



## **Appendix 4- IABA Coaching Code of Conduct – Updated May 2024.**

### **Introduction**

The IABA is committed to setting high standards, ensuring they are maintained and applied consistently. The IABA is committed to review and improvement of those standards as the organization evolves. The **Club** aims to create a safe learning and development environment for all athletes in which their dignity and agency is respected and promoted.

Throughout this code of conduct, the term *athlete* refers to underage boxers and/or to elite boxers under the age of 18 where relevant and applicable.

Adult members of the club/association must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every child and must treat everyone equally, regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion or ability. Adult members working with young people in boxing should be suitable and appropriately qualified.

Adult members will be expected to go through appropriate recruitment and selection procedures (i.e. vetting), that apply to all persons with regular access to young people, whether paid or unpaid. References should be followed up by the club or IABA depending on the level the person is volunteering/employed at.

There will be a 'sign up' procedure, whereby the appointed/reappointed adult members agree to abide by the IABA Code of Conduct (see below).

Clubs will be given access to a copy of the Association's safeguarding policy and the adult members should be made aware of the procedures contained within it.

Adult members involved in young people's boxing have a great opportunity to be a positive role model and help build an individual's confidence.

All adult members are encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect children in their care and themselves from false allegations.

The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate within boxing

### **What we Expect from you**

Coaches should fully understand their roles and have a clear understanding of the nature of the relationship between the coach and athlete. Their role is that of guide, mentor, and facilitator of learning. They can be significant mentors in the life of an athlete and have an incredibly positive influence on the development of the athlete by providing:

- Ensure the safety of all children by careful supervision, proper pre-planning of coaching sessions, using safe methods at all times. Treat all young people equally and ensure they feel valued. Have no favourites. It is tempting to only give praise and attention to a young boxer who may appear to be developing quickly or showing talent. It is wrong to do this as it may undermine other boxers and make them feel inferior.
- Be careful to avoid the “star system”. Each child deserves equal time and attention.
- Ensure that proper protective equipment is worn at ALL times in accordance with Health and Safety Regulations.
- Encourage all children not to discriminate on the grounds of religious beliefs, race, gender, social classes or lack of ability.
- Coaches should communicate and co-operate with medical and ancillary practitioners in the diagnosis, treatment and management of their boxers’ medical or related problems.
- Avoid giving advice of a personal or medical nature if you are not qualified to do so. Any information of a personal nature must be kept strictly confidential and not shared unless the welfare of the child requires the passing on of this information.
- Do not allow any rough or dangerous play, bullying, use of abusive language or inappropriate behaviour.
- Appreciate the efforts of all young people and do not over-train the young person. Recognise the developmental needs and capacity of children and young people by avoiding excessive training or competition and by not forcing them to compete against their will.
- Be positive, approachable and offer praise to promote the objectives of the IABA and their clubs at all times.
- Do not let any allegations of abuse of any kind go unchallenged or unrecorded if appropriate. Incidents and accidents to be recorded in the club incident/accident book. Parents must be informed.
- Report alleged abuse to the clubs Children’s Officer/DLP.
- Ensure the rights and responsibilities of youth members are enforced
- Do not abuse members physically, emotionally or sexually.
- Be sure all members adhere to the IABA requirements to “Ban forthwith the losing of weight on the morning of the scales” (Dr S. Donnelly August 2006).
- Maintain confidentiality about sensitive information. The nature of the relationship between leader and a boxer or their family. This information must be regarded as confidential and except where abuse is suspected, must not be divulged to a third party without the expressed permission of the boxer/family.
- Be a role model (disciplined/committed/punctual), remember children learn by example.
- Ensure that those who approach the scales to enter a competition, whether at club show level, county, provincial or national championship level shall be fit to box at a particular weight.
- Ensure a boxer does not place themselves at risk by restricting their food (their energy source) and/or restriction of fluids which leads to a weakened and strength sapped boxer unable to recover in time and hence not at his/her best when the contest begins.

