



NZMMAF
NEW ZEALAND MIXED MARTIAL ARTS FEDERATION

POLICIES + PROCEDURES

Review date	Responsibility
12 April 2027	NZMMAF Board or party with delegated authority

SAFEGUARDING POLICY | DATE: 12 APRIL 2026

The New Zealand Mixed Martial Arts Federation (NZMMAF) is committed to providing a safe experience and environment where children, young people and adults at risk are protected from abuse and harm that may happen at NZMMAF and in MMA.

We are committed to having a culture of safeguarding and protection in place, which goes beyond compliance. We acknowledge that a failure to take reasonable measures to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk involved in MMA is a threat to integrity and a breach of this policy.

How we protect children, young people and adults at risk

We do this by:

- requiring people who supervise or work with children, young people or adults at risk without a parent or caregiver present to be safety checked and complete annual education on safeguarding
- having safe and inclusive practices for children and adults at risk (e.g., coaching, travelling and overnight stays, taking and sharing images, and changing rooms)
- appointing a safeguarding lead to oversee the requirements in this policy
- having a child protection policy to identify, report, and respond to child abuse, child sexual abuse and child neglect.

Introduction

1. Children, young people and adults at risk have the right to:
 - take part in sport and recreation free from abuse and harm participate fully in cultural life and practices, and express their identity
 - thrive in safe and supportive environments
2. We will protect these rights by having standards of safeguarding and protection to ensure MMA is fair, inclusive, positive and safe.
3. **Safeguarding** means the actions we take to reduce the risk of harm to children and to promote their overall wellbeing.
4. **Protection** means the actions taken to respond when children are or may be experiencing harm, including from child abuse, child sexual abuse and child neglect.

What this policy does

5. This policy sets out what we will do to provide a safe experience and environment where children, young people and adults at risk are protected from harm that may happen inside or outside of our organisation. It also supports our child protection policy, and they should be read together.
6. The policy:
 - describes our commitment to a culture of safeguarding and protection

- requires all staff, volunteers, contractors and participants of NZMMAF to report any safety concerns about a child, young person or adult at risk
 - requires safety checks for specified persons
 - outlines safe practices that must be followed to protect children, young people and adults at risk
 - requires specified persons complete safeguarding training
 - appoints a safeguarding lead person who is responsible for overseeing the obligations required by this policy
 - refers to our child protection policy that provides for how we will identify, report, and respond to suspected or real cases of child abuse, child sexual abuse and child neglect
 - gives effect to our obligations under the Code of Integrity for Sport and Recreation (the Integrity Code) in relation to safeguarding.
7. This policy focuses on those within NZMMAF who will be working closely with children, young people and adults at risk. These people are known as **specified persons** and covers anyone who works in, volunteers for, or provides services to NZMMAF where such involvement:
- may or does involve regular or overnight contact with children, young people or adults at risk; and
 - takes place without a parent or guardian of a child or young person being present; or
 - takes place with an adult at risk without the presence of another adult.
8. The other definitions relevant to this policy are listed at Appendix 1.

Who this policy applies to

9. This policy applies to the members, staff, volunteers and contractors of NZMMAF as well as all participants involved in MMA activities, events and competitions we are responsible for. We will make sure everyone in this group is aware of this policy and knows that they have to follow it.

Safety checks

10. Our responsibility is to provide a fair, inclusive, positive and safe environment. This means we do not allow people into, or remain in, roles at NZMMAF if we consider there is a risk to children, young people and adults at risk.
11. We require that specified persons are safety checked before they start their role or duties at NZMMAF. We may also conduct safety checks for others where we consider it appropriate.
12. A safety check includes:
- verifying the person's identity
 - New Zealand Police vetting, or an official background/criminal record check through the Ministry of Justice
 - verifying the person's qualifications and experience, including professional memberships.
13. The safety check is re-done at least every three years.
14. A specified person is automatically disqualified from working with children, young people or adults at risk if they have been convicted of an offence under Schedule 2 of the Children's Act 2014.
15. If a safety check reveals convictions other than Schedule 2 offences, we will decide whether to engage the person based on the nature of the conviction, the nature of

the role and the results of a due diligence process in relation to the person's background including reference checks.

16. We will also take into account any matter from the safety check we consider relevant to the person who is working with children, young people or adults at risk.
17. Our process for assessing background check for a specified person working with children, young people or adults at risk, and assessing convictions other than Schedule 2 offences, is outlined at Appendices 2 and 3.

Safe practices

18. We have created safe practices that must be followed by everyone to protect children, young people and adults at risk, in the areas listed below.
19. We will raise awareness and understanding of these safe practices for staff, volunteers, contractors and participants through good communication and regular evaluation of their knowledge of safe practices.

