**Thunder Runners: Code of Conduct and Policy Document**

*Thunder Runners are a fully inclusive club who strive to be friendly and welcoming to all members.*

*This document contains the following information*

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# Risk Assessments and COVID-19

Our club is mainly a virtual club therefore we currently have no risk assessments including COVID risk assessments as we do not meet up in a physical environment. Where are members are attending events including races, our members must abide by all rules set by that particular event. When our members choose to meet socially or for training runs, they must follow all government guidelines. This includes local rules on meeting up, social distancing and maximum numbers in attendance at one time. Please review the government website for the latest guidance and rules for your area.

# Code of Conduct

**All Members**

All members, when joining the club, or renewing their membership on an annual basis by paying club fees, therefore agree to the following code of conduct rules.

* All members of the club must always be treated equally with respect.
* The club does not tolerate discrimination; therefore members must not discriminate against others including race, gender, ethnicity/ sexual orientation/ disability.
* Our members must not behave aggressively either online, verbally or physically.
* The club does not tolerate bullying. This includes physical and online bullying- therefore including on social media.
* All members should ensure they act respectively when wearing club branded clothing and branded equipment as to not to damage the reputation of the club. This includes acting with dignity, display courtesy and good manners towards others. It also includes never engaging in inappropriate or illegal behaviour.
* All members should pay annual membership fees within the stated time frame by the club.
* All members should report any kinds of suspected misconduct or welfare issues to the Welfare Officer as soon as possible.

**Club Committee**

* Thunder Runners agrees to adopt all requirements of UK athletics Code of Conducts and safeguarding policies.
* The club agrees to maintain a disciplinary policy, anti-bullying policy and inclusion policy listed in this document to protect our members.
* All members of the committee agree to support the club and carry out all tasks assigned to them when required.
* The club agrees to appoint a Welfare Office who is DBS check cleared and has completed the mandatory online training.
* The club will ensure all club members are treated equally and fairly. They will ensure members rights are respected, as well as those involved in athletics.

# Club Welfare and Safeguarding

Thunder Runners is committed to ensuring all our members are protected from abuse within our club environment.

Our club has a minimum of one Welfare Officer. Their role is to listen,, support and protect all members. Our club has a zero tolerance approach to bullying and discrimination and actively support wellbeing as well as physical and mental health.

Our Welfare Officers are DBS checked and adhere to UK Athletics Safeguarding policies and procedures. Please see the club website [www.thunderrunners.co.uk](http://www.thunderrunners.co.uk) for the list of Welfare Officers.

The club follows all guidance stated in the UK Athletics safeguarding policies. These can be found on the UK Athletics website. <https://www.uka.org.uk/governance/safegarding/>

**Child Safeguarding**

Our club follows guidance set by England Athletics related to child safeguarding.

If any member of our club has concerns over anyone under the age of 18- including neglect and abuse, they must contact the Club Welfare officer.

While it is not the responsibility of UKA, the Home Countries Governing Bodies, volunteers or club members to decide whether a concern constitutes abuse, it is their responsibility to report any concerns about the welfare of a child.

These concerns may arise due to:

A child disclosing that they are being abused.

The behaviour of an adult towards a child.

A number of indicators observed in a child over a period of time.

**How to respond to a disclosure**

Don’t

Probe for more information than is offered.

Speculate or make assumptions.

Show shock or distaste.

Make comments about the person against whom the allegations have been made.

Make promises or agree to keep secrets.

Give a guarantee of confidentiality.

All suspicions and disclosures must be reported appropriately. It is acknowledged that strong emotions can be aroused particularly in cases of possible sexual abuse or where there is a misplaced loyalty to a colleague.

Any person with information of a disclosure, allegation or concern about the welfare of a child must immediately report this in one of the following ways.

Inform the clubs designated Welfare Office

Seek advice from either the NSPCC helpline (0808 800 5000), Children 1st (0141 418 5674), in Scotland the duty officer at the local Children Services department or the local police child protection unit. Telephone numbers are in the local telephone directory.

**Adult Safeguarding**

UK Athletics (UKA), and the Home Country Governing Bodies fully accept their legal and moral obligations to meet their duty of care to all vulnerable adults and to safeguard their welfare, irrespective of age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, religion or belief, sex or gender and sexual orientation.

Key principles: • The welfare of the adult is paramount. • All adults have the right to protection from abuse • All suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately. • All organisations and individuals involved in athletics understand and accept their responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer.

In order to meet their safeguarding obligations, all Affiliated Clubs and organisations must:

Provide and enforce procedures to safeguard the wellbeing of all participants and protect them from abuse. Club policies and practices must, as a minimum, meet the requirements set out in this guidance. Ensure all vulnerable adults who take part in athletics are able to participate in a safe and fun environment.

Respect and uphold the rights, wishes and feelings of adults.

Recruit, train and supervise their employees and volunteers to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect vulnerable adults from abuse, and themselves from false allegations.

