



Policy for Child Protection within Sports Entities

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1. Definitions

Emirate: Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

Competent Authorities: The relevant federal authorities concerned with children's affairs.

Concerned Bodies: Local authorities concerned with children's affairs.

DCD: Department of Community Development

ADSC: Abu Dhabi Sports Council.

Child Rights Law: Federal Law No. (3) of 2016 on Child Rights (Wadeema Law) and its Executive Regulations.

Policy: Policy for Child Protection within Sports Entities.

Policy Implementation Manual: The manual issued by DCD, which governs the implementation of the Policy for Child Protection within Sport Entities.

Child: Each and every human being born alive and under 18 years of age.

Child Protection: All mechanisms, measures, procedures, and both preventive and remedial interventions that must be implemented to prevent, address, and respond to any potential risks, harm, or injury to children that may arise while they are under the supervision of the Sports Entity, including during their transit to and from the Sports Entity using the Entity's transportation means, their movement between designated locations, periods of waiting, and their participation in all sports-related activities organized by the Sports Entity, whether conducted within its facilities or at external venues.

Custodian: The person legally in charge of the Child or entrusted with the Child's custody, as defined by the Child Rights Law.

Child Protection Coordinator: An individual designated by the Sports Entity and duly trained and certified by the Concerned Bodies to acquire the requisite skills to identify, assess, and respond to incidents of violence, neglect, or abuse against children within the

Sports Entity, which require preventive or remedial interventions to safeguard the child against risks.

Child Abuse: Any act or omission that results in harm to a child and impedes their proper, safe, and healthy development, in accordance with the provisions of the Child Rights Law.

Child Neglect: Failure of parents or custodians to take the measures necessary to protect the Child's life and physical, psychological, mental, and moral well-being from danger and preserve their various rights, as prescribed under the Child Rights Law.

Violence against Children: The deliberate use of force by any individual or group against a Child, resulting in actual harm to the Child's health, development, or survival, as defined under the Child Rights Law.

Child's Best Interest: According paramount importance to the Child's interest above all other considerations, ensuring its prioritization and preference in all circumstances, irrespective of the interests of other parties, as stipulated in the Child Rights Law.

Designated Reporters: Individuals entrusted with the protection, care, or education of children, who are under a legal obligation to report to the Competent Authorities or Concerned Bodies any matter that poses a threat to the child's safety or to their physical, mental, moral, or intellectual well-being, in accordance with the provisions of the Child Rights Law.

Sports Entities: Any non-governmental sports entity duly registered or licensed by the Concerned Bodies, operating within the domain of sports. Pursuant to Federal Law No. (4) of 2023 Concerning Sports, Sports Entities include sports federations, associations, clubs, and sports companies and institutions.

Sports Institutions: Any for-profit Sports Entity duly licensed by the Concerned Bodies to engage in Sports Activities and provide sports services, including but not limited to centers, private clubs, and academies, in accordance with Federal Law No. (4) of 2023 Concerning Sports.

Sports Clubs: Recognized Sports Entities established to practice one or more sports disciplines and formally affiliated with a relevant sports federation, in accordance with the provisions of Federal Law No. (4) of 2023 Concerning Sports.

Sports Activities: All forms of physical or mental activities undertaken by individuals or organized through Sports Entities, whether conducted professionally or as a recreational pursuit, aimed at improving fitness levels and overall health, participating in friendly or official championships and competitions, or for entertainment purpose.

Sports Event: Any sports activity, competition, or training involving the participation of amateurs or professionals, conducted at designated sports venues—including sports complexes, sports centers, or any other locations suitable for such purposes, such as beaches, desert areas, or mountainous regions—provided that attendance or viewing by the public is permitted.

Sports Professionals: Individuals employed by Sports Entities and licensed to engage in sports-related professions, in accordance with the provisions of Federal Law No. (4) of 2023 Concerning Sports.

Volunteer: Every registered natural or legal person practicing volunteer work free of charge or outside their job, in accordance with Federal Law No. (13) of 2018 on Volunteer Work.

Suspension Order: A temporary precautionary measure issued by the Sports Entity upon a suspicion or formal complaint indicating a potential breach of child protection obligations of medium or high severity. The order entails the exclusion of the individual subject of the suspicion or complaint from any interactions with children, pending the resolution of the complaint.

2. Purpose

2.1. DCD affirms its unwavering commitment to the safeguarding of children's safety and well-being, the preservation of their dignity, and the provision of a secure and enjoyable sports environment.

