

Code of Conduct for Coaches and Assistant Coaches

As a responsible Athletics Coach, or Assistant Coach, you will:

- Foster a culture of mutual respect between parents, athletes, coaches, officials and other volunteers.
- Promote and support the athlete centric model. This model puts the athlete's interests at the heart of everything we do and above your own personal interests.
- Empower athletes to make their own coaching choices based on what is right for them and facilitate the athlete making these choices by talking to other coaches as necessary. A coach should never prohibit an athlete from joining another group or speaking with another coach.
- Understand that an athlete's coaching needs may change as they get older and collaborate with other coaches to fulfil this need.
- Appreciate your own limitations as a coach and be prepared to seek assistance or an alternative coach if you are unable to meet any athlete's needs in your group.
- Consider yourself as part of a wider coaching team at the Club and not coach your own group in isolation.
- Follow the track etiquette rules published by WADAC and the University of Winchester, both of which are made available on the Club website.
- Avoid carrying out drills on the track during Club nights. Drills can take place off the track.
- Ensure that you communicate clearly with other coaches or assistant coaches who are operating on the track and are likely to be affected by your group.
- Not seek to undermine another coach or assistant coach to another member of the Club or third party.
- Not contradict or challenge any coach in public or seek to undermine any other coach in front of the athlete and/or parents. Any issues relating to the conduct of a coach should either be raised directly with the coach away from athletes or with the Chair.
- Never try to recruit, either overtly or covertly, athletes who are already receiving coaching from another coach at the Club or elsewhere. If an additional coach is approached by the athlete or a parent of an athlete receiving coaching from another coach, the additional coach should refer the athlete or parent immediately to the other coach and explain to the athlete and/or parent that the additional coach is unable to provide coaching until that discussion has taken place and an agreement has been reached between all parties. In the event that the athlete or parent is unable or unwilling to have a discussion with the other coach, then both coaches should discuss the issue directly before any changes to the coaching programme occurs.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every athlete and others involved in athletics and treat everyone equally.
- Cooperate fully with others involved in the sport such as technical officials, team managers, other coaches, trustees, doctors, physiotherapists, sport scientists and representatives of the governing body in the best interests of the athlete.
- Be appropriately qualified including obtaining DBS/Disclosure Scotland clearance, and England Athletics approved Safeguarding Course attendance, update your licence and education as and when required by UKA and adhere to the terms of the coaching licence.

- Hold the appropriate, valid qualifications and insurance cover.
- Follow all guidelines laid down by the national governing body and the Club via the Committee and Chair.
- Clarify with athletes at the outset (and where appropriate, with parents or carers) exactly what it is that is expected of them and what athletes are entitled to expect from you.
- Place the welfare and safety of the athlete above the development of performance.
- Ensure that activities you direct or guide are appropriate for the age, maturity, experience and ability of the individual athlete.
- Encourage and guide athletes to accept responsibility for their own performance and behaviour.
- Try to observe a recommended maximum ratio of 1 coach to 12 athletes at a training session or work in partnership with another coach/coaching assistant to coach more than this number.
- Consistently promote positive aspects of the sport such as fair play and never condone rule violations or the use of prohibited or age-inappropriate substances.
- Not seek to bring the club into disrepute or otherwise damage the reputation of the sport or the club. Develop appropriate working relationships with athletes based on mutual trust and respect, especially with those athletes under 18 years or vulnerable adults.
- Strictly maintain a clear boundary between friendship and intimacy with athletes and not conduct inappropriate relationships with athletes. Relationships with athletes can cause significant problems for other team members, raising concerns of favouritism and/or victimisation should the relationship later end.
- Not allow an intimate personal relationship to develop between yourself and any athlete aged under 18 years. Any violation of this could result in a coach, or assistant coach, licence being withdrawn. It may also be a criminal offence to conduct a relationship with an athlete aged under 16 years. It may also be a violation of your coaching licence to form an intimate personal relationship with a vulnerable adult coached by you.
- Endeavour not to allow intimate relationships to develop between yourself and athletes coached by you aged over 18 years.

As a responsible Athletics Coach or Assistant Coach, when participating in or attending any athletics activities, including training/coaching sessions and competition events you will:

- Act with dignity and display courtesy and good manners towards others.
- Avoid swearing and abusive language and irresponsible behaviour including behaviour that is dangerous to yourself or others, acts of violence, bullying, harassment and physical and sexual abuse.
- Challenge inappropriate behaviour and language by others.
- Be aware that your attitude and behaviour directly affects the behaviour of athletes under your supervision.
- Not engage or have previously engaged in any inappropriate or illegal behaviour.
- Ensure that, at all times, you work within your professional capacity, under no circumstances offering services you are not qualified to conduct.
- Avoid destructive behaviour and leave athletics venues as you find them.
- Not carry or consume alcohol and/or illegal substances.

- Avoid carrying any items that could be dangerous to yourself or others excluding athletics equipment used in the course of your athletics activity.
- Carry a mobile phone at all times for offsite training sessions in case you need to contact someone for urgent medical assistance.

In addition, coaches and assistant coaches should follow these guidelines on best coaching practice, in particular, with young athletes or with vulnerable adults:

- Avoid critical language or actions, such as sarcasm which could undermine an athlete's self esteem. For instance, this will include telling an athlete that they are no good at a particular event, or are too small or big to take part in a training group.
- All lead coaches should safely collect a list of their athletes/emergency contact details/medical conditions/disabilities/parental consents. These should be securely stored, and readily accessible if required.
- Avoid spending time alone with young athletes unless clearly in the view of others to protect both yourself and the young athlete. In special circumstances, for example when coaching elite young athletes, one to one coaching sessions may form part of the required training schedule. In this circumstance, parental/guardian consent must be sought and obtained prior to sessions taking place. The coach must inform the parent/guardian of the venue for training and an emergency contact number should be provided by both the coach and parent/guardian.
- Ensure massage treatment during competitions/training sessions is only carried out appropriately by a professional Physiotherapist/Sports Massage Therapist/Masseuse to Under 18s in the presence of the child's parent and/or coach, never alone with the Under 18. These professionals will hold current qualifications, licences and insurance which will not have lapsed for any reason.
- Do not comment inappropriately on the appearance of an athlete.
- Avoid taking young athletes alone in your car.
- Never invite a young athlete alone into your home.
- Never share a bedroom with a child.
- Always explain why and ask for consent before touching an athlete, and never under any circumstances whatsoever, inappropriately touch an athlete. When touching an athlete always ensure that another athlete or coach is present who can hear, see and understand the purpose of any necessary action.
- Ensure that parents/carers know and have given consent before taking a young athlete away from the usual training venue.
- Work in same-sex pairs if supervising changing areas.
- Respect the right of young athletes to an independent life outside of athletics.
- Report any accidental injury, distress, misunderstanding or misinterpretation to the parents/carers and Club welfare officer as soon as possible.
- Report any suspected misconduct by other coaches or other people involved in athletics to the Club, Regional, National or UKA welfare officer as soon as possible.
- Report any concerns or signs of abuse/bullying/ neglect to the Club's welfare officer. Remember it is your duty to report concerns and ensure the safety of the child you are supervising, not to decide/investigate whether abuse is happening.

- Any use of social media in connection with WADAC activities must be carried out responsibly and in accordance with the WADAC Social Media Policy, and never to threaten, bully, offend, upset or to take part in illegal activity.

The Committee may exclude or ban any coach or assistant coach from Club nights and/or as a coach of WADAC for breaching this code of conduct in accordance with the disciplinary procedures.

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