

SAGF



Policy & Procedures for Safeguarding Participants in Gymnastics from Harassment, Abuse and Poor Practice

Amended 21 January 2021

South African Gymnastics Federation

Policy & Procedures for Safeguarding Participants in Gymnastics from Harassment, Abuse and Poor Practice

Introduction

This document consists of four parts.

Part 1: SAGF Safeguarding Policy Statement

Part 2: SAGF Safe Recruitment Policy & Procedures

Part 3: SAGF Safe Gymnastics Policy & Procedures

Part 4: SAGF Reporting Safeguarding Concerns Policy & Procedures

This document contains the following appendices:

Appendix 1: Guide to procedures if harassment, abuse or poor practice suspected.

Appendix 2: General Code of Conduct

Appendix 3: Model SAGF Provincial, District, Club Safeguarding Policy

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Part 1: SAGF Safeguarding Policy Statement

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Safeguarding is considered to be the responsibility of organisations to make sure their staff, volunteers, operations and programmes do no harm to children or vulnerable adults, or expose them to harassment, abuse or exploitation. It is, however, increasingly becoming best practice to think about how we safeguard everyone in our organisations at all times, including protecting staff and volunteers from inappropriate behaviour such as bullying and harassment.
- 1.2. Everyone connected to the sport of gymnastics should know how to keep children and adults safe. They should have appropriate learning opportunities to develop and maintain the necessary attitudes, skills and knowledge to do this. Partners, associates and other organisations that contribute to business operations should have safeguarding measures in place which are consistent with these standards. The communities you work with should understand your commitments to safeguarding and what to do if concerns arise.
- 1.3. The South African Gymnastics Federation (SAGF) is committed to safeguarding and protecting all who participate in the sport of gymnastics from harassment and abuse and ensuring that all participants are treated with respect and dignity.
- 1.4. Everyone has the right to participate in gymnastics in an environment free from non-accidental harm irrespective of their race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth or athletic ability.
- 1.5. The SAGF recognises that the welfare of all who take part in gymnastics regardless of their role is important and put the safety and well-being of all participants at the centre of everything we do.
- 1.6. The SAGF recognizes that whilst any participant can be subjected to harassment and abuse, certain groups may be more vulnerable to harassment and abuse including but not limited to:
 - Children
 - Young Adults
 - People with a Mental and/or a Physical Disability
 - Competitive Gymnasts
 - Women
 - Elderly Persons, and
 - Other Vulnerable Adults
- 1.7. The SAGF is committed to implementing robust procedures to safeguard and protect all participants in gymnastics including procedures to address the risks associated with specific vulnerable groups.
- 1.8. The SAGF recognises that the prevention of harassment and abuse in sport requires a systematic and coordinated approach both nationally and internationally. This includes working with the South African statutory authorities, the South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee (SASCOC) and with the Federation Internationale de Gymnastics (FIG) internationally to safeguard participants in the sport of gymnastics.

- 1.9. The SAGF recognises that the effectiveness of safeguards is dependent on ensuring gymnasts and other participants are involved and engaged and receive appropriate training and support.

BACKGROUND

- 1.10. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) includes a Bill of Rights which is a cornerstone of democracy in South Africa. It enshrines the rights of all people in South Africa and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom. The Bill of Rights states that you cannot unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth. The Bill of Rights recognises that everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected. That everyone has the right to be free from all forms of violence from either public or private sources; not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way, and that everyone has the right to bodily and psychological integrity, which includes the right to security in and control over their body.
- 1.11. South Africa ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child on 16 June 1995. The rights of the child are included in the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996). The Bill of Rights states that the “A child’s best interests are of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child.” Included in the rights of the child is to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation.
- 1.12. The SAGF is the recognised national sports federation for the sport and recreational activities of gymnastics in South Africa as defined in the National Sport and Recreation Act, 1998 (Act No.110 of 1998) as amended. The SAGF is recognised by the FIG as the only authority for the administration and control of the sport or recreational activity of gymnastics in the republic and is recognised as the sole governing body of gymnastics in the Republic in terms of the constitution of the SASCOC. The SAGF is also recognised by the International Jump Rope Union as the only authority for the administration and control of the sport or recreational activity of rope skipping in the republic and is recognised as the sole governing body of rope skipping in the Republic in terms of the constitution of the SASCOC.
- 1.13. The SAGF recognises its responsibility for safety in the sport of gymnastics as set out in the National Sport and Recreation Act, 1998 (Act No.110 of 1998) as amended, clause 6.1 which reads “National Sports Federations must assume full responsibility for safety issues within their sport and recreation disciplines.”
- 1.14. The SASCOC Safeguarding Policy against harassment and Abuse in all Sports requires that SASCOC members shall have their own safeguarding policy which is easily accessible to their members in accordance with: a) The applicable law; b) The SASCOC’s Safeguarding Policy; c) The International Federation’s Safeguarding Policy d) Any SASCOC Safeguarding Policy and guideline that may be provided from time to time.
- 1.15. The Children's Act 38 of 2005 as amended requires a person who has no parental responsibilities and rights in respect of a child but who voluntarily cares for the child either indefinitely, temporarily or partially, including a care-giver who otherwise has no parental responsibilities and rights in respect of a child, must, whilst the child is in that person's care-
- (a) safeguard the child's health, well-being and development; and

(b) protect the child from maltreatment, abuse, neglect, degradation, discrimination, exploitation, and any other physical, emotional or mental harm or hazards.

- 1.16. Forms of harassment and abuse take place worldwide in all cultures and environments. Evidence of recent and non-recent incidents of harassment and abuse indicate it occurs at all levels of sport.
- 1.17. Although any participant in sport can experience harassment or abuse, sport-based research confirms that athletes are particularly at risk and some groups are more vulnerable than others. This includes elite athletes and athletes with a disability, especially if they are children or young adults.
- 1.18. The risk of harassment and abuse increases when there is a lack of protective measures in place that may mean that those who could have the motivation to harass or abuse can do so without restriction.
- 1.19. Harassment and abuse can have significant long-term negative impacts on athlete participation and performance as well as general health and well-being, particularly if the athlete has not been able to disclose their experiences or access support.
- 1.20. All sports organisations have an important leadership role in embedding a no-tolerance approach towards all forms of harassment and abuse. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) Consensus Statement: Harassment and Abuse in Sport (2016) highlights that “It is incumbent upon all stakeholders in sport both to adopt general principles for safe sport (...) and to implement and monitor policies and procedures for safe sport (...) which state that: all athletes have a right to be treated with respect, protected from non-accidental violence (...)”
- 1.21. In addition, the IOC Basic Universal Principles of Good Governance encompass safeguarding and makes it compulsory for organisations that belong to the Olympic movement to adopt these principles, implement relevant measures and monitor compliance.
- 1.22. The Federation Internationale de Gymnastique (FIG) is committed to the principles of safe sport and good governance and has developed policy for the prevention of harassment and abuse within gymnastics which requires each member federation to adopt and implement their own suitable policy and procedures, either independently or in partnership with the relevant National Olympic Committee (NOC) or the relevant government organisation.
- 1.23. Article 11.29 of the SAGF Constitution 2020 enables the federation “to make and pass rules, by-laws or regulations and to, repeal or alter such rules, by-laws or regulations, with or without penalties for the carrying out, administration and implementation of the Constitution and attainment of the aims and objectives of SAGF”.
- 1.24. Article 11.30 of the SAGF Constitution 2020 enables the federation “to impose fines, to suspend for a period of time, to ban and/or implement any other disciplinary measure on its mor former members or on any gymnast or club or association or organization connected or concerned with gymnastics arising out of or connected with any contravention or breach of the provisions of this Constitution, or any rules, by-laws or regulation formally passed by the Exco. SAGF will have the powers to ban or suspend any gymnast, member or club from participating in any event, championships or competition”.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are used in these policies and procedures:

- 1.25. **Harassment** is defined by the unwanted nature of the action, which could include attention or the provision of items. It is for any given individual to determine what they consider to be acceptable and what they regard as offensive.
- 1.26. The Protection from Harassment Act 2010, defines harassment as directly or indirectly engaging in conduct that the respondent knows or ought to know (a) causes harm or inspires the reasonable belief that harm may be caused to the complainant or a related person by unreasonably (i) following, watching, pursuing or accosting of the complainant or a related person, or loitering outside of or near the building or place where the complainant or a related person resides, works, carries on business, studies or happens to be; (ii) engaging in verbal, electronic or any other communication aimed at the complainant or a related person, by any means, whether or not conversation ensues; or (iii) sending, delivering or causing the delivery of letters, telegrams, packages, facsimiles, electronic mail or other objects to the complainant or a related person or leaving them where they will be found by, given to, or brought to the attention of, the complainant or a related person; or (b) amounts to sexual harassment of the complainant or a related person.
- 1.27. **Sexual harassment** means any unwanted and unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal, non-verbal or physical. Sexual harassment can take the form of sexual abuse.
- 1.28. **Abuse** can be expressed in four forms which may occur in combination or in isolation.
 - psychological abuse
 - physical abuse
 - sexual abuse,
 - neglect.
- 1.29. **Psychological abuse** means any unwelcome act including confinement, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation, infantilising, or any other treatment which may diminish the sense of identity, dignity, and self-worth.
- 1.30. **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 acts 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.
- 1.31. **Sexual abuse** means any conduct of a sexual nature, whether non-contact, contact or penetrative, where consent is coerced/manipulated or is not or cannot be given.
- 1.32. **Neglect** means the failure of a coach or another person with a duty of care towards the athlete to provide a minimum level of care to the athlete, which is causing harm, allowing harm to be caused, or creating an imminent danger of harm.
- 1.33. Harassment and abuse can be based on any grounds including race, religion, colour, creed, ethnic origin, physical attributes, gender, sexual orientation, age disability, socio-economic status and athletic ability. It 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. Harassment and

abuse often result from an abuse of authority, meaning the improper use of a position of influence, power or authority by an individual against another person.

- 1.34. **Regulated activity** within the context of this policy is defined as regular contact with children, young adults, persons with a mental disability or other adults who may be vulnerable to harassment and abuse. Being an employee (staff or volunteer) of the SAGF or its affiliated members and clubs does not imply involvement in regulated activity in itself. It is only when the staff member or volunteer has close contact with children, young adults, adults with a mental disability, or other vulnerable adults that they fall within the scope of regulated activity.
- 1.35. **Regular contact** is defined as more than once per month.
- 1.36. **Children** are defined as young persons under 18 years of age and are protected under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which has been adopted by 197 nations.
- 1.37. **Young Adults** are young persons over 18 years of age transitioning from childhood to adulthood. With limited life experience they may not have developed resilience and may be more at risk of exploitation, harm or abuse.
- 1.38. **Person with a Mental Disability** can be a child under 18 years of age or an adult over 18 years of age who is, or may be, in need of services by reason of mental disability.
- 1.39. **Person with a Physical Disability** can be a child under 18 years of age or an adult over 18 years of age who is, or may be, or might not be, in need of services by reason of physical disability.
- 1.40. **Vulnerable Adult** is any person aged 18 or over who is, or may be, in need of services by reason of disability, age or illness, and who is, or may be, unable to take care of him or herself, or is a person over 18 years of age who is unable to protect him or herself against significant harassment, abuse or exploitation related to their athletic ability, race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language or birth. In the context of South Africa where there are high levels of gender based violence, some women may be considered vulnerable. Other groups who may be vulnerable in a South African context include the LGBTQIAP+ community, marginalised gender identities, refugees and people living with HIV/AIDS.
- 1.41. **Gymnastics Club** means any organisation providing sport or recreational gymnastics activity in South Africa including but not limited to an association of members, a commercial entity, a registered non-profit organisation, company or trust.

PURPOSE

- 1.42. The purpose of the SAGF Safeguarding Policy is to ensure that gymnasts and others taking part in gymnastics can do so without fear of harassment or abuse. The key objectives of the policy are to:
- Ensure everyone in gymnastics understands that all forms of harassment and abuse are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
 - Enable anyone who has witnessed or experienced harassment or abuse within gymnastics to report the incident without fear of victimisation or retaliation.
 - Ensure an appropriate and co-ordinated response to any incidents of harassment or

abuse within or connected to participation in gymnastics, irrespective of whether they arise at local, national or international level.

- Implement effective measures that minimise the likelihood of incidents of harassment and abuse arising.

SCOPE

- 1.43. The SAGF Safeguarding Policy applies to all gymnasts, members of the athlete entourage including but not limited to coaches, trainers, chaperones, judges, agents, medical personnel and any individuals acting on behalf of SAGF such as directors, officials, administrators, members, and service providers whether employed, contracted or voluntary (herein referred to as a “participants”).
- 1.44. The SAGF Safeguarding Policy applies specifically to any incidents of harassment and abuse that occur during or connected to participation in any SAGF activities or connected to any activities where the participant is representing the SAGF.
- 1.45. Where a participant is under a contract of employment with SAGF and an incident of harassment or abuse occurs relating to their employed role, the employment procedures will apply. However, where a participant is sanctioned under employment procedures, this can be addressed under these procedures to the extent that it impacts on the participant’s suitability to continue to participate outside of their employment relationship.
- 1.46. The SAGF will implement safeguards aimed at protecting all participants in gymnastics from harassment and abuse irrespective of their race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language, birth or athletic ability.
- 1.47. The SAGF recognizes that in all matters concerning the care, protection and well-being of a child the standard that the child's best interest is of paramount importance, must be applied. Children are defined as young persons under 18 years of age and are protected under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Constitution of South Africa. The SAGF will implement safeguards specifically aimed at protecting all children participating in gymnastics.
- 1.48. Any incidents of harassment or abuse that are perpetrated against a child must be report to the relevant Child Protection Authorities (South African Police Service (SAPS), Department of Social Development, Registered Child Protection Agency) in accordance with the Children's Act 38 of 2005 as amended and the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 32 Of 2007 as amended.
- 1.49. The SAGF recognises that children and adults may participate in gymnastics activity, who are, or may be, in need of services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness, and who are, or may be, unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm, abuse or exploitation. The SAGF will implement safeguards specifically aimed at safeguarding children and adults participating in the sport and recreational activities of gymnastics in need of care and support.
- 1.50. Any incidents of harassment or abuse that are perpetrated against a child or adult with a mental disability must be reported to the relevant Authorities.

1.51. The SAGF policy and procedures are applicable to all levels of the sport and provides a framework for those involved in gymnastics to meet their duty of care towards all who participate in the sport regardless of whether they are a competitive or recreational gymnast, staff, volunteers, spectators or service providers. The policy is mandatory for all SAGF staff, members and volunteers. Any individual or organisation that is providing a service to SAGF must also demonstrate that they comply with these standards. Anyone who manages or has overall responsibility for a gymnastics club or organisation must support their Safeguarding Officer to fulfil their role and ensure their organisation is fully compliant with this policy. All SAGF members should also read and comply with the policy.

SAGF ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

1.52. SAGF accepts our responsibility to implement safeguarding arrangements and procedures to protect all participants from harassment and abuse and will:

- Provide effective leadership to promote and implement our safeguarding policy and embed a no-tolerance approach to harassment and abuse;
- Identify a competent person(s) to assess and respond to safeguarding concerns;
- Develop and implement codes of conduct which establish behaviours and boundaries by which all participants, no matter how senior, are held to account;
- Ensure all participants understand and abide by the SAGF Safeguarding policy, procedures and codes of conduct;
- Ensure all participants understand and comply with the FIG policy, procedures and code of conduct when representing SAGF at FIG events;
- Ensure all participants are provided with appropriate information and training to recognise, identify and respond to signs of harassment and abuse;
- Share information with relevant stakeholders, including the South African Police Service, Child and Adult Protection Services, SASCOC and the FIG;
- Respond to all incidents or concerns, and provide appropriate support to the individual(s) involved, including the person who reported the concern;
- Ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all concerns are maintained and securely stored;
- Ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in place, including background checks to prevent unsuitable individuals from being appointed to a position of authority;
- Ensure all members and their affiliated clubs have effective arrangements in place to protect participants from harassment and abuse within the club environment; and
- Ensure all participants representing a member or affiliated club at an SAGF event understand and comply with SAGF policy, procedures and codes of conduct.

PROVINCIAL ASSOCIATIONS & DISTRICTS ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

1.53. The responsibility to lead the implementation of this policy is shared with the Provincial Associations and Districts of the SAGF, who shall:

- adopt the SAGF Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- ensure all affiliated clubs have adopted SAGF Safeguarding Policy and Procedures;
- ensure all clubs in their jurisdiction have a Safeguarding Officer and Safeguarding Policy in place;
- ensure that all events conducted under their jurisdiction have a Safeguarding Officer in place,

that a risk assessment has taken place and that safeguarding measures have been implemented.

