

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR PROTECTION OF GIRLS IN SPORTS

GUIDELINES TO BE FOLLOWED IN THE TAMIL NADU - SCHOOL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT PERTAINING TO SPORTS AND GAMES

Worldwide, there is sexual harassment and abuse. Athletes and others suffer as a result, and sport organizations face moral, financial, and legal ramifications. These issues arise at every performance level and affect all sports. It is the duty of all those involved in sports to recognize and stop sexual harassment and abuse as well as to foster a culture of safety, respect, and dignity. As the guardians of safety, sports organizations in particular need to show strong leadership in recognizing and combating harmful behaviors.

All stakeholders in sport have a responsibility to adopt general principles for safe sport, as well as to implement and oversee safe sport policies and procedures, which include the following: all athletes have a right to be treated with respect, protected from non-accidental violence, etc." and that "athletes' welfare is paramount."

This framework for safeguarding athletes and other participants from harassment and abuse in sport and games shall be adopted and put into effect by the Tamil Nadu School Education Department.

Observed Laws and Acts:

- **National Sports Policy (NSP), 2001:** Promotes broad-based sports development and excellence, focusing on identifying young talent and integrating sports into education.
- **Supreme Court (2014) 5 SCC 438 and others:** Selection must be fair, transparent, and based on merit. The verdict emphasized the importance of ensuring equal opportunities and non-discriminatory practices in sports selections.

- **Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act):** Encourages schools to include physical education and provide sports facilities for overall development.
- **Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015:** Protects minors from abuse, neglect, and exploitation, ensuring safe environments during sports activities.
- **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012:** Provides strict legal safeguards against sexual abuse of minors, including young athletes, with a child-friendly judicial process.

Section 19: Mandatory Reporting of Offences

- Any person (including coaches, staff, or teammates) who has knowledge of a sexual offence against a child must report it to the police or Special Juvenile Police Unit.
- Failure to report is punishable with imprisonment or fine or both.
- Institutions (like sports academies or schools) must comply with mandatory reporting, ensuring safety for all child participants.

Section 21: Punishment for failure to report or record a case

- Any person, who fails to report the commission of an offence under sub-section (1) of section 19 or section 20 or who fails to record such offence under sub-section (2) of section 19 shall be punished with imprisonment of either description which may extend to six months or with fine or with both.
- Any person, being in-charge of any company or an institution (by whatever name called) who fails to report the commission of an offence under sub-section (1) of section 19 in respect of a subordinate under his control, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year and with fine.
- The provisions of sub-section(1) shall not apply to a child under this Act.

- **Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986:** Prevents the exploitation of child athletes by prohibiting hazardous work and ensuring safe participation in sports.
- **Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) Act, 2013:** Applies to sports institutions and ensures a grievance redressal system for harassment cases, including those involving minors (through guardians).
- **Guidelines by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports:** Set standard for coaching, accommodation, and travel, ensuring safety and gender equality in sports.
- **National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) Regulations:** Enforces anti-doping rules to protect athletes, including minors, from the use of banned substances.

Sports activities are being organized periodically, typically every year, at various levels including Zonal, District, State, National, and School Games Federation of India (SGFI) competitions. These include School Education Sports events such as RDS, RDG, BDG, RD, and BD New Games, as well as national-level competitions. Additionally, initiatives like the Chief Minister's Trophy and Khelo India Sports play a significant role in promoting athletic participation and talent development across the country.

