State of art of European child protection policies, legal framework, academic and SPORT ASSOCIATIONS best practices aligned

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Executive summary

Deliverable 2.1 is the first **cornerstone in the development of the 360 Safe Play model**. Its purpose is to gather and organise the initial evidence base needed to build a comprehensive, evidence-informed and practice-oriented child safeguarding model for sport organisations across Europe. The report offers a clear overview of child protection policies in sport, combining legal analysis, scientific evidence and insights from practice.

The first volume provides an extensive mapping of international and national **legislation and legal frameworks**, with a specific focus on Spain, Bulgaria and Italy. It also examines relevant **European Union directives, policy references and sectoral guidance** issued by sport bodies, child protection organisations and ombudspersons. In addition, this volume reviews **scientific evidence** related to the different safeguarding dimensions and incorporates an equity lens, including gender, disability, socioeconomic vulnerability and other factors that may increase children's exposure to violence or barriers to protection. This evidence aims to support the development of an informed and robust 360 Safe Play model.

The second volume focuses on a review of **best practices from sport associations, clubs and federations**. Because theory alone is not enough, this section brings together concrete and transferable solutions from leading international clubs and federations, as well as grassroots sport organisations. It highlights inspiring practices from the project's partner countries and from wider desk research. These practices will be presented and discussed within the consortium through a dedicated webinar, with the aim of identifying key lessons and practical conclusions that can further nurture the 360 Safe Play model.

Finally, the third volume synthesises the evidence collected in the first two volumes. It brings together the main **learning** generated during this initial phase of the project and identifies the **remaining gaps** that need to be addressed during the co-creation sessions. This synthesis will help guide the next steps of the project and support the development of the beta version of the materials and tools **required to implement the 360 Safe Play model**.

Methodology

This section sets out the structured methodology used by the consortium to identify the legal foundations, research evidence and practical references needed to inform the development of the 360 Safe Play model.

The first pillar of the methodology consisted of **mapping the legal and policy frameworks** relevant to preventing violence against children in sport, ensuring early detection, establishing reporting and case management procedures, and promoting restorative practices where appropriate. This work was carried out collaboratively by FPT, EDE, DEI-Belgium, OPES and BSFCYR. Zotero was used as the shared repository to collect, organise and classify the key legal and policy documents identified by partners.

At international and European level, DEI-Belgium identified the main legal instruments, standards and European directives related to child protection and children's rights. Particular attention was paid to provisions requiring specific protection for children, including children in vulnerable situations or belonging to groups exposed to higher risks of violence or discrimination. Although many of these instruments are not sport-specific, they are directly applicable to the sports sector insofar as sports clubs, associations and federations are environments where children exercise their rights and must be protected from all forms of violence. The texts were selected from authoritative institutional sources, including the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the European Commission.

At national level, partners in Spain, Italy and Bulgaria identified the key legislation, policies, guidance and institutional frameworks governing the prevention of and response to violence against children aged 6–14 in sports settings. The objective was to clarify four essential areas: existing legal obligations, organisational responsibilities of sports entities, mandatory reporting and referral pathways, and specific safeguarding requirements such as codes of conduct, child protection officers, protocols or background checks.

This legal mapping was complemented by a critical analysis of reference texts, institutional guidance and academic research. The aim was not only to identify the existing legal basis, but also to assess what is already working, where implementation gaps remain, and which elements should be integrated into the 360 Safe Play model. Special attention was given to child safeguarding policies in sport developed by organisations, public authorities and sports institutions, with the analysis organised around key safeguarding dimensions. The review also considered recommendations on how to address these dimensions through an equity lens, considering discrimination axes such as gender, disability, socioeconomic background, ethnic or cultural origin, migration status, sexual orientation and gender identity.

The second pillar consisted of a **systematic desk research** process designed to ensure that the evidence base informing the model was rigorous, transparent and comparable across countries. Partners used a shared Excel tracking tool to record searches, classify documents and support the selection of materials for deeper analysis. This Excel, with the different phases / sheets, is available in the annexes to this document.

The first step was the search log. All searches were recorded using agreed keywords in the relevant local languages, including Spanish, Italian and Bulgarian. Searches were organised around common thematic areas, such as child safeguarding, violence against children, sport, legal frameworks, reporting mechanisms, prevention, and institutional responsibilities. This allowed the consortium to document the search process and ensure that partners followed a consistent approach while remaining sensitive to national terminology and legal contexts.

The second step was the screening log. Potentially relevant documents were added to the shared log and progressively classified. To improve the quality and comparability of the screening process, additional fields were introduced over time, including a short abstract or English summary for documents written in national languages, and columns identifying which safeguarding dimensions were covered by each document. These dimensions made it possible to see whether a source addressed prevention, detection, reporting, case management, referral pathways, codes of conduct, training, institutional coordination or child participation.

The screening process followed three stages. First, partners selected and registered potentially relevant documents. Second, each document received a preliminary classification as “Include” when clearly relevant, or “Maybe/Unclear” when the relevance required further discussion. Third, a light peer-review process was introduced to support the final selection of documents for the extraction table. Under this process, one partner reviewed the documents proposed by another partner, for example FPT reviewing EDE’s proposals or EDE reviewing DEI-Belgium’s proposals. This cross-review mechanism helped ensure consistency, reduce individual bias and verify that only the most relevant documents moved forward to the deep-analysis phase.

The third pillar focused on identifying good practices that could inform the practical design of the 360 Safe Play system. The overall process, culminating in the organisation and analysis of a webinar among project partners, is described at the beginning of Volume 2. This volume brings together the selected practices and examines their relevance for the development of the model, particularly in relation to prevention, early detection, reporting, case management, restorative approaches and institutional coordination.

Finally, the main learning from Volumes 1 and 2 was synthesised in a third volume. This final volume provides a gap-and-implication analysis across the different sections of the research, with three main purposes: to identify the core elements that should form part of the 360 Safe Play model; to determine which aspects need to be further explored and completed during the co-creation sessions; and to identify the advocacy priorities required to promote the necessary public policies and institutional changes.

Why in necessary to implement 360 Safe Play?

Organised sport has a **strong protective and developmental potential for children**: it promotes physical activity, health, self-confidence, cooperation, perseverance and social belonging. For children aged 6-14, sport also takes place at a decisive stage of development, when they become increasingly aware of themselves and others, develop critical thinking and learn to identify and express emotions. These benefits, however, are not automatic. They depend on sport being experienced as a safe, inclusive and trustworthy environment. The central paradox addressed by 360 Safe Play is therefore that the same spaces that can support children’s wellbeing can also become environments where violence is hidden, normalised or insufficiently addressed (UNICEF, 2021).

For this deliverable, **violence against children** is understood in line with UNICEF’s International Classification of Violence against Children: any deliberate, unwanted and non-essential act, threatened or actual, against a child or multiple children that results, or is likely to result, in death, injury or physical or psychological suffering. This definition also includes acts of omission, such as neglect or failure to protect, and covers physical, verbal, non-verbal and sexual acts, whether interpersonal or collective (UNICEF, 2023). In sport, this broad definition is essential because harmful experiences may range from visible physical or sexual abuse to everyday humiliation, exclusion, coercive training practices, bullying, online

harassment, institutional silence or the absence of accessible reporting pathways (European Commission, 2019; Hartill et al., 2023).

