

# ***SPORT AGAINST GENDER INEQUALITY***

## ***Safeguarding & COVID-19 Guidelines***

When working with children and young people while using the Sport Against Gender Inequality (SAGI) online resources, it is of utmost importance that they are provided a safe and enjoyable environment. The welfare of the child, thus, must be paramount.

Children and young people, regardless of their age, culture, ability, gender, language, caste, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity should be able to participate in all SAGI activities in a safe and fun environment. It is the instructor's responsibility to ensure that children and young people are protected from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment, and their rights, wishes and feelings are respected.

The abuse and exploitation of children can come in a number of forms, including, but not limited to, the following:

- **Physical abuse:** This is the non-accidental physical injury of a child. For example, striking, kicking, hitting, giving drugs/alcohol, etc.
- **Emotional abuse:** This is a pattern of behaviour that impairs a child's emotional development or sense of self-worth. For example, constant criticism, negative feedback, pressure of over-expectations, name calling, etc.



- **Neglect:** This is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs. For example, the failure to protect a child from harm or danger, the failure to keep them safe, etc.
- **Sexual abuse:** This is anything done with a child or young person for the sexual gratification of an adult or another child or young person. For example, inappropriate contact, all forms of sexual intercourse, showing explicit images/videos, etc.
- **Discriminatory abuse:** This is harassment on the basis of a child's age, culture, physical ability, gender, language, caste, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity.
- **Cyberbullying:** This is the use of technology for the purpose of abusing a child or young person. For example, sharing opinions of individuals without their consent, sharing their videos/photographs on non-official platforms, trolling, setting up hate sites or using hateful language against a person, encouraging children to self-harm, grooming children online, etc.

### ***Identifying Signs of Abuse & Neglect***

As an instructor coming in contact with children, you should look out for any behavioural change that can indicate that the child may be being abused or neglected. The following signs may indicate that a child is being abused:

- Being scared of adults, coaches and/or teammates.



- Withdrawing from friends and social groups.
- Disinterest in usual activities.
- Being aggressive.
- Difficulty in concentrating.
- Inability to develop relationships.
- Having low self-esteem.
- Reporting being sick too often, complaints of stomach aches, shivering.
- Becoming depressed, anxious, or susceptible to self-harm.

While watching out for signs of abuse, instructors should also keep a watch for any signs that a child may be being neglected. These signs include:

- Poor personal hygiene.
- Inappropriate clothing.
- Being aggressive.
- Difficulty in trusting people.
- Compulsive stealing.
- Low self-esteem and poor relationships.
- Constant hunger, tiredness or weariness.
- Signs of bruises on face and/or body.

Instructors should also be aware of signs that a child might be experiencing abuse online. These include:



- Child spending too much time or too little time online, using social media, playing games or communicating.
- Child feeling angry, anxious, upset or withdrawn after being online.
- Child being secretive about what they are doing online or with whom they are communicating.

### ***Guidelines for the Instructor***

When working with children and young people, it is essential that instructors adhere to the following guidelines:

- Always put the welfare of the child first.
- Treat all children equally, with respect and dignity. This includes ensuring that your activities are accessible for all participants.
- Do not single out one child and neglect others if praising, ensure that you are praising everyone within the group.
- Work in an open environment and avoid private or unobserved situations, where possible.
- Encourage open communication.
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance from children and avoid unnecessary physical contact with children.
- When working with mixed-gender groups, consider having instructors of different genders.
- Do not over-train or over exhaust the children. Make sure they are



given appropriate break time.

- Ensure that you are using safe and proper equipment in your sessions.
- Keep a written record of major injuries and/or any abuse that occurs, along with details of the treatment given and/or action taken.
- Take permission before touching a child, even if it is to tend to an injury.

### ***Managing Disclosure of Abuse***

If a child comes forward to tell you that they are being abused, you must respond appropriately. Hence, it is important that you:

- Stay calm, and talk to them in a quiet place where your conversation will not be interrupted. However, be mindful of being alone with a child.
- Ensure that the child feels safe and secure.
- Be patient, and listen carefully to what the child is saying.
- Reassure them that they have done nothing wrong in coming forward with their concerns.

In addition, you should ensure that you do not:

- Promise confidentiality, since you will have to relay the information to the appropriate authorities.



- Probe for more information.
- Look panicked, shocked or angry.
- Interrupt their story, or ask them to repeat it.
- Give an opinion.