I. Guidelines to be Followed by the Schools

1. Minimum Standard for Schools:

- Ensure adequate, standard sports equipment and proper maintenance of grounds.
- Ensure all venues have sufficient and hygienic restrooms with clean floors, toilets, and bright lighting. Proper water facilities must be available, and each restroom should include a bucket, mug, closed dustbin, and an incinerator for the safe disposal of sanitary napkins. Ensure separate, clean, and private dress changing rooms are provided for males and females. Also, ensure that corridors and sports areas are well-

- maintained to provide a clean and comfortable environment for all participants.
- iii. Ensure that safer environment of dressing room and rest room such as closed windows with screen, proper door latches, and hangers for cloths.
 - iv. Ensuresufficient sanitary napkins availability or/with vending machine in the Schools.
 - v. Provide CCTV surveillance in common areas of dormitories, mass halls, TV rooms, rest room corridor, dressing room corridor and other required areas.
 - vi. Ensure the availability of sufficient first aid kit.
 - vii. Ensure sufficient potable water for everyone.
 - viii. Schools to arrange common area and time allotment to students and their respective coaches / teachers-in charge to have a one-one discussion. Schools to instruct their staff not to have any discussions with students in closed rooms / areas.
 - ix. Schools are expected to ensure that coaches provide appropriate diet plans for the students.

2. Selection Procedure for Sports Person

- i. Schools must have a structured selection procedure to evaluate the sportsperson's abilities, potential, and areas of concern.

3. Maintenance of Sports Persons Record:

- i. To ensure the creation of physiological profile, psychosocial profile and family background of each participant by the coaches and update it regularly.
- ii. Practice session and duration may be decided based on the respective Schools protocol. Schools to ensure that if any practice session is scheduled after school hours or on public holidays to happen in presence of a lady teacher or School Management Committee (SMC) Member or parents.

- iii. Schools are expected to regularly provide, monitor, maintain, and gather feedback on the necessary facilities and amenities for participants.

4. Grievances Redressal and Feedback Mechanism:

- i. Students to be encouraged to report their grievance via grievance box / e-mail or written / verbal complaint to anyone of the Student Safeguarding Advisory Committee (SSAC) members / any individuals. Schools to make it compulsory to report abuse and provide protection to whistle – blowers.
- ii. Schools must ensure that any complaint received is properly registered, documented, and followed by immediate and appropriate action.
- iii. Schools must encourage coaches to record feedback and take necessary actions. If the feedback is critical, it should be escalated to the Headmaster.
- iv. Student Safeguarding Advisory Committee must escalate the reported abuse cases to DCPO with the help of Principal, Headmaster, DEO's and CEO's.
- v. Schools should display the helpline numbers 1098 and 14417 prominently, and ensure that students are made aware of their purpose and how to use them.
- vi. Schools must ensure the confidentiality of the complainant and protect their personal details.
- vii. Schools should provide awareness sessions for the participant on how to report grievances and the follow-up actions involved.
- viii. Schools must be open to receiving feedback from parents and students regarding facilities, coaches, coaching processes, etc., and take necessary actions to address any concerns raised.
- ix. In the case of zero reports, schools must review the feedback mechanism and take necessary steps to improve it.

5. Emergency Management:

- i. To conduct training to coaches, teachers, support staffs on first aid and emergency management.
- ii. Everyone must be aware about emergency safe assembling point.

6. Training and Communication:

- i. Ensure that coaches/ teachers are responsible to communicate with parents about the well-being of the students regularly and also upon completion of the tournament, the teacher In-charge is responsible for handing over the participants to their parents by communicating from time-to-time.
- ii. Schools should insist upon drug-cum-doping and also its consequences.
- iii. To arrange training with the support of subject experts - child safety enthusiasts by the approval of CEO to students on their body rights, life skills, sex education, self-defense, knowing how to understand, manage the irpeers, opposite genders, coaches /teachers and others. Also, how and where to escalate their difficulties and issues.
- iv. Provide training to coaches on gender sensitization, ethical coaching and child safeguarding before assigning duties.
- v. Counseling services should be provided at fixed and regular intervals.
- vi. Schools should create awareness among coaches, teachers, and support staff on how to handle emergency situations, including cases of abuse, suicide attempts, fire accidents, violence, food poisoning, and doping activities.
- vii. Schools should maintain a register for referrals in emergency cases, documenting details such as the incident, the person handling it, and the referral destination.