European evidence shows that **interpersonal violence against children in organised sport is not exceptional**. The CASES study, based on more than 10,000 young adults in six European countries, indicates that around three quarters of children experienced at least one form of interpersonal violence in sport before the age of 18; the 360 Safe Play proposal refers to 78%, while the draft summary uses 75%, both pointing to the same scale of prevalence. The project evidence also reports very high rates of psychological violence (70%), followed by physical violence (43%), non-contact sexual violence (36%), neglect (34%) and contact sexual violence (20%). These figures confirm that violence in sport is multidimensional and that a protection response focused only on severe or visible cases would be insufficient (Hartill et al., 2023).

A second need concerns **underreporting and weak response pathways**. A participatory study in Spain by UNICEF and the Ministry of Social Rights and Agenda 2030 found that fewer than 10% of violence cases involving children are reported, with underreporting being particularly acute among children living in poverty or social exclusion. This gap is especially relevant in sport, where children and families[1] may fear retaliation, exclusion from the club, loss of opportunities, or not being believed. Families may also depend on sport clubs for social integration and community support, making it difficult to challenge coaches or club structures (UNICEF & Ministerio de Derechos Sociales y Agenda 2030, 2021).

Children are not exposed to violence in the same way. Risks are shaped by gender, disability, sexual orientation or gender expression, socioeconomic position, migration status, race, ethnicity, religion and other intersecting inequalities. Children with disabilities face higher levels of emotional and physical violence, neglect, sexual abuse and peer bullying, and they may encounter additional barriers to expressing what has happened or accessing adapted support (Jones et al., 2012). LGBTQI+ children, or children perceived as not conforming to dominant gender norms, may experience identity-based discrimination, humiliation, exclusion and online harassment. Evidence on cybervictimisation among youth aged 12-17 shows higher prevalence among same-gender-attracted adolescents aged 15-17 for several forms of cyberbullying, including hurtful information posted online (15%), threats or insults by text or online messages (22%) and exclusion from online communities (17%) (Statistics Canada, 2023). Children from socioeconomically disadvantaged or migrant families may face greater isolation, reduced access to information, lower trust in institutions and fear that reporting will not lead to change.

Families and caregivers are therefore a specific target group, not only a contextual factor. Parents are often expected to notice signs of distress, support disclosure and activate reporting mechanisms, yet many lack clear information about what constitutes violence in sport, how to distinguish demanding coaching from harmful practices, and where to seek advice. They may also face fragmented information, unclear procedures and uncertainty about the consequences of raising a concern. For this reason, 360 Safe Play positions families both as beneficiaries and as active participants in co-designing and using child-friendly reporting and referral mechanisms.

At system level, the main need is the **gap between ambitious legal and policy frameworks and the everyday reality of grassroots sport**. In Spain, Organic Law 8/2021 (LOPIVI) explicitly recognises sport as an area where violence against children can occur and requires training, the appointment of a Child Protection Delegate, and protocols against discrimination, insults and humiliation. However, FAPMI has identified persistent barriers: difficulty in identifying violence, difficulty in accessing capacity-building programmes, and difficulty in

[1] For the rest of the document, we will speak about “Families” but this should also include “Guardians”

finding reliable advice when violence or potentially violent behaviour occurs (FAPMI, n.d.; Plataforma de Infancia, 2022). In Italy, Legislative Decree 39/2021 and CONI guidelines require amateur sport organisations to adopt organisational models and appoint safeguarding officers, but small clubs often lack the legal and safeguarding expertise needed to translate standards into daily routines. In Bulgaria, the Child Protection Act, the National Programme for Child Protection, the Lanzarote Convention framework and Council of Europe initiatives create an enabling environment, while UNICEF's national study underlines the need to strengthen data, systems and child-protection responses (360 Safe Play Consortium, 2026; Yarrow & Hedges, 2021).

The need addressed by 360 Safe Play can therefore be summarised as an implementation gap: sport organisations are increasingly expected to prevent, detect and respond to violence, but many lack child-friendly tools, trained staff, clear internal roles, practical protocols, effective referral routes, family engagement strategies and monitoring systems. This gap is not only legal or administrative; it is also cultural and organisational. Violence in sport is linked to power asymmetries between adults and children, ultra-competitive cultures, normalised humiliation, gender stereotypes, institutional silence and the absence of safe spaces where children can speak (European Commission, 2019; 360 Safe Play Consortium, 2026).

Conceptual framework of the project

The conceptual framework of 360 Safe Play is based on an **integrated child protection approach**. Protection is not limited to reacting to serious incidents after harm has occurred: it combines prevention, early detection, safe reporting, referral, support, learning, restorative repair for low-threshold conflicts and monitoring. It also recognises that no single actor can protect children alone. Children, families, coaches, volunteers, club managers, local authorities, social services, schools, health services, child-protection bodies and sport federations all form part of the safeguarding ecosystem (European Commission, 2024).

The first principle is **child-centred participation**. Children aged 6-14 are the main rights-holders and the primary experts in their own experiences of safety and risk, yet they are often consulted less than adolescents or adults when protection systems are designed. 360 Safe Play responds through child-friendly co-creation methods, including drawing, storytelling, scenarios, games and structured dialogue. The Child4Safe process allows children to identify risks, define what makes them feel safe, test reporting tools and validate whether the model is understandable and trustworthy. Their participation is not symbolic: feedback loops will show how their contributions influence the toolkit, early-warning mechanism and training materials (360 Safe Play Consortium, 2026; Eurochild, 2022).

The second principle is **community-based protection**. Sport clubs are not isolated spaces; they are part of local communities and public child-protection systems. A 360-degree model therefore connects club-level practices with families, local authorities, municipal sports services, specialised services, and the technical staff of city councils who organise sports programmes and manage the public sports facilities used by organisations and clubs. This is particularly important for grassroots organisations, where safeguarding roles must be simple, realistic and integrated into daily routines. The model aims to clarify who does what, how concerns are identified, how information is shared safely, and when cases must be referred to formal protection channels (European Commission, 2024).

The third principle is **intersectional inclusion**. Safeguarding measures must be adapted to children's different experiences and barriers. The framework explicitly includes children with disabilities, children from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, migrant or minority children, girls, boys and non-binary children, and children affected by discrimination linked to gender identity or sexual orientation. This implies accessible materials, inclusive language,

attention to bullying and exclusion, disaggregated monitoring where possible, and training for adults on how stereotypes and power relations shape violence in sport (Jones et al., 2012).

The fourth principle is **practical early detection and child-friendly reporting**. A key component is an early-warning mechanism based on a simple colour-coded traffic-light logic, helping children and adults recognise situations of wellbeing, discomfort, risk or harm before they escalate. This mechanism must be linked to clear reporting routes, confidentiality safeguards, adult responsibilities and referral protocols. It should not place responsibility on children to solve violence, but should give them age-appropriate language and safe channels to express concern and ask for help.

The fifth principle is **capacity building through experiential and digital learning**. Coaches, volunteers, managers, families and local professionals need more than written protocols: they need the confidence and practical skills to recognise signs of violence, respond appropriately, protect confidentiality, avoid victim-blaming, activate referral mechanisms and build respectful club cultures. The project therefore combines workshops, role-play, realistic scenarios, an online learning platform and a videogame for children. The videogame will allow children to explore situations involving exclusion, unfair treatment or abuse in a safe and age-appropriate way, while the platform will support professionals with modular training content, protocols and practical resources.

