



# GUYANA BASKETBALL FEDERATION

## SAFEGUARDING POLICY

(Effective 15 October 2024)

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Everyone in Guyana has the right to participate in basketball in an environment that is safe and enjoyable. Inclusion, equality and diversity are at the heart of GBF's values. Thus, GBF is committed to establishing and implementing policies that safeguard the welfare of participants, which includes non-discrimination and the prevention of harassment and abuse.

This GBF Safeguarding Policy (the Policy) aims to ensure that basketball is a safe, positive, and enjoyable experience for all persons involved, regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and social and economic background, religion, and level of ability or disability.

The GBF has a zero-tolerance stance towards harassment, discrimination, or abuse of any kind. Accordingly, the GBF's commitment to a safe basketball environment is enshrined in the GBF's Constitution and it is under such principles that this Safeguarding Policy is enacted.

-Article 1.3, GBF Constitution-

The Federation shall maintain absolute political and religious neutrality and shall not sustain, any form of discrimination, racial, gender or otherwise.

-Article 2.1, GBF Constitution-

The objects of the Federation are:

...

- c.* To take all steps it may deem necessary in order to prevent the infringement of its Constitution as well as of the Regulations of FIBA and further to prevent the introduction of irregular methods or practices in the sport as well as the abuses these practices may bring about;
- d.* To prohibit and make sure there is no area of political, religious or racial discrimination, among its members;



## 2. DEFINITIONS

**Abuse:** Treating someone with violence, disrespect, cruelty, harm, or force. Abuse can take many forms, ranging from disrespect to causing someone physical or mental pain. It can occur during basketball-related activities as well as in someone's home, school, hospital or a public place. Often the people who commit abuse are taking advantage of a special relationship. They may be a family member, friend, or person with whom there is a relationship of authority or trust (e.g., a coach, a team doctor, a manager, a referee, an agent). Abuse can be classified into 4 categories: physical, emotional, sexual, and neglect.

**Basketball Competition:** An Official Basketball Competition or any national-level competition recognised by the GBF or its members.

**Basketball Official:** Any Official of GBF (or a "GBF Official"), a GBF Sub Association, a Member, an Affiliated Member or a Local Organising Committee, including without limitation the following:

- a. candidates or nominees for elected or appointed positions with the GBF, a Sub Association or the Guyana Olympic Association (GOA);
- b. members of the Executive Committee;
- c. members of the Sub Associations Executive Committee;
- d. members of the Secretariat;
- e. members of the committees, working groups or taskforces or similar bodies appointed by the GBF, a Sub Association or the Guyana Olympic Association (GOA) for any purpose;
- f. employees of the Secretariat

**Basketball Party:** Persons or groups that are subject to the jurisdiction and disciplinary powers of the GBF:

- a. Players
- b. Coaches
- c. Officials
- d. Volunteers
- e. Staff
- f. Parents or Guardians
- g. Spectators
- h. Executive Officers
- i. Local Organising Committee Members

**Bullying:** Harassment consisting in repeated behaviour intended to intimidate or upset someone and/or make them feel uncomfortable or unsafe, for example, name calling, exclusion or isolation,



spreading rumours, embarrassing someone in public or in front of their peers, threatening to cause Harm, physically hurting someone, or damaging their possessions. Bullying may be a manifestation of Discrimination. When technology or social media is used to engage in this type of conduct, it is often referred to as cyberbullying.

**Discrimination:** Unequal treatment of an individual based on their personal characteristics, such as: age, disability, gender, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual or gender orientation, or cultural preferences. Discriminatory conduct includes insulting language, Harassment, ill-treatment, disparate treatment, or adverse impact on employment or playing opportunities triggered by the abovementioned personal characteristics of the individual. Discrimination can be the triggering factor or motivator for causing Harm to individuals, particularly Young Players and Vulnerable Groups and manifests itself in acts of Harassment and Abuse.

**Emotional Abuse:** Any act or treatment that may cause emotional Harm and undermines a person's sense of well-being, including persistent criticism, denigration or putting unrealistic expectations on Vulnerable Groups, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation or use of threats.