Coaching, training and instructing

20. All coaches, instructors and anyone in a similar role at NZMMAF are required to provide a safe and positive environment and experience for children, young people and adults at risk that is inclusive and builds trust.
21. Coaches and instructors at NZMMAF work to achieve a good understanding of what children, young people and adults at risk need to have a safe and positive experience.
22. Coaches and instructors must follow NZMMAF's safe practices for safe coaching and instructing.

One-on-one interactions

23. We understand the risks associated with working alone with children, young people and adults at risk. NZMMAF requires adults who aren't a parent or caregiver to actively avoid one-on-one time with children, young people and adults at risk. This includes in-person and online interactions.
24. We acknowledge there are times where one-on-one interactions are unavoidable. These may include an activity where it is physically impossible to have another adult present. If these situations arise, the adult must follow NZMMAF's safe practices for one-on-one interactions.

Taking, sharing or storing images

25. All children, young people and adults at risk, our members, staff, volunteers, contractors and participants must follow, NZMMAF's safe practices on taking, storing and sharing images and videos of children, young people or adults at risk. This includes on our premises and at events or activities we have organised and or where we are responsible for the children, young people or adults at risk that are attending.

Transport and travel

26. We acknowledge there is a risk of deliberate harm to children, young people and adults at risk when they are travelling or going away overnight.
27. All children, young people and adults at risk, our members, staff, volunteers, contractors and participants are advised of, and must follow, NZMMAF's safe practices for safe transport and travel.

Overnight stays and accommodation, including sleeping arrangements

28. Sometimes events and activities for NZMMAF involve overnight stays for children, young people and adults at risk. NZMMAF acknowledges travelling and staying

away from home presents potential risks for their safety and wellbeing, and this means overnight stays need careful planning and supervision.

29. All children, young people and adults at risk, our members, staff, volunteers, contractors and participants involved in travelling with children, young people and adults at risk are advised of, and must follow, NZMMAF's safe practices on overnight stays and accommodation, including sleeping arrangements.

Changing room (or equivalent) arrangements

30. We acknowledge children, young people and adults at risk may be more at risk in changing rooms because:
- they may be undressed or showering, so are potentially more vulnerable
 - changing rooms and toilets are sometimes located away from other areas of buildings, venues or locations, and can be isolated
 - there may be less adult supervision in these areas.
31. All children, young people and adults at risk, our members, staff, volunteers, contractors and participants are advised of, and must follow, NZMMAF's safe practice in relation to behaviour in and around changing room and toilet facilities where children, young people or adults at risk may be present.

Education

32. We require that specified persons complete training in relation to safeguarding and protection of children, young people, and adults at risk.
33. They must complete the training before, or soon after, starting their role and at least annually after that.
34. The training must cover:
- prohibited behaviours with a focus on the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and adults at risk
 - the safe practices to prevent prohibited behaviours
 - other practices that we deem important to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children, young people, and adults at risk as set out in our education guidelines.

Child protection policy

35. We have a child protection policy that sets out how NZMMAF identifies, reports and responds to suspected or real cases of child abuse, child sexual abuse and child neglect.
36. All children, young people, adults at risk, our members, staff, volunteers, contractors and participants must follow the child protection policy.

Safeguarding lead person

37. We will at all times have a safeguarding lead person at a national level who is responsible for overseeing what is required by this policy.
38. This lead person is responsible for receiving reports of suspected or real cases of child abuse, child sexual abuse and child neglect under our child protection policy.
39. The safeguarding lead for NZMMAF is Matthew Toa. Their contact details are on www.nzmmafederation.nz and are:
Phone: 027 545 6665
Email: matt@nzmmaf.co.nz.

Reporting breaches of this policy

40. Any person may report a breach of this policy to:

- The safeguarding lead person
- NZMMAF at integrity@nzmmaf.co.nz
- the Sport Integrity Commission:
 - Website: <https://sportintegrity.nz/making-a-complaint/make-a-complaint>
 - Email: complaints@sportintegrity.nz
 - Phone: 0800 378 437.

Related policies

- Child protection policy

Appendix 1: Definitions

In this policy:

adult means a person who is 18 years or over

adult at risk means any adult who needs care and support, is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect, and is unable to remove or protect themselves from that risk because of those needs

child abuse means harming (whether physically, emotionally, psychologically, or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect or deprivation of any child or young person under 18 years of age

child neglect means the persistent failure to meet the physical and/or psychological needs of children and young people under 18 years of age, and not doing or providing the things they need to stay safe and be healthy

child sexual abuse means acts or behaviours where an adult, older or more powerful person uses a child or young person under 18 years of age for a sexual purpose

children and young people mean people under the age of 18 years

harm means physical or mental damage or injury resulting from a prohibited behaviour

participant includes:

a player, competitor, or any other person who takes part in MMA

an official or administrator

a coach, trainer, or other person who gives instruction in relation to MMA

a manager, an agent, or a team staff member

a person providing medical or paramedical services to a person who takes part in MMA or a team or group

