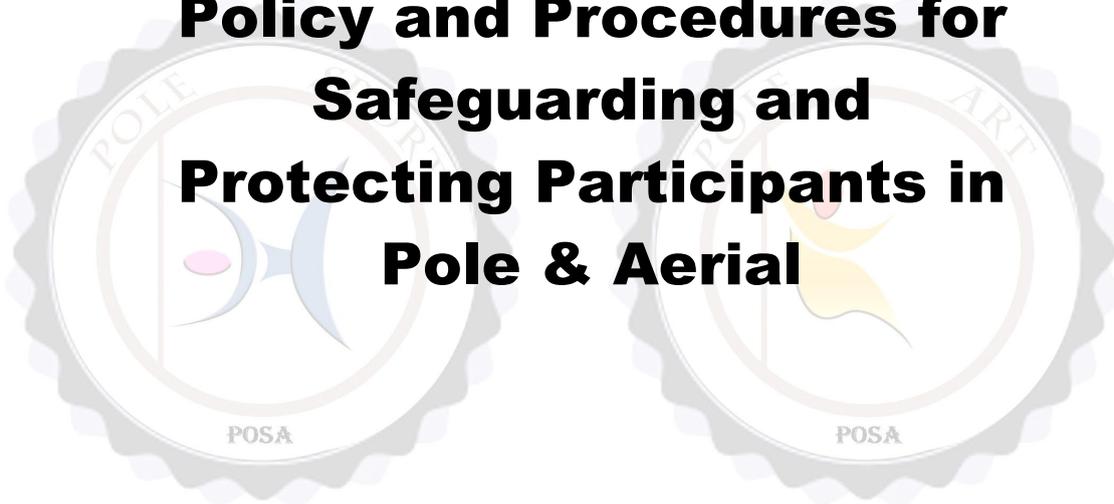


# PO.S.A.- POLE SPORT & ARTS WORLD FEDERATION



## **Policy and Procedures for Safeguarding and Protecting Participants in Pole & Aerial**



Novazzano – 03.10.2024

Changes were needed to avoid any contradiction between these Policies and the Constitution, the Rules & Regulations of the Ethic Committee as well as the Statutes, Code of Disciplines and other POSA Rules

## PART 1

# POSA POLICY for Safeguarding and Protecting Participants in Pole & Aerial

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Sport organizations and everyone in sport have the responsibility to foster a safe, respectful culture so that athletes can thrive without harassment, abuse or violence.

As sports, the Pole Sport & Arts World Federation (POSA) is committed to strengthening the support offered to all its members by putting the athletes, their safety, well-being and welfare, at the center of everything we do.

Everyone in sport has the right to be protected from non-accidental violence, harassment and abuse irrespective of their race, color, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, disability, physical attributes, athletic ability or other status. Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child enshrines the right for all children (defined as anyone under the age of 18) to be safe from violence.

All sport organizations must implement measures to prevent and respond to incidents of non-accidental violence, harassment and abuse. The effectiveness of such measures depends on the POSA and its national federations, to increase awareness of the indicators and impact of all forms of non-accidental violence. Everyone in Pole & Aerial needs to know how to raise concerns and be confident that these will be responded to in line with their National Federation and/or the POSA's Policy and Procedures. Everyone should be aware of the avenues and means open to them for assistance and support.

## 2. CURRENT CONTEXT

Non-accidental violence includes all forms of harassment and abuse and occurs worldwide. Sport is not immune. Evidence and research of recent and non-recent incidents of abuse and harassment is alarming, and it occurs at all levels of sport.

We all share the responsibility to identify the problems and to prevent athletes from suffering.

The International Olympic Committee, in its Agenda 2020, has made strong recommendations to international federations and has provided a framework outlining the key components required for athlete welfare.

The IOC has developed 2 consensus statements related to the prevention of harassment and abuse in sport:

- 1) IOC Consensus statement: Sexual Harassment and abuse in Sport (2007)
- 2) IOC Consensus statement: Harassment and Abuse in Sport (2016)

The POSA fully endorses this framework and is committed to these principles.

These IOC Consensus Statements and basic universal principles of Good Governance encompass safeguarding. Organizations that belong to the Olympic movement are expected to adopt these principles, implement relevant measures, and monitor compliance by sport organizations

The IOC has developed the Safeguarding Athletes from Harassment and Abuse in Sport Toolkit for International Federations and National Olympic Committees (NOCs). The International Safeguarding

Children in Sport have also produced guidelines to assist sport organizations. These are valuable tools to assist in the development of policies and procedures for Safeguarding.