2.2. This Policy is designed to accomplish the following objectives:

- Ensure the effective implementation of the mechanisms, standards, and procedures required for the protection of children within Sports Entities, in accordance with the applicable legislation and this Policy;
- Protect children engaged in Sports Activities from any acts or behaviors that may infringe upon their rights, jeopardize their interests, or cause them harm, in accordance with the provisions of Federal Law, including Abuse, Neglect and Violence against Children;
- Provide support and assistance to children deemed at risk of Abuse, Neglect, or Violence while participating in Sports Activities;
- Ensure that all Sports Professionals and employees in Sport Entities who have direct contact with children under their supervision—including service providers, bus drivers, security personnel, and Volunteers— report any cases of Child Abuse, Neglect, or Violence occurring within Sports Entities..
- Specify the roles and responsibilities of Sports Entities, Professionals, Volunteers, Parents, Custodians, and caregivers in the context of responding to reports of cases of Child Abuse, Neglect, and Violence;
- Ensure that all Sports Entities demonstrate a commitment to the care and protection of children participating in Sports Activities, and coordinate pertinent procedures in relation to such care and protection;
- Promote the safety and well-being of children within the domain of sports;
- Establish legal frameworks designed to prevent and dismiss any individual who poses a risk to the safety and well-being of children involved in Sports Activities.
- Encourage the establishment of partnerships aimed at enhancing the protection of children.
- Facilitate collaboration with the Competent Authorities and Concerned Bodies to ensure the protection and preservation of the rights of all children participating in Sports Activities organized by the Sports Entity or affiliated with any Sports Events.

3. Applicability

3.1. This Policy shall apply to the following parties within the geographical boundaries of the Emirate:

- Sports Entities, excluding sports associations and federations.
- Child Protection Coordinators and Sports Professionals employed by Sports Entities, as well as any other individuals operating under their supervision who have direct contact with children—including, but not limited to, service providers, bus drivers, and security personnel;
- Volunteers who engage with children in a voluntary capacity within Sports Entities, whether in collaboration with such entities or during organized Sports Events;
- Parents, caregivers, and Custodians.

3.2. This Policy shall not apply to Sports Activities or Events conducted by educational institutions within their fields or facilities. Such activities shall be governed by the National Child Protection Policy in Educational Institutions currently in force within the United Arab Emirates.

4. Policy Principles

4.1. This Policy is based on the following four key principles:



Child's Best Interests and Right to Participation: The paramount consideration shall be the best interests and safety of the Child in all circumstances. This principle shall guide all procedures established to ensure their protection and well-being, irrespective of the interests of other parties. Furthermore, children shall be afforded the right to express their views and actively participate in discussions regarding matters related to their protection or any issues that may affect their well-being. Their voices shall be heard, and their opinions shall be considered in decision-making processes, taking into account their age-related capacities and maturity.



Zero Tolerance for Child Abuse: The Sports Entity, along with all Sports Professionals and Volunteers, shall bear the responsibility to identify, address, and manage child protection risks within the scope of their capabilities to ensure that such risks are mitigated and that any form of child abuse is strictly not tolerated.



Responsibility: Whistleblowers are required to adhere to the standards established for Child Protection, to implement such standards diligently, and to uphold the privacy of children, thereby ensuring their safety and well-being.



Protection and Non-Retaliation: All whistleblowers shall be afforded full protection and shall not be subject to any form of obstruction, retaliation, or penalty for fulfilling their duty to report incidents of Abuse, Neglect, or Violence against Children, in accordance with the provisions of Federal Law No. (14) of 2020 on the Protection of Witnesses and the Like.

5. Forms of Child Abuse

The following forms of Child Abuse are strictly prohibited within Sports Entities:

