



Member Protection Policy

Preface

Athletics Victoria has a legal obligation in relation to harassment, discrimination and child protection. We also have moral obligations in relation to establishing standards of appropriate behaviour and in providing safe, respectful and appropriate sporting environments. Therefore Athletics Victoria has developed the following Member Protection Policy.

Athletics Victoria are committed to providing an environment safe for children, that is free from harassment and abuse for everyone, and promotes respectful and positive behaviour and values. This policy provides a code of conduct forming the basis of appropriate and ethical conduct which everyone must abide by.

The Member Protection Policy is an essential part of our organisation's proactive and preventative approach to tackling inappropriate behaviour.

Anne Lord
President
Athletics Victoria

PART A – MEMBER PROTECTION

1.0 Dictionary

This Dictionary sets out the meaning of words used in this policy and its attachments without limiting the ordinary and natural meaning of the words. State/Territory specific definitions and more detail on some of the words in this dictionary can be sourced from the relevant State/Territory child protection commissions or equal opportunity and anti-discrimination commissions.

Abuse is a form of harassment and includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and abuse of power. Examples of abusive behaviour include bullying, humiliation, verbal abuse and insults.

Affiliated club means such clubs as are affiliated with the Association from time to time.

Child means a person who is under the age of 18 years (see also definition of young person)

Child abuse relates to children at risk of harm (usually by adults, sometimes by other children) and often by those they know and trust. It can take many forms. Children may be harmed by both verbal and physical actions and by people failing to provide them with basic care. Child abuse may include:

- Physical abuse by hurting a child or a child's development (e.g. hitting, shaking or other physical harm; giving a child alcohol or drugs; giving bad nutritional advice; or training that exceeds the child's development or maturity).
- Sexual abuse by adults or other children where a child is encouraged or forced to watch or engage in sexual activity or where a child is subject to any other inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature (e.g. sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, pornography including child pornography or inappropriate touching or conversations).
- Emotional abuse by ill-treating a child (e.g. humiliation, taunting, sarcasm, yelling, negative criticism, name calling, ignoring or placing unrealistic expectations on a child).
- Neglect (e.g. failing to give food, water, shelter or clothing or to protect a child from danger or foreseeable risk of harm or injury).

Complaint means a complaint made under Part C of this policy.

Complainant means the person making a complaint.

Discrimination means treating or proposing to treat a person less favourably than someone else in certain areas of public life on the basis of an attribute or personal characteristic they have. The relevant attributes or characteristics are:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Marital status;
- Parental/carer status;
- Physical features;
- Political belief/activity;
- Pregnancy;

- Race;
- Religious belief/activity;
- Sex or gender;
- Sexual orientation;
- Trade union membership/activity;
- Transgender orientation.

Some States and Territories include additional characteristics.

Discrimination is not permitted in the areas of employment (including volunteer and unpaid employment); the provision of goods and services; the selection or otherwise of any person for competition or a team (domestic or international); the entry or otherwise of any player or other person to any competition; obtaining or retaining membership of an organisation (including the rights and privileges of membership).

Requesting, assisting, instructing, inducing or encouraging another person to engage in discrimination may also be discriminatory conduct.

Discrimination may be direct or indirect. **Direct discrimination** is treating, or proposing to treat someone less favourably because of a characteristic (such as race, sex, age etc), in the same or similar circumstances. **Indirect discrimination** is imposing or intending to impose a requirement, condition or practice that is the same for everyone but which has an unequal or disproportionate effect on particular individuals or groups.

Harassment is any type of behaviour that the other person does not want and that is offensive, abusive, belittling or threatening. The behaviour is unwelcome and of a type that a reasonable person would recognise as being unwelcome and likely to cause the recipient to feel offended, humiliated or intimidated.

Unlawful harassment includes the above but is either sexual or targets a person because of their race, sex, pregnancy, marital status, sexuality or other characteristic (see characteristic list under discrimination).

Whether or not the behaviour is harassment is determined from the point of view of the person receiving the harassment. The basic rule is if someone else finds it harassing then it could be harassment. Harassment may be a single incident or repeated. It may be explicit or implicit, verbal or non-verbal.

Junior means a person under the age of eighteen (18) years who is participating in an activity of Athletics Victoria.

Mediator means a person appointed to mediate complaints made under this policy. It is preferable that the mediator has relevant skills, qualifications and/or training in mediation.

Member means natural persons who are eligible in accordance with the laws of Athletics Australia and who are nominated and approved for membership of the Association as provided in the By-laws.

Member protection is a term used by the Australian sport industry to describe the practices and procedures that protect members – both individual members such as athletes, coaches and officials, and the member organisations such as clubs, state associations, other affiliated associations and the national body. Member protection involves:

- Protecting those that are involved in sport activities from harassment, abuse, discrimination and other forms of inappropriate behaviour
- Adopting appropriate measures to ensure the right people are involved in an organisation, particularly in relation to those involved with juniors, and
- Providing education.

Member Protection Officer (MPO) means a person trained to be the first point of contact for a person reporting a complaint under, or a breach of, this policy. The MPO provides confidential information and moral support to the person with the concern or who is alleging harassment or a breach of this policy. They help the complainant deal with any emotions they may have about what has happened and operate as a sounding board as the complainant decides what they want to do. The MPO may accompany the complainant in anything they decide to do, if it feels appropriate and they are happy to do it.

Natural justice incorporates the following principles:

- A person who is the subject of a complaint must be fully informed of the allegations against them
- A person who is the subject of a complaint must be given full opportunity to respond to the allegations and raise any matters in their own defence
- All parties need to be heard and all relevant submissions considered
- Irrelevant matters should not be taken into account
- No person may judge their own case
- The decision maker/s must be unbiased, fair and just
- The penalties imposed must not outweigh the 'crime'

Police check means a national criminal history record check conducted as a prudent pre-employment or pre-engagement background check on a person.

Policy and this policy mean this Member Protection Policy.

Respondent means the person who is being complained about.

Role-specific codes of conduct means standards of conduct required of certain roles (e.g. coaches).

Sexual harassment means unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited behaviour of a sexual nature which makes a person feel humiliated, intimidated or offended. Sexual harassment can take many different forms and may include unwanted physical contact, verbal comments, jokes, propositions, display of pornographic or offensive material or other behaviour that creates a sexually hostile environment.

Sexual harassment is not behaviour based on mutual attraction, friendship and respect. If the interaction is between consenting adults, it is not sexual harassment.

Sexual offence means a criminal offence involving sexual activity or acts of indecency *including but not limited to (due to differences under state/territory legislation):*

- Rape
- Indecent assault
- Sexual assault
- Assault with intent to have sexual intercourse
- Incest

- Sexual penetration of child under the age of 16
- Indecent act with child under the age of 16
- Sexual relationship with child under the age of 16
- Sexual offences against people with impaired mental functioning
- Abduction and detention
- Procuring sexual penetration by threats or fraud
- Procuring sexual penetration of child under the age of 16
- Bestiality
- Soliciting acts of sexual penetration or indecent acts
- Promoting or engaging in acts of child prostitution
- Obtaining benefits from child prostitution
- Possession of child pornography
- Publishing child pornography and indecent articles.

Victimisation means subjecting a person or threatening to subject a person to any detriment or unfair treatment because that person has or intends to pursue their rights to make a complaint under government legislation (e.g. anti-discrimination) or under this policy, or for supporting another person to make a complaint.

Vilification involves a person or organisation doing public acts to incite hatred towards, serious contempt for, or severe ridicule of a person or group of persons having any of the attributes or characteristics within the meaning of discrimination. Public acts that may amount to vilification include any form of communication to the public and any conduct observable by the public.

Young People/person means people in the 13 – 18 year age group.

2.0 Athletics Victoria Core Values

- Athletics Victoria strives to create the best possible environment for athletics to flourish.
- We aim to provide a competition structure which caters for *all* of our members and penetrates into the community to attract more participants and members.
- We endeavour to make our events and programs fun and accessible.
- We undertake to cater for both our developing athletes and our superstars.

