SAFEGUARDING POLICY AGAINST HARASSMENT AND ABUSE

POLICY STATEMENT

The South African Underwater Sport Federation (SAUSF) is committed to creating and maintaining a safe, respectful, inclusive and positive environment for everyone participating in or connected with underwater sport. Harassment, abuse, discrimination, bullying, exploitation, violence, neglect, intimidation and other forms of non-accidental harm are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Safeguarding is a shared responsibility. The welfare and best interests of children are paramount. The safety, dignity, rights and well-being of adults, including adults who may be at risk of harm or exploitation, must also be respected and protected.

This Policy establishes the minimum safeguarding standards for SAUSF and its affiliated federations, clubs, teams, event organisers, officials, coaches, managers, volunteers, service providers and other persons within SAUSF's jurisdiction.

1. PREAMBLE

Sport should provide opportunities for participation, development, achievement and enjoyment. These benefits can only be realised where participants are treated with dignity and are protected from harm. Harassment and abuse can occur in any sporting environment, including training, selection, travel, accommodation, competitions, changing facilities, online communications and social interactions connected with sport.

SAUSF recognises that abuse may be perpetrated by people in positions of authority or trust, peers or others, and may occur as a single incident or a pattern of behaviour. It may be physical, psychological, sexual, discriminatory, financial or neglectful, and may take place in person or through digital platforms.

SAUSF adopts a zero-tolerance approach to safeguarding misconduct. This does not mean that every allegation will automatically be substantiated or result in a sanction. Every concern will be assessed appropriately, protective action will be taken where required, and any disciplinary decision will be made fairly and in accordance with applicable rules.

SAUSF is guided by applicable South African law, its Constitution and governance framework, relevant SASCOC requirements, applicable International Federation rules and recognised safe-sport principles.

2. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this Policy is to prevent harassment and abuse, provide clear reporting and response procedures, protect participants and establish consistent safeguarding standards throughout SAUSF.

- Promote a safe, inclusive and respectful sporting environment for all participants.
- Make clear that harassment, abuse, discrimination, bullying, exploitation, violence and neglect are prohibited.
- Set out the responsibilities of SAUSF, affiliated federations, clubs, event organisers and individuals.
- Provide accessible routes for reporting concerns, including concerns involving senior officials or the Safeguarding Officer.
- Ensure concerns are assessed promptly, risks are managed and appropriate support is offered.
- Provide for independent investigations and fair disciplinary processes where required.
- Promote safe recruitment, appropriate vetting, education and safeguarding awareness.
- Ensure records and personal information are handled lawfully and securely.
- Monitor compliance by affiliated federations and review the effectiveness of safeguarding measures.

3. SCOPE AND APPLICATION

3.1 This Policy applies to all persons participating in, employed by, appointed by, representing, providing services to or otherwise connected with SAUSF activities, to the extent of SAUSF's authority and jurisdiction. This includes:

- SAUSF office-bearers, Executive Council members, employees and contractors;
- affiliated national/provincial federations, clubs and their office-bearers, employees and members;
- athletes and team entourage members, including coaches, assistant coaches, managers, chaperones and support personnel;
- referees, technical officials, selectors, event organisers and volunteers;
- parents, guardians, spectators and service providers where their conduct is connected with a SAUSF activity or participant;
- any person acting on behalf of SAUSF or an affiliate, whether paid or unpaid.

3.2 The Policy applies during all SAUSF-related activities and at any time where conduct has a sufficient connection to participation in, representation of, or the governance of SAUSF or an affiliate. This includes training, trials, camps, competitions, travel, accommodation, meetings, social events, online activity and international representation.

3.3 The Policy applies irrespective of age, sex, gender, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, disability, religion, belief, language, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital status, socio-economic status, athletic ability or any other protected or irrelevant personal characteristic.

3.4 This Policy does not replace criminal law, statutory reporting duties, employment law, the SAUSF Constitution, the Code of Ethics or disciplinary procedures. Where another applicable rule provides a higher standard of protection, the higher standard should be applied to the extent legally permissible.

3.5 SAUSF will exercise its jurisdiction in accordance with its Constitution, membership arrangements, agreements and applicable rules. Where an alleged offender or affiliate falls outside SAUSF's direct jurisdiction, SAUSF may refer the matter to the appropriate body, take any lawful action within its authority and cooperate with relevant authorities.

4. DEFINITIONS

Abuse: Conduct that causes, or creates a risk of, physical, psychological, sexual, financial or other harm, including exploitation and neglect.

Adult: A person aged 18 years or older.

Adult at risk: An adult who, because of disability, illness, age, circumstances or a dependency or power imbalance, may be less able to protect themselves from harm or exploitation. This is a safeguarding description and does not remove the person's autonomy or legal capacity.

Affiliate: A federation, association, club or other organisation affiliated to or recognised by SAUSF.

