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# **ACODEPA'S MODEL POLICY FOR THE PREVENTION OF HARASSMENT AND ABUSE IN SPORT**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Sport occupies a unique place in the lives of individuals and societies. When practiced in a safe and respectful environment, it becomes an unparalleled force for human development and transformation. However, this potential can only be fully realized when people are placed at the center of every decision. Protecting those who make sport possible—especially children, adolescents, and adults in situations of vulnerability—is not a peripheral obligation of a sports organization; it is a fundamental condition for sport to fulfill its deepest purpose.

This conviction has guided ACODEPA over time. The 2020 Policy on the Prevention of Harassment and Abuse in Sport represented a highly significant institutional milestone. By introducing this issue within the ACODEPA framework, it established a common language, raised awareness throughout its community, and laid the foundations for a culture of safeguarding across the Pan American network.

Building upon that legacy, and driven by the same concern that inspired it, ACODEPA now takes a further step forward. With the aim of strengthening safeguarding throughout its network, ACODEPA presents this MODEL POLICY FOR THE PREVENTION OF HARASSMENT AND ABUSE IN SPORT as a formal recommendation to its Affiliated Organizations. It is not intended as a uniform requirement, but rather as a structured reference that each Organization may adopt, adapt, and make its own in accordance with its particular circumstances and the legal framework of its country.

This Model Policy is organized into nine interrelated sections: commitments, definitions, responsibilities, appointments, response procedures, prevention, education, networks, and indicators. Each section addresses an essential component of the safeguarding system and provides guidance for its practical implementation, with the objective of ensuring that every Affiliated Organization has clearly defined structures, processes, and responsibilities to protect its athletes, participants, and wider sporting community.

Although ACODEPA does not directly organize its own sporting events, it is fully committed to supporting its Affiliated Organizations throughout this process. Within its institutional capacities, ACODEPA provides technical guidance and, in particular, education and training programs designed to support the implementation of safeguarding policies and the development of safer sporting environments across the Pan American network.



ACODEPA invites each Affiliated Organization to actively assume its role in the creation of safe sporting environments and encourages every administrator, coach, athlete, and participant to do the same through their respective policies and actions. Safeguarding and protecting people in sport is a collective responsibility, and this Model Policy is the instrument that ACODEPA makes available to its network to put that responsibility into practice by establishing guidelines, principles, responsibilities, and pathways for implementation.

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## **2. MODEL SAFEGUARDING POLICY FOR THE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE TO HARASSMENT AND ABUSE IN SPORT**

This document is a Model Policy for the Prevention of Harassment and Abuse in Sport, developed by ACODEPA as a structured reference for its Affiliated Organizations. It is organized into nine sections, each addressing an essential component of the safeguarding system and providing guidance for its implementation. The Model Policy may be adopted, adapted, and tailored by each Organization in accordance with its specific circumstances and the legal framework of its country.

### **STATEMENT**

A safeguarding policy begins with a public act of responsibility. Before any procedure, structure, or mechanism is established, it is the Organization's formal declaration of commitment that gives legitimacy and binding force to everything that follows. Without such an act, the Policy risks being perceived as a set of rules imposed from outside rather than as the expression of a genuine commitment embraced by those who lead the Organization. For this reason, this Model requires the Organization to publicly declare, through the signature of its legal representative, that the protection of individuals is its highest priority and the ethical foundation of all its actions.

### **Our Commitment**

Sport has the power to transform lives. However, that transformation can only truly occur when the sporting environment is safe, respectful, and free from all forms of violence and abuse. For this reason, the well-being of all members of our sporting community—especially children, adolescents, and adults in situations of vulnerability—is our highest priority. Not one priority among many, but the foremost one.

The Organization unequivocally declares its commitment to protecting all individuals who participate in sport under its responsibility. This commitment is not a formality; it is the ethical foundation upon which all safeguarding actions are built.

We categorically reject all forms of physical, psychological, or sexual violence, neglect, discrimination, or any other conduct that causes harm or places at risk the integrity, dignity, or development of children, adolescents, and adults within our sporting environment.

This commitment is aligned with internationally recognized frameworks for protection and safeguarding in sport, including the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Safeguarding Athletes Guidelines, the IOC Consensus Statement on Harassment and Abuse in Sport, the



United Nations human rights framework, and other international standards and instruments applicable to the safeguarding of individuals in sport.

The protection of individuals cannot depend solely on the goodwill of those involved in sport. It requires clear structures, defined responsibilities, and a strong institutional culture. This Policy is the practical expression of that understanding and the commitment that the Organization publicly assumes before its sporting community.

