

# **World Taekwondo Safeguarding Policy**

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## 1. Principles

World Taekwondo (WT) is committed to establishing and implementing policies that enable Participants in the Taekwondo Movement to practice Taekwondo in a safe and respectful environment. As set forth in the WT Statutes, this includes an athlete-centered environment free of harassment, abuse, and discrimination:

### **Harassment-Free Sport**

Participants in Taekwondo at any level have a right to compete, work and operate in a harassment-free environment. WT shall take reasonable care to ensure there are no forms of harassment whether that be physical, psychological or other forms of harassment (Statutes Article 2.2.3).

### **Non-Discrimination and Ethics**

WT shall not allow any inappropriate form of discrimination to affect its decisions or actions, be it discrimination based on race, color, creed, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical attributes, language, religion, disability, national, political, socio-economic status, or athletic ability, birth or other status. Anyone who deals with WT and/or share in its activities in any capacity commit themselves by their actions to behave in a non-discriminatory and ethical manner. (Statutes Article 2.2.6)

### **Athlete-centered Approach**

Recognizing athletes as the heart of our sport, WT is committed to an athlete-centered approach that prioritizes the well-being, development, and empowerment of athletes at every level, and ensuring their voices are heard and respected. (Statutes Article 2.2.7)

## 2. Goals and Objectives

### **Raise Awareness**

This Policy seeks to more clearly define harassment and abuse and to convey the harm that harassment and abuse can have on individuals, organizations, and the overall culture of Taekwondo.

### **Provide a Foundation for Member Education**

This Policy seeks to serve as an educational tool so that all Participants in the Taekwondo Movement can be made aware of their rights and responsibilities under WT rules.

### **Provide Guidance for Reporting and Case Management**

This Policy seeks to help assist those wishing to make a report, to investigate a report, or to decide on an accusation, by providing information on the relevant WT rules, in particular the WT Integrity Code and the WT Disciplinary Actions and Appeals Code. The investigation procedure for alleged incidents of harassment and abuse is both victim-centric and trauma-informed, ensuring comprehensive information is gathered while making all reasonable efforts to avoid further victimization of those affected and fully respecting the rights of the accused.

## 3. Definitions

Harassment and abuse may occur in person or online. It may be deliberate, unsolicited, unwanted, non-reciprocal, uncomfortable, and coercive. Harassment and abuse often result from an abuse of authority, meaning the improper use of a position of influence, power or authority by an individual against another person. But fellow athletes can also be perpetrators.<sup>1</sup>

WT adopts the definition of harassment and abuse as set out in the IOC Consensus Statement (2016). Harassment and abuse can be expressed in several forms which may occur in

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<sup>1</sup> IOC Safeguarding Toolkit

combination or in isolation. These forms are i) psychological abuse, ii) physical abuse, iii) sexual harassment, iv) sexual abuse, and v) neglect.<sup>2</sup> In addition, harassment and abuse refer also to vi) abuse of authority/power, and vii) online or digital violence.<sup>3</sup>

### **3.1 Psychological abuse**

–means any unwelcome act including confinement, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation, infantilization, or any other treatment which may diminish the sense of identity, dignity, and self-worth.

### **3.2 Physical abuse**

–means any deliberate and unwelcome act –such as for example punching, beating, kicking, biting and burning –that may or may not cause physical trauma or injury. Such act can also consist of forced or inappropriate physical activity (e.g., age- or physique-inappropriate training loads; when injured or in pain), forced alcohol consumption, or forced doping practices.

### **3.3 Sexual harassment**

–any unwanted and unwelcomed conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal, non-verbal or physical. Sexual harassment can take the form of sexual abuse. Some individuals deliberately target sports activities in order to gain access to athletes. Grooming may occur over several years before an individual makes a move.

### **3.4 Sexual abuse**

–any conduct of a sexual nature, whether non-contact, contact or penetrative, where consent is coerced/manipulated or is not or cannot be given.