Child: A person under the age of 18 years, as defined in South African law.

Safeguarding concern: Any disclosure, allegation, observation, information or behaviour that indicates actual or possible harm, abuse, harassment, exploitation, neglect or unsafe practice.

Harassment: Unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It may be verbal, non-verbal, physical, sexual, discriminatory or digital.

Sexual harassment: Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal, non-verbal, visual, written or physical, including sexual advances, requests, comments, gestures, messages or conduct that creates a hostile or intimidating environment.

Sexual abuse: Actual, attempted or threatened sexual conduct where consent is absent, cannot lawfully or meaningfully be given, or is obtained through coercion, manipulation, exploitation or abuse of power. It includes contact and non-contact conduct.

Psychological or emotional abuse: A single serious act or a pattern of behaviour that harms or is likely to harm a person's psychological or emotional well-being, including humiliation, threats, intimidation, isolation, coercion or degrading treatment.

Physical abuse: Deliberate or reckless physical force or treatment causing, or risking, injury or pain. It includes inappropriate physical punishment, forced exercise as punishment, training through injury in unsafe circumstances and forced consumption of substances.

Neglect: Failure by a person with responsibility for another's care or safety to provide reasonable protection, supervision or necessary care, resulting in or creating a risk of harm.

Bullying and cyberbullying: Repeated or serious aggressive, intimidating, humiliating or exclusionary behaviour, in person or online. A power imbalance may be present, but a single serious incident may also constitute misconduct under this Policy.

Grooming: A process by which a person builds trust, access or emotional connection with a child or other person for the purpose of sexual abuse, exploitation or other harmful conduct.

Exploitation: Taking unfair advantage of a person's vulnerability, trust, dependency or position for personal, sexual, financial, sporting or other benefit.

Negligence / poor practice: A failure to exercise reasonable care or comply with safeguarding standards, creating an avoidable risk of harm. Poor practice may require corrective action even where abuse is not established.

Participant: Any person to whom this Policy applies.

Safeguarding Officer: The person appointed by SAUSF to receive and coordinate safeguarding concerns under this Policy. The designated officer is Ms Pamela Mackor.

Case Management Group: A temporary, appropriately constituted group established to assess and oversee a safeguarding matter, with independent members where necessary.

HR Hub: The legal firm appointed by SAUSF to provide legal advice and assistance on legal issues referred to it by SAUSF through an authorised channel.

5. FORMS OF HARASSMENT, ABUSE AND UNSAFE PRACTICE

The following examples are illustrative and are not exhaustive. Conduct may fall within more than one category.

- Psychological or emotional abuse: threats, humiliation, degrading language, intimidation, coercive control, deliberate isolation, manipulation, persistent belittling or retaliation.
- Physical abuse: hitting, pushing, kicking, shaking, inappropriate physical restraint, dangerous training demands, punishment exercise, or knowingly requiring an injured athlete to train or compete in unsafe conditions.
- Sexual harassment or abuse: unwanted sexual comments, propositions, touching, exposure, sexualised communications, grooming, exploitation, assault or any sexual conduct prohibited by law.
- Bullying, discrimination and hazing: repeated insults, exclusion, discriminatory treatment, initiation rituals, humiliation, threats or abuse of power based on identity, status or ability.
- Neglect and poor practice: inadequate supervision, unsafe accommodation or transport, failure to respond to known risks, leaving a child without appropriate care, or failure to obtain necessary assistance.
- Financial or other exploitation: misuse of a participant's money, coercive demands, fraudulent fundraising, withholding necessities or exploiting selection, team or funding power for personal gain.
- Online misconduct: sexualised or threatening messages, cyberbullying, sharing intimate images without consent, inappropriate private contact with minors, or using digital platforms to groom or exploit.
- Abuse of authority: using a coaching, selection, officiating, management or governance position to coerce, intimidate, exploit or obtain improper personal benefit.

Legitimate coaching, selection, performance management and disciplinary action are not automatically harassment or abuse. They must, however, be reasonable, proportionate, non-discriminatory, consistent with sporting standards and delivered respectfully.

6. SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES

- The best interests and safety of a child are paramount in all decisions affecting that child.
- All participants must be treated with dignity, fairness and respect.