3.0 Purpose of this policy

This Member Protection Policy aims to ensure our core values, good reputation and positive behaviours and attitudes are maintained. It assists us in ensuring that every person involved in our sport is treated with respect and dignity, and is safe and protected from abuse. This policy also ensures that everyone involved in our sport is aware of his or her legal and ethical rights and responsibilities.

The policy attachments provide the procedures that support our commitment to eliminating discrimination, harassment, child abuse and other forms of inappropriate behaviour from our sport. As part of this commitment, Athletics Victoria will take disciplinary action against any person or organisation bound by this policy if they breach it.

This policy has been endorsed by the Board of Athletics Victoria. The policy starts on 1st February 2005 and will operate until replaced. This policy and/or its attachments may be amended from time to time by resolution of the Board. Copies of the policy and its attachments can be obtained from our website www.athsvic.org.au or from the Athletics Victoria Office.

4.0 Who this Policy Applies To

This policy applies to the following, whether they are in a paid or unpaid/voluntary capacity:

- Individuals sitting on boards, committees and sub-committees;
- Employees and volunteers;
- Support personnel (e.g. managers, physiotherapists, psychologists, masseurs, sport trainers);
- Coaches and assistant coaches;
- Athletes;
- Referees, umpires and other officials;
- Members, including life members;
- Affiliated clubs;
- Any other person or organisation that is a member of or affiliated to Athletics Victoria;
- Parents, guardians, spectators and sponsors to the full extent that is possible.

5.0 Code Of Conduct

Athletics Victoria requires every individual and organisation bound by this policy to:

- 5.1 Be ethical, fair and honest in all their dealings with other people and Athletics Victoria;
- 5.2 Treat all persons with respect and courtesy and have proper regard for their dignity, rights and obligations;
- 5.3 Always place the safety and welfare of children above other considerations;
- 5.4 Comply with Athletics Victoria's rules and policies including this member protection policy;
- 5.5 Operate within the rules and spirit of the sport;
- 5.6 Comply with all relevant Australian laws (Federal and State), particularly anti-discrimination and child protection laws;
- 5.7 Be responsible and accountable for their conduct; and
- 5.8 Abide by the relevant Role-Specific Codes of Conduct outlined in Part D of this policy.

6.0 Organisational Responsibilities

Athletics Victoria and affiliated clubs must:

- 6.1 Adopt, implement and comply with this policy;
- 6.2 Publish, distribute and otherwise promote this policy and the consequences for breaching it;
- 6.3 Promote appropriate standards of conduct at all times;
- 6.4 Promptly deal with any breaches of or complaints made under this policy in an impartial, sensitive, fair, timely and where possible confidential manner;

- 6.5 Apply this policy consistently without fear or favour;
- 6.6 Recognise and enforce any penalty imposed under this policy;
- 6.7 Ensure that a copy of this policy is available or accessible to the persons to whom this policy applies;
- 6.8 Appoint or have access to appropriately trained people to receive and handle complaints and allegations and display the names and contact details in a way that is readily accessible; and
- 6.9 Monitor and review this policy at least annually.

7.0 Individual Responsibilities

Individuals bound by this policy are responsible for:

- 7.1 Making themselves aware of the policy and complying with the standards of conduct outlined in this policy;
- 7.2 Consenting to a national police check if the individual holds or applies for a role that involves working with or regular contact with people under the age of 18 years;
- 7.3 Complying with all other requirements of this policy;
- 7.4 Co-operating in providing discrimination, child abuse and harassment free sporting environment;
- 7.5 Understanding the possible consequences of breaching this policy.

8.0 Policy Position Statements

8.1 Child Protection Policy

Every person and organisation bound by this policy must always place the safety and welfare of children above all other considerations.

Athletics Victoria acknowledges that our staff and volunteers provide a valuable contribution to the positive experiences of our juniors. Athletics Victoria aims to ensure this continues and to protect the safety and welfare of its junior participants. Several measures will be used to achieve this such as:

- Prohibiting any form of abuse against children;
- Providing opportunities for our juniors to contribute to and provide feedback on our program development;
- Carefully selecting and screening people whose role requires them to work with or have regular contact with children (Screening procedures are outlined in Part B of this policy);
- Ensuring our codes of conduct, particularly for roles associated with junior sport, are promoted, enforced and reviewed;
- Providing procedures for raising concerns or complaints (our complaints procedure is outlined in Part C of this policy); and
- Providing education and/or information to those involved in our sport on child abuse and child protection.

Athletics Victoria requires that any child who is abused or anyone who reasonably suspects that a child has been or is being abused by someone within our sport, to report it immediately to the police or relevant government agency and Athletics Victoria's Member Protection Officer. Descriptions of the sorts of activity which may be abuse are in the Dictionary at clause 1.

All allegations of child abuse will be dealt with promptly, seriously, sensitively and where possible confidentially. A person will not be victimised for reporting an allegation of child abuse and the privacy of all persons concerned will be respected. Our procedures for handling allegations of child abuse are outlined in Part C4 of this policy.

If anyone bound by this policy reasonably suspects that a child is being abused by his or her parent/s, they are advised to contact the relevant government department for youth, family and community services in their state/territory.

8.2 Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy

Athletics Victoria aims to provide a sport environment where all those involved in its activities are treated with dignity and respect, and without harassment or discrimination.

Athletics Victoria recognises that all those involved in its activities cannot enjoy themselves, perform to their best, or be effective or fully productive if they are being treated unfairly, discriminated against or harassed because of their sex, marital status, pregnancy, parental status, race, age, disability, homosexuality, sexuality, transgender, religion, political belief and/or industrial activity.

Athletics Victoria prohibits all forms of harassment and discrimination not only because it is against the law, but because it is extremely distressing, offensive, humiliating and/or threatening and creates an uncomfortable and unpleasant environment.

Descriptions of some of the types of behaviour which could be regarded as harassment or discrimination are provided in the Dictionary at clause 1.

If any person feels they are being harassed or discriminated against by another person or organisation bound by this policy, please refer to our complaints procedure outlined in Part C of this policy. This will explain what to do about the behaviour and how Athletics Victoria will deal with the problem.

8.3 Sexual Relationships Policy

In the event that an athlete attempts to initiate an intimate sexual relationship with their coach, the coach must take personal responsibility for discouraging such approaches, explaining the ethical basis for such action. The coach may wish to approach the Athletics Victoria Member Protection Officer if they feel harassed.

The law is always the minimum standard for behaviour within Athletics Victoria and therefore sex with a person under 16 is a criminal offence.

9.0 Complaints Procedures

9.1 Complaints

Athletics Victoria aims to provide an easy to use, trustworthy and where possible confidential procedure for complaints based on the principles of natural justice. Any person may report a complaint (complainant) about a person/s or organisation bound by this policy if they reasonably believe that a person/s or a sporting organisation has breached this policy. A complaint should be reported to the Athletics Victoria Member Protection Officer.

A complaint may be reported as an informal or formal complaint. The complainant decides whether the complaint will be dealt with informally or formally unless the Athletics Victoria Member Protection Officer considers that the complaint falls outside the parameters of this policy and would be better dealt with another way.

All complaints will be dealt with promptly, seriously, sensitively and where possible, confidentially. Athletics Victoria is committed to fulfilling mandatory reporting obligations and will, when required, seek advice from relevant government agencies and/or police during the process of complaint investigation. Our complaint procedures are outlined in Part C of this policy.

9.2 Vexatious Complaints & Victimisation

Athletics Victoria aims to ensure our complaints procedure has integrity and is free of unfair repercussions or victimisation. If at any point in the complaint process the Athletics Victoria Member Protection Officer considers that a complainant has **knowingly** made an untrue complaint or the complaint is vexatious or malicious, the matter may be referred to the Athletics Victoria Board for appropriate action which may include disciplinary action against the complainant.

Athletics Victoria will also take all necessary steps to make sure that people involved in a complaint are not victimised by anyone for coming forward with a complaint or for helping to sort it out. Disciplinary measures will be imposed on anyone who victimises another person for making a complaint.