### **3.5 Neglect**

–within the meaning of this document means the failure of a coach or another person with a duty of care towards the athlete to provide a minimum level of care to the athlete, which is causing harm, allowing harm to be caused, or creating an imminent danger of harm.

### **3.6 Abuse of authority/power**

–the improper use of a position of influence, power or authority against another person, which can include, but is not limited to, appointments, assignments, contract renewals, performance evaluations, working conditions or promotions, intimidation, threats, blackmail or coercion.

### **3.7 Online or digital violence**

–any act of violence that is committed, assisted or aggravated by the use of information and communication technology (such as mobile phones, social media, computer games, text messaging or email). Online violence can include cyberbullying (sending intimidating or threatening messages), non-consensual sexting (the sending of explicit messages or photos without the recipient's consent) and doxing (the public release of private or identifying information about the victim).

To complement the above categories, the following more specific terms may help to describe certain situations:

**3.6 Athletes with disabilities** – Those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments that, in interaction with certain barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

**3.7 Bullying** – Bullying (or cyber-bullying if conducted online) is unwanted, repeated and intentional, aggressive behavior usually among peers, and can involve a real or perceived

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<sup>2</sup> The IOC Consensus Statement considers that harassment and abuse are on a continuum, and therefore should not be separated.

<sup>3</sup> IOC Framework for Safeguarding Athletes and Other Participants from Harassment and Abuse in Sport

power imbalance. Bullying can include actions such as making threats, spreading rumors or falsehoods, attacking someone physically or verbally and deliberately excluding someone.

**3.8 Child and adolescent** – Every human being below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier. Early childhood relates to those below 8 years of age. Juvenile or young person and adolescents are 10-19 years of age.

**3.9 Hazing** – An organized, usually team-based, form of bullying in sport, involving degrading and hazardous initiation of new team members by veteran team members.

**3.10 Homophobia** – Antipathy, contempt, prejudice, aversion or hatred towards lesbian, gay or bisexual individuals.

**3.11 Negligence** – Acts of omission regarding athlete safety. For example, depriving an athlete of food/or drink; insufficient rest and recovery; failure to provide a safe physical training environment; or developmental age-inappropriate or physique-inappropriate training methods.

**3.12 Inappropriate Conduct** – Actions that may be normalized within sports culture but actually constitute harassment. These include aggressive, sexual, belittling, homophobic, or gender-based jokes and comments, as well as inappropriate physical contact or exposure. Such behavior can occur among peers or other personnel.

**3.13 Safe sport** – An athletic environment that is respectful, equitable and free from all forms of non-accidental violence to athletes and other participants.

#### 4. Why is this policy needed?

WT's mission is to develop and grow Taekwondo throughout the world in a sustainable way, from a grassroots level all the way through to an elite level, to provide all with the opportunity to play, watch and enjoy the sport regardless of age, gender, religion, ethnicity or ability. WT aspires to fulfill its vision and missions through the values of excellence, integrity, respect, tolerance, inclusiveness and leadership.

WT's principles include an athlete-centered approach in an environment free of harassment, abuse, and discrimination, and WT is committed to taking such measures as may be necessary for advancing the interest of Taekwondo worldwide.<sup>4</sup>

WT believes that athlete maltreatment and abuse cause trauma and harm to athletes and observers resulting in numerous consequences that must be addressed across the entire sports ecosystem.<sup>5</sup>

##### Impact on Victims and Teams

Harassment and abuse damage both individual and organizational health. It impacts athletes and other people, while the legal, financial and moral liabilities fall onto sports organizations.

Elite athletes are at higher risk of abuse than non-elite athletes. Other very vulnerable groups include: children, people with disabilities, girls/women, LGBTQ youth, and other marginalized groups (immigrants, international athletes abroad, students-especially with scholarships-, and more).<sup>6</sup>

Harassment and abuse have serious negative impacts on an athlete physically, socially and psychologically. The abuse may damage performance, be associated with doping, increase athletes' willingness to cheat, lead to athlete drop-out or result in a variety of presentations including psychosomatic illnesses, disordered eating, anxiety, depression, substance abuse, self-harm and even suicide.

