***Guidance Notes***

*The purpose of a National Federation safeguarding policy is to ensure that all participants in equestrian sport are protected from harassment and abuse. A safeguarding policy outlines the National Federation’s position and approach to safeguarding and demonstrates a commitment to providing safe environments for all participants (both adults and children).*

*National Federations should develop their safeguarding policy with support and advice from local organisations involved in safeguarding and local legal experts to ensure that the policy is adapted to the local cultural and legal context. It should be developed in consultation with its members and communities. This template provides a starting point for policy development; the name of the National Federation should be inserted in the square brackets [ ].*

*To ensure safeguarding measures are implemented, National Federations should have a designated, Safeguarding Lead. This person should have relevant experience and training or be supported in following the necessary training to be able to perform the role. Best practice is for the Safeguarding Lead to be supported by and to work alongside a Safeguarding Case Management Group (SCMG). The SCMG would be made up of at least three members; ideally one would be from the National Federation, and the others would have backgrounds/experience in safeguarding-related work e.g. as social workers, teachers, police, probation workers, or lawyers. The SCMG would have an agreed Terms of Reference outlining their role and responsibilities, how the group should function and any sanctioning powers they may have.*

*National Federation Responsibilities*

1. *To develop and implement a Safeguarding Policy adapted to their own national legal framework and consistent with the FEI Safeguarding Policy.*
2. *To raise awareness of the Safeguarding Policy and how to report an incident of harassment and abuse, across all participants in their activities.*
3. *To manage reports of harassment and abuse that are brought to its attention promptly.*
4. *To provide appropriate support to individuals who report an incident of harassment or abuse.*
5. *To impose appropriate disciplinary or corrective measures when there has been a violation of the Safeguarding Policy.*
6. *To follow safe recruitment practices and implement codes of conduct.*
7. *To provide education and awareness raising opportunities for participants in their activities.*
8. *To monitor and evaluate the Safeguarding Policy and related procedures periodically to ensure relevant and fit for purpose.*

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**1. Policy Statement & Purpose**

Consistent with the objectives and principles of the FEI, the welfare of the equestrian community, especially minors and adults at risk[[1]](#footnote-1), is of paramount concern. [NATIONAL FEDERATION] is committed to promoting a safe and respectful environment for its members, athletes, support personnel, coaches, trainers, grooms, officials, volunteers and staff in all equestrian disciplines.

[NATIONAL FEDERATION] has developed and adopted this Safeguarding Policy (“Policy”) to set forth the efforts it will undertake to promote a safe equestrian environment and protect participants in equestrian sport from harassment and abuse, both independently and in partnership with other necessary parties, including clubs, parents (or legal guardians), athletes, and the equestrian community.

All forms of harassment and abuse are prohibited and [NATIONAL FEDERATION] will take appropriate action pursuant to this Policy where there is a risk of harm within the context of participation in equestrian sport.

The purpose of this Policy is:

1. to provide a framework for promoting the prevention of harassment and abuse;
2. to raise awareness of what constitutes harassment and abuse;
3. to explain the process for reporting incidents of harassment and abuse and how the reports will be managed.

**2. Definitions**

**2.1 Harassment and Abuse**

Harassment and abuse can be expressed in five forms which may occur in combination or in isolation. These include i) psychological abuse, ii) physical abuse, iii) sexual harassment, iv) sexual abuse, and v) neglect.

These forms of abuse are defined as:

1. **Psychological abuse** — means any unwelcome act including confinement, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation, infantilisation, or any other treatment which may diminish the sense of identity, dignity, and self-worth.
2. **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 act 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.
3. **Sexual harassment** — 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. **Sexual abuse** — any conduct of a sexual nature, whether non-contact, contact or penetrative, where consent is coerced/manipulated or is not or cannot be given.
5. **Neglect** — within the meaning of this Policy means the failure of a coach or another person with a duty of care towards the Covered Individual to provide a minimum level of care to the Covered Individual, which is causing harm, allowing harm to be caused, or creating an imminent danger of harm.

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 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.

**2.2 Covered Individual** means any person in one or more of the following categories:

1. [NATIONAL FEDERATION] **Athletes** and **Support Personnel** (any Coach, Trainer, Athlete, Horse Owner, Groom, Steward, Chef d’Equipe, parent, spouse or partner, family member, team staff, Official, Veterinarian, medical, or paramedical personnel or any other person assisting in any fashion a person participating in or preparing for a [NATIONAL FEDERATION] event);
2. [NATIONAL FEDERATION] **Representatives**, such as [NATIONAL FEDERATION] Board Members, Members of a Committee or Sub-Committee thereof, working group and task force members, officials, employees and consultants;
3. **Accredited Persons** at a [NATIONAL FEDERATION] event and/or [NATIONAL FEDERATION] meeting;
4. **Organiser and Organising Committee members**, subcontractors and volunteers.