9.3 Mediation

Athletics Victoria aims to sort out complaints with the minimum of fuss wherever possible. In many cases, complaints can be sorted out by agreement between the people involved with no need for disciplinary action. The people involved in a formal complaint - the complainant and the person complained about (respondent) - may also seek the assistance of a neutral third person or a mediator. Lawyers are not able to negotiate on behalf of the complainant and/or respondent.

Mediation may occur either before or after an investigation of a complaint. If a complainant wishes to try and resolve the complaint with the assistance of a mediator, the Member Protection Officer will, in consultation with the complainant, arrange for a mediator to mediate the complaint. More information on the mediation process is outlined in Part C2 of this policy.

9.4 Tribunals

A hearings tribunal may be formed to hear a formal complaint that has been referred by the Member Protection Officer, or an alleged breach of the policy. Our tribunal hearings procedure is outlined in Part C5 of this policy.

A respondent may lodge one appeal only to the appeal tribunal in respect of a decision of a hearing tribunal. The decision of the appeal tribunal is final and binding on the people involved to the appeal. Our appeals process is outlined in Part C5 of this policy.

Every organisation bound by this policy will recognise and enforce any decision made, and form of discipline imposed, by an appeals tribunal under this policy.

10.0 What is a Breach of this Policy

Compliance with this policy is a condition of membership with Athletics Victoria. It is a breach of this policy for any person or organisation to which this policy applies, to have been found to have:

- 10.1 Done anything contrary to this policy;
- 10.2 Breached the Code of Conduct and Role-Specific Codes of Conduct;
- 10.3 Brought the sport Athletics Victoria into disrepute;
- 10.4 Failed to follow Athletics Victoria policies and procedures for the protection, safety and welfare of children;
- 10.5 Appointed or continued to appoint a person to a role that involves working with children and young people contrary to this policy;
- 10.6 Discriminated against or harassed any person;
- 10.7 Victimised another person for reporting a complaint;
- 10.8 Engaged in a sexually inappropriate relationship with a person that the person supervises, or has influence, authority or power over;
- 10.9 Disclosed to any unauthorised person or organisation any Athletics Victoria information that is of a private, confidential or privileged nature;
- 10.10 Made a complaint they **knew** to be untrue, vexatious, malicious or improper;
- 10.11 Failed to comply with a penalty imposed after a finding that the individual or organisation has breached this policy;
- 10.12 Failed to comply with a direction given to the individual or organisation during the discipline process.

11.0 Forms of Discipline

If an individual or organisation to which this policy applies breaches this policy, one or more forms of discipline may be imposed. These may include making a verbal or written apology, paying a fine, being suspended or de-registered or having a person's appointment or employment terminated. More information on the range of disciplinary measures and the factors that will be considered before imposing discipline is at Part C6 of this policy.

PART B – ATHLETICS VICTORIA CHILD PROTECTION REQUIREMENTS

1.0 Background

Child Protection is about keeping children safe from abuse and protecting them from people who are unsuitable to work with children. Child abuse is illegal in all states and territories of Australia, with each having their own child protection laws that cover the reporting and investigation of cases of child abuse.

In New South Wales and Queensland child protection legislation places specific requirements upon individuals and organisations involved in a range of areas including sport and recreation. The Victorian, South Australian, Northern Territory and Western Australian governments are currently developing child protection legislation that will also impact upon sport. We will add these new requirements or any amendments to existing requirements to our Member Protection Policy as they are introduced.

Please be aware that state and territory child protection requirements also apply to individuals and organisations originating outside of the states with the legislation in place. For example, if one of our state associations or affiliated clubs takes junior players to New South Wales or Queensland for training camps, competition or other activities, those travelling with the teams must comply with the NSW or QLD legislative requirements.

As part of Athletics Victoria's commitment to protecting the safety and welfare of children and young people involved in Athletics Victoria activities, Athletics Victoria requires the following measures to be met.

- Provide opportunities for juniors to contribute to and provide feedback on program development;
- Provide education and/or information on child abuse and child protection to those involved in our sport such as coaches, juniors, parents and officials; and
- Meet the requirements outlined in Part B1 – until new child protection legislation relevant to that state/territory is introduced.
- Meet the requirements of Part B2 & B3 when travelling into New South Wales or Queensland.

B1 – CHILD PROTECTION REQUIREMENTS

This attachment sets out the screening process for people who currently occupy or who apply for any work (paid or voluntary) in Athletics Victoria that involves working with or regular contact with people under the age of 18 years.

Screening under this policy is not a replacement for any other procedure required by law. If State or Territory legislation sets an equivalent or higher standard of screening, the requirement to screen people under the process outlined below need not be followed.

1.0 Association/Club requirements

Under Athletics Victoria's Member Protection Policy, our organisation is required to:

1. Identify positions (paid and voluntary) that involve working with people under the age of 18 years.
2. Obtain a completed *Member Protection Declaration* (MPD) (found on the AV Registration Form from 2005/2006 season) from all people who are bound by this policy if they occupy or apply for a position that involves working with people under the age of 18 years. The MPD will be kept in a secure place.

If a MPD is not provided, or it reveals that a person does not satisfactorily meet with one or more of the clauses in the MPD (e.g. has a relevant criminal conviction), Athletics Victoria will:

- provide an opportunity for the person to respond/provide an explanation, and
- make an assessment as to whether the person may pose a risk to or be unsuitable to work with people under the age of 18 years.

If unsatisfied, then Athletics Victoria will:

- in the case of an existing employee/volunteer then end the appointment. **Note: legal advice should be obtained before the termination process begins.**
- in the case of someone applying for the position/role, not appoint them.

3. Check a person's referees (verbal or written) and interview a person about their suitability for the role and their suitability for working with children for paid positions.
4. Ask people applying for, and people who currently occupy, a position that involves working with or regular contact with people under the age of 18 years to sign a consent **form** for a National Police Record Check.
5. Request a national police check from our relevant police jurisdiction for people applying for, and people who currently occupy, paid and voluntary positions that involves working with people under the age of 18 years.

In most police jurisdictions a 'Part Exclusion' check for people working with children can be requested. This check excludes irrelevant records.

If the police check indicates a relevant offence, Athletics Victoria will:

- In the case of an existing employee/volunteer then end the appointment.
Note: legal advice should be obtained before the termination process begins.

Any person with prior convictions relating to child or young person abuse will not be permitted to fill any Athletics Victoria positions that involve working with people under the age of 18 years. Athletics Victoria membership may be withdrawn.

- In the case of someone applying for the position/role, not appoint them.

If the person does not agree to a National Police Record Check after explaining why it is a requirement, Athletics Victoria shall:

- In the case of an existing employee/volunteer, transfer the person to another role which does not require them to work with people under the age of 18 years. If this is not possible, then end the appointment. **Note: legal advice should be obtained before the termination process begins.**
- In the case of someone applying for the position/role, not appoint them.

6. Decide whether to offer the person the position, or retain the person in the position, taking into account the result of the National Police Record Check and any other information Athletics Victoria has available.
7. Where a National Police Record Check is obtained under this member protection policy, another organisation which is also required to screen may obtain a copy of the National Police Record Check provided that the consent of the relevant person is obtained and the National Police Record Check was performed in the immediately preceding two years.
8. Protect the privacy of any person who is checked and the confidentiality of any information obtained through the checking process.

B2 – QUEENSLAND CHILD PROTECTION REQUIRMENTS

This information is subject to change at any time. Refer to the Queensland Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian's website: www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au or contact 1800 113611.

In Queensland the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000* requires people who work with children under 18 years of age in certain categories of paid or voluntary employment or those who operate child-related businesses, to undergo a Working with Children Check. The Working with Children Check is a comprehensive assessment of a person's suitability to work with children based on their criminal history and teacher registration, if any. Those found suitable to work with children and young people are issued a suitability card, or blue card. The blue card must be renewed every two years.

Association/Club Requirements

QLD State Associations and affiliated clubs are responsible for applying to the Queensland Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian (CCYPCG) for Working With Children Checks on employees and volunteers who will be working with children or young people and who meet the criteria below. **These requirements apply despite the existence or absence of our member protection policy.**

1.0 Employees

Employees who started a new job or renewed a contract after 1 May 2001, who work with children and young people within a 12 month period:

- At least once a week over the course of one month,
- Or at least once a fortnight over the course of two months, or
- At least once a month over the course of six months,
- At least 8 consecutive days.
- Must undergo a criminal history check.

