

Member Protection Policy

Aim of the Policy

Our aim is to create an environment in which all athletes and their parent(s), guardian, responsible adult, carer, closest relative; can feel confident that our Athletic Club is providing a safe and wholesome setting for all participants in the sport of athletics.

As a club, we can support and offer advice to every athlete, coach, helper, official and officer of the club in order to protect them from neglect, exploitation and abuse.

All suspicions and allegations of abuse against young athletes and vulnerable adults will be responded to, and followed up appropriately in accordance with this policy and local Area Child Protection Policy guidelines and procedures.

Key Principles

- All people under the age of 18 years are defined as children for the purpose of this policy.
- All children and vulnerable adults regardless of their gender, racial origin, culture, ability, religious belief and sexual orientation have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and will be responded to by any officer of the club, who through the Club's welfare officers will refer the matter to the Social Services Department and or relevant authority in whose area the incident or suspicion occurred.
- All coaches and officers who come into active contact with children will be subject to a police reference.

Code of Practice for people working in Athletics with children and vulnerable adults

- Avoid, when possible, situations when you and an individual child or vulnerable adult are alone.
- Avoid physical contact. Teach techniques by demonstration.
- Coaches are expected to hold appropriate qualifications recognised by UK Athletics. Otherwise, they must work under the direct supervision of a qualified coach.
- Adults should never over-criticise young and vulnerable athletes, or use language or actions which may cause children or vulnerable adults to lose self-esteem or confidence.
- Coaches and adults should not take unrelated children or vulnerable adults to their (i.e., the coach or adults) home. Permission must be obtained from the child's parent or guardian for car

journeys. The presence of a further person should be sought. It is sensible to seat any child in the rear of the car.

- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in all conversations, so coaches and adults must not give children or vulnerable adults a promise or expectation of confidentiality.

Actions to be taken by Welfare Officers of Mansfield Harriers & Athletic Club, or in their absence, any officer of the club.

- Advise the child or vulnerable adult that you will not be able to maintain confidentiality.
- Listen to the child or vulnerable adult rather than question him/her.
- Never stop a child or vulnerable adult who is freely recalling significant events.
- Make a note of what is said, taking care to record the time, date, setting and people present.
- Any person with a suspicion or allegation of child abuse shall report to the Welfare Officers or any club officer who should without delay, refer the matter to the police where the alleged incident occurred. The person reporting the suspicions or making the allegations must be prepared to speak to the Social Services to clarify their concerns.
- Any person suspected of abusing a child or vulnerable adult should not be approached by another member of the Club concerning the abuse issue.
- Other Club officials should deal with matters if the person who would otherwise deal with the matter is compromised by a relationship or friendship with the person against whom the suspicion has emerged.
- Any child, parent or person is encouraged to contact the Social Services or the police local to them, directly, without referring the matter to the Welfare Officers of the Club.
- Any coach or member of the club who has been accused of abusing a child or vulnerable adult will be suspended by the Club "without prejudice" pending the investigation.

Definitions of Abuse

- **Physical Abuse.** Occasions when adults or other children deliberately inflict injuries upon a child or vulnerable adult, or knowingly do not prevent such injuries. This could include the nature of the intensity of training or competition. Offering alcohol or drugs.
- **Emotional Abuse.** Where adults or other children fail to show due care or attention or threaten, use sarcasm, taunt or shout at a child or vulnerable adult causing them to lose confidence, self-

esteem and become nervous or withdrawn.

- **Neglect.** Where adults fail to provide help and care to the child or vulnerable adult. This also includes leaving a child or vulnerable adult without proper supervision or placing the child or vulnerable adult at risk of injury.
- **Sexual Abuse.** Where adults or children use children or vulnerable adults to fulfil their sexual needs.
- The coach, volunteer, official or Officer of the Club may be placed in a position of trust by the child or vulnerable adult who may feel able to disclose incidents which have occurred at school or at home. These must be taken seriously and referred immediately to the Social Service Department.

The Approval

Mansfield Harriers & Athletic Club Committee reviewed and approved this Policy: August 2025.

Welfare Officers & Contact

You can find these on the Harriers website along with a contact form for any child or vulnerable adult protection/welfare issues: <https://www.mansfieldharriers.co.uk/safeguarding-welfare-wellbeing>