AFFILIATED CLUB ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1.54. All gymnastics clubs who provide services to children and adults have a common law duty of care to take such steps that, in the circumstances of a gymnastics club, are reasonable to ensure the safety and welfare of both children and adults.
- 1.55. The safety and welfare of children and adults should be a priority for all gymnastics clubs.
- 1.56. The SAGF Safeguarding policy and procedures set out the minimum standards that gymnastics clubs should apply. The SAGF will provide support and guidance to help gymnastics clubs meet their responsibilities.
- 1.57. All gymnastics clubs must ensure that:
 - the overall responsibility for safeguarding sits at the most senior level of their club;
 - there is at least one suitably trained and competent Safeguarding Officer designated within the club to take the lead role in dealing with safeguarding issues. The responsibilities of the individual should include:
 - promoting the safety and welfare of children and adults;
 - promoting the importance of safeguarding;
 - ensuring that children are listened to and are involved in decision making;
 - ensuring that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding;
 - responding to safeguarding and poor practice concerns;
 - liaising with SAGF and local Statutory Authorities;
 - working with other organisations as required;
 - acting as the designated person for criminal records checks;
 - the Club Safeguarding Officer has completed SAGF approved Safeguarding awareness training;
 - the Club Safeguarding Officer has undertaken a criminal record check.
 - all staff and volunteers, who are working with children or adults receive appropriate training, updated every three years, and have access to advice on child protection, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children through the Club Safeguarding Officer;
 - all children and their parents, are aware of behaviour that is not acceptable and how they can help to keep themselves safe;
 - they support Whistle Blowing and take steps to ensure members, their parents/carers, and others, feel able to raise concerns without fear of negative repercussions;
 - confidentiality is maintained in relation to concerns and referrals and information is only shared on a genuine 'need to know' basis in line with SAGF confidentiality and information sharing guidance.
 - that they comply with the SAGF guidance on Safe Recruitment to prevent unsuitable people from obtaining, or remaining in, positions of trust or responsibility;
 - they comply with all the applicable supplementary policy and guidance and accept responsibility for identifying and responding to any deficiencies or weaknesses in its arrangements for safeguarding and promoting welfare of children and adults;
 - they work in partnership with SAGF to ensure poor practice is addressed and any required remedial action is taken.

PARTICIPANT ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1.58. All participants must comply with SAGF safeguarding policy, procedures and codes of conduct and specifically not engage in, allow, condone, or ignore incidents of harassment and abuse and be supportive of other participants who report concerns.
- 1.59. Any participant who has reason to believe that another participant has or is experiencing harassment and abuse connected to their role in the sport has a duty to report it to the SAGF.
- 1.60. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be investigated and may ultimately result in disciplinary action against the individuals concerned.

MONITORING & REVIEW

- 1.61. The SAGF Safeguarding policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it continues to meet our responsibilities as a national federation and to reflect any relevant changes in the environment in which we operate and any significant incidents in the sport.

REPORTING CONCERNS

- 1.62. The following procedures apply to any incidents, concerns, allegations or disclosures of harassment and abuse brought to the attention of SAGF (herein referred to as “complaints”).
- 1.63. If a complaint of harassment or abuse is perpetrated by or against a child or an adult, any action taken must be in accordance with the SAGF Safeguarding policy and procedures.
- 1.64. Where the alleged perpetrator is under the jurisdiction of another national federation, the matter will be reported by the SAGF to the FIG and the relevant NF or National Olympic Committee.
- 1.65. Any participant who has reported that an incident of harassment or abuse involved a person or persons belonging to another organization or unconnected to the sport will be provided with support from the SAGF.

Reporting

- 1.66. Anyone can report an incident of harassment or abuse. Mechanisms for receiving the information are as follows:
 - In writing using the SAGF template form;
 - By phone or email to a National, Provincial, District, Club or Event Safeguarding Officer(s);
 - In person to a National, Provincial, District, Club, or Event Safeguarding Officer(s).

Whistleblowing

- 1.67. Although incidents can be reported directly by the affected individual, the term “whistle blowing” is used to describe a complaint relating to the conduct of an individual made by someone other than the affected person.

- 1.68. SAGF recognises that some individuals may be fearful of the consequences of making a complaint under these procedures, particularly where the perpetrator is in a position of authority. In these circumstances, where possible, the identity of the whistle blower will remain confidential.
- 1.69. Any person who makes a complaint in good faith must not be subject to reprisal or other adverse consequences because of submitting a report. These protections shall not apply to a person who intentionally makes a complaint that is false, vexatious, retaliatory or frivolous.

Assessment of Complaints

- 1.70. Any complaints pursuant to this policy received by the SAGF will be referred to the SAGF National Safeguarding Officer(s) who is the first point of contact for complaints and concerns under this procedure.
- 1.71. The SAGF Safeguarding Officer(s) will make an initial assessment of the complaint to determine the nature of the concern and whether the matter relates to a participant under SAGF jurisdiction.
- 1.72. If the complaint is believed to be a criminal offence, the SAGF Safeguarding Officer(s) will refer the matter to the Police and other relevant authorities and/or regulatory bodies without delay.
- 1.73. If the complaint is not considered to be a matter for the police, the SAGF Safeguarding Officer(s) should:
- Refer the complaint to another organisation;
 - Refer the matter to the SAGF Case Management Group;
- 1.74. The SAGF Case Management Group will consider the complaint and should determine to:
- Proceed with an internal investigation;
 - Resolve the matter informally;
 - Dismiss the complaint as unfounded or as insufficiently serious to require any action by SAGF.
- 1.75. The SAGF Safeguarding Officer(s) will assess whether any of the affected parties require support and arrange for support to be provided where deemed appropriate.

Interim Measures

- 1.76. The SAGF may impose interim protective measures, including the suspension of the participant where one or more of the following circumstances applies:
- The participant is believed to present a significant risk to other participants;
 - The reputation of the sport is at risk; and/or
 - The participants ongoing presence may hinder investigations.

Investigation

- 1.77. In most cases, the SAGF will delay internal investigations until the outcome of a criminal proceedings is known. Once a matter has been referred back from the police, the objective will be to conclude any investigations in a timely manner.
- 1.78. Where an internal investigation is required, the SAGF shall instruct an independent investigator to carry out the investigation, in accordance with these procedures and to an appropriate timeline agreed by the SAGF National Safeguarding Officer(s).
- 1.79. Where relevant, the investigator may request information from the police and any other relevant organizations.
- 1.80. The investigator may require written or oral representations from relevant parties, taking special care if interviewing vulnerable witnesses.
- 1.81. The investigator shall prepare a report and include all relevant evidence for consideration by the SAGF Case Management Group who may determine that:
 - The matter is referred to an Independent Disciplinary Hearing for consideration;
 - Further investigations are instigated;
 - A risk assessment is completed;
 - Instructions, advice or guidance is provided to the relevant parties; and/or
 - No further action is taken.

DISCIPLINARY & APPEALS

- 1.82. Any disciplinary proceedings, including the right of appeal will be conducted in accordance with the SAGF Code of Ethics and Disciplinary Procedure.
- 1.83. The standard of proof for such proceedings is the civil standard of balance of probabilities. Consequently, the SAGF may seek to take disciplinary action irrespective of the outcome of any criminal proceedings.
- 1.84. The SAGF will provide appropriate support and guidance to ensure all participants understand the disciplinary and appeal procedures, especially if children are involved.
- 1.85. Where a disciplinary matter involves a Child or a Person with a Mental Disability, the SAGF Safeguarding Officer(s), Investigator(s) and Independent Disciplinary or Appeals Panels must be mindful of the needs of the person in question and take these into account when deciding upon the format of proceedings or indeed whether any action is taken against such a person.
- 1.86. Where a disciplinary matter involves a Child or a Person with a Mental Disability, the Chairman of the Independent Disciplinary or the Appeal Panel shall decide if the Panel should include at least one member who is suitably trained at dealing with Children or Persons with a Mental Disability.
- 1.87. Any interviews of a Child or a Person with a Mental Disability shall only be conducted by suitably trained and experienced persons nominated by the SAGF.
- 1.88. Written permission should be obtained from any parent / carer of a Child or a Person with a Mental Disability where such person is asked to provide evidence and / or attend a hearing.

Where a Child or a Person with a Mental Disability is asked to attend a hearing, they shall be afforded the opportunity to do so accompanied by any parent / carer and the Independent Disciplinary or Appeals Panel shall make sure that the Child or a Person with a Mental Disability fully understands the process taking place. In exceptional circumstances, where written permission is not obtained from a parent / carer, assessment should be made of the ability of the Child or a Person with a Mental Disability to understand and make their own decisions.

- 1.89. In all proceedings involving a Child or a Person with a Mental Disability, the Investigator(s) or Chair of the Independent Disciplinary or Appeals Panel may vary the standard directions set out in this policy and in order to take into account the needs of a Child or Person with a Mental Disability. This may include without limitation conducting any hearing on paper or providing for evidence to be given by video link.
- 1.90. For the avoidance of doubt, the refusal of the Parent, Carer, Child or Person with a Mental Disability to co-operate shall not preclude the SAGF from taking disciplinary action against the Child or Person with a Mental Disability in accordance with the SAGF Safeguarding Policy & Procedures.

SANCTIONS

- 1.91. Where it is determined that harassment or abuse has been committed, the Independent Disciplinary Panel who dealt with the matter shall impose an appropriate sanction upon the Participant.
- 1.92. The Independent Disciplinary Panel may consider, singly or in combination, depending on the nature and severity of the conduct and whether there are any aggravating and mitigating circumstances the following:
 - Written or verbal apology;
 - Formal warning;
 - Fine;
 - Risk assessment;
 - Training and/or supervision;
 - Temporary suspension;
 - Termination of membership, license, agreement or contract; or
 - Any other sanction that the Independent Disciplinary Panel considers appropriate in the circumstances.
- 1.93. Anyone who have been found to have harassed or abused another participant will have the right to appeal against the decision in accordance to the SAGF Ethics and Disciplinary Code. Intention and motivation to appeal must be made in writing to the SAGF in accordance to the procedures set out in the SAGF Ethics and Disciplinary Code following the receipt of notice of the decision of the Independent Disciplinary Panel.

NON-RECENT INCIDENTS

- 1.94. Serious allegations of sexual abuse may be made some time after the event. Where a non-recent allegation is made, the SAGF National Safeguarding Officer(s) should:

- Clarify whether there is a current risk to participants; and
- Advise the individual of their right to make a formal complaint to the Police.

1.95. This policy does not apply any specific limitations periods for sexual abuse and any serious allegation of non-recent abuse will be treated in accordance with these procedures.

CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS & FINDINGS OF FACT

1.96. The SAGF shall establish that an incident of harassment and abuse has occurred where:

- A SAGF participant is convicted of a criminal offence; or
- The FIG, IJRU, or a gymnastics organization affiliated to the SAGF or another recognized regulatory body has determined that an allegation(s) of harassment or abuse against a SAGF participant is/are proven.

1.97. The Independent Disciplinary Panel having considered any representations made by the participant and any other affected parties may determine that it is appropriate to impose a sanction relating to SAGF activities.

1.98. The Independent Disciplinary Panel may apply the FIG or IJRU sanction to some or all SAGF activities or determine its own sanction(s). Any sanction imposed by the SAGF shall be subject to a right of appeal in accordance with the SAGF Code of Ethics and Disciplinary Procedures.

RETENTION OF RECORDS

1.99. Any information relating to complaints of harassment or abuse will be stored securely and be compliant with the requirements of the Protection of Personal Information Act.

1.100. Any information about poor practice or complaints about harassment and abuse that may indicate that a participant in a position of trust is unsuitable to work or volunteer in the sport will be retained for as long as the participant remains active in the sport or for 10 years, whichever is longer, even if it were not possible at the time that the information was first reported to instigate any formal proceeding.

1.101. Any other records relating to other complaints will be retained for a period of 3 years unless a similar complaint arises within that period.

1.102. Any records relating to disciplinary action taken by SAGF should be retained in accordance with the retention periods set out in the SAGF Code of Ethics and Disciplinary Procedure.

Part 2 -Safe Recruitment of Staff & Volunteers

The following policies and procedures are aimed ensuring all reasonable steps are taken during the recruitment of staff and volunteers to prevent unsuitable individuals from working in the sport.

INTRODUCTION

- 2.1. The SAGF and its affiliated organisations and clubs must ensure all reasonable steps are taken during recruitment to prevent unsuitable individuals from working with children, young people, persons with a mental and/or physical disability and other vulnerable adults.
- 2.2. All individuals involved in gymnastics activity who will have significant access to children, young people, persons with a mental and/or physical disability and other vulnerable adults must be vetted to establish whether they have any criminal convictions or other past behaviour that suggests they are unsuitable to work with children, young people, persons with a mental and/or physical disability and other vulnerable adults or may present a risk to them. This applies equally to paid staff and volunteers.
- 2.3. All applications for roles in the sport that involve “regular contact” with children, young people, persons with a mental and/or physical disability and other vulnerable adults should be carefully considered and scrutinised, regardless of whether the application is for voluntary or paid work with the level of checking completed appropriate to the role being applied for.
- 2.4. All existing and new volunteers and employees working in roles that involves “regular contact” with children, young people, persons with a mental and/or physical disability and other vulnerable adults; or where they hold a position of trust; or existing staff or volunteers who change their role to work with these vulnerable groups, are required to complete a vetting process.
- 2.5. The SAGF Safe Recruitment policy and procedures apply to anyone, whether recruited to a voluntary or paid role who is going to have significant access to children, young people, persons with a mental and/or physical disability or other vulnerable adults or have access to their personal data.
- 2.6. Although the vast majority of staff and volunteers that work in gymnastics are committed, dedicated people who are motivated to work within the sport for commendable reasons, it is vital that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that any unsuitable people or people who may cause harm to children, young people, persons with a mental and/or physical disability and other vulnerable adults are prevented from working with them.
- 2.7. The SAGF Safe Recruitment policy and procedures aim to safeguard all participants in the gymnastics from harassment, abuse or exposure to poor practice. The SAGF recognises that the majority of participants in gymnastics are children and that the sport also offers programmes and activities for children and adults with a mental disability. The SAGF and its affiliated organisations and clubs have a statutory duty to vet staff and volunteers who have regular contact with children and/or persons with a mental disability.
- 2.8. The SAGF also considers that persons prohibited from working with children or persons with a mental disability may also not be suitable to work with young people and other vulnerable adults.

The Children's Act

- 2.9. The CHILDREN'S ACT 38 OF 2005 as amended makes provisions for a National Child Protection Register and states that no person whose name appears in Part B of the Register may manage or operate, or participate or assist in managing or operating, a school, club or association providing services to children. A person who fails to disclose the fact that their name is entered in Part B of the Register is guilty of misconduct and the person's services may be terminated as a result of non-disclosure.
- 2.10. No person managing or operating or who participates or assists in managing or operating an institution providing welfare services to children, including a child and youth care centre, a partial care facility, a shelter or drop-in centre or a school may allow a person whose name appears in Part B of the Register to work with or have access to children at the centre, facility, shelter or school, either as an employee, volunteer or in any other capacity.
- 2.11. All staff and volunteers in gymnastics who have regular contact with children must declare whether or not their name appears in Part B of the National Child Protection Register.
- 2.12. The SAGF and its affiliated organisations and clubs as employers are required to apply to the Department of Social Development for a certificate stating whether or not the particulars of an employee are recorded on Part B of the National Child Protection Register (Form 29). All employees (staff and volunteers) of the SAGF or one of its affiliated organisations or clubs that may come into contact with children must be checked against Part B of the National Child Protection Register. Such vetting against the register must be done for all future employees and retrospectively for existing employees. This can be done directly with the Department of Social Development or through a reputable service provider.

The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act

- 2.13. The CRIMINAL LAW (SEXUAL OFFENCES AND RELATED MATTERS) AMENDMENT ACT 32 OF 2007 as amended makes provision for a National Register for Sexual Offenders and places responsibilities on employers and employees in respect of the act.
- 2.14. The CRIMINAL LAW (SEXUAL OFFENCES AND RELATED MATTERS) AMENDMENT ACT 32 OF 2007 defines an employer as set out in the act as including any person, organisation, institution, club, sports club, association or body who or which, as the case may be- (i) employs employees who, in any manner and during the course of their employment, will be placed in a position of authority, supervision or care of a child or a person who is mentally disabled or working with or will gain access to a child or a person who is mentally disabled or places where children or persons who are mentally disabled are present or congregate; (ii) owns, manages, operates, has any business or economic interest in or is in any manner responsible for, or participates or assists in the management or operation of any entity or business concern or trade relating to the supervision over or care of a child or a person who is mentally disabled or working with or who gains access to a child or a person who is mentally disabled or places where children or persons who are mentally disabled are present or congregate.
- 2.15. The SAGF and its affiliated organisations and clubs are employers as defined in the CRIMINAL LAW (SEXUAL OFFENCES AND RELATED MATTERS) AMENDMENT ACT 32 OF 2007 as amended by virtue of the programmes and activities they deliver which include programmes and activities for children and persons with a mental disabled.