People working in regulated employment, which is 'one-off' or on a short-term basis (where the duration of their employment is less than that listed above) are not required to undergo a criminal history check.

Paid employees who began in regulated employment before 1 May 2002 are not required to undergo a criminal history check by the CCYPCG. Where we know or reasonably suspect that an existing employee has a criminal history that may make the employee unsuitable for child-related employment, then we may apply to the CCYP for a suitability notice for that employee.

Paid employees can begin or continue to work in regulated employment while waiting for the outcome of their blue card application. If an employer does not ensure that the paid employees working in the categories of regulated employment hold a blue card, or have applied for a blue card, they are committing an offence and may face fines or imprisonment.

Application forms for us to apply for a suitability notice for a prospective paid employee can be downloaded from www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au.

2.0 Volunteers

Volunteers working with children in our association/club must have a criminal history check regardless of how often they come into contact with children and young people. However, volunteers who signed an agreement before 1 May 2002 do not have to undergo employment screening until they enter into a new agreement. Application forms for us to apply for a suitability notice for a volunteer can also be downloaded from www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au. Screening for volunteers is free.

3.0 Exemptions

The following people are exempt from the Working with Children Check:

- children under 18 who are volunteers (except students required to work in regulated employment as part of their studies);
- parents who volunteer their services or conduct activities at the school their child is attending, as long as the child is under 18; and
- parents who volunteer their services or conduct activities through a church, club or association or are involved in sport and active recreation, where their child is involved in the same or similar activity.

'Regulated employment' includes any paid or voluntary work that falls under following categories:

- Out of home residential facilities;
- School boarding houses;
- Schools – employees other than teachers and parents;
- Churches, clubs and associations providing services mainly directed towards or involving children;
- Counselling and support services;
- Private teaching, coaching and tutoring; or
- All education programs conducted outside of schools.

B3 – NEW SOUTH WALES REQUIREMENTS FOR CHECKING PEOPLE TO WORK WITH CHILDREN

This information is subject to change at any time. Refer to the NSW Commission for Children and Young People website: www.kids.nsw.gov.au or contact 02 9286 7219.

All NSW clubs and associations who engage/employ people in child-related activities (in a paid or voluntary capacity) must meet the requirements of the Working With Children Check. This is a legal requirement. We are required to:

1. Register with the NSW Department of Sport and Recreation Employment Screening Unit;
2. Identify positions (paid and voluntary) which are **child-related positions**;
3. Obtain a Prohibited Employment Declaration (PED) from all existing employees in child-related positions. PED forms can be downloaded from www.kids.nsw.gov.au/check/resources.html. If the person is a **prohibited person** we must remove him/her from the child-related employment;
4. Keep the PED in a secure place for as long as the person is employed;
5. Ask preferred applicants for paid child-related positions to sign a Consent Form for a background check;
6. Include advice about the Working With Children Check in information being provided about child-related positions (e.g. coach of junior team);
7. Request a background check for preferred applicants for paid child-related employment before they start work;
8. Decide whether to offer the applicant the position, taking into account the result of the Working With Children Check and any other information we have available;
9. Where it is not practical to complete the background check prior to employment commencing, we must still complete the check as soon as possible. We must advise employees that their ongoing employment is conditional upon the satisfactory outcome of the check;
10. Notify the NSW Commission for Children and Young People of any person whose application for child-related employment has been rejected primarily because of a risk assessment in the Working With Children Check. We must do this even if we offer the person an alternative position;
11. Advise the person if their application was rejected primarily because of an adverse risk assessment in the Working With Children Check;
12. Notify the NSW Commission for Children and Young People of any person against whom **relevant employment proceedings** have been completed; and
13. Protect the privacy of any person who is checked and the confidentiality of any information obtained through the checking process.
14. Notify the NSW Commission for Children and Young People of any person against whom relevant employment proceedings have been completed since 3 July 1995; and

15. Provide information to Approved Screening Agencies about any person who has been subject to relevant employment proceedings to enable them to complete the Working With Children Check.

These requirements are made with reference to the following legislation;

- Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998
- Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998 (as amended)
- Ombudsman Act 1974
- Child Protection (Offenders Registration) Act 2000

Child-related employment is any work (paid or unpaid) that involves direct and unsupervised contact with children in several types of areas such as sporting clubs and associations that have a significant child membership or involvement.

Employment includes work done:

- Under a contract of employment;
- As a sub-contractor;
- As a volunteer for an organisation;
- As a minister of religion (whether or not ordained); and
- Undertaking practical training as part of an educational or vocational course

Prohibited person is a person convicted of committing a serious sex offence or a registrable person.

Registrable person is someone who has been found guilty of the following offences against children:

- Murder
- Sexual offences
- Indecency offences
- Kidnapping
- Child prostitution
- Child pornography

Relevant employment proceedings are disciplinary proceedings completed in NSW, or elsewhere, where an employer or professional body that supervises the conduct of the employee has found that '**reportable conduct**' or an act of violence occurred, or there is some evidence that it occurred. An act of violence will be relevant only if it was committed by an employee in the course of employment and in the presence of a child.

Reportable conduct is:

- Any sexual offence, or sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence of a child (including a child pornography offence);
- Any assault, ill treatment or neglect of a child; or
- Any behaviour that causes psychological harm to a child.

PART C –PROCEDURES

To ensure consistency and that the principles of natural justice are followed in all aspects of handling or conducting complaints, allegations, investigations, tribunals and disciplinary measures, Athletics Victoria will follow and implement the following procedures.

C1 – COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

A complaint can be about an act, behaviour, omission, situation or decision that someone thinks is unfair, unjustified, unlawful and/or a breach of this policy. Complaints will always vary. They may be about individual or group behaviour; they may be extremely serious or relatively minor; they may be about a single incident or a series of incidents; and the person about who the allegation is made may admit to the allegations or emphatically deny them.

Given all of the variables that can arise, Athletics Victoria provides a step-by-step complaint procedure that people may use/enter at any stage. Individuals and organisations to which this policy applies may also pursue their complaint externally under anti-discrimination, child-protection or other relevant legislation.

If at any point in the complaint process the Member Protection Officer considers that a complainant has **knowingly** made an untrue complaint or the complaint is vexatious or malicious, the matter will be referred to the Hearings Tribunal (see C5) for appropriate action. All complaints will be kept confidential where possible and will not be disclosed to another person without the complainant's consent except if law requires disclosure or if disclosure is necessary to effectively deal with the complaint.

Step 1

As a first step you (the complainant) should try to sort out the problem with the person or people involved if you feel able to do so.

Step 2

If:

- The first step is not possible/reasonable; or
- You are not sure how to handle the problem by yourself; or
- You just want to talk confidentially about the problem with someone and get some more information about what you can do; or
- The problem continues after you tried to approach the person or people involved; then talk with one of our Member Protection Officers (MPO). A list of our MPO's can be found on the Athletics Victoria website (www.athsvic.org.au).

The MPO will:

- Take notes about your complaint (which the MPO will keep in a secure and confidential place);
- Try to sort out the facts of the problem;
- Ask what outcome/how you want the problem resolved and if you need support;
- Provide possible options for you to resolve the problem;
- Explain how our complaints procedure works;
- Act as a support person if you so wish;
- Refer you to an appropriate person to help you resolve the problem, if necessary;
- Inform the relevant government authorities and/or police if required by law to do so; and
- Maintain strict confidentiality where possible.

Step 3

After talking with the MPO, you may decide:

- There is no problem;
- The problem is minor and you do not wish to take the matter forward;
- To try and work out your own resolution (with or without a support person such as an MPO); or
- To seek an informal mediated resolution with the help of a third person (such as a mediator).

If you wish to remain anonymous, Athletics Victoria may not be able to help you without documentary evidence or other witnesses to support the allegations. We must also follow the principles of natural justice and be fair to both sides. This means that Athletics Victoria or you may be required to provide the person/people you have complained about with full details of the complaint so they have a fair chance to respond to all the allegations.