Signature:

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President and/or Legal Representative of the Organization



## DEFINITIONS

For a safeguarding policy to be effective, it must be understood by everyone. Poorly defined technical terms can lead to differing interpretations, create gaps, and weaken the protection that the Policy seeks to ensure. For this reason, this Policy adopts clear and precise definitions for the key concepts within its safeguarding framework, ensuring that any person who is part of the Organization's sporting community can recognize, identify, and report situations of risk or harm. We recognize that some of these definitions may vary according to the legislation of each country, and the guidance set out herein should be interpreted in accordance with the applicable local legal framework.

### Definitions of Forms of Violence

**Sexual Abuse:** Any conduct of a sexual nature, with or without physical contact, carried out without consent, through coercion or manipulation, or in circumstances where consent cannot be given. It occurs when a perpetrator uses force, threats, or takes advantage of a victim in order to engage in unwanted or non-consensual sexual activity.

**Psychological Harassment (Moral Harassment):** Abusive, frequent, and repetitive conduct through behaviors that constrain, intimidate, or discredit a person, such as forcing or compelling an individual to perform a task under threat to their employment, team position, or continued participation in sport. It also includes the improper use of a position of influence, authority, or trust to exercise control, coercion, or manipulation over athletes or other participants.

**Sexual Harassment:** Any unwanted and unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal, non-verbal, or physical. It involves attempts to obtain sexual advantage or favor through reprehensible, undesirable, and unacceptable behavior, including threats or conditions imposed for remaining in a sporting or working environment, as well as other aggressive manifestations of a sexual nature that negatively affect the victim's activities.

**Bullying:** Unwanted, intentional, and repeated aggressive behavior, generally occurring between peers, that may involve a real or perceived imbalance of power. It may include threats, the spreading of rumors or false information, physical or verbal aggression, and deliberate exclusion. Cyberbullying refers to bullying conducted through digital environments.

**Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity:** Antipathy, prejudice, aversion, contempt, or unequal treatment based on a person's sexual orientation or gender identity, including members of the LGBTQIA+ community. This definition replaces and



expands the term “homophobia” used in previous reference documents, in alignment with updated terminology adopted by the United Nations and the Olympic Movement.

**Negligence or Omission:** Harm caused by the failure of a person responsible for the duty of care toward another individual or situation to take appropriate action. In sport, negligence may result in accidents, injuries, malnutrition, dehydration, emotional harm, or self-destructive behaviors and has been identified as a growing mechanism of abuse within the sporting context.

**Racism:** Oppression manifested either explicitly through physical and verbal aggression or indirectly through jokes and other discriminatory acts based on race, color, ethnicity, or origin.

**Hazing:** An organized form of harassment in sport, generally practiced in groups, involving the degradation or dangerous initiation of new team members by more senior members.

**Digital Violence and Online Abuse:** Any form of harassment, intimidation, humiliation, or exploitation carried out through digital platforms, social media, or electronic communications. It includes the sending or distribution of inappropriate images or content without consent, the creation of false profiles, and online harassment. This concept has been recognized by the IOC Consensus Statement as a growing mechanism of abuse in sport.

**Physical Violence:** Non-accidental trauma or physical injury caused by hitting, beating, kicking, biting, burning, or other forms of harm inflicted upon an athlete or other person. It includes, for example, forced or inappropriate physical activity with workloads unsuitable for a person’s age or physical condition, as well as forced alcohol consumption and systematic doping practices.

**Gender-Based Violence:** Any act of violence directed at a person because of their sex or gender, generally occurring within relationships characterized by power, control, or domination. It includes physical, sexual, psychological, moral, or economic violence.

**Economic Violence:** Any conduct involving the withholding, taking, destruction, or misuse of personal belongings, work tools, personal documents, property, assets, rights, or financial resources belonging to an individual.

**Psychological Violence:** A pattern of deliberate, prolonged, and repeated behaviors, without physical contact, occurring within the context of an unequal power relationship. Such behaviors demean, humiliate, segregate, reject, or isolate an individual. This form of abuse is often present at the core of all other forms of abuse. Its effects reach every aspect





of a person's inner life, affecting cognition, values, beliefs, and the way individuals perceive themselves and the world around them.

### Technical Terms

**Child and Adolescent:** Any human being under the age of 18 years, unless otherwise provided by applicable law. Early childhood refers to children under 8 years of age; adolescents and young people are those between 10 and 18 years of age.

**Safe Sport:** A sporting environment that is respectful, equitable, and free from all forms of non-accidental violence, where athletes and other participants can develop with dignity and integrity.

**Safeguarding Officer:** A professional appointed by the sports organization to lead, coordinate, and oversee the implementation of the safeguarding policy and program, ensuring that children, adolescents, athletes, and other participants are protected from violence, abuse, and neglect.