- **Physical Abuse:** Infliction of physical harm upon a Child, or the failure, or unwillingness to prevent such harm.
- **Sexual Abuse:** The act of coercing, enticing, or involving a Child in any form of sexual activity, whether the Child is conscious or unconscious of the act. This also includes behaviors that do not involve direct physical contact, such as involving children in the production or consumption of pornography, exposing them to sexual activities, or encouraging inappropriate sexual behavior.
- **Mental Abuse:** Refers to the treatment of a Child in a manner that inflicts severe and lasting harm to their mental well-being, hindering their emotional growth and development, including coercing a Child into participating in Sports Activities against their will, applying undue pressure, or engaging in actions that humiliate the Child or damage their reputation.
- **Neglect:** The failure to provide for a Child's basic needs, including the omission of necessary actions to preserve the Child's life, physical health, mental health, psychological well-being, moral integrity, and various rights.
- **Exploitation:** The use of children for labor or activities that result in financial, social, or political gain for others, in a manner that adversely affects the Child's physical, mental, cognitive, moral, or social development.
- **Bullying:** The repeated physical, social, or verbal abuse of children by those in a position of power over those who are vulnerable, weak, or unable to resist to gain advantages or draw attention, resulting in harm and causing emotional or physical pain to the victim. Bullying may be carried out by individuals or groups and can occur in person or through digital platforms (cyberbullying).
- **Discrimination:** The unjust or prejudicial treatment of children and their families based on race, age, gender, nationality, religion, or developmental delays.

6. DCD Role in the Policy Implementation

In exercising its legally prescribed powers, DCD shall oversee the implementation of this Policy within Sports Institutions through the following measures:

- Ensure that all individuals working with children receive the mandatory training on Child Protection.
- Ensure the appointment of a Child Protection Coordinator to complement the provision of the necessary training.
- Ensure that every Sports Event organizer designates a Child Protection Coordinator for any organized event involving children.
- Provide guidance and support to the Child Protection Coordinators in the execution of their responsibilities.
- Ensure that accurate and comprehensive records are maintained in accordance with applicable data protection requirements, particularly with respect to:
 - Attendance logs of Child Protection training sessions for individuals engaged in working with children within Sports Institutions.
 - Reports, investigations, decisions and penalties in relation to cases of Abuse, Neglect, or Violence against Children, in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Policy Implementation Manual.

7. ADSC Role in Policy Implementation

In the exercise of its legally stipulated powers, ADSC shall oversee the implementation of this Policy within Sports Clubs through the following measures:

- Ensure that all individuals working with children receive the mandatory training on Child Protection.
- Ensure the appointment of a Child Protection Coordinator to complement the provision of the necessary training.
- Ensure that every Sports Event organizer designates a Child Protection Coordinator for any organized event involving children.
- Provide guidance and support to the Child Protection Coordinators in the execution of their responsibilities.
- Ensure that accurate and comprehensive records are maintained in accordance with applicable data protection requirements, particularly with respect to:
 - Attendance logs of Child Protection training sessions for individuals engaged in working with children within Sports Clubs.
 - Reports, investigations, decisions and penalties in relation to cases of Abuse, Neglect, or Violence against Children, in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Policy Implementation Manual.

8. Child Protection Coordinators

8.1. Every Sports Entity engaging with children shall designate a Child Protection Coordinator, and every organizer of Sports Events targeting children must also designate a Child Protection Coordinator.

8.2. Responsibilities of the Child Protection Coordinator:

- Ensure that the Sports Entity's child protection policy aligns with this Policy and any other relevant applicable legislation;
- Ensure that all Sports Professionals interacting with children within the Sports Entity have completed the mandatory child protection training;
- Organize and conduct regular awareness programs, training sessions, and workshops on child protection within Sports Entities for Sports Professionals, staff, Volunteers, athletes, and parents;
- Maintain and update accurate records of attendance at mandatory child protection training and development programs; Ensure that Sports Entities maintain confidential and accurate records concerning child protection issues, incidents, and interventions, and share such reports with Concerned Bodies or Competent Authorities, as required;
- Receive complaints related to child safety from parents, children, Sports Professionals, workers, or Volunteers; and provide appropriate guidance and support, in line with the severity of the complaint, as outlined in the Policy Implementation Manual. Assess the severity of complaints and concerns related to Abuse, Neglect, or Violence against Children and determine whether the issue can be addressed internally or whether it requires reporting and referral to the relevant authorities, such as Abu Dhabi Police or the Family Care Authority, in accordance with the Policy Implementation Manual and applicable legislation;
- Make recommendations to the Sports Entity regarding the issuance of Suspension Orders against individuals within the entity;
- Ensure that ADSC and DCD are notified upon the issuance of a Suspension Order by the Sports Entity, including the grounds for such action;
- Evaluate potential risks and vulnerabilities within the Sports Entity that may affect the safety and well-being of children participating in Sports Activities.