**Harassment:** Conduct that is usually ongoing and that can also be used to describe Abuse, insults, or other actions that cause Harm to another individual on a regular basis. Harassment is an umbrella term used to describe a variety of tormenting behaviour, and as such it can be physical, emotional, or of sexual nature.

**Harm:** Any ill treatment (including Harassment, Discrimination, and Abuse) which adversely affects a person's physical or mental well-being, property, rights, or interests. Harm can occur in many forms and can range in gravity. Not all Harm suffered by a Participant will be related to a basketball organization or be perpetrated by someone within basketball. Nonetheless, it is the obligation of Basketball Parties to report any action that they are aware of and that may cause Harm to a Young Player, to Vulnerable Groups, or Participants.

**Hazing:** Form of Harassment that occurs in the context of a ritual or initiation activity, action, or situation, with or without consent, which recklessly, intentionally or unintentionally endangers the physical or emotional well-being of an individual, particularly Young Players of Vulnerable Groups.

**Neglect:** Ongoing failure to meet the basic needs of individuals, particularly Young Players and Vulnerable Groups. Neglect may involve the failure to provide adequate food, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failure to protect from physical and emotional harm or danger, or failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, basic emotional needs, as a result of the structure, policies, processes or practices within an organization.



**Official:** Any Person that holds an office, is elected or appointed to a position, or any Person appointed in an official capacity or that otherwise represents an entity (legal or otherwise).

**Official Basketball Competitions:** The following types of competitions:

- National Team Competitions
- Club Competitions
- School Competitions
- 3x3 Competitions
- ESport Competitions
- FIBA-Recognised Competitions

**Official Game:** Any game of an Official Basketball Competition.

**Participants:** Any Person playing a direct or indirect role in basketball, including without limitation the following:

- players and their agents or representatives;
- player support personnel (e.g. coaches, assistant coaches, doctors, physiotherapists, etc.);
- any other person included on a National Member Federation's team delegation roster;
- commissioners;
- game officials (e.g., referees, Technical Delegates, Commissioners, Table Officials, etc.);
- followers with special responsibilities (e.g., managers, statisticians, interpreters, mascots, etc.);
- Persons employed by, or engaged in activities on behalf of (whether paid or unpaid), or having a direct or indirect affiliation to the GBF, a GBF Member or a Local Organising Committee; and
- any other person accredited for or in attendance at an Official Game.

**Person:** Any natural persons, or an organization or other entity, such as bodies of a corporate or unincorporated associations or partnerships (whether or not any of them have separate legal personality).

**Physical Abuse:** Any deliberate act causing injury or trauma to another person. This includes, without limitation, hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, burning, giving a person medicine that they do not need and/or that may cause them Harm, including the application of inappropriate restraint measures.

**Sexual Abuse:** Any act resulting in the exploitation of an individual, whether with their consent or not, for the purpose of sexual or erotic gratification. Sexual Abuse may be perpetrated by an individual that is older than the victim or intellectually, emotionally, physically, or sexually more mature than the victim. Sexual Abuse includes non-contact activities, such as indecent exposure, involving Young



Players or Vulnerable Groups in witnessing sexual acts, looking at sexual images/pornography or grooming them in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Even if an individual has legally reached the age of sexual consent in their jurisdiction, it is unacceptable for anyone to abuse their relationship of trust for sexual gratification.

**Vulnerable Groups:** Individuals who are vulnerable or at risk of abuse or neglect due to their mental or physical disability, their level of ability, their age, ethnicity or social background, religion, gender, sexual orientation, illness, or that are otherwise in the need for care, protection, or support.

