

FÉDÉRATION INTERNATIONALE DE GYMNASTIQUE



# **FIG FRAMEWORK**

**FOR SAFEGUARDING ATHLETES AND OTHER  
PARTICIPANTS FROM HARRASSMENT AND ABUSE IN  
SPORT DURING EVENTS**

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## INTRODUCTION

The FIG runs a range of events for different groups including World Senior and Age Group Competitions, training events and FIG meetings. Many FIG events are hosted on behalf of the FIG by a National Federation (NF), who is contracted to run the event in their country.

While the FIG Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding and Protecting Participants in Gymnastics applies at all FIG events, some events also require a specific Event Safeguarding Plan. This is particularly important where young people (anyone under 18 years) are participating in the event as there is growing evidence that young elite and developing athletes, particularly those with disabilities, are more vulnerable than other participants to all forms of abuse and poor practice.

The purpose of the event safeguarding plan is to promote best practice and minimise the likelihood of incidents of harassment and abuse occurring and, where any incident does arise, to ensure that:

- any incidents that meet the relevant criminal and/or legal reporting threshold are referred to the police or other relevant safeguarding authorities;
- any serious incidents that do not meet the local reporting threshold are appropriately investigated;
- any minor incidents and poor practice are addressed in a proportionate and timely fashion without need for further escalation; and
- appropriate support is provided to anyone who has been affected by an incident.

Although not all FIG events require a specific safeguarding plan, it is essential that NFs who apply to host an event on behalf of the FIG understand that safeguarding arrangements may need to be addressed when planning and running a gymnastics event. The Local Organisation Committee (LOC) will be responsible for implementing the safeguarding plan but the FIG remains ultimately accountable for ensuring the adequacy of safeguarding arrangements at FIG Events.

Where an NF applies to host a relevant FIG event, they will be expected to set out in the bidding documentation an overview of the safeguarding provisions that foresee are necessary for the event. The FIG will give due consideration as to whether the NF is competent and has the resources to implement safeguarding plans to the required standard for that event when determining the host country.

NFs that send a delegation to an event must ensure their participants understand the safeguarding procedures for the event, which include the required standards of conduct and ensure that anyone in a position of responsibility is considered suitable to represent the NF.

This Framework is supported by the FIG Code of Ethics that states, “the respect of human rights and dignity is a fundamental requirement during all activities of the sport of gymnastics on a national and international level”, and that “discrimination and any form of non-accidental violence which includes sexual harassment, sexual abuse, physical abuse, psychological abuse and neglect will not be tolerated”. Furthermore, the FIG Code of Ethics states “the FIG and its designated agents or committees ensure safe and appropriate conditions and provide athletes with good medical care for their physical and moral well-being. Special attention is given to children’s contest programs, education and training and ensuring their overall health and safety”.

## SCOPE

The Framework supplements the FIG Policy for Safeguarding and Protecting Participants in Gymnastics applies to all FIG World Championships and any other FIG events that are aimed specifically at participants under the age of 18. The Framework may also apply to other FIG events,

which will be determined at the event planning stage in consultation with the FIG Safeguarding Manager.

Where it is determined that the nature of the event does not require a specific safeguarding plan, any incidents of harassment and abuse that arise at the event can be reported to the Gymnastics Ethics Foundation in line with the reporting arrangements set out in the FIG Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding and Protecting Participants in Gymnastics.

The definitions for harassment and abuse and other terms used in the Framework are those set out in the FIG Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding and Protecting Participants in Gymnastics.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **FIG Safeguarding Manager**

The FIG Safeguarding Manager is responsible for assessing all events listed in the FIG calendar to identify the level of safeguarding arrangements that is required for each event.

The Safeguarding Manager will:

- Carry out a safeguarding risk assessment for all FIG events to determine what safeguarding arrangements are required based on the nature of the event along with the age and potential vulnerabilities of participants.
- Where it is determined that an event requires a specific plan, ensure that an inspection visit to potential host countries/event venues gives due consideration to whether the NF/LOC can implement the required safeguarding arrangements for the event. This includes whether the NF can identify a suitable individual to act as Event Safeguarding Officer and the suitability of accommodation and facilities for athletes who are under the age of eighteen.

