



International
Handball
Federation

XXX. Safeguarding Policy

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Article 1

1. Introduction

1. The International Handball Federation (IHF) as the world governing body for handball is committed to making the sport of handball a safe environment.
2. This Safeguarding Policy is to ensure the creation of a safe environment where everyone can train, participate and compete in an environment that is respectful, equitable and free from all forms of harassment and abuse.
3. This Safeguarding Policy is supported by Article 1.4 of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Code of Ethics.
4. This Safeguarding Policy is supported by Article 5 of the IHF Ethics Code which states: *"Safeguarding the dignity of the individual is a fundamental requirement of the IHF. All forms of harassment in handball be it physical, professional, verbal, mental or sexual are prohibited. There shall be no discrimination in handball on the basis of race, gender, ethnic origin, colour, culture, religion, political opinion, marital status, sexual orientation or other grounds."*



Article 2

2. Definitions

The International Handball Federation has adopted the definitions of abuse and harassment as set out in the *International Olympic Committee consensus statement: harassment and abuse (non-accidental violence) in sport* published on 26 April 2016 and in the *International Olympic Committee consensus statement: interpersonal violence and safeguarding in sport* published on 25 November 2024. Other definitions are included as well.

1. **Bullying:** Bullying (or cyberbullying, if conducted online) is unwanted, repeated and intentional, aggressive behaviour usually among peers, and can involve a real or perceived power imbalance. Bullying can include actions such as making threats, spreading rumours or falsehoods, attacking someone physically or verbally and deliberately excluding someone.
2. **Child:** Every human being below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, the majority is attained earlier.
3. **Child abuse/maltreatment:** Child abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.
4. **Discrimination:** Unequal treatment of an individual based on their personal characteristics such as race, gender, ethnic origin, colour, culture, religion, political opinion, marital status, sexual orientation or other grounds.

5. **Emotional abuse:** Any act or treatment that may cause emotional harm and undermines a person's sense of well-being, including persistent criticism, denigration or the imposition of unrealistic expectations on vulnerable groups, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation or use of threats.
6. **Event:** Any competition recognised by the International Handball Federation as per Appendix 1 of the IHF Player Eligibility Code, including, on an exceptional basis, international friendly matches.
7. **Focal Point:** An individual trained by a Safeguarding Officer to act as the point of contact during an Event in the absence of a Safeguarding Officer.
8. **Hazing:** An organised, usually team-based, form of bullying in sport, involving degrading and hazardous initiation of new team members by veteran team members.
9. **Interpersonal violence:** The intentional use of physical force or power against other persons by an individual or small group of individuals. It can occur online, be perpetrated by different actors and take different forms.
10. **Neglect:** Neglect includes a failure to provide a vulnerable player with an adequate standard of nutrition, medical care, clothing, shelter or supervision to the extent that the health or development of the player is significantly impaired or placed at serious risk. A vulnerable adult player is neglected if they are left uncared for over long periods of time or abandoned.
11. **Participant:** Any person involved directly or indirectly in handball as referred to in Article 3 of the Ethics Code and Article 2 of the Statutes.
12. **Physical abuse:** This is correlated to physical violence and could include forced or mandated inappropriate physical activity (e.g. age-inappropriate or physical-inappropriate training loads; when injured or in pain); forced alcohol consumption; or systematic doping practices.
13. **Physical violence:** Physical violence is an act attempting to cause, or resulting in, pain and/or physical injury and physical violence includes beating, burning, kicking, punching, biting, maiming or killing, or the use of objects or weapons.
14. **Psychological violence:** The regular and deliberate use of a range of words and non-physical actions used with the purpose to manipulate, hurt, weaken or frighten a person mentally and emotionally; and/or distort, confuse or influence a person's thoughts and actions within their everyday lives, changing their sense of self and harming their wellbeing. In sport, it could also take the form of non-physical actions that could cause physical or psychological harm to the athlete. Psychological violence could occur online and offline in different forms.
15. **Safeguarding concern:** Any allegations of prohibited conduct as defined in Article 5 of this Safeguarding Policy, or any concern, incident, suspicion, action, behaviour or failure to act in a way that caused, is causing or may cause abuse or harassment.
16. **Safeguarding Officer:** The Safeguarding Officer is a person holding the Safeguarding Officer certification from the International Olympic Committee or from an organisation recognised by the International Olympic Committee.
17. **Sexual violence (includes sexual harassment):** Any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the person affected, in

any setting including but not limited to home and work. The different forms of sexual violence can occur both online and in person.



