

Ethics Policy



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Ethics, Integrity and Safeguarding Policy

Swiss Cheer Association (SCA)

1. Purpose

The Swiss Cheer Association (“SCA”) is committed to ensuring that cheer in Switzerland is practiced in a manner that is safe, respectful, fair, inclusive, athlete-centred, and consistent with the highest standards of sporting integrity.

This Ethics, Integrity and Safeguarding Policy sets out the values, principles, responsibilities, standards of conduct, and reporting mechanisms that apply to everyone participating in, working for, or representing the SCA. Its purpose is to:

- protect the dignity, physical integrity, mental health, and rights of all participants;
- promote ethical behaviour, fair play, and good governance;
- prevent abuse, exploitation, discrimination, corruption, manipulation, and other misconduct;
- establish clear responsibilities, procedures, and consequences;
- strengthen a culture of accountability and respect throughout Swiss cheer.

The SCA recognises that sport is valuable only when human dignity is protected, fair sporting performance remains central, and organisational conduct reflects integrity, transparency, and responsibility.

2. Scope of Application

This Policy applies to all persons and entities under the authority, membership, activities, competitions, events, education programmes, and operations of the SCA, including but not limited to:

- athletes;
- coaches, trainers, choreographers, spotters, team managers, medical and support staff;
- judges, officials, volunteers, and event personnel;
- board members, committee members, delegates, and employees;
- clubs and their representatives;
- parents, guardians, and athlete support persons when engaged in SCA-related activities;
- any other person acting in connection with SCA activities.

This Policy applies during training, competitions, camps, travel, meetings, selection procedures, education courses, online communication, social media use connected to sport, and all other SCA-related contexts.

3. Normative Basis and Alignment

This Policy shall be interpreted in line with:

- The **SCA Code of Conduct**
- the **Swiss Olympic Ethics Charter** and its nine principles;
- the **Statutes on Ethics in Swiss Sport**;
- the mechanisms and reporting framework of **Swiss Sport Integrity**;
- the **IOC Code of Ethics**;
- IOC safe sport and safeguarding standards relating to harassment and abuse prevention;
- the **Athletes' Rights and Responsibilities Declaration**;
- applicable Swiss law, including child and youth protection requirements, labour obligations, data protection, and criminal law where relevant.

Where Swiss law, Swiss Olympic rules, Swiss Sport Integrity procedures, or binding international regulations impose stricter requirements, those stricter requirements prevail.

4. Vision and Core Commitment

The SCA promotes cheer as a sport that develops athletic excellence, teamwork, confidence, discipline, creativity, and resilience. At the same time, the SCA affirms that no sporting objective ever justifies conduct that compromises safety, dignity, health, fairness, or human rights.

The SCA therefore adopts a **zero-tolerance approach** to:

- harassment and abuse;
 - sexual misconduct and exploitation;
 - bullying, hazing, humiliation, and intimidation;
 - discrimination and exclusion;
 - retaliation against reporting persons or witnesses;
 - doping and illicit performance enhancement;
 - competition manipulation, corruption, bribery, and conflicts of interest;
 - deliberate or reckless disregard for athlete safety.
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5. Ethical Principles

5.1 Equality and Non-Discrimination

All participants are entitled to equal treatment and equal respect. No person may be disadvantaged on grounds including nationality, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, social background, language, religion, political opinion, family status, or any other protected characteristic. This principle reflects the Swiss Olympic Charter requirement of equal treatment for all.

5.2 Athlete Welfare and Human Dignity

The dignity, rights, and welfare of athletes and all participants come before performance outcomes, medals, rankings, or organisational interests. Training and competition must not compromise physical or psychological integrity. This is consistent with the Swiss Olympic's requirement for respectful encouragement rather than excessive demands and with IOC safeguarding principles.

5.3 Safe Sport and Safeguarding

Every person has the right to participate in cheer free from harassment, abuse, violence, exploitation, neglect, coercion, or harmful practices. The SCA recognises safeguarding as a core governance responsibility, not merely an educational topic. IOC safe sport standards emphasise the right of athletes to train and compete in an environment free from harassment and abuse.

5.4 Health, Development and Proportionality

Training loads, progression, selection processes, body-related messaging, return-to-sport decisions, and performance expectations must be age-appropriate, evidence-informed, and proportionate. Sport must remain compatible with education, work, family life, and long-term wellbeing.