- viii. Schools should sensitize students on the safety protocols to be followed during their travel, accommodation, and throughout their participation in sports events and tournaments.
- ix. Schools should train coaches, teachers and support staff on how to assess and address the psychosocial concerns of sportspersons.
- x. Schools should maintain a record of leaves taken by sportspersons. Any unusual or unexplained absences must be promptly communicated to the respective parents.
- xi. Schools must ensure that family members or guardians are informed if there are any psychological or behavioral concerns regarding the sportspersons.

7. Additional Guidelines:

- i. Ensure that no participant should go alone to the restroom and she must be accompanied by a girl student who will be authorized by the teacher / coach. This is to avoid movement of single girl going alone to rest room.
- ii. All sports practices should take place with the knowledge of school management, School Management Committee (SMC) members and parents; it shall also be open for parents know the student's sports schedule.
- iii. At least one lady teacher for each sports team must be accompanied with participants in all tournaments.
- iv. All the prohibited areas to be displayed with caution boards up to the understanding level of students. Also, Schools to ensure that participants are strictly prohibited to have access into any aquatic area / arena.
- v. Conduct strict background verification and psychological screening for all teachers / coaches, supporting staff and chaperones yearly once.

- vi. A safe and secured Transportation may be facilitated systematically well in advance and ensure that the travel of team members should be accompanied by the allotted teachers / coaches for the entire competitions.
- vii. TeacherIn-chargesareinstructedtostayalongwiththeparticipantsinthesamevenue allotted by the organizing committee.
- viii. Schools must ensure that the Student Safeguarding Advisory Committee (SSAC) people or designated person documents the full history of the incident and maintains a complete record of all actions taken throughout the process.
- ix. Schools must ensure that no cases go unreported. Failure to report or record a case should result in appropriate disciplinary action.
- x. Schools must ensure that coaches are strictly prohibited from using any form of physical or corporal punishment on sportspersons.
- xi. Schools must take appropriate action against coaches, teachers, and support staff if they establish any mutual expectations with students.

8. Code of Conduct:

- i. Ensure that all teachers/coaches, officials, staff, athletes/players/parents must follow a strict code of conduct to avoid the following:
 - ***Physical abuse***
 - ***Verbal abuse***
 - ***Aggressive behavior***
 - ***Violent behavior***
 - ***Body shaming***
 - ***Mental abuse***
 - ***Emotional abuse***

- *Neglect abuse*
- *Virtual abuse*
- *Bullying*
- *Damaging dignity*
- *Discrimination based on Caste, racism, community, religion and sex*
- *Abuse of power*
- *Personal inter actions*
- *Non ethical behavior*
- *Usage of drugs*
- *Consumption of alcohol, tobacco, etc.,*
- *Wearing costly jewels/valuables*
- *Students carrying mobile phones*
- *Improper dress code*

- ii. Any violation of the code of conduct may result in strict action, based on the seriousness of the incident.
- iii. Schools must provide clear instructions to supervising staff on detecting substance abuse. Schools and coaches should take disciplinary action if there is any deviation from the code of conduct (misconduct).
- iv. Schools should document any instances of substance abuse among sports persons and take immediate and appropriate action if there is a violation of the code of conduct (misconduct).

II. Guidelines to be Followed by the Teachers/Coaches Concerned

1. Training and Communication:

- v. To learn ethical coaching and child safe guarding before assigning duties.
- vi. Maintain constant supervision during all practices and matches. Ensuring players are aware of safety, rules and regulations.
- vii. Coaches must ensure that family members or guardians are informed if there are any psychological or behavioral concerns regarding the sportspersons.

2. Emergency Management:

- i. Based on the medical condition of the participants, appropriate medical support such as first-aid materials, access to clinicians, and physiotherapists may be arranged to ensure their safety and well-being during the event.

