

## **IWF Safeguard and Protection Policy**

### **Introduction**

The International Federation (IWF) is committed to providing a safe environment for all participants at IWF Events, free from discrimination on any ground and from harassment at work including sexual harassment. The IWF will operate a zero tolerance policy for any form of misconduct including but not limited to harassment, treat all incidents seriously and promptly investigate all allegations of misconduct. Any person found to have harassed another will face disciplinary action. All complaints of misconduct will be taken seriously and treated with respect and in confidence. No one will be victimized for making such a complaint.

### **Jurisdiction**

Persons participating in IWF sanctioned events or activities (including but not limited to the entire duration of events, congresses, meetings or any other activity that could be construed as under the authority of the International Weightlifting Federation) shall refrain from all forms of misconduct including but not limited to harassment and abuse, be it sexual, physical or psychological, whether occurring in isolation or in combination or whether consisting of a one-off incident or a series of incidents, whether done in person or online, (including but not limited to social media) and in particular from any abuse of authority, i.e. the improper use of a position of influence, power or authority over another person. Abuse can also take the form of not providing protection. Abuse does not need to be by a person in a position of authority to be considered abuse.

If an alleged misconduct of harassment or abuse has occurred between persons belonging to the same National Federation Delegation, the incident shall be resolved by such NF with the support of the IWF. If the circumstances of the incident are such that could create a conflict of interest within the concerned National Federation Delegation, the matter shall be dealt directly by the IWF.

### **Definitions**

**Misconduct:** Conduct which results in harm, the potential for harm or the imminent threat of harm. Age is irrelevant to misconduct. There are seven primary types of misconduct in sport: emotional, physical and sexual misconduct, bullying, harassment and hazing (or any form of ragging).

**Child, children, minor and youth:** Every human being below the age of 18 unless under the law applicable to the child. Here, “child,” “children,” “minor” and “youth” are used interchangeably.

**Participants:** Participants are who participate at IWF Events including but not limited to minor Athletes, Athletes, Athlete Support Personnel, IWF Technical Officials, elected or appointed IWF Officers and the IWF Secretariat Members.

**Athlete:** Any weightlifting athlete who participates in any IWF sanctioned event.

**Coach/Trainer/Athlete Support Personnel:** Any adult who has or shares the responsibility for instructing, teaching, schooling, training, or advising an athlete.

**Accused individual:** a Participant who is alleged to have violated this Policy.

**Power Imbalance:** a Power Imbalance may exist where, based on the totality of the circumstances, one person has supervisory, evaluative, or other authority over another. Whether there is a Power Imbalance depends on several factors, including but not limited to: the nature and extent of the supervisory, evaluative or other authority over the person; the actual relationship between the parties; the parties’ respective roles; the nature and duration of the relationship; the age of the parties involved; whether there is an aggressor; whether there is a significant disparity in age, size, strength, or mental capacity. Once a Coach-Athlete relationship is established, a Power Imbalance is presumed to exist throughout the Coach-Athlete relationship (regardless of age) and is presumed to continue for Minor Athletes after the Coach-Athlete relationship terminates until the Athlete reaches 18 years of age. A Power Imbalance may exist, but is not presumed, where an Intimate Relationship existed before the sport relationship (e.g., a relationship between two spouses or life partners that preceded the sport relationship).

**Nothing contained in this policy is intended to supersede, replace, or otherwise invalidate the IWF Constitution and By-Laws or the applicable Swiss Laws.**

### **Training and Education**

IWF Participants must complete an awareness training concerning misconduct every two years. This training focuses on the seven categories of misconduct:

- Sexual misconduct
- Child sexual abuse
- Emotional misconduct
- Physical misconduct
- Bullying
- Harassment
- Hazing

## **Prohibited conducts**

**All participants shall refrain from all forms of misconduct, which include:**

- Sexual misconduct,
- Child sexual abuse,
- Emotional misconduct,
- Physical misconduct,
- Bullying,
- Harassment,
- Hazing.

**All forms of misconduct are intolerable and in direct conflict with the Olympic Ideals.**

## **2. Sexual Misconduct**

IWF Participants should have a basic understanding of sexual abuse, as well as “grooming” – the most common strategy used by offenders to seduce their victims. Using a combination of attention, affection and gifts, offenders win the victim’s trust, manipulate the victim into sexual activity, and keep the victim from disclosing abuse.

- (1) Any touching or non-touching sexual interaction that is (a) nonconsensual or forced, (b) coerced or manipulated, or (c) perpetrated in an aggressive, harassing, exploitative or threatening manner;
- (2) Any sexual interaction between an Athlete or a Participant and an Accused individual with evaluative, direct or indirect authority. Such relationships involve a power of imbalance and are likely to impair judgment or be exploitative; or
- (3) Any act or conduct described as sexual abuse or misconduct under Swiss Law.