**Person with a Disability:** A person who has long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

**Safeguarding Focal Point:** A person designated within specific events, teams, or operational units to serve as the first local point of contact for safeguarding matters, supporting the Safeguarding Officer and ensuring an immediate response at the operational level.

**Incident Management Procedure:** A structured set of steps for identifying, recording, assessing, and responding to safeguarding concerns or reports, prioritizing the immediate protection of the affected person and their appropriate referral to the relevant competent authorities or bodies.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

A safeguarding policy only truly exists when there are people and structures responsible for making it work. Defining responsibilities is not a bureaucratic exercise; it is what transforms commitments into concrete actions and ensures that no one is left without support in situations of risk or harm. This section establishes the core responsibilities of any Organization that adopts this Model in the field of safeguarding, both in relation to its internal community and to the events and activities under its management.



The Organization shall have the following responsibilities:

- Develop and periodically review a Safeguarding Code of Conduct that guides every person associated with the Organization to adopt ethical and safe behaviors in all their relationships and activities within administrative, sporting, and any other environments under its management
- Implement systematic measures to prevent and address all forms of psychological, physical, and sexual violence, neglect, and discrimination, acting proactively rather than solely in response to situations of risk or harm
- Manage with diligence, confidentiality, and timeliness any concern, allegation, or report of violence or abuse, ensuring that all disclosures are treated seriously and that appropriate procedures are followed.
- Provide comprehensive support to any member of its community who is a victim of any form of violence or abuse through measures of care, remediation, and recovery, recognizing that safeguarding and protection do not end when a report is made.
- Maintain its own Safeguarding Policy, adopted and adapted from this Model Policy, as a condition for alignment with ACODEPA's standard.
- Provide education and training for individuals associated with the Organization on the prevention and response to violence and abuse, including technical guidance and supporting resources to ensure the effective implementation of the Policy.
- Ensure that all persons associated with the Organization are aware of the available reporting and support channels, as well as the procedures established under this Policy.
- Ensure that all individuals who are part of the Organization formally acknowledge and commit to this Safeguarding Policy, thereby undertaking to apply its principles within their own structures, activities, and events.
- Maintain a formal and regular communication channel between the Safeguarding Officer, Safeguarding Focal Points, and the Organization's governing bodies, ensuring that the safeguarding system operates in an integrated manner, with clear information flows and accountability mechanisms.



## **APPOINTMENTS**

Protecting people requires more than good intentions; it requires structure. Knowing who is responsible for what, to whom concerns should be reported, and how action should be taken in situations of risk is what makes a safeguarding policy operational. This section defines the formal roles that every sports organization should establish to ensure that the safeguarding and protection of children, adolescents, athletes, and other participants are carried out consistently, competently, and with clear accountability.

The following are the principal safeguarding structures that this Model Policy recommends for ACODEPA Affiliated Organizations:

### **Commission for the Prevention of Harassment and Abuse in Sport**

The Commission for the Prevention of Harassment and Abuse in Sport is the Organization's internal multidisciplinary body responsible for developing and recommending the Safeguarding Policy, promoting Safe Sport, consulting and aligning practices with international standards and references, issuing guidance and good practices for the Organization, and providing strategic direction for the implementation of the safeguarding program. It serves as a governance and coordination body, supporting the Safeguarding Officer and maintaining ongoing collaboration with the Ethics and Integrity Commission.

The Organization shall formally establish this Commission. Its members must have a minimum of 20 hours of training in the safeguarding of children and adolescents in sport, as well as demonstrable experience in the field.

### **Safeguarding Officer**

The Safeguarding Officer is the professional appointed by the Organization to lead, coordinate, and oversee the implementation of the safeguarding policy and program, ensuring that children, adolescents, athletes, and all other participants are protected from violence, abuse, and neglect.

The Organization shall formally appoint a Safeguarding Officer who has completed a minimum of 20 hours of training in the safeguarding of children and adolescents in sport and holds a recognized certification issued by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) or an equivalent recognized organization in the field. The appointed individual must have demonstrable experience in safeguarding and shall report regularly to the appropriate supervisory authorities within the Organization.



To ensure continuity of the role in cases of absence or vacancy, the Organization shall also appoint a Deputy Safeguarding Officer who meets the same training, certification, and experience requirements.

### **Safeguarding Focal Point**

A Safeguarding Focal Point is a person appointed within specific events, teams, or operational units to serve as the first local point of contact for safeguarding matters, directly supporting the Safeguarding Officer in the day-to-day implementation and monitoring of the safeguarding program.

