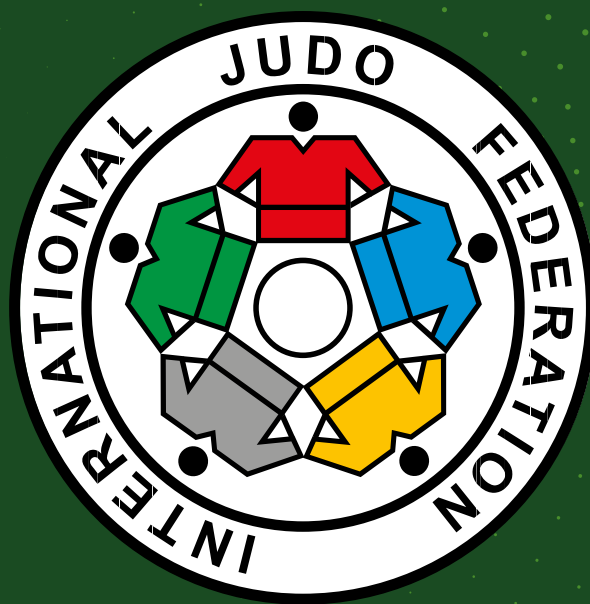


INTERNATIONAL JUDO FEDERATION



IJF SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Protecting Participants in Judo from Harassment and Abuse

Original version in English
Version 26 August 2026



IJF SAFEGUARDING POLICY

IJF Safeguarding policy

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***The IJF reserves the right to review and amend this Policy at any time at its sole discretion. Any change will be communicated prior to the date of effect.**



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Preamble

At the end of the 19th century Jigoro Kano developed a new school of jujutsu, that he called “judo”, different from the other martial arts Japanese school “ryu” by its aims. Like the other schools, judo cultivated maximal efficiency, but the goal was not the same. Judo for “the improvement of man and society” is a method of physical, intellectual and moral education, by the practice of a martial art.

Today, judo is practised all over the world by several million people and the International Judo Federation (IJF) is recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

1. Introduction

The IJF is a non-profit organisation founded for an unlimited period and governed by Hungarian law.

The IJF believes that it is a fundamental right of all athletes, staff and volunteers to be able to participate and develop in a non-violent, safe and respectful environment, free from all forms of discrimination, violence, neglect and exploitation.

All forms of harassment and abuse, especially against participants with vulnerabilities, such as minors, para-athletes and ethnic minorities, constitute a violation of the IJF Code of Ethics and the IOC Code of Ethics. This commitment is reinforced by:

- (i) Principle 3.10 of the IOC Basic Universal Principles of Good Governance (updated 2024), which states that a zero-tolerance approach to safeguarding breaches shall be adopted at all levels of sports organisations.
- (ii) Right 7 of the IOC Athletes’ Rights and Responsibilities Declaration, recognising the right of every athlete to participate in a sport free from harassment and abuse.

The IJF acknowledges its duty of care in this regard and is committed to creating and supporting an environment, and a culture, free from harassment and abuse. The welfare of all individuals involved with the IJF is paramount and behaviour and actions that constitute harassment and abuse will not be tolerated.

The IJF has adopted this policy to promote good practice, to provide athletes and participants of all ages with appropriate safety and protection whilst involved in judo activities, and to allow staff and volunteers to make informed decisions about specific safeguarding issues.

2. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the commitment of IJF to safeguarding. The goal of the IJF in the field of violence, harassment and abuse is to:

- Raise awareness on prevention of harassment, abuse and violence among all IJF bodies and populations.
- Raise awareness, clarify, educate all populations on what is considered to be harassment, abuse and violence.
- Provide information on the alert process and the management of cases of harassment, abuse and violence.
- Establish and sustain a safe sport environment for all those involved in the field of judo, applying an athlete-centred and whole-of-system approach that addresses individual, interpersonal, organisational and societal determinants of interpersonal violence, consistent with the IOC Consensus Statement 2024.
- Involve athletes as active contributors in the development, review and monitoring of safeguarding policies and procedures.

3. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all those involved in the IJF and its affiliated structures, in all settings - including physical competition venues, training camps, team travel, accommodation, and all digital and online environments (including social media, messaging platforms and any other digital communication tools). It covers:

- Athletes.
- Coaches, medicals, staff and entourage of judoka.
- Technical staff, such as referees, organisers, technicians, volunteers.
- The managers and sport professionals from world level to local level (clubs, associations or individual structures of judoka).
- All accredited persons or stakeholders in the events of all structures in connection with the IJF (training, organisation, etc.).



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4. Definitions

The IJF has adopted the definitions of harassment and abuse based on the IOC Consensus Statement on Interpersonal Violence and Safeguarding in Sport (2024).

Harassment and abuse can be expressed in below forms which may occur in combination or in isolation. These include:

- Psychological abuse.
- Emotional abuse.
- Physical abuse.
- Sexual harassment.
- Sexual abuse.
- Neglect.
- Hazing.
- Online and digital harassment.