The sixth principle is **restorative repair for minor peer conflicts, with clear safeguards**. Restorative dynamics can help children develop empathy, responsibility and non-violent communication when conflicts are low-threshold and do not involve serious violence, sexual abuse, repeated bullying or discrimination. In the 360 Safe Play model, restorative processes never replace formal child-protection procedures. They are voluntary, facilitated by trained adults, screened by the safeguarding officer or equivalent role, and focused on repairing interpersonal harm only where all children involved feel safe.

Finally, the framework includes **monitoring, learning and transferability**. This deliverable will provide the evidence base and conceptual foundation for the toolkit, protocols, co-creation sessions and Validation Lab. The model will be tested in Spain, Italy and Bulgaria, enabling comparison across different legal, cultural and organisational contexts. Common indicators, pre/post tools, observation grids and qualitative feedback will help assess whether children, families and professionals improve their knowledge of violence and reporting channels, whether clubs update internal practices, and whether the model is feasible for small non-professional sport organisations. By generating comparable evidence and practical tools, 360 Safe Play can support national roadmaps and provide a scalable template for other European grassroots sport contexts (360 Safe Play Consortium, 2026).

In summary, the conceptual framework understands safe sport as a child-rights ecosystem. Its aim is to move from fragmented, reactive and adult-centred responses towards an integrated, participatory and preventive model where children are listened to, families are supported, clubs have usable tools, professionals know how to act, and public authorities can connect sport with wider child-protection systems (European Commission, 2024; UNICEF, 2023).

VOLUME 1. Legal Framework and Child Protection Policies

The **legal framework** refers to the body of national laws and international treaties, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child or the Lanzarote Convention, which define states' legal obligations to protect minors. These texts establish **mandatory rules** regarding what is prohibited by law and define the responsibility of public authorities to ensure the safety and well-being of every child.

Conversely, a **child safeguarding policy is a commitment** specific to an organization or sports club that aims to create a protective environment on a daily basis. It translates broad legal obligations into concrete, local actions, such as implementing secure recruitment procedures, codes of conduct for coaches, and training to learn how to detect signs of abuse.

In summary, while the legal framework sets the basic rules imposed by the state, the safeguarding policy is the practical tool the club uses to turn these laws into reality on the ground, thereby ensuring that every child can participate in their sport safely.

Legal framework

The connection between sports and the legal framework is not always easy for the general public to grasp. However, it is essential to understand that participation in sports is a child's right recognized by major international bodies. As mentioned, a legal framework implies that states have an obligation to take concrete actions to protect children. Understanding the law and knowing our responsibilities as adults who work with children allows each of us to take ownership and realize that the solution for better protection lies in an integrated approach to children's rights in our practices, including sports activities. Before proposing concrete actions to implement the legal framework, let's take the time to familiarize ourselves with the legal texts that govern our practices.

Worldwide legal framework

At a worldwide level, several organizations provide a legal framework to better protect children. Several legal texts emphasize the need to protect children. One of the first is the International Covenant on Human Rights. The term "human" includes children. Here, we will outline the legal frameworks established by the United Nations and the Council of Europe.

During World War II, thousands of children suffered the devastating consequences of the war; many of them were left orphaned, injured, or abandoned to their sad fate. In 1947, the **United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)** was established. Its primary mission was to provide assistance to children who were victims of the war on the European continent. Then, in 1953, its mandate became international, but its work lacked a clear and binding legal framework.

In 1959, the Declaration of the Rights of the Child was adopted, and 20 years later, following the work of a task force established at Poland's initiative, the **Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)** was adopted. It comprises 54 articles linked by five fundamental principles:

- → Non-discrimination,
- → The best interests of the child,
- → The right to survival and development,

→ The child's opinion,

→ The right to education.

The Convention has been signed and ratified by most countries worldwide. Signing a convention is a symbolic endorsement of the text; ratification, typically through a parliamentary vote, formalizes a country's commitment to act by bringing national laws into compliance with the Convention's provisions. All countries then submit regular reports on the implementation of the Convention to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, which is based in Geneva and comprises 18 experts.

The Convention is the first legally binding international treaty dedicated to the fundamental rights of every human being under the age of 18. Its primary objective is to recognize the inherent dignity of the child and guarantee their rights to survival, development, and protection, without any distinction, so they may grow up in a spirit of peace and solidarity. In recent years, three additional optional protocols have been adopted under the Convention. These protocols propose more targeted measures addressing specific issues. One concerns the involvement of children in armed conflict, a second concerns the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography, and a third establishes a procedure for submitting communications. The Committee also makes general observations that offer specific recommendations on specific issues, such as the protection of children from all forms of violence (Observation No. 13, described below)

In the **specific context of sport**, several articles of the Convention impose strict requirements to ensure a safe environment:

→ **Respect for children's view: Article 12**

This article states that a child capable of forming their own views has the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting them, with these views being given "due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child". For a responsible adult, this means a young athlete should not be treated as a mere performer. Their opinions regarding their training, well-being, or any situation causing them discomfort must be listened to and respected.

→ **Sharing thoughts freely: Article 13**

The child has the right to freedom of expression, which includes the "freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds... regardless of frontiers". This right allows children to learn about their own rights and the specific protection mechanisms available within their club. It also grants them the right to communicate about facts they have witnessed or experienced.

→ **Freedom of thought & religion: Article 14**

Sports organizations and coaches must respect the personal convictions and the cultural or religious identity of every child.

→ **Protection and privacy: Article 16**

This protects the child from arbitrary or unlawful interference with their privacy and attacks on their reputation. In sport, this requires respecting the intimacy of children and protecting their image from abusive exploitation. Adults must ensure that sports facilities provide adequate physical privacy (e.g., in showers and locker rooms). Furthermore, an athlete's "correspondence"—including private messages between a coach and a child—must be handled professionally and never be subject to "arbitrary interference"

→ **Access to information: Article 17**

States must encourage the media to disseminate information aimed at promoting the physical and mental health of the child. This implies that they should have access to clear information about their rights and healthy behaviors.

→ **Protection from violence: Article 19**

This central pillar obligates states to take all measures to protect children from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury, abuse, or exploitation (including sexual abuse) while in the care of an adult, such as coaches, staff or volunteers.

→ **Health, water, food, environment: Article 24**

The child has the right to the "enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health" and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation. Adults and organizations must work to abolish practices prejudicial to children's health. In sports, this involves fighting against overtraining, doping, or physical violence. Furthermore, adults must be supported in using basic knowledge regarding child health, hygiene, and the "prevention of accidents".

→ **Rest, play, culture and arts: Article 31**

This recognizes the child's right to rest, leisure, play, and age-appropriate recreational activities. This article establishes sport as a right, to be practiced for the child's pleasure and development.

→ **Protection from abuse and exploitation: Articles 34, 35, and 36**

These obligate states to prevent and protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse (Art. 34), combat the sale or trafficking of children (Art. 35), and protect minors against all other forms of exploitation prejudicial to their welfare (Art. 36). These are crucial for countering risks related to early recruitment or the commodification of young talent.

→ **Recovery and reintegration: Article 39**

States must promote the physical and psychological recovery of children who are victims of neglect or abuse in an environment that fosters self-respect and dignity.

Finally, the Convention emphasizes that the responsibility for this protection does not rest solely on individuals, but on the member states. States have a duty to support parents and responsible adults in their child-rearing mission. They must also ensure that all sports institutions conform to rigorous safety and health standards, particularly regarding the suitability and supervision of their staff.

