

**Regional Sport Initiative – Playing Together**  
*Podgorica, Montenegro*

**Code of Conduct relating to the Child Protection Program “Sport for All”**

2022

General Assembly, Regional Sport Initiative – Playing Together

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## **I. Introduction**

The REGSPO has adopted a child protection policy with the aim of ensuring the complete physical, emotional, psychological and digital safety of all children who participate in sporting activities, and to provide an inclusive and supportive sporting experience without discrimination.

This Code of Conduct applies to all employees, officials and stakeholders involved in the REGSPO's activities or providing support to these activities. It is aligned with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Olympic Committee's Safe Sport Principles, and the Lanzarote Convention.

## **II. The best interests of the child are of greatest importance**

The physical, emotional and social well-being of children is the highest priority in all the REGSPO's activities. Principles of implementation:

- The child's health, safety and long-term development take precedence over sporting success, performance goals or the institutional interests of the REGSPO.
- All programmes and decisions are adapted to the child's age, maturity, physical abilities and individual needs.
- Children have the right to express their opinion on matters that concern them. Their opinion must be taken seriously and considered in decision-making processes in a manner appropriate to their age.
- Sporting activities should encourage children's self-confidence, leadership and social skills.
- Emotional and psychological well-being of children is as important as physical health, and protective measures are taken accordingly.

## **III. Non-discrimination and inclusion**

Every child has equal rights regardless of personal characteristics and has the right to full participation in the sporting environment. Principles of implementation:

- Discrimination, favouritism, exclusion, marginalization or labelling based on gender, religion, language, ethnic origin, disability, socioeconomic status, physical appearance or any other differences are strictly prohibited.
- Children with special needs shall be provided with accessible facilities, individualized training plans and assistive equipment to ensure their full integration into sporting activities.
- Equal opportunities to participate in sport are provided to all children, irrespective of their abilities or interests.
- Staff must use inclusive language.
- Individual differences among children must be considered when designing and implementing sports programmes.

## **IV. Protection of physical contact and privacy**

Respect for the child's bodily integrity and privacy is a fundamental human right. Principles of implementation:

- Physical contact is permitted only when technically necessary for the sport and must be carried out with the child's explicit consent. Contact must be professional, brief and performed in a visible place. Where possible, another adult should be present.
- Private spaces such as changing rooms, toilets, showers and rest rooms must not be used without permission. It is strictly forbidden to be alone with a child in these spaces.
- Questions that intrude into a child's private life are not permitted; all communication must be exclusively related to sporting activities.
- The need for and limits of physical contact must be explained in advance to both children and their parents.

#### **V. Respect and transparency in communication**

Communication is a means to support children's emotional safety and development.

Principles of implementation:

- All communication must use age-appropriate, respectful, encouraging and pedagogical language.
- Humiliating, mocking, threatening or derogatory expressions or nicknames are strictly prohibited and are considered emotional abuse.
- It is not permitted to send private messages, follow children on personal social networks, speak privately by phone, or use other personal communication channels. Communication must be conducted through the REGSPO's official channels and records of communication must be kept and made available for review as needed.
- Children's emotional reactions during communication must be monitored and the approach adjusted when necessary.

#### **VI. Protection of personal data and digital safety**

Children's personal data and digital privacy must be protected with the greatest care.

Principles of implementation:

- Photographs, video and audio recordings, health data or other personal data may be collected, stored and used only with written parental consent and the REGSPO's approval.
- Content that clearly shows children's faces, reveals their identity or could cause psychological harm is prohibited from being published on social networks.
- Sharing or transmitting sexually explicit, violent or otherwise unsafe digital materials is considered a serious offence and must be reported to the competent judicial authorities.
- Staff must actively raise children's awareness of digital risks and report any suspicious situation without delay.

#### **VII. Ethical boundaries and role modelling**

Staff must serve as ethical and professional role models for children. Principles of implementation:

- All behaviour should be guided by the principles of honesty, kindness, responsibility and fairness.
- Professional boundaries in relationships with children must always be maintained; overly personal or friendly interactions are not permitted.
- A child must not be emotionally manipulated, used for personal gain, or abused in any form.
- Staff must avoid behaviours that could undermine children's trust and should earn their respect through appropriate conduct.
- Staff are responsible for guiding children toward adopting ethical values and the spirit of fair play.

#### **VIII. Obligation to report risks and violations**

All risks and violations involving children must be reported in a timely and confidential manner. Principles of implementation:

- Any form of physical, emotional, sexual or economic abuse; neglect; inappropriate communication; or risks to safety must be reported in writing to the child protection officer or committee within the REGSPO no later than 24 hours.
- Reports are submitted confidentially; the identity of the reporter is protected and safeguards against any form of retaliation are provided.
- Failure to report is considered a serious omission and may lead to disciplinary proceedings.
- Secure reporting channels are provided, and their availability is continuously improved.
- Reporting procedures are designed to be simple and accessible to both children and staff.

#### **IX. Mandatory training and professional development**

Staff must continuously develop their competencies in child protection. Principles of implementation:

- All employees must attend mandatory training and annual seminars to update knowledge organized by the REGSPO.
- Training includes theoretical knowledge and practical scenarios.
- Unauthorized, i.e., non-certified personnel may not be engaged in tasks that involve direct contact with children.
- Updated policies and good practices are shared with staff at least once a year through written and visual materials.
- Trainings focus on the specific needs of children according to age and developmental stage.

## **X. Prohibited conduct**

Any behaviour that may endanger children or their safety is strictly prohibited.

Principles of implementation:

- Sexual innuendo, contact or content; physical punishment; threats; intimidation; humiliation; silencing; private communication or monitoring via social networks; offering alcohol, tobacco or illegal substances; inviting children alone into private spaces; or applying excessive physical or psychological pressure — all are strictly prohibited.
- Such violations are subject to immediate disciplinary action and, if necessary, referral to competent authorities.
- Indirect behaviours that may compromise children's safety (e.g., negligence) are also prohibited.

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Approved by

Marina Tomović

General Secretary