- 2.16. The CRIMINAL LAW (SEXUAL OFFENCES AND RELATED MATTERS) AMENDMENT ACT 32 OF 2007 as amended, defines employees as (a) any person who applies to work for or works for an employer, and who receives, or is entitled to receive, any remuneration, reward, favour or benefit; or (b) any person, other than a person contemplated in (a), who in any manner applies to assist or assists in carrying on or conducting the business of an employer, whether or not he or she is entitled to receive any remuneration, reward, favour or benefit.
- 2.17. All staff and volunteers of the SAGF and its affiliated organisations and clubs with regular contact with children and persons with a mental disability are employees as defined in the CRIMINAL LAW (SEXUAL OFFENCES AND RELATED MATTERS) AMENDMENT ACT 32 OF 2007 as amended.
- 2.18. The SAGF and its affiliated organisations and clubs cannot employ a person whose name appears on the on the National Register for Sexual Offenders if there is any likelihood they will come into contact with children or persons who are mentally disabled as a consequence of their duties. Failure to check employees against the register and employ someone on the register is a criminal offence and is liable on conviction to a fine or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding seven years or to both a fine and such imprisonment.
- 2.19. The SAGF and its affiliated organisations and clubs as employers defined in the act are required to apply to the Registrar of the National Register for Sexual Offenders for a prescribed certificate, stating whether or not the particulars of an employee as defined by the act are recorded in the Register. All employees (staff and volunteers) of the SAGF or one of its affiliated organisations or clubs that may come into contact with children or persons who are mentally disabled must be checked against the National Register for Sexual Offenders. Such vetting against the register must be done for all future employees and retrospectively for existing employees.
- 2.20. Employees are required by the act to inform their employers if they have been convicted of a sexual offence against a child or a person who is mentally disabled, or is alleged to have committed a sexual offence against a child or a person who is mentally disabled and who has been dealt with in terms of section 77 (6) or 78 (6) of the Criminal Procedure Act, 1977, irrespective of whether or not such offence was committed or allegedly committed during the course of his or her employment, must without delay disclose such conviction or finding to his or her employer. They must also disclose any conviction or finding when applying for a role within the organisation. Failing to disclose is a criminal offence liable on conviction to a fine or to imprisonment not exceeding seven years or to both a fine and such imprisonment.
- 2.21. Although SAGF and its affiliated organisations and clubs do not appear to be a recognized organization for the purpose of accessing the National Child Protection Register, it is suggested that the employees still apply for a certificate of clearance. Whilst awaiting this clearance the onus is on the employee to declare in an affidavit if they are named on the register. This affidavit must be placed in the employee's file until such time as a clearance certificate from the Department of Social Development is received. Where the SAGF and its affiliated organisations and clubs suspect an employee may have made a false declaration with regards to their name not appearing on the National Child Protection Register they will report the matter to the SAPS or Social Services for them to investigate.
- 2.22. Although SAGF and its affiliated organisations and clubs are required to apply to the Registrar of the National Register for Sexual Offenders for a prescribed certificate, stating whether or not

the particulars of an employee as defined by the act are recorded in the Register, the Registrar has indicated in writing that the issuing of clearance certificates and verifying of individuals for any purpose is not yet operational. The onus is therefore on the employee to declare if they are named on the register. In addition to obtaining a SAPS clearance certificate, employees must also disclose to their employers (on affidavit) that they have never been convicted of a sexual offence against a child or a mentally disabled person. This affidavit must be placed in the employee's file to be utilised at a future date once the Register becomes fully operational. Where the SAGF and its affiliated organisations and clubs suspect an employee may have made a false declaration with regards to their name not appearing on the National Register of Sexual Offenders they will report the matter to the SAPS or Social Services for them to investigate.

MINIMUM STANDARDS

- 2.23. The SAGF minimum standards for the vetting of applicants for roles in the sport to be undertaken during the recruitment process for new applicants and retrospectively for all existing employees (staff and volunteers) in order to prevent unsuitable individuals from working with children, young people, persons with a mental; disability and other vulnerable adults are:
- 2.24. That all potential and existing employees (staff and volunteers) must submit a police clearance certificate.
- 2.25. That all potential and existing employees (staff and volunteers) must also disclose via affidavit to their employers (on affidavit) that they have never been convicted of a sexual offence against a child or a mentally disabled person and that their name does not appear in Part B of the National Child Protection Register as a person deemed unsuitable to work with children.
- 2.26. That all potential and existing employees (staff and volunteers) must provide the names of two referees who must provide a reference using the SAGF's employee reference form.
- 2.27. The SAGF and its affiliated organisations and clubs must implement the minimum standards to check the suitability of individuals from working with children, young people, persons with a mental disability and other vulnerable adults. Any concerns raised as to the suitability of an individual to work with children, young people, persons with a mental; disability and other vulnerable adults during the vetting of employees (staff and volunteers) must be investigated before a decision is made to appoint a new employee (staff or volunteer); or to continue to employ an existing employee (staff or volunteer).
- 2.28. If a concern has arisen during the vetting of existing employees (staff or volunteers) regarding their suitability to work with children, young people, persons with a mental and/or physical disability and other vulnerable adults, the SAGF or its affiliated organisation or club may suspend the employee (staff¹ and volunteer) from all or some of their duties whilst an investigation is conducted.

¹ Employers should seek advice from a qualified human resources or employment legislation professional on whether paid employees should be suspended with or without pay until such time as an investigation has been concluded.

- 2.29. As people who want to abuse children, young people, persons with a mental and/or physical disability and other vulnerable adults may seek out various avenues to gain access to children, young people, persons with a mental and/or physical disability and other vulnerable adults, it is important that the minimum standards for vetting are followed at all times, even where there is only one applicant for a position.

One-Off Volunteers

- 2.30. All employees whether staff and volunteers of the SAGF, its affiliated organisations and clubs will be required to complete the SAGF vetting procedures. The only current exception to this is in the case of one-off volunteers who will only have supervised contact with children, young people, persons with a mental and/or physical disability or other vulnerable adults for a limited period of time. Examples would be:

- Parents or other volunteers helping out at a club fundraiser or event.
- Young people attending the club for a work experience less than once per month.

- 2.31. Where one-off volunteering leads to regular contact with children, young people, persons with a mental and/or physical disability or other vulnerable adults, the minimum standards for vetting employees must be fully applied.

Service Providers

- 2.32. All service providers for SAGF, its affiliated organisations and clubs who provide a service for longer than a one-off event or service will be required to complete the SAGF vetting procedures.
- 2.33. All service providers contracted for maintenance work should preferably conduct their work during hours where contact with children or vulnerable adults is limited.
- 2.34. All service providers contracted for work where they will be in contact with children or vulnerable adults will be required to sign an affidavit stating they do not appear on the Sexual Offences Register or Part B of the Child Protection Register and that they will abide by the SAGF Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Policy.

Visitors

- 2.35. Identification in the form of an ID card, green bar-coded ID book or passport should be requested from all unknown/unexpected visitors. Failure to produce this documentation can result in the visitor not being given access to the premises. Producing the documentation does not automatically allow visitors access.

Parents

- 2.36. It is inappropriate to require parents, guardians or carers to undertake the SAGF's vetting procedures where their only role is to care for their own child or where they are responsible for an adult who requires support and care. However, in the event that the individual in question wishes to take on a role within the organisation or club that will bring responsibility for other children, young people, persons with a mental disability or other vulnerable adults the full vetting procedures must be applied.

ADDITIONAL RECRUITMENT MEASURES

- 2.37. The following additional measures may be implemented when interviewing for a role in the

sport to check the suitability of staff or volunteers to work with children, young people, persons with a mental and/or physical disability or other vulnerable adults:

- Considering the person's qualifications and experience for the role;
- Identifying a timeline of previous roles in gymnastics, other sports, and any other role that involved working directly with children, young people, persons with a mental disability or other vulnerable adults;
- Assessing attitudes and commitment to safeguarding;
- Assessing their previous experience of working with children both inside and outside of gymnastics;
- Giving the applicant a scenario of a safeguarding nature such as child not being collected after a gymnastics session and ask what they do in that circumstance;
- Asking the applicant if they have ever been refused work that involved contact with children, young people, persons with a mental and/or physical disability or other vulnerable adults or anything that the organisation or club should know that could affect their suitability to work with children, young people, persons with a mental and/or physical disability or other vulnerable adults.

2.38. In line with best practice, SAGF recommends that the minimum standards for the vetting of applicants for roles in the sport in order to prevent unsuitable individuals from working with children, young people, persons with a mental and/or physical disability and other vulnerable adults are renewed every three years.

PART 3 - SAFE GYMNASTICS.

The following policies and procedures are aimed at creating a safe environment for participants in the sport of gymnastics to take part in the sport free from harassment and abuse.

DUTY OF CARE

- 3.1. All clubs and organisations providing gymnastics activity have a responsibility for the safety and welfare of gymnasts, coaches, volunteers, officials, visitors and others. This responsibility applies to all SAGF members and affiliated clubs, regardless of their size or structure. There is a legal responsibility to ensure that participants are protected from harm whilst taking part in gymnastics. This is legally termed as the 'duty of care' and is of paramount importance when dealing with children or adults with a mental disability.
- 3.2. In order to fulfil their 'duty of care' the SAGF, members and affiliated clubs providing gymnastics activity must:
 - Take steps to keep participants safe from harassment or abuse and ensure the welfare of all participants;
 - Ensure that venues, apparatus and equipment for gymnastics activity are safe;
 - Ensure the development of gymnasts is pursued through appropriate physical and psychological preparation and progressive skill development;
 - Put in place suitable first aid support and emergency procedures;
 - Exercise reasonable care at all times.
- 3.3. SAGF members and affiliated clubs providing gymnastics activity must ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and implemented as part of their duty of care. All SAGF members and affiliated clubs must abide by the SAGF Safeguarding Policies & Procedures and clubs are required to submit a copy of their Safeguarding Policy to the SAGF national office as part of the annual registration process.
- 3.4. When working with children and vulnerable adults, a person who carries out a supervisory role takes on certain responsibilities while the child or vulnerable adults are in their care. This may include:
 - Holding a responsibility for the wellbeing of gymnasts during training;
 - Being responsible for the safe dispersal of children or vulnerable adults after training;
 - Providing first aid;
 - Providing/consenting to emergency medical treatment;
 - Undertaking a supervisory role or being a chaperone;
 - Acting as a team manager.

SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS

- 3.5. Although everyone in gymnastics has a duty of care to safeguard participants, an important strategy in safeguarding in sport is the designation of an individual who is responsible for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of participants in the sport. The SAGF, its Provincial and District associations and affiliated clubs as well as all any event sanctioned by the SAGF or its structures are required to appoint a competent person as their Safeguarding Officer.
- 3.6. The SAGF will appoint a competent person(s) as safeguarding officer(s) at a national level.

- 3.7. Each of the Provincial Associations will appoint a competent person(s) as safeguarding officer(s) at a Provincial level.
- 3.8. Each of the District Associations will appoint a competent person(s) as safeguarding officer(s) at a Provincial level.
- 3.9. All SAGF affiliated clubs must appoint a competent person(s) as their safeguarding officer.
- 3.10. All events registered through the SAGF must appoint a competent person(s) as the safeguarding officer(s) for the event.
- 3.11. Safeguarding Officers are responsible for:
- Responding to harassment, abuse and poor practice concerns;
 - Providing support and advice on the implementation of procedures that safeguard and promote the welfare of participants.
- 3.12. In order to avoid any potential conflicts of interest in respect of a club safeguarding officer, the role must not be taken on by a key member of the club coaching team or member of his/her immediate family, however an individual who has a more limited involvement in coaching can take on the role in the event that there is no other acceptable alternative.
- 3.13. In order to avoid any potential conflicts of interest with regard to an event safeguarding officer, the role must not be taken on by a key member of event organising team or member of his/her immediate family.
- 3.14. All Safeguarding Officers are required to undertake SAGF training on safeguarding participants in gymnastics prior to their appointment and to attend annual updates.

GUIDANCE FOR GYMNASTICS COACHES

Good practice

- 3.15. SAGF coaches should always maintain high standards of practice as gymnasts of all ages look to them for guidance and hold them as role models. SAGF coaches have a duty of care for the gymnasts they are coaching; and should always follow good practice guidance to ensure that the gymnasts they coach are safeguarded and the coaches are protecting themselves from any allegations.
- 3.16. Good practice includes:
- Endorsing gymnastics as a fun and enjoyable sport and promoting fair play;
 - Treating all gymnasts with respect and dignity and giving similar attention and time to all gymnasts regardless of their background or level of ability;
 - Keeping coaching qualifications up to date and operating within the level of their coaching qualification;
 - Acting as a role model for gymnasts, for example not smoking or drinking around the athletes and being mindful of your behaviour at club training sessions, events or social gatherings;
 - Not condoning rule violations or the use of prohibited substances;

- Ensuring that training sessions are appropriate for the age and stage of development, both physical and emotional, and experience of the gymnasts they are coaching;
- Ensuring training and competition schedules are based on the needs and interests of the gymnast, not those of parents, coaches, clubs, sponsors, or National, Provincial or District Associations;
- Ensuring that the gymnasts wellbeing is paramount and recognising that performance comes after this;
- Enabling young people to assist in making decisions which relate to them;
- Maintain a safe and appropriate relationship with gymnasts; it is not appropriate to have an intimate relationship with a child or young person;
- Not tolerating any form of bullying or aggression in the sport;
- Understanding the gymnasts, you coach and not pushing them too hard and against their will and ability level.
- Providing feedback to gymnasts in a constructive and positive manner.

Poor practice

3.17. Coaches who demonstrate poor practice open themselves up to a greater risk of allegations being made against them.

3.18. The following are some examples of poor practice that should be avoided by gymnastics coaches and other staff and volunteers:

- Never be alone with a child or vulnerable adult including:
 - Taking them to and from training or an event;
 - Taking them to your home or in your car, where you will be alone with them or sharing a room with them.
- Never allow any form of inappropriate behaviour or language.
- Never be involved in, or allow, behaviour which causes gymnasts emotional distress.
- Never spend excessive amounts of time alone with one child or vulnerable adult away from the others.
- Never engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games.
- Never share a room with a child or a vulnerable adult. Adults should never share a room with children, young or vulnerable adults. It is unacceptable that a number of children and adults share a common sleeping area.
- Never allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Never allow gymnast (children or adult) to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Never make sexually suggestive comments to a gymnast (child or adult).
- Never reduce a gymnast (child or adult) to tears as a form of control.
- Never allow allegations made by a child or adult to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Never do things of a personal nature for children or vulnerable adults that they can do for themselves.
- Never invite or allow children or vulnerable adults to stay with you at your home.
- If cases arise where situations are unavoidable, they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of the person in charge, and in the case of a child with parental consent.
- If any of the following incidents should occur, you should report them immediately to the club or SAGF safeguarding officer(s), or another colleague, make a written note of the event and inform parents of the incident:
 - If you accidentally hurt a gymnast.
 - If a child or vulnerable adult seems distressed in any manner, whilst in your care.

- If a child or vulnerable adult appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
- If a child or vulnerable adult misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

Spotting and manual support

3.19 Supporting and shaping the gymnast is an essential part of coaching gymnastics in that it helps the gymnast to understand shapes, movement patterns and complex skills, but also reduces the risk of injury due to a fall or error in performance. Detailed guidance on appropriate supporting techniques is provided as part of the SAGF Coach Education programme.

3.20. The key points on safe spotting and manual support are:

- The coach must only engage with manual and physical support with explicit consent from the athlete. i.e. “Can I help you with....?”
- The coach must ensure that support is only used when necessary and “over-handling” is avoided;
- The coach must always be alert to the possibility of performance errors or anxiety, which may increase the risk of injury;
- Supporting techniques must not inhibit performance;
- Physical contact should not be invasive of sensitive areas of the body, i.e. genital areas, buttocks or breasts.

3.21. Infrequent non-intentional physical contact can arise out of error on the gymnast’s or coach’s part. Such situations should not be ignored and need to be acknowledged through an apology to the gymnast and reported to the Club Safeguarding Officer or head coach and parents. A written report should be made of any significant incident, which is to be reported to SAGF.

3.22. It is also good practice to explain and provide some written guidance, perhaps as part of an induction pack, to new members and parents that some physical contact will be required but that only appropriate, non-invasive techniques should be used. If a gymnast or parent has any concerns, they should be raised with the Club Safeguarding Officer.

Flexibility/stretching exercises

3.23. There are a range of techniques and types of exercise for extending flexibility that involve the application of force. These techniques can also lead to the person applying the force coming into close proximity with the gymnast and having prolonged contact with areas of the gymnast’s body.

3.24. Coaches must follow the following guidelines:

- Use slow, progressive and prolonged stretching exercises, within the “discomfort zone”, rather than what might be considered to be excessive force;
- Avoid exercises that place the coaches and gymnasts body in “close proximity” and might be seen as unnecessary by the less-informed parent or observer;
- Be sensitive to how the exercise might be perceived by the parents and children;
- Consider holding a parents’ forum to explain the flexibility training techniques, so that the parent is more aware and therefore less likely to misinterpret the techniques being used;

Relationships with athletes and position of trust

- 3.25. SAGF coaches must ensure that their relationship with any gymnast under 18 years of age is professional and appropriate. It must be recognised that the relationship between coaches and gymnasts is important for developing athletes' potential and self-esteem, and also in establishing trusting relationships with a responsible adult, which has been identified multiple times as being critical in children divulging disclosures.
- 3.26. Coaches can easily influence the athletes in their care and the resulting power of a professional relationship cannot be over stated. It is the responsibility of the coach to ensure that they do not abuse their position of trust.
- 3.27. Sexual relationships with children under 16 years of age are illegal and as such will lead to disciplinary action as well as being referred to the SAPS/Social Services for investigation.
- 3.28. A sexual relationship between a person with authority over a young person and a child aged 16 or 17 years is not considered appropriate by the SAGF. While it may not constitute a criminal offence, coaches and others in positions of authority and trust in relation to gymnasts aged 16 and 17 years must not engage in sexual relationships with them while that unequal power relationship exists.

Adults in positions of trust in dual roles

- 3.29. Some SAGF coaches hold relevant professional accreditations that would enable them to fulfil a range of support roles within the sport. Common examples include coaches who are also trained as physiotherapists, nutritionists and masseurs.
- 3.30. SAGF members who wish to make use of their professional qualifications within the sport must first ensure the person being treated is completely clear about the capacity in which they are acting. The adult in the position of trust is ultimately responsible for maintaining appropriate professional boundaries and ensuring that there is a clear separation between their coaching/gymnastics role and any other activities they undertake.
- 3.31. SAGF strongly recommends that anyone providing an additional support service within the sport does not treat children that they coach without parental supervision.

The rule of two

- 3.32. The SAGF recommends that in order to safeguard children and adults that at least two responsible unrelated adults are always present during gymnastics training avoiding situations where a responsible person is alone with a child or vulnerable adult. At least one of the two responsible adults should be the same gender as the gymnast(s).
- 3.33. There may be occasions especially where the gymnast is training at a high performance level where one-to-one coaching may be appropriate. SAGF coaches should only conduct such sessions when there is another responsible adult present or in the case of a child where a parent is present.

CLUB GUIDANCE

Safeguarding policy

- 3.34. All members and affiliated clubs must have in place a safeguarding policy as a requirement for

affiliation to the SAGF.

