

## GUIDELINES FOR TEAM MANAGERS AND OTHER TEAM VOLUNTEERS WHO ARE WORKING WITH YOUNG ATHLETES

This resource has been developed to support club and centre team managers and other team volunteers travelling with teams of young people and children, to provide a safe and positive environment.

### Why is this important?

Athletics team managers and other volunteers are uniquely placed to see what is happening with children and young people. You have a vital role to play in their future and you can have an impact that lasts a lifetime.

Childhood sporting experiences should be positive, and it is our responsibility to provide an environment that is safe, positive and enables children to flourish.

While we aim to provide a safe environment and have the necessary preventative measures in place, we acknowledge that concerns about a child or young person's wellbeing may still arise. These guidelines are part of a collaborative approach to creating safe environments for both children or young people and team managers and other volunteers.

Our guidelines around safeguarding children and young people in athletics is based on core principles which align with Sport NZ's Safe Sport for Children policy and Athletics NZ's Member protection regulation:

- Children and young people have the right to have fun and be safe in their activities
- Children and young people should feel respected, valued, and encouraged to enjoy their participation in athletics and to reach their full potential
- Athletics New Zealand, centres, member clubs, coaches, and team managers; as leaders, organisers, and deliverers of athletics, have a duty of care when it comes to children and young people and should take steps to ensure that children and young people can participate safely in the activities we provide
- Athletics activities are uniquely placed to contribute to safeguarding and the welfare of children. Team managers and other team volunteers have a responsibility to be a good role model and to be a listening ear if a child or young person has a concern

### Who is this guidance for?

This resource is relevant for all athletics team managers and other volunteers of teams working with children and young people, whether club based or representative. For clarification this is any team where any member is aged under 18.

When working with children and young people in sport, we need to be aware of the position of trust we are in. There is a power imbalance between us as a person in authority and those who look up to us. We are role models, and we need to acknowledge this and have clear guidelines with personal and professional boundaries.

When travelling with any teams, always conduct yourself professionally around children and young people. We also need to be able to recognise and respond safely to signs of abuse and neglect of children and young people.

All team managers should have completed the Athletics NZ accredited coach, community coach or community volunteer process before being appointed.

## Have all team administration sorted prior to travel

Before departing on a trip with children or young people, managers should know who they are dealing with. Parents/caregivers should sign a consent form giving permission for their child to attend the event. Make sure that the following information for each child or young person is completed:

- Contact details for parents/caregivers and another emergency contact.
- Any medical, dietary, mobility or religious requirements that can impact the child or young person's health and wellbeing while on the trip, and awareness of any medical treatments that may be necessary.
- If a medical condition has been indicated, ensure they have sufficient medication for the whole trip plus a little extra. If they need an EpiPen, make sure it has been supplied and you know where it is and how to use it.
- Approved medical treatment if needed without immediate parental consent, such as taking painkillers, or emergency procedures as required.
- Parental or caregiver consent to photographs and videos being taken of the child or young person. Or if the parent or caregivers declines to give consent then this must be known too.
- Any concerns that the parent or caregiver may have about the child or young person attending this trip. Including any care and protection orders that may be in place.

Note: The above list is not exhaustive.

## Supervision

Children and young people need a reasonable level of supervision. Children under the age of 14 should not be left unsupervised, except in clearly defined circumstances and with the knowledge and permission of the children's parents. Be aware that you need to do your best to supervise everyone at all times. Counting children and young people frequently will help effective supervision, a buddy system can work well also.

We have a duty of care to our children and young people to ensure they are under the responsibility of an appropriate adult. Children and young people should be signed in and out of a team environment, making it clear who has that responsibility. When working with young people in a team environment, ensure you have written parental permission advising that they are allowed to travel home from the competition by themselves, or with a named person.

Ensure you have the correct ratio of adults to children, including enough adults in case someone has to deal with an emergency or gets sick. For mixed gender teams there should be an equal mix of adult supervisors.

Immediately address any rough, bullying or sexually inappropriate behaviour.

It is safe working practice to avoid being alone with a child or young person as much as possible. There may be times when a team manager needs to speak directly to an athlete regarding performance or behaviour. As much as possible this should be done with another adult present. If one-to-one situations are unavoidable, take precautions such as leaving a door open, or telling another adult what is happening. Make sure all adults in your team are aware of the guidelines regarding supervision.

## Overnight Stays

Overnight and weekend away events offer valuable team experiences for children and young people but these activities need to be managed responsibly to ensure children and young people are safe guarded and parents / caregivers are confident that their child's wellbeing is central to the event.

Motels, hotels, hostels and campgrounds place children and young people in a public environment which poses a greater risk to children and young people that must be assessed and action taken to reduce that risk.

Do the windows and doors lock properly? Consider using accommodation with internal access only.

If possible, negotiate with the accommodation provider for the whole team to stay in one floor or wing. If this is not possible, groups of similar ages should be clustered in rooms near each other with at least two supervising adults.

Violent and adult only movies should be disabled on televisions.  
Minibars should be unavailable in rooms where children or young people are.

Where teams are staying in venues which serve alcohol, children should always remain accompanied by two adults. For instance, when children are put to bed, two adults should remain in their own rooms close at hand. Children should know not to open the door to people who are not part of their team.

Rooming arrangement standards will be mandated:

- Children and young people sharing rooms should be of a similar age and must be same gender.
- Everyone needs their own bed; sharing a bed is not approved of.
- Privacy to get changed and use the bathroom.
- Team meetings to be held in a communal area or accommodation conference/meeting room preferably

Be clear with your team members where they should be and what areas are not accessible to them. Children should not be wandering alone in common areas where the general public may also be enjoying the accommodation.

Athletes, team managers, parents and/or caregivers will be informed of the standards and details of the team accommodation including; who their child or young person is sharing a room with, the address and contact of the accommodation, and the contact number of the team manager and/or volunteer also staying at the accommodation.

All children and young people should be given a code of conduct of expected behaviour. This should include who they can talk with if they feel unsafe or uncomfortable while away or travelling and how they can get hold of these people (for example, a number to text, or face-to-face contact).

Ensure all activities relate to the event or your planned programme. Do not detour to other venues that weren't stated to parents/caregivers.

When considering your team managers and volunteers try to ensure there is an appropriate level of skill or knowledge for the activities being planned. At least one adult should hold current first aid certification.

## Keep your personal life separate

Be mindful that you are a role model for the children and young people you interact with. Some information about your personal life is inappropriate for children and young people to be exposed to. Maintain a friendly but professional manner at all times. This extends to social media. We recommend club team managers and other team volunteers do not add children or young people under the age of 16 as 'Friends' on social media. If social media is your main form of communication with your team, it is

more appropriate to add the child or young person's parents or caregivers and loop them in on the communication.

## Photographs and video

Capturing photos and videos of children and young people is an established way of celebrating achievements and promoting the activity or sport. Team managers and other team volunteers use photographs and videos to provide memories of the experience for both athletes and their parents and whānau. Key guidelines include:

- Written consent must be obtained from parents or caregivers before any filming or photography of anyone under the age of 18 can take place. Verbal consent alone cannot be accepted. Before travelling with a team made up of children and young people, club administration should inform you if there are any children or young people who are not allowed to be photographed, otherwise be sure to check with them.
- Make sure that any official photographer at the event is also aware of what competition number(s) should not be included in photographs.
- Do not publish photographs with the full name(s) of children or young people unless you have written parental consent and you have informed the children, young person, parents, or caregivers and whānau how the photograph will be used.
- Do not use images of children or young people and detailed personal information in publications, including websites or blogs.
- Photography in changing rooms, toilets and showers is not allowed under any circumstances
- Images should focus on the activity or technique, rather than individual children or young people.

## Changing Rooms and Toilets

All children and young people must be safe in changing facilities where they may be particularly vulnerable to bullying and abuse. Responsible adults will keep children safe and respect appropriate boundaries. It is important to consider the facilities that are available, who can access them and whether the environment is safe for children and young people.

We know that children and young people are particularly vulnerable in changing areas. Due in part to various stages of dress/undress and because they are often less supervised than at other times. There is a risk of child-to-child/young person-to-young person problems, such as bullying if the changing room is left unsupervised.

The following procedures can help to reduce the risk of misconduct or abuse in changing facilities:

- Children/young people should be encouraged to use changing facilities as a small group if other members of the public have access at the same time as your team.
- Changing facilities should not be used by adults and children/young people at the same time. Where this is unavoidable, there should be access to separate changing, showering and toilet areas. Under no circumstances should adults be undressed in front of children/young people in changing rooms.
- If disabled children and young people need to use changing facilities, make sure they are accessible and that the disabled child or young person and their caregiver or whānau are involved in deciding if and how they should be assisted. Make sure the child can consent to the assistance that is offered.
- The use of mobile phones and/or photographic equipment with video recording capabilities is not acceptable in changing facilities under any circumstance.

- Where no changing facilities are available, children/young people should be made aware of this prior to the activity taking place and team managers should ensure the athlete is changed and ready before leaving for an event.
- Team managers and other volunteers should be discouraged from entering changing facilities unless it is absolutely necessary.

## Alcohol and Drugs

Team managers and volunteers should not consume alcohol or drugs while in a position of responsibility for children or young people and must not offer alcohol or drugs to children or young people under any circumstances. Team managers and volunteers must be fit to drive and free from any drugs, alcohol, or medicine which is likely to impair judgement and/or the ability to drive.

## Travel

Travelling alone with a child or young person exposes you to risk as a volunteer. During any travel to and from a competition as part of a club or representative team, children and young people should sit in the back seat. Any team manager or volunteer transporting children or young people as part of team travel must have a full clean driver's license and their vehicle showing a current WOF.

When travelling with teams made up of children, the team manager should be sure to have a process in place for every location throughout the trip that ensures children are safe, supervised and accounted for.

For more information or if you have any concerns, Athletics NZ has an appointed Child Protection Officer, who is the person of contact for any questions related to child safety.

### Athletics NZ Child Protection Officer

Fiona Maisey  
Young People's Lead  
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**Definitions of words used in these guidelines.**

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

**Codes of Conduct** are the standards of behaviour and interaction Athletics NZ expect every person in a Position of Trust with a child or young person to follow. Our Codes of Conduct are in a separate document to this policy, and all staff and volunteers will be inducted into these standards

**Duty of Care** ensuring our actions (or omissions) do not harm someone else and protect them from risk or harm

**Position of Trust** describes the relationships where an adult (18 years or older) or a peer (e.g. Young Leader) has, or is perceived to have, power, influence or authority towards a child or young person (under 18 years), by the nature of their role or duties within the organisation. As a result, the power and influence over children and young people can be used to manipulate and abuse

**Safeguarding** refers to a risk-reducing approach and the steps taken to support wellbeing and prevention of harm to a child/young person

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