



VICTORIA PARK & CONNSWATER

ATHLETICS CLUB (VPCAC)

BASED IN

VICTORIA PARK

Park Avenue, Belfast BT4 1JT

CODES OF CONDUCT

Voted at the Club AGM - Belfast 23rd February 2024

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Every member and anyone undertaking a relevant role within the club must agree to abide by the codes of conduct either when they join a club as part of the club application process, or when they renew their club membership. The VPCAC Codes of Conduct contained herein are based on UK Athletics (UKA) and the Home Country Athletics Federations (HCAF) Codes of Conduct and are applicable to all athletes, coaches and volunteers involved in the club activities.

Some of the rules are specific to VPCAC. However, no VPCAC rules shall not be in contradiction to the UKA guidance.

WHAT ARE THE CODES?

The purpose of a code is to clarify:

- What behaviours are acceptable and unacceptable
- The standards of practice expected
- The basis for challenging and improving practice.

The codes let everyone know what they can expect from the club, coaches and volunteers, but also what standard of behaviour is expected from club members and athletes.

The codes are a tool for continuous improvement and must form part of new member inductions

When a club member does not meet the expectations set out in the codes, disciplinary action may be taken by the club.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SENIOR ATHLETES

As a responsible athlete, I will:

- Abide by the UKA and the HCAF Adult Safeguarding Policy <https://athleticsni.org/download/files/Adult-Safeguarding-Policy.pdf> and Adult Safeguarding Procedures <https://athleticsni.org/download/files/Adult-Safeguarding-Procedures.pdf>
- Respect the rights of every athlete, coach, technical official and others involved in athletics and treat everyone equitably
- Uphold the same sporting values away from sport as I do when I am engaged in athletics
- Participate within the rules of the sport, respect decisions of coaches and officials, and demonstrate respect towards fellow athletes
- Cooperate fully with others involved in the sport such as coaches, technical officials, team managers, doctors, physiotherapists, sport scientists and representatives of the governing body in my best interests and those of other athletes
- Consistently promote positive aspects of the sport and never condone rule violations or the use of prohibited substances

- Anticipate and be responsible for my own needs, including being organised, having the appropriate equipment and being on time
- Inform the club coaches of any other coaching that I am seeking or receiving
- Act with dignity and display courtesy and good manners towards others
- In no way undermine, put down or belittle other athletes, coaches or practitioners
- Avoid swearing and abusive language whilst in athletic venues, at club functions and athletics events, or when as part of a team/squad
- Never engage in any inappropriate or illegal behaviour
- Report to the club committee concerns, inappropriate behaviours or language by others
- Not misuse or abuse sporting equipment and venues
- Not carry or consume alcohol or illegal substances while training or competing in athletics
- Maintain strict boundaries between friendship and intimacy with a coach or official
- Act ethically, professionally and with integrity, and take responsibility for your actions

VPCAC SPECIFIC CODES

- Always respect the decisions and follow the instructions of the officials, the coaches and the volunteers
- Always thank the officials, the coaches and volunteers, including third party club volunteers who enable you to participate in athletics
- Listen carefully to the coaches' briefings and instructions from officials **DO NOT TALK OVER**
- Inform your coach of your specific competition goals
- Inform your coach if you leave the venue before the end of the coaching session (or if you intend to)
- Inform your coach if you are feeling unwell or are suffering from an injury
- Avoid participation to coaching sessions and athletic events if you are ill and your illness is likely to be contagious
- Carry a running torch when participating in coaching sessions or events in poor light conditions
- Club vests must be worn during internal club competitions and competitions paid for by the club. Club vests are strongly encouraged to be worn in all other competitions when representing the club but other vests other than club vests may be worn
 - while undertaking a charity event
 - while representing Northern Ireland, Ireland of Great Britain
 - if registered to a competition under the athlete's name only (and not VPCAC)
 - in other circumstances with the club committee's consent
- Always encourage all other club athletes at training and in competition
- Always show sportsmanship to athletes from other clubs as well as unaffiliated athletes
- Always be courteous to the members of the public whilst in training and in competition and always avoid confrontations
- Complaints must be brought to the attention of the club committee in private
- Members must not engage in political, religious or other controversial debate on the club's social media platforms

- Dogs are not permitted to take part in training sessions and club internal competitions without prior and express consent from the Committee after risk assessment.

BREACH OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

I understand that if I do not follow the codes, disciplinary action will be taken by the club committee and in line with the Constitution.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COACHES

Coaches play a crucial role in the development of athletics and in the lives of the athletes they coach. They have a unique position of trust in athletics and the need for coaches to understand and act on their responsibilities is vital, as is the need to promote participation for fun and enjoyment. The code of conduct for coaches reflects the principles of good coaching practice.