These forms of abuse are defined here as:

- a) **Psychological abuse** - a pattern of deliberate, prolonged, repeated non-contact behaviours that target a person's inner life in all its profound scope, including confinement, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation, infantilisation, or any other treatment which may diminish the sense of identity, dignity, and self-worth of a participant.
- b) **Emotional abuse** - any conduct that harms a participant's emotional state or emotional development, including persistent emotional unavailability, unpredictable responses, failure to recognise an individual's individuality or boundaries between the participant and the person with a duty of care, conditional regard, developmentally inappropriate expectations, or persistent and deliberate inducement of fear or shame. Emotional abuse often co-occurs with psychological abuse and may be a precursor to or consequence of other forms of abuse and harassment.
- c) **Physical abuse** - means any deliberate and unwelcome act - such as punching, slapping, beating, kicking, biting and burning - that causes physical trauma or injury. Such an act can also consist of forced or inappropriate physical activity (e.g., age-, or physique - inappropriate training loads; when injured or in pain), forced alcohol consumption, or forced doping practices.
- d) **Sexual harassment** - any unwanted and unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal, non-verbal or physical. Sexual harassment can take the form of sexual abuse.
- e) **Sexual abuse** - any conduct of a sexual nature, whether non-contact, contact or penetrative, where consent is coerced/ manipulated or is not or cannot be given.
- f) **Neglect** - within the meaning of this document means the failure of a coach or another person with a duty of care towards the participant to provide a minimum level of care to the participant, which is causing harm, allowing harm to be caused or creating an imminent danger of harm.
- g) **Hazing** - an organised, usually team-based, form of bullying in sport, involving degrading and hazardous initiation of new team members by veteran team members.
- h) **Online and digital harassment** - any form of harassment or abuse carried out through digital channels including social media, messaging applications, email, online forums or any other electronic communication platform. This includes cyberbullying, non-consensual sharing of intimate images, online grooming and identity-based online abuse. The principles applicable to in-person harassment and abuse apply equally to online conduct.

Harassment and abuse can be based on any grounds including, but not limited to race, religion, colour, creed, ethnic origin, physical attributes, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, socio-economic status and athletic ability. It may occur in person or through any digital or online medium, and the online dimension may aggravate severity given its potential for wide dissemination, permanence and the particular psychological impact of public online targeting.



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Harassment and abuse might result from an abuse of authority, meaning the improper use of a position of influence, power or authority by an individual against another natural person.

The IOC Consensus Statements 2008/2016, consider that “harassment and abuse are on a continuum and, therefore, should not be separated”.

Harassment and abuse can include a one-off incident or a series of incidents. All ages and types of participants are susceptible to the various forms of harassment and abuse with elite, disabled, children and LGBTQIA+ participants being at the highest risk.

5. Impact on Individuals

The impact of the various forms of harassment and abuse on an individual may include:

- Physical e.g., illnesses and injuries, loss of performance, eating disorders, sexually transmitted infections, post-traumatic stress disorder.
- Emotional e.g., volatile mood states.
- Behavioural e.g., drop out of the sport/competition, potential for cheating.
- Mental health/cognitive e.g., anxiety, depression, self-harm, suicidal ideation, post-traumatic stress disorder, low self-esteem, burnout and disordered eating (consistent with the IOC Consensus Statement on Mental Health in Elite Athletes (2019), which recognises interpersonal violence as a significant precipitant of mental health decline in athletes).
- Effect on relationships e.g., belittling, social exclusion.
- Organisational/reputational: loss of athlete trust and participation, reputational harm to federations and judo more broadly, legal and financial liability, and erosion of governance credibility.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 The responsibilities of the IJF

- Implementing this policy and appointing a Safeguarding Officer(s), hereafter: SGO.
- Raising awareness of this policy and the procedure for reporting an incident of harassment and/or abuse across all participants of IJF activities.
- Ensuring that reports of harassment and/or abuse that are brought to its attention are managed in a timely, fair and responsible manner.
- Providing appropriate support to concerned participants of an alleged incident of harassment or abuse.
- Providing reassurance to those who are concerned about a possible alleged incident that personal information will not be disclosed, except, for example, if the concerned person gives their prior consent.
- Imposing appropriate disciplinary or corrective measures when there has been a violation of this policy.
- Ensuring that there is a safeguarding plan and reporting procedure in place at all IJF managed events underlining the commitment of the IJF to ensure that participants know that their safety and welfare are of paramount importance.
- Providing and raising awareness of suitable educational resources and training opportunities for participants.
- Updating the policy and related procedures when appropriate.
- Appointing qualified and internationally certified Mental Health Officer(s).

6.2 The responsibilities of the IJF member national federations

- Defining and implementing their own policies and procedures to protect their athletes, staff and volunteers from harassment and abuse, adapted to their own national legal framework and consistent with the IJF Policy. It is recommended to use the IOC Safeguarding Toolkit referenced in Article 8 of this Policy when developing local national policies and procedures.
- Designating qualified SGO(s) at national level, ensuring this person has received appropriate training, and publishing their contact details to all affiliated clubs and athletes.
- Managing reports of alleged incidents of harassment and abuse relating to persons that are members of their national federation, through their regional bodies or clubs, including athletes, staff and volunteers (subject to Article 7.3 for cross-border cases).
- Ensuring all participants representing their federation in an IJF activity, are aware of and understand the IJF Policy on Safeguarding Participants in Judo from Harassment and Abuse.
- Advising the IJF of any formal disciplinary sanctions relating to harassment and abuse imposed by the member federation, and of any suspensions where the individual may present a risk to IJF participants at that time or in the future.