**2.3 Protected Person** means any individual participant in equestrian sport, including Athletes, Support Personnel, volunteers and employees in all equestrian Disciplines.

**3. Scope of the Policy**

3.1 This Policy shall apply to all Covered Individuals.

3.2 It shall be the personal responsibility of every Covered Individual to make themselves aware of this Policy including, without limitation, what conduct constitutes a violation of this Policy and to comply with those requirements. Covered Individuals should also be aware that conduct prohibited under this Policy may also constitute a criminal offence and/or a breach of other applicable laws and regulations including other regulations of [NATIONAL FEDERATION] or any other Sports Organisations. Covered Individuals must comply with all applicable laws and regulations at all times.

**4. Prohibited Conduct**

The following conduct is prohibited and constitutes a violation of this Policy:

4.1 Psychological Abuse;

4.2 Physical Abuse;

4.3 Sexual Harassment;

4.4 Sexual Abuse;

4.5 Neglect;

4.6 Engaging, or attempting or threatening to engage, in conduct that directly harms the physical and/or mental welfare and/or safety of one or more Protected Persons;

4.7 Posing a risk of harm[[2]](#footnote-2) to the physical and/or mental welfare and/or safety of one or more Protected Persons.

4.8 Complicity, i.e. assisting, encouraging, aiding, abetting, conspiring, covering up or any other type of intentional complicity involving a violation of this Policy:

4.9 Retaliation, i.e. any adverse action taken by a Covered Individual against a person participating in any investigation or proceedings initiated by [NATIONAL FEDERATION] pursuant to this Policy. Retaliation by a Covered Individual against a person for making an allegation, supporting a reporting party, or providing information relevant to an allegation is a serious violation of this Policy.

4.10 Failure to cooperate.

1. Failing to cooperate with any investigation carried out by, or on behalf of, [NATIONAL FEDERATION] in relation to a possible breach of this Policy, including, without limitation, failing to provide accurately, completely and without undue delay any information and/or documentation and/or access or assistance requested by [NATIONAL FEDERATION] as part of such investigation.
2. Obstructing or delaying any investigation that may be carried out by, or on behalf of, [NATIONAL FEDERATION] in relation to a possible violation of this Policy, including without limitation concealing, tampering with or destroying any documentation or other information that may be relevant to the investigation.

4.11 Intentionally making false accusations.

It is not necessary for conduct (or attempted or threatened conduct) to take place in the context of equestrian sport in order for action to be taken pursuant to this Policy, provided that [NATIONAL FEDERATION] considers that any such conduct suggests a risk of harm to one or more Protected Persons in the context of their participation in equestrian sport. For the avoidance of doubt, conduct that took place prior to this Policy coming into effect may indicate a risk of harm within the meaning of Article 4.7.

**5. Reporting Procedures**

Everyone is responsible for ensuring that no one suffers from harassment and abuse. Therefore, anyone who has a concern about a possible incident of harassment or abuse should report it to the [NATIONAL FEDERATION] at the first available opportunity.

If an individual is at immediate risk of serious harm the matter should be reported to the emergency services immediately. Similarly, if in the [NATIONAL FEDERATION]’s reasonable opinion, the reported behaviour amounts to potentially criminal behaviour, it should be reported to the relevant law enforcement authorities. If the victim is under 18 years of age there is a duty to report.[[3]](#footnote-3)

**5.1 How to report incidents and concerns of harassment and abuse**

Reports of harassment or abuse should be submitted to [NATIONAL FEDERATION] as follows:

1. Using the Safeguarding Report Form (*add link*)
2. By email (*add email address*)
3. In person to the Safeguarding Lead (*add name and contact details*)

The following information should be provided:

1. The name(s) of the complainant(s);
2. The type of misconduct alleged (including psychological abuse, physical abuse, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and neglect);
3. The name(s) of the alleged victim(s);
4. The name(s) of the individual(s) alleged to have committed the misconduct;
5. The approximate date(s) and location(s) where the misconduct was committed;
6. The names of other individuals who might have information regarding the alleged misconduct; and
7. A summary statement of the reasons to believe that misconduct has occurred.

For reports where a Child[[4]](#footnote-4) is involved, in any capacity, it is important that the best interests of the Child are of primary consideration throughout the reporting and case management process.

