



## Stratford upon Avon Athletic Club Coaching Guidance - Working Young People

Coaches and volunteers have a vital role to play in safeguarding young people in sport and are a focus for young people and their activities. Therefore, Coaches and volunteers involved in SUAAC activities that have involvement with young people are required to have :

- A UKA Coaching Licence
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) vetting
- Successfully completed the British Athletics Safeguarding in Athletics course
- An understanding of their responsibilities to keep young people and young people safe and what to do if they have concerns about a child's wellbeing.

Good coaching is about providing a fun and safe environment in which people, particularly young people, can enjoy their first experience of athletics, gain some personal success, be a part of the "team" and be motivated and stay involved in athletics.

Coaches and volunteers who work with young people become involved in a Regulated Activity and therefore, are required to go through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) vetting process prior to coaching or volunteering for SUAAC and this includes successfully completing the British Athletics Safeguarding in Athletics course.

As an Athletics coach you will have regular contact with young people, therefore, you should adopt the highest standards of practice and be responsible for identifying those in need of protection. As a coach they will look up to you and if a child decides to talk to you about abuse, you need to know what to do and in SUAACs case the first point of contact is the **Club Welfare Officer**

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You also need to understand your duty of care towards young Athletes, current guidance on good practice, and act responsibly when you are around young people. This will protect the young people you coach and you and reduce the potential for misunderstandings and inappropriate allegations being made.

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

- Consider the well-being and safety of participants before the development of performance.
- Develop an appropriate working relationship with athletes, 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 Athletics (e.g. fair play)
- Display consistently high standards of behaviour and appearance
- Follow all guidelines laid down by the national governing body and the club
- Hold the appropriate, valid qualifications that includes insurance cover
- Never exert undue influence over athletes to obtain personal benefit or reward
- Never condone rule violations, rough play, verbal abuse or the use of prohibitive substances



## Coaching Roles

### Head Coach

To ensure the structure of the junior section is appropriate and properly equipped with coaching, support staff, equipment and facilities to operate in a safe environment.

To provide practical and technical guidance, teaching, support and mentoring regarding coaching as necessary.

Ensure coaches have the appropriate qualifications and are encouraged to progress to the next level.

#### Key responsibilities:

- To plan, direct, implement and keep under constant review a complete Athletics programme that provides members with the ability to become the best they can be by providing the best possible tuition and continued development that constantly improves the athletes, the coaches and the status of the club.
- To ensure that the coaching team conform to and abide by nationally accepted practices and guidelines within the club
- To attend agreed external Athletics functions or fixtures or to ensure that the club has suitable representation at those events.
- To be responsible for and facilitate competition at local, area, district, county, regional and national level.
- To ensure that Athletes and the coaching team comply with the highest standards whilst representing the club at training and externally.
- To facilitate and chair such meetings as are agreed and necessary from time to time.
- To ensure that personal qualifications and knowledge are under constant and continual development and are appropriate for the structure of the club.
- To assist in the review of the overall operating procedures of the club to ensure that it meets best practice.
- To ensure administration and performance records are available and provide ad hoc coaching duties in the various age groups as required or requested.

### Age Group Leader (AGL)

**Key responsibilities:** Working with the Head Coach ensure:

- Practical guidance, teaching, support and mentoring is provided regarding coaching as necessary.
- The respective age group runs smoothly and to ensure the group trains in a safe environment with age appropriate training programmes.
- Weekly training sessions are planned, organised and resourced in a safe manner.
- Plan, direct, implement and keep under constant review an age and skill appropriate Athletics programme that provides members with the ability to become the best they can be by providing the best possible tuition and that constantly improves the athletes, the coaches and the status of the club.
- Ensure that the Age Group coaching team conform to and abide by nationally accepted practices and guidelines within the club.
- Attend agreed external Athletic functions or fixtures and ensure that the club has a presence to support athletes at competitions.
- Ensure that athletes and coaches comply with the highest standards whilst representing the club.
- Ensure that the respective coaching team's qualifications and knowledge are under constant continual professional development with the Head Coach.
- Assist in the review of the overall operating procedures of the club to ensure that it meets best practice.
- To keep administration and performance records and provide ad hoc duties as required.

## **Age Group Coach**

To provide practical guidance and teaching to athletes in line with the Junior Section procedures, guidelines and protocols.