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6.3 The responsibilities of Individuals

- Taking action to safeguard others against harassment and abuse in judo and for taking immediate action once it has been identified regardless of whether a complaint has been made.
- Reporting their concerns to the IJF SGO(s) or appropriate Designated Person where they have reason to believe that another participant has experienced or is experiencing harassment and/or abuse. Information should be shared on a strict 'needs to know' basis only. The person making a report should keep a confidential note of the information they have passed on and to whom.
- Advising IJF of any formal disciplinary sanctions relating to harassment and abuse that they have received.

All those involved in IJF activities have a responsibility to learn how to recognise and respond to signs of harassment and abuse as well as reporting and acting on any concerns.

7. Reports, Investigation and Disciplinary Procedures

7.1 Reporting Procedure

Any person who has reasonable grounds to believe that Harassment or Abuse has occurred, is occurring, or presents a risk of occurring in connection with an IJF activity, as defined in Article 3 of this Policy, may submit a report in accordance with this Article. Reports may be made by the individual directly affected, by a witness, or by any other person acting in good faith who has become aware of information giving rise to a safeguarding concern.

Reports should be submitted through one of the reporting channels set out below. The availability of these reporting channels does not prevent any person from reporting concerns directly to the competent public authorities where required or permitted by applicable law.

The IJF SGO shall be responsible for the receipt, registration, initial safeguarding assessment, management and coordination of all reports submitted under this Policy. In performing these functions, the SGO shall act independently and impartially in accordance with this Policy and shall ensure that all reports are handled promptly, confidentially and in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness.

When to report:

All possible incidents of Harassment or Abuse should be reported as soon as possible.

- If the directly affected individual is a Child within the meaning of this Policy, there is a duty to report.
- If the directly affected individual is not a Child within the meaning of this Policy, their consent should be obtained to pass on information. However, in some cases information may still be passed on, for example, if they are at risk of imminent harm, if not acting may harm someone else, or if there is a concern that a criminal act may have taken place.

How to submit a report:

Reports can be submitted to the IJF as follows:

- Via the dedicated online reporting platform: <https://reportabuse.judobase.org/form>
- By email: safejudo@ijf.org
- In person to the SGO(s) or a Designated Person.
- Individuals may also contact the relevant Continental Union SGO(s) for guidance on the reporting process. All formal reports shall be directed to the IJF SGO(s).

What will happen once the incident has been reported:

- All reports are received by the IJF SGO(s).
- The SGO(s) shall take steps to ensure that the directly affected individual receives appropriate support.
- Where the report concerns a person affiliated to a continental union, the IJF SGO(s) shall notify the relevant continental union SGO(s) without delay.
- Where appropriate and in the case of potential criminal offences, the relevant public authorities shall be informed.
- Where applicable, a provisional suspension may be imposed to protect all parties. Such a decision shall be taken by the IJF President in compliance with Article 32 of the IJF Disciplinary Code.
- Confirmation of receipt of the report shall be promptly sent to the person submitting the report with information about next steps;
- The SGO(s) shall record receipt of the report internally and file it securely.
- The report shall be assessed in accordance with these Procedures to determine the appropriate action.



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7.2 Confidentiality

- Any information pertaining to an alleged incident of Harassment and Abuse shall be regarded as confidential and shall be shared on a strictly “needs to know” basis. In particular, reports shall be treated confidentially and information (including name, date of birth, address of the concerned person or third party) shall not be disclosed, except, for example, if prior consent is given by that individual, if disclosure is necessary to protect someone from harm, or if a potential criminal act comes to the attention of the IJF.
- However, those receiving a disclosure from a Child or regarding an incident in which the victim may be a Child should inform the Child that they have a duty to share information with appropriate persons to ensure that action is taken where abuse may have occurred.
- In cases where a Child is involved, in any capacity, it is important that the best interests of the Child are of primary consideration throughout the case management process.
- Regardless of the age of the affected person, all case management under these Procedures shall be conducted in accordance with trauma-informed and athlete-centered principles, recognising the power imbalances inherent in sport contexts. This includes avoiding unnecessary repetition of questioning, providing access to appropriate support throughout the process, and ensuring that the reporting person(s) and affected person(s) are kept informed of progress at all stages.

7.3 Jurisdiction

The SGO shall review the report and determine whether the matter falls within the jurisdiction of the IJF as defined in Article 3. Where the complexity, seriousness or circumstances of the case so require, the SGO shall convene the Case Management Panel (CMP) to assist in the jurisdictional assessment.

The SGO(s) may recommend one of the following actions:

- If the report is considered to relate to a criminal offence, it shall be referred to the local relevant authorities.
- If the report is considered to be outside the IJF’s jurisdiction, it shall be referred to the appropriate person or organisation, e.g. a member national federation or an IJF member continental union. Where a report involves parties affiliated to different national federations or continental unions, or where the incident occurred in a country other than that of affiliation of the parties, the IJF shall assume primary jurisdiction. In such cases, the IJF SGO leads the case management and coordinates with relevant national federations and national authorities as appropriate.
- If the report is considered to be within the IJF’s jurisdiction, the SGO(s) shall carry out an assessment (see Article 7.4 below).