Once the event venue is approved and a LOC appointed, the Safeguarding Manager will support the LOC to:

- Develop and promote the event-specific safeguarding plan that establishes the minimum safeguarding standards for the event.
- Where it is determined that an Event Safeguarding Officer is required, provide support to the host country to identify a suitable person for the role.
- Review the LOC implementation of the safeguarding plan and identify and support the LOC when addressing any concerns about the adequacy of safeguarding arrangements.
- Liaise with the Gymnastics Ethics Foundation Safeguarding Unit to establish clear communication channels should a major incident occurring at an event be reported to the Foundation.
- Provide training to the FIG Athlete Commission (if they will be present at the event) to ensure they understand what action they should take if a disclosure is made to them.
- Ensure that all NFs are aware of the Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding and Protecting Participants in Gymnastics and NF safeguarding responsibilities for their participants at events.
- Ensure information about safeguarding arrangements is disseminated to participating NF and individual participants where appropriate prior to and during the event. That explains what may constitute harassment and abuse, and how participants report concerns and seek advice and support.
- Where necessary, raising awareness within NFs of the issues around the safeguarding and protection of children and young people.

## **National Federation Local Organising Committee (LOC)**

The NF is responsible for setting up the LOC, who are responsible for the planning and delivery of the event, including the safeguarding arrangements.

Where required, the LOC in consultation with the FIG Safeguarding Manager must appoint an Event Safeguarding Officer. Where possible, the Event Safeguarding Officer should be identified at an early stage in the event planning process and be involved in the development and implementation of the event-specific safeguarding plan.

The LOC must ensure that the event safeguarding plan meets the minimum standards required by the FIG as well as aligning to the local laws and safeguarding requirements. The LOC must document an event safeguarding plan, which must be reviewed by an approved by the FIG Safeguarding Manager. The event safeguarding plan should set out:

- Safeguarding roles and responsibilities including, where appropriate, establishing an Event Case Management Group.
- Arrangements to support the needs of any participants who may have additional vulnerabilities e.g. disabilities.
- Arrangements for the safe recruitment/vetting of all event staff and volunteers including criminal record checks (where applicable).
- Arrangements for the training and induction of staff, volunteers and contractors to ensure they understand their safeguarding responsibilities and know how to respond if concerns or allegations arise at the event.
- Expected standards of behaviour for staff, volunteers and contractors and the applicable code of conduct.
- Arrangements for the induction/briefing of all staff, volunteers and contractors to ensure they are familiar with the safeguarding procedures for the Event Safeguarding Plan and have signed up to the relevant codes of conduct and principles of participation (linked to the appropriate complaints/disciplinary procedure).
- Reporting procedures that align to the legal framework of the host country.
- Contact numbers for legal and safeguarding authorities and any other relevant organisations with safeguarding responsibilities and those who may provide support should an incident arise.
- Communication arrangements with Event Case Management Group and the Gymnastics Ethics Foundation as required to implement the event safeguarding plan.
- Arrangements for hotel allocation to ensure that rooms allocation is appropriate based on a participant's gender, age and role in accordance with FIG requirements.
- Arrangements for reviewing the effectiveness of the safeguarding plan post event including how the views of relevant stakeholders including athletes are sought.

## **Event Safeguarding Officer**

The Event Safeguarding Officer has overall responsibility for receiving and responding to any safeguarding concerns that arise during the event in accordance with the event safeguarding plan including any alleged incidents of harassment and abuse or poor practice.

The Event Safeguarding Officer role should be undertaken by someone who has demonstrable experience and competence in safeguarding. The Event Safeguarding Officer should ideally have experience in gymnastics and needs to be familiar with the applicable national/local safeguarding frameworks. Where the Event Safeguarding Officer is appointed in advance, they should be part of

the LOC and should be responsible for the development and implementation of the safeguarding plan.

The Event Safeguarding Officer should be present throughout the event period and have accreditation that enables them to access all areas of the event including training and warmup areas.

The Safeguarding Officer name and contact details must be well-publicised, including in all pre-event information and on prominent display in the Event venue together with any other reporting arrangements that apply at the Event.

In carrying out the role, the Event Safeguarding Officer is required to:

- Provide safeguarding briefings with heads of delegation and coaches take place at Orientation meetings and Athlete meetings where applicable to ensure everyone is aware of reporting mechanisms and expected standards.
- Ensure they are a visible and accessible presence during the event.
- Respond to poor practice in a constructive way by engaging with the relevant NF representatives and, where appropriate, involving other relevant individuals such as the FIG Safeguarding contact, the Athlete Commission Representative and the Venue contact.
- Document all safeguarding concerns including poor practice issues that occur during the Event.
- Consult with the Event Case Management Group as to the referral route for the concern and, where appropriate, report the concern to the relevant legal/safeguarding authorities.
- Facilitate the provision of appropriate support to affected parties should there be any incident of harassed or abused during the event.
- Assist with any investigations as requested by the Gymnastics Ethics Foundation.
- Maintain confidentiality and appropriate security of records and ensure information about safeguarding concerns is only shared with those who need to know and understand their own responsibility to maintain confidentiality.