Following an analysis of the reports by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, here are the **specific points relating to sport for the three countries involved in the project**. The three reports emphasize the importance of access to physical and recreational activities as a vital tool for inclusion:

Bulgaria (2024): The Committee on the Rights of the Child urges Bulgaria to step up its efforts to ensure that every child can enjoy their right to rest, play, and recreational activities, without any form of discrimination. The central recommendation is the development of a national strategy, adequately resourced, specifically aimed at ensuring access for all children to inclusive sports, recreational, cultural, and artistic activities. This strategic framework must pay particular attention to the most marginalized groups, including children with disabilities, those living in rural areas, minors from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, as well as asylum-seeking and refugee children.

The inclusion of children with disabilities is a key priority. The Committee recommends that the Bulgarian State strengthen support for their individual development and social integration by

ensuring reasonable accommodations for their full inclusion in all aspects of public life, including play and cultural activities. For this inclusion to be meaningful, it is imperative to train all professionals working with children on the rights and specific needs of these minors, while conducting awareness-raising campaigns to combat stigma and promote their image as rights-holders.

Furthermore, the Committee emphasizes the need to break the social isolation of minors deprived of a family environment. Bulgaria is therefore urged to ensure that family-style residential centers fully integrate children into community life and do not perpetuate forms of segregation. This approach must be accompanied by a resolute fight against the discriminatory stereotypes that still affect Roma children, refugee children, and LGBTQI+ minors, to ensure that sports and recreational spaces are places of safety and mutual respect. Finally, the State is encouraged to promote the active participation of children in decision-making processes, ensuring that their views are regularly heard and considered in the development of leisure policies that affect them.

Italy (2019): The Committee encourages Italy to strengthen accessibility and inclusion in leisure activities to ensure that every child can exercise their right to rest and play. A major emphasis is placed on the inclusion of children with disabilities, with the Committee specifically recommending that children with autism spectrum disorders be fully integrated into all areas of social life, including recreational and cultural activities. To support this goal, the State is urged to allocate adequate human and financial resources so that programs for children—particularly those from disadvantaged and marginalized communities—are effective and do not suffer the consequences of austerity measures.

At the same time, the Committee emphasizes the need to reduce regional disparities that affect access to basic services and living standards, directly influencing children's ability to participate in quality extracurricular activities. Special attention is required for migrant and unaccompanied children; the Committee is concerned about the lack of adequate social activities in reception centers and urges Italy to ensure non-discriminatory access to non-formal education programs and lifelong learning opportunities.

In terms of protection, the recommendations emphasize the creation of a safe environment in all contexts of the child's life. This entails an explicit legal prohibition of corporal punishment, even of a minor nature, in all settings, including sports clubs and recreational spaces. Furthermore, the Committee recommends amending legislation to ensure that prevention and protection measures against sexual abuse also apply to volunteers, a category of adults that is highly prevalent in the nonprofit and sports sectors. Finally, sports and leisure activities must become spaces for citizenship where children's participation is actively promoted within their communities and schools, thereby allowing their voices to influence decisions that directly affect them.

Spain (2024): Spain has placed access to recreation and sports at the heart of its national strategy for children, viewing these activities as essential tools for breaking the cycle of poverty and promoting the social development of young people. As part of the National Action Plan for the European Child Guarantee, the government is committed to ensuring free and effective access to extracurricular, sports, and cultural activities for all children in vulnerable situations, thereby eliminating the financial barriers that hinder their development.

This commitment to equality is accompanied by a drive to modernize public sports facilities to make them more inclusive. Emphasis is placed on adapting facilities to the specific needs of children with disabilities, as well as on promoting gender equality and combating all forms of discrimination in these spaces. These measures aim not only at social inclusion but also address a public health challenge. Indeed, to counter the rise in sedentary lifestyles and screen

time, sports are actively promoted through the National Strategic Plan for the Reduction of Childhood Obesity 2022–2030, which encourages active lifestyles from an early age.

The realm of leisure time is also recognized as a major space for non-formal education where minors can exercise their right to participation and association. Strengthening associative structures, such as participation councils and youth organizations, enables young people to become active agents in their own development and to influence the policies that affect them. Finally, for the most vulnerable children, particularly those from conflict or migration contexts, access to safe recreational spaces is a vital protective measure, essential for reducing psychosocial risks and promoting their emotional recovery.

One of the central commitments of the United Nations committee gas to do with “**The right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence**” (General comment number 13, Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2011). The text expands the definition of those responsible for a child. Sports coaches and youth group supervisors are explicitly recognized as "caregivers," holding the same status as parents or teachers. In this capacity, they have a clear legal and professional-ethical responsibility to ensure the child's safety, health, development, and well-being. More broadly leisure, sports, and recreational facilities are defined as "care settings". In this idea protection must be guaranteed not only during the activity itself but also during periods of informal supervision (e.g., locker rooms, free time) and while in transit to and from sports settings.

In the Charter the violence is not limited to physical harm; it includes mental violence, such as humiliation, ridicule, and conveying to children that they are only of value for meeting someone else's needs (e.g., performance at all costs). The document specifically identifies "hazing" (ritualized harassment) and bullying, whether by adults or other children, as forms of violence that must be proscribed.

The Committee advocates for the adoption of professional codes of ethics and specific standards of care for sports clubs. Regarding specifically to professionals and volunteers in sport, all of them must receive training on the child rights approach and how to detect indicators of violence.

Concerning the need for an independent reporting, the text emphasizes creating safe, confidential, and accessible reporting mechanisms that present themselves as help-oriented services rather than purely punitive triggers.

The charter focuses on the child's right to be heard. Sport should not be an environment of blind submission. The child's right to express their views (Article 12) must be respected in all protection processes. For the Committee involving children in the development of prevention strategies, particularly against bullying and harassment, is an effective protective measure.

Finally, sports organizations cannot ignore abuse under the pretext of autonomy. States have a "due diligence" obligation to ensure that those responsible for children in sport respect their rights. Inaction or the failure to provide adequate resources to identify, prevent, and react to violence is considered an omission by the State and its institutions.

Another fundamental legal agreement is the **UNESCO’s International Charter on Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport** (2015). The charter defines participation in sport as a fundamental right for all, essential to the development of physical, psychological and social abilities.

The Charter places **child protection, integrity and safety at the centre of the sporting experience**. Sport should enable children and young people to enjoy its benefits, including better health, self-confidence, social connection and team spirit, but these benefits can only be achieved when participation takes place in a safe and respectful environment. For this reason, the Charter calls for concerted action to protect children from all forms of harm, including violence, sexual exploitation, trafficking, bullying, doping and manipulation.

The Charter also stresses that **children's well-being must not be sacrificed in the pursuit of sporting performance**. It explicitly condemns excessive training and any form of psychological pressure that may damage children's physical, emotional or mental health. Safe and inclusive access to play and sport should be guaranteed from a very young age, including for pre-school children, so that the foundations for lifelong participation can be built in a positive and protective environment. At the same time, sport must never result in the deprivation of education or become a context for labour exploitation.

Creating this protective environment is presented as a **shared responsibility** among all adults and stakeholders involved in children's sporting lives. Professionals, volunteers, coaches and other staff are responsible not only for sports training but also for the overall development and safety of the children in their care. They must therefore be recruited with due diligence, be sufficient in number, and receive continuous training and adequate supervision.

Parents, coaches, administrators and supervisors must remain vigilant about the risks associated with dangerous, inappropriate or overly demanding training methods. Families, medical staff, the media and public authorities also have a role to play in ensuring a coordinated response to threats against the integrity of young athletes. This shared responsibility requires cooperation, clear procedures and a common commitment to safeguarding children's rights.