7.4 Assessment

For reports that are considered to be within the IJF’s jurisdiction, the SGO(s) shall make an initial assessment of the incident. This assessment is to determine the nature of the concern and whether a violation of the policy may have occurred.

The SGO(s) may take the following actions:

- Refer the report to the local relevant authorities, if the assessment indicates an alleged incident of Harassment or Abuse and is deemed to relate to a criminal offence. The assessment of whether conduct may constitute a criminal offence shall be based on the law of the country in which the conduct occurred, not solely IJF governance standards. Conduct that may not constitute a criminal offence in one jurisdiction may do so in another. In cases of doubt, the IJF shall seek legal advice from a qualified practitioner in the relevant jurisdiction before deciding not to refer to the relevant authority.
- Recommend to the IJF President and the IJF Secretary General the imposition of a provisional suspension, in cases of moderate to serious alleged harm or where there is a risk of imminent or repeated harm, to protect both parties.
- Refer the report to the appropriate person or organisation.
- Carry out an investigation and produce a detailed report (see Article 7.5 below).
- Close the report, if an incident of Harassment or Abuse is not indicated. Where there are outstanding issues that may relate to transgressions of IJF rules, e.g. other ethics-related issues, the case may be transmitted to the appropriate body or person.

Important: Consideration shall be given as to whether, when and to what extent the accused person should be informed of a report and of the procedures being followed. The IJF (including the CMP and the SGO) shall ensure fair procedures and respect the fundamental rights of the accused person, while also safeguarding the safety, privacy, wellbeing and legitimate interests of the reporting person, affected person(s), witnesses and the integrity of the process.

In cases where no formal action, investigation or disciplinary procedure is pursued, notification of the accused person is not required.



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7.5 Investigation

The SGO(s), assisted by the CMP where applicable, shall be responsible for carrying out an investigation of the reported incident and the preparation of a detailed report of the findings of the investigation. At the request of the SGO or the CMP, the IJF may appoint an independent investigator with the relevant expertise, to perform this task, in accordance with these Procedures and to an agreed timeline, where the nature, complexity or circumstances of the case so require, in particular when an alleged incident involves an IJF official, an Executive Committee member, or a member continental union officer.

For the purposes of the investigation, the SGO, the CMP or any independent investigator appointed under this Policy may require any relevant individual, member national federation, Continental Union or other relevant organisation to provide information, documents, records or written or oral statements considered necessary for the proper assessment of the matter. All persons and entities subject to this Policy shall cooperate fully with such requests. Failure, without reasonable justification, to comply with a lawful request for information or otherwise cooperate with the investigation may result in the initiation of proceedings under Article 3.2 of the IJF Statutes, shall constitute a separate disciplinary offence, and may be sanctioned in accordance with the IJF Disciplinary Code. The investigation report shall set out the findings of the investigation together with all relevant evidence and shall be submitted to the CMP for consideration. Following its review, the CMP shall determine the appropriate outcome of the safeguarding proceedings and may decide that:

- a) there are reasonable grounds to believe that a potential disciplinary offence may have been committed, in which case the matter shall be referred to the person or body competent to initiate disciplinary proceedings in accordance with the IJF Statutes, the IJF Disciplinary Code and the IJF Code of Ethics. Where such referral is made, the investigation report and all relevant supporting documentation shall be transmitted to the competent disciplinary authority;
- b) further investigation or additional information is required before a determination can be made;
- c) appropriate safeguarding measures, recommendations, guidance or other non-disciplinary interventions should be implemented; or
- d) no further action is warranted, and the matter shall be closed.

Where a safeguarding concern has been reported to the competent public authorities on the basis of a suspected criminal offence, the IJF shall cooperate with those authorities to the extent permitted by applicable law and shall take due account of any directions or requests received from them.

Where necessary to avoid prejudice to the criminal investigation or proceedings, the SGO and the CMP may suspend or defer all or part of the safeguarding investigation until the competent public authorities have concluded their investigations or otherwise confirm that the IJF may proceed. Such suspension or deferral shall not prevent the IJF from taking any interim safeguarding measures considered necessary to protect participants or safeguard the integrity of the proceedings.

7.6 Referral for Disciplinary Proceedings

Where appropriate, an alleged breach of this Policy, the IJF Code of Ethics or any other applicable IJF regulation may be referred for the initiation of disciplinary proceedings, which shall be conducted in accordance with the IJF Statutes, the IJF Code of Ethics and the IJF Disciplinary Code.

7.7 Sanctions

Where the IJF SGO or the CMP determines that there are reasonable grounds to believe that a violation of this Policy may constitute a disciplinary offence, the matter shall, where appropriate, be referred for the initiation of disciplinary proceedings in accordance with the IJF Disciplinary Code. Any disciplinary proceedings, sanctions and appeals shall be conducted exclusively in accordance with the IJF Statutes and the IJF Disciplinary Code.

Once a final disciplinary decision has been rendered in accordance with the IJF Disciplinary Code, the IJF may notify its member national federations and any other relevant organisations on a need-to-know basis of any sanction imposed, in accordance with the applicable confidentiality and data protection requirements.