**Young Player:** A player who has not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### 3. SCOPE

#### 3.1 Purpose

- 3.1.1 This Policy sets out the requirements for the GBF to fulfil its duty and obligations in protecting particularly Vulnerable Groups. This Policy should also be used as a guideline for National Member Federations to establish their own safeguarding policy. This Policy aims to:
- a. set out The GBF's commitment in protecting Vulnerable Groups in basketball;
  - b. ensure that Basketball Parties exercise their duty of care to safeguarding Vulnerable Groups in basketball;
  - c. identify the legal framework for safeguarding the wellbeing of all Participants of basketball;
  - d. establish the basis and guidelines for implementation of educational programs to train Basketball Parties in safeguarding principles and protection of Vulnerable Groups;
  - e. define the standards of the duty of notification and report in case a Basketball Party witnesses or has information of a safeguarding issue;
  - f. set out how Harassment, Discrimination or Abuse can be reported;
  - g. establish standards of behaviour that all Basketball Parties shall adhere to;
  - h. identify the risks associated in the protection of Vulnerable Groups;
  - i. identify ways to mitigate or reduce potential risks in safeguarding Vulnerable Groups in basketball; and
  - j. identify the roles and responsibilities of Basketball Parties in addressing safeguarding violations.



- 3.1.2 The GBF will ensure that the principles enshrined in this Policy are considered and addressed in the organisation of Official Basketball Competitions, or any activity in partnership with a third party in which the participation of Vulnerable Groups is expected.
- 3.1.3 All GBF Members must familiarise themselves with the contents of this Policy and follow its guidelines.

### 3.2 Principles of GBF Safeguarding Policy

- 3.2.1 **Zero Tolerance:** The GBF will not tolerate any form of Harassment, Discrimination, or Abuse and will take all necessary measures to implement this Policy. Accordingly, all Basketball Parties must respect and promote the rights of basketball Participants and adhere to this Policy.
- 3.2.2 **Education:** The GBF expects Basketball Parties to familiarise themselves with the main concepts involving safeguarding, including the core components of actions that may cause Harm and the key indicators to identify such actions. The GBF also expects that all Members will have the education and tools they need to develop and implement their own safeguarding policies and training materials.
- 3.2.3 **Identifying Violations and Duty to Report:** Any suspected violation of this Policy or the GBF Constitution must be reported immediately through the appropriate reporting channels. The successful implementation of this Policy depends on an individual and shared responsibility of all Basketball Parties. Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality throughout the entire investigative and disciplinary process.
- 3.2.4 **Risk Management:** Risks need to be identified and minimised throughout all stages of basketball activities (e.g., recruiting, training, basketball competitions, etc.).

### 3.3 Declaration

- 3.3.1 The GBF does not tolerate any form of Harassment, Discrimination, or Abuse (collectively referred as “Harm”) against any Participant or Person. This zero-tolerance declaration means that the GBF will take the necessary measures to implement its safeguarding Policy. It also means that all Basketball Parties are expected to respect, adhere to, and promote the principles enshrined in this Policy.



3.3.2 In enforcing this Policy, the GBF will actively pursue disciplinary proceedings and impose the corresponding sanctions against any Basketball Party who transgresses this Policy or the relevant safeguarding articles of the GBF Constitution.

## 4. GUIDELINES

### 4.1 Key Indicators of Harm

4.1.1 Indicators of Harm may be physical or behavioural. Indicators do not prove conclusively that an individual has been the subject of Harm. However, the indicators do alert to the fact that an individual, particularly a Young Player or a member of a Vulnerable Group may require help or protection. These indicators include, without limitation:

- a. a victim talks about acts of harassment or abuse;
- b. a friend, family member or somebody close to the victim says something that causes concern;
- c. concerning injuries or physical signs visible on the victim; and
- d. awkward or concerning behaviour of the victim or of a potential perpetrator that alerts that something may be wrong.

### 4.2 Key Indicators of Abuse

4.2.1 The following indicators may suggest that an individual is the victim of physical abuse:

- a. injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them;
- b. injuries that occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls or rough games;
- c. injuries that seem not to have received medical attention;
- d. reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or practice;
- e. bruises, bites, burns and fractures that do not have an accidental explanation;
- f. inconsistent accounts for the cause of the injury;
- g. signs of restraint;
- h. damage to equipment and personal effects of the individual;
- i. use of medications (e.g. excessive use or lack of needed use); and
- j. withdrawal or lack of engagement with peers or other persons.