To assist the member federations, the POSA is developing supporting documents, policy and procedures which are intended to serve as the acceptable standards when adopting and implementing national safeguarding systems.

Everyone in Pole & Aerial has the responsibility to identify and respond to harassment and abuse. Our national federations must demonstrate strong leadership by identifying and eradicating unacceptable practices and implementing preventative programs.

It will be the responsibility of each national federation to adopt and implement such policies. The POSA is also developing educational material and providing opportunities to share case studies of best practice to further assist our member federations.

The POSA will establish an independent Pole & Aerial Ethics Committee which will be responsible for receiving and responding to concerns raised under this policy. To this end, the Committee will be organized as follows:

1. An Independent Safeguarding Section with a helpdesk for participants in Pole & Aerial (athletes, officials, judges, etc.).
2. A Disciplinary Section with two distinct groups (Disciplinary Commission and Appeal Tribunal) as defined in the Statutes and Code of Discipline of the POSA.
3. A Compliance Section is responsible for overseeing good governance within the POSA authorities in accordance with POSA rules and regulations.

The POSA itself will designate a Safeguarding Manager, as a member of staff, who will be responsible for:

- Education resources
- Information and awareness programs
- Support of NFs
- Strengthening POSA rules and codes concerning safeguarding.

### **3. DEFINITIONS OF NON-ACCIDENTAL VIOLENCE, HARASSMENT AND ABUSE**

Harassment and abuse can be expressed in many forms which may occur in combination or in isolation. The following are based on the IOC Consensus Statement (2016) as follows:

#### **Psychological abuse**

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

#### **Physical abuse**

- any deliberate and unwelcome act – such as punching, beating, kicking, biting, and burning – that causes physical trauma or injury. Such acts include forced or inappropriate physical activity (e.g. age, or physically inappropriate and unreasonable training loads or activities, when injured or in pain), forced alcohol or drug consumption or forced doping practices.

#### **Sexual harassment**

- any unwanted and unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal, non-verbal or physical. Sexual harassment can take the form of sexual abuse.

#### **Sexual abuse**

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

## **Neglect**

- Neglect means the failure of a coach or other person with a duty of care towards the athlete to provide a minimum level of care, which may cause harm, allow harm or create an imminent danger of harm.

Harassment and abuse can be based on any grounds including race or ethnic origin, culture, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability socio-economic status, physical attributes and athletic ability. It can include a one-off (one time) incident, or a series of incidents. It may be in person or online. Harassment may be intentional, unsolicited and coercive.

Harassment and abuse often result from abuse of authority, meaning the misuse of power by people in positions of trust, influence, and authority (perceived or actual), against another individual. Some athletes may also carry out acts of harassment and abuse. For young people under the age of eighteen, peer abuse describes incidents when an athlete is exploited, bullied and/or harmed by another athlete or groups of athletes of similar age.

The means and methods by which harassment and abuse is carried out include contact, non- contact, verbal and abuse by means of electronic communications.

It may involve deliberate acts as well as failure to act and omissions or may take the form of bullying or hazing which are defined as follows:

### **Bullying**

- Intentional behaviour is usually repeated over time that hurts another individual or group

### **Hazing**

- Hazing behavior is known to occur in many different types of social groups, including sports teams as a way of initiating a new person when they join the group or want to be socially accepted by their peers.

Harassment and abuse is more likely to occur where poor practice, which is defined below, is not immediately challenged.

### **Poor Practice**

- Behaviors or inaction which may not always be immediately harmful, but which falls below the required standards and/or code of conduct should be addressed. Some poor practice may lead to suspicions about an individual's motivation, even where no harm is intended e.g. being alone with a child, excessive or inappropriate touching etc.

## **4. PURPOSE**

The overall purpose of the policy is to ensure athletes and others taking part in Pole & Aerial can do so without fear of harassment or abuse. The key objectives of the policy are to:

- Ensure everyone in Pole & Aerial understands that all forms of non-accidental violence are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- Enable anyone who has witnessed or experienced harassment or abuse, within Pole & Aerial, to report the incident without fear of victimization or retaliation.
- Ensure an appropriate and coordinated response to any incidents of harassment or abuse within or connected to participation in Pole & Aerial, irrespective of whether they arise at national or international level.
- Implement effective measures that minimize the likelihood of incidents of harassment and abuse.

