

ATHLETICS FIJI

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY



2014

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. Introduction

Athletics Fiji is a national body that aims to promote, develop, enhance and protect athletics in Fiji and its ethical values. Athletics Fiji and its affiliates conduct a range of activities at National and grassroots level. These activities include:

- arranging, supporting and managing the attendance of participants of all ages at overseas and national competitions and at workshops and training events
- providing coaching and training through schools and intensive clinics
- providing outreach services to promote the inclusion of people in village communities and people with disabilities

2. Policy Statement

Athletics Fiji with its affiliates, Member Associations and Clubs is committed to the health, safety and well-being of all its members and is dedicated to providing a safe environment for participating in Athletics Fiji activities. Physical, emotional, psychological or sexual abuse or harassment of children will not be tolerated and are unacceptable to the principles and values of Athletics Fiji.

3. Purpose of policy

This Child Protection Policy commits all Athletics Fiji Members and prospective members responsible for Athletics Fiji activities, particularly those involving members under 18 years of age, to minimising risk to the children. All members, particularly age managers, coaches, officials, leaders, trainers and management personnel, have a responsibility to provide safeguards dedicated to the well-being of children.

4. Scope of Policy

This Policy applies to the following people:

- the Board and its Committees and sub-committees
- Coaches, trainers and development officers
- Technical officials
- Administrators
- Volunteers – local and international
- Parent helpers
- Community Members who help
- Peer/Youth Mentors
- Visiting athletes
- Consultants, contractors and subcontractors
- Partner organisations and sponsors

For the purposes of this document the word "child" will refer to a member or other person up to the age of 18 years.

5. Child Safe Recruitment and Screening Procedures

Athletics Fiji reserves the right to impose Police Checks on any of the above stated individuals. The purpose of a Police Check is to see whether the person has any previous relevant criminal convictions.

Fiji Athletics has a right not to engage any person we consider to pose an unacceptable risk to children.

The following child safe recruitment and screening procedures will apply to all staff and volunteers in contact with children:

- A criminal record check will be done on staff before employment. A Statutory Declaration will be signed by volunteers if a reliable criminal record check is not immediately available. The criminal record check and Statutory Declaration will be kept on file.
- At least 2 verbal referee checks will be conducted and documented. Referees will be asked about the applicant's suitability for the role to work with children and/or to have regular unsupervised contact with children.
- Applicant will be asked whether they have been charged with child exploitation offences and their response. A documented record will be kept of this discussion.

For applicants applying for a position that involves working with children, recruitment procedures must include questions about how they behave with children. For example:

- Have you worked/volunteered with children in a similar position before? What did you like about it? What did you find difficult?
- How have you handled children who did not want to participate in an activity?
- How would you handle children who were not listening to your instructions?
- How would you create a child safe and friendly space for children to play sport?

Employment contracts include provisions for Athletics Fiji to dismiss or discipline staff who breaches the Child Protection Code of Conduct.

6. Code of Conduct

Athletics Fiji expects all members, supporters, advisors and associates to abide by a Code of Conduct which upholds the principles and values of the organisation. At all times they have a responsibility for a duty of care to members of Athletics Fiji under the age of 18.

As an Athletics Fiji member you should meet the following requirements with regard to your conduct during any Athletics Fiji sanctioned activity.

- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of others.
- Be fair, considerate and honest in all dealings with others.
- Be professional in, and accept responsibility for, your actions.

Understand your responsibility if you breach, or are aware of any breaches of, the code of conduct:

- Refrain from any form of abuse of others.
- Refrain from any form of harassment towards others.
- Provide a safe environment for the conduct of the activity in accordance with relevant Athletics Fiji policy.
- Show concern and caution towards others who may be sick or injured.
- Be a positive role model.

Athletics Fiji Team Managers, Coaches, Officials, Administrators and Other in Positions of Responsibility must adopt risk minimisation measures to protect themselves from any misconceptions about their behaviour in performing their designated roles. They must realise that actions which are intended innocently by them may be misconstrued or misrepresented by others.

