JUNIOR SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Version 1.0 July 2026

For Junior Members aged 12-17 during the initial Finch Coasters junior trial

Policy status
This is a Finch Coasters club policy. It is intended to operate alongside, and not replace, the current UK Athletics and England Athletics Child Safeguarding Policy, Child Safeguarding Procedures, Safeguarding Regulations and Codes of Conduct. Where governing-body requirements change or conflict with this policy, the current UK Athletics / England Athletics requirements take precedence.

1. Purpose and commitment

Finch Coasters Running Club is committed to providing a safe, positive and inclusive environment for children and young people who take part in Club activities. For the purposes of this policy, a child is anyone under the age of 18. During the initial junior trial, Finch Coasters Junior Members are aged 12 to 17.

The welfare and best interests of the child are the primary consideration. Every Junior Member has the right to be listened to, treated with dignity and respect, and protected from abuse, neglect, exploitation, bullying, harassment, discrimination and poor practice.

Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility. The Committee, Welfare Officers, Head of Juniors, Junior Hosts, run hosts, volunteers, members, parents/carers and Junior Members all have a part to play in creating and maintaining a safe Club.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- all Finch Coasters Junior Members;
- all adult members when interacting with or participating alongside Junior Members;
- Committee members, Welfare Officers, the Head of Juniors, Junior Hosts, run hosts, tail runners and other volunteers;
- parents and carers when involved in Club activities; and
- all Club-organised or Club-recognised activities in which Junior Members participate, including training runs, races, social events, online communication and travel arrangements where applicable.

External races and events are also subject to the organiser's own age limits, safeguarding arrangements and rules. Junior participation as a Finch Coaster does not override those requirements.

3. Governing framework

Finch Coasters adopts and will work in accordance with the current UK Athletics and Home Country Athletics Federation child safeguarding framework, including the Child Safeguarding Policy, Child Safeguarding Procedures, Safeguarding Regulations and relevant Codes of Conduct.

The welfare of children is the primary concern.

Children have the right to protection from harm regardless of age, disability, sex, gender identity, race, religion, socio-economic status, sexual orientation or other status.

Children should be listened to and their views respected on matters affecting them.

Good safeguarding is best achieved by working in partnership with the child, parents/carers and relevant organisations.

Concerns should be raised without fear of victimisation or reprisal and responded to promptly.

4. Safeguarding leadership and responsibilities

4.1 Committee

The Committee retains collective responsibility for safeguarding governance. It will ensure that the Club has appropriate policies, procedures, risk assessments, codes of conduct, safer-recruitment arrangements, training and reporting routes before and during junior participation.

4.2 Junior Welfare Officer

The Junior Welfare Officer is the principal Club contact for safeguarding and welfare concerns involving Junior Members, working with the Club Welfare Officer and the Lead Welfare Officer arrangements required by England Athletics.

receive and respond appropriately to safeguarding and welfare concerns;

record and refer concerns in accordance with current UK Athletics / England Athletics procedures;

advise the Committee, Head of Juniors and volunteers on child safeguarding;

support Junior Members and parents/carers in understanding how to raise a concern;

maintain appropriate confidentiality and information sharing; and

liaise with England Athletics / UK Athletics and statutory agencies where required.

4.3 Training, DBS and suitability

All persons undertaking roles for which UK Athletics or England Athletics require a DBS check, licence, qualification or safeguarding training must hold the required current clearance or training before carrying out that role. The Club will follow current governing-body requirements for Welfare Officers and other regulated or child-facing roles.

The Club will maintain an appropriate record of relevant qualifications, licences, DBS status and safeguarding training for those involved in junior delivery.

5. Junior trial participation arrangements

During the initial six-month trial, Junior Members may only participate in activities specifically approved by the Committee. Initially, this is the Monday 5 km Club run, subject to the ability and operational requirements set by the Committee.

- The minimum age is 12.
- A Junior Member must meet the agreed participation standard for the session; initially this is the ability to complete approximately 5 km within 40-45 minutes, or an equivalent standard determined by the Committee.
- Participation requires consent from a parent or legal guardian.
- The Club may restrict, pause or stop junior participation where safe delivery, safeguarding, supervision, volunteer availability, insurance or governing-body requirements cannot be met.
- The Head of Juniors and Junior Welfare Officer will support the Committee in reviewing the trial.

6. Junior Host and supervision

Every Club Run attended by one or more Junior Members must have a designated Junior Hoster who holds a current England Athletics Leadership in Running Fitness (LiRF) qualification. If no LiRF-qualified Junior Hoster is present, Junior Members must not take part in that Club Run.

The Junior Host works alongside the normal run host and does not remove the run host's responsibilities. The Junior Host must be identified before the run begins and must know which Junior Members are attending.

