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## Safeguarding policy

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For review by the Executive Committee: by January 2023

## INTRODUCTION

Squash SA (SSA) has a zero tolerance approach to child abuse or exploitation or to abuse of vulnerable persons and seeks to ensure a safe and inclusive environment in which all squash players can achieve their potential. All adults, and indeed other minors but to a lesser extent, share a responsibility of to prevent such abuse or exploitation in all forms. Working with children and vulnerable persons means that we need to protect and nurture them and establish policies and procedures to address this. This Policy is part of SSA's protection framework. The policy is based on national legislation and international conventions including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which signed in 1995, the rights outlined in the South African Bill of Rights and the 2005 Children's Act.

Any person involved in squash must report immediately any suspected or alleged case of abuse, exploitation, or policy non-compliance by anyone within scope of this policy to [safeguarding@squashsa.co.za](mailto:safeguarding@squashsa.co.za) or alternatively 0800 123 321. All information will be treated in confidence, if reported to SSA, insofar as the need for a follow up investigation is required.

## SCOPE

The policy applies to all members of SSA, its districts, clubs and schools as well as people working with children and vulnerable persons in squash. However, as SSA is a membership organisation, this policy should apply to those who are not members but this cannot be enforced by SSA and therefore SSA cannot be held liable.

## PRINCIPLES

### 1. Recognition of the best interests of the child

South Africa has signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. SSA is committed to supporting the rights of the child, vulnerable persons and the country's obligations under the Convention. Thus the best interests of the child and vulnerable persons remain the primary consideration.

### 2. Zero tolerance

Child and vulnerable person abuse and exploitation are criminal acts and attract criminal, civil and disciplinary sanctions.

SSA will not knowingly directly or indirectly engage anyone who may be a risk to children or to vulnerable persons and will work to minimise these risks. SSA will include, as part of the membership registration, the requirement for members to have read and understood this policy.

### 3. Shared responsibility for child protection

Managing risks to children and vulnerable persons is a fundamental platform and as such, SSA requires the commitment, support and cooperation of all members, parents, schools, clubs, districts, coaches, officials, organisations and individuals who help to deliver SSA programs.

### 4. Risk and impact

SSA will work to identify, mitigate, manage and/or reduce the risks to children and vulnerable persons but recognises that full cooperation and information is required.

## 5. Procedural fairness and compliance

Procedural fairness must be applied when decisions are made which may affect a person's rights or interests. However, compliance with the policy and relevant national legislation is also required.

### RISK BASED APPROACH

A risk-based approach is implemented by SSA. As such, the following will be applied:

- a) Does the program, activity or grant involve potential contact with children (minors) and/or vulnerable persons, impact on them, or working with children and vulnerable persons?  
If the answer is yes, a protection risk assessment must be conducted including risk and decision-making processes and documents. This should be an ongoing process and addressed through existing activity planning and risk management processes and minimum safeguarding standards (at **Annex 1 and 2**) assessed.
- b) If the program, activity or grant is determined to be 'contact with children', with vulnerable persons or impacts children and/or vulnerable persons, an assessment of protection risk should be undertaken and, depending on the level of risk identified, the appropriate minimum protection standards must be applied to manage the risk identified.
- c) Where no 'impact on or contact with children' or on vulnerable persons is identified, the minimum compliance standards at Annex 1 may not apply. However, it is better to err on the side of caution.
- d) Regular monitoring for any change in risk and reporting on the effectiveness of the management of such protection risk must be undertaken.

### RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE POLICY

#### National Office

Staff must ensure child protection risk is considered, and is managed in accordance with SSA's risk management practices. SSA will identify and publish on its website an identified "child protection officer" who will be appropriately trained.

#### SSA members, schools, clubs, districts, coaches, officials, organisations and individuals who help deliver SSA programmes

All individuals or organisations must act in accordance with this policy. Where working with children and/or vulnerable persons is identified, individuals and organisations must undertake an assessment of safeguarding risk and apply – and build on (where appropriate) – all minimum standards at Annex 1 and 2.

Individuals and organisations must:

- a) undertake their own risk assessment of each activity to ensure risks are identified and managed in line with this policy including appropriate recruitment, screening, and employment practices
- b) ensure personnel are trained in safeguarding awareness and understand their protection obligations
- c) institute clear internal reporting mechanisms for their personnel to report concerns or allegations and
- d) immediately report any suspected or alleged instances of abuse, exploitation, harm or safeguarding policy non-compliance to the relevant authorities.

Any suspicion or disclosure of abuse and exploitation must be reported immediately through the organisation's internal processes and, if necessary, to SSA while having due regard to confidentiality requirements.

## **COMPLIANCE**

SSA may terminate contract negotiations, decline to engage an individual, or require an individual to be replaced if appropriate criminal record checks are not undertaken, or cannot be undertaken for roles that are identified as working with or having contact with children and/or vulnerable persons.

## **REPORTING**

All staff, individuals and organisations must report immediately any suspected or alleged case of exploitation, abuse or non-compliance with this policy by anyone within scope of the policy in connection with official duties or business. Members of the squash community can also report. All reports should be made to 0800 123 321.