5.5 Participation and Shared Responsibility

Athletes should be heard in decisions affecting them. All participants share responsibility for ethical conduct, prevention of harm, and early intervention when concerns arise. This reflects Swiss Olympic's principle of strengthening self- and co-responsibility.

5.6 Fairness, Integrity and Clean Sport

Competition must be honest, transparent, and free from manipulation. The SCA rejects doping, prohibited methods, corruption, conflicts of interest, and manipulation of competitions or results. IOC ethics materials expressly connect ethics, integrity, good governance, and protection of clean athletes.

5.7 Respectful Conduct

Respectful behaviour is required in communication, coaching, judging, governance, and all interpersonal relations. This includes respectful disagreement, appropriate boundaries, constructive feedback, and prohibition of degrading or humiliating practices.

5.8 Good Governance and Accountability

Ethical sport requires transparent decision-making, documented responsibilities, conflict-of-interest management, fair procedures, and independent reporting and case-handling mechanisms. Swiss Olympic requires member federations to implement the Ethics Charter and appoint an ethics contact or officer to support implementation.

5.9 Environmental and Social Responsibility

The SCA will integrate sustainability, responsible resource use, and social inclusion into its events, travel, procurement, and operations, in line with Swiss Olympic's principles on fairness and environmental responsibility.

6. Definitions of Prohibited Conduct

For purposes of this Policy, prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

6.1 Harassment and Abuse

Any unwanted conduct that violates dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment, including verbal, non-verbal, physical, psychological, and online conduct.

6.2 Sexual Misconduct

Any sexualised behaviour without valid consent, any sexual contact with a minor where prohibited, grooming, sexually suggestive communication, coercion, exploitation of a position of trust, or inappropriate relationships within dependency structures.

6.3 Psychological Abuse

Repeated or severe acts such as humiliation, threats, ridicule, isolation, manipulation, degradation, intimidation, scapegoating, or coercive control.

6.4 Physical Abuse or Unsafe Practice

Intentional violence, reckless training methods, unsafe stunt progression, punishment through dangerous exercise, ignoring concussion or injury protocols, or compelling participation while medically unfit.

6.5 Bullying and Hazing

Initiation rituals, exclusion, mocking, social ostracism, humiliating tasks, cyberbullying, or peer abuse disguised as team culture.

6.6 Discrimination

Unequal treatment, exclusion, stereotyping, or harassment based on protected characteristics.

6.7 Retaliation

Any adverse action against a person for reporting concerns, participating in an investigation, raising a good-faith complaint, or supporting another person in doing so.

6.8 Doping and Harmful Performance Practices

Use, encouragement, concealment, or facilitation of banned substances or methods; promotion of dangerous rapid weight-loss methods, disordered eating practices, or other harmful body-control behaviours.

6.9 Competition Manipulation and Corruption

Match-fixing, score manipulation, bribery, improper influence on judges or officials, betting-related misconduct, misuse of confidential information, or any act undermining fair competition.

6.10 Abuse of Power and Conflicts of Interest

Misuse of authority, favoritism, undisclosed dual roles, improper personal relationships affecting professional decisions, or using one's position for personal advantage.

7. Rights of Athletes and Other Participants

Every participant in SCA activities has the right to:

- safety and protection from harassment and abuse;
- respect for dignity, privacy, and bodily integrity;
- fair, transparent, and unbiased treatment;
- selection and judging processes governed by published criteria where applicable;
- age-appropriate and safe instruction;
- voice and participation in matters affecting them;
- access to reporting mechanisms without fear of retaliation;
- support, information, and procedural fairness when concerns are raised.

These rights are consistent with the IOC Athletes' Rights and Responsibilities Declaration and current safe sport expectations.