The Charter also highlights the importance of values-based education in sport. Adults have a duty to promote prevention programmes based on fair play, honesty, respect for rules and respect for others. These values help foster positive attitudes among children and young people and contribute to rejecting all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation.

In this sense, the Charter transforms sport into a space of active protection. It reminds all adults and institutions involved that the pursuit of performance must never come at the expense of a child's dignity, safety, education or rights.

Regarding **other international treaties**, primarily those of the **Council of Europe**, reveals very specific obligations for the sports sector. The Council of Europe, established in 1949, brings together 46 European countries. This organisation aims to promote democracy and respect for fundamental rights across the continent. It has no direct links with the European Union. Its judicial arm is the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). Since the 1990s, the Council of Europe has proposed several conventions to better protect children. We invite you to discover some of these conventions and their implications for the sports sector.

The **Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (2011)**, also known as the Istanbul Convention, is a key international treaty that frames violence against women and girls as a violation of human rights. It applies to women and girls, including those under the age of 18, and is structured around four main pillars: prevention, protection, prosecution and co-ordinated policies. In the field of sport, this means that clubs, federations, coaches, volunteers and other adults involved with children have a responsibility to create environments based on respect, equality and safety.

From a prevention perspective, the Convention requires states to **promote education on non-violent conflict resolution, equality, mutual respect and the right to personal integrity**. In sports settings, this can be translated into training sessions, club rules and educational activities that actively challenge discrimination, humiliation and abusive practices. It also highlights the need to train professionals, including coaches and sports volunteers, so they can identify violence, respond appropriately and refer victims to the right services. This training should also address the rights and needs of victims and avoid secondary victimisation, meaning the additional harm that children may suffer when institutions respond in an insensitive or inadequate way.

The protection pillar places the safety and needs of victims and witnesses at the centre. The Convention **encourages reporting** and makes clear that confidentiality rules should not

become an obstacle when professionals have reasonable grounds to suspect violence or abuse. This is particularly relevant in sport, where coaches, trainers or sports staff may be among the first adults to notice signs of harm. Child witnesses must also receive support adapted to their age and needs, including psychosocial counselling when necessary.

The prosecution pillar ensures that violence is punished and that victims are protected throughout the legal process. The Convention considers it an aggravating circumstance when violence is committed against a vulnerable person or in the presence of a child. In sports settings, this is especially relevant when abuse occurs within a relationship of trust or authority, such as between a coach and an athlete. It also requires protection from intimidation, retaliation and repeat victimisation, and ensures that child victims of sexual violence have enough time to initiate legal action once they reach adulthood.

Finally, the Convention stresses that protection is only effective when different actors work together. Justice systems, law enforcement, social services, NGOs and other relevant organisations must co-operate. Sports organisations should therefore be understood as part of a broader protection network. The Convention sends a clear message: **violence is not acceptable in any setting, including sport**, and preventing it requires a whole-society response.

On the other hand, the **Convention on the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse**, commonly known as the Lanzarote Convention, is an international treaty designed to protect all children under the age of 18 from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. Its relevance to sport is direct: children must be safe not only at home or school, but also in sports clubs, academies, competitions, changing rooms, online communication spaces and any other environment linked to sporting activity.

The prevention pillar is particularly important for recruitment and training in the sports sector. Adults who are in regular contact with children, including professionals and volunteers, must be aware of children's rights and child protection standards. This includes safe recruitment procedures and background checks to ensure that people convicted of sexual offences against children are not placed in positions of trust. Children must also receive age-appropriate information about risks, how to protect themselves and where to seek help, including risks linked to digital technologies and online communication.

The protection pillar focuses on children's safety and on making it possible for them to speak out. The Convention makes clear that confidentiality rules should not prevent professionals, such as coaches, trainers or sports doctors, from reporting suspicions to child protection services when they have reasonable grounds to believe that a child may be a victim. It also requires accessible information and support services, such as telephone or online helplines, where children, families or witnesses can seek advice, including anonymously.

The prosecution pillar adapts criminal justice to the realities of abuse, including abuse facilitated by technology. The Convention criminalises grooming, understood as an adult using information and communication technologies to propose a meeting with a child for the purpose of committing sexual abuse, when this is followed by concrete acts leading to such a meeting. It also recognises the abuse of a position of trust or authority, such as that of a coach, as an aggravating circumstance. In addition, a sports club or organisation may be held liable if a lack of supervision or control makes it possible for an offence to be committed by someone under its authority.

The Convention also promotes co-operation between sectors and across borders. Sport, health, education, justice and child protection services must work together to prevent abuse, detect risks and support victims. In practical terms, the Lanzarote Convention turns the sports

club into a space of **heightened vigilance**, where professionals, volunteers and families must be alert to both physical and digital risks.

The **Convention on cybercrime (2001)**, also known as the Budapest Convention, is relevant to child protection in sport because sporting environments are increasingly digital. Communication between coaches and children, photos from competitions, training videos, social media posts and online platforms can all create risks if they are not properly managed. The Convention provides a legal framework to address offences committed through computers, mobile phones and online networks.

A key issue is the protection of the image of young athletes. In the digital age, images of children circulate easily and quickly, but the Convention is clear that creating, sharing or possessing sexually explicit images of a child is prohibited. For coaches, volunteers and other trusted adults, using the internet or a mobile phone to solicit a child or exploit their image is a serious criminal offence. This means that digital communication in sport must be governed by strict safeguarding rules.

The Convention also reinforces the responsibility of organisations. A club or federation cannot simply claim that it did not know what was happening if abuse occurred within its structures. If an official uses the organisation to facilitate a crime, or if a lack of supervision allows the crime to happen, the organisation itself may face consequences. This is especially important for clubs that use messaging groups, online training platforms, shared photo folders or social media accounts involving children.

The Convention provides for sanctions for both individuals and organisations. Adults who commit offences may face criminal penalties, including imprisonment, while clubs or federations may face fines or other sanctions if they have been negligent. In practical terms, the digital world is **not a lawless space**. States must adopt laws and co-operate internationally to prosecute offenders, sports organisations must implement digital vigilance, and adult professionals must understand that every message, image or online interaction with a child carries safeguarding responsibilities.

The **Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings** is especially relevant to sport in relation to the recruitment, movement and exploitation of young athletes. Trafficking does not only involve kidnapping or physical coercion. In sport, it may occur when someone exploits a child's vulnerability, a family's poverty, migration status, lack of information or trust in a coach, agent or club in order to obtain control or benefit.
For children, the Convention establishes an essential principle: consent does not matter when exploitation is involved. If a child under the age of 18 is recruited, transported or harboured for the purpose of exploitation, it is considered trafficking even if the child appears to have agreed. In cases of doubt about a young person's age, the protective approach must prevail: the person should be treated as a minor until their age is confirmed.

Sports organisations therefore have a duty to act as a protective shield. Clubs, academies and federations must have clear safeguarding policies, transparent recruitment procedures and mechanisms to detect risks of exploitation. They cannot ignore what happens under their authority. If a club official commits an offence, or if the organisation fails to supervise its staff adequately and this allows exploitation to occur, the organisation may be held liable.

Coaches and sports professionals also have specific responsibilities. Because they often occupy a position of authority and trust, they must be trained to identify warning signs of trafficking and exploitation, especially among children who are socially or economically vulnerable, migrant children or young athletes recruited away from their families. When an adult abuses this authority, the consequences are particularly serious.