### **What to report**

Staff, individuals and organisations must report any behaviour that is suspected of being exploitation or abuse (including possession of child exploitation material) or policy non-compliance by:

- a staff member
- personnel of organisations
- players
- teachers
- coaches
- technical officials
- volunteers.

Where an individual or organisation has submitted a report and becomes aware of additional information, the individual or organisation must also report that additional information.

## **EFFECTIVE DATE**

The policy is effective from January 2021 and will be updated every two years.

## Minimum Protection Standards

Requirement	Minimum standard	Minimum standard – evidence	What is the risk without it?
<b>Having a Safeguarding Policy and reporting procedure in place</b>	<p><b>1. Individuals</b> An individual under Squash SA is covered by this safeguarding policy</p>	<p>Individuals should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend safeguarding training</li> <li>• Sign code of conduct</li> <li>• Commit to safeguarding</li> <li>• Submit a current criminal record or other appropriate check</li> </ul>	An individual or organisation may not be aware of the risks to children or vulnerable persons within their organisation and the activities they manage and/or implement
	<p><b>2. Organisation</b> The organisation must have a policy with a clear reporting mechanism is followed for exploitation and abuse allegations, code of conduct, a commitment to preventing a person from working with children or vulnerable persons if they pose an unacceptable risk to them and policy non-compliance, including available sanctions for breaches</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear guidelines to manage concerns or allegations of abuse and exploitation and possible non-compliance issues</li> <li>• Evidence outlining the organisation's available sanctions</li> <li>• Documentary evidence that policy and reporting information is publicly available</li> <li>• Guidelines on the need for checks prior to individuals working with children and vulnerable persons</li> </ul>	Organisations and the public do not know how to report alleged inappropriate behaviour and a culture of zero tolerance is not developed
	<p><b>3. Training</b> Child protection training should be provided to relevant personnel.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance records</li> <li>• Materials used in training</li> </ul>	Individuals may be unaware of alleged inappropriate behaviour, of how to build safeguarding practices into their work nor reporting mechanisms
	<p><b>4. Regular policy review</b> This policy reviewed regularly</p>	Policy is reviewed and published	Lessons learned and new developments may not be included so leading to increased risk

Requirement	Minimum standard	Minimum standard – evidence	What is the risk without it?
<b>Risk assessment and management</b>	A risk assessment is undertaken regularly, identifying possible risks, and outlining steps being taken to reduce or remove these risks	Risk management plan in place and updated regularly	Activity design and implementation does not manage risk appropriately
<b>Recruitment and screening, and employment practices in place</b>	<p><b>1.</b> Staff manual contains provisions for suspension or transfer to other duties of any employee who is being investigated and provisions to dismiss any employee after an investigation if the allegation is proven</p>	Staff manual contains appropriate provisions	Staff suspended or under cannot be removed (suspended, transferred or dismissed) without a criminal conviction
	<p><b>2. Contact and working with children</b> Clear screening processes for all individuals in contact with children and vulnerable persons including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• behavioural-based interview questions</li> <li>• criminal record or other appropriate checks undertaken before appointment</li> <li>• referee checks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All checks and referee reports documented</li> <li>• Applicants required to disclose any previous charges of abuse or exploitation offences, and their response</li> <li>• Behavioural-based interview questions address issues of working with children and vulnerable persons</li> <li>• Checks must be conducted for South Africa and if the individual has lived and worked in another country, a police check for that country too</li> </ul>	Persons may target organisations with weak processes

### **Expected Professional Behaviour**

All individuals and organisations working or contact with children and vulnerable persons are expected to comply with the following behaviours at all times:

- treat children and vulnerable persons with respect
- not use language or demonstrate behaviour towards them that is or is perceived to be inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate including physical, emotional or psychological abuse
- not engage children under the age of 18 or those who are deemed to be minors or vulnerable in any form of sexual activity
- wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working near children and vulnerable persons
- not invite unaccompanied children into a private residence or room or space, unless the child is at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger
- not sleep close to unsupervised children unless this can be avoided but only with the parent or guardian's permission and ensuring that another adult is present if possible (this does not apply to an individual's own children)
- never use any computers, mobile phones, video cameras, cameras or social media to exploit or harass children, or access child exploitation material through any medium
- comply with all relevant legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour including not use children for domestic or other labour which is not aligned to their age or developmental stage, which interferes with their education or recreational activities or which places them at risk of injury
- immediately report concerns or allegations of abuse and exploitation and possible non-compliance with this policy
- disclose all charges, convictions and other outcomes of an offence that relates to abuse and exploitation immediately

### **Photographing or filming a child or using children's images**

- obtain written consent from the child and parent or guardian before photographing or filming or recording a child or minor once an explanation of how the photograph or film or recording will be used has been provided. The parent or guardian should ideally be present
- ensure photographs, films, videos, recordings and DVDs present children and minors in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or inappropriate manner. Children and minors should be appropriately clothed and not pose in any way that may be interpreted as sexually suggestive

## ANNEX 2

- ensure image or recording is an honest representations of the context and the facts and not doctored in any way and that file labels, data or text descriptions do not reveal identifying information about a child or vulnerable person at any time
- only use photographs, films, videos, recordings and DVDs once approved by the parent or guardian

Approved by the Executive Committee on 20 January 2021.