- Listen to and take seriously all safeguarding concerns; do not promise absolute secrecy.
- Respond promptly and proportionately, taking account of the nature and immediacy of the risk.
- Use the least restrictive protective measure that reasonably manages the risk, while prioritising safety.
- Presume no person is guilty merely because an allegation has been made; provide procedural fairness and an opportunity to respond when appropriate.
- Do not retaliate against, intimidate or victimise anyone who raises a concern in good faith or assists a process.
- Protect privacy and share information only where lawful, necessary and proportionate.
- Safeguarding action and criminal processes are distinct. SAUSF must not obstruct authorities or conduct its own criminal investigation.
- Consider accessibility, language, disability, culture, age and the support needs of those involved.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES OF SAUSF AND AFFILIATES

7.1 SAUSF Executive Council

The Executive Council retains overall governance accountability for safeguarding and must:

- approve, resource and periodically review this Policy and its implementation;
- appoint and support the Safeguarding Officer and an alternate reporting contact;
- ensure the Safeguarding Officer has appropriate authority, training, resources and access to independent assistance;
- ensure conflicts of interest are identified and managed, including where a complaint concerns an Executive Council member or senior office-bearer;
- ensure appropriate independent case management, investigation and disciplinary arrangements are available;
- monitor affiliate compliance and address material failures to implement this Policy;
- ensure that no person is penalised for making a good-faith report.

7.2 Affiliated federations and clubs

Each affiliate must:

- formally adopt this Policy or a safeguarding policy that meets or exceeds its minimum standards, by resolution of its governing body;

- appoint a suitably trained Safeguarding Officer and provide an alternate contact; notify SAUSF of their names and official contact details;
- make its policy and reporting routes accessible to members, parents, athletes and volunteers;
- communicate expected standards and provide safeguarding awareness to people whose roles create contact with children or adults at risk;
- implement safe recruitment and risk-based vetting;
- report safeguarding concerns involving its members or activities promptly to the SAUSF Safeguarding Officer, subject to immediate statutory or emergency reporting duties;
- preserve relevant information and cooperate with lawful SAUSF or authority processes;
- notify SAUSF of material investigations, protective measures and outcomes, subject to privacy and legal restrictions;
- ensure event and training activities have proportionate safeguarding arrangements.

An affiliate must not delay a statutory report or emergency response while seeking approval from SAUSF. Affiliates may request assistance from the SAUSF Safeguarding Officer.

7.3 Individual participants

Every participant must comply with this Policy, behave respectfully, report concerns where appropriate, cooperate honestly with safeguarding processes and avoid conduct that places another person at risk. Persons in positions of trust must maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

8. SAUSF SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

8.1 SAUSF designates Ms Pamela Mackor as its Safeguarding Officer.

8.2 The Safeguarding Officer is the primary contact for receiving and coordinating safeguarding concerns and for advising SAUSF affiliates on the operation of this Policy. The role is not to determine criminal guilt, provide legal advice, or personally investigate every allegation.

8.3 The Safeguarding Officer's responsibilities include:

- receive, acknowledge, record and securely manage safeguarding reports;
- take immediate steps to establish whether anyone is in immediate danger and facilitate emergency or statutory referrals;
- conduct an initial safeguarding and risk assessment, without attempting to determine criminal liability;

- recommend proportionate interim protective measures to the appropriate authorised decision-maker;
- identify whether independent case management, specialist support or an independent investigator is required;
- refer legal questions, statutory interpretation, litigation risks and legal process issues to HR Hub through SAUSF's authorised channel;
- maintain appropriate confidentiality and secure records in accordance with POPIA and this Policy;
- provide or arrange appropriate support and signposting for affected persons;
- assist affiliates and event organisers with safeguarding plans and compliance guidance;
- provide periodic, anonymised safeguarding reports to the Executive Council, subject to confidentiality and privacy requirements;
- undertake relevant training and keep knowledge of safeguarding procedures current.

8.4 The Safeguarding Officer must declare any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest and must not manage a matter where impartiality may reasonably be questioned.

8.5 SAUSF must appoint an alternate safeguarding contact by Executive Council resolution. The alternate may receive reports where Ms Mackor is unavailable, conflicted or implicated. Until an alternate is appointed, a report concerning Ms Mackor or a matter in which she has a conflict must be made directly to the SAUSF President, unless the President is implicated, in which case it must be made to another unconflicted Executive Council member or directly to the appropriate authorities.

8.6 If a complaint concerns the President, an Executive Council member or a person who could influence the handling of the matter, the matter must be referred to an unconflicted decision-maker and, where appropriate, an independent case manager. The person complained about must take no part in decisions concerning that matter.

9. APPLICABLE LAW AND LEGAL SUPPORT

9.1 This Policy must be interpreted and applied consistently with the laws of the Republic of South Africa, the SAUSF Constitution and applicable governance requirements, and any applicable International Federation rules. Relevant legislation includes, as amended from time to time:

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, including the rights to equality, dignity, freedom and security of the person, privacy and the rights of children;
- National Sport and Recreation Act 110 of 1998, as amended;

- Children's Act 38 of 2005, as amended, including applicable child-protection and reporting provisions;
- Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 32 of 2007, as amended, including section 54;
- Protection from Harassment Act 17 of 2011;
- Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013 (POPIA);
- Employment and occupational safety legislation, where applicable; and
- other applicable South African legislation and regulations.