**5.2. Anonymous Reporting**

[NATIONAL FEDERATION] recognises it can be difficult to report an allegation of misconduct and strives to remove as many barriers to reporting as possible. Anonymous reports may be made as follows:

1. by completing [NATIONAL FEDERATION] Safeguarding Report Form *without* including their name;
2. by expressing concerns of misconduct to the [NATIONAL FEDERATION] Safeguarding Lead or other member of the Safeguarding team.

Please be aware that anonymous reporting may make it difficult to investigate or properly address allegations.

**6. Confidentiality**

To the extent permitted by law, and as appropriate, [NATIONAL FEDERATION] will handle any report it receives confidentially and discreetly and will not make public the names of the complainant(s), potential victim(s), or accused person(s); however, [NATIONAL FEDERATION] may disclose such names on a limited basis when conducting an investigation, or reporting to the FEI or relevant bodies or when required to do so under applicable law.

[NATIONAL FEDERATION] may update any individual who has filed a safeguarding report with [NATIONAL FEDERATION] on the status of (i) their report; and/or (ii) the related safeguarding procedure (if applicable). [NATIONAL FEDERATION]’s provision of such updates shall not constitute a violation of the confidentiality provisions of this Article 6.

**7. Case Management**

At [NATIONAL FEDERATION], the Safeguarding Lead is responsible for managing and coordinating reports received under this Policy.

Following the receipt of an allegation of prohibited conduct, [NATIONAL FEDERATION] will consider the following:

1. **Jurisdiction** – the details of the report will be assessed to determine whether the [National Federation] has jurisdiction to address the complaint. [NATIONAL FEDERATION] will report any behaviour, which in the reasonable opinion of [NATIONAL FEDERATION], amounts to potentially criminal behaviour to the relevant law enforcement authorities. Regardless of jurisdiction, for all cases reported to [NATIONAL FEDERATION], the Safeguarding Lead shall keep a record of the status of the reports to ensure appropriate follow-up.
2. **Notification** – [NATIONAL FEDERATION] may consider the circumstances in which it will notify other Athletes and/or the parents (or legal guardians) of Athletes with whom the accused individual may have had contact. At [NATIONAL FEDERATION] ’s discretion, and as appropriate or required by law, [NATIONAL FEDERATION] may notify relevant persons, i.e., competition managers, staff members, contractors, volunteers, parents (or legal guardians), and/or Athletes of any such allegation that (a) law enforcement authorities are actively investigating; or (b) that [NATIONAL FEDERATION] is investigating. Advising others of an allegation may lead to additional reports of harassment or abuse and other misconduct.
3. **Investigation** – if [NATIONAL FEDERATION] has jurisdiction over the complaint, it may carry out an investigation to gather information and evidence. Depending on the nature of the report, the investigation may be carried out internally or by an external investigator.
4. **Assessment** - Following the investigation, the Safeguarding Lead/SCMG will consider the information gathered to determine whether there has been a violation of the policy and the appropriate action. In some cases, e.g. for some low level concerns, a warning letter may be issued by the Safeguarding Lead/SCMG.

**8. Judicial Process**

Following an investigation by or on behalf of [NATIONAL FEDERATION] pursuant to this Policy, the [NATIONAL FEDERATION] shall evaluate all the evidence and may decide to open a safeguarding procedure by referring the matter to the [INSERT NAME OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION BODY WITH AUTHORITY TO DECIDE ON THESE CASES].

The [NATIONAL FEDERATION BODY WITH AUTHORITY TO DECIDE ON THESE CASES] shall have jurisdiction to decide on alleged breaches of this Policy in the first instance according to the process set out in the [NATIONAL FEDERATION] Disciplinary Regulations. The [NATIONAL FEDERATION BODY WITH AUTHORITY TO DECIDE ON THESE CASES] may, either on its own initiative or upon the application of one or all of the parties concerned, stay the proceedings before the [NATIONAL FEDERATION BODY WITH AUTHORITY TO DECIDE ON THESE CASES] pending the outcome of any related criminal or civil investigation and/or proceedings

Any case referred to the [NATIONAL FEDERATION BODY WITH AUTHORITY TO DECIDE ON THESE CASES] pursuant to this Policy will be dealt with according to the procedures set out in the [NATIONAL FEDERATION] Disciplinary Regulations.

Where appropriate, [NATIONAL FEDERATION] may wait until the outcome of any related criminal or civil investigation and/or proceedings is known before deciding whether or not to refer a case to [NATIONAL FEDERATION BODY WITH AUTHORITY TO DECIDE ON THESE CASES].

