

IMOCA Safeguarding Reporting System

The IMOCA Class is committed to fighting against all forms of harassment and abuse alongside its partners World Sailing and the French Sailing Federation.

Within the IMOCA Class, we place the highest priority on the safety and well-being of our community. We are committed to providing a safe environment for all our members and stakeholders involved in our activities.

When we talk about harassment and abuse, what are we talking about?

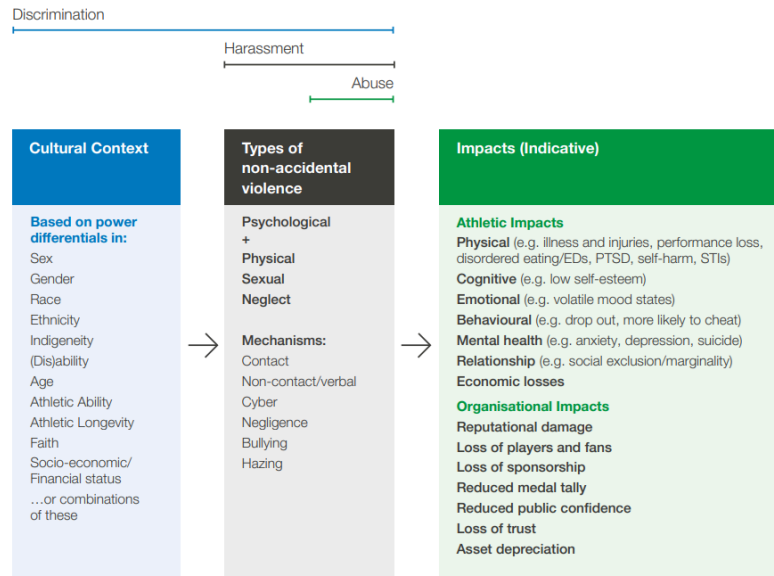
In its 2016 consensus statement¹, the IOC identified the 5 forms of abuse below:

- **Psychological abuse:** means any unwelcome act including confinement, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation, infantilisation, or any other treatment which may diminish the sense of identity, dignity, and self-worth.
- **Physical abuse:** means any deliberate and unwelcome act – such as for example punching, beating, kicking, biting, and burning – that causes physical trauma or injury. Such act can also consist of forced or inappropriate physical activity (e.g., age-, or physique inappropriate training loads; when injured or in pain), forced alcohol consumption, or forced doping practices.
- **Sexual harassment:** any unwanted and unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal, non-verbal or physical. Sexual harassment can take the form of sexual abuse.
- **Sexual abuse:** any conduct of a sexual nature, whether non-contact, contact or penetrative, where consent is coerced/manipulated or is not or cannot be given.
- **Neglect:** within the meaning of this document means the failure of a coach or another person with a duty of care towards the athlete to provide a minimum level of care to the athlete, which is causing harm, allowing harm to be caused, or creating an imminent danger of harm.

Harassment and abuse can be based on any grounds including race, religion, colour, creed, ethnic origin, physical attributes, gender, sexual orientation, age disability, socio-economic status, and athletic ability. It can include a one-off incident or a series of incidents. It may be in person or online. Harassment may be deliberate, unsolicited, and coercive.

Harassment and abuse often result from an abuse of authority, meaning the improper use of a position of influence, power or authority by an individual against another person (see the diagram below). (Mountjoy et al. 2016)

¹ Mountjoy M, et al. Br J Sports Med 2016;50:1019–1029. doi:10.1136/bjsports-2016-096121



Further details and examples of what can constitute harassment and abuse can be found in the IOC Consensus Statement: Harassment and Abuse in Sport (2016).

To these 5 forms of violence, we also add exploitation which is defined as follows by World Sailing²:

- **Exploitation:** Exploitation occurs when a person exercises control over another person and/or their property for their “personal interest” and without the person’s fully informed consent. Exploitation can be financial or sexual.

Unfortunately, abuse and harassment exist almost everywhere in society, but the sporting context is particularly conducive to it because of several factors:

- A high tolerance of physical violence and injuries.
- An authoritarian leadership and unequal power relationships between coaches and athletes.
- Scandal avoidance: incidents in sport are often silenced.
- A male-dominated gender ratio.
- Physical contact is often required.
- Sport implies a system of reward, there is also a lack of supervision and scrutiny especially when athletes are successful, and only the medals start mattering.
- In Sport there are potential risk situations: changing rooms, showers, carpooling, overnight stay.
- Inappropriate sexual behaviour is often tolerated, discrimination and gender inequality accepted.

As explained in the diagram above, non-accidental violence often leaves lifelong scars, it can have terrible consequences on the mental and physical health of a victim. (Mountjoy et al. 2016).

² <https://www.sailing.org/our-sport/welfare-safety/safeguarding/>

IMOCA Tolerance 0 Against Harassment and Abuse:

For this reason, the IMOCA class is committed to a zero-tolerance policy towards non-accidental violence and encourages all its members to report any incidents or behaviours resembling to the forms of abuse and harassment described above, which would go against the values of the IMOCA class.

Since February 2024, IMOCA has signed a partnership with the consulting firm EN GARDE to set up an independent cell dedicated to the fight against harassment, abuse & exploitation in ocean racing. The function of the cell is to collect reports and support victims throughout the disclosure and remediation processes. The services offered by this cell include:

- Provision of psychosocial support to victims and whistleblowers throughout all disciplinary, administrative, and/or criminal procedures
- Offering legal counsel
- Facilitating referrals to suitable legal and medical experts
- Coordination with the disciplinary bodies of IMOCA and the FFV and World Sailing

Reporting system:

If you have witnessed or experienced any form of safeguarding concern, including but not limited to harassment, abuse, discrimination, or inappropriate behaviour within the IMOCA community, we encourage you to report it by email to Safeguarding@imoca.org using the form below.

[Download the reporting form](#)

Your report will be treated with the strictest confidentiality and sensitivity. Only authorized personnel involved in the investigation and resolution process will have access to the details of your report.