

**INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION
AMERICAN FOOTBALL**

GUIDELINES FOR SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

1. OPENING STATEMENT

1.1. IFAF acknowledges the duty of care owed by Members to protect safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. IFAF believes that all young people and adults involved in sport, and in particular the sport of Football, have the right to participate in a fair, safe and quality atmosphere free from abuse or exploitation. That right is paramount to all other considerations and is enshrined in the United Nations convention on the Rights of the Child.

1.2. IFAF considers that all people, especially children have a lot to gain from sport. These benefits will increase through a positive and progressive approach to the involvement in football that places the needs of the individual first and winning the competition second. Winning and losing are an important part of our sport but they must be kept in a healthy perspective. A child centred approach to children's football will return many benefits in terms of the health and wellbeing of our future adult participants.

1.3 IFAF aims to ensure that regardless of age, gender, religion or beliefs, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or socio-economic background, all people participating in football activities organised or conducted by or on behalf of Members:

1.3.1 Do so in a safe, positive and child and person-centred environment;

1.3.2 Are protected from physical or mental abuse, maltreatment, violence and exploitation.

1.4. IFAF acknowledges that some children and adults, including people with disabilities, young people or those from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse. IFAF acknowledges the duty of Members and Continental Federations to take all reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure the welfare of all participants.

1.5. These Guidelines apply to and bind all Members, Continental Federations, IFAF Employees and Volunteers who are all deemed to have agreed to be bound by and to comply with these Guidelines.

2. THE SAFEGUARDING AIM

2.1. IFAF is committed to ensuring that the safeguarding practices of its Members and Continental Federations reflect and comply with all applicable statutory responsibilities and this IFAF guidance. Their practices should also comply with current standards of best practice and the UNICEF International Safeguards for Children in Sport.

2.2. IFAF's intention is to:

2.2.1. Raise awareness of the need to safeguard the paramount right of children and vulnerable adults to participate in football safely and free from abuse or exploitation; and

2.2.2. Assist Members and Continental Committees in developing their own child protection and safeguarding policies if required,

2.3. These Guidelines have been designed to provide guidance to all Members, Continental Federations, IFAF Employees and Volunteers in order that they may adopt and implement safeguarding policies which meet IFAF's desire to uphold and further the fundamental rights of all participants, specifically children.

2.4. IFAF requires all Members and Continental Federations to adopt and/or demonstrate their commitment to the principles and practice of safeguarding as outlined in these Guidelines, by implementing comprehensive policies and appropriate practices which are consistent with the values set out in these Guidelines.

3. THE PRINCIPLES

3.1. All Members and Continental Committees providing services or activities for Children should have a written safeguarding policy that is accessible to and easily understood by all and actively promoted. The safeguarding policy should be approved and endorsed by the relevant management body of the Member and Continental Federation and reviewed appropriately.

3.2. Taking into account the areas of risk for children and vulnerable adults in sport and the views of children, parents/carers and staff, a safeguarding policy must promote and prioritise the safety, individual needs, equality, integrity and wellbeing of participants in accordance with paragraphs 1.1 to 1.4 (inclusive) of the Opening Statement to these Guidelines. The additional risks some people are exposed to because of their race, gender, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, social background or culture should be recognised in any assessment.

3.3. In compiling their safeguarding policies, Members and Continental Committees should include clear and easily understood procedures relating to:

3.3.1. expected standards of adult behaviour towards Children (including a Members' code of conduct, an explanation of discrimination and abusive behaviour, how to deal with unacceptable behaviour by or towards Children, the use of sanctions/discipline and positive ways of managing the behaviour of children that do not involve physical punishment or any other form of degrading or humiliating treatment, and are age and gender appropriate.);

3.3.2. identifying signs of abuse, bullying, psychological stress, burnout and dropout (including appropriate definitions and/or indicators of such behaviour);

3.3.3. taking Children and vulnerable adults away on trips, tours or to tournaments (including in relation to transport arrangements, insurance cover, venue safety);

3.3.4. the use of photographic, mobile equipment, information technology and social media (such as email and the internet);

3.3.5. what action should be taken on a step by step basis in the event of any incident, report or grounds for concern about abuse (including any relevant contact details for local police, social services departments etc);

3.3.6. making and dealing with complaints about abuse by individual(s) subject to clear timescales and incorporating any disciplinary procedures (where appropriate) as well as appeal procedures;

3.3.7. providing appropriate support to the individual(s) who raise, report or disclose concerns or incidents of abuse (on an anonymous basis or otherwise);

3.3.8. ensuring the appointment of a single person (with a clearly defined role in relation to safeguarding) for the implementation and subsequent management and review of the safeguarding regime at each Member and ensure that every group and individual member of the Member is aware who this person is and how to contact them;

3.3.9. assessing the suitability of all individuals that have contact with Children and vulnerable adults (including requiring a self-declaration to be completed, obtaining at least 2 references and evidence of identity and carrying out all checks with any relevant authority);

3.3.10. ensuring that all individuals acting for and on behalf of and/or with Members (whether as an employee, referee, coach, volunteer, parent helper, contractor, agent or otherwise) and their members themselves understand their role and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and any code of conduct and are provided with appropriate training opportunities regarding the policy, the code of conduct and how to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to young people and vulnerable adults;

3.3.11. ensuring that staff and volunteers with special responsibilities in relation to safeguarding receive appropriate training on recruitment practice, complaints and disciplinary processes and update their knowledge and understanding generally;

3.3.12. the secure storing of confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns;

3.3.13. ensuring that all safeguarding arrangements (including training), procedures and policies are monitored, reviewed and updated as appropriate including where there is a major change in any relevant law or customs, guidance, experience or needs; and

3.3.14. amending, as necessary, its constitution to reflect its responsibility for overseeing the adoption and implementation of these Guidelines and ensuring its members are fully signed up to its constitution.

4. IMPLEMENTATION

4.1. These Guidelines will be widely promoted and circulated by IFAF in the following ways:

4.1.1. The Guidelines will be included in IFAF Employee handbook (or equivalent paper or electronic document);

4.1.2. The Guidelines will be highlighted in all IFAF Employee staff and Volunteer inductions carried out by or on behalf of IFAF;

4.1.3. A copy of these Guidelines will be publicly available on IFAF's website and copies will also be available from IFAF Secretary.

4.2. Members and Continental Committees must adhere to these Guidelines, adopting safeguarding policies that meet and implement the Principles. Adherence to the Guidelines is a condition of organising or hosting an International Event and for receiving grant aid from IFAF.

4.3. IFAF Employees and Volunteers must, where appropriate, adopt practices and behaviours that accord with these Principles.

4.4. While this document sets out Guidelines, failure to implement a safeguarding policy that accords with the Principles set out above may have implications and/or consequences. IFAF Board reserves its rights to take such steps as it considers appropriate to ensure these Guidelines are implemented.

5. MONITORING

5.1. IFAF Board will review these Guidelines on the first anniversary of their adoption.

5.2. Thereafter, IFAF Board will review the Guidelines every two years or at such time as the IFAF Board deems appropriate.

APPENDIX ONE

DEFINITIONS

Articles mean the Articles of Association of IFAF, as amended from time to time.

Abuse means the commission or omission of acts that lead to a child experiencing or being exposed to Harm.

Board means the board of directors of IFAF, elected pursuant to the Articles.

Child means any person under 18 years of age.

Child Protection is a set of activities that are required for specific children who are at risk of/or are suffering significant harm.

Continental Federation means a Continental federation established in accordance with the Articles.

Harm means the negative impact or consequences of an act or omission upon a child or vulnerable adult

IFAF Employee means all of IFAF's constituent bodies, officers, employees, consultants and appointees (including without limitation and person holding any IFAF appointment or sitting on any IFAF board, committee or panel), and all persons and entities participating in IFAF activity.

Guidelines mean these guidelines, as amended from time to time.

IFAF means the International Federation of American Football..

International Event means a duly-sanctioned game, competition or event contested by national representative teams under the jurisdiction of different National Associations or by teams representing different Continental Federations.

Member means an entity that has been admitted as a full member or as an associate member of IFAF in accordance with the Articles.

National Federation means a national governing body of Football.

Football means the sort of football and other derivatives of the game as determined by IFAF Board from time to time.

Principles has the meaning given to that word in clause 3.

Safeguarding means the actions we take to ensure all children are safe from Harm when involved in our activities.

Violence means the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation [WHO 2002 World Report on Violence and Health].

Volunteer means a person who provides services or assistance to or works for or on behalf of IFAF on a committee/panel or at an International Event or in any other way, and who is not an IFAF Employee.

Vulnerable adult means a person aged 18 years or over who is, or may be, in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or maybe unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation. This may also include someone who is homeless, or is in the criminal justice system, and may be receiving support from local statutory agencies.