



Policy Statement

Special Olympics New Zealand (SONZ) is committed to safe sport opportunities for all Athletes. Athletes have the right to participate in sport and recreation that is safe and be protected from harm. SONZ recognises that all Athletes, regardless of age can be vulnerable, whether child (under 18 years) or adult (over 18 years). We recognise our responsibility to promote safe practices and to protect all our members from possible harm and exploitation while engaging with SONZ and/or participating in our activities.

1. All Athletes should feel they are respected, valued, and encouraged to enjoy their participation and reach their potential
2. SONZ has a duty of care when it comes to all Athletes and takes steps to ensure they can participate safely in activities provided

It is important for SONZ to provide measures around safeguarding as some athletes with disabilities need specific focus around their welfare.

SONZ recognise that there are some sports, especially contact sports, that have an inherent risk of possible harm by participating in that sport. These risks might be acceptable if appropriate to the sport context and athlete involved. However, appropriate risks will be identified, understood, and addressed by specific risk management plans ensuring all risks are controlled as much as possible.

Sadly, Aotearoa holds particularly high levels of abuse and we know those with additional needs are at an increased vulnerability of suffering from abuse. In sporting communities, we also know there has been evidence of some Athletes experiencing inappropriate harm and/or exploitation through their experiences of sport and recreation.

Harm and exploitation can take many forms (e.g. bullying, put-downs, inappropriate cultural practices, and other harmful practices) but all these forms fall under 4 main categories of abuse (Physical, Emotional, Sexual and Neglect). Adults at risk may also be vulnerable to or suffer from other forms and categories of abuse (e.g. financial abuse). This policy offers further guidance to help recognise categories of abuse and possible indicators of abuse, so should a person present with a vulnerability concern and/or a concern within SONZ be identified, the appropriate support offered.

For the context of this document all Athletes, regardless of age or development level are considered vulnerable.

Safeguarding in all Special Olympics New Zealand activity is based around providing an enjoyable environment that meets the needs and requirements of all children and adults. Those acting on SONZ's behalf are in a Position of Trust and influence. It is essential this trust is maintained, SONZ takes any breaches of this trust seriously. Our expected practice is for everyone to be treated with respect, integrity and for athletes to be engaged within a supportive and progressive environment.

Staff and volunteers will work together to embrace inclusivity, difference, and diversity, respecting the rights of all athletes. Including their right to be safe and it is SONZ role to protect athletes with disabilities and others who may be particularly vulnerable.

Policy Principles:

- The welfare of all Athletes is SONZ's primary concern.
- Our practice is child and adult at risk centred and focused.



- All Athletes have the right to protection from all forms of harm, abuse and exploitation.
- The safeguarding and protection of children and adults at risk is a shared SONZ responsibility.
- We take our responsibility to ensure SONZ workforce personnel can operate within and promote safe practice seriously.
- SONZ will work in partnership with Children and Vulnerable Adults and parents/caregivers to promote welfare, health and development of Children and Vulnerable Adults.

Aims and Objectives of this Policy is:

Aim:

The aim of this policy is to support all personnel in being able to recognise, respond to, report and record any child and/or adult safeguarding concern, including any that may relate to SONZ workforce personnel.

Objectives:

- Ensure a safe environment is provided for all athletes;
- Install best practice in safeguarding and protecting all athletes from harm and reducing risks;
- Ensure appropriate procedures are in place for those who encounter issues; and
- Work in partnership with workforce personnel, all athletes, parents/caregivers and partner agencies to support the promotion of welfare, health and development of all;
- Demonstrate Safer Recruitment best practice including risk assessment and police vetting processes;
- Provide workforce personnel with training and support ensuring they have the knowledge and skills to reflect best practice in identifying and responding to suspected vulnerability, abuse or neglect;
- Ensure safeguarding incident processes support
- response to suspicion, disclosure or allegations of misconduct or harm to all athletes in line with this policy and these procedures, as well as implementing, where appropriate, the relevant investigation, disciplinary and appeals procedure.

Scope

The content of this policy applies to all SONZ representatives (those representing SONZ or acting on SONZ's behalf, or who those may be perceived by Athletes to be doing so). Whilst not exclusive, examples include:

- Employees
- Volunteers
- Contractors and consultants
- Coaches
- Team Managers
- Interns and students on work experience
- Board Members
- Trustees



SONZ Procedures and Practices

Our Protocols

Appendix 1 details the protocols expected to ensure everything possible is done to provide a safe environment for all athletes engaging in SONZ related activity. These protocols advocate good practice, with their purpose being to reduce the likelihood of harm, as well as promote staff safety by aiming to alleviate the risk of possible staff concerns and/or allegations being raised.