- 3.35. The safeguarding policy and information on safeguarding must be communicated to all gymnasts, parents or carers, staff and volunteers at the club. All gymnasts, parents or carers, staff and volunteers must be made aware of the procedures for reporting concerns.
- 3.36. The SAGF, its Provincial and District Associations and affiliated clubs and organisations' must address the following environmental factors:
- Provide an open training environment where coaches and gymnasts can be observed during training at all times especially by other employees and parents/carers;
 - Ensure there is a clear policy for use of changing rooms and toilets;
 - Maintain apparatus, equipment and other club property;
 - Make a provision for first aid facilities;
 - Compliance with the Protection of Personal Information Act in respect of storage of personal and sensitive information.

Safeguarding officer(s)

- 3.37. All SAGF affiliated clubs must appoint a competent person(s) as their Safeguarding Officer(s). The club safeguarding officer(s) must be registered with the SAGF and must complete approved Safeguarding Training for SAGF Club Safeguarding Officers.

Club registration

- 3.38. All SAGF affiliated clubs must maintain accurate records of participants in their activities including:
- Name and address;
 - Date of birth;
 - Parent/Carer information;
 - Emergency contacts;
 - Medical details - allergies, existing conditions, including any specific actions to take;
 - Information on any disability or special needs;
 - First language;
 - Medical consent;
 - Indemnity forms;
 - Consent for participation in gymnastics;
 - Consent for photography and filming or option to object;
 - Information required for the purposes of the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture annual transformation survey.
- 3.39. SAGF clubs should ensure that this information is collected at the earliest opportunity to enable any necessary risk assessments based on medical information and/or disability to be completed prior to participation.
- 3.40. Parental/Guardian consent forms should always be sought prior to participation of a child in gymnastics activity at the club.
- 3.41. The Protection of Public Information Act 2013 requires clubs to conduct themselves in a responsible manner when collecting, processing, storing and sharing personal information and holds them accountable should they abuse or compromise the personal information collected in any way. Clubs need to explain clearly how the personal information being collected will be

used and why and with whom it may be shared.

- 3.42. SAGF affiliated clubs who publish images of children must comply with the guidance on photography and use of imagery included in this document.

Inclusion of parents, guardians or carers

- 3.43. Parents, guardians and carers should be welcomed at SAGF affiliated clubs to observe training sessions that their child or an adult they are providing support and care for are participating. The presence of responsible adults observing training sessions helps create a safer environment.
- 3.44. Clubs should in the case of new or potential members, encourage them to view a session and remain with their child or vulnerable adult until the child or vulnerable adult is happy to be left on their own.
- 3.45. Clubs should provide a suitable area for parents, guardians or carers to view training sessions. Where there is not a purpose built viewing area, clubs should designate a small area of the gym for viewing. This will need to be carefully managed and there may need to be limits on the number of spectators that can be safely accommodated. It may be appropriate for parents, guardians, carers and other spectators to sign in and out of the viewing area.
- 3.46. The use of CCTV from a designated room or area may be used to allow parents, guardians and carers to view what is going on during training without taking up space in the gym. Where CCTV is used to record images the storage of data may be subject to compliance with the Protection of Personal Information Act 2013 and the use of CCTV cameras in public spaces may be subject to municipal bye laws.
- 3.47. The SAGF does not permit the livestreaming of training sessions due concerns regarding the security and management of such images of children.
- 3.48. Clubs should facilitate viewing of training sessions by parents, guardians and carers and may not restrict their ability to observe such sessions by:
- Obscuring windows;
 - Refusing reasonable requests to view;
 - Asking parents, guardians or carers to leave without due cause;
 - Justifying the prohibition of viewing on spurious health and safety grounds.
- 3.49. The inclusion of parents, guardians and carers in creating an open training environment is much more than providing them with a viewing area. It involves creating a culture of openness between the club and parents, guardians or carers. This can include:
- Regular written and oral communication with parents, guardians or carers;
 - Providing regular feedback on a child or person with a mental disability's progress;
 - Opportunities to discuss the child or person with a mental disability's progress and training regime;
 - Opportunity to raise concerns and receive feedback on the outcome;
 - Encouraging parents, guardians and carers to become involved in the club;
 - Inviting parents, guardians and carers to attend welfare briefings prior to an away event;
 - Encouraging parents, guardians and carers to attend events or keep in close contact with their child or adult requiring care;

- Setting up parents, guardians and carers forums;
- Appointing a Parent Liaison Officer who is responsible for communication, information and encouraging involvement.

Changing room policy

- 3.50. SAGF affiliated organisations and clubs have a duty of care to safeguard children and vulnerable adults during club sessions, including the wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults in changing rooms.
- 3.51. SAGF affiliated organisations and clubs must have in place a policy, or rules, relating to the use of changing facilities. Where the organisation or club is operating at a public facility the policy for changing rooms should be developed together with the facility owner.
- 3.52. Separate changing facilities, or times, should be provided for males and females (in accordance to their chosen gender) except where there are village style changing is being operated at the facility and no one should enter changing rooms whilst these are being used by members of the opposite sex;
- 3.53. Separate changing facilities should be provided for adults and children; adults should not be permitted to get changed in the same room at the same time as children;
- 3.54. Mobile phones must not be used in changing rooms;
- 3.55. Any concerns or incidents occurring in a changing facility must be reported without delay. Gymnasts, parents, coaches, volunteers attending the club should know how to report such concerns.
- 3.56. Where clubs are unable to provide safe changing rooms all members should be advised to arrive wearing their training attire under their clothes.

Changing room guidance for parents

- 3.57. It is not recommended that supervision is provided within changing rooms as this places both the adult and children at risk of harm or allegation. Instead clubs may wish to place a club official outside of the doors to the changing room which enables children to call for assistance if required.
- 3.58. Additionally, parents should specifically be advised around:
- The type of changing facilities at the venue – for example, are they village changing or separate for males and females.
 - Whether changing facilities will be accessible by members of the public using the facilities as well as club members, and if club members over 18 years of age will be accessing them at the same time as members under 18 years of age.
 - Avoiding being in the changing rooms whilst the gymnasts are changing unless their child required additional assistance. In these circumstances the parent/carer must be the same gender as the child unless there is access to a family changing room or the venue has village changing facilities.

Supervision and support

- 3.59. Where children, persons with a mental and/or physical disability, young people or other

vulnerable adults are participating in gymnastics activity there must always be a minimum of two unrelated responsible adults present. This ensures there is supervision in the event of an accident or incident that requires one of the adults to leave the group to accompany a gymnast.

- 3.60. Individuals assigned supervisory roles should be clear of their responsibilities.
- 3.61. The ratio of those being supervised to those undertaking supervision roles should be based on a risk assessment which takes into consideration the age of the gymnasts, the needs of the gymnasts, the type of activity and where the activity is taking place.
- 3.62. SAGF recommends a minimum ratio of one adult to sixteen gymnasts for low-level floor activity during club training session.
- 3.63. Where events are external to the regular club training venue, the SAGF recommends a minimum ratio of one adult to ten gymnasts is required and there must always be a minimum of two unrelated responsible adults present. For gymnasts aged under-eight years this ratio must be increased. This ensures there is supervision in the event of an accident or incident that requires one of the adults to leave the group to accompany a child.
- 3.64. The SAGF does not impose restrictions on adults training alongside children, but clubs have a responsibility to ensure they consider the differences in the gymnasts needs based not only on age but also experience and each individual's stage of development. Where clubs have adults training with children, the club has a responsibility to create a safe environment for all its participants including putting safeguards in place to protect all participants.
- 3.65. There may be circumstances where some gymnasts will need help with personal and intimate care such as going to the toilet, changing and washing. This need is most likely to arise for pre-school children or some gymnasts with mental or physical disabilities.
- 3.66. The SAGF recommends that clubs require parents of children aged 3-4 years to remain nearby during gymnastics activity and contactable in case their child becomes distressed or requires assistance. Parents of children under three years of age and of children who require assistance to use the toilet must remain with their child.

Children and adults with disabilities

- 3.67. Some children and adults with disabilities, as a result of their need for practical assistance in daily living, may be more vulnerable to abuse and the risk may be greater where there are a number of carers. This may increase the likelihood of exposure to abusive behaviour and make it more difficult to set and maintain physical boundaries. It can be difficult, particularly for children and adults with a mental disability, to differentiate between different roles if carried out by the same person. This may lead to confusion and additional vulnerability.
- 3.68. Taking account of the above factors and the safeguarding concerns that can arise from coaches and others putting themselves in a position where they are alone with a child or vulnerable adult, SAGF views as unacceptable the routine provision of personal care by coaches. SAGF requires all intimate care to be carried out by someone other than the coach (except when the coach is also the parent) whose sole role in relation to the child or adult is to address their care needs.
- 3.69. In order to provide adequate support to gymnasts, SAGF advocates that either a professional carer or the gymnast's parent or guardian should carry out the role of "carer."

- 3.70. Although it is acknowledged that some disabled children or adults who take part in events that require an overnight stay may require overnight support, SAGF considers that it is not acceptable for SAGF coaches, or other SAGF members in responsible positions, to share a room with an unrelated gymnast in order to provide overnight support.
- 3.71. SAGF suggests that overnight support should be provided by the gymnast's parents, guardians or full time or part time carers.
- 3.72. It is the responsibility of every SAGF affiliated organisation and club to consider the needs of children and adults with mental or physical disabilities; making reasonable adjustments to help provide for the inclusion of any child or adult who wishes to participate in the sport.
- 3.73. All SAGF affiliated organisations and clubs should work with parents, guardians and carers to ensure support is in place for those children and adults with disabilities who require assistance can access gymnastics activity.

Late collection of children

- 3.74. Occasionally parents/carers may become delayed or unable to collect children from training sessions.
- 3.75. When new junior members join the club their parents should be advised who to contact if they will be delayed in collecting their child and advise them of the action to be taken, for example they would need to advise if another club member could take their child home. It is important that emergency contact details are collected for all junior members. If you are unable to contact their primary contact, emergency contact details are essential.
- 3.76. Club officers must never leave a child under 16 years of age alone, and they must have written parental permission to leave athletes over 16 years of age on their own. It is recognised that some parents will allow their child to travel to and from training sessions on their own, or with club mates, and in these situations the parent would be required to notify the club of this. Clubs should have a collection policy to ensure 2 coaches/ volunteers stay with uncollected children.
- 3.77. Club coaches and officers should avoid:
- Asking the child to wait alone with them or being left alone with any child who has not been collected
 - Taking any child home or to another location
 - Allowing the child to leave with another club member without permission.

Missing child guidance

- 3.78. In the unfortunate incident that a child goes missing during club activities or at events it is important to remember that most children are found within a few minutes of their disappearance. SAGF provide the following guidance in relation to the actions that should be taken in this occurrence:
- Ensure any other young people you are responsible for are appropriately looked after while the search is being completed for the missing child.
 - Organise all available adults to fully search specified areas, particularly obvious areas of

- danger.
- If the child cannot be found after a good search of the immediate surroundings, contact the child's parents to advise them of the concern and reassure them that everything is being done to locate the child.
- Ensure that the area in which the child has gone missing is fully searched, including changing rooms, toilets, public and private areas.
- Ensure that there is a single point of contact for all individuals searching to report back to. This individual should record all of the events that have occurred as well as creating a physical description of the young person to include approximate height, build, hair and eye colour in addition to what they were last seen wearing, where and when they were last seen.
- If the young person has not been found within 20 minutes the SAPS should be informed, even if the search has not been fully completed.
- Once you have contacted the SAPS, they will advise if further action is required before their involvement. If the SAPS act upon your report, follow their guidance and requests for progressing the search.
- As soon as the young person is located be sure to communicate this to all individuals involved in the search.

Including children in decision making

- 3.79. The South African Government ratified in 1995 the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. South Africa has enshrined children's rights in the Constitution (Act 108 of 1996), the supreme law of the country that was designed to respect, protect, promote and fulfil the rights of all people in the country.
- 3.80. One of the four core principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is the need to show respect for the views of the child. Article 12 of the Convention states: 'children have a right to an opinion and for it to be listened to and be taken seriously'.
- 3.81. Clubs should ensure that children have an opportunity to be consulted and, where appropriate, be involved in decisions that relate to their involvement in the sport, as well as within the specific area of safeguarding policy and procedures.
- 3.82. Key principles when involving children:
- The extent that a child can be involved in decision making will depend on their age and level of maturity and understanding;
 - Children and young people's involvement and opinions must be acknowledged and appreciated;
 - Children should be treated honestly. Their expectations need to be managed and boundaries that may limit their involvement explained;
 - Children should be provided with timely feedback about how their involvement has shaped or influenced a policy or approach;
 - All children should be given the opportunity to be involved irrespective of race, religion, culture, disability, age, ethnic origin, language or the area in which they live;
 - Children should always be provided with age appropriate information to help them understand;
 - Information for children should be clear and accessible and in appropriate language and style of communication;
 - Children and young people should be supported to enable them to make a positive and effective contribution, e.g. by the Safeguarding Officer.

3.83. Some ideas on involving children and young people include:

- Establishing a youth forum to seek the views of children in the club;
- Identifying a young person's representative to communicate the views in formal settings such as Club Committee Meetings;
- Involving children in helping develop literature, posters and website, information on child safeguarding issues;
- Carrying out questionnaire based surveys to seek views and comments from children;
- Holding meetings with children when considering changes to policies and gather their views.

Managing communication

3.84. All clubs should have a communication policy that covers the use of communication devices and the manner in which coaches, staff, volunteers can communicate with children and vulnerable adults.

3.85. The following key points should be included:

- Cell phones should be turned off in the gym except in the case where a phone is used as a club contact number or for emergencies.
- Adult members should not communicate with gymnasts under the age of 18 years by text message, social media, internet chat rooms/networking sites or e-mail.
- All communication by the above methods should be through the parent.
- Subject to parental consent, coaches can communicate with young people over the age of sixteen years either by group e-mails/texts or by copying correspondence to either the Club Safeguarding Officer or a senior official, as well as the parent(s).
- Coaches should limit communications to training related issues.
- In the event of a gymnast showing a coach a text message, image or email that is considered to be inappropriate for a child to have, the coach must inform the Club Safeguarding Officer.

3.86. As technology has developed, the internet and its range of services can increasingly be accessed through various devices including cell phones, computers and game consoles. Although the internet has many positive uses, it provides a platform for the distribution of images of child abuse. In addition, networking sites and chat-rooms have increasingly been used by people for the purpose of 'grooming' children and young people for abuse, and by children as a means of bullying.

Communicating with children and vulnerable adults

3.87. It is important that club officers communicate appropriately with children and vulnerable adults in the club, be that in person, by phone, in writing, text, online, or any other form of communication.

Mobile phone and online guidance

3.88. The development and use of cell phones has grown exponentially and communicating by text, email and instant messaging has become the norm. The intention of this guidance is to provide club officers and those in positions of trust with a better understanding of best practice in this area.

- 3.89. Coaches and club officers should only hold the contact details for children and persons with a mental disability, if they have written permission from parents/carers.
- 3.90. Communication to children and persons with a mental disability should always be copied into a parent/carer, and should be relevant to the gymnast's participation in gymnastics.
- 3.91. Instead of holding the contact details for children and persons with a mental disability, coaches and club officers could hold the contact details of the parents/carers of children or persons with a mental disability and ask them to pass on any relevant information to the gymnast.
- 3.92. In certain situations, it may be necessary for the coach or a club official to have a child or persons with a mental disability contact number, for example if away on a training camp. In these situations, the parent/carer of the children or persons with a mental disability concerned should be advised in what type of situations the details will be used and they would need to provide permission for this. Immediately following these circumstances, the contact details should be deleted.
- 3.93. It may be required for the club to contact groups of children or vulnerable adults, for example training groups, in these cases it should be considered as to whether a secure page on the club website could be developed and accessible to relevant individuals only. This could be accessed by the parents/carers in addition to the gymnasts themselves as no direct contact would be occurring.
- 3.94. If sensitive data is held, then devices (e.g., mobile phones, laptops) should have appropriate security (e.g., passwords).
- 3.95. Additional guidance for coaches includes:
- Avoiding taking calls, texting, or being distracting by your phone, during training sessions. If answering a call is unavoidable it is imperative that there is another individual who can supervise the session during this time.
 - If using the camera function, the coach should have the permission of the young person's parents/carers and should follow the guidelines for photography and videography.
 - If the coach enters the changing facilities for any reason the camera function of their phone should not be used under any circumstances.
 - Photographs of young people under 18 years of age should only be published if the permission of their parents/carers has been given.
 - If a photo is published, the young person's details such as their full name, location of the photograph or any details that would enable them to be found should not be included.
 - If you are shown a message or image that is considered inappropriate for a young person to have, you should inform the Club Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible.
- 3.96. SAGF recognises that a number of young people will become coaches after being members in a club, and as a result will still be friends with a number of other young club members, some of whom may be 16 or 17 years of age. It is plausible that they will have their contact details and frequently communicate with them already. As a result, SAGF accepts that it would not be appropriate to expect young coaches to be removed from their friendship groups and so in these cases SAGF suggest:
- That any pre-existing friendships are maintained and the coach would not have to remove contact details.
 - If this is the case, then the coach should inform the Club Safeguarding Officer and the head coach.

- Following this advisory, the head coach should make every effort to ensure that the coach is not the primary coach for their friendship group unless unavoidable.