- Ensure that only officials of the same sex manage weigh-ins and monitor dressing rooms to avoid embarrassment for a young boxer.
- Ensure a boxer remains hydrated. Dehydration, a condition caused by too low a fluid intake can cause serious side-effects. Children and young people are most susceptible to dehydration because of their small body mass and higher loss of water and electrolytes (salts) which is greater during exercise. Even mild dehydration can cause a loss of form i.e. a loss of 2-4lbs (1-2 kilograms) in the lower weights will cause a loss of ability. Sluggishness, slow reactions and no stamina with tiredness at the end of rounds and complete loss of energy in the last round will result. To avoid losing too much fluid during exercise it is best to drink regularly – up to 2 litres per day in addition to the boxer’s usual fluid intake.
- Refrain from smoking and/or the consumption/influence of alcohol during club activities or coaching sessions.
- Challenging bullying in any form i.e. physical or emotional. Bullying is not an accepted behaviour towards anyone at boxing – be they child, coach, volunteer or parent. Anyone found to be bullying others will be dealt with seriously both with regard to the behaviour exhibited and the reasons for the behaviour.
- When approached to take on a new boxer, ensure that any previous coach-student relationship has been ended by the boxer or former coach in a professional manner.
- Avoid working alone and ensure there is adequate supervision for all activities. It is important to realise that certain situations or friendly actions could be misinterpreted by the participant or by outsiders.
- Make boxing FUN.

**Practices to be avoided:**

- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
- Administering First Aid involving the removing of children’s clothing unless in the presence of others.

**Practices never to be sanctioned by Coaches/Volunteers/Officials:**

**The following will never be sanctioned:**

- Sharing a room with a child/young person.
- Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Taking children to their home. Inviting or allowing children to stay with you at home, whether as part of a pre-arranged tournament hosting agreement or as a friend of your own child. But always with parents’ permission.
- Sharing a bath or shower with a child/young person.
- Allowing or engaging in any form of inappropriate touching or making sexual advances.
- Allowing children/young people to use foul, sexualised or discriminatory language suggestive comments to a child/young person, even in fun.
- Reducing a child/young person to tears as a form of control.
- Allowing allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Undertaking personal care for children/young people.
- Mismatching of opponents. (Age, Weight, Ability)
- Engaging in inappropriate training for example ‘endurance’ or ‘stamina’ training such as long distance runs at a pace that causes extreme fatigue and distress.

- The practice of forcing fluid restriction in underage competitors is unacceptable and would risk the health of a young boxer merely to “make the weight.” Using saunas, laxatives and fluid and food restriction just prior to a weigh-in, boxers would experience loss or sapping of strength. This practice also causes a loss of sodium or potassium salts from the body.

- Ensure they maintain healthy, positive and professional relationships with all young boxers. Coaches/volunteers and others in positions of authority and trust in relation to players aged 16 and 17 years must not engage in sexual relationships with them while that unequal power relationship exists.

**Coaches/ Volunteers/ Officials have a right to:**

- Access ongoing training and information on all aspects of leading/managing activities for youths, particularly on safeguarding.
- Support in the reporting of suspected abuse or poor practice.
- Access to professional support services.
- Fair and equitable treatment by the IABA and club.
- Be protected from abuse by children/ youths. Other adult members and parents.
- Not to be left vulnerable when working with children.

Any misdemeanors and general misbehavior will be dealt with immediately and reported verbally to the club’s child protection officer. Persistent breach of the code will result in dismissal from the club and possible the IABA. Dismissals can be appealed by the Coach /Volunteer/Official with final decisions taken by the IABA.

**Respect For Diversity**

- Coaches must take care not to impose their own personal, political, or religious beliefs on athletes, nor suggest to athletes that adoption of particular beliefs or values may result in preferential treatment. It is preferable to avoid discussions of such nature in the workplace.
- Where athletes seek advice which may require a value judgement, the staff member should only provide information on the range of options available within the law and within IABA safeguarding/ Children First/Children Act 2004 guidelines.
- Coaches in IABA should contact their Club Children’s officer should such a situation arise for further help and guidance.