The Organization shall formally appoint one or more Safeguarding Focal Points, according to the scale and structure of its activities. Each appointed individual must have completed a minimum of 20 hours of training in the safeguarding of children and adolescents in sport and shall report regularly to the Safeguarding Officer.

### **External Advisory Group**

The External Advisory Group is composed of independent specialists and agencies in the fields of law, psychosocial support, child protection, and related areas. Its purpose is to provide the Organization with independent technical advice on safeguarding matters, thereby strengthening the credibility and quality of institutional decision-making.

The formal relationship between each member of the Group and the Organization shall be established through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), ensuring clarity regarding roles, scope of responsibilities, and commitments undertaken by each party. Members of the Group must have completed a minimum of 20 hours of training in the safeguarding of children and adolescents in sport.

The Group operates in an advisory capacity, supporting both the Safeguarding Officer and the Organization. Its role is complementary to the Organization's internal safeguarding structure and does not replace or diminish the responsibilities of its internal bodies and governance mechanisms.

### **Ethics and Integrity Commission**

The Ethics and Integrity Commission is the independent or semi-autonomous body responsible for assessing breaches of ethical standards, codes of conduct, and integrity regulations, including safeguarding cases when they involve misconduct. Its role is complementary to the safeguarding system, with a central function in accountability and disciplinary processes.



The Organization shall formally align its safeguarding operations with the Ethics and Integrity Commission, ensuring that communication channels between the respective bodies are clearly defined and that cases involving ethical accountability are referred appropriately. Members of the Commission must have completed a minimum of 20 hours of training in the safeguarding of children and adolescents in sport, ensuring that decisions regarding inappropriate conduct are made with a proper understanding of the safeguarding and protection context.

### Safeguarding Structure Model



## RESPONSES

recognizing a situation of risk is only the first step. What ultimately determines the effective protection of an individual is the quality and timeliness of the response that follows. Well-defined procedures that are known to everyone and applied consistently help prevent further harm and ensure that the Organization fulfills its responsibilities with integrity.

This section provides guidance on the procedures, reporting pathways, protocols, and criteria that should govern all responses to situations involving psychological, physical, or sexual violence, neglect, or discrimination within the sporting environment.

### Presence of a Safeguarding Officer at Events

At all events falling under the jurisdiction of the Affiliated Organization, including meetings, seminars, championships, and training camps, a Safeguarding Officer or Safeguarding Focal Point shall be appointed and responsible for ensuring the implementation of safeguarding procedures throughout the duration of the event.



## **Incident Management Procedure**

The Affiliated Organization shall maintain a clear, documented, and widely communicated Incident Management Procedure that is known to all individuals within the Organization. The procedure shall be structured around the following general stages: identify, report, and activate the appropriate competent authorities.

Any suspicion of harm, abuse, neglect, or misconduct must be reported, even when there is uncertainty about what has occurred. Failure to report is not an option.

To ensure consistency, accountability, and proper record-keeping, all disclosures, concerns, and reports shall be documented using standardized forms and reporting templates that are readily available and accessible to the Safeguarding Officer and any other professionals designated within the procedure.

## **Immediate Protection and Incident Management**

Upon activation of the Incident Management Procedure, immediate protective measures for the victim shall be implemented. These measures may include, where necessary and appropriate, the precautionary suspension of the alleged perpetrator from the sporting environment while the matter is being assessed.

Cases shall be categorized according to their level of severity, supported by a decision-making flowchart, in order to guide priority actions, risk management measures, and appropriate referrals.

Communication with the legal guardians or representatives of a child or adolescent victim shall take place whenever it is appropriate and safe to do so, always taking into account the best interests, safety, and well-being of the affected individual.

## **Reporting and Support Channel**

The Affiliated Organization shall establish a formal Reporting and Support Channel, including an accessible mechanism that enables any person to safely and confidentially report concerns regarding inappropriate conduct, abuse, violence, misconduct, or breaches of applicable policies and standards.

The Organization shall ensure that all concerns are listened to, documented, assessed, and referred for appropriate investigation and follow-up. The Channel shall contribute to risk prevention, the protection of victims, and the promotion of a safe, respectful, and ethical organizational environment.



The Reporting and Support Channel shall be accessible through one or more of the following means: email, online reporting form, telephone, or in-person contact with the Safeguarding Officer, a Safeguarding Focal Point, or another designated individual responsible for receiving and managing safeguarding concerns.

### **Procedural Rights**

The Organization shall ensure respect for fundamental procedural rights throughout the management of any safeguarding concern or allegation. These rights include impartial treatment, the presumption of innocence, the right to be heard and to present a defense, the principle of proportionality in the application of sanctions, the opportunity to be heard before any disciplinary measure is imposed, and formal notification of rights to all persons involved in the process.