7. Behaviour towards Children

1. Do not encourage, or allow others to engage in any of the following:
 - getting dressed or undressed in front of children,
 - invading the privacy of children while showering or toileting,
 - photographing children while dressing, undressing, showering or toileting,
 - sleeping in closed quarters with children without a second adult present,
 - aggressive, physically distressing or sexually provocative activities,
 - sexually suggestive comments about or to a child,
 - inappropriate or intrusive touching of a child,
 - joking ridiculing, rejecting, isolating, or 'taking the micky' out of a child.
2. Leaders should maintain an open door policy when conducting briefings, meetings and assemblies of members. Invite all children, parents, friends and other leaders to participate, particularly when performing interviews, transporting children and conducting excursions.
3. Male and female adults, leaders or parents must accompany children when undertaking athletics' activities away from home, and especially overnight.
4. Treat all members with respect and dignity. Be mindful of your language, tone of voice and body language. Attack the problem not the person.
5. Do not tolerate abusive or inappropriate behaviour - deal with it immediately.
6. Protect children from pressure to participate.
7. Respect a child's privacy and expect them to respect yours.
8. Do not become involved in excessive attention-seeking behaviour, physically or sexually, by a child. Be mindful of the needs of children and redirect their attention to athletics.
9. Maintain your status as ROLE MODEL to children and other adults. Don't abuse your position.

10. Understand Athletics Fiji policies on child protection and grievances, and respect them.
11. Comply with all relevant Australian and local legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour
12. Immediately report concerns or allegations of child exploitation and abuse and policy non-compliance in accordance with appropriate procedures
13. Immediately disclose all charges, convictions and other outcomes of an offence, which occurred before or occurs during my association Athletics Fiji that relate to child exploitation and abuse.
14. When photographing or filming a child or using children's images for work-related purposes:
 - comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images
 - obtain informed consent from the child and parent or guardian of the child before photographing or filming a child
 - ensure photographs, films, videos and DVDs present children in a dignified and respectful manner
 - ensure identifying information about a child when sending images electronically or publishing images in any form. Reporting child abuse allegations and breaches of code of behaviour

The abuse of children by other members or by non-members is not acceptable and Athletics Fiji expects all incidents of such abuse to be reported immediately to a member of the Board of Athletics Fiji, who will contact the appropriate agency in Fiji. Definitions, types and indicators of abuse can be found in Attachment 1.

Where there is a complaint against an employee or volunteer, there may be three types of investigation.

1. **Criminal** in which case the police are immediately involved
2. **Child protection** in which case the Department of Social Welfare (and possibly) the police will be involved
3. **Disciplinary or misconduct** in which case Athletics Fiji will be involved.

What to do if Abuse is suspected?

Use the following guides should you or any other member suspect abuse.

- I. You have suspicion on reasonable grounds when:
 - A child tells you they have been abused,
 - Someone else tells you a child has been abused,
 - A child tells you they know someone who has been abused (often they are referring to themselves),

- Your observations of a child's behaviour and/or injuries etc., and your knowledge of the child, lead you to suspect abuse,
 - You observe a member's abuse of another member.
- II. If you suspect a child has been abused follow these procedures:
- Ensure the child is safe (if they are in your care),
 - Maintain the safety of other children,
 - Obtain and document the following information:
 - a) the child's name, age and address
 - b) your reason for suspecting abuse (i.e. observation, injury, information)
 - c) your assessment of danger posed to the child including information pertaining to the alleged perpetrator,
 - d) what arrangements, if any, exist for the immediate protection of the child,
 - e) what involvement, if any, other agencies have in dealing with the suspected member protection issues.
- III. If you become aware that any coach, manager or other person having any contact with children was at any time in the past convicted of an offence involving child abuse or has at any time transgressed the provisions of this or any other code or law dealing with child abuse you must report this knowledge to a member of the Board within 24 hours.
- IV. The Athletics Fiji President will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and Department of Social Welfare inquiries.
- V. The President will consult with police and Department of Social Welfare on any further action to be taken.

See Attachment 5 for contacts for Police and the Department of Social Welfare.

Breaches of Code of Conduct

Athletics Fiji expects its members and staff to discuss any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child immediately with a Board member.

Any person who has been found to have breached the Policy and Code of Behaviour may be monitored, warned, suspended or have their employment / engagement with the organisation terminated.

If any person is found guilty under this Code, Athletics Fiji will then:

1. Cancel the perpetrator's membership,
2. Check periodically that the person is having no further contact with athletics,
3. Periodically follow up on the victim's progress and ensure that they have adequate access to care.