9.2 This list is not exhaustive and does not constitute legal advice. Where an incident occurs outside South Africa, the law of the relevant jurisdiction may also apply. SAUSF must obtain advice where jurisdiction or legal obligations are uncertain.

9.3 HR Hub is the legal firm appointed by SAUSF. Legal issues arising under this Policy, including interpretation of legislation, statutory reporting questions, legal risk, formal legal correspondence, litigation, disciplinary jurisdiction and procedural advice, must be referred to HR Hub through the SAUSF-authorised channel. The Safeguarding Officer must not be expected to provide legal advice unless separately qualified and authorised to do so.

9.4 Referral to HR Hub does not replace or delay emergency action or a person's direct statutory reporting obligation. Where the law requires a person to report directly to SAPS or another authority, that report must be made immediately in accordance with the law.

9.5 Where a criminal offence is suspected, SAUSF must refer the matter to the appropriate authorities and must not conduct a parallel criminal investigation, interview witnesses in a way that may prejudice an investigation, or interfere with evidence. SAUSF may nevertheless take reasonable interim safeguarding measures and may conduct a separate internal process where lawful and appropriate, in consultation with HR Hub and without obstructing the authorities.

10. CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING

10.1 Safeguarding information is sensitive and must be handled discreetly. Absolute confidentiality cannot be promised. Information may need to be disclosed where required by law, necessary to protect a person, required for a fair process, or authorised by the person concerned.

10.2 Information must be shared only with people who need it for a legitimate safeguarding, legal, statutory or procedural purpose. The amount of information shared must be limited to what is necessary.

10.3 The Safeguarding Officer must explain, where safe and appropriate, how information may be used and with whom it may be shared.

10.4 The identity of a complainant, child, witness or affected person must not be disclosed more widely than necessary. Particular care must be taken with children and adults at risk.

10.5 All processing of personal information, including information about alleged offences, health, disability or children, must comply with POPIA and other applicable law. Appropriate access controls, secure storage, retention and disposal procedures must be maintained.

10.6 No participant may publish, circulate or discuss confidential case information on social media or in group communications, except where disclosure is legally protected or required. This provision must not be used to prevent lawful reporting, obtaining support or making a protected disclosure.

11. REPORTING A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN

11.1 Who may report

Any person may report a concern, including an athlete, parent or guardian, coach, official, volunteer, employee, spectator, service provider or witness. A report may be made by the affected person or by someone acting on their behalf.

11.2 How to report

Reports should be made to the SAUSF Safeguarding Officer, Ms Pamela Mackor, through the SAUSF office at office@sausf.co.za, marked CONFIDENTIAL – FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OFFICER. A report may also be made verbally or by another accessible means. SAUSF should publish and maintain the current contact details and an alternate reporting route.

If the report concerns Ms Mackor, or she is unavailable or conflicted, the report should be sent to the SAUSF President or the appointed alternate Safeguarding Officer. If the President is implicated, the report must be directed to another unconflicted Executive Council member or to the appropriate authority.

11.3 A reporting form is provided in Appendix A. Use of the form is encouraged but is not a condition for reporting. A report should include, where known:

- the name and safe contact details of the person affected and the reporter;
- the person's age, and whether they are a child or adult at risk;
- what happened, including dates, times and locations;
- the identity or description of the person alleged to have caused harm;
- any immediate safety, medical or support needs;
- names of witnesses and any available records or evidence;
- whether SAPS, Social Development, a child protection organisation or another authority has been contacted.

11.4 A person may report anonymously. SAUSF will assess anonymous information as far as reasonably possible, recognising that anonymity may limit the ability to investigate or provide feedback.

11.5 A report made in good faith must be treated seriously even if it is not ultimately substantiated. Knowingly false or malicious allegations may be addressed under applicable disciplinary procedures, but an allegation must not be treated as malicious merely because it cannot be proven.

11.6 Immediate danger and statutory reporting

Where anyone is in immediate danger, urgent medical assistance is required, or a crime may be in progress, contact emergency services or SAPS without delay. Do not wait for the Safeguarding Officer or SAUSF.

Any person with a statutory duty to report must comply personally and immediately. In particular, section 54 of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act, as amended, requires a person who has knowledge, reasonable belief or suspicion that a sexual offence has been committed against a person who is vulnerable as defined in section 40 to report that information immediately to a police official. Section 110 of the Children's Act imposes reporting duties on specified categories of persons in relation to certain abuse or neglect of children; other persons may also report a child believed to be in need of care and protection. The precise application of these provisions must be checked against current law and the facts of the case.

SAUSF's internal reporting process does not replace, restrict or postpone any statutory reporting obligation. HR Hub may be consulted for legal guidance, but consultation must not delay a report that the law requires immediately.

