

UKA and the Home Country Athletics Federations

CODES OF CONDUCT

Introduction:

The UK Athletics and Home Country Athletics Federations (HCAF) Codes of Conduct set out national standards of conduct for all clubs, coaches, officials, volunteers and athletes in the sport. The 2021 revised codes take account of developments in national policy, guidance and practice.

Every club, club member, and anyone undertaking a relevant role must agree to abide by the codes of conduct either when they join a club as part of the club application process, or when they renew their club membership or UKA licence.

What are the codes?

The purpose of a code is to clarify:

- what behaviours are acceptable, and unacceptable.
- the standards of practise expected.
- the basis for challenging and improving practise.

The Codes are therefore a guide for individuals and clubs to think about, and monitor, how they, and others, conduct themselves in their roles. The Codes let everyone know what they can expect from the club, coaches and volunteers, but also what standard of behaviour is expected from club members, athletes and parents.

The codes are a tool for continuous improvement. They can be used prior to, or during training sessions, at club or team meetings, and must form part of new member inductions, and at annual renewal of membership.

For all clubs the codes are an important part of monitoring and improving the behaviour and practice of its members. When a club member does not meet the expectations set out in the codes, disciplinary or performance management action may be taken by the club.

Adopting and communicating clear codes of conduct is an important element in delivering the standards for child wellbeing and protection in sport.

Version:	WASG05.0	Codes of Conduct	
Last reviewed:	November 2020	Policy owner:	James Williams, CEO
Approved by:	Board	Audience:	All

Children and Young People (under 18 years):

Children and young people have their own codes of conduct and should be clear about their club's expectations in terms of acceptable behaviour and conduct. It can be beneficial to ask children in their group/team to discuss and agree what the consequences of breaking these codes should be for them. This could be done at the start of the year, before a trip away from home, or as part of a training event.

For groups of very young children it can be useful to have them develop together a specific behaviour code or charter for their group. Such charters are used extensively in primary schools and the children will recognise and understand what they are being asked to do.

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1. Clubs: Standards and Expectations for Clubs

Every club committee has a responsibility to implement and communicate codes of conduct, as well as relevant policies and processes which link to the codes.

The Safeguarding section of the UKA and relevant home country governing body websites contains examples of the documents listed below.

Affiliated Clubs must:

- Adopt the UKA and home country athletics federations Child Safeguarding policy and procedures and ensure it is displayed prominently on websites and social media pages.
- Adopt the UKA and home country athletics federations Adult Safeguarding Policy and procedures and ensure it is displayed prominently on websites and social media pages.
- Adopt the UKA and home country athletics federations codes of conduct and ensure they are signed up to by those working and volunteering in regulated roles, parents/carers, and athletes (Clubs who have online membership processes, or utilise 3rd party sites, must make sure that the process includes a section for the applicant to read and agree to abide by the codes of conduct).
- Adopt an induction process for new members that includes agreeing and signing up to the codes of conduct, safeguarding policies, discipline policy, anti-bullying policies, and other relevant information.
- Adopt the UKA and HCAF procedures for responding to wellbeing concerns or child/adult at risk abuse allegations.
- Adopt a disciplinary process for managing misconduct cases.
- Appoint a minimum of one welfare officer in line with UKA welfare officer guidelines and role description for club welfare officers.
- Ensure that all coaches and volunteers are recruited safely and are operating appropriately within the club environment i.e. that they hold appropriate up to date qualifications and licences, have undertaken a satisfactory Criminal Records Check, and are adhering to the safeguarding policies, terms and conditions of their licence and the relevant codes of conduct.
- Ensure that coaches, technical officials, and club officers attend recommended safeguarding training every 3 years.
- Liaise appropriately with parents/carers, officials, coaches, UKA, the relevant home country athletics federation and other relevant people/organisations to ensure that good practice is maintained.
- Maintain a register of safeguarding training attended and Criminal Record Checks completed relevant to Club members and share that register with the HCAF when asked.
- Ensure that contact details for club welfare officers, local Authority social services, the police and relevant agencies are openly displayed in club environs and on club website and made available to anyone who requires them.
- Ensure that club officers and volunteers act responsibly and set an example to others, especially younger members.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every club member and others involved in athletics.

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- Develop an environment that promotes the wellbeing and safety of athletes above other considerations including the development of performance.
- Consistently promote positive aspects of the sport such as fair play and never condone rule violations or the use of prohibited or age-inappropriate substances.
- Report any suspected misconduct by club officials, coaches, technical officials, or anyone else licenced under UKA, to UKA or relevant home country athletics federation as soon as possible.