### ***Examples***

Types of sexual misconduct prohibited under this Policy include:

- (1) sexual assault,
- (2) sexual harassment,
- (3) sexual abuse, or
- (4) any other sexual intimacies that exploit an Athlete or a Participant. Minors cannot consent to sexual activity with an adult, and all sexual interaction between an adult and a minor is strictly prohibited.

Examples of sexual misconduct prohibited under this Policy include, without limitation:

(1) **Touching offenses.** Behaviors that include:

- (a) unwanted fondling an Athlete's or a Participant's body part
- (b) exchange of reward in sport (e.g., team placement, scores, feedback) for sexual favors
- (c) genital contact
- (d) sexual relations or intimacies between persons in a position of trust, authority and/or evaluative and supervisory control over the Athletes.

(2) **Non-touching offenses.** Behaviors that include:

- (a) a Coach discussing his or her sex life with an Athlete
- (b) a Coach asking an Athlete about his or her sex life
- (c) Coach requesting or sending a nude or partial-dress photo to Athlete
- (d) exposing Athletes or Participants to pornographic material
- (e) sending Athletes or Participants sexually explicit or suggestive electronic or written messages or photos (e.g. "sexting")
- (f) deliberately exposing an Athlete or a Participant to sexual acts
- (g) deliberately exposing an Athlete or a Participant to nudity (except in situations where locker rooms and changing areas are shared)
- (h) sexual harassment; specifically, the sexual solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature, and a. is unwelcome, offensive or creates a hostile environment, and the Accused individual knows or is told this  
b. is sufficiently severe or intense to be harassing to a reasonable person in the context.

In case of the weigh-in procedure the IWF Technical and Competition Rules & Regulation (TCRR) shall be observed in accordance with this stipulation of this Policy.

### **3. Child Sexual Abuse**

- (1) Any sexual activity with a Minor Athlete or participant where consent is not or cannot be given. This includes sexual contact with a Minor Athlete or Participant that is accomplished by deception, manipulation, force or threat of force, regardless of the age of the participants, and all sexual interactions between an adult and a Minor Athlete or Participant, regardless of whether there is deception or the Minor Athlete or Participant understands the sexual nature of the activity.

Note concerning peer-to-peer child sexual abuse: Sexual contact between Minors also can be abusive. Whether or not a sexual interaction is between children constitutes, child sexual abuse turns on the existence of an aggressor, the age difference between the children, and/or whether there is an power of imbalance and/or intellectual capabilities.

- (2) Any act or conduct described as child sexual abuse under Swiss Law.

### ***Examples***

Sexually abusive acts may include unwanted sexual penetration, non-consensual sexual touching or non-contact sexual acts such as verbal acts, sexually suggestive electronic or written communications, exposure or voyeurism.

#### **4. Emotional Misconduct**

- (1) A pattern of deliberate, non-contact behavior that has the potential to cause emotional or psychological harm to an Athlete or Participant, regardless of age.

##### **Non-contact behaviors include:**

- a. verbal acts
- b. physical acts
- c. acts that deny attention or support

- (2) Any act or conduct described as emotional abuse or misconduct under Swiss Law.

Emotional misconduct does not include professionally-accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, discipline or improving athletic performance.

### ***Examples***

Examples of emotional misconduct prohibited by this policy include, without limitation:

- (1) **Verbal Acts.** A pattern of verbal behaviors that (a) repeatedly attack an Athlete or a Participant personally (e.g., calling them worthless based on their performance, fat or disgusting) or (b) repeatedly and excessively yelling at a particular participant or Participants in a manner that serves no productive motivational purpose.
- (2) **Physical or Violant Acts.** A pattern of physically aggressive behaviors, such as (a) throwing sport equipment, water bottles or chairs at, or in the presence of, Participants; or (b) punching walls, windows or other objects.
- (3) **Acts that Deny Attention and Support.** A pattern of (a) ignoring an Athlete for extended periods of time or (b) routinely or arbitrarily excluding Participants from practice.

**Comment:**

*Bullying, harassment, and hazing, defined below, often involve some form of emotional misconduct.*

**5. Physical Misconduct**

- (1) Contact or non-contact conduct that results in, or reasonably threaten to, cause physical harm to an Athlete or Participants, regardless of age; or
- (2) Any act or conduct described as physical abuse or misconduct under Swiss Law.