### **Record-Keeping and Confidentiality**

All information related to a safeguarding concern, disclosure, allegation, or incident shall be documented, stored, and handled with strict confidentiality. Appropriate measures shall be taken to ensure the preservation of evidence, the security of records, and the protection of the privacy and identity of all individuals involved. Access to safeguarding information shall be limited to those persons who require it in order to fulfill their responsibilities, in accordance with applicable laws, organizational procedures, and the principles of safeguarding and data protection.

### **Specific Procedures**

The Affiliated Organization shall adopt differentiated procedures according to the type of violence, abuse, neglect, or misconduct identified. It shall also establish specific protocols for situations involving employees, coaches, administrators, officials, volunteers, and other individuals associated with the Organization, ensuring that each case is managed appropriately in light of the roles, responsibilities, and circumstances involved.

### **Specialized Support**

The Affiliated Organization shall ensure access to qualified professionals capable of providing initial response services and the necessary medical, psychological, and other appropriate support to victims and, where applicable, to their families.

Cases shall be monitored through a formal case management and follow-up system, with up-to-date records maintained throughout the process and clearly designated individuals responsible for each stage of case handling, support, and resolution.





## **Institutional Crisis Management**

In situations involving significant institutional impact or public attention, the Affiliated Organization shall activate a pre-established crisis communication plan designed to protect victims, safeguard the integrity of ongoing processes, and ensure the responsible management of information. Any communication related to such situations shall be conducted in a manner that prioritizes the safety, privacy, and dignity of affected individuals, while preserving the fairness, confidentiality, and integrity of any safeguarding, disciplinary, or legal proceedings.

## **Activation of Support from ACODEPA**

The Organization may request support from ACODEPA in the management of safeguarding incidents when it does not have adequate technical capacity to respond appropriately, or when there is a suspected involvement of officials, board members, or other leaders of the Organization itself, in circumstances where internal handling could compromise the impartiality, independence, or credibility of the process.

The Organization shall be familiar with the channels, procedures, and criteria established for requesting such support and shall ensure that these mechanisms are readily accessible to the Safeguarding Officer and other relevant safeguarding personnel.

## **Primacy of Local Law**

The procedures established under this Policy shall not, under any circumstances, replace or override the legal obligations in force in the country where an incident occurs. Applicable local laws shall take precedence over any internal policy, procedure, or protocol. Compliance with mandatory reporting requirements and any other legal obligations toward competent authorities is the responsibility of all individuals involved in the management of the case. The Organization shall ensure that all safeguarding actions are carried out in accordance with the applicable legal framework while maintaining the highest possible standards of protection and support for those affected.

## **Well-Being of the Safeguarding Team**

Individuals who are directly involved in the management of safeguarding incidents and crisis situations may be exposed to experiences with a significant emotional impact. The Affiliated Organization shall ensure that members of its safeguarding team have access to appropriate emotional and psychological support following their involvement in such situations. Supporting those who protect others is an institutional responsibility. The well-being of safeguarding personnel is essential to maintaining an effective, sustainable, and resilient





safeguarding system, and should be recognized as an integral component of the Organization's duty of care.

## **PREVENTION**

The best response to violence is preventing it from occurring in the first place. Prevention means creating proactive conditions in which risks are identified before they result in harm, and ensuring that sporting environments are structured in ways that minimize opportunities for any form of abuse, violence, neglect, or misconduct.

This section establishes the preventive measures that the Organization shall adopt across its activities, events, programs, and all other environments under its responsibility and management.

### **Risk Assessment and Risk Management**

The Organization shall conduct periodic safeguarding risk assessments of its activities, identifying situations, environments, and practices that may create opportunities for abuse, violence, neglect, or other forms of harm. For each identified risk, specific mitigation measures shall be established, including clearly assigned responsibilities and implementation timelines.

### **Criminal Background Checks**

The Organization shall conduct regular criminal background checks on all employees and volunteers as part of both the recruitment process and ongoing monitoring. Such checks are a fundamental safeguarding measure and shall be kept current throughout an individual's relationship with the Organization, subject to applicable laws and regulations.

### **Mandatory Visual Identification**

All individuals directly or indirectly associated with the Organization shall wear or display mandatory visual identification while carrying out their activities. This measure promotes transparency within the sporting environment and enables participants to clearly identify the individuals with whom they are interacting.

### **Access Control**

The Organization shall maintain formal access control procedures for all venues, facilities, and digital environments in which its activities take place, restricting access by unauthorized individuals to spaces used by children, adolescents, and athletes.



Clear rules governing access to changing rooms, locker rooms, and restroom facilities shall be established, communicated to all participants, and applied consistently, ensuring privacy, dignity, and safety.

