



UTS Northern Suburbs Athletics Club Incorporated

Member Protection Policy

Contents:

1	General.....	1
2	Application of policy	2
3	Protection of children and young people	3
4	Other important, related aspects of this policy	6
5	Complaints involving member protection	7
6	Member Protection Information Officer.....	10
7	Glossary	10
8	Policy Management.....	11
9	Version	11

1 General

1.1 Introduction

UTS Northern Suburbs Athletics Club, Incorporated. (**Club**) is a volunteer-based, not for profit community sports Club whose objects are set out in its Constitution.

The Club has extensive involvement with athletes of all ages and diversity. The Club is pleased to work closely with Northern Suburbs Little Athletics and with a number of high schools. The Club actively supports an extensive number of junior athletes and works with many talented coaches and officials.

The Club recognises the importance of the supporting structure for all members which includes a policy for protecting the wellbeing of members. Inclusion, engagement, camaraderie and community spirit are all highly valued principles at our Club.

The Club has developed this member protection policy having regard to expectations of athletics and leading sporting organisations relevant to the Club, the Club's objectives, community standards and expectations and the law applicable to the Club.

While this document sets out the Club's current member protection policy, the Club (through its Committee) always has full discretion to change it or to interpret it in any particular case in view of all the relevant circumstances. The Club will also apply this policy in light of other policies, such as the procedural fairness policy. The Club will not adopt or implement an overly rigid, inflexible or legalistic approach if that would not help the Club better protect its members.

Please read all of this policy. If you have any queries about the policy, please contact the Club secretary or the Member Protection Information Officer (on the Club's website).

1.2 Purposes of policy

The main objective of our Member Protection Policy (**policy**) is to maintain responsible behaviour towards members of the Club.

The policy should also assist in making decisions by participants in the Club on ethical principles.

It outlines our commitment to a person's right to be treated with respect and dignity, and to be safe and protected from abuse.

It also covers our approach to the care and protection of children and young people participating in our Club's activities.

2 Application of policy

2.1 Persons affected

Our policy applies to everyone involved in the Club or using its amenities.

This includes committee members, administrators, coaches, officials, athletes, visitors (including parents, guardians and teachers) and spectators. This policy applies whether or not the person is a member of the Club.

2.2 Extent of application of policy

Our policy applies to all aspects of Club activities.

For example, without limitation, it can apply to decisions relating to membership applications or entitlement, athlete selection (e.g. team selection), breaches of any of our codes of behaviour, behaviour that occurs at training, in the Club rooms, at social events organised or sanctioned by the Club (or our sport), and at competitions away from Sydney including national competitions and Australian University Games. The policy applies whether or not there is any official or formal Club team or management.

It covers private behaviour where that behaviour brings (or is reasonably likely to bring) our Club or sport into disrepute or there is suspicion of harm towards a child or young person.

In the interests of member protection, there is no fixed limit to how the Club will apply this policy.

It may be applied on its own or together with another Club policy. For example, the Club policy on procedural fairness may be applied on its own or together with this policy on member protection.

2.3 Club responsibilities

We will:

- implement and comply with our policy;
- promote our policy to everyone involved in our Club;
- promote and model appropriate standards of behaviour at all times;
- respond to breaches or complaints made under our policy promptly, fairly, and confidentially;
- review this policy every 12-18 months; and
- refer any reasonable suspicion of a serious issue of misconduct under laws to regulatory authorities; and
- refer any reasonable suspicion of a serious issue of misconduct under codes of conduct adopted or supported by Athletics Australia or Athletics NSW to the relevant sporting body.

Serious issues include unlawful behaviour that involves or could lead to significant harm and includes criminal behaviour (e.g. physical assault, sexual assault, child abuse). Disclosure of personal or confidential information or reasonable suspicions under this policy is an essential component of maintaining a culture of member protection within the Club, in the sporting community in which the Club operates and within the local communities which the Club operates.

2.4 Individual responsibilities

Everyone associated with our Club must:

- comply with the standards of behaviour outlined in our codes from time to time;
- treat others with respect;
- always place the safety and welfare of children and young people above other considerations;
- be responsible and accountable for their behaviour; and
- follow the principles and guidelines in this policy if they wish to make a complaint or report a concern about possible child abuse, discrimination, harassment or other inappropriate behaviour towards members.

3 Protection of children and young people

3.1 Child and young people protection

The Club is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people who are involved in our activities.

(Children and young people (or “youth”) are concepts adopted in some legislation applying to the Club. We will broadly interpret these terms in the best interests of member protection.)

