



**Little
Athletics**
Tasmania

Policy #7

Probity Policy

Amended

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Athletics Association Inc.
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Foundation for all sports

Little Athletics Tasmania Probity Policy

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1. Policy Statement

The Tasmanian Little Athletics Association Inc. is firmly committed to a coordinated and comprehensive approach to promote the protection of children and adults. In accordance with the principles contained in the Child Protection Act 1999, probity

- a) every child has a right to protection from harm
- b) the welfare and best interests of a child are paramount

Tasmanian Little Athletics Association Inc aims to promote a safe environment for all children and adults and to recognise and notify suspected child abuse and neglect.

The Tasmanian Little Athletics Association Inc. is committed to the belief that all children have a right to feel safe at all times.

2. Code of Conduct for Adults

Adults in the Tasmanian Little Athletics Association Inc. respect the dignity of themselves and others.

Adults in the Tasmanian Little Athletics Association Inc. demonstrate a high degree of individual responsibility, recognising that at all times their words and actions are an example to both adult and child members of the Association.

Adults in the Association do not use the Association to promote their own beliefs, behaviours or practices, where these are not compatible with the Association policies.

Adults in the Association act with consideration and good judgement in all interpersonal relationships.

Adults in the association avoid unaccompanied and unobserved activities with child members, wherever possible.

Adults in the Association, for their own protection, should avoid potentially compromising situations by ensuring, where reasonably possible, that at least two adults are in attendance whilst supervising and/or accompanying child members. It is recognised that in certain circumstances it may be necessary for an adult, whilst acting responsibly and exercising their "duty of care", to be alone with a child member.

Adults in the Tasmanian Little Athletics Association Inc. accept that bullying, physical or verbal abuse, neglect or any other type of abuse is unacceptable conduct by any adult within the Association.

Adult members have a responsibility to report concerns about child abuse.

Adult Member Rights

Adult members of the Tasmanian Little Athletics Association Inc. have the right to:

1. Support in the reporting of suspicions of child abuse
2. Fair and equitable treatment from the Association
3. Be protected from abuse by child members
4. Be protected from abuse by other adult members and parents

Adult Member Responsibilities

Adult members of the Tasmanian Little Athletics Association Inc. are responsible for:

1. Working as a team to ensure the safety of child members in their care
2. Using appropriate child behaviour management
3. Listening and responding to child members' statements concerning alleged abuse
4. Ensuring the rights and responsibilities of child members are enforced
5. Reporting suspicions of child abuse to the President of the Association or his/her Delegate
6. Not abusing child members physically, emotionally or sexually.
7. Only disclosing sensitive information to appropriate authorities and/or designated Officers of the Association, on a 'need to know' basis

3. Child Members Rights

Child members of the Tasmanian Little Athletics Association Inc. have the right to:

1. Be protected from abuse by adult members
2. Be safe
3. Be listened to
4. Be respected
5. Be protected from abuse by other child members
6. Be referred to appropriate professional help if needed

4. Tasmanian Little Athletics Association Inc. Rights

The Tasmanian Little Athletics Association Inc. has the right to:

Expect all adult members to comply with its Personal Protection and Intervention Policy

1. Expect all child members to keep within the bounds of accepted community standards of behaviour
2. Take appropriate action if members contravene its Personal Protection and Intervention Policy
3. Expect that adult members will not abuse child members physically, emotionally, sexually or verbally.
4. Take appropriate action in the event of malicious accusations
5. Acquire police checks with convictions in relevant areas

5. Tasmanian Little Athletics Association Inc. Responsibilities

The Tasmanian Little Athletics Association Inc. is responsible for:

1. Providing safety to all child and adult members
2. Widely promoting the Personal Protection and Intervention Policy to members and the wider community
3. Providing support to members who report suspicions of child abuse
4. Treating information of suspected child abuse with confidentiality and disclosing information only to those who need to know, eg relevant Department.
5. Making every effort to identify potential abusers via police
6. Ensuring all TLAA Board Members and Centre Committee Members are aware of the indicators of child abuse and neglect, their obligations to notify suspected child abuse and neglect and procedures for notification.

