



CLUB SUPPORT FACTSHEET

KEEPING YOUNG ATHLETES SAFE AT TEAM COMPETITIONS

This factsheet is to help clubs with providing a duty of care to young athletes, ensuring that they receive a safe and positive experience of team competition.

Clubs are responsible for all club activity, including taking teams of athletes to competition.

Clubs should:

1. seek information from the competition provider/host club on the safeguarding plan
2. establish identified persons with responsibility for supervising young athletes at the event, during competition time and outside it
3. carry out risk assessments specific to the competition and ensure all who are responsible for the young athletes are aware of the actions to migrate risk
4. arrange travel and handover arrangements before and after the event
5. ensure there is a list of all young athletes and their next of kin, emergency details, consent, medical information, photography consent available
6. promote the coordination of pre-event briefings for parents/participants with their team
7. communicate key information to young athletes and parents/carers prior to the event
8. receive, respond to and manage safeguarding issues as they arise
9. ensure any additional needs of participants are identified and addressed
10. communicate the competition rules and behaviours to young athletes and their parents.

Clubs should liaise with the competition provider/host club to check safeguarding plans so they are aware of the following:

- safeguarding lead for the competition
- registration and consents process
- incident and accident reporting procedures
- any actions that clubs need to be aware of from the competition risk assessment
- provision for first aid
- procedures for missing participants
- how safeguarding concerns will be reported, responded to and managed at and after the event.

For more digital club support, visit the [England Athletics Club Hub](#)



DEFINITION: A youth/young athlete is any athlete aged under 18.



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Supervision at competitions and events

In the preparation for taking a team to a competition, the club should carry out a risk assessment which specifically informs decision making about supervision levels.

Key factors to assess include:

- ages of children
- gender of children
- behaviour
- additional supervision/support needs of some or all participants (for example due to disability or medical needs)
- competence/experience of participants for the specific activity
- nature of the venue - whether closed (e.g. gated track & field facility) or open (e.g. parkland);
- travel requirements.

While the risk assessment may well indicate the need for an enhanced level of supervision for a particular competition, the Child Protection in Sport Unit recommends adult to child supervision ratios as

✓ 9-12 years old: 1:8

✓ 3-18 years old: 1:10



Remember that regardless of the overall ratio, a minimum of two supervisors is recommended.

Clubs can stipulate that parents/carers need to supervise their own young athlete at competition. If a parent/carer wishes to oversee supervision of another athlete, then they must receive permission from the athletes' parent.

Supervision should be carried out by a volunteer that has a DBS check and has completed the UKA Online Safeguarding Course i.e., team managers, UKA licensed coaches, welfare officers.

Supervising comfort breaks and toilet ratios

Adults who haven't previously volunteered or had the necessary vetting checks should not be left alone with children, or take them to the toilet unaccompanied.

It may be a good idea with larger groups of children to encourage groups to take a comfort break together.

Supervision responsibilities

- Ideally meeting the young athletes in their care prior to the competition.
- Attending pre-event briefings and event training, and familiarising themselves with the venue, accommodation and transport arrangements.
- Being responsible for and providing a duty of care for the young athletes on behalf of the club.
- Being the first point of contact with the individual athletes.
- Understanding what to do should any incident or concern be reported to them.

Missing participants

Despite organisers and team managers' best efforts, children and young people do sometimes go missing during competition. **It is therefore essential that you have plans and procedures in place to manage this.**

- Consider having a team area and meeting point around the track or in the stadium setting that all athletes know where to find.
- Let the athletes know who their team manager is and who to inform if they need to leave the area or change pick-up time (if their parent or carer isn't present).
- Ensure you have supervision ratios in place.
- Encourage athletes to move around the stadium in groups.
- Check with the competition provider on their safeguarding plan.



Club organised travel

- ✓ Be clear on who in the club is responsible for booking the transport.
- ✓ Ensure you have the details of the travel company and important contacts.
- ✓ Carry out a risk assessment specifically on club organised travel.
- ✓ Prepare a list of individuals who will be travelling.
- ✓ Ensure that you are meeting the required supervision ratios.
- ✓ Gain parental consent for the young athletes who are travelling alone.
- ✓ Ensure everyone is on the bus before it departs for the event or home.
- ✓ Carry out a head count each time passengers enter and leave the bus.
- ✓ Remind everyone about seatbelts including yourself.
- ✓ Keep an eye on the travellers – are they seated, are they eating, are they feeling unwell?
- ✓ Factor in a 'food stop' for a return time if travelling later after an evening competition.
- ✓ Arrange a central dropping point for all athletes rather than individual home drops; those in charge of arrangements need to check that the athletes are collected.
- ✓ Let parents know arrival time about 20 minutes from collection point.

Supervision while travelling

The level of supervision necessary should be considered part of the risk assessment.

- ✓ The team manager is responsible for the group at all times, including maintaining good discipline.
- ✓ The driver should not normally be responsible for supervision, but this may be the case with smaller groups of older athletes.
- ✓ All group members should be aware of the location of the emergency door, first-aid kit and fire extinguisher on the transport.
- ✓ The team manager should be aware of alternative routes or means of travel in the event of delay or cancellation.

Traveling alone with a child or young person

Generally, adult drivers should not be alone with a young person in a car, however short the journey. If it is absolutely necessary, you should get written permission, inform all relevant people on expected departure/ arrival times and the athlete should travel in the back of the car. In an emergency, this should be recorded afterwards.

Private cars

You should avoid the use of private cars to transport children, unless this involves parents carrying their own children and any other children by private agreement with another parent – rather than at the request or on behalf of the club.

Content adapted from CSPU



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