**There is a recommended ratio of Coaches to groups of athletes**

The recommended ratio of coaches to athletes in large groups is 1:10. However, it is always advisable to have two coaches even with a group of 10 or less. Safety and other specific circumstances may require that these ratios are lower.

For competition trips and events away from the training base the ratio should be at least 1:8. For trips away with overnight stays away from home, the ratio should be 1:6 with at least two coaches.

***(See: IABA Guidelines for Groups Undertaking a Trip Involving Overnight Stays Away from Home.)***

In a single sex group, it is recommended that one Coach or person, at least, is of the same sex as the participants. In a mixed group there should be sufficient male and female coaching coach/leaders to reflect the ratio of male and female participants.

**Responses to challenging behaviour aim to facilitate learning and development:**

When dealing with a disruptive athlete it is important to try to help the athlete to learn from the situation and to take charge of, and change, their own behaviour. It is recommended that where possible more than one

coach be present during these conversations. Although every situation is unique, the following are some general guidelines on how to respond appropriately:

**DO:**

- Talk to the athlete and maintain their confidentiality. Ideally this would be with another adult from the coaching team with whom the athlete is comfortable. Acknowledging that all situations are unique and for safety or immediacy reasons, the discussion may only be possible one to one. This should only happen if both parties are in a visible location and with the prior knowledge of other supporting coaches.
- Be aware of your own feelings
- If you are angry, walk away and say you will deal with it later
- Breathe deeply and calm yourself
- Ask the athlete what is happening
- Listen attentively to what the athlete says
- Acknowledge the athlete's feelings and point of view
- Describe specifically their behaviour and state your response
- Explain consequences of disruptive behaviour
- Praise and encourage the athlete in some way if possible
- Discuss alternative responses and help the athlete to try them out
- Consult with parents if necessary

**DO NOT:**

- Use sarcasm or hurtful remarks
- Use bad language
- Verbally or physically abuse the athlete
- Use exercise as a punishment
- Embarrass or humiliate an athlete using sarcastic or hurtful remarks about the athlete or his/her family
- Verbally abuse an athlete in order to bully or intimidate him/her
- Physically punish an athlete
- To tell jokes of an inappropriate nature or make comments of a sexual nature
- To use electronic media to carry out any of the above
- Use images of underage athletes on personal social media sites

**Any form of physical, emotional or sexual abuse of athletes by another athlete, coach member is totally unacceptable.**

**Recording an Incident:**

IABA guidelines require that serious instances of disruptive behaviour, which necessitate intervention, be documented, and kept on file. Where applicable, this should be shared with the relevant member of Club management. (See **IABA.IE**) for a sample template that can be adapted to suit the environment and the incident. This report should be available to Safeguarding Manager where necessary, relevant staff involved with the group or individual).

The written report should describe:

- a) The programme/activity running at the time
- b) What happened
- c) Who was involved
- d) Where and when it happened

- e) What was said, if significant
- f) Any injury to person(s) or property
- g) If the situation was resolved and what was done to bring about its resolution
- h) Any follow-up or consequences to the situation.
- i) Any contact with an external agency- who, what was their role, contact details and advice provided

Self-Declaration 1. Do you agree to abide by this code of conduct and the guidelines contained in the Young People in Boxing Policy? Yes [ ] No [ ]

2. Have you ever been asked to leave a sporting organisation? Yes [ ] No [ ]

If yes please specify details

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3. Is there any reason why you should not be working with young people? Yes [ ] No [ ] If yes please specify details \_\_\_\_\_

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NB: If question 2 and/or 3 is answered YES, the clubs Child Protection Officer should contact or National Child Protection Officer.

*Coach*

*Name (Print) :.....*

*Signature:.....*

*Role: .....Date:.....*

*Secretary/ Children's Officer*

*Name (Print) :.....*

*Signature:.....*

*Role: .....Date:.....*