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2. Codes of Conduct: Coaches

Coaches play a crucial role in the development of athletics and in the lives of the athletes they coach. They have a unique position of trust in athletics and the need for coaches to understand and act on their responsibilities is vital, as is the need to promote participation for fun and enjoyment.

The codes of conduct for coaches reflect the principles of good coaching practice;

Responsibilities – professional standards

To maximise the benefits and minimise the risks to athletes, coaches must attain an appropriate level of competence through qualifications, and a commitment to ongoing training to ensure safe and correct practice.

Responsibilities – personal standards

Coaches must demonstrate proper personal behaviour and conduct at all times.

Rights

Coaches must respect and champion the rights of every individual to participate in sport and physical activity.

Relationships

Coaches must develop a positive relationship with their participants (and others) based on openness, honesty, mutual trust and respect.

1. Professional standards

As a responsible athletics Coach I will:

- 1.1 Abide by the UKA and the home country affiliated federations Child Safeguarding policy.
- 1.2 Abide by the UKA and the home country affiliated federations Adult Safeguarding Policy.
- 1.3 Keep my professional knowledge and skills up to date, be appropriately qualified and renew my coach licence as and when required by UKA.
- 1.4 Ensure I have obtained an acceptable criminal record check (DBS/Disclosure Scotland/Access NI) (a licence will not be issued to anyone who does not have an acceptable criminal records certificate or who refuses to share the certificate with UKA when required).
- 1.5 Ensure that activities I direct, or guide are appropriate for the age, maturity, experience and ability of the individual athlete.
- 1.6 Be aware of the current national and international regulations on anti-doping in sport. I will not assist, support or ignore practices, policies or procedures that contravene national or international anti-doping regulations.

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- 1.7 Never try to recruit, either overtly or covertly, athletes who are already receiving coaching. (If approached by an athlete receiving coaching refer immediately to the coach currently providing coaching support).
- 1.8 In circumstances where I need to demonstrate a technique through physical contact, always provide an explanation and seek consent before touching the athlete (never touch an athlete aged under 18 to demonstrate a technique without another adult being present).
- 1.9 Observe the recommended national guidance on coach/athlete ratios.

2. Personal standards

As a responsible athletics Coach I will:

- 2.1 Consistently promote positive aspects of the sport (e.g. fair play) and never condone rule violations or adopt or encourage the use of prohibited or age-inappropriate substances or techniques.
- 2.2 I must never engage in the massage of an athlete under the age of 18 years. I understand that I require an up to date and recognised qualification in sports massage or another relevant qualification from a recognised body or authority to engage in the massage of an athlete over 18 years.
- 2.3 Follow the relevant guidance for coaches on social media use.
- 2.4 Be aware that my attitude and behaviour directly affects the behaviour of athletes under my supervision.
- 2.5 Avoid swearing, abusive language and irresponsible or illegal behaviour including behaviour that is dangerous to me or others, acts of violence, bullying, harassment and physical and sexual abuse.
- 2.6 Avoid destructive behaviour and leave athletics venues as I find them.
- 2.7 Not carry or consume alcohol and/or illegal substances.
- 2.8 Avoid carrying any items that could be dangerous to me or others excluding athletics equipment used in the course of my athletics activity.
- 2.9 Challenge inappropriate behaviour and language by others and report any suspected misconduct by other coaches or other people involved in athletics to the Club, HCAF/UKA safeguarding team as soon as possible.

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3. Rights

As a responsible athletics Coach I will:

- 3.1 Provide coaching services without discrimination on grounds of age, gender, sexual, cultural, ethnic, disability or religious preference.
- 3.2 Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every athlete and treat everyone equally, regardless of background or ability.
- 3.3 Make the athlete's health and welfare my primary and overriding concern.
- 3.4 Respect the athlete's right to self-determination when deciding who they are coached by.
- 3.5 Respect the right of all athletes to an independent life outside of athletics.
- 3.6 Report any accidental injury, distress, misunderstanding or misinterpretation to the parents/carers and club Welfare officer as soon as possible.
- 3.7 Never exert undue influence to obtain personal benefit or reward.

