Allowing or engaging in touching a child in a sexually suggestive manner;
- Allowing children to swear or use sexualised language unchallenged;
- Making sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun;
- Reducing a child to tears as a form of control;
- Allowing allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon;
- Exert undue influence over a participant in order 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 (hypnosis etc.) in the training of children;
- Inviting or allowing children to stay with you at your home;
- Share a room alone with a child for sleeping accommodation on trips.

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR PARENTS

IBTF, believes that parents/guardians have an important role in the child's enjoyment of baton twirling activities and their continued development and involvement in Baton Twirling.

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 young 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 children. Do not publicly question the judgement or honesty of judges, coaches or organisers;
- Encourage their children to compete by the rules of baton twirling 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 team mates and opponents;
- Support all efforts to remove abusive behaviour and bullying.

POLICY FOR THE SELECTION AND APPROVAL OF VOLUNTEERS

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

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

People working with children are required to:

- Agree, in writing to abide by the Code of Practice;
- Attend a Child Protection/Safeguarding workshop;
- Subject themselves to clearance from the relevant authorities;
- Complete the Disclosure Form contained within this Code of Practice – see appendix A.

Each National Safeguarding/Children's Officer will maintain a database of suitable qualified coaches/club directors/volunteers.

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS REGARDING REQUESTS FOR DISCLOSURES

IBTF expects its national member federations to administer Vetting checks. Background checks should be carried out on all persons who on behalf of the organisation, work in any capacity with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

These checks will inform us:

- If the applicant has a criminal record;
- If their name is included on the National Federation's Governmental agencies.

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, clubs and other organisations working with children and young people. It includes behaviours such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting and extortion behaviour by one or more children against a victim.

How would you know if a child 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 a young person might be getting bullied:

- Reluctance to come to a venue or take part in activities;
- Physical signs (unexplained bruises, scratches, or damage to belongings);
- 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 law officials, dealing with bullying behaviour is normally the responsibility of all coaches/club directors/volunteers within a club/IBTF.

How can it be prevented?

- Ensure that all members follow the Code of Practice and Safeguarding for Young and Vulnerable baton twirlers, 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 young people, 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 young people to negotiate, co-operate and help others, particularly new or different children;
- Offer the victim immediate support and put the 'no blame approach' into operation.
- Never tell a young person to ignore bullying, they can't ignore it, it hurts too much;
- Never encourage a young person 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 is 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

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 also 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 PHOTGRAPHIC AND FILMING EQUIPMENT

Federations should adopt 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 children and young people 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 young 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.

Clubs, 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 will aim to ensure they are clear about our expectations of them in relation to child protection. 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;

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 to improve means may be used as 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 national federations 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 young people and it is therefore important that we attempt to engage with our young baton twirlers in an equally user friendly manner and publicise baton twirling activities as being important and interesting. Websites are regularly used by young people, so it is important that guidelines are put in place.

Website Guidance for Clubs

- Agree a club website policy also known as an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) following discussions at your club committee meetings and with members, including and junior club 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 club.
- Ensure that the web master is answerable to a member of the club's committee, such as the Club Director.
- The club 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 children and young people when deciding on the web site's policy.
- Consult with the club'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 club for dealing with any complaints or concerns that may be raised about the content of your website.

Message Boards and Public Forums

Increasingly, club websites now include a message board or other form of public forum. Such boards can add interest to a website and promote social networking, club camaraderie and interesting debates. However, they are not without their dangers and clubs 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 young people 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 children for security, enabling parents to keep in touch and make sure they are safe. Young people value their phones highly as it offers a sense of independence. In addition, mobile phones allow quick and easy access which can make for a safe and efficient way to carry out club business. However, such technology has also allowed and increased direct personal contact with young people, in some cases used to cross personal boundaries and cause harm to young people. Within clubs there is a need to encourage responsible and secure use of mobile phones by adults and young people.