4.2.2 The following behavioural indicators may suggest that an individual is the victim of sexual abuse:

- a. any allegations made concerning sexual abuse;
- b. a Young Player's excessive preoccupation with sexual matters or inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour inconsistent for their age;
- c. a Young Player engages in sexual play inappropriate for their age;
- d. a Young Player is sexually provocative or seductive with adults;
- e. other inappropriate sexual behaviour;
- f. consistent use of inappropriate sexual language;
- g. reluctance of the individual to be touched; and
- h. withdrawal or lack of engagement with peers or other persons.

4.2.3 The following physical or external indicators may suggest that an individual is the victim of sexual abuse:

- a. pregnancy in someone unable to consent to sexual contact;
- b. damage, constant pain or itching in the genital area or difficulty walking or sitting;
- c. repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains;
- d. infections or sexually transmitted diseases;
- e. torn, stained or bloody underwear;
- f. fear and withdrawal from relationships;
- g. inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home;
- h. severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares which sometimes have overt or veiled sexual connotations; and
- i. changes in appearance and eating disorders such as anorexia or bulimia.

4.2.4 The following indicators may suggest that an individual is the victim of emotional abuse:

- a. depression, aggression, extreme anxiety, changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a Young Player withdraws or becomes clingy;
- b. compulsive behaviour, obsessions or phobias;
- c. sudden underachievement or lack of concentration;
- d. seeking adult attention and not mixing well with other Young Players of their same age;
- e. sleep or speech disorders;
- f. negative statements about self.
- g. extreme shyness or passivity and being withdrawn;
- h. running away, stealing, lying and cruelty to others;
- i. too eager to do everything they are asked;





- j. excessive general anxiety or heightened anxiety around specific persons; and
- k. inexplicable withdrawal or lack of engagement with peers or other persons.

4.2.5 The following indicators may suggest that an individual is the victim of neglect:

- a. dirty skin, body smells, unwashed, uncombed hair, and untreated lice;
- b. clothing that is dirty, too big or small, or inappropriate for weather conditions;
- c. frequently left unsupervised or alone; recurrent or untreated injuries;
- d. frequent diarrhea;
- e. frequent tiredness;
- f. untreated illnesses, infected cuts, or physical complaints which the carer does not respond to;
- g. frequently hungry;
- h. overeating junk food;
- i. sudden behaviour changes; and
- j. withdrawal or lack of engagement with peers or other persons.

### 4.3 Reporting Mechanisms and Procedure

4.3.1 If an individual (particularly a Young Player or a member of a Vulnerable Group) discloses that they have suffered Harm, such allegation must be taken very seriously. It is important that any disclosure is dealt with appropriately and that the immediate needs of the individual are prioritised.

4.3.2 It's normal to feel overwhelmed and confused in this situation. Abuse and other Harm are difficult subjects that can be hard to accept and even harder to talk about. Children and adults at risk who are abused are often threatened by the perpetrators to keep the abuse a secret. Thus, telling someone else takes a great amount of courage.

4.3.3 Vulnerable Groups will have to deal with a lot of issues, including the fear that no one will believe them. So, care must be taken to remain calm and to show support throughout the disclosure phase.

4.3.4 Safeguarding issues, as well as any violations of this Policy or the GBF Constitution should be reported through the following channels: [safeguarding@guyanabasketball.com](mailto:safeguarding@guyanabasketball.com) or <https://guyanabasketball.com/gy/safeguarding/> (allows for anonymous reporting)



4.3.5 The protection and safeguarding of members of Vulnerable Groups is the main goal of this Policy. Any action that may constitute a criminal act should also be reported to relevant national authorities (e.g., police, social services).