4. Relationships

As a responsible athletics Coach I will:

- 4.1 At the outset clarify with athletes (and where appropriate, with parents or carers) exactly what it is that is expected of them and what athletes are entitled to expect from me.
- 4.2 Develop healthy and appropriate working relationships with athletes based on mutual trust and respect, especially with those athletes under 18 years or who are adults at risk.
- 4.3 Never conduct an intimate relationship with an athlete under 18 years of age (an intimate relationship with someone under 16 years is a criminal offence). A violation of this will result in a coach licence being withdrawn. It may also be a violation of my coaching licence to form an intimate personal relationship with an adult at risk coached by me or under my supervision.
- 4.4 Recognise that it is strongly recommended that I do not allow intimate relationships to develop between me and athletes I coach who are aged over 18 years.
- 4.5 Avoid spending time alone with young athletes (under 18) unless clearly in the view of other adults.
- 4.6 Ensure that parents/carers know and have given consent before taking a young athlete (under 18) away from the usual training venue.
- 4.7 Never take young athletes (under 18) alone in my vehicle.
- 4.8 Never invite a young athlete (under 18) alone into my home.

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- 4.9 Never share a bedroom with a young athlete (under 18).
- 4.10 Cooperate fully with others involved in the sport such as technical officials, team managers, other coaches, doctors, physiotherapists, sport scientists and representatives of the governing body in the best interests of the athlete.

Breach of the Codes of Conduct:

I understand that if I do not follow the Codes of Conduct, I may be in breach of the terms and conditions of my UKA licence and could be subject to disciplinary action and sanction by my Club, Home Country Athletics Federation and/or UKA:

I may:

- Receive a verbal warning.
- Receive a written warning.
- Be monitored by another coach.
- Be required to attend supplementary training.
- Be suspended by the Club/HCAF/UKA.
- Be required to leave or be sacked by the Club/HCAF/UKA.
- My UKA coaching licence may be withdrawn.
- I may be referred to DBS / Disclosure Scotland/AccessNI.

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3. Code of Conduct: Senior Athletes

As a responsible athlete I will:

- Respect the rights of every athlete, coach, technical official and others involved in athletics and treat everyone equitably.
- Uphold the same sporting values away from sport as I do when I am engaged in athletics.
- Participate within the rules of the sport, respect decisions of coaches and officials and demonstrate respect towards fellow athletes.
- Cooperate fully with others involved in the sport such as coaches, technical officials, team managers, doctors, physiotherapists, sport scientists and representatives of the governing body in my best interests and those of other athletes.
- Consistently promote positive aspects of the sport and never condone rule violations or the use of prohibited substances.
- Anticipate and be responsible for my own needs including being organised, having the appropriate equipment, and being on time.
- Inform my coach of any other coaching that I am seeking or receiving.
- Act with dignity and display courtesy and good manners towards others.
- Avoid swearing and abusive language whilst in athletic venues, at club functions and events, or when as part of a team/squad.
- Never engage in any inappropriate or illegal behaviour.
- Challenge and report inappropriate behaviour and language by others.
- Not misuse or abuse sporting equipment and venues.
- Not carry or consume alcohol or illegal substances.
- Maintain strict boundaries between friendship and intimacy with a coach or official.
- Use safe transport or travel arrangements.

Breach of the Codes of Conduct:

I understand that if I do not follow the Codes action can be taken by my club and I may:

- Be asked to apologise for my behaviour,
- Receive a verbal warning from my coach,
- Receive a verbal or written warning from the club committee,
- Be suspended from attending club training sessions,
- Be suspended from the club,
- Be required to leave the club.

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4. Code of Conduct: Children and Young People (under 18 years):

As a child or young person under 18 years,

I have the right to:

- Be safe, and protected
- Be listened to
- Be respected and treated fairly
- Be believed
- Ask for help
- Be coached by someone who has the right qualifications

As a young athlete I will respect the Code of Conduct and I will:

- Be friendly and supportive to other athletes.
- Keep myself safe.
- Tell my coach if I am ill or injured.
- Report inappropriate behaviour or risky situations to an adult.
- Compete fairly and respect other athletes and officials.
- Respect the rules of my club.
- Behave and listen to all instructions from my coach and officials.
- Take care of equipment owned or provided by the club, or training facility.
- Not use bad language or take part in inappropriate or illegal behaviour.
- Not bully anyone or pressure them to do things they do not want to, including online.
- Keep to agreed timings for all club activities.
- Tell my parents/carers where I am or if I'm going to be late.
- Not use my mobile phone during training, competitions, or in changing rooms.
- Not carry or consume alcohol or illegal substances.
- Use safe transport or travel arrangements.