Responsibilities – Professional Standards

To maximise the benefits and minimise the risks to athletes, coaches must attain an appropriate level of competence through qualifications, and a commitment to ongoing training to ensure safe and correct practice.

Responsibilities – Personal Standards

Coaches must demonstrate proper personal behaviour and conduct at all times.

Rights

Coaches must respect and champion the rights of every individual to participate in sport and physical activity.

Relationships

Coaches must develop a positive relationship with their participants (and others) based on openness, honesty, mutual trust and respect.

1. RESPONSIBILITIES – PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

As a responsible athletics coach, I will:

1.1 abide by the terms of my UKA coaching licence

1.2 abide by the UKA and the HCAF Adult Safeguarding Policy and Adult Safeguarding Procedures

1.3 Keep my professional knowledge and skills up to date, be appropriately qualified for the activities I lead, and renew my coach licence as and when required by UKA

1.4 Ensure I have obtained an acceptable criminal record check (Access NI)

1.5 Ensure that activities I direct, or guide, are appropriate for the age, maturity, experience and ability of the individual athlete

- 1.6 Be aware of the current national and international regulations on anti-doping in sport. I will not assist, support or ignore practices, policies or procedures that contravene national or international anti-doping regulations
- 1.7 Never try to recruit, either overtly or covertly, athletes who are already receiving coaching. (If approached by an athlete receiving coaching, refer them immediately to the coach currently providing coaching support)
- 1.8 In circumstances where I need to demonstrate a technique through physical contact, always provide an explanation and seek consent before touching the athlete
- 1.9 Observe the recommended national guidance on coach/athlete ratios
- 1.10 Cooperate fully with others involved in the sport such as technical officials, team managers, other coaches, doctors, physiotherapists, sport scientists and representatives of the governing body in the best interests of the athlete.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES – PERSONAL STANDARDS

As a responsible athletics coach, I will:

- 2.1 Consistently promote positive aspects of the sport (e.g. fair play) and never condone rule violations or adopt or encourage the use of prohibited or age-inappropriate substances or techniques
- 2.2 I understand that I require an up-to-date and recognised qualification in sports massage or another relevant qualification from a recognised body or authority to engage in the massage of an athlete over 18 years
- 2.3 Follow the relevant guidance for coaches on social media use and not post on social media any content which is inappropriate or offensive
- 2.4 Be aware that my attitude and behaviour directly affects the behaviour of athletes under my supervision
- 2.5 Avoid swearing, abusive language and irresponsible or illegal behaviour, including behaviour that is dangerous to me or others, acts of violence, bullying, harassment, and physical and sexual abuse
- 2.6 Avoid destructive behaviour and leave athletics venues as I find them
- 2.7 Not carry or consume alcohol or illegal substances while coaching or attending events directly linked to coaching
- 2.8 Avoid carrying any items that could be dangerous to me or others, excluding athletics equipment used in the course of my athletics activity
- 2.9 Challenge inappropriate behaviour and language by others and report any suspected misconduct by other coaches or other people involved in athletics to the club committee as soon as possible
- 2.10 Act ethically, professionally and with integrity, and take responsibility for your actions.

3. RIGHTS

As a responsible athletics coach, I will:

- 3.1 Provide coaching services without discrimination on grounds of age, gender, sexual, cultural, ethnic, disability or religious preference

- 3.2 Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every athlete and treat everyone equally, regardless of background or ability
- 3.3 Make the athlete's health and welfare my primary and overriding concern
- 3.4 Respect the athlete's right to self-determination when deciding who they are coached by
- 3.5 Respect the right of all athletes to an independent life outside of athletics
- 3.6 Report any accidental injury, distress, misunderstanding or misinterpretation to the Club Committee as soon as possible
- 3.7 Never exert undue influence to obtain personal benefit or reward
- 3.8 In no way undermine, put down or belittle other coaches or practitioners, or allow those behaviours to exist within the athletes and groups that I lead / manage – including those behaviours towards other athletes or groups of athletes.