**8.1 Provisional Measures**

[NATIONAL FEDERATION] may impose provisional measures, including a provisional suspension, on the Covered Individual. [NATIONAL FEDERATION] shall also be entitled to recognise and apply provisional suspensions and/or provisional measures imposed by other bodies, such as clubs or Safeguarding authorities. Where a provisional measure is imposed or recognised and applied by the [NATIONAL FEDERATION], a Covered Individual shall be entitled to apply to the [NATIONAL FEDERATION BODY WITH AUTHORITY TO DECIDE ON THESE CASES] for relief against such provisional measures, including the lifting of a provisional suspension.

Where a provisional measure is imposed, this shall be taken into consideration in the determination of any sanction which may ultimately be imposed.

**8.2 Sanctions**

8.1. Where it is determined that a violation has been committed, the [NATIONAL FEDERATION BODY WITH AUTHORITY TO DECIDE ON THESE CASES] shall impose an appropriate sanction upon the Covered Individual from the range of permissible sanctions set out in the [NATIONAL FEDERATION] Disciplinary Regulations.

8.2. When determining the appropriate sanctions applicable, the [NATIONAL FEDERATION BODY WITH AUTHORITY TO DECIDE ON THESE CASES] shall take into consideration all aggravating and mitigating circumstances and shall detail the effect of such circumstances on the final sanction in the written decision.

8.3 The [NATIONAL FEDERATION] shall be entitled to prevent any person (regardless of whether they are a Covered Individual or not) convicted of a criminal offence which would constitute a violation of this Policy from participating in any meetings or activities surrounding any [NATIONAL FEDERATION] competition or event, including as a spectator.

**8.3 Appeal**

An appeal may be lodged against a decision of [NATIONAL FEDERATION BODY WITH AUTHORITY TO DECIDE ON THESE CASES] in accordance with the [NATIONAL FEDERATION] Disciplinary Regulations.

**9. Mutual Recognition of Sanctions & Duty to Inform**

9.1. Subject to the right of appeal, any decision taken by the [NATIONAL FEDERATION] pursuant to this Policy must be recognised and respected by all clubs.

9.2 Where the [NATIONAL FEDERATION] is informed that a Covered Individual has been:

1. convicted of a criminal offence which would constitute a violation of this Policy; or
2. held by their Club or any other competent sports governing body to which the Covered Individual is subject, to have committed a violation which would constitute a violation under this Policy, the [NATIONAL FEDERATION] shall recognise the applicable conviction/decision imposed.

Where appropriate, the [NATIONAL FEDERATION] reserves the right to open a separate safeguarding procedure against the Covered Individual in relation to their [NATIONAL FEDERATION] related activities.

9.3 Clubs shall promptly inform the [NATIONAL FEDERATION] of any allegations (where possible) and/or sanction(s) imposed on any person under their jurisdiction relating to any conduct falling within the scope of Article 4 of this Policy.

9.4 The [NATIONAL FEDERATION] shall promptly inform the clubs of any allegations (where possible) and/or sanction(s) imposed on any person under their jurisdiction relating to any conduct falling within the scope of Article 4 of this Policy.

9.5 The [NATIONAL FEDERATION] shall promptly inform the FEI of any allegations (where possible) and/or sanction(s) imposed on any person under their jurisdiction relating to any conduct falling within the scope of Article 4 of this Policy.

**10. Educational resources list**

*(National Federations should add any local resources/helplines to this list that may be relevant)*

1. FEI Safeguarding: <https://inside.fei.org/content/general-regs-statutes>
2. IOC Safe Sport: <https://olympics.com/ioc/safe-sport>
3. Safe Sport International: <https://www.safesportinternational.com/>
4. International Safeguards for Children in Sport: <https://www.sportanddev.org/research-learning/guiding-toolkits/child-protection-and-safeguarding>
5. UN Convention on Rights of the Child: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>
6. International Helplines:
   1. Child Helpline International <https://childhelplineinternational.org/helplines/>
   2. Pro Safesport Plus <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/pss/home/-/asset_publisher/fIyIrsApJR5A/content/welcome-to-the-pro-safe-sport-website-?inherit>

1. Adults at risk is defined as “any person aged 18 or older who is engaged in activities in connection with the [NATIONAL FEDERATION] (whether as a Participant or otherwise) and who is, or may be, vulnerable to or unable to protect themselves against harm or the risk of it (whether generally or a result of circumstances in which they find themselves at the relevant time). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. ‘Harm’ is not a narrow concept and can mean different things in different contexts, but (in very

   general terms) it can be considered as meaning ill-treatment or the impairment of health, welfare

   or development. Harassment and abuse are examples of conduct that cause harm. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This may differ by country and legal advice should be sought to ensure alignment with local legislation. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child defines child as “a human

   being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained

   earlier” [↑](#footnote-ref-4)