8. Duties of the SCA

The SCA shall:

1. **Adopt and publish clear ethics, integrity, and safeguarding rules.**
 2. **Appoint a designated Ethics Officer or equivalent responsible person** with defined independence, access, and responsibilities, in line with Swiss Olympic implementation expectations.
 3. **Cooperate fully with Swiss Sport Integrity** and comply with the Statutes on Ethics in Swiss Sport in matters within their jurisdiction.
 4. **Provide education and prevention programmes** for athletes, coaches, officials, parents, and clubs.
 5. **Implement safeguarding measures** appropriate to the age and vulnerability of participants, especially minors.
 6. **Establish safe recruitment and appointment processes**, including role descriptions, suitability checks, references, and where legally appropriate criminal-record checks.
 7. **Maintain reporting channels** that are accessible, confidential as appropriate, and widely communicated.
 8. **Protect reporting persons and affected persons** from retaliation and secondary victimisation.
 9. **Review regulations, championship rules, and operational procedures** to ensure they reflect this Policy.
 10. **Monitor, evaluate, and update** this Policy and its implementation on a regular basis.
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9. Specific Standards of Conduct

9.1 For Athletes

Athletes shall:

- treat teammates, opponents, coaches, judges, officials, and volunteers with respect;
- follow safety instructions, progression rules, medical advice, and competition rules;
- refrain from bullying, hazing, harassment, abuse, or exclusionary behaviour;
- speak up, seek help, or report concerns where safety or dignity may be at risk;
- reject doping, dangerous body practices, and manipulation of competition;
- use social media responsibly and not post degrading, abusive, or discriminatory content;
- act as role models, particularly towards younger athletes.

9.2 For Coaches, Trainers and Choreographers

Coaches and trainers carry an enhanced duty of care. They shall:

- place athlete welfare above short-term performance outcomes;
- provide safe, age-appropriate, and technically competent instruction;

- ensure that stunts, tumbling, tosses, and other elements are taught with proper progression, spotting, surface conditions, and supervision;
- maintain professional boundaries at all times;
- communicate respectfully and avoid humiliation, threats, or coercive methods;
- never encourage participation while injured or medically unfit;
- never use, promote, or tolerate doping, dangerous weight-control methods, or abusive training practices;
- report concerns promptly where required;
- undertake regular continuing education in ethics, safeguarding, and safety.

9.3 For Parents and Guardians

Parents and guardians shall:

- support their child's participation in a manner that is encouraging and not coercive;
- respect the roles of coaches, judges, and officials;
- contribute to a positive and safe team environment;
- raise concerns responsibly and through appropriate channels;
- avoid abusive conduct towards athletes, coaches, officials, or other families.

9.4 For Judges, Officials and Event Personnel

Judges, officials, and organisers shall:

- act impartially, professionally, and transparently;
- avoid conflicts of interest and disclose any actual, potential, or perceived conflict;
- apply rules consistently and without bias;
- uphold safety standards at events;
- intervene appropriately where there is risk to participants;
- preserve confidentiality and integrity in all official duties.

9.5 For Board Members, Committees and Staff

Persons in governance and administration shall:

- exercise their functions with loyalty, diligence, transparency, and independence;
 - avoid misuse of office and undisclosed conflicts of interest;
 - ensure appropriate documentation of decisions;
 - safeguard confidential and personal data;
 - support ethical culture and proper case-handling;
 - never interfere improperly with reporting, investigations, or disciplinary processes.
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10. Safeguarding and Protection Measures

To create a genuinely safe sporting environment, the SCA shall implement safeguarding measures including:

- designated safeguarding and ethics contacts;
- mandatory awareness training for relevant roles;
- codes of conduct signed by coaches, officials, and where appropriate athletes and support persons;
- safe travel, accommodation, changing-room, and supervision protocols;
- digital communication guidelines, especially for contact with minors;
- procedures for responding to concerns, urgent risks, and disclosures;
- referral pathways to external authorities where required by law;
- legally compliant criminal-record screening or equivalent risk-based vetting for relevant positions;
- risk assessments for camps, events, and national-team activities.

The IOC safe sport framework and Swiss ethics mechanisms emphasise that prevention, reporting, education, and response procedures must work together rather than exist as isolated measures.

11. Reporting and Whistleblowing

11.1 Duty to Report and Right to Seek Help

Any person who experiences, witnesses, or reasonably suspects a breach of this Policy should report it without delay through the appropriate channel.

Coaches, officials, and persons in positions of responsibility have an elevated duty of care and, where applicable, a duty to report or escalate concerns.

11.2 Reporting Channels

Reports may be made:

- internally to the SCA Ethics Officer, Safeguarding Lead, or designated board contact;
- externally to **Swiss Sport Integrity**, which receives and investigates reports under the Swiss system for ethics violations and abuses in sport.

Where there is immediate danger, criminal conduct, or a child protection risk, reports must also be made to the competent public authorities.