Social media guidance

- 3.97. Social media websites such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram are fully integrated into daily life and as such the operation of many clubs providing a convenient outlet to communicate with both current and potential members. Alongside the positive aspects of these sites there are the inherent dangers and consequences of misuse including cyber bullying, grooming, identity theft, and viewing unsuitable content.
- 3.98. As these sites are accessible to junior members as well as senior members, clubs must ensure that all posted messages have suitable content and format to avoid miscommunication of their meanings.
- 3.99. The club will need to consider:
- What content is uploaded onto social media – photos, blogs, videos etc;
 - How to manage who can access what information;
 - How content will be presented;
 - If there will be sanctions for the abuse of the club's social media.
- 3.100. There are a number of good practice points that clubs should follow when setting up and maintaining their social media sites including:
- Fully integrating procedures relating to the reporting of potentially abusive or illegal content/activity to ensure that these are in line with the SAGF procedures;
 - Understanding acceptable and unacceptable online behaviour and ensuring that this is communicated to all users. It should be clearly outlined to users who to contact if they have concerns, along with how they can be contacted.
 - Ensure that all club officers, coaches and gymnasts understand the importance of protecting their privacy online and that they understand the risks of posting and sharing content which could damage both theirs and the club's reputation.
 - Ensuring that the email address used to register the account/page is suitable, including the club as the domain name. This will reduce the risk of fake accounts being set up, improving the security for both the individual monitoring the account/page as well as the user accessing it. This should include how the access details for the account/page will be kept secure to ensure the threat of hacking and misuse is reduced.
 - How the account/page will be set up and managed:
 - As a page not a personal profile, this will enable updates to be shown in member's news feeds, the promotion of training or events and the page will appear in searches which could attract new members;
 - Developed as a working group, ensuring that the Club Safeguarding Officer is consulted as appropriate;
 - Including the option for comments to be reviewed before being posted to ensure they are appropriate;
 - Ensuring that permissions are granted if photographs are used, especially of athletes under 18 years of age;
 - Gaining permission of club officers for their contact details to be published;
 - Will the individual monitoring the account/page receive training before completing the role;
 - How the privacy and security settings will be appropriately set to ensure that content is appropriate for all individuals who could be accessing the page/account;
 - The ability to block individuals who should not have access or post offensive or

- inappropriate material;
- Including a profanity filter where possible;
- Including contact details for the club and appropriate club officers as this will enable users to verify the account/page, as well as knowing who to contact with any queries.
- Think before you post anything on to the page/account – do they fit with the clubs current policies and guidance and do you have permission for any photographs or videos.

Social Media Guidance for Coaches and Club Officers

3.101.SAGF make the following recommendations for individuals who are in a position of trust and have responsibility for children and vulnerable adults within clubs:

- Any contact with children or vulnerable adults through social media, should be relevant to their gymnastics participation, and should be with the consent of parents/carers.
- If a young person requests to add you as a friend on social media you should decline if you:
 - Use your social media account for personal purposes and there is a chance your account may include photos or content that would be inappropriate or deemed unprofessional for a child or young person to view or read, or that would make you look unprofessional;
 - Are in contact with the child through their club, and the child's parents/carers have not given permission for the contact.
- Never use social media to attack the SAGF, its Provincial or District Associations, affiliated clubs or the members of the SAGF, its Provincial or District Associations, or affiliated clubs or the sport.
- Ensure that the use of any photographs or videos is in line with the SAGF photography guidance.

TRAVEL GUIDELINES

3.102. The SAGF, members and affiliated clubs have a duty of care to safeguard gymnasts which includes having the appropriate levels of supervision in place if gymnasts are taken to events or camps.

3.103. If SAGF, a member or an affiliated club take athletes away overnight, or over multiple nights, they will be responsible for the safeguarding and wellbeing of the gymnasts as soon as they have received the gymnast from their parent/carer and will remain responsible until the gymnast is handed back to their parent/carer.

3.104. SAGF would expect the following people be included in away trips:

- A Safeguarding Officer – this could be a club safeguarding officer or a competent person appointed to the role for the event or camp only.
- Head Coach
- Chaperone(s)

3.105. The role of the Safeguarding Officer and Chaperone(s) are outlined below.

Safeguarding Officer

3.106. The safeguarding officer appointed for a specific trip may not necessarily be the same one as appointed by the SAGF or a club but they should ideally have completed the SAGF's training for Safeguarding Officers.

3.107. The safeguarding officer for this role should:

- Ensure that all individuals on the trip know that they are the safeguarding officer for the duration and that they should be informed of any safeguarding or welfare concerns.
- Hold the contact details for all athlete's parents/carers in the event that they will be needed during the trip.
- Hold the medical information for all athletes to ensure that they are accessible if needed during the trip.
- Manage any concerns raised on the trip, with others as deemed appropriate, and complete any resulting tasks following the trip.
- In the instance of any ongoing concerns, refer them to the SAGF or Club Safeguarding Officer(s) if a different person.

Chaperones

3.108. The role of the chaperones is to provide loco parentis supervision of the gymnasts on the trip, assist with the maintenance of their general care and wellbeing and to assist the Safeguarding Officer if and when required.

3.109. Individuals who operate in this role should:

- Not be undertaking a coaching role during the away trip.
- Have been vetted in line with the SAGF's Safe Recruitment Policy.
- Have attended some form of safeguarding training.
- Have their role fully explained and the associated expectations outlined to them before commencing the role.
- Meet with other trip leaders in advance of the trip to ensure that all roles and responsibilities are confirmed across the group.
- Be provided with a list of gymnasts they will be responsible for along with any pertinent information they may require, for example specific medical information or any additional assistance they may require.

3.110. If the group is fairly small, it's possible that a chaperone could also act as the Safeguarding Officer for the trip. It is recommended that a ratio of 1 chaperone to 10 gymnasts is maintained and if there are male and female athletes there should be at least one male and one female chaperone. It is important that there are enough chaperones to effectively manage any situations that occur and maintain the wellbeing of the gymnasts during these times.

3.111. In advance of any trips the chaperones should:

- Meet with the gymnasts they will be responsible for during the trip, and their parents
- Be provided with the details of the trip including:
 - any booking details;
 - athlete and team leader room allocations;
 - the location of their room in relation to the gymnasts;
 - details of any transportation being provided;

- any guidance that athletes have been provided with.
- Provide a signed copy of the relevant code of conduct and be provided with a copy of the gymnast's code of conduct.
- Identify the nearest medical facilities.

3.112. During the trip, chaperones should:

- Have a room on the same floor as the gymnasts and ideally as close as possible so they can be easily contacted by gymnasts;
- Provide their room number to the gymnasts they are responsible for and advise them they should only use this information in emergency situations;
- Check all gymnast's rooms on arrival to ensure they are secure;
- Check if unsuitable channels can be accessed on the television in the room and if so request for these to be blocked;
- Check that the in room telephone is operational;
- Accompany any gymnast that they are responsible for should they require medical attention, ensuring that they take any medical records or information with them.

Planning the Trip

3.113. Before the trip commences the following tasks should be completed and agreed by the team leading it:

- Consider the risks of any overnight accommodation, either in person or by liaising with hotel staff, for example not having the exclusive use of the venue.
- Allocate rooms based upon age and gender, considering parent and athlete requests where possible. Under 18's should not share a room with an over 18-year old even if they are of the same gender. If this has to happen (for budget reasons) that this is discussed and agreed upfront and parental approval documented. It potentially exposes an adult as well as a child and is a situation that should be avoided.
- Ideally all athletes should be on the same floor, with club officers' rooms at either end.
- Ensure that guidelines are in place for the use of any in room telephones and televisions.
- How club officer contact details, and the guidance for using these, will be provided to athletes and their parents/carers.
- The development of an emergency plan and contingency plan in the event of illness or injury.
- Circulate travel and behavioural policies to all athletes and parents prior to the trip.
- Distributing and collating all required forms to and from parents/carers.

Emergency Plan

3.114. In the unfortunate occurrence of an incident the emergency plan will become vital in managing it and ensuring that the situation does not worsen. The emergency plan should detail:

- The nature of the emergency and who is involved.
- The action to be taken to maintain the wellbeing of the athletes and manage the current situation
- Confirming any injuries and providing medical assistance if required;
- Nominating which member(s) of the team leading the trip would accompany the individual requiring medical attention;
- Ensuring that there will be adequate supervision for the remainder of the gymnasts while the situation is being rectified.

- Where required, who will notify the Police of the incident;
- Who will be responsible for contacting the parents/carers of the gymnast(s) involved;
- When and who should contact the SAGF Safeguarding Officer;
- Who will create a written record of the incident?

PHOTOGRAPHY, VIDEO & USE OF IMAGES

3.115. Taking photographs or videoing people in public places in South Africa is legal, whereas consent needs to be given to photograph or video people in a private place. Reproducing and selling photographs of people is legal for editorial and limited fair use commercial purposes. Civil law requires the consent of any identifiable persons for advertorial and promotional purposes.

3.116. The sport of gymnastics can benefit from the use of images of participants to promote and celebrate activities, events and competitions. Parents and children generally welcome opportunities to celebrate or publicise their involvement and achievements in the sport through photographs and video recordings. Gymnastics coaches also find it helpful to use photographs or videos as a tool to support a gymnast's skills development.

3.117. The guidelines contained in this section have been developed with the aim of increasing the safety and well-being of children, persons with a mental and/or physical disability, young and vulnerable adults and for the avoidance of the following potential sources of harassment or abuse:

- Using, adapting or modifying images for the purpose of harassing or abusing participants in the sport or to identify persons in-order to harass or abuse them;
- Using images for child abuse purposes, or adapting and modifying them for this purpose;
- The potential identification of a child from their personal information and the possible grooming which could occur as a result;
- The potential identification of children that have been recognised as being at risk for reasons including:
 - Having been removed from their family for their own safety;
 - Restrictions on parental access following the separation of parents;
 - Being a witness in legal proceedings.

3.118. The SAGF recognises that photos and videos on websites and social media, and in posters, the press or other publications, can be misused posing direct and indirect risks to children, persons with a mental disability, young people and vulnerable adults. Children in particular may be subjected to grooming, harassment, abuse and bullying as a consequence of an image recorded on any device.

3.119. The following policy and procedures are aimed at safeguarding children and adults participating in gymnastics from risks associated with the misuse of images captured through any device.

SAGF provincial & district associations and affiliated clubs

3.120. SAGF recommend the following advice for provincial & district associations and affiliated clubs:

- Provincial & district associations and affiliated clubs should have a policy in place covering the recording of images of gymnasts. The policy may include a ban on all the recording of images of gymnasts or the requirement for anyone recording images of gymnasts to first register with the provincial & district associations or club. This policy to apply to everyone attending club sessions including official photographers/videographers, gymnasts, coaches, parents, club officers, staff and spectators.
- Where the club conducts activities at a public venue they should consult the operators of the facility regarding their policy covering the recording of images.
- The club policy should apply a ban on the recording of images of any form in changing rooms, toilets and first aid areas. The ban should include the use of smart phones, which can take photographs and record video, in changing rooms, toilets and first aid areas.
- If imagery of a gymnast under 18 years of age is published or used by the member or affiliated club for any reason the athlete's parents/carers should give consent.
- A gymnast's parents/carers should have the opportunity to refuse their child being photographed. This should not exclude the child from any member or club's activities.
- A photography consent form template is available from the SAGF website.
- If the club is hosting an event, it should be made clear to all parents/carers if a designated photographer is going to be present and if so they should be provided with the opportunity to confirm if their child is eligible to be included in photographs. It should also be made clear that there could be other parents/carers taking photographs during the event and in these cases they will have submitted a registration form and have agreed to only photograph the child(ren) they are responsible for. It is worth remembering that while their child(ren) should be the main focus of any imagery there is the potential for other children to be in the background of these photographs.
- Care should be taken when using any images showing children or vulnerable adults on their website, social media or other publications.

3.121. Further considerations for capturing images include:

- Action shots should demonstrate the spirit of the sporting activity and should not be taken if the gymnast's leotard is torn or displaced. Only use images of children or vulnerable adults in suitable dress or kit.
- Photographic or video images that appear ambiguous should be avoided as they can be used inappropriately and out of context by others (for example, images from some angles of gymnasts doing the splits);
- The photographs should focus on the action and, where possible, be a group shot as opposed to focussing on individuals.
- Providing anyone who registers to take photographs either during club activities should be provided with clear guidance as to what images are acceptable to capture.
- If the images are being taken by a member or club appointed photographer for the use of the club it should be agreed who will take charge of the images and manage their use.
- Recognise that gymnastics presents a higher risk for potential misuse than other sports, so images of these activities should:
 - avoid showing the full face and body of a child or vulnerable adult – instead show children from the waist or shoulders up;
 - avoid images and camera angles that may be more prone to misinterpretation or misuse than others;
 - consider using models or illustrations if you are promoting an activity, rather than the children or vulnerable adults who are actually involved in it;
 - provide coaches who use images of athletes as part of their training with clear guidelines by which they are required to comply, including: use of the images, consents, and retention, safe storage and confidentiality.

- 3.122. SAGF, provincial & district associations and affiliated clubs and events should apply a ban on photography of any form in changing rooms, toilets and first aid areas. Where they use another organisation's facilities should ask the facility owner to implement a ban on photography in these areas. The ban should apply to all participants, spectators, staff and volunteers. This includes the use of smart phones which can take photographs and record video.
- 3.123. SAGF affiliated clubs should warn parents and spectators that there can be negative consequences to sharing images linked to information about their own or other people's children on social media (Facebook, Twitter) – and care should be taken about 'tagging'.

Recording of Images at Events

- 3.124. Event organisers should have in place a policy on recording images of gymnasts at their event. The policy may include a ban on all the recording of images of gymnasts or the requirement for anyone recording images of gymnasts to first register with the member or club. This policy to apply to everyone attending club sessions including official photographers/videographers, gymnasts, coaches, parents, club officers, staff and spectators. If the event is taking place in a public space it may be difficult to enforce restrictions on the recording of images except in respect of the competition area.
- 3.125. There should be a ban on all recording of images in changing rooms, toilets and first aid areas. The use of smart phones which can take photographs and record video should be restricted in these areas.
- 3.126. Although parental consent is not required for photography by the public, event organisers should make the photography policy clear to all participants and parents ahead of the event.
- 3.127. Event organisers should use event programmes, entry forms, information forms and signage to communicate the event's policy of the recording of images to all participants, officials, parents, spectators.
- 3.128. Where an event organiser requires anyone wishing to take photographs to register. Communicating this to the public is essential, together with establishing a straightforward process for doing so. Individuals will usually register via a basic form and receive a sticker or equivalent to indicate they have undergone the process. Staff, volunteers, participants, parents, spectators and the public need to be both informed about this process and encouraged to report anyone apparently taking photos without the necessary registration.
- 3.129. Any concerns regarding the recording of images at an event should be communicated to the event organiser or the event safeguarding officer(s).
- 3.130. If there are concerns or suspicions about potentially criminal behaviour this should include referral to SAPS.
- 3.131. Event organisers should appoint a safeguarding officer for events that cater for children or vulnerable adults. For club events this may be the club's safeguarding officer.
- 3.132. Where an official or professional photographer/videographer will be attending an event, the SAGF, members and affiliated clubs must:
- inform parents/carers and children/vulnerable adults that a photographer will be in

- attendance;
- ensure parents/carers and children/vulnerable adults consent to both the taking and publication of films or photos – see the SAGF recording of images consent form;
- check the photographer's identity, the validity of their role, and the purpose and use of the images to be taken;
- issue the photographer with identification, which must be worn at all times;
- provide the photographer with a clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of image content and their behaviour;
- clarify areas where all photography is prohibited (toilets, changing areas, first aid areas, and so on);
- inform the photographer about how to identify – and avoid taking images of – children without the required parental consent for photography;
- don't allow unsupervised access to children or one-to-one photo sessions at events;
- don't allow photo sessions away from the event – for instance, at a child or vulnerable adult's home;
- clarify issues about ownership of and access to all images, and for how long they'll be retained and/or used.

Guidance for video recording a child during training sessions

3.133. There should be a clear and valid reason as to why video recording a child during a training session would be necessary, a primary reason for this would be for athlete development and mastering a skill. If there is a valid reason consent would need to be obtained from the athlete's parents/carers before video recording is completed and they should also be offered the opportunity to sit with the child when the video is reviewed. Once the content has fulfilled its purpose it should be deleted unless there is a valid reason for keeping the video recording.

Privacy considerations

3.134. Images or video recordings of children must be kept securely:

- hard copies of images should be kept in a locked drawer
- electronic images should be in a protected folder with restricted access
- images should not be stored on unencrypted portable equipment such as laptops, memory sticks or mobile phones

3.135. Avoid using any personal equipment to take photos and recordings of children – use only cameras or devices belonging to your organisation.

3.136. If you're storing and using photographs to identify children and adults for official purposes – such as identity cards – ensure you comply with the legal requirements for handling personal information (Protection of Personal Information Act).

Talented young athletes

3.137. As young gymnasts progress up the competitive ladder, their sporting success can lead to an increased public profile:

- elite-level events are more likely to take place in a public arena;
- The SAGF, its members and affiliated clubs and events will look to positively promote the sport;
- elite young athletes who receive endorsements or sponsorship may welcome positive

media coverage on a local, district, provincial or national level;

3.138. In these cases, some aspects of our guidance around the use of images and publishing identifying information are neither practical nor desirable.

3.139. Event organisers retain their duty of care to these gymnasts and a responsibility to safeguard them. They must ensure that children and their parents/carers consent to images being taken and what information will be published alongside them. It is important that good-practice guidance regarding supervision and the nature and use of images are applied.

3.140. In addition, athletes, their parents and media representatives need to be clear about appropriate arrangements and ground rules for interviews, and for filming and photo sessions. Sports organisations should help to manage these issues as part of their overall support of elite athletes.

Use of CCTV at Gymnastics Clubs & Facilities

3.141. If a gymnastics club or facility intends to use a live video stream of leisure activities for parents to spectate, which is displayed in public areas, facilities should make sure that:

- all customers are aware;
- images are not recorded;
- footage is shown without sound (reduces potential identification of individuals);
- any cameras provide wide-angle, general views of the gymnasium;
- there are arrangements in place to respond to any concerns about anyone watching the stream whose behaviour gives cause for concern.