**Key responsibilities:** Working with the respective Age Group Leader:

- Ensure the club's junior coaching sessions are run in a safe manner
- Support the preparation of coaching sessions in advance and running of each session.
- Give feedback and suggestions for the organisation of junior coaching.
- Support the competitions with the junior team(s).
- Inform the Respective Age Group Leader in advance of any sessions that cannot be attended.
- Ensure personal actions conform to and abide by nationally accepted practices
- Attend agreed external Athletics courses, functions or fixtures to improve qualifications.
- Ensure that the highest standards whilst representing the club are met.
- Assist in the review of the overall operating procedures of the club to ensure that it meets best practice.
- To provide ad hoc duties as required

## Guidelines

### Coach:Athlete Ratios

When working with groups of young people and young people there must be enough adults to provide the appropriate level of supervision. Staffing and supervision ratios can sometimes be difficult to determine. It is the AGLs responsibility to ensure there is enough qualified coaches supported by suitable volunteers to ensure that the session can be delivered in a safe and enjoyable environment.

Supervision levels and the nature of that supervision will depend on a number of things. Carry out a notional risk assessment of the activities that are involved in the planned session taking the following things into account. This will help making a decision about the number of volunteers and the nature of their experience required for the session to remain safe, fun and promote learning.

- Age
- Gender
- Behaviour
- Ability of group and any reasonable adjustments that are required
- Any special needs
- The nature and duration of the session activities
- The competence and experience of coaches and volunteers involved
- The maturation levels and experience of the athletes being coached
- The location of the session
- Equipment type
- Complexity of the session

### Adult to Child ratios

There are no specific guidelines on adult to child ratios for organisations that are not in the education or early years sectors. However, SUAAC has adopted the following ratios as best practice suitable to the way the club is organised:

|                    |                        |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| Under 11s          | 1 adult to 8 athletes  |
| Under 13s          | 1 adult to 10 athletes |
| Under 15 and above | 1 adult to 12 athletes |

Adults is defined as a qualified coach aged 18 or over.

Based on the nature of the activity and ability of the young people, you may need more than this minimum. At least 2 adults should be present for all sessions involving young people.

Toilet ratios: If the group has boys and girls who require supervision to the toilet, there should be a male and female adult supervising these visits. Best practice is to encourage the young people to take toilet breaks at the same time or in groups so that this can be supervised by one adult, leaving the other with the rest of the group.

## Coaches Code of Conduct - working with young people

### Good Practice means:

- Ensuring that Athletics is fun, enjoyable and fair play is promoted.
- Treating all young people equally, with respect and dignity.
- Being an excellent role model; this includes not smoking, using inappropriate language, swearing or drinking alcohol, using a mobile (unless necessary) whilst coaching.
- Always putting the welfare of young people first, before winning or achieving goals by encouraging a constructive environment where healthy competition, skill development, fun and achievement are promoted in equal measures.
- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding being alone with a child, and encouraging open communication within no secrets).
- Building balanced relationships based on trust which enable young people to take part in the decision making process.
- As you are in a position of trust and authority not having inappropriate including sexual relationships with minors i.e. 16/17 year olds or below in your care.
- Not tolerating acts of aggression/bullying whether physical or verbal.
- Recognising the needs and abilities of young people, avoiding too much training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- Giving positive and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- No physical contact.....see below.
- Keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance in sport.
- Finding out if any young people you are coaching have medical conditions that could be aggravated whilst training or competing.
- Keeping a record any time a child is injured in your care, along with the details of any treatment provided.
- Promoting good sportsmanship by encouraging young people to be considerate of other athletes, officials and County / Club volunteers and by being modest in victory and gracious in defeat.
- Always conduct coaching sessions with at least one other adult present and adults
- Dressing appropriately and being professional when operating in an Athletics environment with young people.
- Highlighting to the Club Welfare Officer concerns relating to harassment and abuse of young people.

### Poor practice means you must never:

- Spend time alone with young people away from others
- Take or drop off a child at an event/training unless accompanied by a parent/carer or appropriate adult
- Take young people to your home or transport them by car, where they will be alone with you
- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games
- Share a room with a child
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate verbal, touching or physical abuse
- Take part in or tolerate behaviour that frightens, embarrasses or demoralises an Athlete or that affects their self esteem
- Allow young people to use inappropriate language or behaviour unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- Make a child cry as a form of control
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or ignored by reporting them to the club's Welfare Officer
- Do things of a personal nature for young people or vulnerable adults that they cannot do for themselves

Any of the above can leave you open to allegations and the following guidance is about safeguarding young people whilst they are involved in Athletics. It will also help to protect coaches from unnecessary or malicious allegations when working with young people.



## Physical contact

### SUAAC has adopted the following as best practice:

The Club understands that physical contact between a child and an adult may be required to instruct, encourage, protect or comfort. However, it is important to remember that in Athletics today there is a multicultural mix of young people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, young people who may be on the Child Protection Register or have previously been or are currently being abused at home.

Not all young people are used to or are comfortable with any type of touching, be it friendly or otherwise and so quite simply SUAAC's policy is **don't** unless a specific activity requires it and the athlete is aware of what is happening and gives their permission.

In many cultures, girls in particular, are uncomfortable about any kind of touching by a stranger. SUAAC therefore assumes **all** young people are not comfortable with physical contact and all adults must understand that touching not only involves touching young people when showing them Athletics postures etc, but can also include responsive or pleasant actions, e.g. when asking the child to carry out a task, or celebrating a win with say a high 5 or a pat on the back.

However, physically or visually impaired young people may need to be touched in order to help them understand, acquire or visualise a specific Athletics posture but it must be remembered that the guidance detailed below still applies.

If for specific reasons touching is required you should only use minimal, light touch physical contact if its aim is to:

- Develop skills or techniques
- Treat an injury
- Prevent an injury or accident from occurring
- Meet the requirements of a specific activity

In addition:

- Never find yourself in a situation where you are the only adult present around young people.
- You should never make any physical contact on a one to one basis and seek to explain the reason for the physical contact to the child i.e. reinforcing the teaching or coaching skill. Unless the situation is an emergency, the adult should ask the child for permission to allow the demonstration. Physical contact should always be intended to meet the child's needs NOT the adult's.
- If a child becomes injured during a coaching session and the injury requires the child to be carried to a place of treatment, always seek support from another adult before moving the child. Any first aid administered should be in the presence of another adult or in open view of others.
- Explain what you are intending to do and if the child seems uncomfortable in any way with physical contact, STOP immediately and seek the support of another adult.
- If the child you are working with is visually impaired, you should tell them who you are and ask their permission before you come into physical contact with them
- Where physical contact is for motivational or celebratory reasons, agree with the athlete to praise good performance, with a "High Five" or similar action. No hugging.
- Never take on one to one coaching with a child unless another adult or parent/carer is present.

## Communication

If you need to communicate with a child for the purposes of for example organising training or passing on Athletics information such as competitions, always include a parent's mobile telephone number or email as well. If you have agreed with the parents in advance to use the child's own mobile phone or email for communication with them, under no circumstances make the number available for general circulation.

If any of the following incidents take place or are observed, you MUST in the first instance report them to the respective Age Group Leader or Head Coach (and if necessary to the SUAAC's Welfare Officer) and make a written note of the event using SUAAC's Accident/Incident Reporting Form (see below) and inform parents where appropriate if :

- You accidentally hurt a child
- A child seems distressed in any manner
- A child acts in a sexually inappropriate manner
- A child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have said and/or done
- In response to something a child has said
- In response to signs or suspicions of abuse
- In response to allegations made against a coach or volunteer
- In response to allegations made about a parent, carer or someone not working within Athletics
- In response to bullying
- In response to a breach of code of conduct/poor practice
- Observation of inappropriate behaviour

If a child tells you about abuse you need to:

- Listen carefully to what is said and take the child seriously without comment or examination or make assumptions or judgements.
- Do not dismiss the concern and let the child know that if what they tell you leads you to believe they are in danger, you will have to pass the information on to someone who can protect them
- Stay calm; do not show disgust or disbelief and keep an open mind
- Ask questions for clarification only and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you
  - Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared i.e. SUAAC's Welfare Officer.
  - Record in writing what was said using the child's own words. Do this as soon as possible, using The Club's Incident Reporting Form ....see below.
- Do not approach any alleged abuser to discuss the concern

If appropriate SUAAC's Welfare Officer will discuss the incident with the Head Coach and respective AGL and decide on the appropriate course of action.

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**I have read, understood and will follow the SUAAC Coaching Guidelines**

**Name:**

**Date:**

**Cut and paste and email to [stratford-athletics@outlook.com](mailto:stratford-athletics@outlook.com)**





**INCIDENT/ACCIDENT REPORT**

**Number:**

**Date:**

**Time:**

**Name of Child:**

**Date of Birth:**

**Year Group:**

**Parent/Guardian:**

**Address:**

**Telephone/Contact No:**

**Name of Coach/Helper:**

**Location:** *e.g. Jubilee Track, Stratford upon Avon High School or other*

**Incident/Accident Details: i.e.**

- Facts of the allegation or observations
- Description of any visible bruising or other injuries
- The child's account, if it can be given, regarding what has happened and how
- Witnesses to the incident(s) and their account
- The name and address and date of birth of any alleged offender
- Any times, dates or other relevant information
- Endeavour to ascertain a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay

**Account Given** *(Use Child's Own Words):*

**Response Given** *(quote your own words):*

**Any Others Present:**

**Action Taken:** *(note any action taken, first aid, individuals contacted etc)*

**Date & Time sent to SUAAC Welfare Officer:** *(i.e. within 24 hours of the accident/incident)*