6. Child Abuse

Child abuse can be any of the following:

1. **Sexual Abuse:** Any sexual act or sexual threat imposed upon a child. Pressure, either physical or psychological, is always present in child sexual assault.
2. **Neglect** occurs when a child is harmed because a parent/guardian or caregiver fails to provide the basic physical and emotional necessities of life.
3. **Physical Abuse** refers to non-emotional injury to a child, generally caused by an adult who is responsible for that child.
4. **Emotional Abuse** is behaviour by a parent or caregiver, which can destroy the confidence of the child causing significant emotional distress or hurt.

Under the **Child Protection Act 1999**, protection from liability for notification of, or information given about alleged harm applies:

1. If a person acting honestly:
 - Notifies the President or another officer of the department that the person suspects a child has been, is being or is likely to be, harmed; or
 - Gives their President, an authorised officer or police officer information about alleged harm to a child.
2. The person does not incur liability for giving the notification or information.
3. Also, merely because the person gives the notification or information, the person can both be held to have -
 - Breached any code of professional etiquette or ethics; or
 - Departed from accepted standards of professional conduct

All Tasmanian Little Athletics Association Inc Board Members and Centre committees have a duty of care and responsibility to ensure the safety, welfare and wellbeing of child members is maintained. Failure to notify when there are concerns about child abuse and/or neglect means that the child's safety needs cannot be properly addressed and they may be left vulnerable to further abuse.

The Tasmanian Little Athletics Association Inc. is of the belief that by taking simple preventative measures during the conduct of any Little Athletics activity then the opportunity for any form of child abuse can be minimised.

7. Definitions and Indicators of Child Abuse

The term **Physical Abuse** refers to non-accidental injury to a child by a parent/caregiver/other person. It includes injuries caused by excessive discipline, severe beating or shaking. Some signs and symptoms may include:

- Bruising
- Lacerations or welts
- Burns or scalds
- Fractures, sprains or dislocations

The term **Sexual Abuse** refers to allegations of sexual behaviour towards a child by someone known or unknown to the child and who is in a position of power over the child. Some signs and symptoms may include:

- Age inappropriate behaviour and/or persistent sexual behaviour, promiscuity
- Marked changes in behaviour or mood, tantrums, aggressiveness, withdrawal self destructive behaviour
- Allusions to problems at home, not wanting to return home
- Fear and loss of trust
- Physical symptoms including bruising or bleeding in the vaginal or anal area

The term **Emotional Abuse** refers to harm caused to the child by excessive or unreasonable demands as well as failing to provide the psychological nurturing necessary for development. Some signs and symptoms may include:

- Severe verbal abuse or threats of abuse
- Being physically or socially isolated as punishment
- Feelings of worthlessness about life and self
- Extreme attention seeking behaviour
- Behavioural disorders such as disruptiveness, bullying, aggressiveness

The term **Neglect** refers to the failure to provide the basic necessities of life including food, clothing, shelter, emotional security, medical care and adequate supervision of the child's growth and development. Some signs and symptoms may include:

- Poor standards of hygiene, inadequate clothing for weather conditions
- Malnutrition, complaints of hunger, hiding food
- Untreated medical or dental problems
- Lack of appropriate supervision - either unsupervised or under supervised when engaging in certain activities
- Extreme longing for adult affection

8. Recognition of Abuse or Neglect

When child abuse or neglect is suspected it is important to communicate concerns to child protection professionals who can assist in determining if whether the concerns are significant.

Recognising the signs and symptoms of child abuse and neglect means forming a genuine concern or well founded suspicion that abuse or neglect has occurred or may occur in the future.

9. Being Alert to Abuse or Neglect

Concerns about abuse or neglect can be raised in a number of ways, such as:

- A child, a parent, a work colleague, a sibling or another adult may tell about something that has happened, their fears, or how they feel about being placed in certain situations.
- Marked changes in a child's physical appearance or condition, their behaviour or family circumstances may arouse suspicion.
- Observations in the interactions between an adult (parent/carer/other adult) and a child may raise concerns.
- Observations in the interactions between two children may raise concerns.