SONZ Recruitment

The SONZ recruitment process for all staff and volunteers is a priority, with screening for all staff and volunteers required if involved with organisational activity.

The process includes:

- A role description is in place for each role
- Interviews take place for all SONZ staff, volunteers are discretionary
- Reference checks are undertaken for staff, volunteers are discretionary
- Roles across SONZ are covered by the Children's Act 2014 will be police vetted upon appointment and refreshed every 3 years with all checks incorporating identity verification.

All workforce personnel operating to this policy's expectations will be provided with a copy of or access to this policy. They are required to read their copy and will be asked to sign a SONZ Safeguarding Commitment Statement. This Commitment Statement will confirm their understanding of and commitment to abiding by all SONZ's safeguarding requirements and guidelines. As part of staff meetings and training sessions, references to this policy and any other applicable safeguarding guidelines will be made regularly, ensuring staff remain familiar SONZ's safeguarding expectations.

Safeguarding Lead

SONZ will appoint two Safeguarding Leads (SLs). Safeguarding remains a shared SONZ responsibility and SONZ will collectively support our Safeguarding Leads with their role responsibilities. However, the role of the SLs will include:

- Ensuring appropriate safeguarding information is available, understood and adhered to by all SONZ representatives;
- When appropriate, enable the provision of safeguarding learning and development within SONZ (e.g. Induction, workforce training, etc.), whether this is provided internally or via appropriate external bodies;
- Reporting to Senior Management Team (SMT) and Board on SONZ's safeguarding undertakings and development needs as appropriate;
- Being available for safeguarding advice and guidance, acting as a source of support;
- To act as the main contact for all workforce personnel and Athletes who may have a safeguarding concern or who may have received a safeguarding disclosure;
- To make sure SONZ's safeguarding expectations and practice is consistently applied, particularly in all situations where there is concern for athletes;
- To promote the importance of safeguarding within sport and the role of the SL across any partner organisations;
- To be appropriately skilled and if required upskilled on developments around safeguarding;



- To make sure SONZ have a relationship with appropriate agencies as required including those providing specialist safeguarding and/or protection support e.g. Oranga Tamariki, Police, etc.;
- Maintain confidential records of any reported cases and subsequent actions taken;
- Ensure all SONZ safeguarding policies and procedures are reviewed annually or earlier if required (e.g. legislation changes, learnings from SONZ experiences, etc.).

Expectations of SONZ staff and volunteers

- Complete SONZ's Safeguarding Commitment Statement confirming they have the necessary knowledge to implement this policy and any other associated safeguarding procedures;
- Attend training or read documentation deemed appropriate;
- Follow the policies and procedures when any vulnerability, abuse or neglect is suspected or disclosed, or if a concern or an allegation is made towards a staff member;
- When a new programme or initiative starts, all those operating on SONZ's behalf (staff, volunteers, contractors and third parties) are to be directed to SONZ's safeguarding policies and procedures and implement expectations as required.

Training

It is important that staff and volunteers are working safely and effectively with all athletes. SONZ will:

- Provide training or guidance to introduce the procedures within this policy and safeguarding training applicable to roles and responsibilities, whether via SONZ or external partners;
- All SONZ staff and volunteers receive guidance on SONZ's expectations surrounding acceptable and unacceptable conduct. Staff's commitment to these expectations is reflected within their Safeguarding Commitment Form.

Allegations made against staff, volunteers, and coaches

Safeguarding suspicions, complaints, concerns and/or allegations against SONZ workforce personnel and/or those operating on our behalf must be taken seriously. Staff are not to judge the validity of any concern raised; they are to report all concerns to the Safeguarding Lead. The Safeguarding Lead is responsible for responding to all concerns raised. They will aim to do so as soon as possible and where this is not possible, within a maximum of 48 hours from the concern/allegation being received. All responses will be managed sensitively and within the reporting procedures detailed within this policy.

If the case has been referred to Police and they are undertaking an investigation, any SONZ investigation is subject to Police direction and approval, breaches of this may prejudice any criminal investigation being undertaken.