12. INITIAL RESPONSE, RISK ASSESSMENT AND INTERIM MEASURES

12.1 On receipt of a concern, the Safeguarding Officer must, as soon as reasonably practicable:

- acknowledge receipt where contact details are available;
- establish whether anyone is in immediate danger or requires urgent medical, psychological or other support;
- consider whether the affected person is a child or adult at risk and identify any additional protective needs;
- identify any immediate statutory reporting or referral requirements;
- preserve relevant information and advise against deleting messages, photographs, records or other potential evidence;
- record the concern, actions taken, decisions made and reasons for those decisions;
- consider conflicts of interest and determine whether the matter must be referred to an alternate or independent person.

12.2 A risk assessment is protective, not a finding of guilt. It should consider the nature and seriousness of the alleged conduct, the person's access to participants, the age and circumstances of the affected person, any power imbalance, the possibility of repetition or retaliation, event or travel arrangements, and any other relevant factors.

12.3 Interim measures may include changes to supervision, no-contact directions, restrictions on communication, changes to accommodation or transport, removal from particular duties or activities, temporary suspension where authorised, or referral to specialist services. Measures must be proportionate, regularly reviewed and recorded.

12.4 Interim measures are not disciplinary sanctions and must not be presented as a finding that an allegation is true. The person affected and the person subject to a measure should, where appropriate and safe, be informed of the measure and its basis.

12.5 The welfare and safety of the affected person must remain central. Support may include access to a trusted adult, parent or guardian where appropriate, medical care, counselling, safeguarding support or referral to a suitable external service. The alleged perpetrator may also be offered appropriate support, without compromising the safety or rights of others.

13. CASE MANAGEMENT AND INVESTIGATIONS

13.1 Case Management Group

A Case Management Group may be established for a matter requiring coordinated oversight. It should be small, appropriately skilled and independent. Membership may include the Safeguarding Officer, an independent safeguarding professional, an unconflicted SAUSF representative and other specialists as required. HR Hub may advise on legal issues but should not automatically be treated as the investigator or decision-maker.

The Group must declare and manage conflicts of interest. Anyone connected to the matter, or whose impartiality may reasonably be questioned, must recuse themselves. If the complaint concerns the Safeguarding Officer or Executive Council leadership, an independent chair or case manager must be appointed.

13.2 Role of case management

The Case Management Group may:

- review the initial risk assessment and interim measures;
- determine whether referral to statutory authorities or specialist services is required;
- decide whether an independent investigation is appropriate;
- define the scope and terms of reference for an investigation;
- monitor the welfare and support arrangements for affected persons and witnesses;
- ensure that records are securely maintained;
- refer a matter to the appropriate disciplinary body where there is a case to answer;
- monitor implementation of recommendations and safeguarding measures.

13.3 Independent investigation

Where an investigation is required, SAUSF should appoint an independent investigator with appropriate competence, experience and no conflict of interest. The investigator's terms of reference must define the allegations, scope, reporting line, expected timeframes, confidentiality requirements and deliverables.

The investigator may gather and assess relevant documents and other evidence, identify and interview witnesses, obtain relevant records and prepare a written report. Interviews with children or vulnerable persons must be conducted by appropriately skilled persons, in a manner that is sensitive, age-appropriate and consistent with any police or statutory process.

The investigator must not make findings of criminal guilt. The report should distinguish established facts, disputed facts, evidence, limitations and recommendations. The person against whom allegations are made must be given a fair opportunity to respond to material allegations before adverse findings are made, subject to lawful restrictions and the protection of affected persons.

Where a criminal investigation is underway, SAUSF must consult the appropriate authorities and HR Hub before taking steps that could interfere with that investigation. Protective measures may still be taken.

13.4 Timeframes

Matters must be progressed without unreasonable delay. The Safeguarding Officer or Case Management Group should provide periodic updates where appropriate. If a matter cannot be concluded within a reasonable period, the reasons and revised expected timeframe should be recorded and communicated, subject to confidentiality and legal constraints.

14. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE AND APPEALS

14.1 Safeguarding assessment and investigation are distinct from disciplinary adjudication. The Safeguarding Officer and investigator must not determine or impose disciplinary sanctions unless separately and lawfully appointed to an independent disciplinary role, and only where conflicts are absent.

14.2 Where the evidence indicates a possible breach of this Policy or other SAUSF rules, the matter may be referred to the SAUSF Judicial Body or an independently appointed disciplinary panel in accordance with the SAUSF Constitution and applicable Code of Ethics and Disciplinary Procedures.

14.3 The disciplinary process must provide procedural fairness, including:

- clear written notice of the allegations and applicable rules;
- reasonable information about the case to be met, subject to lawful protection of confidential information;
- a reasonable opportunity to respond and present relevant evidence;
- an impartial decision-maker with no conflict of interest;
- a decision based on the applicable standard of proof under the governing SAUSF rules;
- written reasons for the decision and any sanction;
- an appeal or review route in accordance with the SAUSF Constitution and disciplinary rules.