Article 3

3. Scope of Application

1. This Safeguarding Policy is applicable for:
 - a. all forms of handball: indoor, beach and wheelchair;
 - b. all Events as defined in Article 2.6;
 - c. all Participants as defined in Article 2.11;
 - d. all alleged incidents of harassment and abuse.
2. This Safeguarding Policy is applicable for all safeguarding concerns that have taken place at any time in the past or present.



Article 4

4. National Federations and Continental Confederations

1. Every National Federation and Continental Confederation must ensure the application of the IHF Safeguarding Policy and guarantee that the handball environment is free from abuse and harassment.
2. Every National Federation and Continental Confederation shall develop its own Safeguarding Policy in accordance with local laws and the IHF Safeguarding Policy. In case of discrepancies between the Safeguarding Policies, the IHF Safeguarding Policy shall prevail; the same will apply if the National Federation and/or the Continental Confederation does not have a Safeguarding Policy.



Article 5

5. Prohibited Conduct

The following conduct shall be considered as prohibited conduct and therefore subjected to this Safeguarding Policy; the list is non-exhaustive:

- a. abuse, harassment (such as bullying, neglect, psychological and/or physical violence, etc.);
- b. any criminal offence or breach of the applicable law which would raise a safeguarding concern;
- c. any form of coercion leading to abuse and harassment;
- d. a breach of the IHF Safeguarding Policy (also including the Safeguarding Policy of the National Federations and Continental Confederations, if applicable);

- e. a breach of the IHF Code of Conduct referred to in Appendix 1 (also including the Code of Conduct of the National Federations and Continental Confederations, if applicable);
- f. failing to report any safeguarding concerns, suspicions and/or allegations;
- g. knowingly make or encourage another person to make a false or misleading report of possible prohibited conduct or knowingly provide materially false or misleading information during proceedings before the Ethics Commission (applicable for witnesses);
- h. abuse of process and/or breach of confidentiality in relation to a safeguarding concern.



Article 6

6. Procedures

6.1. Reporting Procedure

1. Anyone may report a safeguarding concern.
2. Any person who reports a safeguarding concern in good faith shall not be subjected to reprisal; the IHF strongly support whistleblowers by providing a confidential reporting system.
3. All safeguarding concerns should be reported as soon as possible. Where the person who is the subject of a safeguarding concern is a child (a player under 18 years of age), any person who becomes aware of, or reasonably suspects, a possible breach of this Safeguarding Policy has a duty to report it. Where the person concerned is an adult player (18 years of age or older), their consent should normally be obtained before the safeguarding concern is reported or otherwise shared, unless there are reasonable grounds to believe that the person concerned or another person is at risk of imminent harm, or that the conduct concerned may constitute a criminal offence.
4. A number of reporting channels are available:
 - a. using the [online report form](#) on the IHF website or on the IHF social media channels; this online form allows anonymous reporting;
 - b. by email: safeguarding@ihf.info;
 - c. in person to the Safeguarding Officer or the Focal Point if no Safeguarding Officer has been designated for the Event.
5. In case of report by email or in person, it is asked to provide the following information:
 - a. name, age, role/position, contact details of the individual concerned (additional name and contact details if the report is made by a third party), country of origin;
 - b. a clear, concise and factual description of the safeguarding concern including date(s)/time(s) and location when the safeguarding concern took place, the names of any persons alleged to have been involved in or causing the concern and their contact details;
 - c. the form in Appendix 2 can be filled out and sent by email;
6. All the reports will be communicated to the IHF Safeguarding Officer.

6.2. Case Management

6.2.1. Jurisdiction

1. The Safeguarding Officer, in cooperation with the Safeguarding Working Group, shall assess the report and proceed as follows:
 - a. if the report is considered to be related to a criminal offence, it shall be referred to the relevant authorities;
 - b. if the report is considered to be outside of the IHF's jurisdiction, it shall be referred to the appropriate person or organisation;
 - c. if the report is considered to be within the jurisdiction of the IHF, it shall be referred to the Ethics Commission;
 - d. if, during an Event, a disciplinary procedure related to a safeguarding concern has been initiated, the Safeguarding Officer shall be informed of such proceeding.
2. Where a Continental Confederation or National Federation does not have a Safeguarding Policy in force, has not established an operational and effective mechanism for handling safeguarding concerns, or fails or is unable to address a safeguarding concern effectively and within a reasonable period, the IHF Safeguarding Policy shall apply. In such cases, the IHF Safeguarding Officer shall have jurisdiction to receive the safeguarding concern and, in cooperation with the Safeguarding Working Group, assess it and refer the case to the Ethics Commission for investigation, provided that the complaint arises from a competition organised by the relevant Continental Confederation or National Federation.