Each concern is assessed against its own merits, as all hold different levels of concerns, strengths and risk factors. However, for all concerns relating to SONZ personnel, for the protection of all involved (child/adult, SONZ personnel and SONZ), SONZ may be required to implement some immediate safeguards, for an identified timeframe or until the matter is resolved. If applicable, these measures are taken without prejudice, as purely as precautionary measure for all involved (e.g. helping to protect the child/adult, other children/adults and the SONZ personnel member from any further concerns/allegations). Immediate safeguards may include:

- Additional supervision of the staff member concerned.
- Redeploying the staff member concerned to alternative non-child related duties.



- Standing the accused staff member down.

Disclosure Procedure

Whether abuse or neglect is suspected or disclosed, or any concerns or allegations are made against SONZ personnel or others associated with SONZ, the welfare and interests of the person at risk remains the paramount consideration.

SONZ staff are not to investigate matters or make any decisions alone. SONZ requires the procedures within this policy to be followed.

However, any SONZ personnel can contact Oranga Tamariki (Ministry for Children) or the Police for advice at any time if they feel SONZ procedures are being ineffective or there are ongoing concerns for all athletes. Sport NZ can also be consulted. At SONZ we understand that the appropriate method for reporting may depend on specific circumstances. We do request any person taking this action informs SONZ so we can ensure all responses are in collaboration with Oranga Tamariki and/or the Police.



What to do if you are worried about a child/adult

You must:

1. Stay calm
2. Make sure the person (and any other persons) is safe from any immediate harm
3. Always listen to, believe, and reassure the child/adult
4. Try to encourage the person to keep talking but keep any questions to a minimum
5. Use open ended prompts – e.g. Tell me about that, explain what you mean by, describe how you are feeling.
6. Record what you have heard/observed ASAP. Using the Safeguarding Incident Form (Appendix 3), Alternatively make a note of key information e.g. when, where, what was said (trying to use exact words where possible), who was present, so you can use this information when completing your Safeguard Incident Form.
7. Record word for word anything the child/adult has stated plus anything you have said
8. Let the person know what will happen next



IF THE CHILD IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER:

- Contact the Police immediately on **111**
- Follow police advice
- Contact Safeguarding Lead – David Hibberd on 027 299 4734 Gary Peacham on 021 274 6975.
- Record actions taken on the Safeguarding Incident Report Form (Appendix 3)
- Safeguarding Lead and staff member will work together to follow procedures
- Safeguarding Lead will contact Oranga Tamariki (OT) on 0508 326 459.
- Safeguarding Lead with the Police and OT will decide when and who will inform parents/ whanau/caregivers.
- Safeguarding Lead will monitor and review.

NO IMMEDIATE DANGER BUT CONCERNS ARE SIGNIFICANT

- Safeguarding Lead – David Hibberd on 027 299 4734 or Gary Peacham on 021 274 6975.
- Safeguarding Lead and any applicable staff member 's will work together to record actions on the Safeguarding Incident Form (Appendix 3)
- Safeguarding Lead will determine which specialist services support is required (e.g. Police, Oranga Tamariki (OT), CCS) and take forward the referral.
- The Safeguarding Lead will work with the specialist service to confirm when and who will inform any involved parties e.g. parents/caregiver, applicable adult support person, etc. Where concerns hold no known or possible risk in involved parties being informed prior to a referral being made, this action will be taken by the Safeguarding Lead.
- Safeguarding Lead will retain a copy of all information including the Safeguarding Incident Form in a secure and confidential location
- Safeguarding Lead will follow up all referrals if no response has been received within 3 working days or less depending on the urgency of the concern.





CONCERNS INDICATE VULNERABILITY

- Safeguarding Lead – David Hibberd on 027 299 4734 or Gary Peacham on 021 274 6975.
- SL and any applicable staff member 's will work together to record actions on the Safeguarding Incident Form (Appendix 3)
- Safeguarding Lead will determine whether advice/guidance from a specialist services if required. If yes, the Safeguarding Lead will take this forward.
- If needs remain at vulnerability levels, the Safeguarding Lead will determine whether responses can be met within SONZ or if working together with other services may offer more assistance. If so, the Safeguarding Lead will take forward any referrals subject to parental and/or the adult's consent.
- The Safeguarding Lead will work with appropriate staff and the person or their family to identify support options available, including those that can be offered by SONZ.
- Safeguarding Lead will retain a copy of all information including the Safeguarding Incident Form in a secure and confidential location
- Safeguarding Lead will follow up all referrals if no response has been received within 3 working days or less depending on the urgency of the concern.
- If concerns remain or begin to escalate, the Safeguarding Lead will re-evaluate the case risks and either re-refer or escalate the referral to specialist.