## **5. SCOPE**

This policy applies to all member federations and their representative athletes, members of the athlete entourage, coaches, judges, medical personnel participating in POSA activities, as well as POSA authorities all other persons including officers, directors, employees, agents, honorary members, officials, registered participants and volunteers acting on behalf of POSA (all referred to as a “participant”).

The reference to POSA employees in this Policy only applies to those who are involved in the delivery of Pole & Aerial’ activities.

## **6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **6.1 POSA**

The POSA is responsible for ensuring the implementation of this policy including:

- Defining the Pole & Aerial Ethics Committee Constitution and Rules
- Ensuring all POSA officials understand and abide by POSA policy
- Informing all relevant parties of the procedures contained in this policy and their rights under the law;
- Taking leadership for the development of resources (prevention, awareness and education);
- Ensuring there is a safeguarding plan and reporting procedure in place based on this policy and according to the laws of the host location at all POSA events.

### **6.2 Pole & Aerial Ethics Committee**

The Pole & Aerial Ethics Committee is responsible for:

- Ensuring concerns and reports about harassment and abuse are assessed and where appropriate investigated, in a fair, sensitive, responsible, and timely manner.
- Putting in place a disciplinary process including a Disciplinary Commission and Appeal Tribunal to deal with alleged breaches.
- Imposing appropriate disciplinary or corrective measures when a report of harassment and abuse has been substantiated, regardless of the position or authority of the offender.
- Informing the POSA of any formal disciplinary sanction imposed by the Disciplinary Commission and the Appeal Tribunal for implementation.
- Providing advice and support to a participant who experiences harassment and abuse and providing advice to the participant about whom the allegation has been made relating to the procedure and their individual rights.
- Supporting and assisting any participant who experiences harassment and abuse by another individual not associated with POSA.

### **6.3 National Federations (NF)**

Each NF is responsible for:

- Developing and implementing a Policy and Procedures for safeguarding and protecting participants from harassment and abuse,
- Ensuring such policy and procedures are in line with the standards of POSA Policy and Procedures.
- Ensuring all participants in Pole & Aerial are aware and adhere to the POSA Code of Conduct at POSA activities.
- Advising the POSA of any disciplinary sanction imposed by the NF relating to an incident that occurred at a POSA event that was dealt with by the NF.

- Informing the POSA on a ‘need to know’ basis of any temporary suspension or permanent exclusion of one of their members if it is reasonably believed that he/she could present a risk to participants in Pole & Aerial outside the NF concerned.

## 6.4 All Participants

Everyone has a responsibility to ensure that the gymnastic sport environment is free from non-accidental violence.

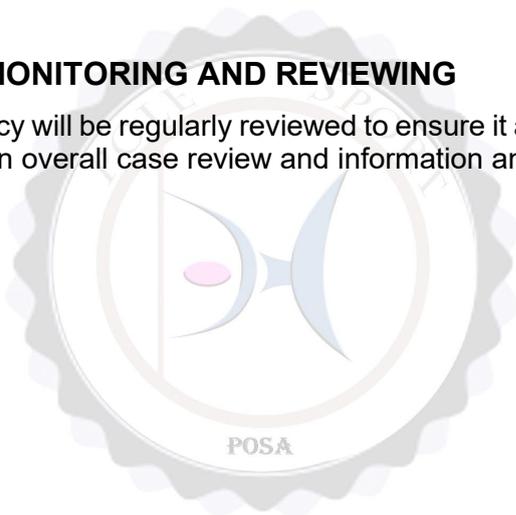
All participants must comply with the POSA Policy and Code of Conduct and specifically not engage in, allow, condone, or ignore incidents of harassment and abuse and be supportive of other participants who report concerns.

Any participant in Pole & Aerial who has reason to believe that another participant has or is experiencing harassment and abuse in the sport has a duty to report it to the Pole & Aerial Ethics Committee.

Failure to comply with the Policy and procedures will be investigated and may ultimately result in disciplinary action against the individuals concerned.

## 7. MONITORING AND REVIEWING

The Policy will be regularly reviewed to ensure it adequately meets the POSA’s responsibilities and as part of an overall case review and information analysis.