The Convention therefore requires action at several levels. States must ensure that police, social services, justice systems and the sports sector work together. Clubs and federations must monitor the people and practices under their responsibility. Professionals must understand that their role is not only to train athletes, but also to protect them. In this sense, the Convention reinforces a central idea for child safeguarding in sport: **sporting success can never justify the exploitation of a child**.

European Union legal and strategic framework

The European Union's action on the protection of minors in sport is based on a strong **legal and strategic framework**. This framework recognises that sport is not only a space for physical activity and performance, but also a setting where **children's rights, safety and well-being must be actively protected**. Article 165 of the **Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union** provides the legal basis for EU action in sport and explicitly refers to the need to protect the physical and moral integrity of sportspeople, especially young people. This is reinforced by Article 24 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which states that children have the right to the protection and care necessary for their well-being and that their best interests must be a primary consideration in all actions affecting them, including those carried out by private institutions such as sports clubs.

The **EU Work Plan for Sport 2024–2027** translates these principles into concrete priorities. It identifies integrity and values in sport as a central area of action and calls for the strengthening of safe sport by preventing harassment, abuse, violence, sexual violence and all forms of discrimination. This approach confirms that safeguarding is not an additional element of sport, but part of its core values. The Work Plan also promotes practical initiatives, including cooperation with the Council of Europe, to improve safety and support services in sports environments.

The **European Child Guarantee** adds an important social inclusion dimension. It recognises that sport, leisure and cultural activities play a key role in children's social learning and development. For children at risk of poverty or social exclusion, access to sport should therefore be free, effective and inclusive. This means removing barriers such as the cost of equipment, transport or facilities, so that vulnerable children are not excluded from opportunities that support their well-being, participation and social integration.

The **EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child**, adopted in 2021, places children's participation and protection at the centre of EU action. It stresses that children have the right to be heard in decisions that affect them, including in schools, clubs and community spaces. It also highlights the importance of protecting children from violence and supporting victims through multidisciplinary responses, such as the Barnahus model. In the context of sport, this means that children should not only be protected by adults,but also listened to when defining what makes a sports environment safe, respectful and inclusive.

Digital safety is also part of the EU's child protection approach. **The Better Internet for Kids strategy** addresses risks such as grooming, cyberbullying and exposure to hateful or harmful content. These risks are increasingly relevant in sport, where clubs, coaches and young athletes use messaging apps, social media, online platforms and digital images. Sports organisations and adults working with children therefore need the skills to guide children safely in digital environments and to prevent online interactions from becoming spaces of abuse or exploitation.

The **2024 Commission Recommendation** on developing **and strengthening integrated child protection systems** reinforces the need for coordinated action across all sectors. It identifies coaches, volunteers and sports staff as key actors in detecting early signs of violence

and reporting concerns. It also stresses the importance of due diligence in recruitment, including criminal background checks for adults working with minors, as well as clear reporting obligations when there are reasonable grounds to suspect abuse.

Taken together, these EU legal and policy instruments form a coherent framework that requires sports organisations to move beyond technical coaching. **The protection of children must become a shared responsibility embedded in the daily culture of clubs, federations and sports institutions.** This means creating safe environments, training adults, listening to children, preventing violence and discrimination, and ensuring that every child can participate in sport with dignity, safety and respect.

Legal framework on national levels

Spain

Spain's child-protection framework is especially relevant for sport because it has moved from a general duty to protect children towards a model of **safe environments**. In practice, this means that sports clubs, federations, municipal sports schools and leisure organisations are not only responsible for technical training or competition. They are also expected to prevent violence, detect risks early, protect children immediately and activate the appropriate public services when necessary.

At national level, the key legal reference is **Organic Law 8/2021, known as LOPIVI**, on the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents against violence. For the sports sector, its most important contribution is that it explicitly recognises sport and leisure as spaces where violence against children can occur and therefore as spaces where safeguarding duties must be implemented. LOPIVI requires sports and leisure organisations that work regularly with minors to apply protection protocols, appoint a child-protection delegate, create mechanisms for prevention and early detection, promote children's participation, reinforce communication with families and ensure training for professionals and volunteers.

This **changes the role of sports organisations**. A club cannot limit itself to having a general statement against violence. It must operate as an accountable safeguarding environment, with clear procedures, trained adults and defined responsibilities. The child-protection delegate becomes a key figure: children and families must be able to identify this person as an accessible point of contact, while coaches and volunteers must know when and how to involve them. However, the delegate and the club should not conduct internal investigations that replace public authorities. Their role is to detect, protect, document, communicate and cooperate.

LOPIVI also creates a **general duty to report signs of violence against children**. This duty is stronger for professionals and volunteers who work regularly with minors, including those in sport. If a coach, volunteer, manager or protection delegate detects signs of violence, the priority is to protect the child and communicate the case to the competent services. If the child's health or safety is at risk, or if the facts may constitute a crime, the case must be reported immediately to the police, the Prosecutor's Office or the courts. This is directly relevant for clubs: serious cases should never be resolved only through informal conversations, mediation or internal discipline.

The **2022 Sports Law reinforces this approach by incorporating LOPIVI's safeguarding obligations into the sports system**. It states that minors' sports practice deserves special protection and must be adapted to their physical, psychological and emotional development. It also requires sports entities to prevent discrimination, degrading treatment, insults, abuse, harassment and abuse of authority. At federation and league level, the law requires protocols for prevention and action in cases of discrimination, abuse, sexual harassment, harassment

based on sex and abuse of authority. This means that safeguarding is no longer only an ethical recommendation: it is linked to legal compliance, disciplinary responsibility and, in some cases, access to public funding.

Other national laws complete this framework. **Law 19/2007 on violence, racism, xenophobia and intolerance in sport** contributes to safer sports environments, especially in events and public-order contexts. **Organic Law 10/2022 on sexual freedom** strengthens the response to sexual violence and must be read together with LOPIVI when the victim is a child. Education law is also relevant because it requires schools to have protocols against bullying, cyberbullying, sexual harassment and gender violence, as well as a well-being and protection coordinator. This matters for school sport and extracurricular sport, where schools, clubs and municipalities often interact.

In Catalonia (Spanish region), this national framework is translated into a more operational child-protection system. **Law 14/2010 on the rights and opportunities of children and adolescents** is the main legal basis. It recognises children as rights-holders, establishes that their best interests must guide all public and private decisions affecting them, and confirms their right to be heard. For sport, this is important because children should not only be protected by adults; they should also be listened to when defining what makes a club safe, respectful and inclusive.

Catalan law also recognises children's right to practice sport and participate in physical and recreational activities in a safe environment. It states that competitive sport must be voluntary and that training methods must respect the child's physical condition and educational needs. This has a direct impact on sports practice: excessive pressure, humiliating coaching methods, overtraining or practices that undermine education and well-being are incompatible with a child-rights approach to sport.

The Catalan system clearly distinguishes prevention, risk management and formal protection. Local social services have a central role when a situation of risk is detected. They assess the case, coordinate support and follow up with the child and family. If the risk is serious or cannot be addressed through ordinary intervention, the case is escalated to specialised childhood services and, where necessary, to the Generalitat's child-protection system. For sports clubs, this clarifies the route: clubs are not child-protection authorities, but they are part of the detection and referral chain.