Step 4

If your complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction, you may:

- Make a formal complaint in writing to the CEO; or
- Approach a relevant external agency such as an equal opportunity commission, for advice.

Step 5

If you decide to make a formal complaint in writing under Step 4, the CEO, on receiving the formal complaint and based on the material you have provided, decide whether:

- They are the most appropriate person to receive and handle the complaint;
- The nature and seriousness of the complaint warrants a formal resolution procedure. Some complaints may be of a minor and/or purely personal nature with no connection to The activities of Athletics Victoria. In these cases, the CEO may determine that the complaint does not warrant a formal resolution procedure;
- To appoint a person to investigate the complaint;

- To refer the complaint to an informal or formal mediation session;
- To refer the complaint to a hearings tribunal;
- To refer the matter to the police or other appropriate authority; and/or
- To implement any interim administrative or other arrangements that will apply until the complaint process set out in these Procedures is completed.

In making the decision(s) outlined above, the CEO will take into account:

- Whether they have had any personal involvement in the circumstances giving rise to the complaint and, if so, whether their ability to impartially manage the complaint is compromised or may appear to be compromised;
- Whether, due to the nature of the complaint, specific expertise or experience may be required to manage the complaint;
- Your wishes, and the wishes of the respondent, regarding the manner in which the complaint should be handled;
- Whether, due to the nature of the complaint, the relationship between you and the respondent and any other relevant factors, the complaint should be referred (or should not be referred) to informal or formal mediation or to a hearings tribunal. Relevant factors may include an actual or perceived power imbalance between you and the respondent, the nature of any ongoing working relationship between you and the respondent, and the personal attributes of you and the respondent (for example, if one party does not speak English fluently, some of the possible complaints resolution mechanisms may not be appropriate);
- The nature and sensitivity of any information or other material that must be provided by you, the respondent, and any of the other people involved in the complaint;
- Whether the facts of the complaint are in dispute; and
- The urgency of the complaint, including the likelihood and the consequences (if the complaint is ultimately proven) that you will be subject to further unacceptable behaviour while the complaint process set out in these Procedures is being conducted.

If the CEO is the appropriate person to handle the complaint they will, to the extent that these steps are necessary:

- Get full information from you (the complainant) about your complaint and how you want it resolved (if this information has not already been obtained through earlier steps);
- Put the information they've received from you to the person/people you're complaining about and ask them to provide their side of the story;
- Decide whether they have enough information to determine whether the matter alleged in your complaint did or didn't happen; and/or
- Determine what, if any, further action to take. This action may include disciplinary action in accordance with C6, appointing a person to investigate the complaint, referring the complaint to an informal or a formal mediation session or a hearings tribunal and/or referring the complaint to the police or other appropriate authority.

Step 6

If:

- A person is appointed to investigate the complaint under **Step 5**, the investigator will conduct the investigation and provide a written report to the General Manger who will determine what, if any, further action to take. This action may include a direction to the investigator to make further enquiries and obtain additional information, disciplinary action in accordance with C6, and referring the complaint to an informal or a formal mediation session, a hearings tribunal and/or the police or other appropriate authority;
- The complaint is referred to an informal or a formal mediation session under **Step 5**, the mediation session will be conducted in accordance with C2 or as otherwise agreed by you and the respondent;
- The complaint is referred to a hearings tribunal under **Step 5**, the hearing will be conducted in accordance with C5;
- The complaint is referred to the police or other appropriate authority under **Step 5**, Athletics Victoria will use its best endeavours to provide all reasonable assistance lawfully required by the police or other appropriate authority; and
- Interim administrative or other arrangements are implemented under **Step 5**, Athletics Victoria will periodically review these arrangements to ensure that they are effective.

Step 7

If, under **Step 6**, an informal or formal mediation session is conducted, and you and the respondent(s) can not reach a mutually acceptable mediated solution to the complaint, you may request that the CEO reconsider the complaint in accordance with **Step 5**.

You or the respondent(s) may be entitled to appeal where:

- Under **Step 5**, a decision was made by the General manger:
 - Not to take any action; or
 - To take disciplinary action; or
- Under **Step 6**, a decision was made by the CEO or hearings tribunal:
 - Not to take any action; or
 - To take disciplinary action.

The grounds for appeal and the process for appeals under this Policy are set out in C5.

If the internal complaints processes set out in this Policy do not achieve a satisfactory resolution/outcome for you, or if you believe it would be impossible to get an impartial

resolution within Athletics Victoria, you may choose to approach an external agency such as an equal opportunity commission to assist with a resolution.

Step 8

The CEO will document the complaint, the process followed and the outcome. This document will be stored in a confidential and secure place.

External Procedure

There may be a range of external options available to you depending on the nature of your complaint. If you feel that you have been harassed or discriminated against, you can seek advice from your State or Territory equal opportunity commission without being obliged to make a formal complaint. If the commission advises you that the problem appears to be a type of harassment that comes within its jurisdiction, you may then make a decision as to whether or not to lodge a formal complaint with the commission.

Once a complaint is received by an anti-discrimination commission, an investigation will be conducted. If it appears that unlawful harassment or discrimination has occurred, there will usually be an attempt to conciliate the complaint confidentially first. If this fails, or is inappropriate, the complaint may go to a formal hearing where a finding will be made as to whether unlawful harassment or discrimination occurred. The tribunal will decide upon what action, if any, will be taken. This could include financial compensation for such things as distress, lost earnings or medical and counselling expenses incurred.

An anti-discrimination commission can decline to investigate a complaint, or dismiss a complaint at any point in the investigation, conciliation or public hearing stages.

If you do lodge a complaint under anti-discrimination law, you may use an appropriate person (e.g. an MPO) as a support person throughout the process. It is also common to have a legal representative, particularly at the hearing stage of a complaint.

C2 – MEDIATION

Mediation is a process by which people who are in conflict can be helped to communicate with each other about what is important for them and how to make decisions about resolving their dispute. Mediators provide a supportive atmosphere and method of talking to one another, to assist in sorting out the issues, coming up with acceptable solutions and making mutually satisfactory agreements.

Procedure of Mediation

- 1) The people involved in a formal complaint (complainant and respondent(s)) may work out their own resolution of the complaint or seek the assistance of a neutral third person or a mediator. Mediation may occur either before or after an investigation of the complaint.
- 2) Mediation (getting those involved to come to a joint agreement about how the complaint should be resolved) will only be recommended:
 - a) After the complainant and respondent have had their chance to tell their version of events to the MPO or CEO on their own; *and*
 - b) The MPO or CEO does not believe that any of the allegations warrant any form of disciplinary action - proven serious allegations will not be mediated, no matter what the complainant desires; and
 - c) Mediation looks like it will work (i.e. the versions given by the complainant and respondent tally or almost tally and/or at the very least, it looks as though it will be possible for each party to understand the other party's point of view).
- 3) Mediation will **not** be recommended if:
 - a) The respondent has a completely different version of the events and they won't deviate from these;
 - b) The complainant or respondent are unwilling to attempt mediation; or
 - c) Due to the nature of the complaint, the relationship between you and the respondent(s) and any other relevant factors, the complaint is not suitable for mediation.
- 4) If mediation is chosen to try and resolve the complaint, the MPO or CEO will, in consultation with the complainant and the respondent(s), arrange for a mediator to mediate the complaint.
- 5) The MPO or CEO will notify the respondent(s) that a formal complaint has been made, provide them with details of the complaint, and notify them Athletics Victoria has decided to refer the matter to mediation to resolve the complaint.
- 6) The mediator's role is to assist the complainant and respondent(s) reach an agreement on how to resolve the problem. The mediator, in consultation with the complainant and respondent(s), will choose the procedures to be followed during the mediation. At a minimum, an agenda of issues for discussion will be prepared by the mediator.

- 7) The mediation will be conducted confidentially and without prejudice to the rights of the complainant and the respondent(s) to pursue an alternative process if the complaint is not resolved.
- 8) At the end of a successful mediation the mediator will prepare a document that sets out the agreement reached between the complainant and respondent(s) and it will be signed by them as their agreement.
- 9) If the formal complaint is not resolved by mediation, the complainant may:
 - a) Write to the CEO to request that they reconsider the complaint in accordance with **Step 5**; or
 - b) Approach an external agency such as an anti-discrimination commission.