4. RELATIONSHIPS

As a responsible athletics coach, I will:

- 4.1 At the outset, clarify with athletes exactly what it is that is expected of them and what athletes are entitled to expect from me
- 4.2 Develop healthy and appropriate working relationships with athletes based on mutual trust and respect, especially with adults at risk
- 4.3 Never incite or engage in sexual activity, inappropriate touching or communication (in person or social media or any other form of verbal or non-verbal communication) with an athlete who is an adult at risk coached by me or under my supervision. A violation of this code may result in a coach licence being permanently withdrawn
- 4.5 Not use my position as a licensed coach to incite or engage in sexual activity, inappropriate touching or communication (in person or social media or any other form of verbal or non-verbal communication) with athletes I coach. In certain circumstances a violation of this code may result in a coach licence being permanently withdrawn

BREACH OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

I understand that if I do not follow the code, I may be in breach of the terms and conditions of my UKA licence and could be subject to disciplinary action and sanction by my club, Home Country Athletics Federation and/or UKA and that as a consequence of such disciplinary action the following sanctions may be imposed by the club committee:

- Receive a verbal warning
- Receive a written warning
- Be monitored by another coach
- Be required to attend supplementary training
- Be referred by the club committee to ANI/HCAF/UKA
- Be required to leave or be dismissed by the club committee
- Be referred to AccessNI.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are the lifeblood of athletics and they play a crucial role in clubs and at events. Some volunteers will be more involved in a club or event than others and responsibilities will vary, but regardless of the role, there is a need for all volunteers to recognise and understand that there are shared standards of behaviour to which they must comply, and which are in place to protect all participants and promote participation for fun and enjoyment.

As a responsible volunteer, I will:

- Abide by the UKA and the HCAF Child Safeguarding Policy <https://athleticsni.org/download/files/child-safeguarding-policy-2023.pdf> and Child Safeguarding Procedures <https://athleticsni.org/download/files/child-safeguarding-process-map-2023.pdf>
- Abide by the UKA and the HCAF Adult Safeguarding Policy <https://athleticsni.org/download/files/Adult-Safeguarding-Policy.pdf> and Adult Safeguarding Procedures <https://athleticsni.org/download/files/Adult-Safeguarding-Procedures.pdf>
- Ensure that where my role requires, I have obtained an acceptable criminal record check (Access NI)
- Ensure that activities I arrange or support are appropriate for the age, maturity, experience and ability of the individuals involved
- Cooperate fully with others involved in the sport such as coaches, technical officials, team managers and representatives of the governing body
- In no way undermine, put down or belittle other officials, athletes, coaches or practitioners
- Consistently promote positive aspects of the sport (e.g. fair play) and never condone rule violations or adopt or encourage the use of prohibited or age-inappropriate substances or techniques
- Never engage in the massage of an athlete under the age of 18 years. I understand that I require an up-to-date and recognised qualification in sports massage or another relevant qualification from a recognised body or authority to engage in the massage of an athlete over 18 years
- Follow the relevant guidance on social media use and not post on social media any content which is inappropriate or offensive
- Avoid swearing, abusive language and irresponsible or illegal behaviour, including behaviour that is dangerous to me or others, acts of violence, bullying, harassment and physical and sexual abuse
- Avoid destructive behaviour and leave athletics venues as I find them
- Not carry or consume alcohol or illegal substances while volunteering in athletics
- Avoid carrying any items that could be dangerous to me or others, excluding athletics equipment used in the course of my athletics activity
- Challenge inappropriate behaviour and language by others and report any suspected misconduct by other coaches or other people involved in athletics to the club committee as soon as possible
- Volunteer my time without discrimination on grounds of age, gender, sexual, cultural, ethnic, disability or religious preference
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person and treat everyone equally, regardless of background or ability

- Report any accidental injury, distress, misunderstanding or misinterpretation to the relevant authority as soon as possible
- Never exert undue influence to obtain personal benefit or reward
- Develop healthy and appropriate working relationships with athletes and other volunteers based on mutual trust and respect, especially with anyone under 18 years or who are adults at risk
- Never incite or engage in sexual activity, inappropriate touching or communication (in person or social media or any other form of verbal or non-verbal communication) with anyone under 18 years of age
- Never incite or engage in sexual activity, inappropriate touching or communication (in person or social media or any other form of verbal or non-verbal communication) with an athlete who is an adult at risk
- Not use my position as a volunteer to incite or engage in sexual activity, inappropriate touching or communication (in person or social media or any other form of verbal or non-verbal communication) with athletes who are aged over 18 years
- Avoid spending time alone with young athletes (under 18) unless clearly in the view of other adults
- Never take young athletes (under 18) alone in my vehicle
- Never invite a young athlete (under 18) alone into my home
- Never share a bedroom with a young athlete (under 18).

BREACH OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

I understand that if I do not follow the codes, disciplinary action will be taken by the club committee and in line with the Constitution.