- maintain appropriate oversight of Junior Members throughout the session;
- ensure the approved junior participation conditions are followed;
- work with the run host and tail runner to avoid a Junior Member becoming isolated from the organised group;
- respond appropriately to accidents, welfare concerns or safeguarding concerns; and
- ensure any early departure or handover is managed safely.

The presence of a LiRF-qualified Junior Host is an additional Finch Coasters safeguard. It does not remove any separate requirement for appropriately licensed coaches, leaders, ratios or other supervision that may be required by current UK Athletics / England Athletics guidance for the activity being delivered.

7. Parents and carers

A parent or legal guardian must:

- give consent to junior membership and participation;
- provide accurate emergency contact details and relevant medical, allergy, medication, disability or welfare information;
- ensure the Junior Member arrives appropriately dressed and equipped for the conditions;
- inform the Club of any change that may affect safe participation;
- support the relevant UK Athletics / England Athletics Parents Code of Conduct and Club rules; and

collect or otherwise take responsibility for the Junior Member at the agreed end of the activity where applicable.

Parents/carers will normally be involved in decisions concerning their child. A parent/carer may not be informed immediately where doing so could increase a safeguarding risk or where the Club is advised otherwise by England Athletics, UK Athletics, police, children's social care or another statutory agency.

8. Behaviour and positions of trust

Adults involved in Finch Coasters must maintain clear, professional and appropriate boundaries with Junior Members. Adults must never exploit a position of trust or the power imbalance that can exist between an adult and a child.

- No adult member should create an unnecessary one-to-one situation with a Junior Member inside or outside approved Club arrangements.
- Where an unavoidable one-to-one situation occurs, it should be open, observable and reported to the Junior Host or Welfare Officer as appropriate.
- Sexualised behaviour, grooming, harassment, bullying, discriminatory conduct, hazing, coercion, inappropriate physical contact or abuse of authority is prohibited.
- Adults must not use gifts, favours, secrecy or special treatment to create an inappropriate relationship with a Junior Member.
- All members and volunteers must follow the relevant current UK Athletics / England Athletics Codes of Conduct.

9. Communication, social media and online safety

- Junior Members are not permitted to join the closed Finch Coasters Members Facebook Group.
- Junior Members must not contact adult Finch Coasters members outside their own family through social media, direct messages or private messaging.
- Adult members must not initiate, accept or continue private social-media or direct-message contact with Junior Members outside their own family.
- Necessary Club communication involving a Junior Member should normally be directed through their parent/legal guardian or an approved Club communication channel with appropriate oversight.
- Club communications must be professional, relevant to Club activity and capable of being appropriately audited or overseen.

10. Photography and video

Under-18 members must not be photographed or videoed in connection with Finch Coasters activities.

- The Club will not intentionally take, publish or distribute identifiable photographs or video of Junior Members.
- Members and volunteers must not deliberately include Junior Members in Club photographs, group photographs, race-day images or video content.
- If a Junior Member is inadvertently captured in an image, that image must not be published or shared by the Club and should be deleted where reasonably practicable.
- This Club rule applies even where a parent/carer may otherwise be willing to consent.

11. Safe running and activity arrangements

Junior Members may only take part in sessions approved for junior participation.

Risk assessments must specifically consider age, route, distance, pace, traffic and road crossings, terrain, weather, darkness, lighting, group size, supervision, emergency arrangements and any collection/handover arrangements.

Junior Members must remain within the organised group structure and must not knowingly be left isolated.

Torch and high-visibility requirements apply to Junior Members in the same way as other participants; a junior may be refused participation if required safety equipment is missing.

A Junior Member should not leave an organised run early without agreement from the Junior Host or run host and appropriate arrangements with the parent/carer.

The Club will follow current UK Athletics / England Athletics requirements on qualifications, supervision and activity delivery.

12. Recognising concerns

Safeguarding concerns may include:

a disclosure or allegation of physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect;

grooming, exploitation, coercive or controlling behaviour;

bullying, cyberbullying, harassment or discriminatory abuse;

inappropriate adult-child relationships or boundary violations;

a concerning change in a child's behaviour, demeanour, health or wellbeing;

unsafe practice, repeated breaches of codes of conduct or failure to follow safeguarding requirements;

online or social-media contact that breaches Club rules;

unauthorised photography or video involving a Junior Member; or

any situation in which a child appears to be at risk of harm, whether the concern arises inside or outside athletics.

A concern does not need to amount to proven abuse before it is reported. Practice concerns and wellbeing concerns should also be raised so that proportionate action can be taken early.