8.3 Child Protection Coordinators are not responsible for investigating or addressing high-risk child protection cases.

9. Sports Entities

Sports Entities shall take all necessary actions and measures to ensure the protection of children in accordance with the provisions of this Policy, Child Rights Law, and applicable legislation. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Ensure compliance with child protection legislation;
- Establish and maintain a safe environment for Children to facilitate their participation in Sports Activities.
- Ensure that all personnel have completed appropriate first aid training.
- Ensure that the Sports Entity adopts a child protection policy that incorporates all requirements outlined herein and as specified in the Policy Implementation Manual. Designate a Child Protection Coordinator.
- Ensure that all Sports Professionals, workers, and Volunteers interacting with children, within the Sports Entity, have completed the mandatory child protection training.
- Maintain an internal database of all individuals working with children, in compliance with the Policy Implementation Manual.
- Ensure that their internal regulations and employment contracts include a provision stating that an employee's services will be terminated if they violate the provisions of the Child Rights Law and any legislation related to child protection, in accordance with the provisions of this policy and its Implementation Manual.
- Address and report cases of Abuse, Neglect or Violence against Children, according to the severity of the case, in accordance with the Policy Implementation Manual and applicable legislation.
- Ensure that the right to education for children is upheld and consider the timing of school assessments when scheduling Sports Activities.
- Refrain from coercing children to participate in Sports Activities that do not interest them or subjecting them to pressure to compel their participation.
- Publish the Child Protection Policy on the Sports Entity's website and within its facilities, along with the procedures for reporting any cases of Abuse, Neglect, or Violence against children.

10. Sports Professionals and Volunteers

- Sports Professionals and Volunteers working with children shall ensure the safety and protection of the Child in accordance with the provisions of this Policy and applicable legislation, and shall adhere to the rules of conduct established by Sports Entities.
- Report any issues or concerns to the Child Protection Coordinator at the respective Sports Entity.
- Report any cases of Abuse, Neglect or Violence against Children.
- Attend any required child protection training.

11. Family, Parents, Caregivers & Custodians

The family, parents, and Custodians shall ensure the safety and protection of the Child in accordance with the provisions of this Policy and applicable legislation, and shall notify the Sports Entity or Concerned Bodies of any threat to the Child's safety, or any concerns regarding their physical or mental well-being.

12. Mandatory Training

All individuals engaging with children within Sports Entities shall complete the necessary training on child protection provided by the Concerned Bodies, in accordance with the Policy Implementation Manual and applicable legislation.

13. Whistleblowing Procedures

13.1 The Policy Implementation Manual outlines the rules for addressing and reporting cases of Abuse, Neglect, or Violence against Children within Sports Entities, in accordance with this Policy, the Child Rights Law, and applicable legislation related to child protection.

13.2 The identity of the whistleblower shall remain confidential, and legal protection shall be provided in accordance with the applicable legislation.

14. Responsibility

Without prejudice to any criminal liability arising from the violation of the provisions of the Child Rights Law and applicable child protection legislation, any individual who breaches the provisions of this Policy shall be subject to administrative penalties. The DCD Chairman, in coordination with ADSC and with the approval of the Executive Council, shall issue a schedule of violations and administrative fines for actions that contravene the provisions of this Policy, in accordance with the applicable legislation.

15. Supervision and Monitoring

DCD, in collaboration with ADSC and the Concerned Bodies, shall regularly monitor and evaluate the implementation of this Policy.

16. Confidentiality

16.1 Child Protection Coordinators, Sports Professionals, Volunteers, employees working with children within Sports Entities, parents, and Custodians shall maintain strict confidentiality in connection with child protection concerns and cases of child abuse, and shall share such information only with individuals or entities who have a legal right to access it, in accordance with the applicable legislation.

16.2. Sports Entities shall ensure that the appropriate measures are in place to safeguard data and prevent the unauthorized access, use, or disclosure of sensitive information, in accordance with the applicable legislation.

17. Application

17.1. This Policy shall be regularly reviewed by DCD through the following steps:

- Considering feedback provided by ADSC regarding recommendations for policy amendments.
- Engaging with the Concerned Bodies to evaluate the application of the Policy and explore avenues for its development.
- Ensuring the alignment of this Policy with any updates or amendments made to the applicable legislation concerning child protection.

17.2. DCD shall hold exclusive authority to interpret the provisions of this Policy, as required.

17.3 This Policy shall enter into force as of its date of publication in the Official Gazette.

United Arab Emirates - Emirate of Abu Dhabi
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