### **One-Adult Rule**

No child or adolescent shall be left alone with a single adult during any activity conducted by the Affiliated Organization. This rule applies in all circumstances, including training sessions, travel, medical consultations, and one-to-one meetings, and shall not be subject to exceptions.

Prior to the commencement of any activity involving children or adolescents, the Affiliated Organization shall establish minimum supervision ratios and ensure that a sufficient number of responsible adults are present to provide appropriate oversight throughout the activity.

### **Safe Environment Guidelines**

The Affiliated Organization shall develop, publish, and maintain minimum Safe Environment Guidelines applicable to its facilities, events, activities, and operations.

These guidelines shall be communicated to all participants and reviewed periodically to reflect evolving best practices, lessons learned, and continuous improvements in safeguarding and participant protection.

## **EDUCATION**

Knowledge is protection. A safeguarding policy only fulfills its purpose when the people who are part of the organization are able to recognize situations of risk, understand their responsibilities, and know how to respond appropriately. No institutional structure can replace the capacity of each individual to identify inappropriate conduct and take the right course of action.

For this reason, safeguarding education is not an optional benefit; it is a responsibility of the Organization toward everyone who is part of its sporting community.

### **Basic Training**

All individuals associated with the Organization, regardless of the nature or duration of their involvement, shall receive basic safeguarding training before commencing their activities. This training shall introduce the fundamental principles of the Policy, expected standards of conduct, and the available channels for raising concerns and reporting incidents.



Participation in this training program is mandatory and shall be renewed annually to ensure continued awareness, understanding, and compliance with the Organization's safeguarding responsibilities and standards.

### **Continuing Education Program**

The Affiliated Organization shall provide a continuing education program with a minimum duration of four (4) hours, aimed at all employees, volunteers, Safeguarding Focal Points, and other individuals occupying sensitive or strategic roles within the safeguarding framework. Participation in this program is mandatory and shall be renewed annually.

### **Training Records**

Participation in all safeguarding training activities shall be formally documented. At the conclusion of each training program, a learning assessment shall be conducted to verify participants' understanding and retention of the content covered.

### **Safeguarding Visibility at Events**

The commitment statement contained in this Policy, together with the contact details of the Reporting and Support Channel, shall be displayed at all events organized or supported by the Organization.

All accredited participants shall receive concise educational materials, such as a booklet, leaflet, or quick-reference guide, presenting essential safeguarding information in an accessible, practical, and user-friendly format.

### **Educational Campaigns**

The Organization shall develop and promote regular safeguarding awareness and education campaigns directed at athletes, families, coaches, and other members of the sporting community.

These campaigns shall contribute to the development of a culture of protection by ensuring that safeguarding remains a visible and normalized part of everyday sporting life, rather than being addressed only in response to crises or incidents.

### **Partnerships for Content Development**

The Organization shall establish formal partnerships with institutions specializing in child safeguarding, safeguarding in sport, and related fields to support the development, review, and periodic updating of the educational content used in its training programs and awareness campaigns.



Such partnerships help ensure that educational initiatives remain aligned with recognized good practices, current evidence, and the most recent developments in the field of safeguarding and the protection of individuals in sport.

## **NETWORKS**

No organization can face the most complex safeguarding situations alone. Cases involving violence, abuse, or neglect often require technical expertise, resources, and competencies that extend beyond the internal capacity of any sports organization.

For this reason, building and maintaining a qualified support network is not merely a complement to a safeguarding policy; it is an essential component of it. This section establishes the guidelines that enable the Organization to access specialized support and to understand when and how such support should be activated.

### **Formal Establishment of the Support Network**

The Organization shall formally establish a support network for its safeguarding activities, composed of qualified professionals and specialized services in areas such as physical and mental health, social services, child protection, public safety, healthcare, and other relevant fields, according to the needs and circumstances of each context.

This network shall be maintained on an ongoing basis and kept up to date. Its activation shall form an integral part of the Incident Management Procedure outlined in this Policy.

A number of the professionals, specialists, or agencies that make up the support network shall also serve as members of the Organization's External Advisory Group.

### **Information Sharing Among Affiliated Organizations**

The contact details of all members of the support network shall be organized and shared among Affiliated Organizations as a resource available for situations that exceed local response capacity.

This exchange of information shall take place systematically and be reviewed periodically to ensure that all contact details and relevant information remain accurate and current.

### **Activation Protocol**

The Organization shall establish a clear protocol defining when and how the support network is to be activated, based on objective criteria related to the nature, complexity, and severity of each situation.



This protocol shall be known to all individuals responsible for incident management and shall be fully integrated into the response procedures described in the RESPONSES section of this Policy.