**Examples**

Examples of physical misconduct prohibited by this Policy include, without limitation:

(1) **Contact offenses.** Behaviors that include:

- (a) punching, beating, biting, striking, choking or slapping an Athlete or a Participant;
- (b) intentionally hitting an Athlete or a Participant with objects or sporting equipment;

(2) **Non-contact offenses.** Behaviors that include:

- (a) isolating an Athlete or a Participant in a confined space (e.g., locking an Athlete or a Participant in a small space);
- (b) forcing an Athlete or a Participant to assume a painful stance or position for no athletic purpose (e.g. requiring an Athlete or a Participant to kneel on a harmful surface);
- (c) withholding, recommending against or denying adequate hydration, nutrition, medical attention or sleep.
- (d) providing alcohol to an Athlete or a Participant under the legal age
- (e) encouraging or permitting an Athlete to return to competition or training pre-maturely following a serious injury (e.g., a concussion) and without the clearance of a medical professional;
- (f) prescribing dieting or other weight-control methods (e.g., weigh-ins, caliper tests) without regard for the nutritional well-being and health of athlete.

**Comment:**

*Bullying, harassment and hazing, defined below, often involve some form of physical misconduct.*

## 6. Bullying

- (1) An intentional, persistent and repeated pattern of committing, or willfully tolerating by another person, physical and non-physical behaviors that are intended, or have the reasonable potential, to cause fear, humiliation or physical harm in an attempt to socially exclude, diminish or isolate the targeted Athlete(s) or Participant(s), as a condition of membership
- (2) Any act or conduct described as bullying under Swiss Law.

### ***Examples***

Examples of bullying prohibited by this Policy include, without limitation:

- (1) **Physical behaviors.** Behaviors that include (a) hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, choking, or slapping an Athlete or a Participant; (b) throwing at, or hitting an Athlete or a Participant with, objects such as sporting equipment.
- (2) **Verbal and emotional behaviors.** Behaviors that include (a) teasing, ridiculing, intimidating; (b) spreading rumors or making false statements; or (c) using electronic communications, social media, or other technology to harass, frighten, intimidate or humiliate (“cyber bullying”).

## 7. Harassment

- (1) A repeated pattern of physical and/or non-physical behaviors that (a) are intended to cause fear, humiliation or annoyance, (b) offend or degrade, (c) create a hostile environment or (d) reflect discriminatory bias in an attempt to establish dominance, superiority or power over an individual athlete or group based on gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression or mental or physical disability; or
- (2) Any act or conduct described as harassment under Swiss Law.

### ***Examples***

Examples of harassment prohibited by this Policy include, without limitation:

- (1) **Physical offenses.** Behaviors that include (a) hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, choking or slapping an Athlete or Participant; (b) throwing at or hitting an Athlete or a Participant with objects including sporting equipment.

(2) **Non-physical offenses.** Behaviors that include (a) making negative or disparaging comments about an Athlete's or a Participant's sexual orientation, gender expression, disability, religion, skin color, or ethnic traits; (b) Repeatedly undermining an Athlete or a Participant personally or professionally based on performance or qualifications (c) displaying offensive materials, gestures, or symbols; (d) disadvantaging an Athlete based on his or her sexual orientation.

## **8. Hazing**

- (1) Coercing, requiring, forcing or willfully tolerating any humiliating, unwelcome or dangerous activity that serves as a condition for (a) joining a group or (b) being socially accepted by a group's members; or
- (2) Any act or conduct described as hazing under Swiss Law.

### ***Examples***

Examples of hazing prohibited by this Policy include, without limitation:

- (1) requiring, forcing or otherwise requiring the consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs (except performance enhancing drugs which would be set out in the IWF Anti-Doping Policy considered as alleged anti-doping rule violation.)
- (2) tying, taping or otherwise physically restraining an Athlete or a Participant
- (3) sexual simulations or sexual acts of any nature
- (4) sleep deprivation, otherwise unnecessary schedule disruption or the withholding of water and/or food
- (5) requiring social actions (e.g. grossly inappropriate or provocative clothing) or public displays (e.g. public nudity) that are illegal or meant to draw ridicule
- (6) beating, paddling or other forms of physical assault
- (7) excessive training requirements focused on individuals in a team.

### **Willfully Tolerating Misconduct**

It is a violation of this Safeguard and Protection Policy if any person is aware of any misconduct, but takes no action to intervene on behalf of the Athlete(s), Participant(s).



## **No Retaliation**

Regardless of outcome, the IWF will support the complainant(s) and his or her right to express concerns in good faith. The IWF will not encourage, allow or tolerate attempts from any person to retaliate, punish, allow or in any way harm any person(s) who reports a concern in good faith. Such actions against a complainant will be considered a violation of this policy and grounds for disciplinary action. Any allegations of retaliation should be reported using the same process as for reporting an initial concern.