As a young person, 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 or Children's Officer/Safeguarding Officer within the club;
- 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 club director/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 networking sites 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 club directors/coaches should be aware of:

- They should not engage in any inappropriate chat with young members nor should they 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;
- Club directors/coaches and mentors should also warn young people 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;
- Young people may do themselves a disservice if they are not careful about what they post.

Child Welfare and Protection Procedures

IBTF accepts that organisations, which include young people 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. Child welfare and the protection of young people 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 a young person, 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 a child, 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 club but should be passed on to the Club 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 local statutory authorities. However, there is a responsibility to protect children by assisting the appropriate agencies so that they can then make enquiries and take any necessary action to protect the young person.

Everyone should follow the procedures outlined below firstly the procedure for responding to a child in distress and secondly the procedure for reporting the concern.

Response to a Child Disclosing Abuse

When a young person discloses information of suspected abuse you should:

- a) Deal with any allegation of abuse in a sensitive and competent way through listening to and facilitating the child to tell about the problem, rather than interviewing the child about details of what happened;
- b) Stay calm and not show any extreme reaction to what the child is saying. Listen compassionately, and take what the child is saying seriously;
- c) Understand that the child 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 child will not mind talking to those involved in the investigation;
- d) Be honest with the child and tell them that it is not possible to keep information a secret;
- e) Make no judgemental statements against the person whom the allegation is made;
- f) Not question the child 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?"
- g) Check out the concerns with the parents/guardians before making a report, unless doing so would endanger the child;
- h) Give the child 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 child may have been threatened and may feel vulnerable at this stage;
- i) Carefully record the details;
- j) Pass on this information to the National Child Protection Officer.
- k) Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.

Responding to Disclosure Check List

Club Directors, 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 a child might disclose that he or she is being abused. Although false allegations of abuse do occur, they are rare and if a young person says or indicates that he or she is being abused, no information is obtained which gives concern that a young person is being abused, action must be taken immediately.

Actions to Take	Actions to Avoid
<p>The person receiving the disclosure should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - React calmly so as not to frighten the child - Tell the child he/she is not to blame and was right to tell - Take what the child says seriously - Keep questions to the absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said - Reassure the child but do not make promises of confidentiality that cannot be kept - Make a full report of what had been said, heard and/or seen (fact and not opinion) as soon as possible. 	<p>The person receiving the disclosure should not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Panic - Allow expressions of shock or distaste to show - Probe for more information than is offered - Speculate or make assumptions - Make negative comments about the alleged abuser - Approach the alleged abuser - Make promises that cannot be kept or agree to keep secrets.

Reporting Suspected or Disclosed Child Abuse

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

- a) Observe and note dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident occurred or suspicion was aroused, together with any other relevant information;
- b) Report the matter as soon as possible to the Club Children's Officer and then the National Children's Officer. If the Club/National Children's Officer has reasonable grounds for believing that the child 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 child abuse;
- c) In cases of emergency, where a child 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 child be left in a dangerous situation pending intervention by the Statutory Authorities;
- d) 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 child abuse to the Statutory Authorities will first inform the family of their intention to make such a report unless doing so would endanger the child or undermine an investigation.

Guidelines on Allegations Against Club Directors/Coaches

Allegations concerning failure to observe this Code against Directors/Coaches should be subject to disciplinary procedures. Club Directors/Coaches subject to allegations should be suspended from activities involving young persons/vulnerable adults pending the conclusion of the disciplinary procedures.

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 child 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 child 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 child in a sensitive way;
- Giving information to others on a 'need to know' basis for the protection of a child is not a breach of confidentiality;
- All persons involved in a child protection process (the child, his/her parents/guardians, the alleged offender, his/her family, Club Directors, Coaches) should be afforded; appropriate respect, fairness, support and confidentiality at all stages of the procedure;
- 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 child/children is paramount. Any such complaints relating to inappropriate behaviour should be brought to the attention of the Club/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 Club/National Children's Officer, and checked without delay.