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<sup>4</sup> WT Statutes, Articles 2.1,2.2.

<sup>5</sup> British Journal of Sports Medicine, Infographic. A guide to understanding athlete abuse, Dr Yetsa A Tuakli-Wosornu.

<sup>6</sup> British Journal of Sports Medicine, Infographic. A guide to understanding athlete abuse, Dr Yetsa A Tuakli-Wosornu.

It may also damage athletes in a long term that even after the athletes leave from the sport, they suffer from the experience, and may affect their closed ones.<sup>7</sup>

### **Impact on Culture**

Passive attitudes, non-intervention, and denial and/or silence by people in positions of power all increase the psychological harm caused by harassment and abuse. Lack of action from bystanders also gives victims the impression that harassment and abusive behavior are legally and socially acceptable, and/or that those in sport are powerless to speak out against it.<sup>8</sup>

### **WT's Commitment**

WT believes that a healthy sport system that empowers athletes can contribute greatly to the prevention of harassment and abuse both within and outside sport.

WT believes that all individuals have equal rights to protection and will provide information about athlete rights and where to report in case of experiencing or witnessing harassment and abuse.

WT will provide education to competition staff, volunteers, and team entourage so that they will be aware of their obligation to report their concerns in order to prevent any harassment and abuse.

WT believes that mitigation is possible through increased awareness, zero tolerance for toxicity, and true culture change. Sports must move towards an ethics of care, prioritizing wellbeing throughout the entire competitive ecosystem.<sup>9</sup>

WT calls on every Participant in the Taekwondo Movement to share responsibility to identify and prevent harassment and abuse and to develop a culture of dignity, respect and safety. WT believes that International Federations are gatekeepers to safety and should demonstrate strong leadership in identifying and eradicating these practices.

## **5. Responsibility of Members**

### **Who does this policy apply to?**

This Policy applies at all times to all Participants in the Taekwondo Movement as per the following definition:

Participant

Any individual who is seeking to be, currently is, or was at the time of any alleged Code violation:

- a. A member or license holder of WT, Continental Unions ("CUs"), or Member National Associations ("MNAs").
- b. An employee or member of the Council, Board or Committee of WT, CUs, MNAs.
- c. Within the governance or disciplinary jurisdiction of WT, CUs, or MNAs.
- d. Authorized, approved, or appointed by WT, CUs, or MNAs to have regular contact with or authority over athletes.

Organizations and roles included:

- WT Council and WT Secretariat and its staff
- All Continental Unions and Member National Associations
- All registered athletes, coaches, team officials, medical staff, team manager and any athlete entourage member

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<sup>7</sup> IOC Consensus 2016

<sup>8</sup> IOC Consensus 2016

<sup>9</sup> British Journal of Sports Medicine, Infographic. A guide to understanding athlete abuse, Dr Yetsa A Tuakli-Wosornu.

- All participants in WT events and WT-recognized events, including volunteers, suppliers and other personnel identified as being within WT's jurisdiction, and administrative and technical staff

### **The role of CUs and MNAs**

The welfare of athletes is paramount and WT acknowledges the duty of care owed by Continental Unions ("CUs") and Member National Associations ("MNAs") to safeguard and promote the welfare of all athletes.

WT requires all CUs and MNAs to accept and adopt the general principles of Safeguarding, to define and introduce their own policies and procedures modified as necessary to fit with their own national and, where applicable, continental, legal requirements and conditions.

WT recommends the CUs and MNAs to use the [IOC Safeguarding Toolkit](#) to draw up relevant policies and procedures for their nations and continents. It is also strongly recommended to involve athletes in the development process.

WT will assist CUs and MNAs in developing their athlete safeguarding and child protection policies.