Require staff/volunteers to adopt and abide by UKA’s Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, Codes of Conduct and the relevant grievance, investigatory and disciplinary procedures.

Respond to any allegations appropriately and implement the appropriate complaints, adult protection, disciplinary and appeals procedures.

Designate a person in the organisation who is responsible for ensuring that all appropriate DBS checks are completed.

Review policies regularly.

**How to respond to a disclosure**

You may become aware that abuse or poor practice is taking place, suspect abuse or poor practice may be occurring or be told about something that may be abuse or poor practice and you must report this to the UK Athletics Lead Safeguarding or the Home Country Welfare Officer, or, if the Lead Safeguarding or Welfare Officer is implicated then report to the UK Athletics CEO or the relevant Home Country Athletics Federation CEO.

Make a note of what the person has said using his or her own words as soon as practicable. Complete an Incident Form and submit to the UK Athletics Lead Safeguarding or Welfare Officer.

As long as it does not increase the risk to the individual, you should explain to them that it is your duty to share your concern with your Lead Safeguarding or Welfare Officer.

Describe the circumstances in which the disclosure came about.

Take care to distinguish between fact, observation, allegation and opinion. It is important that the information you have is accurate.

Be mindful of the need to be confidential at all times, this information must only be shared with your Lead Safeguarding or Welfare Officer and others on a need to know basis.

If the matter is urgent and relates to the immediate safety of an adult at risk, then contact the police immediately.

# Inclusion Policy

**Introduction**

For the purposes of this policy ‘inclusion’ means access for all. It means recognising differences between individuals / groups and providing opportunities for them to participate in Athletics and Running regardless of those differences, whether this is as a participant, coach, leader, official, volunteer or member of staff.

**Thunder Runners** embraces diversity and difference and is committed to providing opportunities that are safe, inclusive, accessible and equitable. We want our club to be equally accessible to all members of society, whatever their age, disability, gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality or social/economic status.

We will develop a focus on inclusion, not exclusion, and ensure that we provide appropriate advice to members and volunteers to ensure that everyone can participate as fully as possible.

The Inclusion Policy is intended to promote a change in attitudes and perceptions and to improve opportunities for everyone to participate at our club.

We will seek to ensure that we comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the characteristics protected by it ( age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity) and encourage our members to do so. We will seek to include everyone regardless of whether they have a protected characteristic or not.

Our aim is to provide an environment where everyone feels:

* Welcome
* Represented
* Included in decision making
* Able to participate
* Safe and free from discrimination, bullying, harassment and vilification.

**Aims**

The aims of the Inclusion Policy are:

* To promote the development of knowledge and understanding of disability, equity and inclusion amongst our participants, leaders/coaches, officials, volunteers and competition/event organisers by the provision of appropriate guidance and training. To guide and support the integration of inclusive practice into our core club/group programmes and activities.
* To contribute towards growing and sustaining numbers of people from under-represented groups participating within our club.
* To promote inclusion within Athletics and Running wherever possible and in accordance with the provisions of the Equality Act.
* To adopt inclusive practice within our competition and events.
* To promote close working partnerships with relevant groups and organisations to support the development of inclusive practice within our club**.**

**Commitment**

We will;

* Not tolerate discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation.
* Actively identify and reduce barriers to participation for under-represented groups.
* Consult with expert partners and other organisations to facilitate inclusive practices and remove barriers to participation.
* Ensure under-represented groups are given the opportunity to participate in all aspects of our club.
* Provide opportunities for all in coaching, officiating and leadership positions.

There are a number of measures that we will take to ensure that we are working under the guidance of the Policy and within the requirements of the Equality Act (2010).

**We will provide a welcoming environment**

* We will think positively about how we can include people rather than focusing on potential barriers to participation.
* We will consider how our club/group is promoted. For example, by providing information in formats which are accessible and by using appropriate imagery.
* We will encourage people to contact us to discuss their needs and requirements to facilitate inclusion and we will ensure we consider what reasonable adjustments could be made to enable them to participate.
* We will develop the knowledge and understanding of key officials, coaches, leaders and other volunteers, of disability**, equity and inclusive practice by providing appropriate guidance and training.**

**We will talk to people**

* We will, so far as is reasonably possible, consult with relevant groups and with prospective individuals about their needs and requirements.
* We will not make assumptions and will try to speak to people about the reasonable adjustments they believe might be made to enable them to participate and to discuss how these could be made.

**We will make reasonable adjustments**

* We will demonstrate that every effort has been made to enable everyone to participate and that inclusion not exclusion has been the priority.
* If reasonable adjustments are required to make an event/activity accessible, then we will make those reasonable adjustments.

# Anti-Bullying Policy

**Statement of Intent**

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our members so they can participate in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our club. If bullying does occur, all athletes or parents should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a *TELLING club*. This means that *anyone* who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the club welfare officer or any committee member.