4.3.6 The following steps (the 4 Rs) will help in the process of handling information given by victims and lessen the risk of causing more trauma to the victim or compromising any investigation during the disclosure phase.

a. Receive

1. Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief. A common reaction to news as unpleasant and shocking as Abuse is denial. However, if denial, shock or disgust is displayed, the victim may be afraid to continue and will shut down.
2. Accept what is being said without judgement.
3. Take it seriously.

b. Reassure

1. Reassure the victim, but only so far as is honest and reliable.
2. Don't make promises that can't be kept.
3. Reassure the victim (particularly a Young Player) that they did nothing wrong and that what they have said has been taken seriously.
4. Don't promise confidentiality – never agree to keep the information as a secret. There is a duty to report any concerns.
5. Tell the victim that this will need to be reported to other persons, but only those whose job it is to protect them.
6. Acknowledge how difficult it must have been to talk. It takes a lot for a child or adult at risk to come forward about abuse.

c. React

1. Listen quietly, carefully and patiently.
2. Do not assume anything – don't speculate or jump to conclusions.
3. Do not investigate, interrogate or decide if the victim is telling the truth.
4. Don't do anything that may jeopardise an investigation.
5. Let the victim explain to you in their own words what happened.
6. Don't ask leading questions (e.g., "Isn't it true that..."). Do ask open questions (e.g., "Is there anything else that you want to tell me?").
7. Communicate in a way that is appropriate to their age (particularly with Young Players), understanding and preference.
8. Explain what will be done next and to whom will the information be told.



9. Report the situation through the GBF reporting channels.
10. Do not discuss the case with anyone except as necessary to protect the victim.

d. Record

1. Make some very brief notes at the time and write them up in detail as soon as possible.
2. Do not destroy your original notes in case they are required during the investigation.
3. Record the date, time, place, words used by the victim, and how the victim appeared (be specific).
4. Record the actual words used, including any swear words or slang.
5. Record statements and observable things, not interpretations or assumptions (keep it factual).
6. Under no circumstance undertake own investigation.

4.3.7 Confidentiality is an important principle that enables people to feel safe in sharing their concerns and asking for help. However, the right to confidentiality is not absolute. Sharing relevant information with the right people at the right time is a vital component of good safeguarding practices. Accordingly, all reports made to the GBF will be treated with the utmost confidentiality but shared as needed with sporting bodies or public authorities in order to fulfil the purposes of this Policy. The GBF will abide by all data protection laws and maintain strict confidentiality of:

- a. data collected (in writing or electronically) relating to victims, particularly Young Players and Vulnerable Groups; and
- b. information and documentation relating to safeguarding allegations, concerns, and incidents.

## 5. RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT

### 5.1 Risk Management

5.1.1 Regular risk assessments will be conducted to identify potential safeguarding risks and implement measures to mitigate them.

5.1.2 Risk management strategies will be reviewed and updated as necessary.

### 5.2 Review and Monitoring

5.2.1 This safeguarding policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains current and effective.



5.2.2 Feedback from participants, parents, and stakeholders will be considered in the review process.

### 5.3 Legal Framework

5.3.1 The GBF will comply with all relevant legislation and guidance concerning safeguarding, including but not limited to child protection laws and data protection regulations.

## 6. IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 This policy will be communicated to all individuals involved in the GBF and made readily available on the GBF's website and other relevant platforms.

6.2 By adhering to this safeguarding policy, the GBF aims to create a safe and inclusive environment where everyone can participate in basketball activities free from harm. Together, we are committed to promoting the welfare and well-being of all our participants.

### 6.3 Roles and Responsibilities

6.3.1 **Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO):** The GBF will appoint a DSO who will be responsible for coordinating safeguarding matters, providing advice, and maintaining records of incidents and concerns.

6.3.2 **Committee Members:** The GBF's Executive committee and standing committees' members will support the DSO in ensuring that safeguarding principles are upheld and that adequate resources are allocated to safeguarding initiatives.

6.3.3 **Coaches and Officials:** Coaches and officials have a responsibility to ensure the safety and welfare of participants under their supervision, as well as to report any safeguarding concerns they become aware of.

6.3.4 **Parents and Guardians:** Parents and guardians are encouraged to be vigilant and report any concerns they may have regarding the welfare of participants.

### 6.4 Training and Awareness

6.4.1 The GBF will ensure that all individuals involved in basketball activities receive appropriate safeguarding training.



6.4.2 Awareness campaigns and educational resources will be provided to promote understanding of safeguarding issues and procedures.