### **Safer Recruitment Practices**

Host city contracts and cooperation agreements with WT should include a requirement for safer recruitment practices such as criminal and background checks, self-declaration statement about not having been convicted or accused of harassment and abuse, etc. It is recommended to consult with an appropriate national organization on this matter (e.g., NGOs, NOCs, Sport Ministry). This requirement should apply whenever third-party individuals hold positions of responsibility over athletes, particularly children and other vulnerable groups.

### **Standards of Conduct**

All Participants in the Taekwondo Movement must adhere to the Integrity Standards set forth in the WT Integrity Code. Furthermore, applicable persons must fulfill the specific requirements stated in their integrity pledges or role-related commitments.

## **6. Reporting Violations**

### **Safeguarding Officer**

All the suspicious behavior of harassment and abuse can be reported to the WT Safeguarding Officer at the following email:

**[safeguarding@worldtaekwondo.org](mailto:safeguarding@worldtaekwondo.org)**

To raise your concerns via an independent integrity hotline monitored by the Swiss-based law firm TIMES Attorneys, send an email to:

**[reporting@worldtaekwondo.org](mailto:reporting@worldtaekwondo.org)**

Reports received by the Safeguarding Officer shall be processed according to the procedure provided in Article 3 of WT's Disciplinary Actions and Appeals Code.

Refer to the competition-specific safeguarding policy for means of reporting at events.

Access the "[Reporting](#)" section under the WT Global Integrity Unit on the WT website for more information on reporting.

The WT Safeguarding Officer shall:

- Act as a contact point of any who wishes to report a case of harassment or abuse
- Independently review any reports
- Coordinate investigations and disciplinary actions

- Coordinate the production and update of the Safeguarding Policy and procedures
- Take a leading role in promoting the implementation of Safeguarding Policy
- Coordinate in training and education on Safeguarding

### **Confidentiality**

All reports of harassment will be treated with the utmost confidentiality as it contains extremely sensitive information.

WT Safeguarding Officers will not disclose any information of the concerned about a possible alleged incident of harassment and abuse, even from WT, except if the concerned person authorizes to reveal, or if it is required to protect someone from harm, or if a potential criminal act comes to the attention of WT. All the data and records of the person in concern will be stored safely.

### **Whistle Blowing**

WT believes the power and importance of speaking up for anyone who has concerns. The 'whistle blowers' should be able to speak up in the confidence that wherever possible the organization will provide anonymity.

WT supports 'whistle blowers' and encourages anyone to speak up when they have concerns in order to prevent any damage to athlete or participants.

### **Referral of Safeguarding Concerns**

WT shall develop event-specific safeguarding policies for WT-promoted events. These policies will include guidelines for areas to consider such as referring safeguarding concerns to the relevant authorities, reviewing applicable laws and regulations. Due to the varying legal frameworks internationally, a comprehensive organizational procedure for the referral of safeguarding cases will not be included in this policy.

The WT Disciplinary Actions and Appeals Code (Art. 3.2.B) specifies that investigations may be conducted in cooperation with competent national or international authorities. This ensures that appropriate actions can still be taken, when necessary, despite the absence of a detailed referral procedure within this policy.

## **7. Education**

### **Educational Tools**

Education is essential for every Participant in the Taekwondo Movement to understand their role in safeguarding against harassment and abuse. Access the "[Education & Certification](#)" section under the WT Global Integrity Unit on the WT website for more information and materials.

The IOC has developed a number of educational tools related to athlete safeguarding. They are free and accessible for all athletes and entourage members. WT strongly encourages all athletes and entourage members to work through the following module:

Athlete365 Learning – Safeguarding Athletes from Harassment and Abuse

<https://olympics.com/athlete365/learning>

Child Protection in Sport Unit: <https://thecpsu.org.uk/>

Play by the Rule: <https://www.playbytherules.net.au/>

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Methods of monitoring and evaluation, including research projects and surveys, will be implemented to assess the effectiveness of this policy and identify areas for improvement. This will also encompass the monitoring of education programs to evaluate their effectiveness in raising awareness.