6.2.2. Assessment

1. For all reports that are considered to be within the jurisdiction of the IHF, the Safeguarding Officer, in cooperation with the Safeguarding Working Group, will assess the report to determine the nature of the safeguarding concern and whether a violation of the Safeguarding Policy has occurred.
2. If the assessment indicates a risk of imminent or further harm, or to protect the parties, the Safeguarding Officer, in cooperation with the Safeguarding Working Group, may propose to the IHF Ethics Commission the imposition of a temporary suspension until the Ethics Commission has issued its decision.
3. The Ethics Commission shall proceed with the investigation as stipulated in Article 6.2.3 if a safeguarding concern has been identified.
4. The Safeguarding Officer, in cooperation with the Safeguarding Working Group, may close the report if the safeguarding concern is not identified. If a violation of other IHF Regulations occurs, the case may be referred to the competent body.

6.2.3. Investigation

1. The Ethics Commission shall be responsible for the investigation of the reported safeguarding concern and the preparation of a detailed report of the findings of the investigation.
2. If necessary, the Ethics Commission may appoint an independent investigator to perform the investigation in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy procedure.
3. The investigation may require the provision of further information, documents, data recording and storages devices (images, sound, etc.) in connection with the potential safeguarding concern.
4. The alleged perpetrator shall be informed at the appropriate time and shall be given fair procedures to respect their fundamental rights.

6.3. Judicial Process

6.3.1. IHF Ethics Commission

1. In the event of the confirmation of the safeguarding concern, pursuant to Article 4 of the IHF Ethics Code, the Ethics Commission is competent to impose a sanction.
2. The Ethics Commission shall:
 - a. respect the confidentiality of the case;
 - b. ensure that no conflict of interest can be identified;
 - c. ensure the preservation of the fundamental rights of the alleged perpetrator (right to a fair trial, to present a defence, to produce evidence, to receive counsel).
3. The Ethics Commission's decision may be published on the IHF website with an appropriate level of disclosure and taking into account confidentiality.

6.3.2. Sanctions

1. The sanction shall be proportionate to the violation of the Safeguarding Policy.
2. The Ethics Commission should take into consideration the following factors:
 - a. the nature of the violation;
 - b. the severity of the violation;
 - c. the number of violations (one time or several repetitions);
 - d. the person affected (child or adult);
 - e. the relationship between the person affected and the perpetrator;
 - f. any other relevant circumstances.
3. The Ethics Commission may impose sanctions in accordance with Article 8 of the IHF Ethics Code.
4. In case of criminal pursuit and following the decision of the criminal court, the Ethics Commission may decide to impose additional sanctions according to this Safeguarding Policy.

6.3.3. Appeal

Decisions by the Ethics Commission, except for provisional decisions, shall be subject to appeal to the



Article 7

7. Safeguarding Officer

1. The Safeguarding Officer shall:
 - a. be the main point of contact for anyone reporting a safeguarding concern at any time and during Events;
 - b. be the main point of contact for a National Federation or Continental Confederation reporting a safeguarding concern at any time;
 - c. manage the reporting procedure alongside the Safeguarding Working Group and inform the Ethics Commission accordingly;
 - d. provide support to all Participants;
 - e. implement the Safeguarding Policy in cooperation with the Safeguarding Working Group;
 - f. ensure the application of the Safeguarding Policy during Events in cooperation with the Organising Committee;
 - g. educate and train the Focal Points.



Article 8

8. Confidentiality

1. Any information related to the safeguarding concern shall be regarded as confidential and shall only be shared under strict conditions.
2. The Safeguarding Officer may disclose confidential information to the appropriate persons or authorities if:
 - a. a failure to disclose such information may cause harm to someone, or
 - b. such information relates to a potential criminal offence.
3. All data collected through reporting and procedures shall be recorded and stored in the IHF database and kept under a strict confidentiality policy.



Article 9

9. Education

1. To promote a better understanding of safeguarding in handball, the IHF shall provide education and training to the National Federations and Continental Confederations, which shall, in turn, disseminate such education and training to their respective members.



