



## **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

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Created By:	PNGOC
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## Change History

Date	Version	Created/Amended by	Description of change
1 Oct 19	1.0	PNGOC	Original Policy
15 Apr 25	2.0	PNGOC	Updated to align with current best practices and alignment with the 2024 IOC Consensus Statement on Interpersonal Violence and Safeguarding in Sport

## 1. Introduction and Purpose

- a. The PNG Olympic Committee (PNGOC) is the recognised National Olympic Committee (NOC), Commonwealth Games Association (CGA) and Pacific Games Association (PGA) for Papua New Guinea; as such we are responsible for sending Team PNG to the Olympic Games, Olympic Youth Games, Commonwealth Games, Commonwealth Youth Games, Pacific Games and Pacific Mini-Games (Games). We are a non-government not-for-profit organisation with membership from the National Sports Federations (NFs) of Papua New Guinea.
- b. The Papua New Guinea Olympic Committee ('PNGOC') is committed to delivering services to Members, Affiliates, partners and all stakeholders in a fair, accountable and impartial manner. The organization is committed to sustaining an ethical and safe workplace that is free from conflicts of interest and harm to adults, as well as any form of interpersonal violence, while promoting a holistic approach to participants' well-being.
- c. The purpose of this Safeguarding Policy ('Policy') is to assist the organisation and those engaged by and associated with it to identify, disclose, respond, manage and monitor issues related to the safeguarding of adults, including PNGOC personnel, athletes and officials, from discrimination, harassment, abuse, exploitation in general and sexual misconduct.
- d. The Policy is intended to help safeguard all PNGOC personnel (outlined in the Scope) from discrimination, harassment, abuse and exploitation (both general and sexual), bullying and sexual misconduct both locally and internationally.
- e. PNGOC has a **"no tolerance"** approach and will investigate vigorously any allegations of discrimination, harassment, abuse, exploitation (both general and sexual) and bullying and sexual misconduct, regardless of whether the matter has been raised formally or informally.
- f. PNGOC promotes a safe and healthy environment in which all PNGOC personnel are treated fairly and with respect. All PNGOC personnel including Athletes and those involved in direct sport activities, must not encounter discrimination, harassment, abuse or exploitation on the basis of gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, religion or belief, age, disability, offending background or any other personal characteristic.
- g. Everyone involved in organised sport shares the responsibility to adhere to the principles of safe sport, through best practice and the implementation and adherence of safeguarding policies. Everyone carries a personal responsibility for their own behaviour and for ensuring that their conduct is in accordance with the principles set out in this policy. In addition, each person has a responsibility to report any allegations whether witnessed, notified or suspected surrounding discrimination, harassment, abuse and exploitation.

## 2. Scope

- a. This Policy applies to all PNGOC Personnel including all Directors, employees, contractors, members of Committees and Commissions and volunteers of the PNGOC ('Officers or Agents'), Team PNG members including athletes, officials and coaches and member and affiliate National Federations of PNGOC.

## 3. Principles

The PNGOC Safeguarding Policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- a. **Responsibility and Accountability:** Everyone within the PNGOC ecosystem shares the responsibility for upholding safe sport. Each individual is accountable for their behaviour and for adhering to this policy.
- b. **Athlete-Centred Approach:** The well-being of the athlete is paramount. Sport should be organized and delivered in a way that prioritizes their safety, health, and development.
- c. **Prevention of Interpersonal Violence:** PNGOC takes a proactive approach to prevent all forms of interpersonal violence, which is defined as:  
  
"Physical, sexual, and psychological violence, and deprivation/neglect."(as per the IOC 2024 Consensus Statement)
- d. **Respect and Dignity:** All individuals have the right to be treated with respect, fairness, and dignity. Discrimination, harassment, and abuse are unacceptable.
- e. **Safe and Inclusive Environment:** PNGOC is committed to creating a safe, inclusive, and equitable environment for all participants, regardless of age, gender, ability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or any other personal characteristic.
- f. **Relational Health:** Positive and healthy relationships within the sporting environment are essential for fostering a culture of care and promoting well-being.
- g. **Trauma-Informed Practice:** The policy and its implementation will be guided by a trauma-informed approach, recognizing the potential impact of violence and abuse on individuals.
- h. **Reporting and Response:** All concerns and allegations of interpersonal violence will be taken seriously, reported promptly, and addressed in a fair, timely, and appropriate manner.