3. Maintenance of Sports Persons Record:

- i. To ensure the creation of physiological profile, psychosocial profile and family background of each participant by the coaches and update it regularly.
- ii. Practice session and duration may be decided based on the respective Schools protocol. Coaches to ensure that if any practice session is scheduled after school hours or on public holidays must happen in presence of a lady teacher or SMC or parents.
- iii. Coaches should ensure the provision, monitoring, and maintenance of necessary facilities and amenities for sportspersons.
- iv. Coaches should maintain a record of leaves taken by sportspersons, and promptly inform the principal and their respective parents of any unusual or unexplained absences.

4. Additional Guidelines:

- i. At least one lady teacher for each sports team must be accompanied with participants in all tournaments.
- ii. Ensure that participants are not supposed to go for any sight-seeing before and after the tournament.
- iii. Coaches and teachers must know all the prohibited areas and to ensure that participants are strictly prohibited to have access to prohibited area especially aquatic area.
- iv. At the time of motivating / inspiring / appreciating, the physical touch is strictly prohibited on the participants under any circumstances. Verbal appreciation is highly solicited.
- v. Discipline and decorum should be monitored throughout the practice and competitions.
- vi. Coaches and teachers are responsible for maintaining regular communication with parents regarding the well-being of students. Prior to any tournament, they must obtain written consent from the parents or guardians of participating students. Additionally, upon completion of the tournament, the designated teacher-in-charge must ensure that all participants are safely handed over to their parents, maintaining timely communication throughout the process.
- vii. Teacher In-charges are instructed to stay along with the participants in the same venue allotted by the organizing committee.
- viii. Should the participants report any form of abuse, then it is compulsory to report abuse to the grievance committee and provide protection to whistle – blowers.

- ix. Coaches, teachers, and support staff must follow code of conduct. Any violation of the code of conduct may result in strict action, based on the seriousness of the incident.
- x. No participants should go alone to the restroom and she must be accompanied by a girl student who will be authorized by the teacher / coach. This is to avoid movement of single girl going alone to rest room.
- xi. Coaches can meet the participant individually only in the common area allotted by the school within allotted time. Coaches / teachers are not allowed to have any discussions with students in closed rooms / areas.
- xii. Coaches should provide an appropriate diet plan tailored to the students' athletic needs.
- xiii. Coaches, teachers and support staff must ensure that no cases go unreported.
Failure to report or record a case should result in appropriate disciplinary action.
- xiv. Coaches, teachers, and support staff must be receptive to feedback from parents and students regarding facilities, coaching, and the coaching process, and take necessary actions to address any issues raised.
- xv. Coaches should record feedback and take appropriate actions. If the feedback is critical, it should be escalated to the Principal.
- xvi. Coaches should not invite sports person to their homes or engage in any private meetings. If such a situation arises, the student must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.
- xvii. Coaches are strictly prohibited from using physical or corporal punishment on sports persons.

- xviii. Coaches should provide equal time, input, and attention to all sports persons, ensuring fair treatment and opportunities for everyone.
- xix. Coaches must avoid favoritism and should not encourage or accept any kind of personal favours.
- xx. Coaches should avoid frequent one-on-one meetings with individual sports persons without the knowledge of the Principal and the student's parents or guardians.
- xxi. Coaches must avoid neglect or abuse, which includes any omission or failure to provide reasonable care for the students.
- xxii. Coaches, teachers, and support staff should not have any mutual expectations with students.
- xxiii. Coaches must provide clear instructions to supervising staff on detecting substance abuse. Schools and coaches should take disciplinary action if there is any deviation from the code of conduct (misconduct).
- xxiv. Coaches should document any instances of substance abuse among sportspersons and take immediate and appropriate action if there is a violation of the code of conduct (misconduct).
- xxv. Coaches, teachers and support staff should address these indicators promptly if a student exhibits any of the following signs:
- Unexplained or unwanted injuries
 - Decline in performance
 - Nightmares or trouble sleeping
 - Poor self-image
 - In ability to trust others
 - Aggressive or disruptive behavior

- Intense anger
- Acting out sexually
- Self-destructive, self-abusive, or suicidal behavior
- Sadness, withdrawal, passivity, or depression
- Drug or alcohol use
- Avoidance of certain places
- Changes in behavioral patterns
- Fear of certain adults or peers
- Risk-taking behaviors

III. Guidelines to be Followed by the Sports Persons

1. Adherence to Rules:

- i. Sports persons must adhere to the rules and regulations governed by the rules of the specific game / organization.
- ii. Students who fail to comply with the school's rules and regulations may be subject to disciplinary action.