C3 – INVESTIGATION PROCESS

If an investigation needs to be conducted the following steps are to be followed:

- A written brief will be provided to the investigator to ensure the terms of engagement and scope of the investigator's role and responsibilities are clear.
- The complainant will be interviewed and the complaint documented in writing.
- The details of the complaint will be conveyed to the person/people complained about (respondent(s)) in full. The respondent(s) must be given sufficient information to enable them to properly respond to the complaint.
- The respondent(s) will be interviewed and given the opportunity to respond. The respondent(s) response to the complaint will be documented in writing.
- If there is a dispute over the facts, then statements from witnesses and other relevant evidence will be obtained to assist in a determination.
- The investigator will make a finding as to whether the complaint is:
 - Substantiated (there is sufficient evidence to support the complaint); inconclusive (there is insufficient evidence either way);
 - Unsubstantiated (there is sufficient evidence to show that the complaint is unfounded); and/or
 - Mischievous, vexatious or knowingly untrue.
- A report documenting the complaint, investigation process, evidence, findings and, if requested, recommendations will be given to the CEO.
- A report documenting the complaint and summarising the investigation process and key points that were found to be substantiated, inconclusive, unsubstantiated and/or mischievous will be provided to the complainant and the respondent(s).
- Both the complainant and the respondent(s) are entitled to support throughout this process from their chosen support person/adviser (e.g. MPO or other person).
- The complainant and the respondent(s) may have the right to appeal against any decision based on the investigation. Information on our appeals process is in C5.

C4 – INVESTIGATION PROCEDURE: CHILD ABUSE

An allegation of child abuse is a very serious matter and must be handled with a high degree of sensitivity. The initial response to a complaint that a child has allegedly been abused should be immediate if the incident/s are serious or criminal in nature while less serious/urgent allegations should be actioned as soon as possible, preferably within 24 hours.

The following is a basic outline of the key processes to follow.

Step 1 - Clarify basic details of the allegation

4. Any complaints, concerns or allegations of child abuse should be made or referred to the MPO or CEO.
5. The initial response of the person that receives the complaint from the child (or person on behalf of the child) is crucial to the well-being of the child. It is important for the person receiving the information to:
 6. Listen to, be supportive and do not dispute what the child says;
 7. Reassure the child that what has occurred is not the fault of the child;
 8. Ensure the child is safe;
 9. Be honest with the child and explain that other people may need to be told in order to stop what is happening; and
 10. Ensure that what the child says is quite clear but do not elicit detailed information about the abuse. You should avoid suggestive or leading questions.
11. The person receiving the complaint should obtain and clarify basic details (if possible) such as:
 12. Child's name, age and address;
 13. Person's reason for suspecting abuse (observation, injury or other); and
 14. Names and contact details of all people involved, including witnesses.

Step 2 – Report allegations of a serious or criminal nature

15. Any individual or organisation to which this policy applies, should immediately report any incident of a serious or a criminal nature to the police and other appropriate authority.
16. If the allegation involves a child at risk of harm, the incident should immediately be reported to the police or other appropriate government agency. You may need to report to both the police and the relevant government agency.
17. The relevant State or Territory authority should be contacted for advice if there is **any** doubt about whether the complaint should be reported.
18. If the child's parent/s are suspected of committing the abuse, report the allegation to the relevant government agency.

Step 3 – Protect the child

16. The MPO or CEO should assess the risks and take interim action to ensure the child's/children's safety. Some options could include redeployment of the alleged offender

to a non-child related position, supervision of the alleged offender or removal/suspension from their duties until the allegations are finally determined.

17. The MPO or CEO should also address the support needs of the person against whom the complaint is made. Supervision of the person should ideally occur with the knowledge of the person. If stood down, it should be made clear to all parties that are aware of the incident that this does not mean the person is guilty and a proper investigation still needs to be undertaken.

Step 4 – Further clarify and investigate allegation

For allegations of a serious or criminal nature (for example, sexual abuse):

- 6 Seek advice from the police and relevant government agency as to whether Athletics Victoria should carry out its own internal investigation (in addition to any police or relevant government agency investigation).
- 7 If the police and/or relevant government agency advises that it is appropriate, then appoint an independent person (where possible) with appropriate expertise to conduct an investigation. The investigator should:
 - 7.1 Contact the parents/carers of the child at an appropriate time and as directed by the police or relevant government agency.
 - 7.2 If appropriate, meet with parents/carers and the child to clarify the incident and offer support on behalf of Athletics Victoria if required (example, professional counselling).
 - 7.3 Meet with the person against whom the allegation refers at an appropriate time and as directed by the relevant authority and give the person an opportunity to explain or respond to the allegation and identify any witnesses and supporting evidence. The person should have an opportunity to invite a support person/adviser to attend at a meeting and should be offered support (example, professional counselling) if necessary.
 - 7.4 Obtain a signed statement and record of interview from the person.
 - 7.5 Make contact with any witnesses and obtain written and signed statements outlining details of the allegation (what happened, when, how). This should only occur following advice from the relevant authority.
 - 7.6 Obtain other information that could assist in making a decision on the allegation.
- 8 The information collected during the investigation should be made available to the relevant authorities.
- 9 Strict confidentiality (except if law requires disclosure or if disclosure is necessary to effectively deal with the complaint), impartiality, fairness and due process must be maintained at all times.

For allegations of a less serious nature (e.g. verbal abuse):

- Where possible, appoint an independent person with appropriate expertise to make contact and meet with each of the people involved to obtain details of the allegation.
- The investigator should follow the procedure set out in C3.

- Strict confidentiality (except if law requires disclosure or if disclosure is necessary to effectively deal with the complaint), impartiality, fairness and due process must be maintained at all times.

Step 5 – Record and analyse all information

- If an internal investigation was conducted under **Step 4**, the investigator will provide a report to the CEO.
- The decision-makers will be the CEO and Board of Management of Athletics Victoria and will remain separate and at arm's length from the investigator.
- The CEO and Board of Management will consider all the information and determine a finding. It will also recommend action and its rationale for the action.

Step 6 – Undertake disciplinary action

- For incidents of a serious or criminal nature, consideration must be given to the findings of the police and/or the government agency before making a decision on disciplinary proceedings.
- If disciplinary action is to be taken, follow the procedures outlined in C6 of the policy.
- Implement any disciplinary decision recommended by the CEO and the Board of Management. The action should be immediate.
- Check with the relevant state government authority to see if you need to forward a report (e.g. the NSW Commission for Children and Young People requires notification of relevant employment proceedings).
- Complete the Record of Child Abuse Allegation report and retain in a secure place.

C5 – HEARINGS & APPEALS TRIBUNAL PROCEDURE

The following Tribunal Hearing Procedure will be followed by hearings tribunals established by Athletics Victoria.