11.3 Protection Against Retaliation

No person shall suffer disadvantage, intimidation, exclusion, or sanction for making a good-faith report or participating in a process under this Policy. Retaliation constitutes a separate ethics violation.

11.4 Confidentiality and Data Protection

Reports and case information shall be handled discreetly, on a need-to-know basis, and in compliance with applicable data protection and procedural requirements.

12. Procedures and Consequences

12.1 Initial Assessment

Upon receiving a concern, the competent body shall assess:

- whether there is an immediate safety risk;
- whether urgent interim measures are required;
- whether the matter falls under SCA competence, Swiss Sport Integrity competence, or public authority competence.

12.2 Interim Protective Measures

Where necessary, interim measures may include:

- modification of duties;
- temporary suspension from activities;
- supervision requirements;
- separation of individuals;
- event-access restrictions;
- protective conditions for training or travel.

12.3 Investigation and Decision-Making

Matters shall be handled fairly, promptly, independently, and proportionately, with due regard to procedural fairness and the applicable jurisdiction of Swiss Sport Integrity and the Swiss Sports Tribunal where relevant under the Ethics Statutes.

12.4 Sanctions and Corrective Measures

Without prejudice to external processes, consequences for violations may include:

- warning or reprimand;
- mandatory education or supervision;

- removal from duties or accreditation;
- ineligibility for certain roles;
- suspension or exclusion from SCA activities;
- referral to Swiss Sport Integrity, disciplinary bodies, or public authorities;
- structural or organisational corrective actions.

Sanctions shall be proportionate to the seriousness, duration, intent, vulnerability of affected persons, abuse of position, and recurrence of the misconduct.

13. Education, Prevention and Culture

The SCA will not rely on rules alone. Ethical sport requires continuous education and culture-building.

The SCA shall therefore provide or require:

- induction on ethics, safeguarding, and conduct standards;
- periodic mandatory education for coaches and officials;
- age-appropriate athlete education on rights, consent, boundaries, and reporting;
- parent information on supportive sport environments;
- guidance on body image, nutrition, and mental wellbeing;
- training on conflicts of interest, clean sport, and integrity risks;
- regular communication promoting respectful conduct and early intervention.

Swiss Olympic's ethics framework expressly links healthy, respectful, fair and successful sport with information, education, prevention, and intervention.

14. Governance and Implementation

To ensure effective implementation, the SCA shall:

- designate an **Ethics Officer** and/or **Safeguarding Officer** with a written mandate;
 - define reporting lines and responsibilities between board, staff, committees, and clubs;
 - maintain a register of training completion and compliance measures;
 - ensure championship rules, event manuals, and licensing requirements reflect this Policy;
 - periodically review risk areas in cheer-specific settings, including stunts, athlete-coach dependency, minors, travel, and online communication;
 - report annually to the Board on implementation, trends, and recommendations, while respecting confidentiality.
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15. Cheer-Specific Ethical Considerations

Given the nature of cheer, special attention shall be paid to:

- safe stunt progression and spotter competency;
- age-appropriate training loads and recovery;
- prevention of pressure to perform through pain or injury;
- body image, weight-related comments, and harmful aesthetic pressure;
- respectful choreography and costuming decisions;
- safeguarding in mixed-age and youth settings;
- team selection and substitution decisions made through transparent criteria;
- conduct during travel, camps, overnight stays, and social media use.

No athlete may be degraded, publicly shamed, or pressured into unsafe participation in the name of discipline, aesthetics, or competitive success.

16. Review and Continuous Improvement

This Policy shall be reviewed at least every two years, and earlier where required by legal, regulatory, or operational developments, including updates in Swiss Olympic, Swiss Sport Integrity, or IOC standards. Swiss Olympic's ethics statutes themselves call for periodic revision and adaptation based on experience and new insights.

The review shall consider:

- reported cases and lessons learned;
 - feedback from athletes, clubs, coaches, and officials;
 - developments in safeguarding and integrity standards;
 - alignment with national and international best practice.
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17. Final Provisions

This Policy forms a binding ethical framework for the SCA and its member environment. All SCA regulations, championship rules, education pathways, and operational procedures should be interpreted and updated consistently with this Policy.

The SCA affirms that sporting success has value only when achieved in a manner that respects dignity, protects health, ensures fairness, and strengthens trust in sport.