



## GolfRSA Safeguarding Policy

### Supplement 9: Types of Harassment, Abuse & Poor Practice

[Version: January 2024]

#### Harassment

1. Harassment is defined by the unwanted nature of the action. It is for any given individual to determine what they consider to be acceptable and what they regard as offensive. In some situations, harassment can be considered to be a criminal offence and can lead to a restraining order or prosecution.
2. The *Protection from Harassment Act 2010*, defines harassment as directly or indirectly engaging in conduct that the respondent knows or ought to know (a) causes harm or inspires the reasonable belief that harm may be caused to the complainant or a related person by unreasonably (i) following, watching, pursuing or accosting of the complainant or a related person, or loitering outside of or near the building or place where the complainant or a related person resides, works, carries on business, studies or happens to be; (ii) engaging in verbal, electronic or any other communication aimed at the complainant or a related person, by any means, whether or not conversation ensues; or (iii) sending, delivering or causing the delivery of letters, telegrams, packages, facsimiles, electronic mail or other objects to the complainant or a related person or leaving them where they will be found by, given to, or brought to the attention of, the complainant or a related person; or (b) amounts to sexual harassment of the complainant or a related person.
3. **Sexual harassment** means any unwanted and unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal, non-verbal or physical. Sexual harassment can take the form of sexual abuse.
4. Harassment can take a variety of forms with the most common being:
  - Suggestive sexual comments;
  - Racist insults/jokes;
  - Verbal abuse;
  - Unwelcome attention

## Abuse

There are 4 categories of abuse: physical, psychological, sexual and neglect:

5. **Physical abuse** means any deliberate and unwelcome act – such as, for example punching, beating, kicking, biting and burning – that causes physical trauma or injury. Such acts can also consist of forced or inappropriate physical activity (e.g., age-, or physique- inappropriate training loads; when injured or in pain), forced alcohol consumption, or forced doping practices.
6. **Psychological abuse** means any unwelcome act including confinement, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation, infantilising, or any other treatment which may diminish the sense of identity, dignity, and self-worth.
7. **Sexual abuse** means any conduct of a sexual nature, whether non-contact, contact or penetrative, where consent is coerced/manipulated or is not or cannot be given.
8. **Neglect** means the failure of a coach or another person with a duty of care towards the athlete to provide a minimum level of care to the athlete, which is causing harm, allowing harm to be caused, or creating an imminent danger of harm.
9. Different forms of abuse may constitute criminal activity in South Africa as defined in the *Criminal Procedure Act 51 Of 1977* as amended; *the Children's Act 38 of 2005* as amended and the *Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 32 Of 2007* as amended; and the *Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act 7 of 2013*.
10. Harassment and abuse can be based on any grounds including race, religion, colour, creed, ethnic origin, physical attributes, gender, sexual orientation, age disability, socio-economic status and athletic ability. It can include a one-off incident or a series of incidents. It may be in person or online.
11. Harassment may be deliberate, unsolicited and coercive.
12. Harassment and abuse often result from an abuse of authority, meaning the improper use of a position of influence, power or authority by an individual against another person.

## Poor Practice

13. **Poor practice** is the behaviour of an individual in a position of responsibility which falls below the organisation's required standard. Poor practice may not be immediately dangerous or intentionally harmful to a child or adult but is likely to set a poor example.

## Effects of Harassment, Abuse and Poor Practice

14. The impact of harassment on a child or adult can be profound and can result in the child or adult feeling unhappy, demoralised or undervalued. Harassment is often an ongoing form of abuse which causes extreme distress by the repeated action, usually verbally.
15. Abuse, whether short-term or prolonged, can be extremely damaging to the child and may

affect their relationships and trust in others both currently and in the future. In extreme cases children who have been abused have developed drug and alcohol dependencies, illegal tendencies and in some cases have gone on to abuse children themselves.