14.4 A criminal charge, investigation or prosecution does not automatically prevent SAUSF from taking interim protective action or conducting a separate internal process. The timing and scope of any internal process must be considered carefully, in consultation with HR Hub and relevant authorities where appropriate, to avoid prejudicing criminal proceedings or compromising fairness.

14.5 Sanctions must be proportionate to the seriousness and circumstances of the proven breach. Relevant factors may include the nature and severity of the conduct, impact on the affected person, abuse of trust or authority, repetition, vulnerability, aggravating and mitigating circumstances, prior findings and steps taken to prevent recurrence.

14.6 Subject to the SAUSF Constitution and applicable disciplinary rules, sanctions or measures may include a warning, reprimand, apology where appropriate and safe, mandatory education or training, supervision, conditions on participation, removal from a role, suspension, membership or licence consequences, competition restrictions, termination of an agreement or contract, or other lawful sanction.

14.7 The Executive Council must not interfere with the merits of an independent disciplinary decision. Any appeal must be determined by the body or panel authorised under the SAUSF Constitution and disciplinary rules, and must be independent of the original decision-maker.

14.8 Any action against an affiliate must be taken only in accordance with SAUSF's Constitution, membership rules, agreements and applicable disciplinary procedures.

15. CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS AND EXTERNAL FINDINGS

15.1 A relevant criminal conviction, finding by a court, statutory body or recognised sports regulator may be considered by SAUSF when assessing eligibility, risk and appropriate action, subject to applicable law and the SAUSF rules.

15.2 SAUSF may consider reliable findings made by another recognised regulatory or sporting body, but must assess their relevance, scope and procedural fairness before relying on them for an internal decision.

15.3 Any internal sanction or restriction must be imposed under SAUSF's own rules and jurisdiction, with appropriate notice and an opportunity to make representations, unless an immediate interim measure is necessary to protect a person or comply with law.

15.4 A lack of criminal conviction does not, by itself, establish that a safeguarding concern is unfounded. Equally, an allegation or pending charge is not proof of misconduct.

16. RECORD KEEPING AND RETENTION

16.1 Safeguarding records must be accurate, relevant, secure and accessible only to authorised persons. Records may include reports, risk assessments, referrals, decisions, investigation material, disciplinary outcomes, support arrangements and review notes.

16.2 SAUSF must comply with POPIA, including requirements relating to lawful processing, purpose limitation, data minimisation, information quality, security safeguards, data subject rights and retention.

16.3 Records must be retained only for as long as reasonably necessary for the purpose for which they were collected, or for a longer period where required or authorised by law, a legitimate legal claim, a regulatory requirement or an applicable SAUSF records schedule. No fixed retention period in this Policy overrides statutory requirements or a lawful preservation obligation.

16.4 A retention schedule should be approved with HR Hub's advice. It should distinguish substantiated cases, unsubstantiated concerns, anonymous reports, disciplinary records and routine administrative records. A legal hold must be applied where litigation, a criminal process or another formal proceeding is reasonably anticipated or underway.

16.5 Records must be securely destroyed or anonymised when the retention period expires, unless a lawful reason requires continued retention. Any data breach involving safeguarding information must be escalated in accordance with SAUSF's privacy and incident-response procedures.

17. SAFE RECRUITMENT AND VETTING

17.1 SAUSF and its affiliates must take reasonable, proportionate steps to prevent unsuitable persons from being appointed to roles involving access to children, adults at risk, confidential safeguarding information or positions of trust.

17.2 Vetting must be risk-based and appropriate to the role. Roles requiring particular scrutiny may include coaches, assistant coaches, team managers, chaperones, safeguarding officers, selectors, officials, referees, volunteers and persons responsible for accommodation, transport or supervision.

17.3 Safe recruitment should include, as appropriate:

- a role description identifying safeguarding responsibilities and expected conduct;
- verification of identity, qualifications, experience and relevant accreditations;
- a structured interview addressing safeguarding awareness and professional boundaries;

- at least two suitable references where practicable, including relevant previous safeguarding-related work;
- a declaration of relevant convictions, disciplinary findings, restrictions or previous concerns, subject to applicable law;
- appropriate criminal-record and statutory register checks, obtained through lawful processes and with required consent or authority;
- a written safeguarding undertaking and agreement to comply with this Policy;
- induction and safeguarding training before the person undertakes unsupervised or high-risk duties.

17.4 Police clearance, the National Child Protection Register and the National Register for Sex Offenders are distinct processes and must not be treated as interchangeable. SAUSF and affiliates must use the appropriate statutory mechanism, observe eligibility and access rules, and seek HR Hub advice where uncertain. No person may be unlawfully denied an opportunity or have sensitive information processed unlawfully.