## 4. Guidelines and Definitions

- a. This Policy will assist to:
  - i. Safeguard all adults including athletes, para-athletes and PNGOC personnel. Minors are included in the PNGOC's Child Protection Policy;
  - ii. Protect the integrity of sport and sports organisations;
  - iii. Protect those working within sport; and
  - iv. Promote the values of safe sport.

## b. Definitions

To ensure clarity and consistent application of this policy, the following terms are defined as follows:

- **Abuse:** A pattern of maltreatment that can include psychological, physical, and/or sexual abuse, and neglect. (Source: IOC 2016 Consensus Statement)
- **Bullying:** Bullying (or cyberbullying if conducted online) is unwanted, repeated and intentional, aggressive behaviour usually among peers, and can involve a real or perceived power imbalance. Bullying can include actions such as making threats, spreading rumours or falsehoods, attacking someone physically or verbally and deliberately excluding someone (Source: IOC 2024 Consensus Statement).
- **Discrimination:** is treating, or proposing to treat, someone unfavorably because of a personal characteristic protected by the law, such as sex, age, race or disability.
- **Exploitation:** The act of taking advantage of someone's vulnerability or a power imbalance.
- **Harassment:** Unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical, or non-verbal, that demeans, humiliates, or creates a hostile environment. (Source: Adapted from IOC 2016 Consensus Statement)
  - Harassment as stated in Article 1.4 of the IOC Code of Ethics or Harassment and Abuse includes psychological abuse, sexual harassment and neglect. These forms of harassment and abuse may occur in combination or in isolation. Harassment can include a one-off incident or a series of incidents. It may be in person or online. Harassment may be deliberate, unsolicited and coercive.
- **Interpersonal Violence (IV):** Physical, sexual, and psychological violence, and deprivation/neglect. (Source: IOC 2024 Consensus Statement)
- **Neglect:** within the meaning of these definitions means the failure of a person with duty of care, including PNGOC personnel, towards an adult participant, athlete or anyone engaging in PNGOC activities to provide a minimum level of care which is causing harm, allowing harm to be cause or create an imminent danger of harm
- **Physical Abuse:** means any deliberate and unwelcome act- such as for example punching, beating, kicking, biting and burning – that causes physical trauma or injury. Such 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.
- **Psychological Abuse:** A pattern of deliberate, prolonged, repeated non-contact behaviours within a power differentiated relationship. This form of abuse is at the core of all other forms." (Source: IOC 2016 Consensus Statement)
- **Sexual Harassment:**
  - Any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:
  - Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment,
  - Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or
  - Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an

individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. Sexual harassment may consist of a single intense and severe episode or of a persistent pattern of offensive behaviour. (Source: IOC 2007 Consensus Statement)

- **Sexual Misconduct:** A range of inappropriate behaviours of a sexual nature, including sexual harassment and sexual abuse.

### c. Unacceptable Conduct

To help safeguard all PNGOC Personnel and other participants, the following behaviors are considered unacceptable and constitute misconduct under this policy: Harassment, Discrimination, Abuse, Exploitation, Sexual Misconduct and Bullying are considered unacceptable behavior. All Persons found to have engaged in such conduct will be dealt with accordingly as per the reporting procedures outlined in Section 5.

The following behaviors are considered unacceptable and will not be tolerated under any circumstances:

#### 1. Harassment:

- Any unwelcome behavior, whether verbal, physical, or online, that demeans, humiliates, or intimidates an individual.
- Examples include but are not limited to: offensive jokes, slurs, threats, or inappropriate physical contact.
- Harassment, Discrimination and Abuse could also be based on physical attributes, socioeconomic status and athletic ability.