We support the rights of the child and the young person and will act without hesitation to ensure a child safe environment is maintained at all times.

We also support the rights and wellbeing of our Committee members, other officeholders, other members and volunteers and encourage their active participation in building and maintaining a secure environment for all participants.

The Club acknowledges that our Committee members, other officeholders, other members and volunteers provide a valuable contribution to the positive experiences of children and young people involved in our sport. The Club aims to continue this and to take measures to protect the safety and welfare of children and young people participating in our sport by the following specific measures:

Identify and analyse risk of harm

The Club will develop and implement a risk management strategy which includes a review of existing child protection practices, to determine how child-safe and child-friendly the organisation is and to determine what additional strategies are required to minimise and prevent risk of harm to children because of the action of an employee, volunteer or another person.

Develop codes of conduct for adults, children and young people

The Club will ensure that the organisation has codes of conduct that specify standards of conduct and care when dealing and interacting with children, particularly those in the organisation's care.

The organisation will also implement a code of conduct to address appropriate behaviour among children and young people.

The code of conduct will set out professional boundaries, ethical behaviour and unacceptable behaviour.

Choose suitable employees and volunteers

The Club will ensure that the organisation takes all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children (in prescribed positions).

This may be achieved using a range of screening measures. Such measures will aim to minimise the likelihood of engaging (or retaining) people who are unsuitable to work with children.

The Club will ensure that working with children checks/criminal history assessments are conducted for employees and volunteers working with children, where an assessment is required by law.

If a criminal history report is obtained as part of their screening process, the Club will ensure that the criminal history information is dealt with in accordance with relevant State requirements.

Support, train, supervise and enhance performance

The Club will ensure that volunteers and employees who work with children or their records have ongoing supervision, support and training such that their performance is developed and enhanced to promote the establishment and maintenance of a child-safe environment.

Empower and promote the participation of children in decision-making and service development

The Club will promote the involvement and participation of children and young people in developing and maintaining child-safe environments.

Report and respond appropriately to suspected abuse and neglect

The Club will ensure that volunteers and employees are able to identify and to respond to children at risk of harm.

The Club will make all volunteers and employees aware of their responsibilities under State laws if they have suspicion on reasonable grounds that a child has been or is being abused or neglected.

In addition to any legal obligation, if any person feels another person or organisation who is subject to this policy is acting inappropriately towards a child or young person or is breaching a code of practice set out they may make an internal complaint. Please refer to our complaints procedure outlined in Section 5 of this policy. This will explain what to do about the behaviour and how the Club will deal with the problem.

3.2 Supervision

Members under the age of 18 must be supervised at all times by a responsible adult.

Our Club will provide a level of supervision adequate and relative to the members' age, maturity, capabilities, level of experience, nature of activity and nature of venue.

If a member finds a member under the age of 18 is unsupervised having regard to all of the circumstances, then they should assume responsibility for the member's safety until the parent/guardian or supervisor can be found.

Parents must turn up on time to collect their child for reasons of courtesy and safety. If it appears that a member will be left alone at the end of a training session with just one child, they should ask another member to stay until the child is collected.

3.3 Transportation

Parents/guardians are responsible for transporting their children to and from Club activities (e.g., training and meets).

If our Club makes arrangements for the transportation of children (e.g. for away or overnight trips), we will conduct a risk assessment that includes ensuring vehicles are adequately insured, the driver has a current and appropriate licence for the vehicle being used and appropriate safety measures are available (e.g., fitted working seatbelts).

3.4 Taking and Using Images of Children

Digital images and social media are prolific in our society. Athletics shares this experience.

Unfortunately, images of children can be used inappropriately or illegally.

To manage this risk, the Club requires that members, wherever possible, obtain permission from a child's parent/guardian before taking an image of a child that is not their own and ensure that the parent knows the way the image will be used.

We also require the privacy of others to be respected and disallow the use of camera phones, videos, and cameras inside changing areas, showers and toilets.

If the Club uses an image of a child without express consent of the parent or guardian of the child or the context is not a public event (such as but not limited to a major championship), it will avoid naming or identifying the child or it will, wherever possible, avoid using both the first name and surname.

We will not display personal information such as residential address, email address or telephone numbers without gaining consent from the parent/guardian.

We will not display information about hobbies, likes/dislikes, school, etc. since this information can be used as grooming tools by paedophiles or other persons.

We will only use appropriate images of a child, relevant to our sport and ensure that the child is suitably clothed in a manner that promotes the sport, displays its successes and favourable aspects.