16. Poor practice is potentially damaging to the individual, the organisation and to children or adults who experience it. For example, coaching with alcohol on the breath, smoking, swearing in front of golfers, or not paying due care and attention to participants all constitute poor practice.
17. Poor practice can sometimes lead to or create an environment conducive to harassment or abuse. It may also lead to suspicions about the individual's motivation, even where no harm is intended. For example, if a coach is giving one child too much attention, regularly transports children in their car, or encourages physical contact with children without obvious justification.

### Specific Forms of Abuse

18. Further to the broader descriptions of abuse above, abuse may occur in different forms and settings including:
  - **Domestic abuse** – includes Intimate Partner Violence (“IPV”) or a child witnessing IPV.
  - **Sexual Exploitation** - where women, children and young adults are sexually exploited for money, power or status.
  - **Bullying and Cyberbullying** – which can occur anywhere, at home, at school, at the sports club, and online. Bullying usually takes place over a long period of time and can cause physical and emotional harm.
  - **Grooming** - Children and young people can be groomed online or in the real world, by a stranger or by someone they know - a family member, friend or professional.
  - **Trafficking** - where women or children are recruited, moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold. They are often moved away from their homes and forced to work in the sex trade.
  - **Hazing** - initiation ceremonies including rituals, challenges, and other activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group such as a sports team.
  - **Financial Abuse** - misappropriation of financial resources or abusive use of financial control, in the context of a relationship where there is an expectation of trust. Adults at risk, women in unequal relationships and older persons can be at risk of financial abuse.

### Bullying

19. Bullying can be defined as repeated and deliberate actions or hurtful behaviour that is repeated over a period of time. The damage caused by bullying can frequently be underestimated and cause considerable distress to young people and could result in their health and development being affected.

20. Bullying can be:
- Physical: including pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching, and other forms of violence or threats.
  - Verbal: name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing
  - Emotional: Excluding, tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating
  - Racial: racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
  - Sexual: unwanted physical contact, homophobic taunts, abusive comments
21. Bullying can occur between:
- An adult and young person;
  - A young person and another young person; or
  - A parent and their child
22. With golf being competitive the opportunity for bullying may be increased. Examples within golf could include:
- An athlete being picked on for being a weaker competitor;
  - Parents pushing their child too hard;
  - A coach adopting a win at all costs attitude;
  - Officials putting undue pressure on golfers.

### Grooming

23. Grooming refers to an individual working to create an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust with the distinct purpose of sexual abuse or exploitation.
24. Grooming can be undertaken by both males and females and can occur both online and in the real world. It can be undertaken by an individual the child or young person knows or by a stranger.
25. Many children and young people will not understand that they have been groomed and that it constitutes abuse. Abusers may invest a lot of time and effort into gaining a child's, and possibly the rest of their families trust by:
- Offering advice and understanding
  - Buying gifts, such as equipment
  - Giving the child attention
  - Using their professional position or reputation
  - Taking them on trips, outings or holidays

26. Once they have established trust, groomers will exploit the relationship by isolating the child from friends or family and making the child feel dependent on them. They will use any means of power or control to make a child believe they have no choice but to do what they want. Abusers may introduce 'secrets' as a way to control or frighten the child. Sometimes they will blackmail the child, or make them feel ashamed or guilty, to stop them telling anyone about the abuse.

### Trafficking

27. *The Prevention and Combatting the Trafficking in Persons Act 2013* states that “any person who delivers, recruits, transports, transfers, harbours, sells, exchanges, leases or receives another person within or across the borders of the Republic, by means of (a) a threat of harm; (b) the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion; (c) the abuse of vulnerability; (d) fraud; (e) deception; (f) abduction; (g) kidnapping; (h) the abuse of power; (i) the direct or indirect giving or receiving of payments or benefits to obtain the consent of a person having control or authority over another person; or (j) the direct or indirect giving or receiving of payments, compensation, rewards, benefits or any other advantage, aimed at either the person or an immediate family member of that person or any other person in close relationship to that person, for the purpose of any form or manner of exploitation, is guilty of the offence of trafficking in persons.
28. There have been cases of trafficking linked to sport in South Africa where children have been transported to illegitimate sports training camps and been subjected to child abuse and neglect.

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