Part 4 - Recognising and Responding to Harassment, Abuse and Poor Practice.

The following policies and procedures are aimed at guiding participants in the sport of gymnastics as to how to recognise and respond to harassment, abuse and poor practice.

INTRODUCTION

- 4.1. All who take part in gymnastics should be able to recognise the signs and indicators of harassment and abuse and know how to respond to these signs. It is not the responsibility of individuals within gymnastics to determine if harassment or abuse has, or is, occurring but they should report any concerns/ incidents to a safeguarding officer. It is not an individual's responsibility to approach the person they are worried about themselves.
- 4.2. The SAGF will appoint a National Safeguarding Officer (s) who will lead on all safeguarding matters nationally and will be available to advise and support Safeguarding Officers appointed at provincial, district and club levels as well as for events.
- 4.3. Club Safeguarding Officers need to be appropriately trained and have an understanding of the different forms of harassment and abuse and their definitions. They act as a first point of contact for any person in gymnastics at a club level who has a concern about the welfare and protection of a child, person with a mental and/or physical disability, young adult or other vulnerable adult. They will assist the Club in developing and promoting a safe and friendly environment and are responsible for disseminating safeguarding information to their clubs as needed.

HARASSMENT, ABUSE & POOR PRACTICE

Harassment

- 4.4. **Harassment** is defined by the unwanted nature of the action, which could include attention or the provision of items. It is for any given individual to determine what they consider to be acceptable and what they regard as offensive. In some situations, harassment can be considered to be a criminal offence and can lead to a restraining order or prosecution.
- 4.5. The Protection from Harassment Act 2010, defines harassment as directly or indirectly engaging in conduct that the respondent knows or ought to know (a) causes harm or inspires the reasonable belief that harm may be caused to the complainant or a related person by unreasonably (i) following, watching, pursuing or accosting of the complainant or a related person, or loitering outside of or near the building or place where the complainant or a related person resides, works, carries on business, studies or happens to be; (ii) engaging in verbal, electronic or any other communication aimed at the complainant or a related person, by any means, whether or not conversation ensues; or (iii) sending, delivering or causing the delivery of letters, telegrams, packages, facsimiles, electronic mail or other objects to the complainant or a related person or leaving them where they will be found by, given to, or brought to the attention of, the complainant or a related person; or (b) amounts to sexual harassment of the complainant or a related person.
- 4.6. **Sexual harassment** means any unwanted and unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal, non-verbal or physical. Sexual harassment can take the form of sexual abuse.

4.7. Harassment can take a variety of forms with the most common being:

- Suggestive sexual comments;
- Racist insults/jokes;
- Verbal abuse;
- Unwelcome attention.

Abuse

4.8. There are 4 categories of abuse: physical, psychological, sexual and neglect.

4.9. **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 acts 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.

4.10. **Psychological abuse** means any unwelcome act including confinement, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation, infantilising, or any other treatment which may diminish the sense of identity, dignity, and self-worth.

4.11. **Sexual abuse** means any conduct of a sexual nature, whether non-contact, contact or penetrative, where consent is coerced/manipulated or is not or cannot be given.

4.12. **Neglect** means the failure of a coach or another person with a duty of care towards the athlete to provide a minimum level of care to the athlete, which is causing harm, allowing harm to be caused, or creating an imminent danger of harm.

4.13. Different forms of abuse may constitute criminal activity in South Africa as defined in the Criminal Procedure Act 51 Of 1977 as amended; the Children's Act 38 OF 2005 as amended and the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 32 Of 2007 as amended; and the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act 7 of 2013.

4.14. Harassment and abuse can be based on any grounds including race, religion, colour, creed, ethnic origin, physical attributes, gender, sexual orientation, age disability, socio-economic status and athletic ability. It can include a one-off incident or a series of incidents. It may be in person or online.

4.15. Harassment may be deliberate, unsolicited and coercive.

4.16. Harassment and abuse often result from an abuse of authority, meaning the improper use of a position of influence, power or authority by an individual against another person.

Poor practice

4.17. **Poor practice** is behaviour of an individual in a position of responsibility which falls below the organisation's required standard (typically as described in the Code of Conduct). Poor practice may not be immediately dangerous or intentionally harmful to a child or adult, but is likely to set a poor example.

Effects of harassment, abuse and poor practice

4.18. The impact of harassment on a child or adult can be profound and can result in the child or adult feeling unhappy, demoralised or undervalued. Harassment is often an ongoing form of abuse which causes extreme distress by the repeated action, usually verbally.

- 4.19. Abuse, whether short-term or prolonged, can be extremely damaging to the child and may affect their relationships and trust in others both currently and in the future. In extreme cases children who have been abused have developed drug and alcohol dependencies, illegal tendencies and in some cases have gone on to abuse children themselves.
- 4.20. Poor practice is potentially damaging to the individual, the organisation and to children or adults who experience it. For example, coaching with alcohol on the breath, smoking, swearing in front of gymnasts, or not paying due care and attention to participants all constitute poor practice.
- 4.21. Poor practice can sometimes lead to, or create, an environment conducive to harassment or abuse. It may also lead to suspicions about the individual's motivation, even where no harm is intended. For example, if a coach is giving one child too much attention, regularly transports children in their car, or encourages physical contact with children without obvious justification.

Specific forms of abuse

- 4.22. Abuse may occur in different forms and settings including:
- **Domestic abuse** – includes Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) or a child witnessing IPV.
 - **Sexual Exploitation** - where women, children and young adults are sexually exploited for money, power or status.
 - **Bullying and Cyberbullying** – which can occur anywhere, at home, at school, at the sports club, and online. Bullying usually takes place over a long period of time and can cause physical and emotional harm.
 - **Grooming** - Children and young people can be groomed online or in the real world, by a stranger or by someone they know - a family member, friend or professional.
 - **Trafficking** - where women or children are recruited, moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold. They are often moved away from their homes and forced to work in the sex trade.
 - **Hazing** - initiation ceremonies including rituals, challenges, and other activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group such as a sports team.
 - **Financial Abuse** - misappropriation of financial resources or abusive use of financial control, in the context of a relationship where there is an expectation of trust. Adults at risk, women in unequal relationships and older persons can be at risk of financial abuse.

Bullying

- 4.23. **Bullying** can be defined as repeated and deliberate actions or hurtful behaviour that is repeated over a period of time. The damage caused by bullying can frequently be underestimated and cause considerable distress to young people and could result in their health and development being affected.
- 4.24. Bullying can be:
- Physical: including pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching, and other forms of violence or threats.
 - Verbal: name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing
 - Emotional: Excluding, tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating
 - Racial: racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
 - Sexual: unwanted physical contact, homophobic taunts, abusive comments

4.25. Bullying can occur between:

- An adult and young person
- A young person and another young person
- A parent and their child

4.26. With gymnastics being competitive the opportunity for bullying may be increased. Examples within gymnastics could include:

- An athlete being picked on for being a weaker competitor;
- Parents pushing their child too hard;
- A coach adopting a win at all costs attitude;
- Officials putting undue pressure on gymnasts.

Grooming

4.27. **Grooming** refers to an individual working to create an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust with the distinct purpose of sexual abuse or exploitation.

4.28. Grooming can be undertaken by both males and females and can occur both online and in the real world. It can be undertaken by an individual the child or young person knows or by a stranger.

4.29. Many children and young people will not understand that they have been groomed and that it constitutes abuse. Abusers may invest a lot of time and effort into gaining a child's, and possibly the rest of their families trust by:

- Offering advice and understanding
- Buying gifts, such as equipment
- Giving the child attention
- Using their professional position or reputation
- Taking them on trips, outings or holidays

4.30. Once they have established trust, groomers will exploit the relationship by isolating the child from friends or family and making the child feel dependent on them. They will use any means of power or control to make a child believe they have no choice but to do what they want. Abusers may introduce 'secrets' as a way to control or frighten the child. Sometimes they will blackmail the child, or make them feel ashamed or guilty, to stop them telling anyone about the abuse.

Trafficking

4.31. The Prevention and Combatting the Trafficking in Persons Act 2013 states that "any person who delivers, recruits, transports, transfers, harbours, sells, exchanges, leases or receives another person within or across the borders of the Republic, by means of (a) a threat of harm; (b) the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion; (c) the abuse of vulnerability; (d) fraud; (e) deception; (f) abduction; (g) kidnapping; (h) the abuse of power; (i) the direct or indirect giving or receiving of payments or benefits to obtain the consent of a person having control or authority over another person; or (j) the direct or indirect giving or receiving of payments, compensation, rewards, benefits or any other advantage, aimed at either the person or an immediate family member of that person or any other person in close relationship to that

person, for the purpose of any form or manner of exploitation, is guilty of the offence of trafficking in persons.

- 4.32. There have been cases of trafficking linked to sport in South Africa where children have been transported to illegitimate sports training camps and been subjected to child abuse and neglect.

RECOGNISING HARASSMENT, ABUSE AND POOR PRACTICE

- 4.33. Safeguarding concerns may arise as a result of:

- A disclosure from a child, protected adult, athlete or other vulnerable adult;
- Direct or reported observation of possible abuse, neglect, suspicious behaviour or poor practice;
- Significant or multiple changes in behaviour in a child's or adult's behaviour, appearance, attitude or relationship;
- Reports from external agencies or individuals.

- 4.34. Children and vulnerable adults may not find it easy to disclose their concerns, and certain groups will find this more difficult for example, children from different racial groups may find it difficult to find people to tell. There may be language barriers, or children or adults may not be able to communicate due to a disability.

- 4.35. The majority of referrals will be made by adults who have concerns about a child or a vulnerable adult as identified by their behaviour or appearance.

- 4.36. It should not be assumed that abuse will be easy to identify as children and vulnerable adults can:

- Be bruised easily in everyday life while practicing, for example falling whilst practicing a routine;
- Be moody and unpredictable, especially during adolescence;
- Experience changes in behaviour as a result of external situations.

- 4.37. Indicators of abuse could include:

- Unexplained injuries such as burns, bruises or cuts which are on areas of the child's or an adult's body which are not normally prone to injury through playing.
- Inconsistent reasons for a physical injury
- The child or vulnerable adult disclosing a concern which suggests an abusive act
- Another person, such as a parent, coach or team mate, raising concerns about a child's or vulnerable adult's wellbeing
- A child's inappropriate sexual awareness or engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- Fearing or displaying a lack of trust in adults
- An excessive fear of making mistakes
- Difficulties making friends, or being prevented from doing so or socialising
- A sudden weight loss or gain, or variations in eating patterns that may identify an eating disorder.

- 4.38. While the above list contains a number of indicators this is not a complete list and there may

be other signs that are observed. Further, if a child or vulnerable adult is exhibiting any one of the above it should not be considered proof that they are being abused, however if there are multiple signs being displayed there could be cause for concern.

- 4.39. It is important to remember it is not your responsibility to determine if abuse has occurred. Your responsibility is to report any concerns that you have.

Responding to Disclosure

- 4.40. If a child or adult indicates that they are being harmed, or information is received that gives rise to concern that a child or adult is being harmed, the person receiving the information should:

- Stay calm and ensure the child or adult is safe and feels safe;
- Listen carefully to what is being said, allowing the child or adult to continue at their own pace;
- Explain that it is likely that the information will have to be shared with others – do not promise to keep secrets;
- Keep questions to a minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said;
- Reassure the child or adult that they have done the right thing in sharing the information;
- Show and tell the child or adult that what he/she says is being taken seriously and recognise any difficulties inherent in interpreting what they said;
- Tell the child or adult what will be done next and with whom the information will be shared;
- Record in writing what was said using the child or adult's words as soon as possible. Record dates and times; any names mentioned; to whom the information was given; information should be noted as given as facts, hearsay or opinion; record should be signed and dated as a record.

- 4.41. If the child or adult indicates that they do not wish others to be informed about the allegations, carefully and tactfully explain the reasons why it may be in their best interests that the matter is referred to an appropriate person or department (SAPS, social services, sports organisation's safeguarding officer).

- 4.42. Receiving a disclosure places great responsibility on the person to whom the disclosure is made. If there is any uncertainty in what actions to be taken, consult with an appropriate person or organisation (SAPS, social services, sports organisation's safeguarding officer).

- 4.43. Actions to avoid:

- Dismissing the concern (irrespective of whether you believe what you are being told or not, you should always report the disclosure, untrue disclosures even when the person is anonymous are rare);
- Panicking;
- Allowing shock or distaste to show;
- Probing for more information than is offered;
- Making promises that cannot be kept such as promising not to tell anyone;
- Speculating or making assumptions;
- Approaching the person who is the subject of the allegation or suspicion (this may put the child or adult at risk or jeopardise a criminal investigation);
- Conduct a personal investigation of the case;
- Making negative comments about the accused person.

REPORTING CONCERNS

4.44. Concerns may fall into two categories:

- Where harm is happening in the context of the sport of gymnastics;
- Where harm is happening towards someone connected with the sport of gymnastics; but is occurring at home or in a context outside of the sport.

4.45. Concerns could be with regard to a:

- Current Situation;
- Past (Historical) Situation.

4.46. Concerns might be about:

- Maltreatment (Harassment or Sexual, Physical, Emotional Abuse or Neglect);
- Poor Practice;
- Perceived Failure of an Organisation to Safeguard.

4.47. Anyone can report an incident of harassment or abuse. Mechanisms for receiving the information are as follows:

- In writing using the SAGF template form;
- By phone or email to a National, Club or Event SAGF Safeguarding Officer(s);
- In person to a National, Club or Event SAGF Safeguarding Officer(s).

4.48. Due to the need for confidentiality and to expedite safeguarding complaints in order to protect children and adults from harassment, abuse or poor practice, the SAGF's normal communication lines from Club to District to Provincial Member to SAGF National Office are set aside. A SAGF Club or Event Safeguarding Officer should report safeguarding concerns directly to the SAGF's National Safeguarding Officer (s). This ensures that only those people that need to know to help protect a participant from harassment, abuse or poor practice are informed of the concern and that the concern can be dealt with expeditiously.

4.49. In situations where the child or adult is considered to be in immediate danger it will be necessary to notify the SAPS or social services.

4.50. In situations where there is no immediate danger your duty of care is to refer the concerns to the most appropriate person or organisation to take action. This may be a SAGF National, Club or Event Safeguarding Officer.

4.51. Reports of concern should be recorded using the SAGF Safeguarding Report Form.

4.52. The SAGF Club or Event Safeguarding Officer will take responsibility for referring the complaint to:

- Local SAPS where a crime is suspected of having taken place;
- Local social services where a child or adult is suspected of being at risk and requiring support and protection;
- The National SAGF Safeguarding Officer(s).

4.53. Any complaints pursuant to this policy received by SAGF will be referred to the SAGF National Safeguarding Officer(s) who is the first point of contact for complaints and concerns under this procedure.

- 4.54. The SAGF National Safeguarding Officer(s) will make an initial assessment of the Complaint to determine the nature of the concern and whether the matter relates to a Participant under SAGF jurisdiction.
- 4.55. If the complaint is believed to be a criminal offence, the SAGF Safeguarding Officer(s) will refer the matter to the Police and other relevant authorities and/or regulatory bodies without delay.
- 4.56. In most cases, the SAGF will delay internal investigations until the outcome of a criminal proceedings is known. Once a matter has been referred back from the police, the objective will be to conclude any investigations in a timely manner.
- 4.57. The SAGF National Safeguarding Officer will take responsibility for referring the complaint to:
- SAPS where a crime is suspected of having taken place;
 - Social services where a child or adult is suspected of being at risk and requiring support and protection;
 - Case Management Group where unacceptable behaviour or poor practice is suspected of taking place in the context of gymnastic activity.
- 4.58. Where an investigation is being conducted by SAPS or social services, the SAGF will only take action in consultation with the statutory authorities. The SAGF has the right to suspend a person against whom allegations have been made pending the outcome of an investigation by the SAPS or social services or any resulting criminal proceedings.
- 4.59. The SAGF may impose interim protective measures, including the suspension of the participant where one or more of the following circumstances applies:
- The participant is believed to present a significant risk to other participants;
 - The reputation of the sport is at risk; and/or
 - The participants ongoing presence may hinder investigations.
- 4.60. If the complaint is not considered to be a matter for the police, the SAGF National Safeguarding Officer(s) should:
- Refer the complaint to another organisation if appropriate;
 - Refer the matter to the SAGF Case Management Group;
- 4.61. The SAGF Case Management Group will consider the complaint and should determine whether to:
- Proceed with an internal investigation;
 - Resolve the matter informally;
 - Dismiss the complaint as unfounded or as insufficiently serious to require any action by SAGF.
- 4.62. Where an internal investigation is required, the SAGF Case Management Group shall instruct an independent investigator to carry out the investigation in accordance with these procedures and to an appropriate timeline agreed by the SAGF Case Management Group.
- 4.63. Where relevant, the investigator may request information from the police and any other relevant organizations.

- 4.64. The investigator may require written or oral representations from relevant parties, taking special care if interviewing vulnerable witnesses.
- 4.65. The investigator shall prepare a report and include all relevant evidence for consideration by the SAGF Case Management group who may determine that:
- The matter is referred to an Independent Disciplinary Panel for consideration;
 - Further investigations are instigated;
 - A risk assessment is completed;
 - Instructions, advice or guidance is provided to the relevant parties; and/or
 - No further action is taken.
- 4.66. In a case of unacceptable behaviour or poor practice, where the SAGF Case Management Group having considered the report of the investigating officer(s) deem there is a case to answer, the SAGF will implement the disciplinary process. This process consists of a disciplinary hearing and an appeals process. Disciplinary and appeals hearings shall be heard by an independent panel appointed by the SAGF or other appropriate body.
- 4.67. The SAGF Safeguarding Officer(s) will assess whether any of the affected parties require support and arrange for support to be provided where deemed appropriate.