## **INDICATORS**

A safeguarding policy that is not evaluated cannot evolve. Measuring, recording, and analyzing what is being done enables an organization to identify gaps, recognize progress, and make better-informed decisions about future actions.

This section establishes the monitoring, evaluation, and review mechanisms necessary to ensure that the Policy remains current, relevant, effective, and responsive over time.

### **Annual Safeguarding Report**

The Organization's internal safeguarding structure shall undergo a formal annual evaluation conducted by the Commission for the Prevention of Harassment and Abuse in Sport. This evaluation shall assess the effectiveness of the established safeguarding mechanisms, the quality of prevention and response processes, and the extent to which the commitments set out in this Policy have been fulfilled.

Based on this evaluation, the Organization shall produce an annual safeguarding report that consolidates the principal indicators related to the implementation of the Policy. These indicators shall include, among others, the number of events at which safeguarding procedures were implemented, the number of incidents recorded, the number of training activities delivered and individuals trained during the reporting period, the appointment of a Safeguarding Officer or Safeguarding Focal Point, and the existence of an operational Reporting and Support Channel.

The Organization may also include any additional indicators considered relevant for monitoring and strengthening its safeguarding system.

The results of this assessment shall be used as a basis for the continuous improvement of both this Policy and its implementation, promoting a culture of collective learning, accountability, and shared responsibility.

### **Independent External Evaluation**

Every four years, at the beginning of each Olympic cycle, the Organization shall undertake an independent external evaluation of its safeguarding system.

This evaluation shall be conducted by qualified specialists who are independent of the Organization and have no conflict of interest in relation to its operations. The purpose of the



evaluation is to provide an impartial assessment of the level of Policy implementation and the effectiveness of the safeguarding measures and practices adopted.

Such an evaluation contributes to institutional credibility, transparency, and continuous improvement by identifying strengths, gaps, and opportunities for development that may not be fully captured through internal review processes.

## **APPENDICES**

1. Template for the Development of a Safeguarding Policy
2. Report Form



### 3. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Adopting this Model Policy does not mean that the work is complete. A safeguarding policy only fulfills its purpose when it moves beyond the written document and begins to guide real decisions, behaviors, and practices. The quality of implementation is what ultimately determines whether this set of commitments, definitions, responsibilities, and procedures truly transforms the experience of those who participate in sport under the Organization's responsibility.

For this to happen, certain foundations are non-negotiable.

This Policy shall be formally approved by the Organization's highest governing body, ensuring that it receives the institutional support necessary to be enforced, implemented, and monitored at all levels. All individuals associated with the Organization, regardless of the nature or duration of their involvement, shall formally acknowledge and subscribe to this Policy, thereby committing themselves to the principles and obligations it establishes.

The Policy shall be made available in the languages relevant to the sporting community it serves, ensuring that no language barrier prevents access to its content. Its alignment with the International Olympic Committee's Safeguarding Framework and Guidelines, as well as with other relevant international safeguarding standards and bodies, shall be maintained and reviewed during each policy review cycle.

This Policy shall undergo a formal review at least once every four years. Extraordinary reviews shall be conducted whenever significant updates are made to international safeguarding standards or whenever the specific needs of the Organization require it. Sport evolves, safeguarding knowledge advances, and this Policy must evolve accordingly.

The Organization's Code of Ethics and Conduct shall be developed or reviewed to explicitly incorporate safeguarding-related behaviors and expectations, ensuring that the protection of individuals is embedded within the ethical standards that guide the entire sporting community, rather than existing as a separate system disconnected from organizational culture.

The Organization shall ensure that all of its events, structures, programs, and activities are covered by the principles and procedures established in this Policy. The adoption of a safeguarding policy aligned with ACODEPA standards is not an additional administrative burden; it is a means of ensuring that the safeguarding of athletes and participants is addressed through a concrete, structured, and accountable framework.



Protecting people in sport is a collective responsibility. This Safeguarding Policy is the starting point, and its strength depends on the willingness of every Affiliated Organization, every leader, every coach, every athlete, and every participant to actively embrace and uphold the commitment it represents.





#### 4. WHY TO ADOPT THIS MODEL?

This Model provides Affiliated Organizations with a structured, verifiable reference aligned with the highest international standards of safeguarding in sport. Its key elements, ranging from updated definitions to the monitoring and evaluation system, distinguish this Model as a practical tool for turning commitments into real protective actions, as detailed below.

**Language of accountability.** The Policy consistently adopts mandatory language: “must,” “is the responsibility of,” “is mandatory,” reflecting the principle that protecting people cannot depend on goodwill, but on a clearly assumed institutional commitment.

