



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF
CP FOOTBALL

IFCPF Safeguarding & Welfare

1. Policy Statement

The International Federation of Cerebral Palsy Football (IFCPF) is committed to providing football in a fun, safe and respectful environment for all, and we acknowledge our duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of everyone involved in the sport of CP Football. We are committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice and external regulatory body requirements.

2. Application

This policy applies to all individuals, teams and organisations involved in the sport of CP Football.

3. General Principles

IFCPF recognises that the welfare and interests of every individual is paramount and they entitled to live and work in a safe and positive environment that is free from abuse.

This policy aims to ensure that regardless of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, socio-economic background, all involved in our sport:

- have a positive and enjoyable experience of CP Football in a safe and positive environment
- are protected from abuse whilst participating in CP Football or outside of the activity

Terminology:

Abuse: an act or omission that harms an individual (in other words, someone may abuse an individual directly, or may be indirectly responsible for abuse because he/she fails to prevent another person from harming that person). It can be physical, emotional, sexual or by neglect. It can take place in person or online. Although typically thought of as an adult mistreating a child, any individual can also harm other individuals. This is especially in relation to bullying.

Safeguarding: the action taken to ensure that all individuals are safe from harm when involved in football. It means proactively doing everything possible to minimise risk and prevent abuse.

Protection: refers to the action taken in response to a specific concern for an individual or individuals who may be suffering or are at risk of suffering harm or abuse. It is an essential part of safeguarding and requires referral to specialised protection services, law-enforcement agencies and expert local organisations who are trained to advice on and manage cases, if concerns arise.

Additional Vulnerability:

IFCPF acknowledges that some individuals, including people with disabilities or those from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

A consultation undertaken in England by the Office of the Children's Commissioner (2007) found disabled children to be twice as likely as non-disabled children to be a target for bullying. Research with athletes in Belgium and the Netherlands in 2015 showed that young disabled athletes experienced significantly more psychological, sexual and physical violence than their non-disabled peers.

People with a disability may be especially vulnerable to abuse for a number of reasons:

- The increased likelihood of social isolation
- Having fewer outside contacts than non-disabled individuals, and perhaps having limited access to someone to disclose to
- A dependency on others for practical assistance in daily living (including intimate care)
- An impaired capacity to resist, avoid or understand abuse
- Their speech and language communication needs may make it difficult to tell others what is happening
- Their particular vulnerability to bullying.
- Being viewed as a "safe target" for abusers
- Their relative powerlessness (perhaps physically, psychologically and socially) and the opportunities this presents for grooming by potential abusers
- Many young people having learnt to be compliant
- A reluctance to challenge carers who may often be viewed as valiantly coping with the burden of a disabled individual and therefore not considered as potential risks
- The denial of the possibility of (particularly sexual) abuse of disabled individuals
- Disabled individuals being less likely to be heard or listened to.

Definitions of abuse:

Sexual harassment/abuse: Sexual harassment and/or abuse is any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favours, or any other form of unsolicited or unwelcome sexual conduct. Sexual abuse and/or harassment often occurs after the careful grooming of the individual until he/she believes that sexual involvement with his/her abuser is acceptable, unavoidable or a normal part of the relationship and every day behaviour. Regardless of any innocent intent, the following examples, which may also be criminal offenses, constitute sexual harassment and/or abuse when they are offensive:

Financial abuse: Financial abuse is bullying or exploitation involving material and/or fiscal assets including tactics to limit access to assets, concealing information about accessibility to assets, or using assets as the basis to control an individual's behaviour.

Emotional abuse: Emotional abuse is behaviour that may result in psychological trauma to an individual, including anxiety, depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder.

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. It can include actions such as making threats, spreading rumours or falsehoods, attacking someone physically or verbally and deliberately excluding someone.

Hazing: Hazing includes initiation activities that involve forms of ridicule and humiliation within a group or in public, as well as pranks.

Neglect: Neglect is failure to provide an individual's basic needs when those responsible for their care have the means to do so, including suitable shelter, nutrition and psychological support.

Physical abuse: Physical abuse is all forms of inappropriate physical harm to the individual.

Exploitation: Child exploitation is exploitation of under-aged or vulnerable individuals. Exploitation refers to the use of an individual for one's own benefit, gratification or satisfaction.

