

INTRODUCTION

The protection and creation of safe spaces for children in the field of sports is a challenge that sports institutions need to tackle.

*Although it has always had this issue as a basic part of its daily work, Athletic Club has taken a step forward in the field of child protection at the heart of its institution with the creation of the **ATERPE** ('refuge' in Basque) project, a policy that brings together all of the actions carried out by the club in this field and which are known and respected by all its workers.*

In addition, the club's Child Protection Officer is laying the foundations for systematic work that will culminate in a comprehensive child protection policy, including elements of prevention, training and action protocols, the sole purpose of which is the well-being of all of the children within the organisation.

This role is ground-breaking within the national football and sports scene. No other club in La Liga and very few internationally have one. It is a clear message of institutional responsibility for the children with whom we work in all of the organisation's projects, not just the grassroots football teams (Foundation, External Project and partner clubs). This innovative experience can lead the way towards comprehensive child protection in the world of sport.

VISION

All of the children in our junior categories and those who take part in any activity organised by our institution must have a space for doing safe/protective sports, with adults who are aware, trained and responsible for the well-being of the athlete.

COMMITMENT

For Athletic Club, the well-being of all of the children in its junior categories is a key priority. Our commitment to this issue is clear and is reflected in the creation of the ATERPE child protection policy.

Therefore, the responsibility for creating safe spaces rests with everyone at the club. The ATERPE child protection policy “obliges, must be known by and be respected” by everyone at the club: the Board of Directors, employees, volunteers, trainees, etc.

BASIC PRINCIPLES

The basic principles take the legislation and recommendations of various international working groups on child protection in sport into account:

EU Work Plan for Sport 2014-17.

The International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sports of UNESCO (1978), the last review of which is dated November 2015

The International Olympic Committee, Executive Commission, Consensus Statement on Sexual Harassment and Abuse dated February 2007.

Recommendations on the protection of young athletes and safeguarding children's rights in sport of the Groups on Good Governance of the European Commission July 2016.

The International Olympic Committee's Consensus Statement on: harassment and abuse (non-accidental violence) in sport.

Guidelines for International Federations and National Olympic

Committees for the creation and implementation of policies to protect athletes from abuse and harm in sport.

International Safeguards for Children in Sport from the International Group of Children in Sport. Beyond Sport Summit 2014.

THE CORE PRINCIPLES

Respect for children's rights. All children have the right to be protected from discrimination on the basis of gender, race, sexual orientation or religious belief.

The best interests of the child and his or her well-being are the core principles.

Commitment to prevention

Continuous training.

Respect for the law and the requirement to comply with it (requirement of a certificate proving no sexual offences have been committed).

Culture of respect. Club staff must respect minimum standards and a code of conduct that includes respect for children's rights.

Adequate communication: Establishment of adequate channels to communicate situations where there is a lack of protection for the people determined by our institution.

Institutional commitment: existence of a Child Protection Officer at the Club as part of the Comprehensive Care Department.

Appropriate response in the event of a situation with a lack of protection. Any possible suspicion or evidence of a situation where there is a lack of protection will be taken seriously by responding in an appropriate manner.

Encouraging participation

OBJECTIVES

To **analyse** all the areas in the club where there is any kind of direct or indirect relationship with minors.

To have specific risk **prevention** actions available for the areas analysed above.

A specific training plan for all professionals in the different areas of the club.

To have specific action **protocols** available for certain situations where there is a lack of protection.

To **support** partner clubs and other organisations in our environment in the process of creating specific actions to prevent violence against children in sport.

To **emphasise** the importance of working on this issue in the field of sport.

The most common types of situations of where there is a lack of protection that a protection policy needs to take into account and that, of course, **ATERPE** has done: protection against any situation of physical, sexual, emotional damage and harassment.

The work of putting all of the elements of the policy together is under way, and will culminate in a structure featuring at least the following elements:

INTERNALLY

Adapted code of conduct

Action protocols for staff.

Sector-specific training.

Known and executed action protocols by type of lack of protection.

Operational communication channel.

Authorisation and informed consent received and stored.

EXTERNALLY

Support to partner clubs in the formation and creation of a protection policy.

Communication and consultation channel for queries or specific cases.

Shared resource centres. templates for clubs or institutions.

Collaboration with public institutions or organisations to promote child protection in sport.

Creation of or participation in forums and conferences on the subject