### **FIG Event Safeguarding Contact**

Unless the FIG Safeguarding Manager is present at the event, the FIG will designate an individual to support the Event Safeguarding Officer. This person should not undertake any other roles at the event that could conflict with their safeguarding responsibilities.

The FIG Event Safeguarding contact's role could include:

- Ensuring safeguarding arrangements are highlighted at orientation meetings.
- Liaising with the Event Safeguarding Officer to ensure that minimum standards detailed in the event safeguarding plan are adhered to.
- Supporting the Event Safeguarding Officer to respond to any incidents of poor practice.
- Participating in Event Case Management Group discussions as required.
- Ensuring translation services are provided where necessary.
- Supporting the provision of assistance to any affected parties where appropriate.
- Responding to any media enquiries relating to the incident and other relevant communications in consultation with senior FIG officials.

### **Event Case Management Group**

The Event Case Management group will be made up of relevant individuals who are responsible for making decisions on appropriate responses and any safeguarding or general misconduct issues that

arise during the event. The Group must include individuals with experience in assessing and responding to safeguarding concerns and who have excellent understanding of the relevant local laws and safeguarding frameworks. Where appropriate the Group can include a representative from the venue provider and any relevant local authorities.

The FIG Safeguarding Contact should be part of this group and, where there is limited experience locally, a representative from the Gymnastics Ethics Foundation should also be included on the Group. It is not necessary for all members of the Group to be present at the event, but they must be contactable during the event period.

The Event Case Management Group is responsible for assessing any safeguarding concerns that are brought to the attention of the event welfare officer and should determine:

- the seriousness of the concerns and whether the matter meets a criminal threshold and should be reported to the police or other relevant authorities;
- any risks posed by the accused person and whether there is a need to remove the person from the event or impose other protective measures;
- the jurisdiction for the participants involved;
- how poor practice concerns should be resolved;
- whether the NF with jurisdiction has policy in place to respond appropriately and/or whether the NF response is adequate;
- when incidents need to be referred to the Gymnastics Ethics Foundation; and
- what, if any, support is required for the affected parties.

### **Athletes Commission Representative**

At World Championships and other major events, the Athlete Commission Representative for the relevant gymnastics discipline is usually present. The Representative should receive prior training from the FIG Safeguarding Manager and be available as a point of contact for athletes who prefer to talk to another athlete about safeguarding concerns rather than talking directly to the Event Safeguarding Officer.

The Representative must be fully conversant with the safeguarding arrangements for the event and should work closely with the Event Safeguarding Officer to highlight any relevant concerns. Where appropriate, the Representative will provide support to athletes.

### **National federations**

NFs have a key responsibility to safeguard their athletes and need to ensure they take steps to protect all members of their delegation. Each NF will need to provide the FIG with the name of their senior executive responsible for safeguarding at the point of entry and ensure all NF participants understand their safeguarding responsibilities and the expected standards of conduct.

The Head of Delegation (HoD) is directly responsible for safeguarding and protecting the welfare of their delegation members and will be the point of contact for the Event Safeguarding Officer should a safeguarding issue that relates to a member of the NF delegation arise. Should a safeguarding incident arise, the HoD must work in partnership with the Event Safeguarding Officer to ensure any safeguarding concerns are resolved appropriately.

The NF must ensure the HoD has appropriate knowledge and experience to undertake their safeguarding responsibilities and is able to deal with safeguarding incidents involving NF participants in accordance with the NF Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

All delegation members need to be made aware of the FIG Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding and Protecting Participants in Gymnastics and the specific safeguarding arrangements at the event.

Delegation members should ensure they have received appropriate safeguarding training and signed up to the NF/FIG code of conduct.

## **Gymnastics Ethics Foundation**

The Safeguarding Section is responsible for assessing and responding to any reports of harassment and abuse that are reported to the Foundation.

If a complaint of harassment and abuse takes place during an event and is reported to the Foundation before the end of the Event, the Event Safeguarding Officer should be informed, and the Event safeguarding procedures applied.