The most relevant Catalan tool for sport is the **Protocol marc de protecció d'infants i adolescents davant les violències en l'àmbit esportiu**. This protocol translates the general legal framework into practical guidance for federations, clubs, associations, school sports associations and sports sections of other entities. It recommends that each sports organisation develop its own internal safeguarding protocol, including prevention, risk reduction, detection, action, follow-up and evaluation.

The Catalan protocol is especially useful because it shows what safeguarding means in everyday club life. It requires more than awareness-raising. It points to concrete measures such as defining unacceptable behaviours, creating accessible reporting channels, training staff, reviewing recruitment procedures, reducing risks in changing rooms, trips and training spaces, managing family behaviour during events, and promoting a culture of good treatment. In this sense, prevention becomes part of the organisation's daily governance.

The protocol also gives practical guidance on case management. Each club or sports association should appoint a protection delegate. In larger organisations, it may be useful to have a contact person in each sport section so that children, families and staff know whom to approach. Information about a possible case may come from the child, from a family, from

technical staff or through a reporting channel. At the first moment, adults must provide emotional support, handle information carefully and avoid interrogating the child.

When the facts may constitute serious maltreatment or a crime, the club must take precautionary measures to prevent contact between the alleged perpetrator and minors, inform the family of the affected child and activate external reporting to the competent authorities. When the case does not appear to be criminal, the club must still take corrective or protective measures and follow its internal circuit. This internal circuit should define who receives information, who records it, who decides urgent measures, who informs families and who communicates with external services.

The Catalan framework also stresses coordination. Depending on the case, the protection delegate or the club may need to coordinate with municipal sports services, schools, county councils, social services, the police, DGAIA or the Juvenile Prosecutor's Office. This is particularly important in grassroots sport, where clubs often use public facilities, receive local support, work with schools and depend heavily on volunteers. The safeguarding system must therefore connect the club with the wider local protection ecosystem.

Overall, the Spanish and Catalan frameworks point in the same direction: **sports organisations must become active safeguarding environments**. This requires clear protocols, safe recruitment and vetting, trained coaches and volunteers, a visible protection delegate, child-friendly reporting channels, family communication, non-discrimination measures, coordination with public services and a clear distinction between internal action and formal public intervention. For grassroots clubs, the main challenge is not only knowing the law, but translating it into simple, realistic and usable procedures that can work in everyday sports practice.

Euskadi (Spanish region) has developed a rights-based child-protection framework in which sport, leisure, education and community spaces are treated as key environments for prevention, early detection and intervention. The central norm is Law 2/2024 on Childhood and Adolescence, which recognises children's right to practise physical activity and sport in **safe, inclusive and non-violent environments**. It requires public administrations to promote good treatment, equality, coexistence and non-violence in activities involving minors, including sport and leisure. Importantly, the law also requires specific protocols for prevention, detection and intervention in sport and educational leisure, as well as staff training, anti-violence and anti-discrimination measures, and the appointment of a protection delegate in sports organisations working regularly with minors.

This framework is reinforced by Law 2/2023 on Physical Activity and Sport, which explicitly prohibits violence, intolerance and discrimination in sport, with special attention to children and vulnerable groups. It requires awareness-raising, training for technical staff, measures against sexual harassment, LGTBI-phobia and discriminatory conduct, and protocols for prevention, detection and intervention in cases of violence against minors. It also establishes protection delegates and safe reporting and response mechanisms within sports entities. Taken together, these laws make clear that Basque sports organisations are not only expected to coach children, but to operate as **accountable safeguarding environments**.

The Basque model also has a strong equality and inclusion dimension. Legislation on equality between women and men, lives free from male violence, and the rights of trans persons connects safeguarding with the prevention of sexism, harassment, abuse of authority, transphobia and other forms of discrimination. These rules are especially relevant in sport, where power relations, gender stereotypes and exclusionary practices can create risks for girls, LGTBIQ+ children and other vulnerable groups. The framework also links sport with education and youth policy, promoting coeducation, diversity, socio-emotional well-being, adapted sport, participation and healthy lifestyles.

Finally, the Basque Strategy against Violence towards Children and Adolescents 2022–2025 gives coherence to this system by promoting a culture of good treatment and safe environments across schools, sport, leisure and community settings. It prioritises training for professionals and volunteers, early detection, interinstitutional cooperation and child participation. For the 360 Safe Play Model, Euskadi offers a useful example of how child rights can be translated into concrete sports obligations: trained adults, clear protocols, protection delegates, child-friendly reporting mechanisms, inclusive participation and strong coordination between clubs, schools, community actors and public protection systems.

Italy

The concept of **safeguarding** in sport represents today one of the most profound, radical, and significant changes in the Italian sporting system of recent decades. It is not simply a new bureaucratic step or just another formal task for association offices, but a real **cultural change** that finally shifts the focus of the sporting structure toward the full protection of the human person. When we discuss safeguarding, we mean a coordinated and complex set of policies, procedures, and daily actions that aim to guarantee a safe, inclusive environment that respects the dignity of every athlete, professional or otherwise. This protection has absolute priority when it concerns minors and vulnerable individuals, but its spirit encompasses the entire social body of sport. The primary goal is to ensure that sporting activity is not perceived solely as a path toward technical or physical results, but as a fundamental contribution to the **psychophysical well-being** and social growth of the individual, transforming the sporting environment into a life experience free from abuse, violence, harassment, or discrimination.

In Italy, this ethical necessity, for a long time left to the personal sensibilities of individual managers, has become a **mandatory legal duty** with the recent Sports Reform. This historic step marks the definitive move away from informal safety management, introducing authentic tools for prevention and monitoring established by **Legislative Decrees 36 and 39 of 2021**. This legislative evolution is not an isolated event, but part of a renewed constitutional framework: the new text of **Article 33 of the Italian Constitution** officially recognizes the educational, social, and health-promoting value of sporting activity. This recognition grants the lawmaker the power and duty to establish strict regulations, because if the State promotes sport as a tool for well-being, it bears the moral and legal obligation to ensure that the environments where this activity occurs never become spaces of oppression or risk to the safety of citizens.

Entering the details of Italian law, **Article 16 of Legislative Decree 39/2021** represents the technical heart of the reform. This regulation, titled "Simplification of tasks for sporting bodies," clarifies in detail the methodologies to prevent and combat genderbased violence, harassment, and every other form of discrimination based on race, religion, personal beliefs, disability, age, or sexual orientation. The rules apply to **national sporting Federations, associated sporting disciplines, sports promotion entities, and meritorious associations**, mandating them to draft specific guidelines within twelve months of the decree's commencement, with a four-year renewable validity.

Sports Associations and Societies (ASD and SSD), both amateur and professional, are obligated to adopt **organizational and control models (MOG)** that adhere to these guidelines. In particular, the lawmaker requires that by **August 31, 2024**, the models and codes of conduct be prepared, while by **December 31, 2024**, the appointment of the manager against abuse, violence, and discrimination (Safeguarding Officer) must be formalized. In the event of affiliation with more than one entity, societies may opt to follow the guidelines of only one, following a formal notification. The regulation also introduces a stringent system of sanctions for those who fail to comply with these duties and specifies that societies already possessing an organizational model under **Legislative Decree 231 of 2001** must integrate the new

protection rules into it. A significant feature of Article 16 is the possibility for **Comitato Olimpico Nazionale Italiano (CONI)** and other sporting organizations to participate in criminal trials as a civil party, demonstrating a resolute institutional stance against unlawful behaviors.
The Italian system is structured through a "cascade" model that involves three levels of responsibility. At the apex, we find **CONI**, which acts as the primary supervisor through the **Permanent Observatory**, disseminating fundamental principles to combat every form of violence. At the second level, there are **Federations and Sports Promotion Entities (EPS)** such as OPES, CSI, or UISP, which have the task of translating general regulations into practical guidelines and establishing their own National Safeguarding Officer. At the base of the pyramid are the individual **ASD and SSD** that must implement these protections on the field.