As part of our safeguarding and wellbeing policy, IFCPF will:

- Promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of every individual.
- Ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns.
- Ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern.
- Ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored.
- Prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals.
- Ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation.
- Map out, identify and establish partnerships with authorities/agencies and civil society organisations with expertise in this area that can provide help and advice.
- Ensure appropriate and immediate action is taken to address allegations of abuse through referral of concerns to the relevant statutory authorities.
- Develop an implementation/action plan to promote and install safeguarding measures.
- Require all members of staff and volunteers to comply with this policy.
- Manage concerns of poor practice and breaches of the code of conduct through the relevant competent body.
- Ensure investigatory, disciplinary and appeals processes are in place to appropriately manage allegations, reports and cases where staff or volunteers have been found to have breached this policy and the code of conduct. Case management and support for victims of abuse (or alleged victims), and those accused, will be undertaken by the relevant authorities.
- Ensure that confidential and accurate records of concerns, allegations, and reports and submitted evidence provided are maintained and securely stored.
- Ensure that we continually evaluate and review our safeguarding practices on a regular basis, at least annually, to ensure that we learn and improve safeguarding, in keeping with evolving best practices and legislation.

4. Recommendations for responding to abuse

Reporting a concern is really important in order to prevent an individual from suffering harm or being at risk of abuse, and to ensure that the concern is dealt with properly and consistently.

No action is not an option.

Any staff member or volunteer who, in good faith, discloses possible wrongdoing(s) or grounds for concern about a child will receive full support from IFCPF, even if the allegation is subsequently proved to be unfounded. It is important to support a culture where it is clearly understood by staff and volunteers that it is acceptable to report concerns and allegations in confidence and not to suppress them for fear of criticism or repercussions for doing so. Such a culture ensures that abuse cases or risks are not ignored and inadvertently allowed to continue.

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in CP Football to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns or allegations by reporting these to the appropriate authorities.

Poor Practice:

Poor practice reports can be handled internally by the relevant disciplinary or ethics procedures.

Poor practice refers to behaviour that disregards the needs of individuals, thus compromising their well-being and safety, but does not meet the threshold of abuse.

Grounds for concern of abuse might exist when there is:

- An account by a person who saw an individual being abused.
- Evidence, such as an unexplained physical injury or behaviour which is consistent with abuse, such as the individual being withdrawn and really quiet when he/she is not usually so.

- Consistent indication, over a period of time, that an individual is suffering from emotional or physical abuse and neglect.
- A specific indication (or disclosure) from an individual that he/she has been abused. It is very difficult for individuals to speak up about possible abuse, so be vigilant in picking up signs.

In football, *incidents of poor practice* might occur when the needs of individuals are not given the necessary priority, resulting in their well-being and safety being compromised. Examples might include:

- Taking insufficient care to avoid injuries (e.g. by excessive or inappropriate training for the age, maturity, experience and ability of players);
- Failing to report behaviour which may compromise the welfare of an individual and allowing concerning practices to go unreported;
- Constantly showing favouritism towards or ignoring certain individuals;
- Using foul language and prohibited substances in the presence of vulnerable individuals;
- Repeatedly ignoring health and safety guidelines, or failing to undertake regular risk assessments, which may put individuals at risk of harm (e.g. not ensuring that equipment, transport or facilities are fit for purpose, safe to use and accessible).

Failure to challenge and report poor practice can lead to an environment where abuse may occur.

5. Procedures

The policy and procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone involved in CP Football. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the organisation.

Staff and volunteers should report any concerns they have to IFCPF using established reporting lines (anonymously online or by email).

- Online - <https://www.ifcpf.com/contact>
- E-mail - info@ifcpf.com

Complainants should be encouraged to report allegations and concerns as soon as possible and within 24 hours. Where a case of abuse is suspected, IFCPF will have a list of names and contacts of local authorities, expert agencies and trusted organisations that specialise in safeguarding and welfare who can offer professional help to the alleged victim and family and for cases to be properly investigated.

In case of an emergency, you should report the matter directly to the protection agency in your area and/or to the police.

Ensure that all information submitted by you is reported in strict confidentiality.

If you become aware of repeated poor practice by one of your colleagues, you have a responsibility to also report the matter to the safeguarding officer.

6. Monitoring

The policy will be reviewed a year after development and then every three years, or in the following circumstances:

- Changes in legislation and/or government guidance
- As required by external regulatory bodies
- As a result of any other significant change or event.

Applicable Laws and rules:

- Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (version dated 2012)
- Council of Europe: Article 1. (ii) of the European Sports Charter (version dated 2001)
- UNESCO: Article 10.1 of the Revised International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport (version dated 2015)
- [IPC Code of Ethics \(April 2016\)](#)
- [Chapter 3.15 - IPC Policy on Non-Accidental Violence and Abuse in Sport \(December 2016\)](#)
- [FIFA Guardians – Child Safeguarding – Toolkit for Member Associations](#)

Written by	Date Approved	Date for Review
IFCPF Management Team	July 2019	July 2020