## PART 2

### POSA PROCEDURES for Safeguarding and Protecting Participants in Pole & Aerial

The following procedures apply to any complaints, allegations or concerns of non-accidental violence, harassment and abuse made against a participant that are brought to the attention of the Pole & Aerial Ethics Committee.

If an alleged incident of harassment and abuse is reported involving participants that belong to the same NF, or if the incident involves participant(s) but took place at an activity under NF jurisdiction, the incident shall be dealt with by such NF, if it has a policy and procedures for safeguarding participants in accordance with POSA Policy.

Where the alleged perpetrator is a member of a NF which has a policy and procedures in place, the Pole & Aerial Ethics Committee may refer to the case to be dealt with by the NF under their procedures.

In all other cases, including where:

- i (i) an NF which has a policy and procedures for safeguarding participants, does not, in the opinion of the Pole & Aerial Ethics Committee, safeguard such participants (e.g. by taking any disciplinary action); or
- ii (ii) an NF does not have a policy and procedures for safeguarding participants.

the “POSA Policy and procedures” and the Pole & Aerial Ethics Committee’s Constitution and Operational Rules (Code of Discipline) will apply.

Any participant in Pole & Aerial who reports an incident of harassment and abuse that involves a person or persons outside POSA or NF jurisdiction will be provided with support from the Pole & Aerial Ethics Committee. In addition, support may be available from the NOC or Human Rights Commission.

These procedures do not provide a route of appeal for decisions made by NFs or NOC’s except in cases where it is alleged that the NF or NOC has failed to apply appropriate procedures. In this case, the POSA may direct the matter to the Pole & Aerial Ethics Committee.

#### 1. REPORTING PROCEDURES

The Pole & Aerial Ethics Committee can receive reports of an incident of harassment or abuse through:

- the POSA’s helpdesk (until 31 December 2025).
- the Pole & Aerial Ethics Committee’s independent helpdesk (from 1 January 2025).
- During World Championships or other major POSA events, if available, to the Event Safeguarding Officer. (Or to the Head of the organization)

Although incidents can be reported directly by the affected individual, incidents can also be reported by others (whistle blowing) relating to the conduct of an individual or the practices of a national federation. In such cases, confidentiality relating to the identity of the whistle blower will be respected.

Any person who reports a concern in good faith will not be subject to reprisal or other adverse consequences because of submitting a report. These protections shall not apply to a person who intentionally makes false accusations.

## 1.1 Assessment process

Any allegation or concern pursuant to this policy received by the POSA will be referred to by the Pole & Aerial Ethics Committee. The latter shall make an initial assessment of the complaint to determine whether the complaint relates to a participant and whether the complaint is under its jurisdiction.

The Pole & Aerial Ethics Committee will assess the seriousness of the complaint and may:

- refer the matter to the police, other relevant authorities and/or regulatory bodies where it meets the relevant criminal threshold, in accordance with the event safeguarding plan
- refer to the matter to an NF.
- refer to the complaint to another organization.
- proceed with further internal investigation and.
- either dismiss the complaint as unfounded or as insufficiently serious to require any further action or

The Pole & Aerial Ethics Committee may decide on a temporary suspension.

If the matter is reported to the police, the Pole & Aerial Ethics Committee will not share any information about the incident without prior authorization.

Irrespective of jurisdiction, consideration will be given towards any support required for the affected parties.

Where there is an event safeguarding plan in place, the above steps will be carried out by a team assigned for the event.

## 1.2 Investigation procedure

Once a matter has been referred back to by the police, the objective will be to conclude all investigations in a timely manner, ideally within two months.

If the allegations are not of a criminal nature but need further investigation, the Pole & Aerial Ethics Committee (Safeguarding Section) shall assign an individual or a group who shall be responsible for carrying out the investigation, in accordance with these procedures and to an appropriate timeline agreed by the Committee. Where relevant, the investigator may request information from the police and any other relevant organizations.

The investigator may require written or oral representations from relevant parties, taking special care if interviewing vulnerable witnesses. Failure to co-operate with a request to provide relevant information may itself be considered misconduct.

The investigator shall prepare a report and include all relevant evidence for consideration by the Ethics Committee who may determine that:

- The matter is referred to the Disciplinary Commission for consideration;
- Further investigations are instigated.
- A risk assessment is completed.
- Instructions, advice or guidance are provided to the relevant parties; or
- No further action is taken.