**What Is Bullying?**

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

* Emotional being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically) sending hurtful text messages, tormenting, (e.g. hiding spikes/clothing, threatening gestures)
* Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
* Racist racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
* Sexual unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
* Homophobic because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
* Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing

**Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?**

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Athletes who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

This club have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

**Objectives of this Policy**

* All committee members, coaches, athletes ,parents and club members should have an understanding of what bullying is.
* All committee members, and coaching staff should know what the club policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
* All athletes and parents should know what the club policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
* As a club we take bullying seriously. Athletes and parents should be assured that they would be supported when bullying is reported. Bullying will not be tolerated.

**Signs and Symptons**

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

* Says he is being bullied
* is unwilling to go to club sessions
* becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
* feels ill before training sessions
* comes home with clothes torn or athletics equipment damaged
* has possessions go "missing"
* asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
* has unexplained cuts or bruises
* is frightened to say what's wrong
* gives improbable excuses for any of the above

In more extreme cases

* starts stammering
* cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
* becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
* is bullying other children or siblings
* stops eating
* attempts or threatens suicide or runs away

These signs and behaviours may indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated

**Procedures**

1. Report bullying incidents to the club welfare officer or a member of the committee .
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to UK:A for advice
3. Parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem
4. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly
6. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour
7. If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue the club will initiate disciplinary action under the club constitution.

**Recommended club action**

**If the club decides it is appropriate for them to deal with the situation they should follow the procedure outlined below.**

* Reconciliation by getting the parties together. It may be a genuine apology solves the problem.
* If this fails/not appropriate a small panel (Made up from chairman, Welfare Officer, Secretary, committee members) should meet with the parent and child alleging bullying to get details of the allegation. Minutes should be taken for clarity, which should be agreed by all as a true account.
* The same 3 persons should meet with the alleged child who has instigated bullying and parent/s and put the incident raised to them to answer and give their view of the allegation. Minutes should again be taken and agreed.
* If bullying has in their view taken place the athletes should be warned and put on notice of further action i.e. temporary or permanent suspension if the bullying continues. Consideration should be given as to whether a reconciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at this time.
* In some cases the parent of the child who has instigated bullying or bullied athletes can be asked to attend training sessions, if they are able to do so, and if appropriate. The club committee should monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not being repeated.
* All coaches involved with both athletes should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process i.e. the warning.

**In the case of adults reported to be bullying athletes under 18**

1. UK:A should always be informed and will advice on action to be taken
2. It is anticipated that in most cases where the allegation is made regarding a coach, child protection awareness training may be recommended.
3. More serious cases may be referred to the police, social services or judicial complaints procedure.

**Prevention**:

* The club will have a written constitution, which includes what is acceptable and proper behaviour for all members of which the anti bullying policy is one part.
* All athletes and parents will sign to accept the constitution upon joining the club.
* The club welfare officer will raise awareness about bullying and why it matters, and if issues of bullying arise in the club, will consider meeting with swimmers to discuss the issue openly and constructively

This policy is based on that provided to schools by KIDSCAPE.

KIDSCAPE is a voluntary organisation committed to help prevent child bullying.

KIDSCAPE can be contacted on 0207 730 3300.

The ASA have assisted in the formation of this policy document.

# Grievance and disciplinary policy

Complaints and Disputes

1. All concerns, allegations or reports of malpractice or abuse relating to the welfare of children or vulnerable adults will be recorded and responded to swiftly and appropriately in accordance with the Club’s and England Athletics’s safeguarding policy and procedures. The Welfare Officer shall be the lead Officer for all Members in the event of any safeguarding concerns.
2. Any complaints of misconduct (improper or unprofessional conduct) regarding the behaviour of Members or Officers shall be dealt with by the Club in accordance with its discipline and appeals process\* and must be presented in writing to the Secretary (and where the matter relates to the Secretary, the complaint must be submitted to the Welfare Officer). Unless exceptional circumstances apply, the Secretary will hear complaints within fourteen days of receiving a complaint. If the complaint is sufficiently evidenced, the Secretary will appoint (three) Club Members (who have no direct or indirect interest/involvement in the matter) to sit on a disciplinary panel. Subject to rule 3 below, a decision of the disciplinary panel shall be final and conclusive.
3. Any appeals must be received by the Secretary within 7 (seven) days of receiving the written decision and, if appropriate, the appeals process will be followed.
4. Any complaints of serious misconduct (including, without limitation, theft, doping violations, fraud, physical violence, safeguarding policy breaches, serious breach of applicable health and safety, gambling and/or ticketing regulations or any act or omission of the Member or Officer which in the opinion of England Athletics, acting reasonably, brings or is likely to bring the sport of athletics into disrepute) regarding the behaviour of Members or Officers shall be reported and dealt with by England Athletics in accordance with its Disciplinary Procedures.
5. If a dispute arises between any Members or Officers of the Club about the validity or propriety of anything done by any Member or Officer under these Rules and the dispute cannot be resolved by agreement, the parties to the dispute must first try in good faith to settle the dispute by mediation before resorting to litigation