The publication of disciplinary decisions shall be governed by the IJF Disciplinary Code and any other applicable IJF regulations.



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7.8 Appeal

Any appeal against a decision adopted under this Policy shall be submitted and determined in accordance with the appeal procedures, competent bodies, time limits and other applicable provisions of the IJF Statutes and the IJF Disciplinary Code, as amended from time to time.

7.9. Implementation of Final Decisions

Final decisions adopted pursuant to this Policy shall be notified to the relevant member national federation and, where applicable, shall be recognised and implemented in accordance with the IJF Statutes, the IJF Disciplinary Code and any other applicable IJF regulations. Where a safeguarding concern gives rise to a continuing risk to participants in judo, provisional measures may be imposed in accordance with this Policy and the IJF Disciplinary Code pending the final determination of the matter.

8. Educational and Related Resources

8.1 IOC “Safeguarding Toolkit” document

The IOC “Safeguarding Toolkit” has been created to help the Olympic Movement to develop and implement athlete-safeguarding policies and procedures.

8.2 IOC Tools for Athletes

To complement the IOC “Toolkit” and ensure that athletes, their entourage and other individuals understand the core components of this sensitive topic, the IOC developed athlete safeguarding e-learning courses, launched on the IOC athlete learning gateway which are free and publicly available (<http://onlinecourse.olympic.org/course/baseview.php?id=39>).

8.3 Additional Resources

- IJF Code of Ethics.
- IOC Consensus Statement 2016: Harassment and Abuse in Sport.
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- International Safeguarding Children in Sport guidelines (with resources available in several languages).
- The Council of Europe: Article 1; (ii) of the European Sports Charter (version dated 2001).
- UNESCO: Article 10.1 of the Revised International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport (version dated 2015).
- United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.
- Safe Sport International.
- IOC Consensus Statement on Interpersonal Violence and Safeguarding in Sport (2024).
- IOC Consensus Statement on Mental Health in Elite Athletes (2019).
- IOC Mentally Fit Helpline - a confidential mental health support helpline available to all Olympic Games participants, also recommended as a model for IJF event-level provision.
- IOC Safe Sport Regional Hub Initiative (launched 2024): pilot hubs in Southern Africa and the Pacific Islands providing regional safeguarding capacity-building.
- IOC Athletes’ Rights and Responsibilities Declaration, particularly Right 7 (right to participate in sport free from harassment and abuse).
- IOC Basic Universal Principles of Good Governance (BUPGG), updated 2024 - Principle 3.10 (zero-tolerance approach to safeguarding breaches).



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9. Glossary

Abuse

Abuse means any act or omission, whether isolated or repeated, that intentionally, recklessly or negligently causes, or creates a risk of, physical, psychological, emotional or sexual harm to a participant. It includes conduct arising from the misuse of authority, trust, influence, dependency or a duty of care. Abuse includes psychological abuse, emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, neglect, hazing, and online or digital harassment, as defined in this Policy.

Case Management Panel (CMP)

A standing body of the IJF established under this Policy. The members of the CMP shall be appointed by the IJF President and shall possess appropriate expertise in safeguarding, law, athlete welfare and/or sports governance. In the performance of their functions under this Policy, the members of the CMP shall act independently and impartially and shall not seek or accept instructions from any person or body in relation to the management or determination of individual safeguarding matters.

Child

For the purposes of this Policy, a Child is any human being below the age of eighteen years. A person aged eighteen or above shall also be treated as a Child under this Policy, if that person is considered a minor under the law applicable to their personal status. Any lower age threshold under national law, including for contractual capacity, medical consent, sexual consent or criminal responsibility, shall not exclude a person under eighteen from the scope of this definition. This definition applies solely for the purposes of this Policy and does not limit any safeguarding, reporting or referral obligation arising under applicable law.

Continental union Safeguarding Officer (SGO)

A qualified person designated by an IJF continental union to serve as the safeguarding liaison between the IJF SGO(s) and national federation SGO(s) within that continent. The continental union SGO coordinates safeguarding matters at continental level between the IJF SGO(s) and national federation SGO(s), monitors the progress of referred cases, and refers cases to the IJF SGO(s) where a national federation fails to act.

Designated Person

A Designated Person is an appropriately trained person who oversees safeguarding responsibilities at an IJF event and reports to the Safeguarding Officer(s).

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of vulnerable adults or children and protect them from harm, including protecting them from harassment and abuse.

Safeguarding Officer (SGO)

The Safeguarding Officer (SGO) is the principal person in the IJF responsible for receiving reports concerning the welfare of participants, coordinating and conducting investigations under this Policy, managing referrals to relevant authorities and bodies, and receiving referrals from continental union SGO(s). The SGO operates independently in the exercise of these functions.

Safe Sport (2024 IOC definition)

A physically and psychologically safe and supportive athletic environment where participants can thrive and experience the full benefits of sport participation. Safe sport requires the active commitment of all within the sports ecosystem - athletes, entourage, clubs, national federations, continental unions and international bodies - to recognise risk factors, prevent interpersonal violence, and respond effectively when it occurs.



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10. Document Version History

28 January 2025 approved version

Text in red has been added. Text with a line through it has been deleted.