Breach of the Codes of Conduct:

I understand that if I do not follow this Code action can be taken by my club and I may:

- Be asked to apologise for my behaviour,
- Receive a verbal warning from my coach,
- Receive a verbal or written warning from the club committee,
- Be suspended from attending club training sessions,
- Be suspended or required to leave the club,

Additionally: My club will always tell my parent/carer if I breach the Code of Conduct.

Athlete:	Parent/carer:
Name:	Name:
Signature:	Signature:
Date:	Date:

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5. Code of Conduct: Parent/Carer

As a responsible parent/carers of an athlete aged under 18 I will:

- Demonstrate respectful behaviour at all times.
- Set a good example and encourage my child to learn the rules of the sport and compete within them at all times.
- Help my child to recognise good performance, and not just results.
- Make athletics fun.
- Never force my child to take part in sport if they do not want to.
- Never punish or belittle my child for losing or making mistakes.
- Use correct and appropriate language at all times.
- Check the qualifications and licences of people who are coaching or managing my child, or offering a service connected to athletics such as physiotherapy, massage or nutritional advice.
- Know exactly where my child will be and who they will be with at all times.
- Assume responsibility for safe transportation of my child to and from training and competition.
- Return any necessary written consent forms to the club/team manager or appropriate person, including next of kin details, health and medical requirements before my child goes to any away events or trips.
- Provide any necessary medical information and medication that my child needs for training or trips away.
- Report any concerns about my child's (or any other child's) welfare to the Club Welfare Officer, or National Welfare Officer. (This does not affect your right to contact your local social services or the police if you feel it is necessary).

Good spectator behaviour:

I understand that inappropriate pressure on children, and poor behaviour of adult spectators can sometimes make children drop out of sport. I accept that this code promotes good spectator behaviour, and understand that if I verbally abuse children, coaches or officials action will be taken.

Breach of the Codes of Conduct:

I understand that if I do not follow the Code action can be taken by my club and I may:

- Be asked to apologise for my behaviour,
- Receive a verbal or written warning from the club committee/HCAF,
- Be suspended from attending club training sessions and events,
- Be suspended from the club,
- Be required to leave the club.

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6. Code of Conduct: Technical Officials

Officials play a vital role in the preparation and delivery of safe and high-quality athletics events.

The codes of conduct for Officials reflect the required standards of personal and professional conduct in that role.

Responsibilities – professional standards

To maximise the benefits and minimise the risks to participants, Officials must attain an appropriate level of competence through qualifications, and a commitment to ongoing training to ensure safe and correct practice.

Responsibilities – personal standards

Officials must demonstrate proper personal behaviour and conduct at all times.

Rights

Officials must respect and champion the rights of every individual to participate safely in sport and physical activity.

Relationships

Officials must develop positive relationships with participants (and others) based on openness, honesty, mutual trust and respect.

1. Professional standards

As a responsible technical official I will:

- Abide by the UKA and the home country affiliated federations Child Safeguarding policy.
- Abide by the UKA and the home country affiliated federations Adult Safeguarding Policy.
- Keep my professional knowledge and skills up to date, be appropriately qualified and renew my coach licence as and when required by UKA.
- Work in a spirit of cooperation with other officials and not interfere with their responsibilities.
- Offer guidance and support to less experienced officials whenever appropriate.
- Report any accidental injury, distress, misunderstanding or misinterpretation to the parents/carers and Club/Regional/National or UKA safeguarding officer as soon as possible.
- Challenge and report any inappropriate behaviour or suspected misconduct by other technical officials, coaches or other people involved in athletics to the Club, HCAF or UKA as soon as possible.

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2. Personal standards

As a responsible technical official I will:

- Never smoke or consume alcoholic whilst involved on officiating duties.
- Be fully prepared for the officiating task that is assigned to me.
- Dress appropriately, to the standard and nature of the competition as outlined by the relevant officials committee.
- Arrive in good time for the competition and report to the official in charge.
- Consistently promote positive aspects of the sport such as fair play and never condone rule violations or the use of prohibited or age-inappropriate substances.
- Avoid swearing and critical or abusive language or irresponsible behaviour, including behaviour that is dangerous to me or others, acts of violence, bullying, harassment and physical and sexual abuse.
- Avoid destructive behaviour and leave athletics venues as I find them.
- Avoid carrying any items that could be dangerous to me or others excluding athletics equipment used in the course of your athletics activity.
- Always explain why and ask for consent before touching an athlete.
- Work in same-sex pairs if supervising changing areas.