4 Other important, related aspects of this policy

4.1 Integrated policy

Member protection is a broad concern which also covers a number of related specific concerns and risks.

In earlier times organisations might have had separate policies, partly driven by legislation on specific issues. This member protection policy covers all concerns, generally and in some cases specifically, as covered by this Section 4.

Although it is important to address specific issues and risks, the Club will apply the entire member protection policy broadly and in an integrated way with the aim of best protecting members.

4.2 Anti-harassment, Discrimination, and Bullying

Our Club opposes all forms of harassment, discrimination and bullying.

This includes treating or proposing to treat someone less favourably because of a particular characteristic; imposing or intending to impose an unreasonable requirement, condition or practice which has an unequal or disproportionate effect on people with a particular characteristic; or any behaviour that is offensive, abusive, belittling, intimidating or threatening – whether this is face-to-face, indirectly or via social media or communication technologies such as mobile phone and computers.

Some forms of harassment, discrimination and bullying are against the law and are based on particular characteristics such as age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy, political or religious beliefs, race, and marital status.

Our Club takes all claims of harassment, discrimination, bullying and cyber bullying seriously. We encourage anyone who believes they have been harassed, discriminated against or bullied to raise the issue with the Club (see Section 5).

4.3 Inclusive practices

Our Club is welcoming and we will seek to include members from all areas of our community.

People with a disability

If possible we will include people with a disability in our Club activities, including teams.

We will make reasonable adaptations (e.g. modifications to equipment and rules) to enable participation. If we are not in a position to control adaptations, we will make reasonable efforts to request adaptations.

People from diverse cultures

We will support and respect people from diverse cultures and religions to participate in our Club and if possible will accommodate requests for flexibility (e.g. modifications to uniforms).

Sexual and Gender Identity

All people, regardless of their sexuality, are welcome at our Club.

We strive to provide a safe environment for participation and will take action over any homophobic behaviour.

From time to time sporting organisations that influence the Club, such as IAAF, may adopt policies that affect competition and apply to Club activities or competitions in which the Club members participate. We will strive to apply those external policies as reasonably and fairly as possible in the best interests of member protection.

Pregnancy

Pregnant women should be aware that their own health and wellbeing, and that of their unborn children, should be of utmost importance in their decision making about the way they participate in our sport.

The Club is not in a position to make or enforce a conclusive assessment of each circumstance. The Club is primarily responsible for maintaining a safe and supportive environment which, in the case of pregnancy of a member, is also primarily the responsibility of the member.

We recommend pregnant women to consult with their medical advisers, make themselves aware of the facts about pregnancy in sport, and ensure that they make informed decisions about participation.

5 Complaints involving member protection

5.1 Relationship to Club's other policies and procedures

The Club has other policies specifically for managing disputes (including grievances), procedural fairness, confidentiality and discipline.

Those other policies will generally apply to complaints that could involve member protection.

Complaints involving member protection could range from serious issues that need reporting to a regulatory authority to lesser complaints of breaches of codes of conduct. No policy can rigidly fix how each possible complaint should be

managed. In the best interests of protecting members and also managing a range of complaints with different degrees of seriousness, the Club will assess complaints and issues with a view to the best procedure for the circumstances.

This flexibility should not be used to challenge the assessment by the Club. Instead, it should be respected as the best policy for giving priority to member protection yet also allow a measure of proportionality to the particular issue or risk.

5.2 General principles on managing complaints under this policy

Our Club takes all complaints about on and off-field behaviour seriously.

Our Club will handle complaints based on the principles set out in the Club's procedural fairness policy. In brief, without changing the separate procedural fairness policy:

- Both the person making the complaint (complainant) and the person the complaint is against (respondent) will be given full details of what is being said against them and have the opportunity to respond (give their side of the story) unless the Club assesses that the complaint is irrelevant to the Club or is frivolous or vexatious or, alternatively, the matter complained of is a serious issue that ought to be reported to a regulatory authority.
- Irrelevant matters will not be taken into account.
- Decisions will be unbiased and fair in all of the circumstances, including all information reasonably obtained in the circumstances.
- Any penalties imposed will be fair and reasonable.
- If the complaint relates to suspected child abuse, sexual assault or other criminal activity, then our Club will report the behaviour to the police or relevant government authority.
- The Club may also report or refer the incident to Athletics NSW (or both).

5.3 Member Protection Complaint Management Procedure

When a complaint is received by our Club, the person receiving the complaint (e.g., Secretary or Member Protection Information Officer) will:

- listen carefully and ask questions to understand the nature and extent of the problem;
- ask what the complainant would like to happen;
- explain the different options available to help resolve the problem;
- take notes; and
- maintain confidentiality proportionate to the complaint but not necessarily anonymity.