1. Introduction

The IJF is a non-for-profit organisation founded for an unlimited period of time and governed by Hungarian law.

This commitment is reinforced by:

- (i) Principle 3.10 of the IOC Basic Universal Principles of Good Governance (updated 2024), which states that a zero-tolerance approach to safeguarding breaches shall be adopted at all levels of sports organisations; and
- (ii) Right 7 of the IOC Athletes' Rights and Responsibilities Declaration, recognising the right of every athlete to participate in a sport free from harassment and abuse.

The IJF has adopted this policy to promote good practice, to provide athletes and participants of all ages with appropriate safety and protection whilst involved in judo activities, and to allow staff and volunteers to make informed decisions about specific safeguarding issues.

2. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the commitment of IJF to safeguarding. The goal of the IJF in the field of violence, harassment and abuse is to:

- Establish and sustain a safe sport environment for all those involved in the field of judo, applying an athlete-centred and whole-of-system approach that addresses individual, interpersonal, organisational and societal determinants of interpersonal violence, consistent with the IOC Consensus Statement 2024.
- Involve athletes as active contributors in the development, review and monitoring of safeguarding policies and procedures.

3. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all those involved in the IJF and its affiliated structures, in all settings - including physical competition venues, training camps, team travel, accommodation, and all digital and online environments (including social media, messaging platforms and any other digital communication tools). It covers:

- Technical staff, such as referees, organisers, technicians, volunteers,

4. Definition of Harassment and Abuse

The IJF has adopted the definitions of harassment and abuse based on the IOC Consensus Statement on Interpersonal Violence and Safeguarding in Sport (2024).

Harassment and abuse can be expressed in below forms which may occur in combination or in isolation.

These include :

- psychological abuse,
- emotional abuse,
- physical abuse,
- sexual harassment,
- sexual abuse,
- neglect,
- hazing,
- online and digital harassment.

These forms of abuse are defined here as:

- sexual abuse,
- neglect,
- hazing,
- online and digital harassment.

These forms of abuse are defined here as:

- b) **Emotional abuse** - any conduct that harms a participant's emotional state or emotional development, including persistent emotional unavailability, unpredictable responses, failure to recognise an individual's individuality or boundaries between the



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participant and the person with a duty of care, conditional regard, developmentally inappropriate expectations, or persistent and deliberate inducement of fear or shame. Emotional abuse often co-occurs with psychological abuse and may be a precursor to or consequence of other forms of abuse and harassment.

g) Hazing - an organised, usually team-based, form of bullying in sport, involving degrading and hazardous initiation of new team members by veteran team members.

h) Online and digital harassment - any form of harassment or abuse carried out through digital channels including social media, messaging applications, email, online forums or any other electronic communication platform. This includes cyberbullying, non-consensual sharing of intimate images, online grooming and identity-based online abuse. The principles applicable to in-person harassment and abuse apply equally to online conduct.

Harassment and abuse can be based on any grounds including, **but not limited to** race, religion, colour, creed, ethnic origin, physical attributes, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, socio-economic status and athletic ability. **It may occur in person or through any digital or online medium, and the online dimension may aggravate severity given its potential for wide dissemination, permanence and the particular psychological impact of public online targeting.**

Harassment and abuse **might** result from an abuse of authority, meaning the improper use of a position of influence, power or authority by an individual against another natural person.

Harassment and abuse can include a one-off incident or a series of incidents. ~~but to be actionable, harassment should be shown to be severe or repeated.~~ All ages and types of participants are susceptible to the various forms of harassment and abuse with elite, disabled, children and **LGBTQIA+** participants being at the highest risk.

5. Impact on Participants

The impact of the various forms of harassment and abuse on a participant may include:

- **Mental health/cognitive** e.g., anxiety, depression, self-harm, suicidal ideation, post-traumatic stress disorder, low self-esteem, burnout and disordered eating (consistent with the IOC Consensus Statement on Mental Health in Elite Athletes (2019), which recognises interpersonal violence as a significant precipitant of mental health decline in athletes),
- **Organisational/reputational:** loss of athlete trust and participation, reputational harm to federations and judo more broadly, legal and financial liability, and erosion of governance credibility.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 The IJF is responsible for:

- Implementing this policy and appointing a Safeguarding Officer(s), **hereafter: SGO.**
- **Appointing qualified and internationally certified Mental Health Officer(s).**

6.2 The IJF Member national federations are responsible for:

- **Designating qualified SGO(s) at national level, ensuring this person has received appropriate training, and publishing their contact details to all affiliated clubs and athletes.**

7. Reports, Investigation and Disciplinary Procedures

7.1 Reporting Procedure

Any person who has reasonable grounds to believe that Harassment or Abuse has occurred, is occurring, or presents a risk of occurring in connection with an IJF activity, as defined in Article 3 of this Policy, may submit a report in accordance with this Article. Reports may be made by the individual directly affected, by a witness, or by any other person acting in good faith who has become aware of information giving rise to a safeguarding concern.

Reports should be submitted through one of the reporting channels set out below. The availability of these reporting channels does not prevent any person from reporting concerns directly to the competent public authorities where required or permitted by applicable law.