#### 2. Discrimination:

- Any unfair or prejudicial treatment of individuals based on race, gender, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or other protected characteristics.
- Examples include exclusion from activities, derogatory remarks, or unequal treatment.
- Harassment, Discrimination and Abuse could also be based on physical attributes, socioeconomic status and athletic ability.
- Discrimination can occur:
  - **Directly:** when a person or group is treated less favorably than another person or group in a similar situation because of a personal characteristic (see list below).
  - **Indirectly:** when an unreasonable requirement, condition or practice is imposed that has, or is likely to have, the effect of disadvantaging people with a personal characteristic (see list below).

**Personal characteristics include:**

- i. a disability, disease or injury, including work-related injury
- ii. parental status or status as a carer, for example, because they are responsible for caring for children or other family members
- iii. race, colour, descent, national origin, or ethnic background
- iv. age, whether young or old, or because of age in general
- v. sex
- vi. religion
- vii. pregnancy and breastfeeding
- viii. sexual orientation, intersex status or gender identity, including gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, queer and heterosexual
- ix. marital status, whether married, divorced, unmarried or in a de facto relationship or same sex relationship
- x. political opinion
- xi. social origin
- xii. medical record
- xiii. an association with someone who has, or is assumed to have, one of these characteristics, such as being the parent of a child with a disability.

**3. Abuse:**

- Any action that causes physical, emotional, or psychological harm to another person.
- This includes physical abuse (e.g., hitting, slapping), emotional abuse (e.g., verbal insults, manipulation), and neglect.
- Harassment, Discrimination and Abuse could also be based on physical attributes, socioeconomic status and athletic ability.

**4. Exploitation:**

- Taking advantage of another person for personal gain or benefit, including financial, sexual, or other forms of exploitation.
- This includes coercion, manipulation, or abuse of power to exploit vulnerable individuals.

**5. Sexual Misconduct:**

- Any form of sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment (SEAH), including unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.
- Examples include inappropriate comments, sharing explicit materials, or

engaging in sexual activity without consent.

**6. Bullying:**

- Repeated and intentional behavior that causes harm, fear, or distress to another person.
- Examples include spreading rumors, isolating someone socially, or cyberbullying.

**Expected Standards of Behaviour**

To maintain a safe and respectful environment, all PNGOC Personnel and participants are expected to adhere to the principles outlined in this policy and the standards outlined in the PNGOC Code of Conduct.

Further details and examples of what can constitute the different types of unacceptable conduct can be found on the IOC Consensus Statement: (2024).

**d. Article 1.4 of the IOC Code of Ethics states:**

*“Respect for international conventions on protecting human rights insofar as they apply to the Olympic Games’ activities and which ensure in particular (a) Respect for human dignity and; (b) Rejection of discrimination of any kind on whatever grounds, be it race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Rejection of all forms of harassment and abuse be it physical, professional or sexual, and any physical or mental injuries.”*

**5. Reporting and Responding**

- a. All persons within the scope of the Policy are required to report any instance (witnessed, suspected or alleged) of Harassment, Discrimination, Abuse, Exploitation, Sexual Misconduct and Bullying, and any incidents of policy non-compliance.
- b. The PNGOC Board will establish an Ad-Hoc Committee to investigate reports. The Ad-Hoc Committee shall include the legal advisor as a compulsory member, and/or in his or her absence, any member of the board with a legal background.
- c. To the best of its ability and within its capacity, the PNGOC will follow a reporting and responding procedure similar to the process outlined in Annex 1 of this Policy.
- d. A variety of reporting mechanisms may be used, including a report in writing, a report via email, a report via phone call, and a report in person, to the designated Safeguarding Officer at the PNGOC. The specific contact details (email address, phone number, and physical address) of the Safeguarding Officer will be published on the PNGOC website and included in training materials.
- e. If a member of staff or volunteer who is not trained in safeguarding becomes aware of a safeguarding concern or allegation, they must refer the person making the report to the designated Safeguarding Officer. Staff and volunteers must not attempt to



assess the validity of an allegation. All allegations must be taken seriously and addressed as such.