2. Safety Orientation:

- i. Athletes / Players must be aware of safety guidelines. Players are not permitted to step out of the playing venue and also to prohibited areas.
- ii. Students should understand that if any coach, teacher, support staff, or anyone asks them to maintain secrecy, it is an indication that the student is experiencing abuse, and it must be reported immediately.
- iii. Students must be aware that abuse can occur from both the same gender and the opposite gender. Abuse in any form must be reported immediately.

3. Code of Conduct:

- i. Players must follow code of conduct. Any violation of the code of conduct may result in strict action, based on the seriousness of the incident.

4. Grievance Reporting:

- i. All athletes / players should have the knowledge of how and where to report their grievances. Players must be aware about provision of grievance box / e-mail ID/grievance committee members. Players are encouraged to report Grievance in any form (written/verbal) to the committee or any one. Additionally, schools must ensure that students are aware of child helpline numbers 1098 and 14417, including their purpose and usage.
- ii. Students can raise complaints or suggestions anonymously through the grievance box, SSAC, any staff member, or their parents. Confidentiality will be maintained, regardless of whether they reveal their identity.
- iii. Students are encouraged to report if they observe any fellow students experiencing psychological concerns or abuse from anyone, including coaches, teachers, support staff, senior students, or peers, and if they need any help.

5. Feed back on Coaching:

- i. Female Sports persons are encouraged to provide feedback on coaching and over all participation.
- ii. Students are encouraged to provide feedback on amenities, facilities, coaching practices, disciplinary actions, or any other issues they may face.

6. Discipline and Decorum:

- i. Discipline and decorum should be maintained by all the participants throughout the competition.

7. Aware on Not Being Alone:

- i. No participant should go alone to the restroom and she must be accompanied by a girl student who will be authorized by the teacher / coach. This is to avoid movement of single girl going alone to rest room.
- ii. During travel, students must go to the restroom with another female student, as assigned by the coaches or teachers.
- iii. A single student is not allowed to travel alone with the coach in any private vehicle

8. Restriction on One-to-One Meeting:

- i. Coaches can meet the participant individually only in the common area allotted by the school and allotted time. Coaches / teachers are not allowed to have any discussions with students in closed rooms / areas.

9. Dress Code for Sports Persons:

- i. Prescribed dress code to be followed depending upon the game / sport.
- ii. Before and after competition, athletes / players are advised to change their sports costume and wear the school uniform.

10. Doping:

- i. To eradicate doping in sports at all levels, participants may be educated about doping and its consequences.
- ii. Promote ethical attitudes in sports, encouraging rejection of doping and other unfair methods to improve performance.
- iii. Once an athlete / player indulged in unfair use of chemical substances and caught hold by the doping committee, severe action will be taken not only against the athlete but also management, teacher In-charge / coaches who are found guilty.

IV. Guidelines to be Followed by the Parents

- i. Off the school hours, ensure that the parents must aware on the coach–players meetings take place only with knowledge of School.
- ii. Parents must give written consent before their wards can travel for any tournaments, which should be submitted to the head of the School.
- iii. Parents must acknowledge the communication with School which helps students' protection.
- iv. Parents should know about tournament schedule, accommodation and travel plan.
- v. Parents must provide emergency contact details to the school for urgent communication.
- vi. Parents must instruct their wards to abide by and adhere the code of conduct aid down by the school.
- vii. Parents must ensure that no cases go unreported. Failure to report or record a case should result in appropriate disciplinary action.
- viii. Parents must follow the code of conduct. Any violation of the code of conduct may result in strict action, based on the seriousness of the incident.
- ix. Parents should address these indicators promptly if a student exhibits any of the following signs:
 - Unexplained or unwanted injuries
 - Decline in performance
 - Night mares or trouble sleeping
 - Poor self-image
 - Inability to trust others
 - Aggressive or disruptive behavior