Athletics Fiji will immediately contact the Australian Sports Commission if any staff or volunteers or other personnel are accused of, charged with, arrested for, or convicted of criminal offences relating to child exploitation and abuse

Athletics Fiji will also inform the Australian Sports Commission of any breaches of the Child Protection Policy or Code of Behaviour, and response taken.

For all reports made to Athletics Fiji:

- a fair process will be observed
- confidentiality will be maintained except when a report to police or authorities is required
- anyone making a false allegation will be disciplined
- will be handled professionally and in a timely manner and reports will be stored securely.

8. Training and Awareness Raising

Athletics Fiji has one employee and is managed by a Board appointed every 2 years. It is in the process of establishing committees for coaches and other officials. It has little turnover in members and volunteers.

Athletics Fiji will provide training and induction on the Policy and Code of Behaviour for all new staff and volunteers as required. Athletics Fiji will keep a record of the agenda for the training sessions, copy of the materials used and an attendance record. Athletics Fiji will use Board and committee meetings at least annually as forums to provide training and professional development opportunities in relation to this policy.

9. Risk Assessment

A risk assessment will be conducted by the Board every 12 months on the activities involving contact with children. The Risk Assessment template will be used and any activities found to be high risk will be recorded. The steps taken to reduce these risks and responsibility for this and dates for action and completion will also be recorded.

An example of an activity that could pose a risk to children is a sports competition involving up to 300 participants Of all ages. Athletics Fiji organise this event but the children involved are supported by their coach, teacher or parent. Athletics Fiji provides technical officials and medical support including a doctor and physiotherapist.

See the risk assessment template in Attachment 4.

10. Review

This Policy will be reviewed each year by the Board. This policy document includes a document control table to record endorsement and review dates.

The President is the focal point for child protection concerns and policy review.

11. Attachments

Definitions of Child Abuse
Code of Behaviour towards Children
Example of Statutory Declaration of Criminal Record

**Risk Assessment Table
Child Protection Contacts**

Document Control	
Effective date:	September 2013
Approved by:	Athletics Fiji Board
Next review:	September 2014

Attachment 1 - Definitions of abuse

The following definitions come from the AusAID Child Protection Policy 2013:

A child is a person under the age of 18.

There are four kinds of abuse:

- **Physical abuse** – the use of physical force against a child that results in harm to the child. Physically abusive behaviour includes shouting, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, kicking, biting, burning, strangling and poisoning
- **Neglect** – the failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child (where they are in a position to do so) with the conditions that are culturally accepted as being essential for their physical and emotional development and well-being
- **Emotional abuse** – refers to a parent or caregiver’s inappropriate verbal or symbolic acts towards a child or a pattern of failure over time to provide a child with adequate non-physical nature and emotional availability. Such acts have a high probability of damaging a child’s self-esteem or social competence
- **Sexual abuse** – the use of a child for sexual gratification by an adult or significantly older child or adolescent. Sexually abusive behaviours include fondling genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling breasts, voyeurisms, exhibitionism and exposing the child to, or involving the child, in pornography

The symptoms of abuse can include one, or a combination of, the following:

- Sudden, unexplained, changes in the child’s behaviour
- Becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- Running away
- Self-harming
- Bed wetting
- Age inappropriate sexual knowledge or behaviour
- Low self-esteem
- Relationship problems, particularly with adults with authority over them.

Attachment 2 - Athletics Fiji Code of Conduct

I, _____ [insert name], acknowledge that I have read and understand Athletics Fiji *Child Protection Policy*, and agree that in the course of my association with Athletics Fiji I must:

- treat children with respect regardless of race, colour, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status
- Treat all members with respect and dignity and mindful of my language, tone of voice and body language. I will not use language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate. I will not make sexually suggestive comments about or to a child or joking ridiculing, rejecting, isolating, or 'taking the 'micky' out of a child.
- not engage children under the age of 18 in any form of sexual intercourse or sexual activity, including paying for sexual services or acts
- wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working in the proximity of children
- not invite unaccompanied children into my home, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger
- use any computers, mobile phones, video cameras, cameras or social media appropriately, and never to exploit or harass children or access child exploitation material through any medium
- not use physical punishment on children
- not hire children for domestic or other labour which is inappropriate given their age or developmental stage, which interferes with their time available for education and recreational activities, or which places them at significant risk of injury
- not sleeping in closed quarters with children without a second adult present. I will not sleep close to unsupervised children unless absolutely necessary, in which case I must obtain my supervisor's permission, and ensure that another adult is present if possible. Male and female adults, leaders or parents must accompany children when undertaking athletics' activities away from home, and especially overnight.
- Not engage in aggressive, physically distressing or sexually provocative activities or inappropriate or intrusive touching of a child. I will not get dressed or undressed in front of children and I will not invade the privacy of children while showering or toileting,
- Leaders should maintain an open door policy when conducting briefings, meetings and assemblies of members. Invite all children, parents, friends and other leaders to participate, particularly when performing interviews, transporting children and conducting excursions.
- Do not tolerate abusive or inappropriate behaviour - deal with it immediately.
- Protect children from pressure to participate.
- Respect a child's privacy and expect them to respect yours.
- Do not become involved in excessive attention-seeking behaviour, physically or sexually, by a child. Be mindful of the needs of children and redirect their attention to athletics.
- Maintain your status as ROLE MODEL to children and other adults. Don't abuse your position.

- Comply with all relevant Australian and local legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour Immediately report concerns or allegations of child exploitation and abuse and policy non-compliance in accordance with appropriate procedures
- Immediately disclose all charges, convictions and other outcomes of an offence, which occurred before or occurs during my association Athletics Fiji that relate to child exploitation and abuse.

When photographing or filming a child or using children’s images for work-related purposes:
I must:

- comply with local traditions or restrictions for reproducing personal images
- obtain informed consent from the child and parent or guardian of the child before photographing or filming a child
- ensure photographs, films, videos and DVDs present children in a dignified and respectful manner. Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive.
- not photograph children while dressing, undressing, showering or toileting,
- ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts
- ensure file labels, meta data or text descriptions do not reveal identifying information about a child when sending images electronically or publishing images in any form.

Understand that the onus is on me, as a person associated with Athletics Fiji to use common sense and avoid actions or behaviours that could be construed as child exploitation and abuse

Name:

Signed:

Date:

Attachment 3 – Example of Statutory Declaration of Criminal Record Form

This is an example of Save the Children’s Statutory Declaration form to use if a criminal record check is not immediately available. This form **DOES NOT** replace a Police Check and a full Police Check should be undertaken where possible.

Applicant’s Name:		Role applying for:	
Have you ever been charged or convicted of any offence?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please provide details:			

Please note: if you are applying for a position where you will have regular contact with children, (this may be frequent or infrequent), you are required to give details of **all** convictions or criminal offences and cautions, or pending prosecutions.

Have you ever been dismissed from employment or had any disciplinary action taken against you which may be related to work with a child/children under 18 years of age?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please provide details:		
Have you received any formal reprimands, final warnings, or cautions from the police?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please provide details:		
Is there any other information which may be relevant to your application e.g. pending prosecutions	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please provide details:		
Signature:	Date:	

Actioned by HR:	Date:
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Attachment 4 - Child Protection Risk Assessment Table

Getting everyone in your organisation to contribute and commit to agreed policies and practices regarding children and young people is an important first step to achieving a safe and fair environment for sport.

The best way to make this happen is by getting together as an organisation to talk about the risks, possibilities, issues and responsibilities involved in making sport safe, then deciding on the best course of action to take. You can do this by including child protection risk assessment on the agenda at committee meetings, coaches meetings, etcetera.

By making everyone aware of the risks and responsibilities, as well as what your organisation is already doing well to protect children, you will be creating and maintaining a child safe and friendly organisation.

(Source: Keeping Junior Sport Safe, Published by Sport and Recreation Victoria, Department of Planning and Community Development)

Instructions:

1. It is suggested that the Organisations President/CEO, managers, coaches and administrators come together as a team to work through this risk assessment.
2. Write down the activities your organisation provides.
3. For each activity identify whether the activity involves contact with children and young people. In contact with children is defined as “working on an activity or in a position that involves or may involve contact with children, either under the position description or due to the nature of the work environment”
4. For each activity that does involve contact with children and young people use the table below to look at the different child protection factors (using the examples as a guide), whether the factors increase or decrease the level of risk of harm to children and what you can do to reduce this level of risk.
5. You can use this information to help write your Child Protection Policy and Code of Behaviour as it will highlight areas you will need to provide procedures for. Some of the areas you identify will already be covered by the standards in the AusAID Child Protection Policy. Others will be unique to your organisation.
6. You can also decide who will be responsible for actions taken and a time frame.