CONCERNS ARE LOW LEVEL BUT HOLD POTENTIAL FOR VULNERABILITY

- If no referrals are required, the Safeguarding Lead and appropriate staff will closely monitor the situation for an agreed time frame.
- If no further action, all case data will reflect a record of the initial concern being raised so should any further concerns be raised they are not managed in isolation to the initial concern.

MONITOR AND REVIEW

1. Safeguarding Lead and appropriate staff members will monitor and review ongoing concern(s) on a weekly basis.
2. Consider whether any further actions or referrals required.
3. Records of all actions, reviews and/or further referrals will be retained by the Safeguarding Lead.
4. If no further concerns, the record should be archived in a confidential location.
5. If a matter is under review and the person ceases to be involved in any SONZ programmes, the Safeguarding Lead must ensure that any relevant information is passed on to specialist services where appropriate.



Confidentially and sharing of Information

SONZ are committed to the sharing of information as appropriate, so if there is concern about an athlete, SONZ will seek advice from Oranga Tamariki (OT) and/or the Police before information around an allegation is shared with anyone, other than the SPO or designated senior manager.

Alongside seeking advice from Oranga Tamariki and the Police, legal advice and SONZ will refer to the Privacy Commission guidelines on sharing information about vulnerable children and adults, so we are supported on when to share information and talk to parents, whanau and caregivers.

The SPO has responsibility for making sure that any information is stored secured, and if online within a restricted access area. The SPO is responsible for the secure and confidential sharing of relevant information if required to do so.

The Privacy Act (1993) and the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989 (Children and Young People's Wellbeing Act (1989)), staff can disclose information when there is good reason to do so. Also under sections 15 and 16 of the Children and Young People's Wellbeing Act (1989), any person that has concern that a child has been or could be harmed can report the matter to Oranga Tamariki or the Police, and if the report being made is in good faith, no civil, criminal or disciplinary procedures will; be brought against them.

On collecting personal information about an individual, it is key that information is collected from the individual concerned. When doing this it is important, we are transparent on why the information is being collected and how it will be used, who has access to the information, how and where it is stored and that people have access to their information and correction of information.



APPENDIX 1: SONZ Safeguarding Protocols

SONZ approach in which all athletes are treated appropriately with fairness, equally and dignity in all we do. So, we must ensure:
Activities should be appropriate for the age or development of the athletes
Positive and appropriate language is used when addressing athletes in their presence
We must create safe spaces that reduces and risk to all staff and volunteers:
Always use common sense
If required ensure athletes use appropriate safety equipment, plus ensure equipment and facilities comply with safety regulations
Make sure photography/filming of athlete is appropriate and within applicable consent requirements.
Make sure start/finish times of sessions are communicated to parents/caregivers and are stuck to, this will ensure athletes are not left unsupervised
Make sure athletes are handed over to their parent/caregiver or authorised person at the end of sessions
Except in an emergency, ensure that parental/caregiver authorisation is provided before giving first aid
Never use alcohol, cigarettes (and e-cigarettes) in the presence of a athletes
Do not engage in communication with athletes, on a one-on-one basis on social media
Make sure all physical contact with an athlete is relevant and appropriate to the activity
Never engage in any intimate or over-familiar sexual relationships with athletes
Never engage in any form of bullying
Never allow parents/caregivers, other athletes or supporters to engage in any type of bullying. This includes touchline, face to face or cyber, physical and verbal bullying
Always avoid private or unobserved situations such as being in a changing room alone with an athlete
Avoid entering a changing room alone with athletes, if you must enter have at least one other adult with you
Avoid driving unaccompanied with athletes
Do not invite an athlete into your home without their parent/caregiver
You must always have another adult present when staying overnight with athletes
Never share a room with an athlete in the absence of their caregiver/parent