**Formal and renewable commitment.** This Model requires the formal signature of the President or Legal Representative of the Organization, turning the institutional commitment into a legal and public act, visible to the entire sports community.

**Nine-section framework.** This Model is organized into nine interdependent sections: commitments, definitions, responsibilities, designations, responses, prevention, education, networks, and indicators, which facilitates implementation, auditing, and communication for different audiences within the Organization.

**Updated and comprehensive definitions.** The glossary includes essential concepts for the current context: moral harassment, bullying and cyberbullying, hazing, gender-based violence, property violence, racism, discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as operational definitions such as Safe Sport, Safeguarding Focal Point, and Incident Management Procedure.

**Formal safeguarding structure.** The Policy establishes a complete responsibility architecture: a lead and deputy Safeguarding Officer, Safeguarding Focal Points, a Committee for the Prevention of Harassment and Abuse in Sport, an External Advisory Group, and an Ethics and Integrity Committee, all with a minimum requirement of 20 hours of training and formal accountability mechanisms.

**Explicitly codified organizational responsibilities.** This Model dedicates a full section to the Organization’s responsibilities, establishing concrete obligations: from creating a Safeguarding Ethical Code of Conduct to supporting affected persons in incident management.

**Structured and graded response system.** The Policy establishes a complete incident response flow: mandatory presence of a safeguarding officer at all events, documented stages of identification, reporting, and activation, classification by severity level with flowcharts, precautionary suspension, guarantees of due process rights, formal case follow-



up, crisis communication plan, and specific care for safeguarding team members exposed to high emotional impact situations.

**Systematic prevention as an obligation.** This Model makes mandatory periodic risk mapping with mitigation actions, regular criminal background checks for all individuals linked to the Organization, mandatory visual identification, formal access control to physical and online facilities, the one-adult rule with no exceptions, and the development and publication of minimum safe environment guidelines.

**Education program with measurable requirements.** This Model establishes mandatory basic training before the start of activities for all individuals linked to the Organization, continuous training with a minimum of 4 hours per year, formal participation records, learning assessments after each training session, mandatory educational materials at all events, and regular awareness campaigns directed at the entire sports community.

**Specialized support network.** This Model guides the formal creation of a support network in the areas of physical and mental health, social assistance, child protection, and public safety, with a defined activation protocol and formal linkage with the External Advisory Group through a Memorandum of Understanding.

**Monitoring, evaluation, and review system.** This Model establishes the preparation of an Annual Safeguarding Report led by the Committee for the Prevention of Harassment and Abuse in Sport, an Independent External Evaluation, and a formal Policy Review every four years, with consultation of athletes and other representatives of the sports community.

**Alignment with ACODEPA standards.** The adoption of this Model, properly adapted, is the pathway recommended by ACODEPA for its Affiliated Organizations to align with pan-American network standards on safeguarding and protection of people in sport.



## 5. BENEFITS OF ADOPTING THIS MODEL

Institutional credibility within the Olympic Movement. A Policy aligned with the International Olympic Committee Guidelines, with a verifiable structure, formally designated roles, and periodic evaluations, positions the Organization as a regional and international reference.

**Reduction of institutional risk.** Precise definitions, mandatory records, structured confidentiality, a formal reporting channel, and guarantees of due process significantly reduce the Organization's exposure to procedural failures that may lead to harm to individuals, reputational crises, or legal liability.

**Real protection, not just declared protection.** The adoption of this Model means moving from intentions to obligations: athletes, children, adolescents, and other participants no longer depend on individual goodwill. Protection becomes enforceable, structured, and verifiable.

**Clarity on who does what.** The formal architecture of roles and responsibilities—Safeguarding Officer, Focal Points, Prevention Committee, and External Advisory Group—eliminates ambiguity that, in practice, often leaves risk situations unaddressed. When everyone knows their role, no one fails to act due to lack of clarity.

**Faster responses and less reliance on improvisation.** Defined procedures, flowcharts, and objective criteria reduce response time and improve the quality of action in moments of crisis, which are precisely when people most need clarity.

**A protection culture that expands through the network.** By building its own Policy based on this Model, the Organization actively contributes to the protection culture across the pan-American network, rather than merely fulfilling a formal obligation.

**Long-term system sustainability.** The cycle of annual internal evaluation, independent external review, and formal Policy revision creates a system that learns from its own experience and updates itself in line with international safeguarding advancements.

**Care for those who provide care.** Emotional support for safeguarding personnel is a frequently overlooked benefit in sector policies. Individuals handling abuse cases without adequate support may experience burnout, disengage, and weaken the entire system. Caring for those who care is not optional—it is essential for the continuity of protection.