



Horse Sport Ireland High Performance Athlete Welfare Policy

1. Policy Statement

Horse Sport Ireland (HSI) High Performance is committed to ensuring that athletes participating in its High Performance programmes are supported within a safe, respectful and athlete-centred environment. HSI recognises that athlete welfare is fundamental to sustainable high performance success. The organisation is committed to promoting environments in which athletes can train, compete and develop to their full potential while their wellbeing, dignity and rights are respected at all times. This policy outlines the principles through which HSI High Performance seeks to promote and protect athlete welfare within its programmes.

HSI High Performance recognises that athletes operate within both national and international sporting frameworks. This policy therefore aligns with the safeguarding and athlete welfare principles established by Sport Ireland and the Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI).

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a framework that supports the welfare of athletes within Horse Sport Ireland High Performance programmes.

The policy aims to:

- Promote safe and supportive High Performance environments
- Ensure that athlete wellbeing is considered alongside performance objectives
- Provide clear pathways for athletes to raise welfare concerns
- Align HSI High Performance practices with Sport Ireland governance expectations

3. Scope

This policy applies to individuals involved in Horse Sport Ireland High Performance programmes, including:

- Athletes selected to High Performance squads or pathways
- Athletes representing Ireland in FEI Championships or Nations Cups
- High Performance discipline managers
- National coaches in the HP programme
- Support personnel operating within High Performance programmes

The policy applies to all High Performance activities including:

- Training camps and squad activities
- International competitions and team travel
- Selection processes
- High Performance support services

4. Policy Principles

HSI High Performance is guided by the following principles in promoting athlete welfare.

Athlete-Centred Approach

Athletes are at the centre of the High Performance system. Athlete welfare is considered alongside performance objectives.

Safe Performance Environments

Athletes should train and compete in environments that are free from abuse, harassment, discrimination and intimidation.

Duty of Care

HSI High Performance recognises its responsibility to support the wellbeing of athletes participating in its programmes.

Respect and Professional Conduct

All individuals involved in High Performance programmes are expected to demonstrate respect, professionalism and integrity.

Transparency and Accountability

Clear and accessible mechanisms must exist for athletes to raise welfare concerns.

5. High Performance Environment

HSI recognises that the High Performance equestrian system operates within a unique sporting context that includes:

- The partnership between athlete and horse
- Professional training yard environments
- Relationships between athletes, coaches and horse owners
- International travel and competition demands

Within this context, HSI High Performance seeks to promote environments that support:

- Athlete wellbeing and development
- Ethical and responsible training practices
- Respectful professional relationships
- Sustainable participation in high performance sport

HSI also recognises that athlete welfare and horse welfare are closely connected within equestrian sport and should be supported through responsible training and competition practices.

Alignment with International Safeguarding Standards

Horse Sport Ireland High Performance operates within the governance framework of international equestrian sport and supports the safeguarding principles established by the Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI).

This policy should be read alongside the FEI Safeguarding Policy Against Harassment and Abuse, which establishes international standards for preventing harassment and abuse within equestrian sport.

Where Horse Sport Ireland athletes or support personnel participate in FEI competitions or activities, FEI safeguarding rules and procedures may apply in addition to the provisions outlined in this policy.

HSI High Performance will cooperate with the FEI and other relevant authorities where safeguarding concerns arise within international equestrian environments.

<https://inside.fei.org/fei/your-role/medical-safety/harassment-abuse>

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Horse Sport Ireland High Performance

HSI High Performance will:

- Promote a culture that prioritises athlete welfare
- Provide appropriate welfare supports within High Performance programmes
- Ensure mechanisms exist for athletes to raise concerns
- Align High Performance practices with Sport Ireland governance and welfare expectations

High Performance Staff

High Performance discipline managers, coaches and team staff are responsible for promoting safe, respectful and professional environments within High Performance programmes.

Athletes

Athletes participating in Horse Sport Ireland High Performance programmes are expected to uphold standards of professionalism, respect and integrity and to contribute positively to the High Performance environment.

7. Raising Athlete Welfare Concerns

Horse Sport Ireland High Performance is committed to ensuring that athletes can raise concerns relating to their welfare in a safe, confidential and supportive manner. Athletes are encouraged to raise any concerns regarding their welfare, the conduct of individuals within the High Performance environment, or the safety of training and competition environments.

Concerns may be raised through the following channels:

- The HSI High Performance Manager
- An appointed Coach within the HP Programme
- The HSI Safeguarding Officer
- The CEO
- The COO

Safeguarding concerns can also be reported directly to the HSI Safeguarding team at: safeguarding@horsesportireland.ie

All concerns will be treated seriously and handled in accordance with Horse Sport Ireland safeguarding and disciplinary procedures. Confidentiality will be respected and individuals raising concerns will be supported throughout the process.

International Reporting Pathways

Horse Sport Ireland High Performance athletes regularly participate in international competitions governed by the Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI).

Where a safeguarding concern arises in connection with an FEI competition, event, or activity, the matter may fall within the jurisdiction of the FEI safeguarding framework.

In such circumstances, individuals may report concerns through the FEI safeguarding reporting mechanisms. Horse Sport Ireland should also be informed where the concern involves an Irish athlete or member of the High Performance programme.

Where the FEI is managing or investigating a safeguarding matter, Horse Sport Ireland will seek to coordinate with the FEI and may defer to the FEI process in order to avoid duplicate investigations.

HSI reserves the right to take appropriate action where matters relate to participation within Horse Sport Ireland programmes or where required under national governance or safeguarding obligations.

8. Matters Outside the Scope of this Policy

This policy is intended to address matters relating to athlete welfare within the Horse Sport Ireland High Performance environment.

The following matters are generally outside the scope of this policy and should be addressed through the appropriate procedures or contractual arrangements:

- Employment matters, including issues relating to employment contracts, working conditions, or employment disputes
- Commercial or contractual disputes, including agreements between athletes, owners, sponsors, agents, or training yards
- Selection decisions, which are governed by the relevant Horse Sport Ireland selection policies
- Performance or coaching disagreements, unless such matters give rise to concerns relating to athlete welfare, safeguarding, or misconduct
- Matters subject to the jurisdiction of the Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI) where they arise within FEI events or proceedings

Where a concern raised under this policy falls outside its scope, Horse Sport Ireland may direct the individual to the appropriate policy, process, or authority.

9. Commitment to Continuous Improvement

Horse Sport Ireland High Performance is committed to continually strengthening its approach to athlete welfare.

This will be supported through:

- Ongoing review of welfare frameworks
- Engagement with athletes and stakeholders
- Alignment with Sport Ireland guidance and best practice in High Performance sport

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains appropriate and effective.

Field	Details
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