

Practical guidelines for volunteers working with children, young people and those who are vulnerable.

Who Is this guidance for?

This guidance is for anyone volunteering in the sport of athletics. Paid staff within the sport who work with children and vulnerable adults may require additional and/or more formal training, depending on their role.

Reading and understanding this material is required in order to become an Athletics NZ Community Volunteer Member, this membership is compulsory for centre team managers at national events.

Some guidelines to remember.

As an adult, it is your responsibility to establish and maintain clear professional boundaries with children and young people in sport. The following outlines good practice and how to establish boundaries in a range of situations.

Please read and understand these guidelines, and if you have any questions, feel free to contact the Athletics NZ Child Protection Officer.

1. Always act, and be seen to act, in the child's best interests
2. Do not intimidate, bully, humiliate, threaten, pressure or undermine a child
3. Ensure that language is age appropriate when talking to children
4. Create a safe and open environment for children that also reduces the risk to staff and volunteers
5. Avoid situations that may lead to questions being raised over your motivations and intentions
6. Avoid private or unobserved situations with a child. Always have another adult present or at least another athlete
7. Ensure that all physical contact with children is relevant and appropriate to the activity being undertaken
8. Do not engage in communication with a child on a one-on-one basis through social media, texting other than for relevant coach/athlete feedback or administration.
9. Do not drink alcohol in the presence of children and never offer alcohol to children

Key Definitions

Bullying is repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed towards a person or a group of people that can have a significant impact on them. It may create a risk to their physical and/or mental health and safety. The person or people acting in this way may not intend to cause harm or may not see their behaviour as bullying.

Child A child is a person under the age of 14.

Child abuse is the harming (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person.

Vulnerability is situational. An adult may be vulnerable to abuse for a number of reasons,

Young person A person of or over the age of 14 years but under 18 years.

NB; For the purposes of these guidelines, the word child encompasses children, young people, and vulnerable adults.