Confidentiality

- 4.68. Confidentiality is important factor the reporting, recording and processing of safeguarding concerns. The safeguarding concern should only be disclosed or discussed with those people within SAGF, members and affiliated clubs that need to know in order to manage the case and to safeguard the individual(s) from maltreatment.
- 4.69. The only information regarding a safeguarding concern that will be discussed with the SAGF Exco will be:
- Gender of the complainant
 - Age of the complainant
 - Nature of the abuse
- No other details may be disclosed
- 4.70. Individuals receiving or having safeguarding concerns should avoid attempting to conduct enquiries into the concern. Our duty of care is to report the concerns to the appropriate person and/or organisation. This may be the SAPS, social services, or an appropriate Safeguarding Officer(s).

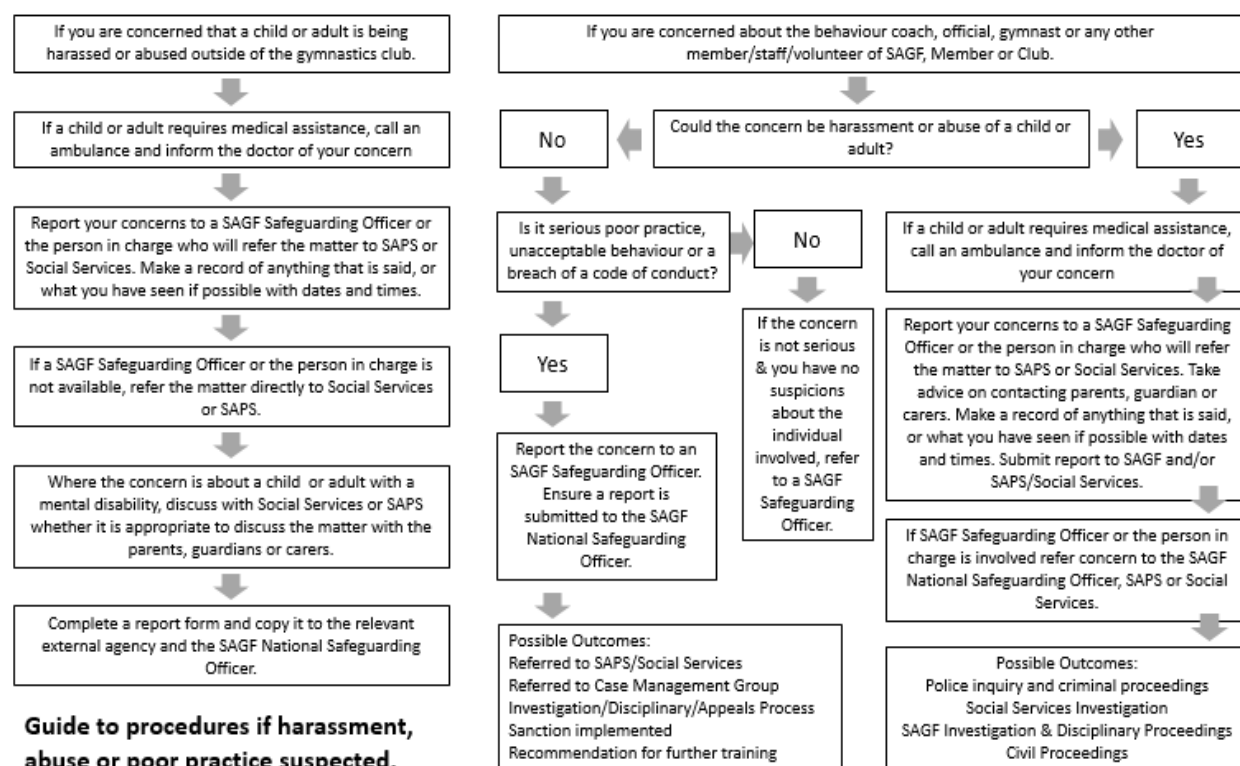
Whistleblowing

- 4.71. Although incidents can be reported directly by the affected individual, the term “whistle blowing” is used to describe a complaint relating to the conduct of an individual made by someone other than the affected person.
- 4.72. SAGF recognises that some individuals may be fearful of the consequences of making a complaint under these procedures, particularly where the perpetrator is in a position of authority. In these circumstances, where possible, the identity of the whistle blower will remain confidential.

4.73. Any person who makes a complaint in good faith must not be subject to reprisal or other adverse consequences because of submitting a report. These protections shall not apply to a person who intentionally makes a complaint that is false, vexatious, retaliatory or frivolous.

ENDS

Appendix 1: Guide to procedures if harassment, abuse or poor practice suspected.



Appendix 2: **General Code**

of Conduct Code of

Conduct

Everyone acting on behalf of the South African Gymnastics Federation (SAGF), its members and affiliated clubs is required to sign the code of conduct below. This acts as confirmation that:

- you have read the Safeguarding Policy
- you agree to fulfil your duty of care to safeguard children and vulnerable adults to the best of your ability, and
- you agree to abide by the principles and behaviours as outlined in the Safeguarding Statement below.

Disciplinary action will be taken if the Safeguarding Statement is

breached. What is Your Duty of Care?

Anyone working with children or vulnerable adults has a legal and moral duty of care to do all they can to protect them from harm. Specifically, this means:

- A duty to behave in a way that does not place children or vulnerable adults at risk of harm
- A duty to report all safeguarding concerns about specific children or vulnerable adults to the SAGF and ensure these concerns are addressed.

Safeguarding Statement

By signing this Safeguarding Statement you confirm that you will abide by all the SAGF's safeguarding expectations.

As a representative of the SAGF, I will:

Always

- Work in a way that respects children's rights and the rights of vulnerable adults, and places their best interests above all other considerations
- Conduct myself with the highest professional standards in line with SAGF's mission, values and behaviours.
- Act on safeguarding concerns swiftly and pass information to the appropriate safeguarding person so that action can be taken to reduce the risk of harm to children or vulnerable adults
- Treat everyone with equal respect, without discrimination, regardless of their gender, culture, ethnicity, age, religion, sexual orientation, or ability
- Work in a way that makes provision for children or vulnerable adults who require additional support due to their own needs or circumstances in order for them to access the same level of protection or opportunities that others may have
- Respect cultural and religious differences when engaging with children and their families and vulnerable adults, and be sensitive to these in my interactions with them
- Maintain appropriate professional and personal boundaries at all times whenever I have direct or indirect contact with children or vulnerable adults. This includes online and digital contact
- Ensure that all data I obtain through my role is handled with the highest regard for safety and

privacy, including collection, storage and sharing of information where appropriate. All personal data and sensitive children's and vulnerable adult's data will be stored in line with the protection of personal information legislation.

- Ensure I have completed all safe recruitment checks that the SAGF requires of me with integrity and honesty.

Never

- Share personal details with children or vulnerable adults including online or digital information
- Spend time alone with children or vulnerable adults, where my actions cannot be accounted for
- Initiate physical contact with a child or a vulnerable adult (including hugging, picking them up) except when spotting or providing manual support after receiving explicit consent from the gymnast
- Engage in any physical abuse of a child or adult at risk (including hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, pushing or otherwise causing physical harm)
- Engage in any sexual activity (contact or non-contact) with a child or vulnerable adult (including indecent exposure, exposure to pornographic material, sexual teasing or innuendo, inappropriate touching including penetrative or non-penetrative acts, or use of adult sex workers)
- Engage in any form of financial or material exploitation (including stealing, fraud, misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits) behaviour through or during my work with SAGF
- Perform tasks of a personal nature for a child or vulnerable adult
- Endorse the participation of a child or vulnerable adult in abusive activities (e.g. bullying, hazing, neglect, withholding medication, food or shelter, or ignoring medical, physical or emotional needs)
- Emotionally or psychologically abuse a child or vulnerable adult by acting in a way that shames or degrades them (including threatening to hurt or abandon, humiliating, blaming, controlling, overprotecting, isolating or intimidating)

Name: Click here to enter text.

Your role: Click here to enter text.

Date: Click here to enter a date.

Please tick to indicate you have read and will adhere to this Statement ☐

SAGF Provincial, District & Club Safeguarding Policy

[Insert name of organisation] acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults participating in gymnastics and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities and complies with best practice and the requirements of the South African Gymnastics Federation (SAGF).

[Insert name of organisation] subscribe to the SAGF Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and endorse and adopt the Policy Statement contained in that document.

[Insert name of organisation] shall:

- promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults;
- 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 relating to children and adults;
- ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of harassment, abuse or poor practice and that support is 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 persons;
- ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation.

[Insert name of organisation] acknowledges that some children and adults can be particularly vulnerable to harassment, abuse or poor practice and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

This policy applies to everyone attending [Insert name of organisation] whether in a paid or voluntary capacity. This includes club members, their parents/guardians or carers, clubs coaches, officials, helpers, medical personnel and service providers.

The SAGF Safeguarding policy and procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone involved in [Insert name of organisation]. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the organisation.

[Insert name of organisation] shall appoint a competent person to be the club's safeguarding officer. The club safeguarding officer shall be responsible for:

- promoting the safety and welfare of children and adults at the club;
- promoting the importance of safeguarding in the club;
- ensuring that children are listened to and are involved in decision making;
- ensuring that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding;

- responding to safeguarding and poor practice concerns;
- liaising with SAGF and local Statutory Authorities;
- working with other organisations as required;
- acting as the designated person for Safe Recruitment practice.

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 any government guidance;
- as required by SAGF;
- as a result of any other significant change or event.

This policy was adopted by [Insert name of organisation]

On the _____

Signed: _____

Designation: _____

ENDS

Appendix 4: SAGF Safeguarding Incident Recording Form

SAGF Safeguarding Incident Recording Form

If an incident or concern is immediate and there is a risk of significant harm to a child or an adult that they are in need of protection, then call your local SAPS and/or Social Services.

Once the matter has been referred then complete this form and submit to the South African Gymnastics Federation.

This form should be used by club or event officials to record the details of any concerns raised. A copy should be sent to the National Safeguarding Officer(s) at the South African Gymnastics Federation [insert email address here]. All efforts must be made to keep the information confidential. The information should only be shared with those that need to know if it is in the best interest of the child or vulnerable adult. The form should be completed for all levels of concern, even where no immediate action may be necessary.

DETAILS OF PERSON COMPLETING THE FORM

Name: _____

Club Name: _____

Position Held: (Safeguarding Officer/Coach, etc.) _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Contact Numbers: _____

Name/details of person who raised concern (if different from above): _____

DETAILS OF PERSON CONCERN IS ATTRIBUTED TO

Name: _____

Position: _____

Club Name: _____

Relationship to alleged victim: _____

DETAILS OF ALLEGED VICTIM (if more than one, continue on a separate sheet)

Name: _____

Club Name: _____ Discipline _____

Date of Birth: _____ Age at time of incident (s) _____

Assessment of model applicability

Description of the incident(s) (please include as much detail as possible. If a child or vulnerable adult talked to you, write down the exact details of the conversation – remember not to lead them. Please include any other information including location, number of incidents, any witness details etc. - please continue on a separate sheet of paper if necessary)

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Children/Adult Social Services

Name _____ of _____ contact: _____

Contact Number/s: _____

Email: _____

Action they are taking/details of advice: _____

South African Police Service (SAPS)

Name of contact: _____

Contact Number/s: _____

Email: _____

Action they are taking/details of advice:

Any relevant additional information

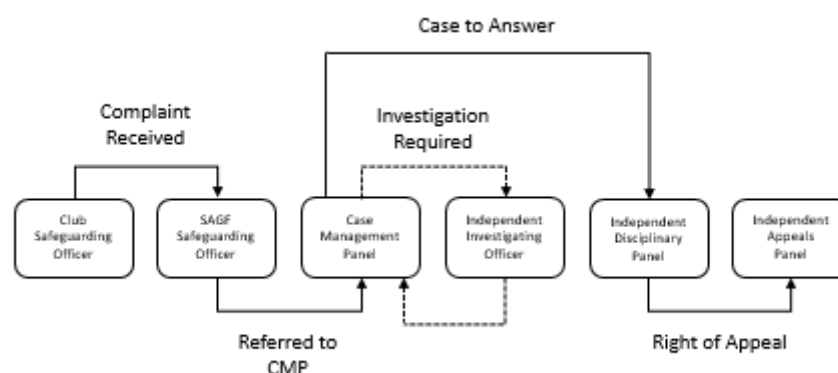
Signed _____

Date _____

South African Gymnastics Federation

Safeguarding

Key Role Descriptions



Club Safeguarding Officer

The role:

The person within a gymnastics club with primary responsibility for managing and reporting concerns about children & vulnerable adults and for putting into place procedures to safeguard children & vulnerable adults in the club.

Duties and responsibilities:

- Work with others in the gymnastics club to ensure a safe and friendly environment for all participants;
- Assist the gymnastics club to fulfil its responsibilities to safeguard children & vulnerable adults at club level;
- Assist the gymnastics club to implement its safeguarding plan at club level
- Act as the first point of contact for staff, volunteers, parents, gymnasts, children and young people to raise concerns about a participant's welfare or where poor practice, or harassment, or abuse are identified;
- Act as the first point of contact with the SAGF's Lead Safeguarding Officer(s);
- Implement the gymnastics club's reporting and recording procedures;
- Maintain contact details for local social workers and SAPS;
- Promote the gymnastic club's best-practice guidance and/or code of conduct within the club;
- Sit on the gymnastic club's management committee;
- Ensure those persons within the gymnastic club with regular contact with children or vulnerable adults are up to date in their vetting and have completed SAGF safeguarding training;
- Ensure appropriate confidentiality is maintained;
- Promote anti-discriminatory practice.

Skills & abilities required:

- An empathy for and person centred approach to working with children and vulnerable adults;
- Basic administration and computer skills;
- Basic advice and support-provision skills;
- Communication skills, including use of social media;
- Ability to maintain records;
- Ability to provide information about local resources;
- Ability to promote the gymnastics club and SAGF's policies, procedures and resources.

Knowledge Required:

- Gymnastics club's role and responsibilities to safeguard the welfare of children and vulnerable adults;
- Boundaries of the role of club safeguarding officer;
- Basic knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of statutory agencies (Department of Social Development, social services providers, and the SAPS);
- Local arrangements for managing safeguarding children & vulnerable adults and reporting procedures;
- Poor practice, harassment and abuse – behaviour that is harmful to children & vulnerable adults.
- Gymnastic club and SAGF policies and procedures relating to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults;
- Core values and principles underpinning practice;
- Awareness of equality issues and protecting children & vulnerable adults from harassment and abuse;
- Basic knowledge of legislation, guidance and national frameworks for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults;
- How adults groom children or vulnerable adults to harass, abuse or exploit.

Provincial or District Safeguarding Officer

The role:

The person within a provincial or district association of the SAGF with primary responsibility for managing and reporting concerns about children & vulnerable adults and for ensuring clubs and events held in their province or district put into place procedures to safeguard children & vulnerable adults.

Duties and responsibilities

- Work with others in the province or district to ensure a safe and friendly environment for all participants;
- Assist gymnastics club and events to fulfil their responsibility to safeguard children & vulnerable adults
- Ensure all clubs and events in their province or district have in place a safeguarding policy

and a safeguarding officer;

- Act as the first point of contact for clubs or events staff, requiring advice on safeguarding policies and procedures;
- Assist the SAGF's Lead Safeguarding Officer(s) to promote safeguarding in the province or district;
- Promote the gymnastic club's best-practice guidance and/or code of conduct within the club;
- Sit on the provincial or district management committee;
- Where they receive a complaint or concern regarding safeguarding report this to the SAGF National Safeguarding Officer;
- Monitor the implementation of the SAGF safeguarding policies and procedures at provincial and district level;
- Ensure appropriate confidentiality is maintained;
- Promote anti-discriminatory practice.

Skills and abilities:

- An empathy for and person centred approach to working with children and vulnerable adults;
- Basic administration and computer skills;
- Basic advice and support-provision skills;
- Communication skills, including use of social media;
- Ability to maintain records;
- Ability to provide information about local, district, provincial and national resources;
- Ability to promote the SAGF's policies, procedures and resources.

Knowledge Required:

- Provincial or District association's role and responsibilities to safeguard the welfare of children and vulnerable adults;
- Boundaries of the role of provincial and district safeguarding officer;
- Basic knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of statutory agencies (Department of Social Development, social services providers, and the SAPS);
- Provincial or district arrangements for managing safeguarding children & vulnerable adults and reporting procedures;
- Poor practice, harassment and abuse – behaviour that is harmful to children & vulnerable adults.
- SAGF policies and procedures relating to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults;
- Core values and principles underpinning practice;
- Awareness of equality issues and protecting children & vulnerable adults from harassment and abuse;
- Basic knowledge of legislation, guidance and national frameworks for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults;
- How adults groom children or vulnerable adults to harass, abuse or exploit.

SAGF Lead Safeguarding Officer

The role:

The designated person(s) within the SAGF with primary responsibility for managing and reporting concerns about children & vulnerable adults and for putting into place procedures to safeguard children & vulnerable adults in the SAGF, including supporting club safeguarding officers, where relevant.