## **Bad-Faith Allegations**

A report of abuse, misconduct or policy violations that is malicious, frivolous or made in bad faith is prohibited. Such reports will be considered a violation of this policy and grounds for disciplinary action. Depending on the nature of the allegation, a person making a malicious, frivolous or bad-faith report may also be subject to civil or criminal proceedings.

## **Reporting Procedure**

The IWF also encourages Athlete's parents, Athletes and all Participants to communicate violations of the IWF Safeguard and Protection Policy and/or allegations and suspicions of child physical and sexual abuse.

Anyone affected by or who has observed an alleged incident of harassment or abuse during the period of an IWF Event or any other IWF activity may either file a Statement of Complaint against the Accused individual to the IWF or report the incident in writing to the IWF with a Report form.

## **The IWF's Report Form can be found at:**

<https://iwf.sport/harassment-and-abuse-reporting/>

[Or a direct report can be made to the safeguardreport@iwfnet.net e-mail address.](mailto:safeguardreport@iwfnet.net)

## **Reporting**

The report shall include the name, place, time, address, contact information, country or National Federation which the reported person is affiliated to, information pertaining to the basis for the report with the description of the involved parties, including any facts and evidence (e.g. video recording, photos, other documentary or electronic evidence, and names of other persons who witnessed the alleged incident).

Any report made through any channel must be referred to the Safeguard Officer within 24hrs without exception.

Safeguard Officer shall be appointed by the IWF Executive Board. The Safeguard Officer shall ensure reports are documented to the extent possible.

### **Jurisdiction and Validity of Allegations**

Based on the facts and evidence in the report, the Safeguard Officer will, first determine whether the case falls under the jurisdiction of the IWF, and then determine whether any follow-up action is warranted and recommend to the reporting person whether the matter should be submitted to the IWF Disciplinary and Ethics Commission and/or notified to local authorities, as appropriate and required by local law.

In case the reporting person decides not to submit the matter to the IWF Disciplinary and Ethics Commission and/or to notify it to local authorities against the recommendation of the Safeguard Officer, the Safeguard Officer shall forward the report together with any comments to the IWF Executive Board which may then decide whether to file a Statement of Complaint to the IWF Disciplinary and Ethics Commission and/or notify the local authorities in its own name. However, if the reporting person is the alleged victim of the alleged incident, the Safeguard Officer shall forward the report only with the explicit oral or written consent of the reporting person.

### **Preliminary Suspension/Interim Measures**

If the reported complaint indicates that an individual's continued participation poses an acute risk of ongoing physical or emotional harm, the IWF Disciplinary and Ethics Commission may preliminarily suspend or impose other interim measures against the accused individual pending final resolution of the complaint to eliminate such risk or harm. In such instances, the IWF Disciplinary and Ethics Commission will provide the Accused individual with notice and offer her/him an opportunity to contest the preliminary suspension or other interim measure.

For the purposes of this Policy, a preliminary suspension means that the Accused individual may not participate in any capacity or in any role in the business, events, or activities of the IWF.

Any preliminary suspension or interim measure may be appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in Lausanne, Switzerland at the written request of the Accused individual within 14 days of the suspension or imposition of the interim measure.

## **Investigation**

As appropriate, and at its discretion, the IWF Disciplinary and Ethics Commission may institute a formal investigation and hearing procedure to address serious allegations of misconduct (e.g., physical and sexual misconduct).

If an investigation is conducted, the complainant, victim and Accused individual shall have the right to:

- receive written notice of the report or complaint, including a statement of allegations;
- present relevant information to the investigator(s); and,
- legal counsel, at his or her own expense.

## **Hearing**

In every case where a hearing is conducted pursuant to this Policy, it will comply with the IWF Constitution and By-laws, provided that all of the following conditions are satisfied:

- the Accused individual is informed of the allegations and evidence brought against him or her;
- the Accused individual is given a reasonable opportunity to respond to the allegations brought forward;
- the Accused individual may be represented by legal counsel at his or her expense;
- the IWF Disciplinary and Ethics Commission member(s) who make the determination can render an unbiased decision; and,
- there is a right to appeal the IWF Disciplinary and Ethics Commission's decision.

## **Notice**

The Accused individual will be notified of a specific date and time to ensure that he or she is available for the hearing. Unless the IWF Disciplinary and Ethics Commission requires the Accused individual to attend the hearing in person, the Accused individual may appear by telephone conference call. In case the hearing is held in person, the Accused individual may participate at one's own cost. The Accused individual has the right to be represented by legal counsel at the hearing, provided that the counsel's participation may be subject to the reasonable hearing rules related to the conduct of the hearing.