a parent or caregiver of a person who takes part in MMA

any other person working with, treating, or assisting a person who takes part in MMA or a team or group

a volunteer providing services for MMA

prohibited behaviours means the following, which are further defined in the prohibited behaviours policy:

bullying, violence, abuse, intimidation, or harassment

child abuse, child sexual abuse or child neglect

sexually harmful behaviour

discrimination

competition manipulation and associated activity

corruption, fraud, deception or breach of trust

retaliation against or victimisation of any person because that person makes or intends to make a complaint or disclosure to NZMMAF, the Sport Integrity Commission or another organisation bound by the Integrity Code.

A prohibited behaviour can be an act or an omission, and includes behaviour that happens online or through electronic means.

safe practices are practices developed by NZMMAF that must be followed to safeguard and protect children, young people and adults at risk.

specified person means anyone who works in, volunteers for, or provides services NZMMAF and where such involvement:

may or does involve regular or overnight contact with children, young people or adults at risk; and

takes place without a parent or guardian of a child or young person being present; or

takes place with an adult at risk without the presence of another adult.

APPENDIX 2: Process – Assessing background checks for specified persons

Step	Process
Receive and review	<p>Are there any concerns, active criminal charges, or past convictions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there are none, continue with the remainder of your recruitment process, which may result in approving the person to work with children, young people or adults at risk. However, do not regard a clear background check as a substitute for other forms of sensible due diligence, such as reference checks. • If there are concerns arising out of the report, continue following the steps below.
Evaluate	<p>Is it medium- or high-risk, or an automatic disqualification?</p> <p>Use Appendix 3 and look at the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nature and severity of the offence – was it a minor or serious crime • relevance to the role – does the offence relate to working with children • timeframe – was it recent or many years ago • pattern of behaviour – is there a history of multiple offences • rehabilitation – has the individual completed rehabilitation, counselling, or training?
Discuss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify the person their background check has raised concerns. • Give them an opportunity to explain their history and ask for supporting evidence (eg, character references, rehabilitation records). • Ensure privacy of their information and fair treatment including the right to be heard before any decisions are made.
Make a decision	<p>After reviewing all factors, decide whether to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • approve the person (with or without conditions) • decline their application due to child safety concerns • implement extra safeguards (eg, supervision, restricted duties). <p>If disqualifying someone, ensure the decision is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consistent with any other policies • based on clear reasoning • communicated to them professionally and confidentially. <p>If a person disagrees with a disqualification decision, they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • request a review and provide new information • appeal through the organisation’s (or external) dispute resolution process • seek legal advice.
Document and store	<p>Maintain records of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the background check and keep it stored securely • the risk assessment notes • the final decision • any conditions or safeguards put in place – communicate to all those supporting the person in their role.

Step	Process
Monitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="464 257 1369 324">• Re-check individuals at least every three years (or as required by your policy).<li data-bbox="464 331 1182 369">• Monitor behaviour and act on any new concerns.

APPENDIX 3: Process – Risk categorisation for Specified Persons

Risk type	Criteria
Disqualifying-risk	<p>Automatic disqualification – Do not allow the person to work or volunteer with children, young people or adults at risk in any capacity</p> <p>A person who is convicted or charged with any Schedule 2 offence under the Children’s Act 2014 is automatically disqualified from working or volunteering with children, young people and adults at risk. This includes but isn’t limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sexual offences against children or adults (indecent assault, sexual grooming, child exploitation) • violent offences (assault, manslaughter, family violence involving children) • child abuse or neglect convictions • making, possessing, or distributing child exploitation material.
High-risk	<p>Likely disqualification – Requires further assessment</p> <p>A person is most likely disqualified from working or volunteering with children, young people and adults at risk if they have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a history of sexual and domestic violence or protection orders (especially if it involves children) • serious drug or alcohol-related convictions (eg, dealing drugs, disqualification from driving on more than on occasion) • a conviction or charge that could endanger children (eg, dangerous driving with children in the vehicle) • ongoing investigations for crimes involving violence, dishonesty, or child abuse or neglect • patterns of criminal behaviour that suggest a risk, even if individual offences seem minor.
Medium-risk	<p>May not disqualify – requires discussion and further assessment</p> <p>These offences and behaviour may not disqualify someone but require further investigation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Past dishonesty or fraud and corruption convictions (eg, match fixing, theft). • Minor drug-related offences (eg, possessing illegal drugs for personal use). • Consistent traffic convictions, unless they involve reckless endangerment. • Concerns about other inappropriate behaviour, even if it’s not criminal. <p>The individual may be allowed to work with children, young people or adults at risk depending on the context. Additional safeguards may be required, such as supervision or limited responsibilities.</p>