Tribunal Formation and Notification

10. A Tribunal Panel will be constituted following the rules outlined by the Athletics Victoria's Board of Management, to hear a complaint that has been referred to it by the CEO.
11. The CEO will organise for a Tribunal to be convened by notifying Tribunal Panel members that they are required to hear a complaint. The Tribunal Panel members will be provided with a copy of all the relevant correspondence, reports or information received and sent by the MPO or CEO relating to the complaint/allegations.
12. The Tribunal Hearing will be scheduled as soon as practicable, but must allow adequate time for the person being complained about (respondent(s)) to prepare to respond to the complaint.
13. The number of Tribunal Panel members required to be present throughout the Tribunal Hearing Process will follow the rules outlined by the Athletics Victoria Board.
 - The Tribunal Panel will not include any person who has any actual or perceived conflict of interest, preconceived opinions, vested interests or personal involvement relating to the complaint.
 - The Tribunal Panel will comprise at least one person who has knowledge, and preferably experience, of any relevant laws relating to the complaint (e.g. anti-harassment).
 - If a member of the Tribunal Panel cannot continue once the Tribunal Hearing has commenced, and the minimum number required for the Tribunal Hearing is still maintained, the discontinuing member will not be replaced.
 - If the specific or minimum number is not maintained, the discontinuing member may be replaced if it is considered appropriate by the Tribunal Chairperson. Factors to consider should include the circumstances of the complaint and the ability of the new Tribunal Panel member to be reasonably and impartially informed of the hearing evidence up until the time of their appointment. If the Tribunal Chairperson believes it is not appropriate for a new Tribunal Panel member to be appointed then the Tribunal will be rescheduled to a later date. The Tribunal Chairperson will inform the CEO of the need to reschedule, and the CEO will organise for the Tribunal Hearing, with a new Tribunal Panel to be reconvened.
14. The CEO will inform the respondent(s) by written notification that a tribunal hearing will take place. The written notification will outline:

- That the person has a right to appear at the tribunal hearing to defend the complaint/allegation;
- Details of the complaint, including any relevant rules or regulations they are accused of breaching (if there is more than one complaint these should be set out separately);
- The date, time and venue of the tribunal hearing;
- That they can make either verbal or written submissions to the Tribunal;
- That they may arrange for witnesses to attend the Tribunal in support of their position;
- An outline of any possible penalties that may be imposed if the complaint is found to be true;
- That legal representation will not be allowed; and
- If the respondent is considered a minor, they should have a parent or guardian present.

A copy of any information / documents that have been given to the Tribunal (e.g. investigation report findings) will also be provided to the respondent.

The respondent(s) will be allowed to participate in all Athletics Victoria activities and events, pending the decision of the Tribunal, including any available appeal process, unless the CEO or Board of Management believes it is warranted to exclude the respondent(s) from all or some Athletics Victoria's activities and events, after considering the nature of the complaint.

15. The CEO will inform the person making the complaint (complainant) by written notification that a tribunal hearing will take place. The written notification will outline:
- That the person has a right to appear at the tribunal hearing to support their complaint;
 - Details of the complaint, including any relevant rules or regulations they are accused of breaching (if there is more than one complaint these should be set out separately);
 - The date, time and venue of the tribunal hearing;
 - That they can make either verbal or written submissions to the Tribunal;
 - That they may arrange for witnesses to attend the Tribunal in support of their position;
 - That legal representation will not be allowed; and
 - If complainant is considered a minor, they should have a parent or guardian present.

A copy of any information / documents that have been given to the Tribunal (e.g. investigation report findings) will also be provided to the complainant.

16. If the complainant believes the details of the complaint are incorrect or insufficient they should inform the CEO as soon as possible so that the respondent and the Tribunal Panel members can be properly informed of the complaint.

Tribunal Hearing Procedure

- The following people will be allowed to attend the Tribunal Hearing:
 - The Tribunal Panel members;
 - The respondent(s);
 - The complainant;
 - Any witnesses called by the respondent;
 - Any witnesses called by the complainant;
 - Any parent / guardian or support person required to support the respondent or the complainant.

- The Tribunal Chairperson will call the hearing to order at the designated time and determine if the respondent(s) is present.

- If the respondent(s) is not present and the Tribunal Chairperson considers that no valid reason has been presented for their absence, the Tribunal Hearing will continue subject to the Tribunal Chairperson being satisfied that all Tribunal notification requirements have been carried out correctly.

- If the Tribunal Chairperson considers that a valid reason for the non-attendance of the respondent(s) is presented, or the Tribunal Chairperson does not believe the Tribunal notification requirements have been carried out correctly, then the Tribunal Hearing will be rescheduled to a later date.

- The Tribunal Chairperson will inform the CEO of the need to reschedule, and the CEO will organise for the Tribunal Hearing to be reconvened.

- The Tribunal Chairperson will read out the complaint that is to be judged, ask the respondent(s) if they understand the complaint being made against them, and if they agree or disagree with the complaint.

- If the person agrees with the complaint, they will be asked to provide any evidence or witnesses that should be considered by the Tribunal Panel when determining any disciplinary measures.

- If the person disagrees with the complaint, the complainant will be asked to describe the circumstances that lead to the complaint being made.
 - Brief notes may be referred to.
 - The complainant will be allowed to call witnesses.
 - The respondent(s) may be allowed to question the complainant and their witnesses.

- The respondent(s) will then be asked to respond to the complaint.
 - Brief notes may be referred to.
 - The respondent will be allowed to call witnesses.
 - The complainant may be allowed to ask questions of the respondent and their witnesses.

- 10) Both the complainant and respondent will be allowed to be present when evidence is presented to the Tribunal. Witnesses may be asked to wait outside the Tribunal Hearing until required.
- 11) The Tribunal will be allowed to:
 - consider any evidence, and in any form, that it deems relevant.
 - question any person giving evidence.
 - limit the number of witnesses presented if it is agreed by all parties that they will support the person who requested them, but will not provide any new evidence.
- 12) Video evidence, if available, may be presented. The arrangements must be made entirely by the person/s wishing to offer this type of evidence.
- 13) If the Tribunal considers that at any time during the Tribunal Hearing that there is any unreasonable or intimidatory behaviour from anyone allowed to be present, the Tribunal Chairperson shall have the power to stop any further involvement of the person in the Tribunal Hearing.
- 14) After all of the evidence has been presented the Tribunal Panel will make its decision in private. If the Tribunal believes the complaint has been substantiated on the balance of probabilities (i.e. more probable than not), the respondent will then be given an opportunity to address the Tribunal Panel and make a submission on any disciplinary measures that may be imposed. Only those disciplinary measures outlined in the Athletics Victoria's Member Protection Policy will be considered. Any disciplinary measure imposed must be reasonable in the circumstances.
- 15) All decisions made by the Tribunal will be based on a majority vote.
- 16) The Tribunal Chairperson will announce the decision in the presence of all those involved in the hearing and will declare the hearing closed.
- 17) Within 48 hours, the Tribunal Chairperson will:
 - Forward to the CEO a copy of the tribunal decision including any disciplinary measures imposed.
 - Forward a letter to the respondent(s) reconfirming the Tribunals decision and any disciplinary measures imposed. The letter should also outline, if allowed, the process and grounds for an appeal to be made.

Appeals Procedure

A complainant or a respondent(s) who is not satisfied with a decision described in **Step 7** of the Complaints Procedures can lodge one appeal to Athletics Victoria on one or more of the following bases:

- a) That a denial of natural justice has occurred; or
- b) That the disciplinary measure(s) imposed is unjust and/or unreasonable.

- (1) A person wanting to appeal in accordance with (a) or (b) must lodge a letter stating their intention and the basis for their appeal with the Board of Management within 7 days of the relevant decision.
- (2) If the letter of appeal is not received by the Board of Management within the relevant time period the right of appeal will lapse.
- (3) Upon receipt of the letter of appeal, the CEO must convene a special meeting of the Athletics Victoria Board of Management to review the letter of appeal and decide whether there are sufficient grounds for the appeal to proceed. The Athletics Victoria Board of Management will be able to invite any witnesses to the meeting it believes are required to make an informed decision.
- (4) If it is considered that the letter of appeal has not shown sufficient grounds for appeal in accordance with paragraph 25, then the appeal will not proceed and the person will be notified of this decision and the reasons for this decision.
- (5) If the appeal is considered to have sufficient grounds to proceed then a Tribunal with a new panel will be convened to rehear the complaint. The CEO shall follow the Tribunal Formation and Notification procedures outlined above.
- (6) The Tribunal Hearing Procedure shall be followed for the appeal.
- (7) The decision of the appeal Tribunal will be final.

C6 – DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

Any disciplinary measure imposed by the Board of Management or Hearings Tribunal under this policy must:

- **Observe any contractual and employment rules and requirements;**
- **Conform to the principles of natural justice;**
- **Be fair and reasonable;**
- **Be based on the evidence and information presented;**
- **Be within the powers of the Board of Management or Hearings Tribunal to impose the disciplinary measure.**

Individual

Subject to contractual and employment requirements, if a finding is made that an individual has breached the Athletics Victoria Member Protection Policy (including the Codes of Conduct), one or more of the following forms of discipline may be imposed by the Athletics Victoria Board or Hearings Tribunal:

- A direction that the individual make a verbal and/or written apology;
- A written warning;
- A direction that the individual attend counselling to address their behaviour;
- A withdrawal of any awards, placings, records, achievements bestowed in any competition, activities or events held or sanctioned by Athletics Victoria;
- A demotion or transfer of the individual to another location, role or activity
- A suspension of the individual's membership or participation or engagement in a role or activity;
- Termination of the individual's membership, appointment or engagement;
- In the case of a coach or official, a direction that the relevant organisation de-register the accreditation of the coach or official for a period of time or permanently;
- Any other form of discipline that the Board of Management or Hearings tribunal considers appropriate.