- f. In situations where an individual is making an allegation, our staff and volunteers are required to:
  - i. Listen to the allegation or disclosure supportively, without dispute;
  - ii. Clarify the basic details, without seeking detailed information or asking suggestive or leading questions;
  - iii. Record what was said (where possible, noting the exact words used by the person making the allegation);
  - iv. Date and sign the record;
  - v. Explain to the individual (if present) that other people may need to be told, to stop what is happening;
  - vi. Provide reassurance that our organisation will take immediate action in response to the allegation; and
  - vii. Report the matter as per organisational policy requirements (as stated earlier).
- g. Only personnel trained in safeguarding procedures should receive and manage allegations. Untrained personnel should only facilitate the referral of the person making the report to the Safeguarding Officer.

## **6. Disciplinary Procedure**

- a. A case is brought to the Board with recommendations on corrective action to undertake and sanctions to impose. Measures and sanctions must respect the principle of proportionality and be consistent with applicable laws. The following factors should be taken into consideration when determining proportionality: the nature and severity of the violations, the number of violations any other relevant circumstances (including how the incident was raised, who is involved and whether this was witnessed, suspected or alleged).
- b. *Fair Process and Natural Justice*
  - i. PNGOC provides sufficient opportunity to the other party to respond and to be heard. Such a process highlights the importance of providing the responding party with fair process. In practical terms, this means that if an allegation is made against someone, the following procedure is followed:
    - 1. Notice is provided to the individual/ individuals concerned; and
    - 2. The right and or opportunity to be heard should be offered, before any measure or sanction is applied.
    - 3. A matter may be referred to Police should the case be deemed to have a criminal nature.

## **7. Confidentiality**

- a. Reports of harassment and abuse often contain extremely sensitive information. Given the nature of PNGOC activities, often people particularly athletes are reluctant to officially make reports, and therefore it is very important that reports are followed up in a timely and appropriate manner.
- b. All reports of Harassment, Discrimination, Abuse, Exploitation, Sexual Misconduct and Bullying will be treated with strict confidentiality. It is essential that the persons affected voices and opinions are taken into account.
- c. The confidentiality and privacy of all concerned (including the alleged perpetrator) should be maintained, except if doing so would compromise the welfare of the individual person and/or investigation of the allegation.

## **8. Corrective Action and Lessons Learned**

- a. The other party will be notified in writing of the outcome of the review or investigation verifying or refuting the allegations made against that person.
- b. Once the board has made an assessment, they will deliver the decision, and if the matter is referred to Police then the Board will leave it to the justice system.
- c. In our experience, the allegations are most of the time closed and dismissed because of lack of evidence and not due to them being false.
- d. If the allegations are dismissed for whatever reason, the parties to the matter will be interviewed separately by a member of the Disciplinary Committee, and the matter will be closed.
- e. A report of the matter will be kept by the PNGOC and will be recorded in the PNGOC Safeguarding Complaint Register. There is provision for mediations and counseling available to all persons affected should the matter excel to affecting the athletes mental state.

## **9. Training and Education**

- a. It is recommended that member National Federations, employees and board members complete safeguarding awareness and education training program at least every two years including education on this Safeguarding Policy.
- b. To the extent possible, the required education and training will be based on awareness and application of this Safeguarding Policy, and materials and information available from the PNGOC.

## **10. Review and amendment**

- a. The Executive Board of the PNGOC may, in its absolute discretion, review and amend this Policy document at any time.
- b. A copy of this Policy will be available to an interested party upon written request to Secretary General of the PNGOC.

Adopted by the Executive Board of the PNGOC on: **October 30, 2019**

Amended: April 15<sup>th</sup> 2025

Annex 1: Flowchart demonstrating harassment and abuse report response (*IOC Toolkit for safeguarding athletes from harassment and abuse in sport*)