If a member has a genuine concern that a child in their care has been, or may be subjected to abuse or neglect, then the situation must be dealt with quickly, carefully and with an open mind. If there is uncertainty about whether to notify or not, concerns should be discussed with the State President.

10. Listen and Clarify

If a child tells you about abuse listen attentively and **later** record the child's exact words (as well as you can recall), the time and place the allegation was made and who, if anyone, was present. **Do not prompt** the child for further details or ask questions as this may lead to contamination of evidence.

As the child talks to you:

- Observe the demeanour of the child
- React calmly to the information the child provides
- Listen actively and be non-judgmental
- Do not ask leading questions, for example, *"did they/she/he do.....to you?"*
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling you, for example, *I am pleased you told me about these worries....."*
- Do not make promises you cannot keep, particularly about telling others (for example: Police, parents etc) about the information, or about what will happen next
- Reassure and support any colleagues who are present

You should:

- Provide comfort and care to the child, recognise that they may be fearful about the consequences of their action and confused about the situation
- Reassure the child that this is not their fault and they have not done anything wrong
- Not confront the parents or other family members

11. Child Abuse Notification Procedure

In urgent situations immediately advise The Department of Families Youth and Community Service - Child Protection Service on 1300 737 639 (24 hours)

Verbal notification must be made to the Tasmanian Little Athletics on 1300 888 713

The following information is to be reported:

- Parents names & alleged perpetrators name
- Name and description of child.
- Address or descriptions of his/her whereabouts.
- When child was last seen.
- If known, approximate age, Centre details/school and if any siblings.
- If known, whether a language or sign interpreter may be required or an Aboriginal / Torres Strait Islanders agency should be involved.
- All available information relevant for safety and welfare of child.
- Details of events, conversations or observations, which led to the report.
- Your contact name and phone number.

12. Guide to Protective Services

All Tasmanian Little Athletics Association Inc Board Members and Centre committee members are encouraged to adopt protective practices to maximise their protection from a misconstrued act. The following is only a guide and Centre committee members should initiate protective measures they deem warranted suiting their situation. eg. a Centre conducting competition of a night may feel it necessary to implement more stringent measures or a Centre with an enclosed ground may utilise a gate attendant:

- No athlete in the Under 7 to U10 years be permitted to leave the competition area without a parent/guardian.
- Incorporate a 'buddy' system when athletes require to leave the competition area (eg. go to the toilet).
- One on one coaching activities should be avoided, unless a parent/guardian or other athletes/officials are in the near vicinity.
- Enforce the parent/guardian be present at the ground at all times, emphasising during the registration process the Association policy on child protection and that at no time is Little Athletics a baby-sitting Centre.
- Video viewing in one on one situation is totally banned.
- When conducting camps with both boys and girls participating it is important that adults of both genders accompany the group.
- Encourage, don't pressure.
- Be sensitive to an individual athlete's capacity for physical activity and protect them from any unwarranted pressure to participate.
- Discipline and manage behaviour - do not abuse.
- Don't exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues.
- Do not let children involve you in excessive attention seeking behaviour that is overtly sexual or physical in nature.

13. Improper Adult Conduct of a Sexual Nature

This is misconduct, which does not fit into the definition of “sexual abuse”. It is unwanted, unsolicited and unreciprocated behaviour such as:

- Sexual or smutty jokes.
- Personally offensive verbal comments hand or body gestures.
- Physical contact such as patting, pinching or putting an arm around a child’s body.
- Requests/demands for sexual activity.
- General inappropriate behaviour when children are present.

Note:

- Improper conduct may be unintentional ie. individual may not be aware that behaviour is causing distress.
- Similar distress can be caused by either intentional or unintentional improper conduct.
- If not addressed may escalate to sexual assault.

14. Alleged Improper Conduct

If you suspect improper conduct inform the President of the Tasmanian Little Athletics Association Inc immediately.