Duties and responsibilities:

- Working with others within the SAGF to create a safe and friendly environment for all who participate in the sport of gymnastics;
- Play a lead role in developing and establishing the SAGF's approach to safeguarding children & vulnerable adults considered a key role within the organisation;
- Manage concerns of poor practice, harassment or abuse that are reported to the SAGF including the records system;
- Manage referrals to social services and the SAPS;
- Central point of contact within SAGF on safeguarding for both internal or external persons or organisations;
- Represent the SAGF at external meetings related to safeguarding;
- Coordinate the dissemination of the SAGF's safeguarding policy, procedures and resources throughout the organisation;
- Provide advice and support to club safeguarding officers and support gymnastics clubs in their recruitment, selection and training of club safeguarding officers;
- Advise on the SAGF's safeguarding training needs, development of its training strategy, and provide training where appropriate;
- Play a lead role in maintaining and reviewing the organisation's implementation plan for safeguarding and protecting children & vulnerable adults;
- Ensure safeguarding standards are met and maintained;
- Keep own knowledge and skills up-to-date.

Skills & abilities required:

- An approach that is focused on the needs of children & vulnerable adults;
- Administration and systems (records) management skills;
- Ability to promote and demonstrate anti-discriminatory practice;
- Advice and support-provision skills at all levels within the SAGF structure;
- Communication skills;
- Ability to develop and produce national level guidance and resource;
- Influencing skills;
- Ability to work with conflict and emotionally distressing matters;

Also recommended:

- Ability to deliver core training through different levels within the organisation

Knowledge required:

- Role and responsibilities of statutory agencies, including social services and SAPS;
- Planning processes for dealing with enquiries and investigations related to safeguarding children & vulnerable adults;

- Behaviour that is harmful to children & vulnerable adults, thresholds of poor practice in the sport and abusive behaviour;
- SAGF's roles and responsibilities
- Boundaries of the lead safeguarding officer role;
- SAGF's policy and procedures related to safeguarding children & vulnerable adults;
- Core values and principles of working with children or vulnerable adults;
- Equality issues and safeguarding;
- How abusers target and groom sports organisations in order to abuse children or vulnerable adults;
- Best practice in safeguarding;
- Legislation, government guidance and national frameworks for safeguarding children & vulnerable adults;
- How adults groom children or vulnerable adults for abuse.

Case Management Group

The role:

The role of the Case Management Group is to support the SAGF Lead Safeguarding Officer to manage complaints or reported concerns with regards to possible harassment, abuse of participants in gymnastics or exposure to poor practice.

Duties & responsibilities:

1. To ratify any actions already taken by SAGF Lead Safeguarding Officer.
2. To initially assess and agree immediate response (does there appear to be a case to answer).
3. To manage the SAGF's initial response to reported concerns about the welfare or harassment, abuse or exposure to poor practice of children or vulnerable adults. This includes deciding whether to:
 - i. proceed with an internal investigation;
 - ii. resolve the matter informally;
 - iii. dismiss the complaint as unfounded or as insufficiently serious to require any action by SAGF.
4. To consider relevant evidence collated in respect of complaints in reports prepared by appointed investigators and determine whether:
 - i. the matter is referred to an Independent Disciplinary Panel for consideration;
 - ii. further investigations are required;
 - iii. a risk assessment needs to be completed;
 - iv. instructions, advice or guidance should be provided to the relevant parties; and/or no further action is taken.
5. To consider the need for a temporary/interim suspension order.
6. To monitor the progress of cases and report to the SAGF management or board on issues arising from cases and trends that require management action.
7. To identify/communicate learning from cases and make recommendations to the SAGF management or board.

Membership

Membership of the Case Management Group is comprised of a relatively small number of individuals with identified and relevant skills, knowledge experience and/or status within the organisation. The group should include individuals with a legal background, safeguarding expertise and an understanding of the sport.

Members of the Case Management Group will be appointed by the Senior Officer with overall responsibility for Safeguarding and Equity within the SAGF with advice from the SAGF Lead Safeguarding Officer.

Skills and abilities:

It is essential that the collective experience of the Case Management Group includes:

- operational experience and knowledge of multi-agency safeguarding;
- detailed knowledge of the legislation and guidance relating to safeguarding issues;
- excellent communication and inter-personal skills, and to be able to relate to professionals within the statutory agencies and to members and officials of a gymnastics club;
- an understanding of anti-discriminatory practice.

Case Management

When a safeguarding complaint or concern arises three members of the Case Management Group will form a panel to consider the case.

The panel will be chaired by someone with a legal background and will include two other member of the Case Management Group.

All safeguarding matters must be regarded as highly confidential and not for disclosure outside of the Case Management Group unless so agreed.

Members of the Case Management Group have an overriding obligation to protect children or adults with mental disability at risk of harm and may therefore share information as appropriate with third parties.

Should any member of the Case Management Group discover they are connected, or have an interest in, any referral case which would disqualify them from participating in any matters relating to that particular case, they must recuse themselves from the panel.

The Case Management Group will operate independently of the SAGF's Management Board.

The Case Management Group may meet in person or by way of telephone/video conferencing if necessary.

Case management principles:

1. Any issue arises in relation to the protection, safeguarding or welfare of children or vulnerable adults shall be the paramount consideration.
2. Any investigation or inquiry is to proceed upon the basis that the primary consideration will be a

determination of the risk posed to children and or vulnerable adults.

3. Unless the determination finds no, or an insignificant, risk, effective steps must be taken to manage or reduce the risk.
4. Individuals about whom there are concerns should be treated fairly and honestly and should be provided with support throughout the process.
5. Any investigation must be sensitive to the welfare of the children and vulnerable adults during its processes and, at all times, hold central the need to keep the interests of children and vulnerable adults as paramount.
6. Where issues other than risk to children and vulnerable adults are under consideration in any investigation such issues must remain subordinate to the requirement to determine the risk posed to children and vulnerable adults.
7. The assessment of risk involves consideration of the actual or potential harm that an individual may pose to children or vulnerable adults in gymnastics.
8. The assessment of risk does not involve making a finding based upon either the criminal or civil standards of proof (i.e. certainty or “the balance of probabilities”). The assessment requires a defensible decision that a risk does or does not exist and, where it does, a determination of the extent of such risk.
9. Save in exceptional cases, the assessment will not require the production of a formal risk assessment report.
10. The steps taken to address any perceived risk to children or vulnerable adults must have regard to the nature and extent of the risk as well as to any particular and relevant aspects of gymnastics and, in the light of this, must seek to ensure that such steps will be effective.
11. In cases where the perceived risk is low, and no criminal or disciplinary charge could be made out, it may be nonetheless necessary to impose stringent restrictions on an individual or remove his/her ability to participate in the sport of gymnastics.

Independent Investigation Officer

The role:

To conduct an investigation gathering and assessing available evidence and information following a decision made by the SAGF’s Case Management Panel that an investigation is required as part of its safeguarding case management process.

Knowledge:

- How to gather evidence and information to assist in establishing the facts alleged;
- How to identify witnesses and interview them in order to obtain facts, information and professional opinion pertaining to the case;
- Best practice in interviewing witnesses (particularly children or vulnerable adults) and taking and recording statements;
- A clear understanding of the need to ensure that all material (e.g. information, records, identity of potential witnesses) is collected and retained;
- An understanding of what information/evidence an investigator can obtain;
- Factors that might impact upon the investigation and the impact these might have (e.g. vulnerability of witnesses, language, culture etc.);
- The support available for witnesses and for the person/s accused;
- Familiarity with the preparation of an investigation report following the conclusion of the

investigation;

- Knowledge of how statutory investigations are conducted and how sports investigations may link in with these;
- Familiarity with sports organisations disciplinary processes and the purpose of written standards of expected performance and conduct;
- Clarity about the parameters/limits of investigation.

Skills:

- Ability to plan an investigation within appropriate timescales;
- Ability to assess and analyse a variety of evidence both written and in other forms;
- Ability to work independently but within the context of organisational expectation;
- Ability to record decisions and the reasons behind them;
- Ability to work alongside other professionals including the police and social workers;
- Ability to give evidence to disciplinary proceedings and appeals;
- Ability to signpost support for victims/witnesses if a need is identified in conjunction with the SAGF;
- Ability to recognise that an investigation may need to be referred on to the police.

South African Gymnastics Federation

Safeguarding Risk Assessment

Potential risk of harm (harassment, abuse or poor practice) to child or vulnerable adult.	Likelihood of harm occurring – Low/Medium/High	Steps to mitigate identified risk.	Responsibility	Further action
Club & Coaching Practice				
Lack of coaching qualifications.	MED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All SAGF Coaches to be vetted in line with SAGF Safe Recruitment Policy. Clubs to confirm qualifications of coaches. 	SAGF. Affiliated Clubs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review annually progress in implementing the Safe Recruitment Policy. Review annually coach education needs.
Supervision issues	LOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement SAGF Safeguarding Policy (Supervision). 	SAGF. Affiliated Clubs. Coaches.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review annually or following a significant event.
Unauthorised photography & recording activities	MED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement Photography and Use of Images guidelines contained in SAGF Safeguarding Policy. 	SAGF. Affiliated Clubs. Coaches.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review annually or following a significant event.
Behavioural Issues	MED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply SAGF Code of Conduct. Ensure all persons with regular 	SAGF. Affiliated Clubs. Coaches.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review annually or following a significant event.

		<p>contact with children and vulnerable adults receive SAGF Safeguarding Training.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Apply Complaints & Disciplinary procedures. 		
Lack of gender balance amongst coaches.	MED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Address through Coach education policy & programme. ▪ Implement guidelines on supervision in SAGF Safeguarding Policy. 	SAGF. Affiliated Clubs. Coaches.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review annually or following a significant event.
No guidance for travelling and away trips.	HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement guidelines in SAGF Safeguarding Policy. ▪ Develop a Safe Travel/Away Trip Guide. ▪ Appoint a safeguarding officer for all travel/away trips. ▪ Ensure chaperones have received SAGF Safeguarding Training. 	SAGF. Affiliated Clubs. Coaches. Chaperones. Officials. Judges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review annually or following a significant event.

Lack of adherence to procedures in Safeguarding policy (i.e. good coaching practice, photography, travel, etc.)	MED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SAGF audit clubs with regard to Club Safeguarding Policies & Appointment of Safeguarding Officers. ▪ SAGF to train & support Club Safeguarding Officers to implement safeguarding best practice in clubs & at events. ▪ Ensure all complaints are responded to & where necessary disciplinary procedures are followed. 	SAGF. Affiliated Clubs. Coaches.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review annually or following a significant event.
Reporting Concerns				
Lack of knowledge of organisational and statutory reporting procedures.	HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information on reporting concerns to be published on SAGF & Club websites and to easily accessed. ▪ All persons in gymnastics with regular contact with children or 	SAGF. Affiliated Clubs. Event Organisers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SAGF Board to receive progress at regular meetings. ▪ Review reporting procedures annually or following a significant event.

		vulnerable adults to receive SAGF safeguarding training.		
Complaints not being dealt with seriously.	MED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SAGF & Club Safeguarding Policies & Procedures signed of at Board or equivalent level. ▪ Appointment of SAGF and Club Safeguarding Officers. ▪ All complaints to be reported to SAGF and recorded. 	SAGF. Affiliated Clubs. Safeguarding Officers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review complaints received and procedures annually. ▪ Investigate any complaint that concerns raised were not properly dealt with.
No Safeguarding Officer appointed.	MED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SAGF to require Club Safeguarding Officer details as part of annual registration process. ▪ Clubs to publish name and contact details of their Safeguarding Officer to their members. 	SAGF. Affiliated Clubs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain and support appointment of Club Safeguarding Officers. ▪ Ensure all Safeguarding Officers can access training annually.
Concerns of harassment, abuse or	MED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure all children & vulnerable adults in affiliated clubs 	SAGF. Affiliated Clubs. Safeguarding Officers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SAGF to investigate any reported failures in reporting

poor practice not reported.		<p>are aware of their rights, acceptable versus unacceptable behaviour & how to report concerns.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clubs to communicate safeguarding information to all members. 		<p>harassment, abuse or poor practice & make recommendations for improvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clubs to communicate annually with club members on safeguarding matters.
Disciplinary Process				
Lack of awareness of the disciplinary process.	LOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SAGF & Clubs to ensure members are aware of SAGF Safeguarding Policy & Procedures including the Code of Conduct & Disciplinary Procedures. SAGF to provide regular training for Club Safeguarding Officers. 	SAGF. Affiliated Clubs. Safeguarding Officers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SAGF to provide ongoing information and support to clubs on safeguarding matters.
Facilities				
Unauthorised access to areas designated for children or vulnerable adults only.	HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow guidelines in the SAGF Safeguarding Policy & Procedures. 	SAGF. Affiliated Clubs. Event Organisers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review safeguarding policy and procedures annually or after a significant event.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create & communicate club specific guidelines for restricted areas. ▪ Create & communicate event specific guidelines for restricted areas. 		
Photography, filming or recording in prohibited areas.	MED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Follow guidelines in the SAGF Safeguarding Policy & Procedures. ▪ Create & communicate club specific guidelines for photography, filming & recording. ▪ Create & communicate event specific guidelines for photography, filming & recording. 	SAGF. Affiliated Clubs. Event Organisers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review safeguarding policy and procedures annually or after a significant event.
Missing or found child on site.	LOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Follow guidelines in the SAGF Safeguarding Policy & Procedures. ▪ Create club specific guidelines for such incidents 	Affiliated Clubs Event Organisers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review safeguarding policy and procedures annually or after a significant event.

		<p>including clear lost child protocols clarity on who is the lead in case of a lost child.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create event specific guidelines for such incidents including clear lost child protocols clarity on who is the lead in case of a lost or found child. 		
Children sharing facilities with adults e.g. dressing room, showers etc.	HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Follow guidelines in the SAGF Safeguarding Policy & Procedures. ▪ Create club specific guidelines for use of changing facilities. ▪ Create event/venue specific guidelines for use of changing facilities. 	Affiliated Clubs Event Organisers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review safeguarding policy and procedures annually or after a significant event.
Recruitment				
Recruitment of inappropriate people into roles in the sport.	HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All potential and existing employees (staff and volunteers) must complete the 	SAGF Affiliated Clubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review Safe Recruitment policy annually in particular the Registrar of the

		SAGF's safeguarding self-declaration form, must submit a police clearance certificate and must provide the names of two referees who must provide a reference using the SAGF's employee reference form.		Sexual Offenses Register's capacity to respond to requests for checks.
Lack of clarity on roles	MED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all persons with a responsibility for safeguarding in gymnastics is clear about their roles including Board/Committee Members, Club Owners, Safeguarding Officers. 	SAGF. Affiliated Clubs. Safeguarding Officers	Review Annually.
Unqualified or untrained people in role.	HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all persons with regular contact with children or vulnerable adults to undertake SAGF Safeguarding Training. 	SAGF. Affiliated Clubs.	Review Annually.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all coaches working in gymnastics to hold a recognised coaching qualification. 		
Communication and Use of Social Media				
Lack of awareness of 'risk of harm' with members and visitors.	HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make Safeguarding Policies & Code of Conduct easily accessible. Display notices at clubs in respect of safeguarding matters. Provide training and information to club members and parents/carers on safeguarding matters. 	SAGF & Affiliated Clubs.	Review Annually.
No communication of Child Safeguarding Statement or Code of Behaviour to members or visitors.	HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make Safeguarding Policies & Code of Conduct easily accessible. Display notices at clubs in respect of safeguarding matters. 	SAGF. Affiliated Clubs.	Review Annually.

Unauthorised photography & recording of activities	HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement SAGF guidelines at all venues where gymnastics activity takes place. ▪ Display notices regarding photography and recording of activities at clubs. 	SAGF & Affiliated Clubs. Event Organisers.	Review Annually.
Inappropriate use of social media and communications by under 18's	HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SAGF develop guidelines for children on the safe use of social media. ▪ Affiliated clubs to provide information and training to members on safe use of social media. 	SAGF. Affiliated Clubs.	Review Annually.
General Risk of Harassment, Abuse or Poor Practice				
Harassment, Abuse or Poor Practice not being recognised.	HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure all persons working with children or vulnerable adults receive SAGF Safeguarding Training. 	SAGF. Affiliated Clubs. Safeguarding Officers.	<i>Review annually or after a significant event.</i>
Harm caused by Child, Coach, Volunteer, Official, Office Holder, Parent/Care	HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement SAGF Safeguarding policy and procedures. 	SAGF. Affiliated Clubs. Safeguarding Officers.	Review annually or after a significant event.

Giver/Member of Public to a child or vulnerable adult.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure all Affiliated Clubs have a Safeguarding Policy. ▪ Make SAGF Safeguarding Training widely available & ensure all person with regular contact with children & vulnerable adults undertake training. 		
General behavioural issues	MED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publish SAGF Code of Conduct & Disciplinary Procedures. ▪ Require persons with regular contact with children & vulnerable adults to sign code of conduct or make it a condition of membership. ▪ SAGF & Affiliated clubs to follow complaints and disciplinary procedures in respects of any 	SAGF. Affiliated Clubs. Safeguarding Officers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review Code of Conduct, Reporting and Disciplinary procedures annually or following a significant event.

		concerns raised regarding conduct.		
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Explanation of terms used:

- **Potential risk of harm (harassment, abuse or poor practice) to child or vulnerable adult** – these are identified risks of harm to children and vulnerable adults whilst accessing gymnastics activities at a Club/District/Provincial/National Level.
- **Likelihood of harm happening** – the likelihood of the risk occurring at a Club/District/Provincial/National Level measured by as Low, Medium or High.
- **Steps to mitigate identified risk.** – indication of the policy, procedures or actions required to alleviate the risk.
- **Responsibility** – indication of where the responsibility for alleviating the risk lies.
- **Further action** - indicates further action that might be necessary to alleviate any risk on an ongoing basis.

This Risk Assessment document has been discussed and completed by the South African Gymnastics Federation on____/____/20

Signed:

Signed:

Name:

Name:

Role: Chairman/Chief Executive Officer

Role: SAGF Safeguarding Officer

Date:

Date: