



# Best Practice Document

To provide everybody with the best possible experience and opportunities in athletics it is important that everyone operates within an accepted ethical framework and demonstrates exemplary behaviour. This document is to assist all club members to identify best practice and poor practice. Children very rarely make false allegations however, clear and concise policies for best practice will offer safeguards for both children and those working with them. It further considers the needs of adult athletes and the responsibility of all club members to offer a welcoming and equal environment to all members and address any issues of discrimination and harassment.

**Best practice with children means: -**

- Being open and conducting all interactions with children in a public place and with appropriate consent.
- Avoiding situations where you are alone with one child
- If you have to meet or coach one child ensure it is conducted in an open environment, and where full consent and emergency contact details have been provided.
- If you are travelling alone with a child gain appropriate consent, avoid consistently having one child alone with you in the car and never sharing a room on your own with a child,
- Challenging bullying, harassment, foul or provocative language or controlling behaviour that could upset individuals or reduce them to tears.
- Never ignoring bullying by parents, coaches or children. Listening to and supporting the person being bullied.
- Maintaining an appropriate relationship with children; this means treating people fairly, with respect and avoiding favouritism.
- Being friendly and open and ensuring that relationships are appropriate for someone in a position of power and trust.
- Respecting all athletes and helping them to take responsibility for their own development and decision making.
- Never taking or allowing inappropriate photographs of children
- Avoiding unnecessary physical contact. In certain circumstances physical contact is perfectly acceptable and appropriate, as long as it is not intrusive or

disturbing to the athlete and that consent for contact has been given by the individual and appropriate parental consent.

- Being qualified and insured for the activities you are coaching and ensuring that your licence remains valid. Ensure that your practice is appropriate for the age and development stage of each athlete.

**Best practice with adults means:**

- Treating everyone equally and ensuring sessions are inclusive, regardless of ability
- Coaches will do their utmost to accommodate disability
- Discrimination or harassment of any athlete is not acceptable and will be dealt with accordingly
- Respecting adult athletes and being aware of any vulnerability

**The following are examples of poor practice and should be avoided:**

- Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games including horseplay.
- A coach shouting comments at athletes when they are not working hard enough.
- A coach using harassing and discriminatory language such as 'you run like a girl'
- A coach engaging in an intimate relationship with one of his/her athletes.
- A group of athletes ganging up on a new athlete and refusing to talk to him/her.
- A coach taking a group of children away to a weekend event on his/her own.
- Criticising or intimidating a less able athlete
- Excluding athletes because they do not meet the expectations of the coach

**The list above is not exhaustive and many other examples exist.**

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