15. Media Contact Management

In the event of contact by the media as a result of any incident/activity other than competition/promotion being conducted by a Centre, the media is to be referred to the President of the TLAA.

It needs to be clearly understood that if an adult member of Little Athletics is facing criminal proceedings for inappropriate behaviour and the case has not yet been heard or a judgement made, then opinions of such a person’s character or actions should not be generally discussed. If such person is found to be not guilty by the legal system they could possibly seek damages for defamation.

When there is any doubt whatsoever concerning media contact in any particular situation then do not offer any comment without prior referral to the TLAA President.

Always remember that on the surface what may seem a perfectly positive promotion of Little Athletics can be turned around.

16. Policy Guidelines for TLAA Personnel

Coaching Personnel

All personnel involved in the conduct of Tasmanian Little Athletics Association Inc coaching activities, no matter whether such personnel be permanently employed, part time, casual or volunteers, must supply, at the time of application on the TLAA Standard Coaching Application Form, at least two referees and agree to the conduct of a police search for any convictions, charges laid or current investigations, by signing the TLAA Authorisation Release Form.

Note:

At all times the results of any such security checks will remain confidential.

No persons with any known prior convictions relating to child abuse will be permitted to take part in any Tasmanian Little Athletics Association Inc appointed coaching positions.

Team Management

All personnel involved in Tasmanian Little Athletics Association Inc team management positions, no matter whether such personnel be permanently employed, part time, casual or volunteers, must supply, at the time of application on the TLAA Standard Application Form at least two referees and agree to the conduct of a police search for any convictions, charges laid or current investigations, by signing the TLAA Authorisation Release Form.

Note:

At all times the results of any such security checks will remain confidential.

17. Code of Ethics and Legal Responsibilities of the Coach

The coaches' primary role is to facilitate the process of individual development through achievement of athletic potential. This role accepts the athlete's long term interests as of greater importance than short-term athletic considerations. To fulfil this role the coach must behave in an ethical manner respecting the following points:-

1. I agree to respect the basic human rights, that is the equal rights, of each athlete under my control with no discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, colour, language, religion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, birth or other status.
2. I agree to respect the dignity and recognise the contribution of each individual. I will ensure that the practical environment is safe and appropriate. This appropriateness will take into consideration the age, maturity and skill level of the athlete.
3. I agree to ensure that all equipment used in the activities under my control is safe for the users and that the supervision I provide for these activities within each session is adequate.
4. I agree to plan my sessions adequately and activities within by using appropriate teaching progressions so as to reduce the risk of possible injury.
5. I agree to identify and to evaluate athletes with injuries and incapacities so as the workload and performance expectations are modified accordingly.
6. I agree to warn all athletes under my control of the inherent risks of the sport/individual events with continual reinforcement being ongoing so as each athlete appreciates those risks.
7. I agree to evaluate the skill level and experience of each athlete in my group so as mismatching of athletes can be kept to a minimum.
8. I agree to advise all athletes under my control the rules of the sport/individual events so as the athletes respect these rules and the spirit of the rules as they are intended.
9. I agree to respect the image of the coach and to continuously maintain the highest standards of personal conduct, reflected in both the manner of appearance and behaviour.
10. I agree not to smoke whilst coaching, nor consume alcoholic beverages so soon before coaching that:
11. the smell of alcohol is still on my breath and
12. it affects my competence to coach
13. I agree that my authority to discipline athletes under my control extends only to minor infractions (ie. attentiveness) and that any serious disciplinary breach must be referred by me to the camp management for their attention.
14. I agree to abide by the general rules of the TLAA constitution and by laws so as not to bring the Association into disrepute.

I,.....working as a.....

(print full name)

acknowledge that I have read and understood the contents of the Tasmanian Little Athletics Association Inc. Probity Policy and am willing to fulfil my obligations contained therein.

Signature

Date:/...../.....

Questions or concerns?

Question and concerns relating to this policy can be directed to the Little Athletics Tasmania Office:

Little Athletics Tasmania

PO Box 812

Moonah TAS 7009

Telephone: 1300 888 713

Email: office@taslittleathletics.com.au