Example Child Protection Factors to be considered:

Children and Young People:

- Age of children involved (young/adolescent)
- Children with disabilities
- Gender
- Children who have been in conflict with the law
- Children living in institutions/orphanages

- Children not used to having a say/opinion

Staff and Volunteers:

- Level of experience, skills, community leadership
- Previous experience working with children
- Ratio of children to adults
- Level of supervision
- Training provided

Policies and Procedures:

- What is already in place?
- What are the gaps in this area?
- Are staff and volunteers aware of existing policies and procedures?
- How can children, staff, volunteers, parents, community members report a concern for the safety of a child involved in your program?

Program activities:

- Do children generally participate in groups or one on one with an adult?
- Amount of physical contact required in coaching
- Are there any physical dangers in the environment where the activity takes place i.e. water, traffic, building site?
- Do activities occur during the day or evening?
- Risk of injury to a child
- What methods of discipline are used by the staff/volunteers?
- Travel to attend sporting events which may involve overnight stays

Community factors:

- Are parents/carers involved in the program activities?
- Are community leaders involved?
- What formal and informal systems exist to protect children locally?
- Local risk factors to children in the community i.e. risk of violence when walking home late at night

Risk Assessment Table

Child Protection Factor <i>(add your own factors)</i> <i>Write down here the factors you have identified</i>	Does this factor increase or decrease the level of risk of harm to a child?	What strategies can be put in place to decrease a high risk factor?	Who will be responsible for the strategies/action to be taken?
<p>Consider the Children/Young People Participating</p> <p><i>Example: there will be a large number of children under 10 years of age participating</i></p>	<p><i>This will increase the level of risk</i></p>	<p><i>We will have more staff at this activity to increase the supervision</i></p>	<p><i>Head Coach</i></p>
<p>Consider the Staff and Volunteers</p> <p><i>Example: New volunteers recruited with little experience working with children</i></p>	<p><i>This will increase the level of risk</i></p>	<p><i>Provide training and make sure they have signed the Child Protection Policy and Code of Behaviour and been inducted on the Policy</i></p>	<p><i>President</i></p>

<p>Consider Policies and Procedures</p> <p><i>Example: We have a new Child Protection Policy but no one knows about it</i></p>	<p><i>This increases the level of risk to children</i></p>	<p><i>Hold an information session about the Policy and make sure everyone is signed on</i></p>	<p><i>President and Administrator</i></p>
<p>Consider the Program Activities</p> <p><i>Example: Activities require travel to other communities which may involve overnight stays</i></p>	<p><i>This increases the level of risk</i></p>	<p><i>All staff and volunteers will be made aware of the child protection policy and conduct, including appropriate sleeping arrangements</i></p>	<p><i>President</i></p>

<p>Consider the Community Factors</p> <p><i>Example: Children sometimes walk home late at night from activities</i></p>	<p><i>This increases the level of risk to children</i></p>	<p><i>The community will be consulted to determine appropriate strategies to ensure children do not walk home late at night unaccompanied by an adult and the timing of activities will be reviewed and adjusted.</i></p>	<p><i>Head Coach</i></p>
<p>Other Factors:</p>			

Attachment 5 - Child Protections Contacts in Eastern Region

Department of Social Welfare

The link below is to the Department's website with contacts for support agencies.

<http://www.social-welfare.gov.fj/index.php/social-welfare/history>

Response Services

- Community outreach
- Case assessment and referrals to appropriate organisations, action taken where necessary
- Family Assistance and Income Generating opportunities to alleviate poverty and need
- Homes for children in need of care and protection

LOCATION

Suva | 77 Suva St

Nasinu

Nausori | Vunivuni Hill

Vuindawa

Navua

PHONE:

331 5754

368 3395

347 8361/ 347 8352

368 3093

346 0401

Police

To secure the safety and security of the people of Fiji and its visitors.

Response Services

- Investigations of crimes
- Referrals to Department of Social Welfare and other services
- Information giving