3. Rights

As a responsible technical official I will:

- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every athlete and others involved in athletics and treat everyone equally.
- Officiate without discrimination on grounds of age, gender, sexual, cultural, ethnic, disability or religious preference.
- Act with dignity and display courtesy and good manners towards others.
- Ensure the welfare and safety of the athletes under my supervision.
- Do not exert undue influence to obtain personal benefit or reward.
- Conduct the event in accordance with the rules and with due respect to the rights and welfare of the athletes.

4. Relationships

As a responsible technical official I will:

- Clarify with athletes (and where appropriate, with parents or carers) exactly what it is that is expected of them and what athletes are entitled to expect from me as an official.
- Encourage and guide athletes to accept responsibility for their own performance and behaviour.

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- Cooperate fully with others involved in the sport such as other technical officials, competition providers/organisers, team managers, coaches, and representatives of the governing body in the provision of fair and equitable conditions for the conduct of athletics events under the relevant rules of competition.
- Act in a decisive, objective but friendly manner in my interaction with other officials, athletes, coaches and spectators and carry out my duties in an efficient and non-abrasive manner.
- Strictly maintain a clear boundary between friendship and intimacy with athletes and will not conduct inappropriate relationships with athletes.
- In particular, I MUST NOT allow an intimate personal relationship to develop between me and any athlete aged under 18 years (Any violation of this will result in a technical official's licence being withdrawn. It is a criminal offence to conduct a such a relationship with an athlete aged under 16 years). (It may also be a violation of a technical official's licence to form an intimate personal relationship with an adult at risk)
- It is also strongly recommended that you do not allow intimate relationships to develop between yourself and athletes judged by you aged over 18 years
- Avoid spending time alone with young athletes unless clearly in the view of others.
- Never take a young athletes alone in my vehicle.
- Never invite a young athlete alone into my home, hotel or boarding room.
- Never share a bedroom with a child.

Breach of the Codes of Conduct:

I understand that if I do not follow the Code of Conduct the following sanctions(s) may be taken by my club, Home Country Governing Body and/or UKA:

I may:

- Receive a verbal warning.
- Receive a verbal or written warning.
- Be required to attend supplementary safeguarding training.
- Be suspended by the Club/HCAF/UKA.
- Be required to leave or be sacked by the Club/HCAF/UKA.
- My UKA Technical Official's may be withdrawn.
- I may be referred to DBS / Disclosure Scotland / AccessNI.

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7. Club Welfare Officer: Roles & Responsibilities.

A Club Welfare Officer (CWO) with the support of the club committee has the responsibility to:

- Implement effective child safeguarding policy and procedures and keep them up to date.
- Implement effective adult safeguarding policy and procedures and keep them up to date.
- Promote safeguarding at the club and encourage good practice.
- Respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns.
- Regularly report to the club’s organising committee on safeguarding matters.
- Ensure that members of the clubs volunteers/staff who are working with children and/or adults at risk are recruited safely and in line with legal requirements.
- Maintain records of safeguarding training attended by club members.
- Maintain records of club coaches and officials’ licences and criminal records checks.
- Make sure the sports volunteers/staff, parents/carers, adults, and children are aware of:
 - How to contact the CWO
 - The Code of Conduct for working with children/adults at risk
 - How to respond to safeguarding concerns
- Deal effectively with breaches of the Code of Conduct, poor practice, or allegations of abuse.
- Keep up to date with developments in safeguarding.
- Attend the relevant safeguarding courses for the role of CWO.
- Complete a criminal records check through the relevant home country procedures.
- Maintain confidential records of reported safeguarding concerns and action taken.
- Liaise with the HCAF Welfare Officer and/or statutory agencies if/when required.

Person Specification:

It is desirable for a club welfare officer to:

- Have an interest in safeguarding and welfare matters.
- Be friendly and approachable with the ability to communicate well with adults and children.
- Be willing to challenge opinion, where necessary, and to drive the safeguarding agenda.
- Have strong listening skills and the ability to deal with sensitive situations with empathy and integrity.
- Have an understanding of the importance of confidentiality and when information may need to be shared in order to protect the best interests of a child or an adult at risk.
- Have the confidence and ability to manage situations relating to the poor conduct/behaviour of others towards a child or an adult at risk and know when to ask for support.

Breach of the Codes of Conduct:

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- Receive a verbal warning.
- Receive a verbal or written warning.
- Be required to attend supplementary safeguarding training.
- Be suspended by the Club/HCAF/UKA.
- Be required to leave or be sacked by the Club/HCAF/UKA.
- I may be referred to DBS / Disclosure Scotland / AccessNI.

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