If a child comes forward to you with a complaint of any form of abuse or neglect, or if you witness abuse or neglect of a child yourself, you should take the following steps:

- First and foremost, ensure the immediate safety of the child.
- Record all appropriate information, including the name, location, nature of abuse, dates/times, which member of staff was contacted and alleged abuser.
- Explain to the child that you have to inform the abuse to others in order to put a stop to it.
- Report the incident to your affiliated organisation's Child Protection Officer.

It is the responsibility of the Child Protection Officer to investigate the matter internally, and adhere to the principles of natural justice. They will also inform the relevant stakeholders and public authorities of the incident, as deemed necessary.

If you are not affiliated with any organisation, it is your duty to



familiarise yourself with the appropriate local and national child protection services that are available, and report the signs of abuse to them. Please note that these guidelines for the SAQI resources are to be used in conjunction with your existing organisational policies and the local and national laws.

### ***Cyberbullying and Online Harassment***

While conducting training sessions online, it is imperative that instructors understand how cyberbullying and online harassment operates, and the various ways in which they can manifest.

### ***Identifying Online Risks to Children***

- Exposure to or being showed sexually explicit or other harmful and upsetting material.
- Bullying and trolling, such as sharing images and videos of a person without their consent, or discussing a person without their consent
- Exposing personal information of children.
- Cyber grooming – abusers online can create online accounts in order to access children.



## ***Best Practices to Ensure Online Safeguarding***

- While using online platforms, it is important that instructors choose an accessible platform which also has robust privacy and security settings.
- Such platforms will allow instructors to monitor who has access to the children's profiles, and can safeguard them from potential abuse from strangers or anonymous accounts.
- Instructors must use online accounts that have been authorised by their organisation to communicate with the children. Never use personal accounts.
- Instructors must use an organisational device to communicate with children. If this is not possible, their personal device should be authorised by the management to be used on a case-by-case basis
- Instructors must be mindful of their body language, and ensure that the clothing that they are wearing is appropriate.
- Within the online platform, set out appropriate behavioural standards which are applicable to both the adults working with the children, and the children themselves.
- Vet all accounts that are being used, to prevent strangers and anonymous users from accessing children's profiles.
- Use age appropriate and respectful language.
- Ensure the communication is relevant to the training and the



material at hand. This includes limiting the information that can be shared on the platform, and preventing children from disclosing personal and private information.

- Ensure that all children are included in the discussions and activities being conducted online.
- Put in place strict moderation guidelines, which clearly indicate what is allowed and what is not allowed to be posted.
- Ensure that your online content is accessible to all participants and, if needed, caters to their special needs.

### ***COVID-19 Guidelines***

Given that the world is currently going through the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important that instructors adapt the SAQI online resources in line with the safety guidelines that have been issued by medical professionals [1].

Considering that the virus spreads from close contact between individuals, the SAQI online resources have been developed using games and activities where physical distancing is possible. However, the instructors delivering the SAQI online resources in-person will need to ensure that contact between participants and instructors is avoided.

[1] The following guidelines have been adapted from the World Health Organization's guidelines for sports federations and sport event organizers.



Further, the following hygiene guidelines should be followed to ensure that participants and instructors remain safe:

- It is preferable to conduct activities outdoors, since they will be better ventilated than indoor settings.
- Ensure availability to handwashing, alcohol-based hand sanitizers and hygiene facilities at multiple locations.
- Ask all participants to wash or sanitize their hands before and after the activity.
- Ensure that all participants are using face coverings and/or medical masks that cover both their face and nose.
- Ask participants to bring their own water bottles, and do not allow them to share their water with others.
- Make disposable tissues available for all participants, and ensure that used tissues are disposed correctly.
- Do not allow participants to share towels, clothes, soap or other personal items with other participants.
- Avoid hand shaking, hugs, or any contact between participants – come up with new, creative ways of congratulating or expressing other emotions.
- Do not share equipment between participants. If equipment has to be shared, ensure that it is thoroughly sanitized before being handed over to a new participant.
- Conduct health checks for all participants and instructors, including



a temperature check.

- Ask participants and instructors who are feeling sick or who have been in contact with a sick person to avoid attending the sessions.

**S**PORTS

**A**AGAINST

**G**ENDER

**I**NEQUALITY

***Activity Workbook 1  
Safeguarding & COVID-19 Guidelines***



The Commonwealth

*Martha Farrell*  
FOUNDATION