When imposing any form of discipline, it will be accompanied by a warning that a similar breach of policy by that individual in the future may result in the imposition of a more serious form of discipline.

Affiliate Members

If a finding is made that an Athletics Victoria Affiliated Member (Club) has breached the Athletics Victoria Member Protection Policy (including the Codes of Conduct), one or more of the following forms of discipline may be imposed by the Board of Management or Hearings Tribunal:

- A written warning;

- A monetary fine;
- A direction that any rights, privileges and benefits provided to that Affiliate Member by Athletics Victoria be suspended for a specified period;
- A direction that any funding granted or given to it by Athletics Victoria or Athletics Australia cease from a specified date;
- A direction that Athletics Victoria cease to sanction events held by or under the auspices of that Affiliate Member;
- A recommendation to Athletics Victoria that its affiliation be suspended or terminated in accordance with the relevant constitution or rules; and/or
- Any other form of discipline that the Board of Management or Hearings Tribunal considers to be appropriate.

When imposing any form of discipline, it will be accompanied by a warning that a similar breach of policy by the organisation in the future may result in more serious form of discipline.

Factors to consider when imposing discipline

The form of discipline to be imposed on an individual or organisation will depend on factors such as:

- If the individual is a parent and/or spectator (ability to enforce a penalty may be difficult);
- Nature and seriousness of the behaviour or incidents;
- In a case where action is taken concurrently with or in lieu of a resolution of a formal complaint, the wishes of the complainant;
- If the individual concerned knew or should have known that the behaviour was a breach of the policy;
- Level of contrition of the respondent(s);
- The effect of the proposed disciplinary measures on the respondent(s) including any personal, professional or financial consequences;
- If there have been relevant prior warnings or disciplinary action; and/or
- If there are any mitigating circumstances such that the respondent(s) shouldn't be disciplined at all or not disciplined so seriously.

PART D –ROLE SPECIFIC CODES OF CONDUCT

1.0 Coach Code of Conduct

In addition to the Athletics Victoria General Code of Conduct (Part A, 5.0), coaches must meet the following requirements in regard to conduct during any activity held by or under the auspices of Athletics Victoria or an affiliated club:

1. Do not tolerate acts of aggression.
2. Provide feedback to athletes in a manner sensitive to their needs. Avoid overly negative feedback.
3. Recognise athletes' right to consult with other coaches and advisors. Cooperate fully with other specialists (for example, sports scientists, doctors and physiotherapists).
4. Treat all athletes fairly within the context of their sporting activities, regardless of gender, race, place of origin, athletic potential, colour, sexual orientation, religion, political beliefs, socio-economic status and other conditions.
5. Encourage and facilitate athletes' independence and responsibility for their own behaviour, performance, decisions and actions.
6. Involve the athletes in decisions that affect them.
7. Encourage athletes to respect one another and to expect respect for their worth as individuals regardless of their level of competition.
8. Ensure that the tasks and/or training set are suitable for age, experience, ability, and physical and psychological conditions of the athletes.
9. Ensure any physical contact with athletes is appropriate to the situation and necessary for the athlete's skill development.
10. Be acutely aware of the power that you as a coach develop with your athletes in the coaching relationship and avoid any sexual intimacy with athletes that could develop as a result.
11. Avoid situations with your players that could be constructed as compromising.
12. Actively discourage the use of performance enhancing drugs, and the use of alcohol, tobacco and illegal substances.
13. Do not exploit any coaching relationships to further personal, political or business interests at the expense of the best interest of your athletes.
14. Accept and respect the role of officials in ensuring that competitions are conducted fairly and according to established rules.
15. Know and abide by rules, regulations and standards, and encourage athletes to do likewise. Accept both the letter and the spirit of the rules.
16. Be honest and ensure that qualifications are not misrepresented.

(Australian Sports Commission, 2005)

2.0 Official Code of Conduct

In addition to the Athletics Victoria General Code of Conduct (Part A, 5.0), officials must meet the following requirements in regard to conduct during any activity held by or under the auspices of Athletics Victoria or an affiliated club:

1. Place the safety and welfare of the athletes above all else.
2. Accept responsibility for all actions taken.

3. Be impartial.
4. Avoid any situation which may lead to a conflict of interest.
5. Be courteous, respectful and open to discussion and interaction.
6. Value the individual in sport.

(Australian Sports Commission, 2005)

3.0 Athlete Code of Conduct

In addition to the Athletics Victoria General Code of Conduct (Part A, 5.0), athletes must meet the following requirements in regards to training for, and competing in, any activity held by or under the auspices of Athletics Victoria or an affiliated club:

1. Respect the rights, dignity and worth of fellow athletes, coaches, officials and spectators.
2. Do not tolerate acts of aggression.
3. Respect the talent, potential and development of fellow athletes and competitors.
4. Care for and respect the equipment provided to you.
5. Be frank and honest with your coach concerning illness and injury and your ability to train fully within the program requirements.
6. At all times avoid intimate relationships with your coach.
7. Conduct yourself in a professional manner relating to language, temper and punctuality.
8. Maintain high personal behaviour standards at all times.
9. Abide by the rules and respect the decision of the official, making all appeals through the formal process and respecting the final decision.
10. Be honest in your attitude and preparation to training. Work equally hard for yourself and your team.
11. Cooperate with coaches and staff in development of programs to adequately prepare you for competition at the highest level.

(Australian Sports Commission, 2005)

4.0 Administrator (volunteer) Code of Conduct

In addition to the Athletics Victoria General Code of Conduct (Part A, 5.0), administrators (volunteer) must meet the following requirements in regard to conduct during any activity held by or under the auspices of Athletics Victoria or an affiliated club:

1. Resolve conflicts fairly and promptly through established procedures.
2. Maintain strict impartiality.
3. Be aware of your legal responsibilities.

(Australian Sports Commission, 2005)

5.0 Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct

As a parent/guardian of an athlete in any activity held by or under the auspices of Athletics Victoria or an affiliated club, you must meet the following requirements in regard to your conduct during any such activity or event:

1. Respect the rights, dignity and worth of others.

2. Remember that your child participates in sport for their own enjoyment, not yours.
3. Focus on your child's efforts and performance rather than winning or losing.
4. Never ridicule or yell at your child and other children for making a mistake or losing a competition.
5. Show appreciation for good performance by all athletes (including opposing athletes)
6. Demonstrate a high degree of individual responsibility especially when dealing with or in the vicinity of persons under 18 years of age, as your words and actions are an example.
7. Respect officials' decisions and teach children to do likewise.
8. Do not physically or verbally abuse or harass anyone associated with athletics (athlete, coach, official etc).
9. Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every young person regardless of their gender, ability, cultural background or religion.
10. Be a positive role model.
11. Understand the repercussions if you breach, or are aware of any breaches, this code of behaviour.

(Australian Sports Commission, 2005)

6.0 Spectator Code of Conduct

As a spectator in any activity held by or under the auspices of Athletics Victoria or an affiliated club, you must meet the following requirements in regard to your conduct during any such activity or event:

- 6.1 Respect the decisions of officials and teach young people to do the same.
- 6.2 Never ridicule or scold a young athlete for making a mistake. Positive comments are motivational.
- 6.3 Condemn the use of violence of any form, whether it is by other spectators, coaches, officials or athletes.
- 6.4 Do not use violence, harassment or abuse in any form (that is, do not use foul language, sledge or harass athletes, coaches, officials or other spectators).
- 6.5 Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person regardless of their gender, ability, cultural background or religion.

(Australian Sports Commission, 2005)