17.5 Where a vetting result or other credible information raises a concern, the organisation must assess the information fairly and take appropriate steps before appointment. For an existing role, temporary restrictions or suspension may be considered where authorised and reasonably necessary to manage risk. The individual must be treated fairly and given an appropriate opportunity to respond, subject to immediate protective needs.

17.6 Vetting should be refreshed at intervals appropriate to the role and legal requirements. SAUSF recommends a review at least every three years for roles involving regular contact with children or adults at risk, and sooner where a concern, change of role or relevant information arises.

17.7 One-off volunteers may be exempted from full vetting only where their role is genuinely limited, contact is supervised at all times, access is controlled and no position of trust is created. If the role changes or contact becomes regular or unsupervised, the full applicable vetting process must be completed.

17.8 A person must not be appointed to or continue in a role where applicable law prohibits the appointment or where a properly assessed and substantiated risk makes the role unsuitable. Decisions must be made in accordance with law and with HR Hub advice where required.

18. SAFEGUARDING AT TRAINING, EVENTS, TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION

Event organisers, team managers and coaches must plan for safeguarding before each camp, tournament, tour or other activity, with arrangements proportionate to the age, number and needs of participants.

18.1 Children and supervision

- Obtain appropriate parent or guardian consent, emergency contact details and relevant medical or support information before an activity involving a child.
- Identify a responsible team manager or designated adult and ensure appropriate supervision ratios and arrangements.
- Do not leave a child unsupervised or in the sole care of an adult who has not been authorised for that responsibility.
- Establish clear procedures for arrival, collection, late collection, attendance and missing participants.
- Ensure children know who they can approach if they feel unsafe.

18.2 Accommodation and changing facilities

- Plan room allocations in advance, with age, sex, disability, privacy, safety and participant needs considered.
- Adults should not share a bedroom with a child unless there is a legitimate, documented safeguarding reason, appropriate parent/guardian consent and suitable safeguards; an adult should not share a bed with a child in any event.
- Provide appropriate privacy and supervision arrangements for changing rooms, showers and toilets.
- Do not take photographs or videos in changing, showering or sleeping areas.
- Any necessary one-to-one support must be transparent, appropriate and recorded where practicable.

18.3 Transport and travel

- Use approved transport and ensure children are not transported alone by an adult unless necessary, authorised and subject to appropriate safeguards.
- Where one-to-one transport is unavoidable, obtain parent/guardian consent where appropriate, inform another responsible adult and keep a record of the journey.

- Maintain passenger lists, emergency contacts and clear travel supervision arrangements.
- Apply the same safeguarding standards to domestic and international travel.

18.4 Coaching, communication and digital conduct

- Coaching and feedback must be respectful and proportionate; physical contact must be appropriate, necessary and explained.
- Use official or group communication channels for routine contact with minors wherever possible; avoid secretive or disappearing-message communications.
- Where direct communication with a child is necessary, include a parent/guardian or another authorised adult where practicable and appropriate.
- Do not request, create, possess or share sexualised images of children, or share images of participants without appropriate consent and lawful authority.
- Do not use social media or messaging platforms to intimidate, groom, exploit or harass any participant.

18.5 Event safeguarding plan

Before an event involving children or adults at risk, the organiser should identify the event Safeguarding Contact, emergency and referral arrangements, accommodation and transport risks, supervision arrangements, reporting route, first-aid provision and any participant-specific support needs. The checklist in Appendix C should be used as a minimum guide.

19. CODES OF CONDUCT, EDUCATION AND COMPLIANCE

19.1 Expected conduct

All participants must act respectfully, maintain appropriate boundaries, follow reasonable safety instructions, avoid discriminatory or abusive language, respect privacy, report concerns and cooperate with safeguarding measures.

Coaches, managers, officials, selectors and other persons in positions of trust must not exploit their authority, threaten selection or playing time to obtain personal compliance, engage in favouritism that creates unsafe dependency, or communicate with minors in secretive or inappropriate ways.

Athletes must not bully, harass, haze, threaten, exploit or retaliate against other athletes. Parents and guardians must support a respectful environment and must not intimidate athletes, officials, coaches or volunteers.

19.2 Education and awareness

SAUSF and affiliates must ensure that relevant personnel receive safeguarding induction and periodic awareness. Safeguarding Officers should receive role-specific training. Coaches, managers, officials and volunteers working regularly with children or adults at risk should understand reporting routes, professional boundaries, event safety and their legal obligations.

19.3 Compliance monitoring

SAUSF may require an affiliate to provide evidence of compliance, including its adopted policy, Safeguarding Officer appointment, training records, vetting arrangements, event plans and anonymised information about safeguarding reports and actions. SAUSF may provide guidance, request corrective action and take steps under its Constitution and membership rules where an affiliate persistently fails to comply.

