

THE FELL RUNNING ASSOCIATION

WELFARE POLICY

It is the policy of the Fell Running Association (FRA) to ensure that every child or young person who takes part in fell running events organised or promoted by the FRA should be able to participate in a fun and safe environment and be protected from neglect and physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

The key principles that underwrite this policy are:

- Anyone under the age of 18 years should be considered as a child for the purposes of this document
- The child's welfare is paramount
- All children whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- Coaches and helpers will be provided with the appropriate documentation and support to ensure they are able to implement the policy
- Adults working with children must also be provided protection and be aware of good practice so that they can be protected from wrongful allegations
- Working in partnership with children and their parents/carers is essential for the protection of the child
- The FRA recognises the statutory responsibility of Social Services departments to ensure the welfare of children and it is committed to working with Local Area Child Protection committees, and, where appropriate, to comply with their procedures.

In order to ensure the effective implementation of this policy the FRA has appointed a Welfare Officer and a Junior Co-ordinator who will work in partnership with race organisers, coaches and other FRA officials and volunteers to ensure the protection of the children in their care.

The role of FRA Officers & Committee members is:

- To accept that all Officers and Committee members have responsibilities in this area and are prepared to respond to any indication of abuse
- To be ready to amend bad practice
- To implement as appropriate any recommendations of UK Athletics and AAA
- To maintain confidentiality of the child and the accused.

The role of the Welfare Officer within the FRA will be:

- To promote amongst all club members and helpers awareness of good practice and of the legal framework within this area
- Where appropriate, to ensure all club helpers/officials/coaches complete a self-declaration reference form (obtainable from the FRA Welfare Officer & FRA website) for staff working in regulated positions
- To send all forms to the AAA/UKA on request
- To receive and advise on reports from other club members. Reports should be submitted to the Welfare Officer using an incident report form (obtainable from the FRA Welfare Officer & FRA website)
- To initiate action, ensuring all appropriate persons have been contacted.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The essence of good ethical conduct and practice is summarised below. All officials and volunteers must:

- Consider the well-being and safety of participants before the development of performance
- Develop an appropriate working relationship with performers, based on mutual trust and respect
- Make sure all activities are appropriate to the age, ability and experience of those taking part
- Promote the positive aspects of the sport (e.g. fair play)
- Display consistently high standards of behaviour and appearance
- Follow all guidelines laid down by UK Athletics and the AAA.
- Hold the appropriate, valid qualifications and insurance cover
- Never exert undue influence over performers to obtain personal benefit or reward.

The FRA has adopted the AAA code of conduct on 'welfare and child protection':

EXTRACTS FROM THE AAA CODES OF CONDUCT FOR OUR SPORT

Athletes should:

- Treat others with the same respect and fairness that you wish to receive
- Uphold the same values off the field as you do when engaged in athletics
- Anticipate your own needs, be organised and on time
- Thank those who help you participate in athletics
- Inform your coach of any other coaching you are receiving
- Show patience with and respect diversity in others
- Act with dignity at all times
- Notify a responsible adult if you have to go somewhere (why, where and when you will return)
- Not respond if someone seeks private information, unrelated to athletics e.g. home life
- Use safe transport or travel arrangements
- Avoid destructive behaviour and leave athletics venues as you find them
- Never engage in any illegal or irresponsible behaviour
- Challenge anyone whose behaviour falls below the expected standards of 'Athletics Welfare'
- Speak out immediately if anything makes you concerned or uncomfortable (telling your parents/carers and or the Club Welfare Officer) or if you suspect a club mate has suffered from misconduct by someone else.

Parents / carers should:

- Check out the people who are coaching or managing your child
- Take an active interest in your child's participation
- Attend training and competitions whenever possible
- Ensure that your child does not take unnecessary valuable items to training or competition
- Know exactly where your child will be at all times and who they are with
- Return an informed consent form (obtainable from the FRA Welfare Officer & FRA website) to the Club/Team Manager/Chaperone, including next of kin details, health and medical requirements, before your child goes to any 'away' events
- Inform your child's coach of any illness or disability that needs to be taken into consideration for athletic performance
- Provide any necessary medication that your child needs for the duration of any trips
- Never make assumptions about your child's safety.

Coaches should:

- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every athlete and treat everyone equally, regardless of background or ability
- Place the welfare and safety of the athlete above the development of performance
- Develop appropriate working relationships with athletes (especially under 18s), based on mutual trust and respect
- Not exert influence to obtain personal benefit or reward
- Encourage and guide athletes to accept and take responsibility for their own behaviour and performance and give them as much autonomy as possible
- Never do something for an athlete that they can do for themselves (In the case of some disabled athletes or vulnerable adults tasks of a personal nature may be requested or necessary. In such cases, the full understanding and consent of the parent or carer should be sought and the individual's autonomy and dignity should be respected.)
- Avoid critical language or actions, such as sarcasm, that undermine an athlete's self-esteem
- Not spend time alone with a young athlete unless clearly in view of others
- Avoid taking a young athlete alone in your car
- Never invite a young athlete alone to your home
- Never engage in physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay, or share a bedroom with a child
- Always explain why and ask for consent before touching an athlete
- Work in same-sex pairs when supervising changing areas
- Ensure that parents/carers know about and have approved in advance if taking a young athlete away from the usual training venue
- Respect the right of young athletes to an independent life outside athletics
- Make sure you are appropriately qualified for activities that you coach and update your licence and education as and when required by UK Athletics
- Adopt safe training regimes appropriate to the age, stage of development and capacity of the athlete
- At the outset, clarify with athletes (and where appropriate their parents or carers) exactly what is expected of them and what performers are entitled to expect from you
- Never try to recruit, either overtly or covertly, athletes who are already receiving coaching.
- Co-operate fully with other colleagues (e.g. other coaches, officials, team managers, sport scientists, doctors, physiotherapists, governing body staff) in the best interests of the athlete
- Consistently promote positive aspects of the sport (e.g. fair play) and never condone rule violations or the use of prohibited or age-inappropriate substances
- Strictly maintain a clear boundary between friendship and intimacy with athletes
- Challenge inappropriate behaviour or language by others
- Report any accidental injury, distress or misunderstanding or misinterpretation (including if a child appears to have been sexually aroused by your actions). A brief written report of such incidents should be submitted to the Welfare Officer as soon as possible and parents/carers notified
- Report any suspected misconduct by other coaches or athletics personnel
- Consistently display high standards of behaviour and appearance.

DOCUMENTS INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

Standards for Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport, Child Protection in Sport Unit

SAFeCHILD, Scottish Athletics Federation

The two documents referenced above provide relatively user-friendly summaries. They are also readily available on the web. The full, 'official' background can be found in:

UK Athletics - Welfare Policy - This document states the Policy of UKA, giving a definition of what is meant by the term athletics welfare. With this new policy, UKA will now work with all the other home countries to work towards a co-ordinated approach to this subject.

AAA of England – Athletics Welfare Policy – This new AAA Policy, which has now been adopted by the Management Board, accepts the same definition of athletics as the UKA Policy.

AAA of England – Procedures – This document gives guidance on the systems, which the AAA will adopt to apply its Policy. The majority of the 1998 AAA Child Policy is contained within this document. There are no significant contradictions between the two: the 2001 procedures give more detailed support to the clubs and are more up to date.

USEFUL WEBSITES

- www.sportprotects.org.uk The website of 'Child Protection in Sport'
- www.englandathletics.org The website of AAA (look under Administration - Policies)
- www.scottishathletics.org.uk/ The website of Scottish athletics