APPENDIX 2: Best practice when handling a disclosure

DO	DO NOT
Believe the person and take what is said seriously	Say anything critical
Be available to talk to	Jump to conclusions
Listen	Investigate any suspicions and concerns raised, including probing, or questioning for more information
Provide reassurance and tell them they are right to provide the information	Do not promise to keep anything secret
Let them know you try to provide help and that you might have to let other people know this information	Do not stop them speaking, let them speak freely, just listen
Consult with your SL or appropriate line manager	Let anyone who is potentially involved in any abuse/suspicion know the athlete has said something to you
Take an accurate record as soon as possible on the Safeguarding Incident Reporting form (see form in appendix 3)	



APPENDIX 3: Safeguarding Incident Form

This is a SONZ document to be filled in before contacting Oranga Tamariki – Ministry for Children / police or other agency and is to be securely stored by the Safeguarding Protection Officer	
Safeguarding Protection Officer (SL) Name:	Contact Details for Safeguarding Lead:
Name and role of person raising concern:	Contact Details of Person raising concern: Name: Email: Phone
Name of Child/ren or Adult:	Child/ren or Adult D.O.B:
Parents /Carers name(s):	Contact details of Parent/Carers: Name Email Phone
Date and time of incident:	
Location of Incident:	
<p>Details of the incident or concerns: <i>Record factual details of the incident or concern only – what was said word for word, description of what was seen, any injuries, etc</i></p>	



Has the incident been reported to any external agencies (Oranga Tamariki, Police or third party)?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes		
<input type="checkbox"/> No		
If YES, please provide further details:		
Name of organisation / agency:		
Contact person:		
Email:		
Phone:		
Agreed action or advice given:		
Safeguarding Lead Name:	Safeguarding Lead Signature:	Date:



Appendix 4: Definitions of Abuse

Athletes can be exposed to various types of abuse. These could physical, sexual, emotional or neglect, all of which should be treated seriously.

Physical abuse is a non-accidental incident on Athletes that result in physical harm. Included are some of the following:

- Burning
- Using something to strike or intimidate
- Biting
- Beating hitting or shaking
- Strangulation
- Violence

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effect on the Athletes emotional development. The types of emotional abuse include:

- Humiliation
- Continual criticism
- Threatening behaviour
- Rejection or isolation
- Inappropriate expectations

Sexual abuse is any act that results in the sexual exploitation of a child or vulnerable adult. Consensual or not sexual abuse does not always involve physical force or touching. It could involve the showing of explicit material, sending inappropriate social media messages. Some the signs to look for include:

- Age and/or developmental level inappropriate sexual play or interest
- The fear and reluctance to spend time with a certain person or in a certain place
- Reluctant to shower or change with others
- Sexually explicit descriptions

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet basic physical and/or psychological needs, causing long term serious harm to the Athletes development. Neglect consists of:

- Educational neglect
- Emotional neglect
- Medical neglect
- Physical neglect
- Lack of appropriate supervision
- Abandonment

What if there is suspicion of abuse? Disclosure about suspicion might be disclosed by an Athlete through verbal, behaviour, artwork and relationship with others. It's important when dealing with disclosure that following is carried out:

- Be patient, keep a low voice and stay calm



- Do not over question, no leading questions. (see earlier points)
- If there is silence during conversation, do not be too quick to fill the silences
- Inform that you are there to help, thank the child for telling you
- Never promise confidentiality
- Don't panic

Reviewing of policies and procedures

SONZ will review this policy and procedures on an annual basis. Alternatively, this will occur:

- Annually and within required expectations of up to 3 years from its initial implementation date.
- In accordance with legislation change and any update on guidance around the protection of children;
- Following on with any issues or concerns raised about the SONZ policies and procedures;
- Following any significant safeguarding learnings.

When adopted by the SONZ board, an annual review will be undertaken by the SPOs, Athlete Welfare Working Group and ratified by the SONZ Board

Latest date amended	Next review date	Date reviewed by SPOs/SONZ Board	Date ratified by the SONZ Board
August 2020			

Further Information

The content of this document has been developed from a variety of resources. Additional information and resources are available from:

Sport New Zealand: www.sportnz.org.nz – (Safe Sport for Children guidelines)
Oranga Tamariki (Ministry for Children) – www.orangatamariki.govt.nz – 0508 326 459

Special Olympics New Zealand will continue to update and improve the resources we provide, if you have any questions or suggestions please contact us at rsdirector@specialolympics.org.nz

Thanks goes to Sport New Zealand and Holistic Safeguarding in supporting Special Olympics New Zealand with this policy and our on-going working in further developing our safeguarding protocols.