The Foundation would not otherwise be actively involved in responding to safeguarding concerns that arise at an event except if:

- They are asked in advance to be part of the case management group that will be consulted in the event of an incident involving a participant that could amount to harassment and abuse.
- A serious incident has occurred that does not meet the criminal threshold and the Case Management Group has concluded that the NF does not have appropriate policy and procedures to respond to the incident or their response is considered to be inadequate in the circumstances.
- An allegation is made to the Gymnastics Ethics Foundation that the response of the LOC is unsafe.
- An allegation of abuse is non-recent or did not occur in the host country.

Where appropriate, the Gymnastics Ethics Foundation will respond in accordance with the FIG Safeguarding Policy and work in partnership with the Event Safeguarding Officer and/or FIG Safeguarding contact at the Event to support and protect those involved who are participating in the event.

## **RESPONDING TO SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS AT ANY EVENT**

It is essential that the any safeguarding concerns at Events are dealt with without any unnecessary delay. The following information supplements the procedure set out in the FIG Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding and Protecting Participants in Gymnastics and applies to FIG events where there is an appointed Event Safeguarding Officer and reporting procedures that align to the legal requirements of the host country.

The Event Safeguarding Officer is responsible for responding to any safeguarding concerns and incidents, including poor practice, that occur or come to light during an event.

The Event Safeguarding Officer should refer any poor practice concerns to the applicable NF Head of Delegation with instruction/advice on how to respond where appropriate. Providing that the Event Safeguarding Officer is satisfied that the NF has responded appropriately, no further follow-up is required. If the Event Safeguarding Officer is not satisfied by the response, the matter should be escalated to the Event Case Management Group.

Where an alleged incident of harassment and abuse occurs or is reported to the Event Welfare Safeguarding Officer, the Event Safeguarding Officer should liaise with the Event Case Management Group to assess the seriousness of the matter and determine what action is required, except in circumstances where police and/or medical intervention is required urgently, and consultation would cause an unacceptable delay. It is vital that any incident that took place in the host country that meets the applicable criminal and/or safeguarding threshold is reported to the police or relevant authority, in accordance with the event safeguarding plan. The Event Case Management Group must assess whether a referral to the authorities is required and the Event Safeguarding Officer must



report the incident if required or liaise with relevant authorities if they are already aware e.g. because the alleged perpetrator has been arrested.

If an incident took place in another country, the host country authorities are unlikely to have any jurisdiction to act. Nevertheless, the incident should be reported to the local authorities, particularly if the allegation relates to abuse of a child or children and/or other participants may be at risk of harm.

Where an allegation of harassment and abuse is assessed and considered to fall below the threshold for reporting to the police or safeguarding authorities, the matter should be referred to the alleged perpetrator's NF providing that the NF has a policy and procedures for safeguarding participants as required under FIG Policy.

The Event Safeguarding Officer should consult with the relevant NF head of delegation and must be satisfied that the NF will respond appropriately in accordance with the NF Safeguarding Policy and/or Complaints and Disciplinary Policy. Providing that the Event Safeguarding Officer, in consultation with Case Management Group, is satisfied that no other participants are at risk, no further action is required.

Where the Event Case Management Group is not satisfied that the matter will be dealt with appropriately by the NF (e.g. by taking disciplinary action where necessary or the alleged incident of harassment or abuse has occurred between participants belonging to different NFs organisations), the Event Safeguarding Officer must report the concern to Gymnastics Ethics Foundation. The matter will then be dealt with in accordance with the FIG Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding and Protecting Participants in Gymnastics. Where appropriate, the Foundation may request that the Event Safeguarding Officer assists the Foundation with their enquiries and may request that the Event Safeguarding officer co-ordinate any required protective measures in partnership with FIG Officials and the LOC.

Where an allegation of harassment and abuse is made at the event, the Event Safeguarding Group must also consider whether any support is required by the affected parties. Where appropriate the Event Safeguarding Officer should liaise with the relevant NF and facilitate access to the support.

The Event Safeguarding Officer must maintain clear records of all concerns raised and actions agreed and taken. The confidential records should be provided to the FIG and the Gymnastics Ethics Foundation at the end of the event. In the case of minor poor practice where an NF has responded appropriately and no further follow up is required, it would not usually be necessary to identify the participants who were involved.

This document has been approved by the FIG Executive Committee at its meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019 in St. Petersburg and enters into effect immediately,

## **Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique**



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