19.4 Review

The Executive Council must review this Policy at least once every three years, and sooner following a significant incident, change in law, change in SASCOC or International Federation requirements, or material change in safeguarding practice. Amendments must be approved in accordance with the SAUSF Constitution.

APPENDIX A – SAFEGUARDING CONCERN REPORTING FORM

This form is intended to help record a concern. It is not necessary to complete every field before making a report. If anyone is in immediate danger, contact emergency services or SAPS first.

A. Reporter details	Name; preferred contact method; telephone/email; relationship to the affected person; anonymous report (yes/no).
B. Affected person	Name (if known); age/date of birth (if known); safe contact details; child/adult; any accessibility, communication or support needs.
C. Incident details	What happened? Include dates, times, location, whether it is ongoing, and whether there is an immediate risk.
D. Person alleged to have caused harm	Name or description; role in sport; relationship to affected person; current access to participants.
E. Witnesses and evidence	Names/contact details of witnesses; messages, photographs, documents or other evidence; where evidence is stored.
F. Immediate action	Medical or safety action taken; whether SAPS, Social Development, a child protection organisation or another authority has been contacted; reference number if available.
G. Support required	Immediate safety, medical, counselling, communication or other support requested.
H. Declaration	I believe the information provided is true to the best of my knowledge. I understand that information may be shared where necessary to protect a person, comply with law or ensure a fair process. Signature/date (if applicable).

Submit to: Ms Pamela Mackor, SAUSF Safeguarding Officer, via office@sausf.co.za. Mark the email **CONFIDENTIAL – FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OFFICER.** If the report concerns the Safeguarding Officer, use the alternate route in section 8.5.

APPENDIX B – PARTICIPANT CODE OF CONDUCT

Every person covered by this Policy is expected to:

- Treat all participants with dignity, fairness and respect.
- Never engage in harassment, abuse, bullying, discrimination, hazing, exploitation, intimidation or retaliation.
- Respect personal boundaries, privacy and the right to say no.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries, particularly with children and adults at risk.
- Never use physical punishment, humiliating treatment or unsafe training practices.
- Use appropriate, transparent communication channels and comply with digital safeguarding requirements.
- Respect changing-room, accommodation, transport and photography rules.
- Report safeguarding concerns promptly and cooperate honestly with appropriate processes.
- Protect confidential information and avoid discussing cases publicly or on social media.
- Follow lawful safeguarding instructions and event-specific safety arrangements.

APPENDIX C – EVENT AND TRAINING CAMP SAFEGUARDING CHECKLIST

- ☐ An event Safeguarding Contact has been identified and contact details shared.
- ☐ Emergency services, nearest medical facility and statutory referral routes are known.
- ☐ Parent/guardian consent and emergency contacts have been collected for minors.
- ☐ Participant attendance, sign-in/out and collection arrangements are in place.
- ☐ Supervision responsibilities and appropriate ratios have been allocated.
- ☐ Accommodation and rooming arrangements have been risk assessed.
- ☐ Changing rooms, showers and toilets have privacy and supervision arrangements.
- ☐ Transport arrangements and one-to-one journey safeguards have been confirmed.
- ☐ Photography, video and social media arrangements have been communicated.
- ☐ Participants know how to report a concern confidentially.
- ☐ Relevant staff and volunteers have received safeguarding briefing.
- ☐ Any participant-specific support or accessibility needs have been addressed.
- ☐ Any incident or concern will be recorded and referred in accordance with this Policy.

APPENDIX D – SAFEGUARDING OFFICER ROLE SUMMARY

Designated Officer: Ms Pamela Mackor

Primary function: Receive, coordinate and oversee the safeguarding response for SAUSF, ensuring concerns are recorded, risk assessed, referred appropriately and managed fairly.

The Safeguarding Officer is not the criminal investigator, disciplinary tribunal, legal adviser or final decision-maker on sanctions. Legal issues are to be referred to HR Hub, SAUSF's appointed legal firm, through the authorised SAUSF channel. Matters involving a conflict of interest must be transferred to the alternate or an independent person.

The Executive Council must ensure that the role is supported by an appointed alternate, appropriate training, secure recordkeeping arrangements and access to independent case-management and investigation resources.

APPENDIX E – LEGISLATIVE AND GOVERNANCE REFERENCES

This Policy should be read with the current versions of the following instruments, as applicable:

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.
- National Sport and Recreation Act 110 of 1998, as amended.
- Children's Act 38 of 2005, as amended, including section 110 and relevant regulations.
- Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 32 of 2007, as amended, including sections 40, 44, 45 and 54 where applicable.
- Protection from Harassment Act 17 of 2011.
- Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013.
- SAUSF Constitution, Code of Ethics and Disciplinary Procedures.
- Applicable SASCOC policies and governance requirements.
- Applicable International Federation safeguarding rules and guidance.