Appendix 1

IHF Code of Conduct

Ethical duties of the Participant

1. The Participant shall **comply with the IHF Safeguarding Policy and Ethics Code** and its principles of conduct, integrity and dignity. The Participant shall ensure that they conduct the activities related to handball conscientiously and in compliance with the standards of the IHF.
2. The Participant shall respect and adhere to all the Statutes, Regulations, directives and decisions of the competent bodies of the IHF as well as the IOC Code of Ethics.

Integrity-related:

3. The Participant shall not act in a manner likely to adversely affect the reputation and the integrity of the IHF or the sport of handball, they shall not act in a manner likely to bring the sport of handball into disrepute.
4. The Participant shall act with the utmost integrity, honesty and responsibility in fulfilling the role allocated to them during the IHF Competition and shall not engage in any criminal or other improper activity within or outside the sport of handball.
5. The Participant shall not be involved in any conflict of interest and therefore shall abide by the Rules on Conflicts of Interest as set out in the IHF Ethics Code at any time. Conflict of interest arises if the Participant has private or personal interest(s) influencing the integrity and the independence of the conducted activities before, during and/or after the IHF Competition.
6. The Participant shall not, directly or indirectly, offer, promise, give, solicit or accept any personal remuneration or commission, financial or other benefit, any concealed benefit or service of any nature connected with the organisation and conduct of the IHF Competitions or Events.

Dignity-related:

7. The Participant shall not discriminate against or offend the dignity or integrity of a country, a person or a group of persons, based on race, skin colour, ethnicity, nationality, social origin, gender, disability, language, religion, sexual orientation or any other distinction.
8. The Participant shall not engage in, facilitate, encourage or otherwise be involved in any form of harassment or abuse, whether physical, psychological, verbal, emotional or sexual.

Reporting process:

9. The Participant shall be committed to safeguarding the integrity of the sport of handball by reporting any situations, behaviours infringing the above-mentioned integrity and dignity-related duties (*including but not limited to conflicts of interest, personal benefits, discrimination, harassment and abuse during the IHF Competition*) directly to the IHF (anonymously) by completing the Safeguarding Report form on the IHF website or by sending the attached report form (Appendix 2 – Safeguarding Concern Report Form) to the following email address: safeguarding@ihf.info, or by contacting the Safeguarding Officer or, if the Safeguarding Officer is not present on site during the IHF Competition, the designated Safeguarding Focal Point.

Betting and Manipulation of the IHF Competition

1. The Participant shall be aware that betting on or supporting by any mean(s) betting on the IHF Competition concerned, manipulating the results of the IHF Competition concerned and/or conducting any other corrupt conduct are prohibited as stated in Article 5 of the IHF Ethics Code.
2. The Participant shall be committed to safeguarding the integrity of the sport of handball by abiding by the Olympic Movement Code on the Prevention of the Manipulation of Competitions of September 2022 (Appendix of the IHF Ethics Code), as well as any amendment made thereafter by the IOC. Further information on the Olympic Movement Code, as well as relevant educational materials and tools, are available on the [IOC](#) and [IHF](#) websites.

Reporting process:

3. The Participant shall report any IHF Competition-related betting and/or manipulation suspicions and/or established behaviours as follows:
 - (1) If the Participant is approached with a request regarding match-fixing, game manipulation or any directly or indirectly related topic, such approach shall be immediately, clearly and unequivocally declined.

The Participant shall immediately report this situation together with all the contacts related to the case concerned directly to the IHF (anonymously or not) by sending the attached Report Form ([Appendix 3 – Code of Conduct Report Form](#)) to ihf.office@ihf.info.
 - (2) If the Participant has information of any kind related to a nominee's/participant's involvement in match-fixing or game manipulation, the IHF only shall be informed by sending the attached Report Form ([Appendix 3 – Code of Conduct Report Form](#)) to ihf.office@ihf.info.

Violation of the Code of Conduct – Sanctions

The violation of this Code of Conduct Form and/or the negligence to report any event referred to above shall lead to the suspension of the signatory Participant concerned and to the imposition of additional sanctions referred to in the applicable IHF Statutes and Regulations, including but not limited to the IHF Ethics Code and the IHF Regulations Concerning Penalties and Fines.

Code of Conduct Form

All Participants shall duly sign the applicable Code of Conduct form before the commencement of each IHF Competition.