- Intense anger
- Acting out sexually
- Self-destructive, self-abusive or suicidal behavior
- Sadness, withdrawal, passivity or depression
- Drug or alcohol use
- Avoidance of certain places
- Changes in behavioral patterns
- Fear of certain adults or peers
- Risk-taking behaviors

V. Guidelines to be Followed by Organizing Schools/Institutions

- i. Should deploy women welfare officers, deploy trained counselors, gender sensitization of coaches and safety protocols or accommodation.
- ii. Ensure adequate, standard sports equipment and proper maintenance of grounds.
- iii. Ensure that there should be sufficient and hygienic rest rooms including clean floor, clean toilet and water facility, each restroom must have bucket and mug, closed dustbin, incinerator to dispose napkins; also separate dressing rooms to maintain privacy.
- iv. Ensure that safer environment of dressing room and rest room such as closed windows with screen, proper door latches, and hangers for cloths.
- v. Ensure sufficient sanitary napkins availability or with vending machine in the schools.
- vi. Provide CCTV surveillance in common areas of dormitories, mass halls, TV rooms, rest room corridor, dressing room corridor and other required areas.
- vii. Ensure the availability of sufficient first aid kit.

- viii. Ensure sufficient potable water for everyone.
- ix. Schools to arrange common area and time allotment to students and their respective coaches / teachers-in charge to have a one-one discussion. Schools to instruct their staff not to have any discussions with students in closed rooms / areas.
- x. Everyone must aware about emergency safe assembling point.
- xi. Counseling services should be provided at fixed and regular intervals.
- xii. Organizing schools must follow code of conduct. Any violation of the code of conduct may result in strict action, based on the seriousness of the incident.
- xiii. Organizing schools / Institutions shall have a complaint box
- xiv. During the conduct of event, a committee exclusively for safety to be in place consisting of a women headmistress as head, one women Physical Director/Physical Education Teacher and one Team Manager preferably women.
- xv. A whatsapp number shall be displayed in the Venue to receive complaints from the participants including children.
- xvi. The Committee on safety must ensure that any complaint received is properly registered, documented, and followed by immediate and appropriate action.
- xvii. The Committee on safety must encourage coaches to record feedback and take necessary actions. If the feedback is critical, it should be escalated to the Headmaster.
- xviii. The Committee on safety must escalate the reported abuse cases to DCPO with the help of Principal, Headmaster, DEO's and CEO's.
- xix. The institutions/organizations should display the helpline numbers 1098 and 14417 prominently, and ensure that students are made aware of their purpose and how to use them.

- xx. The institutions and the Committee on safety must ensure the confidentiality of the complainant and protect their personal details.
- xxi. The Committee on safety should provide awareness sessions for the participant on how to report grievances and the follow-up actions involved.
- xxii. Ensure that no cases go unreported. Failure to report or record a case should result in appropriate disciplinary action.

VI. Guidelines for SSAC, Coaches, Teachers, Support Staff, and Others In Handling Complaints

When a sports person discloses an experience of abuse, you should:

- i. Listen with Empathy
- ii. Avoid Speaking Poorly of the Perpetrator
- iii. Encourage the Individual to Speak Up
- iv. Ask No Blaming or Leading Questions: Do not ask questions that place blame on the victim or make them feel guilty about the incident.
- v. Reassure: Assure the student that they are not responsible for the incident and that it is not their fault.
- vi. Maintain Confidentiality: Follow mandatory reporting protocols.
- vii. Offer Support: Provide medical or counseling services if needed.

Director