13. Responding to a disclosure or concern

If a child tells you something concerning:

stay calm and listen;

take the child seriously;

allow them to speak in their own words and do not ask leading or repeated questions;

do not promise confidentiality; explain that you may need to share the information with people who can help;

do not confront the person who is alleged to have caused harm;

make a factual written record as soon as possible, using the child's own words where important;

report the concern promptly to the Junior Welfare Officer or Club Welfare Officer; and

follow the current UK Athletics / England Athletics Child Safeguarding Procedures.

Immediate danger
If there is an immediate and serious concern about the safety or health of a child, contact the emergency services on 999. Do not delay emergency action in order to contact a Club officer first.

14. Reporting and referral

Safeguarding concerns involving Junior Members must not be dealt with solely as ordinary grievances. The Junior Welfare Officer / Club Welfare Officer will determine the appropriate safeguarding route in accordance with current UK Athletics / England Athletics procedures.

- Serious safeguarding concerns must be referred to the appropriate England Athletics / UK Athletics safeguarding route.
- Where required, concerns will be referred to police, children's social care, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or another statutory body.
- The Club will not conduct its own safeguarding investigation where that could compromise a governing-body or statutory investigation.
- The Committee may take proportionate interim protective measures while a concern is being considered, including restricting contact with Junior Members or suspending attendance at junior activities.

15. Confidentiality, records and information sharing

- Safeguarding information will be recorded accurately, securely and shared only on a need-to-know basis.
- Information may be shared without consent where necessary to protect a child, comply with law, or support safeguarding or statutory processes.
- Safeguarding records may be retained for longer than ordinary membership records where required by governing-body guidance or law.
- Members must not discuss safeguarding allegations on social media or with people who have no legitimate need to know.

16. Safer recruitment and volunteer management

The Club will use safer recruitment and role-allocation practices appropriate to its junior activities. This includes checking that people undertaking regulated, licensed or designated child-facing roles have the required qualifications, licences, DBS status, references or safeguarding training where applicable.

No person will be placed in a junior-facing role merely because they are an existing Club member or parent/carer. Suitability, competence, safeguarding requirements and the needs of the activity must be considered.

17. Codes of Conduct

The Club will require the relevant current UK Athletics / England Athletics Codes of Conduct to be introduced as part of junior membership and volunteer induction and at renewal where appropriate. This includes, as applicable, codes for:

- the Club Safeguarding Code;

children and young people;

parents and carers;

coaches, leaders and volunteers;

Welfare Officers; and

senior athletes/adult members.

18. Equality, inclusion and additional vulnerability

All children have an equal right to safeguarding and protection. The Club recognises that some children may face additional barriers to speaking up or may be more vulnerable because of disability, communication needs, discrimination, mental health, family circumstances or other factors.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered to support safe participation, but no adjustment will override safeguarding, supervision, governing-body or legal requirements.

19. Complaints, breaches and disciplinary action

A breach of this policy, the relevant safeguarding procedures or a Code of Conduct may result in protective action and/or disciplinary action under the Finch Coasters Grievance and Disciplinary Policy and applicable UK Athletics / England Athletics processes.

Safeguarding concerns take precedence over ordinary Club dispute resolution. Mediation or informal resolution must not be used where this would be inappropriate or unsafe in a child safeguarding matter.

20. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed at the end of the initial six-month junior trial and thereafter at least annually, or sooner if there is a significant incident, change in Club activity, change in law, or update to UK Athletics / England Athletics safeguarding requirements.

The Committee may make urgent safeguarding amendments where required to remain compliant with governing-body or legal requirements, subject to the Club's constitutional governance arrangements.

21. Related Finch Coasters documents

Club Constitution

Adult Safeguarding Policy

Health and Safety Policy

Social Media Policy

Privacy Notice

Inclusion Policy

Grievance and Disciplinary Policy

Junior / Parent / Volunteer Codes of Conduct and any junior operating procedures adopted by the Committee

22. External framework and reference documents

This policy has been drafted with reference to the UK Athletics / Home Country Athletics Federation Child Safeguarding Policy supplied by the Club, and the current safeguarding resources published by England Athletics as at July 2026. The Club should always use the latest versions published by UK Athletics / England Athletics.

- UK Athletics and HCAF Child Safeguarding Policy
- UK Athletics and HCAF Child Safeguarding Procedures
- UK Athletics Safeguarding Regulations
- UK Athletics / England Athletics Codes of Conduct
- England Athletics Club Hub: Setting Up a Junior Section
- England Athletics guidance on the role and training requirements of Club Welfare Officers

23. Adoption

Policy approved by	Finch Coasters Committee / General Meeting as applicable
Effective from	.....
Next formal review	End of six-month junior trial / earlier if required
Junior Welfare Officer	.....