Appendix 2

Safeguarding Concern Report Form

Your information			
Name			
Contact number(s)			
Country of origin			
Email			
Name of National Federation (if applicable)		Your role	

If the report is made by a third party – information of the person affected	
Name	
Contact number(s)	
Email	
Did the person give their consent for the report?	No ☐
	Yes ☐

If the person is a child	
Name	Date of birth
Is there any information about the child that would be useful to consider?	

Contact information – parent / carer if a child is concerned		
Name(s)		
Address		
Contact number(s)		
Email		
Have they been notified of this incident?	No ☐	Please explain why this decision has been taken
	Yes ☐	Please give details of what was said / actions agreed

Incident details			
Date and time of concern			
Country of the concern			
Place where the concern happened (provide details)			
Please tick one:	☐ I am reporting my own concerns.	☐ I am responding to concerns raised by someone else – please fill in their details:	
Role within the sport or relationship to the person if the concern is raised by someone else			
Details of the incident or concerns (include other relevant information, such as description of any injuries and whether you are recording this incident as fact, opinion or hearsay)			

Incident details (continued)*			
Please provide any witness accounts of the incident			
Name of witness (and date of birth, if a child)		Role within the sport or relationship to the child	
Address			
Contact number(s)			
Email			
Details of any person involved in this incident or alleged to have caused the incident / injury			
Name (and date of birth, if a child)		Role within the sport or relationship to the child	
Address			
Contact number(s)			
Email			
Please provide details of action taken to date			
Has the incident been reported to any external agencies?		☐ No	☐ Yes – please provide further details:
Name of organisation / agency			
Contact person			
Contact number(s)			

Email	
Agreed action or advice given	

* Attach a separate sheet if more space is required (e.g. multiple witnesses)

Complementary information		
Name		
Contact number(s)		
Email		
Are you or the person concerned safe from imminent danger?	No ☐	Yes ☐
Is the abuse / harassment still happening to you or the person concerned?	No ☐	Yes ☐

Declaration	
Your signature	x
Print name	
Today's date	

Please send the report and the evidence you consider relevant to this submission to safeguarding@ihf.info

You will be able to provide evidence after submitting a Report.

All information mentioned in this Safeguarding Concern Report Form is strictly confidential and can only be accessed and read by the IHF Safeguarding Officer.

IHF Safeguarding Officer	
Safeguarding Officer's name	
Date reported	



Appendix 3

Code of Conduct Report Form

REPORT FORM	
What do you wish to report?	
Infringement Category	☐ Non-compliance with integrity provisions (other than competition manipulation) ☐ Wrongful betting practice ☐ Competition manipulation ☐ Other (please specify): _____
Your Personal Details	
☐ I wish to remain anonymous (in this case, you do not need to fill in the following fields with your personal information)	
Last name	
First name	
National Federation, if applicable	
Email address	
Contact phone number	
Description of the situation/suspicion/offence	
Name of the person or entity reported on	
Country and city of residence of the person/entity reported on	
Any relevant contact information	
What happened? (please describe the incident(s) as detailed as possible)	
When? (date, competition, etc.)	

Where? (country, city, place, etc.)	
Will it/could it happen again?	
Are other people aware/could other people be aware of the reported incident(s)?	
Do you have any piece(s) of evidence related to the reported incident(s)? If, yes, which ones? (please send us any relevant piece(s) of evidence together with this Report Form)	
Any other relevant information? (please send us any other relevant document(s) together with this Report Form)	
Data Protection: This Report Form is submitted to ihf.office@ihf.info and will be processed by the IHF. Please be aware that if you included any personal information in the present Report Form, this information will be studied and used by the IHF in order to further investigate the reported case where necessary. You have the right, in accordance with the law, to withdraw your consent, to request access to your personal information, to request the deletion or correction of any erroneous or incomplete personal information and to object its use. <i>All information mentioned in this Report Form is strictly confidential and can only be accessed and read by the IHF Office and IHF Legal Bodies if applicable.</i>	

- ☐ I hereby confirm that all information contained within this Report Form is true and agree that the Report Form will be shared with the IHF.
- ☐ I have read and understood the data protection information.

DATE (DAY/MONTH/YEAR)	PLACE	SIGNATURE (IF YOU WISH TO REMAIN ANONYMOUS, PLEASE JUST SIGN WITH A CROSS)
...../...../.....		