

Safeguarding & Wellbeing Policy



Our Commitment

At Netball Portugal, the safety, dignity, and wellbeing of every player, coach, volunteer, and member of our community come first. Safeguarding is not just about preventing abuse; it is about creating a culture of respect, inclusion, and care where children, young people, and adults at risk can thrive both on and off the court.

We are equally committed to protecting the **mental health** of our players. This includes tackling bullying, harassment, and harmful behaviour whether it happens in person, during training and competition, or online through social media and digital platforms.

Scope

This policy applies to everyone associated with Netball Portugal, including:

- Children and young players (under 18 years of age)
- Adults at risk (those over 18 who may be unable to protect themselves from harm due to disability, illness, or personal circumstances)
- All staff, volunteers, coaches, officials, and members of Netball Portugal
- Parents and guardians of junior players

Key Principles

1. **Safety first** – Physical and mental wellbeing is our top priority in all activities.
2. **Voice and choice** – Children and adults at risk will be listened to, and their views will influence decisions that affect them.
3. **Respect for all** – No one will face discrimination or exclusion based on age, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, culture, religion, ability, sexual orientation, or background.
4. **Zero tolerance for bullying and abuse** – Whether physical, emotional, sexual, or digital, harmful behaviour will not be ignored or tolerated.
5. **Shared responsibility** – Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Every adult involved in Netball Portugal has a duty to act if they see or suspect harm.
6. **Confidentiality with care** – Information will be handled sensitively and shared only when necessary to protect someone from harm.

Definitions

- **Safeguarding:** The proactive measures taken to prevent harm and promote wellbeing.
- **Child Protection:** Specific action when a child is at risk of significant harm.
- **Wellbeing Support:** Initiatives to promote mental health, resilience, and positive participation.
- **Bullying:** Any repeated behaviour—verbal, physical, social, or digital—that causes emotional or physical harm.
- **Personnel:** All adults representing Netball Portugal, whether as employees, board members, contractors, volunteers, coaches, or officials.

Legal and Policy Context

- This policy reflects Portuguese, European, and international safeguarding standards, including:
- **Portugal**
 - Law No. 147/99 – Protection of Children and Young People in Danger
 - Law No. 113/2009 – Prevention of child sexual abuse and exploitation
 - Resolution of the Council of Ministers No. 112/2020 – National Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2021–2024

- Decree-Law No. 101/2021 – Mandatory criminal record checks for adults working with children
- **European & International**
 - United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
 - Council of Europe / EU “Child Safeguarding in Sport” Roadmap (Portugal)
 - International Safeguards for Children in Sport

Responsibilities

- **Board of Directors** – accountable for ensuring the policy is up to date, legally compliant, and implemented across the organisation.
- **Safeguarding Lead Officer** – the first point of contact for concerns, ensuring issues are managed effectively and reported to relevant authorities when necessary.
- **Coaches, volunteers, and staff** – responsible for embedding good practice, monitoring player welfare, and reporting concerns without delay.
- **Parents and guardians** – expected to support the safeguarding culture, including role-modelling respect and reporting any concerns.

Our Commitments

Netball Portugal will:

- Provide a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment for everyone involved in netball.
- Actively support the **mental health and resilience** of players, offering guidance and signposting to professional help where needed.
- Take a firm stand against **bullying, cyberbullying, and online harassment**, and support those affected.
- Ensure all personnel working with children and adults at risk undergo recruitment checks and safeguarding training.
- Respond to safeguarding and wellbeing concerns quickly, appropriately, and with sensitivity.
- Carry out risk assessments for activities such as tournaments, overnight stays, or travel involving children and adults at risk.
- Promote a culture where speaking up is safe and concerns are taken seriously.
- Regularly evaluate and review safeguarding practices to remain effective and relevant.

Breaches of Policy

Failure to comply with this policy or associated codes of conduct may result in disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or removal from Netball Portugal.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually at first, then every three years, or earlier if:

- Legislation or safeguarding guidance changes
- New risks or challenges emerge
- A safeguarding concern within Netball Portugal requires policy reassessment