The IJF SGO shall be responsible for the receipt, registration, initial safeguarding assessment, management and coordination of all reports submitted under this Policy. In performing these functions, the SGO shall act independently and impartially in



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accordance with this Policy and shall ensure that all reports are handled promptly, confidentially and in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness.

When to report:

- All possible incidents of Harassment or Abuse should be reported as soon as possible;
- If the directly affected individual is a Child within the meaning of this Policy, there is a duty to report.
- If the directly affected individual is not a Child within the meaning of this Policy, their consent should be obtained to pass on information. However, in some cases information may still be passed on, for example, if they are at risk of imminent harm, if not acting may harm someone else, or if there is a concern that a criminal act may have taken place.

How to submit a report:

Reports can be submitted to the IJF as follows:

- Via the dedicated online reporting platform: <https://reportabuse.judobase.org/form>.
- By email: safejudo@ijf.org.
- In person to the SGO(s) or a Designated Person.
- Individuals may also contact the relevant Continental Union SGO(s) for guidance on the reporting process. All formal reports shall be directed to the IJF SGO(s).

What will happen once the incident has been reported:

- All reports are received by the IJF SGO(s);
- The SGO(s) shall take steps to ensure that the directly affected individual receives appropriate support;
- Where the report concerns a person affiliated to a continental union, the IJF SGO(s) shall notify the relevant continental union SGO(s) without delay;
- Where appropriate and in the case of potential criminal offences, the relevant public authorities shall be informed;
- Where applicable, a provisional suspension may be imposed to protect all parties. Such a decision shall be taken by the IJF President in compliance with Article 32 of the IJF Disciplinary Code;
- Confirmation of receipt of the report shall be promptly sent to the person submitting the report with information about next steps;
- The SGO(s) shall record receipt of the report internally and file it securely;
- The report shall be assessed in accordance with these Procedures to determine the appropriate action.

7.2. Confidentiality

- Any information pertaining to an alleged incident of Harassment and Abuse shall be regarded as confidential and shall be shared on a strictly “needs to know” basis. In particular, reports shall be treated confidentially and information (including name, date of birth, address of the concerned person or third party) shall not be disclosed, except, for example, if prior consent is given by that individual, if disclosure is necessary to protect someone from harm, or if a potential criminal act comes to the attention of the IJF.
- However, those receiving a disclosure from a Child or regarding an incident in which the victim may be a Child should inform the Child that they have a duty to share information with appropriate persons to ensure that action is taken where abuse may have occurred.
- In cases where a Child is involved, in any capacity, it is important that the best interests of the Child are of primary consideration throughout the case management process.
- Regardless of the age of the affected person, all case management under these Procedures shall be conducted in accordance with trauma-informed and athlete-centered principles, recognising the power imbalances inherent in sport contexts. This includes avoiding unnecessary repetition of questioning, providing access to appropriate support throughout the process, and ensuring that the reporting person(s) and affected person(s) are kept informed of progress at all stages.

7.3 Jurisdiction

The SGO shall review the report and determine whether the matter falls within the jurisdiction of the IJF as defined in Article 3. Where the complexity, seriousness or circumstances of the case so require, the SGO shall convene the Case Management Panel (CMP) to assist in the jurisdictional assessment.

The SGO(s) may recommend one of the following actions:

- If the report is considered to relate to a criminal offence, it shall be referred to the local relevant authorities;



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- If the report is considered to be outside the IJF's jurisdiction, it shall be referred to the appropriate person or organisation, e.g. a member national federation or an IJF member continental union. Where a report involves parties affiliated to different national federations or continental unions, or where the incident occurred in a country other than that of affiliation of the parties, the IJF shall assume primary jurisdiction. In such cases, the IJF SGO leads the case management and coordinates with relevant national federations and national authorities as appropriate.
- If the report is considered to be within the IJF's jurisdiction, the SGO(s) shall carry out an assessment (see Article 7.4 below).

7.4. Assessment

For reports that are considered to be within the IJF's jurisdiction, the SGO(s) shall make an initial assessment of the incident. This assessment is to determine the nature of the concern and whether a violation of the policy may have occurred.

The SGO(s) may take the following actions:

- Refer the report to the local relevant authorities, if the assessment indicates an alleged incident of Harassment or Abuse and is deemed to relate to a criminal offence. The assessment of whether conduct may constitute a criminal offence shall be based on the law of the country in which the conduct occurred, not solely IJF governance standards. Conduct that may not constitute a criminal offence in one jurisdiction may do so in another. In cases of doubt, the IJF shall seek legal advice from a qualified practitioner in the relevant jurisdiction before deciding not to refer to the relevant authority.
- Recommend to the IJF President and the IJF Secretary General the imposition of a provisional suspension, in cases of moderate to serious alleged harm or where there is a risk of imminent or repeated harm, to protect both parties.
- Refer the report to the appropriate person or organisation;
- Carry out an investigation and produce a detailed report (see Article 7.5 below);
- Close the report, if an incident of Harassment or Abuse is not indicated. Where there are outstanding issues that may relate to transgressions of IJF rules, e.g. other ethics-related issues, the case may be transmitted to the appropriate body or person.

Important: Consideration shall be given as to whether, when and to what extent the accused person should be informed of a report and of the procedures being followed. The IJF (including the CMP and the SGO) shall ensure fair procedures and respect the fundamental rights of the accused person, while also safeguarding the safety, privacy, wellbeing and legitimate interests of the reporting person, affected person(s), witnesses and the integrity of the process.