Once the complainant decides on their preferred option for resolution, the Club will assist, if appropriate and necessary, with the resolution process. This may involve:

- supporting the person complaining to talk to the person being complained about;

- bringing all the people involved in the complaint together to talk objectively through the problem (this could include external mediation);
- gathering more information (e.g. from other people that may have seen the behaviour);
- seeking advice from our district, regional, state or national body or from an external agency (e.g. State Department of Sport or anti-discrimination agency) or any of them;
- referring the complaint to Athletics NSW;
- referring the complainant to an external agency such as a community mediation centre, police, or anti-discrimination agency; or
- any combination or sequence of any of the above.

In situations where a complaint is referred to Athletics NSW and an investigation is conducted, the Club will:

- co-operate fully;
- ensure the complainant and respondent are not victimised;
- if applicable, ensure that the complainant is not placed in an unsupervised situation with the respondent(s); and
- act on Athletics NSW's recommendations.

At any stage of the process, a person can seek advice from or lodge a complaint with an anti-discrimination commission or other external agency.

5.4 Disciplinary Measures

Our Club will take disciplinary action against anyone found to have breached our policy or a code of conduct or made allegations which reasonably appear to be false, malicious, frivolous or vexatious.

Any disciplinary measure imposed under our policy must:

- be applied consistent with any contractual and employment rules and requirements;
- be fair and reasonable; and
- be based on the evidence and information presented and the seriousness of the breach.

Possible measures that may be taken under our discipline policy include but are not limited to:

- resolving it with an oral or written apology;
- counselling to address behaviour;
- withdrawal of any awards, placings, records, achievements bestowed in any tournaments, activities or events held or sanctioned by our Club;
- suspension or termination of membership, participation or engagement in a role or activity;

- de-registration of accreditation for a period of time or permanently; or
- any other form of discipline that our Club considers to be reasonable and appropriate.

5.5 Appeal from disciplinary measures

Please refer to our separate policies on procedural fairness and on discipline.

6 Member Protection Information Officer

6.1 Role of MPIO

The Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO) can play a key role in ensuring our sport is safe, fair and inclusive.

MPIOs do this through ensuring Club members and administrators know their rights and responsibilities, and ensuring that policies that focus on member protection are being implemented.

6.2 Club appointment of MPIO

The Club will appoint and maintain the appointment of at least one MPIO from time to time.

6.3 Specific duties of MPIO

The MPIO will be specifically responsible for at least the following:

- Providing information about a person's rights, responsibilities and options to an individual making a complaint or raising a concern.
- Providing information and advice to Committee members and complaint handlers with regard to the Member Protection Policy and associated matters.

MPIOs generally perform an impartial role. They do not mediate or investigate complaints.

7 Glossary

Some expressions used in this document have the following wider meaning.

Expression	meaning
Athletics NSW	Athletics NSW Limited ABN 11 330 775 869
Club	UTS Northern Suburbs Athletic Club Incorporated (an incorporated association registered with the Office of Fair Trading, NSW, No. 023631156)
Committee	The Committee Members of the Club from time to time. This includes anyone acting with the delegated authority of the Club's Committee, such as a member of a sub-Committee (whether or not a Committee Member) or an individual person with delegated authority from the Committee as a whole.

Expression	meaning
IAAF	International Association of Athletics Federations
MPIO	Member Protection Information Officer

8 Policy Management

8.1 Club control

This is a non-binding policy. The Club's Committee may change this policy at any time, without giving reasons for that and without giving prior notice.

No-one is entitled to receive, or has any enforceable or reviewable right or interest in receiving, any right, financial assistance or other benefit from the Club, whether by this policy, any precedent of a Club decision or by representation from any person purporting to represent the Club.

The Club can make its decisions by its Committee or any sub-committee (which could be a single person) or a delegate (or two or more delegates).

The Club has absolute discretion when making any decision under this policy or to amend it or not to apply it.

To the extent permitted by law, neither the Club nor any Committee member will be liable in any way to anyone for any decision made under or in relation to this policy.

9 Version

The principal contact for the policy is the Club secretary.

Complaints about conduct covered by this policy should be made either to the MPIO or to the Club secretary.

Version history:

Date	Version	Comment
January 2015	Version 1.0	Mirrored policy adopted by Athletics NSW and template provided by Australian Sports Commission.
August 2016	Version 2.0	Reviewed, updated and integrated with other Club policies. No material change in substance of this policy.