In case any disciplinary procedure (notification, imposing preliminary sanctions) will start against the Accused Individual the related Member Federation will be informed of the allegations immediately.

In case a minor Athlete or Participant is involved the responsible Member Federation is obliged to provide the IWF with the name and contacts of the Parents or Legal Guardian.

## **Timing**

The IWF Disciplinary and Ethics Commission shall have the authority to set timelines and other rules regarding the proceeding and the conduct of the hearing, as it deems necessary.

On request of the Accused individual, and provided that it is necessary to expedite the proceeding to resolve a matter relating to a scheduled training or competition, the IWF Disciplinary and Ethics Commission may render an expedited determination.

## **Evidence**

At the hearing, the Accused individual will be allowed to present any reasonable evidence or argument that he or she wishes the IWF Disciplinary and Ethics Commission to consider. IWF Disciplinary and Ethics Commission may require or permit documentary evidence, such as the written report of any investigator or other fact-finder before the hearing, and that the names of any witnesses be shared before the hearing. The IWF Disciplinary and Ethics Commission may also consider another organization's determination as evidence to be considered.

If the complainant/alleged victim(s) is a minor, the investigator's or other fact-finder's report may substitute for the minor witness's direct testimony, provided that the accused had an opportunity to present and respond to relevant information collected during the investigation and before the report was transmitted to the IWF Disciplinary and Ethics Commission.

The IWF Disciplinary and Ethics Commission may proceed in the Accused individual's absence if it cannot locate the Accused individual or if the Accused individual declines to attend the hearing.

## **Findings and Sanctions:**

The IWF Disciplinary and Ethics Commission has the discretion to impose sanctions on the Accused individual in accordance with the Article 12.7 of the IWF Constitution and By-laws, if it finds based on a preponderance of the evidence that emotional, physical or sexual misconduct has occurred.

The IWF Disciplinary and Ethics Commission will communicate its finding to the Accused individual. The IWF Disciplinary and Ethics Commission may impose sanctions on the Accused individual in its findings.

The decision regarding the appropriate sanction shall be up to the IWF Disciplinary and Ethics Commission deciding each complaint. In imposing a sanction, the IWF Disciplinary and Ethics Commission will consider:

- whether the Accused individual poses an ongoing concern for the safety of the IWF participants;
- the seriousness of the offense or act;
- the ages of the Accused individual and alleged victim when the offense or act occurred;
- any information produced by the Accused individual, or produced on behalf of the Accused individual, in regard to the Accused individual's rehabilitation and good conduct
- the effect on the IWF's reputation; and,
- any other information, which in the determination of the Commission, bears on the appropriate sanction.

The respective Member Federation, who the Accused individual is affiliated to will be informed of the findings/sanctions imposed on the Accused individual.

Cases will be closed by the IWF Disciplinary and Ethics Commission on timely manner.

### **Rehabilitative care**

It is the IWF's obligation to ensure that all victims (Athletes, Participants) of misconducts set out in this Policy shall receive guidance for appropriate treatment for their recovery and social reintegration.

### **Loss of Benefits:**

An Accused individual who has committed a violation and who receives benefits from the IWF may, at the discretion of the IWF, lose those benefits. Benefits that may be lost or restricted may include, but are not limited to, the IWF's Development Programme, Per Diems at IWF Events or any remuneration received from the IWF.

In the event that a preliminary suspension or other interim measure is imposed on an Accused individual, the IWF may suspend any payment that is to be paid to the Accused individual. If the Accused individual is found not to have committed any violation, the suspended payment will then be paid to the individual. If a payment is made to an Accused individual after the Accused individual has been accused of a violation, but prior to a final determination, and the Accused individual is found to have committed a violation, the Accused individual may be obligated to repay the payment.

### **Appeal**

If the Accused individual disagrees with the finding or sanction of the IWF Disciplinary and Ethics Commission and wishes to appeal, he or she may file an appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) within 14 days of the IWF Disciplinary and Ethics

Commission finding. A decision rendered by the IWF Disciplinary and Ethics Commission shall be final and binding on all parties.

### **Confidentiality**

Confidential information shall be disclosed to appropriate persons or authorities on a need to know basis, only, unless failure to disclose said information may result in harm to Athletes, Participants or any other persons.

### **Publications**

In publishing any sanction or decision of the IWF Disciplinary and Ethics Commission, the IWF will only publish victim related information with the expressed permission of the victim, received in writing.