In cases where no formal action, investigation or disciplinary procedure is pursued, notification of the accused person is not required.

7.5 Investigation

- The SGO(s), assisted by the CMP where applicable, shall be responsible for carrying out an investigation of the reported incident and the preparation of a detailed report of the findings of the investigation. At the request of the SGO or the CMP, the IJF may appoint an independent investigator with the relevant expertise, to perform this task, in accordance with these Procedures and to an agreed timeline, where the nature, complexity or circumstances of the case so require, in particular when an alleged incident involves an IJF official, an Executive Committee member, or a member continental union officer.

For the purposes of the investigation, the SGO, the CMP or any independent investigator appointed under this Policy may require any relevant individual, member national federation, continental union or other relevant organisation to provide information, documents, records or written or oral statements considered necessary for the proper assessment of the matter. All persons and entities subject to this Policy shall cooperate fully with such requests. Failure, without reasonable justification, to comply with a lawful request for information or otherwise cooperate with the investigation may result in the initiation of proceedings under Article 3.2 of the IJF Statutes, shall constitute a separate disciplinary offence, and may be sanctioned in accordance with the IJF Disciplinary Code. The investigation report shall set out the findings of the investigation together with all relevant evidence and shall be submitted to the CMP for consideration. Following its review, the CMP shall determine the appropriate outcome of the safeguarding proceedings and may decide that:

- a) there are reasonable grounds to believe that a potential disciplinary offence may have been committed, in which case the matter shall be referred to the person or body competent to initiate disciplinary proceedings in accordance with the IJF Statutes, the IJF Disciplinary Code and the IJF Code of Ethics. Where such referral is made, the investigation report and all relevant supporting documentation shall be transmitted to the competent disciplinary authority;
- b) further investigation or additional information is required before a determination can be made;



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- c) appropriate safeguarding measures, recommendations, guidance or other non-disciplinary interventions should be implemented; or
- d) no further action is warranted, and the matter shall be closed.

Where a safeguarding concern has been reported to the competent public authorities on the basis of a suspected criminal offence, the IJF shall cooperate with those authorities to the extent permitted by applicable law and shall take due account of any directions or requests received from them. Where necessary to avoid prejudice to the criminal investigation or proceedings, the SGO and the CMP may suspend or defer all or part of the safeguarding investigation until the competent public authorities have concluded their investigations or otherwise confirm that the IJF may proceed. Such suspension or deferral shall not prevent the IJF from taking any interim safeguarding measures considered necessary to protect participants or safeguard the integrity of the proceedings.

7.6 Referral for Disciplinary Proceedings

Where appropriate, an alleged breach of this Policy, the IJF Code of Ethics or any other applicable IJF regulation may be referred for the initiation of disciplinary proceedings, which shall be conducted in accordance with the IJF Statutes, the IJF Code of Ethics and the IJF Disciplinary Code.

7.7 Sanctions

Where the IJF SGO or the CMP determines that there are reasonable grounds to believe that a violation of this Policy may constitute a disciplinary offence, the matter shall, where appropriate, be referred for the initiation of disciplinary proceedings in accordance with the IJF Disciplinary Code. Any disciplinary proceedings, sanctions and appeals shall be conducted exclusively in accordance with the IJF Statutes and the IJF Disciplinary Code.

Once a final disciplinary decision has been rendered in accordance with the IJF Disciplinary Code, the IJF may notify its member national federations and any other relevant organisations on a need-to-know basis of any sanction imposed, in accordance with the applicable confidentiality and data protection requirements.

The publication of disciplinary decisions shall be governed by the IJF Disciplinary Code and any other applicable IJF regulations.

7.8. Appeal

Any appeal against a decision adopted under this Policy shall be submitted and determined in accordance with the appeal procedures, competent bodies, time limits and other applicable provisions of the IJF Statutes and the IJF Disciplinary Code, as amended from time to time.

7.9. Implementation of Final Decisions

Final decisions adopted pursuant to this Policy shall be notified to the relevant Member National Federation and, where applicable, shall be recognised and implemented in accordance with the IJF Statutes, the IJF Disciplinary Code and any other applicable IJF regulations.

Where a safeguarding concern gives rise to a continuing risk to participants in judo, provisional measures may be imposed in accordance with this Policy and the IJF Disciplinary Code pending the final determination of the matter.

8.3 Additional Resources

- IOC Consensus Statement on Interpersonal Violence and Safeguarding in Sport (2024).
- IOC Consensus Statement on Mental Health in Elite Athletes (2019).
- IOC Mentally Fit Helpline - a confidential mental health support helpline available to all Olympic Games participants, also recommended as a model for IJF event-level provision.
- IOC Safe Sport Regional Hub Initiative (launched 2024): pilot hubs in Southern Africa and the Pacific Islands providing regional safeguarding capacity-building.
- IOC Athletes' Rights and Responsibilities Declaration, particularly Right 7 (right to participate in sport free from harassment and abuse).
- IOC Basic Universal Principles of Good Governance (BUPGG), updated 2024 - Principle 3.10 (zero-tolerance approach to safeguarding breaches).



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