## 2. DISCIPLINE AND APPEALS

Any disciplinary proceedings, including the right of appeal, will be conducted in accordance with the POSA Code of Discipline.

The standard of proof is as per the determination in the POSA Code of Discipline. Consequently, the Pole & Aerial Ethics Committee may seek to take disciplinary action irrespective of the outcome of any criminal proceedings.

The Pole & Aerial Ethics Committee will provide appropriate support and guidance to ensure participants involved in this process understand the disciplinary and appeal procedures, especially if children are involved.

### **3. CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS AND NF FINDINGS OF FACT**

The Pole & Aerial Ethics Committee, through its Disciplinary Commission, shall establish that an incident of harassment and abuse has occurred where:

- a participant is convicted of a criminal offence; or
- An NF authorized to deal with a complaint under these procedures has determined that an allegation(s) of harassment or abuse against an POSA participant is/are proven.

The Disciplinary Commission having considered any written representations made by the participant and any other affected parties, may further investigate the case if needed or determine based on the criminal conviction that it is appropriate for the POSA to impose a sanction relating to POSA activities. The Disciplinary Commission may apply the NF sanction to some or all POSA activities or determine its own sanction(s).

Any sanction imposed by the Pole & Aerial Ethics Committee shall be subject to a right of appeal in accordance with the POSA Code of Discipline.

### **4. NON-RECENT ABUSE CASES / LIMITATION PERIODS**

The limitation periods are set out in the POSA Code of Discipline (Art. 5).

Where a serious allegation of sexual abuse is received within the limitation periods the Pole & Aerial Ethics Committee will:

- Clarify whether there is a current risk to participants; and may take immediate provisional measures; and
- Advise the individual to make a formal complaint to the police; and
- Provide support and further assistance if deemed appropriate by the Ethics Committee.

Such allegations must be treated in accordance with POSA procedures.

### **5. CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING**

Any information pertaining to an alleged incident of harassment and abuse shall be regarded as confidential.

The Pole & Aerial Ethics Committee may disclose confidential information to appropriate individuals, authorities or other organizations where it is deemed necessary to comply with these procedures or where failure to disclose such information may result in harm to others.

The POSA will be kept informed by the Pole & Aerial Ethics Committee of any relevant decisions and where appropriate will be responsible for implementing the judgements of the Disciplinary Commission or Appeal Tribunal.

Any affected individual will be notified by the POSA of the outcome of any disciplinary or appeal panel decisions. The publication of decisions of the Disciplinary Commission and Appeal Tribunal are set out in the POSA Code of Discipline.

### **6. RETENTION OF RECORDS**

Any information relating to allegations of non-accidental violence, harassment and abuse will be securely stored and may be retained by the Pole & Aerial Ethics Committee in accordance with Swiss law and until expiry of the limitation periods set out in the POSA Code of Discipline.

## 7. TERMINOLOGY

The terms used in this policy shall be interpreted as follows:

**National Federation (NF)** – shall mean the member federations of the POSA.

**POSA Pole & Aerial Activity** – shall mean any activities under the direct jurisdiction of the POSA. It shall not include POSA sanctioned events run by NFs.

**Pole & Aerial Ethics Committee** – shall mean the independent body designated by the POSA with responsibility for receiving and responding to reports of harassment and abuse.

**Event Safeguarding Officer** – shall mean the designated individual responsible for receiving and acting on safeguarding concerns at POSA Pole & Aerial events.

### Related policies:

- POSA Code of Ethics
- IOC Code of Ethics
- POSA Code of Discipline
- POSA Codes of Conduct for Athletes, Coaches, Judges, Entourage
- POSA Medical Rules – Anti-Doping Rules
- POSA Rules & Regulations

### Ethic Committee Members (Disciplinary Commission):

President- Cesare Bianchi (Italy)  
Lawyer- Monica Mariani (Italy)  
Member- Jillhara Hemachandra (Sri Lanka)  
Member- Davide Cali (Switzerland)

### Appeal Tribunal:

President- Alfredo La Mont (USA)  
Lawyer- Yuliia Damova (Ukraine)  
Member- Josiani Bellucci (Brazil)  
Member- Ashley Robinson (USA)

### Safeguarding Manager:

Judit Gábris-Baczakó (Hungary)