The **Safeguarding Officer** is the central figure of this system. They are not a police officer or investigator, but a guarantor of safety and integrity tasked with monitoring the implementation of protocols, educating the staff, and acting as a reference point for anyone wishing to report concerns. It is fundamental to reiterate that criminal responsibility is personal (**Art. 27 Constitution**); thus, the manager is not liable for crimes committed by other coaches or directors. However, they may be held accountable at a civil or disciplinary level if there is a serious failure or negligence in managing the reports they receive. Their appointment must guarantee autonomy and independence from the society's management; the process includes a search for competent profiles, a decision by the board, and formal communication to the parent organization, as well as publishing contact information (e-mail or dedicated phone) on the association's website.

The Safeguarding system integrates with rigorous legal duties. The concept of safe sport is central and serves to guarantee the creation of an athletic environment that does not merely provide technical instruction, but ensures a respectful, equitable context entirely free from every form of violence, whether physical, psychological, sexual, or digital. This necessity stems from scientific evidence, such as the fasting study of 2004, which demonstrated that abuse is a prevalent issue in every country and sport, with a concerning presence in elite sport, where the absence of reports often does not signify the absence of a problem, but rather a cultural barrier to reporting. In Italy, the legislative transition is facilitated by **Legislative Decrees 33 and 36 of 2021**, which mandate associations to adopt the **Organizational and Control Model (MOG)** and the **Code of Conduct**. These are not simple bureaucratic documents, but living tools that must map risks and establish rules to prevent negligence, bullying, and abuse of power. Real protection is achieved through practical protocols that transform daily sporting life: from the mandatory verification of the criminal record for all staff (as required by D.Lgs. 39/2014) to the total prohibition of sharing sensitive spaces like locker rooms and bathrooms with athletes. Also, the management of training and trips is strictly regulated, banning individual sessions without supervision and requiring a clear separation in rooms for mixed teams, extending vigilance even to the digital world to halt private and unmonitored contacts between coaches and minors on social networks, thereby preventing grooming behaviors punished by **Article 609-undecies of the Penal Code**. The role of the instructor then assumes an extremely significant and delicate legal meaning.

On the civil level, **Article 2048 of the Civil Code** regards them as a true "preceptor," holding them responsible for damages caused by students while they are under their supervision. This responsibility is contractual: the coach must not only train the athlete but is a guarantor of their safety, and can be exonerated only by proving they employed every possible preventive procedure. On the criminal side, the situation is even more stringent and is based on various crimes that protect the minor's safety. Article 609-quater of the Penal Code punishes sexual acts with minors, raising the protection threshold to 16 years specifically when the act is committed by someone who has the minor in their care for sporting training. The gravity of these actions is further compounded by Article 61 n. 11 of the Penal Code, which adds the aggravating factor of the trust relationship, punishing the abuse of the coach's position of

authority. To this is added the protection against the abuse of correction or discipline tools (Art. 571 Penal Code), if training methods become harassment that jeopardizes mental or physical health, or even ill-treatment (Art. 572 Penal Code), if the instructor creates a living environment that is consistently humiliating.

Beyond the punitive aspect, Safeguarding encompasses a fundamental educational and social function. The modern instructor must be an active observer capable of detecting signs of distress, such as the onset of eating disorders or coercive control, often utilized to render the athlete dependent and isolated. Sport must promote the right to play and health mandated by UN conventions, combating forced early specialization and excessive performance pressure, factors that damage the identity of the young person and lead to dropout. This inclusive approach aims to dismantle ethnic and gender barriers, guaranteeing equal resources and protecting not only minors but also adults, ensuring self-determination and respect for universal rights. Finally, for this entire system to function, it is vital that there are transparent and protected reporting channels, where privacy is guaranteed and every event is rigorously documented, allowing the Prosecutor to act swiftly and ensuring that the protection of individuals always takes precedence over the reputation of the organization.

The effectiveness of safeguarding in Italy is demonstrated by numerous organizations that have transformed the rule into a practice to be proud of. In the Caserta area, Tam Tam Basketball in Castel Volturno is a luminous example of social inclusion, prioritizing the athlete's total well-being over any trophy. Similarly, ASD Arcobaleno in Borgosesia has initiated a detailed Child Safeguarding Policy focused on education through sport. In the North, Polisportiva Albosaggia in Sondrio has consolidated the protocols of different federations into one transparent and accessible model, making the rules easily understandable for all families.

Attention to digital safety is a pillar for Volley Silea in Veneto, which explicitly prohibits private coach-athlete contacts without supervision. To guarantee total impartiality, the **Kreo Team** in Verona preferred an external manager, while the historic **Sportiva Sturla** in Genoa established strict procedures against negligence and psychological abuse. In Rome, the **Eschilo Sporting Village** and **ASD Roma 2020** have made their Control Models public, while **ASD Club Sport Roma** has adopted a "zero tolerance" policy toward bullying and abuse. Experiences like those of **Palestra Big Roma**, which assigned the reporting channel to an internal psychologist, or **Ginnastica Romana**, which protects the safety of young female athletes following strict federal rules, show how widespread this sentiment is today. Finally, groups like the **Longboard Crew Italia** demonstrate that even in niche sports it is possible to excel in protecting gender identity and social inclusion.

In the modern sporting scene, the role of **Sports Promotion Entities (EPS)** like OPES, CSI, and UISP, together with the pedagogical expertise of NGOs like **Save the Children**, has changed deeply: they are no longer just messengers of rules, but real motors of a cultural change that joins the protection of minors with the legal safety of associations. This change finds its foundation in **D.Lgs. 36/2021 and D.Lgs. 39/2021**, laws that have made safeguarding a pillar of the sporting system. **OPES**, for example, has taken clear leadership by adopting a zero-tolerance policy and providing ASDs with pre-validated models that follow **Art. 16 of D.Lgs. 39/2021**, reducing bureaucratic costs and guaranteeing high safety standards. From **January 1, 2025**, the adoption of these models becomes a necessary requirement for affiliation, effectively turning the protection of members into a condition for the very existence of the sports club. The strictness of these rules serves to protect associations from the heavy consequences of civil liability, especially regarding the instructor.

The latter, according to **Art. 2048 of the Civil Code**, is seen as a "preceptor" and is therefore responsible for damage caused by students or suffered by them while they are under their watch. This is a heavy responsibility that requires proof that it was impossible to prevent the event. In court, the lack of an effective safeguarding model or failure to follow specific protocols of entities like the **CSI "Pact of Co-responsibility,"** which extends vigilance even to moments

in the locker rooms, or the rules of the **Child Safeguarding Policy of Save the Children**, exacerbates the club's position, demonstrating a clear "fault in organization." In the same way, **UISP** includes in its rules the fight against every form of psychological abuse and discrimination, following the **Charter of Women's Rights in Sport**, requiring constant monitoring by the Safeguarding Officer. Therefore, mandatory training every six months, checking the criminal record (**ex Art. 2 D.Lgs. 39/2014**), and creating reporting channels that guarantee privacy are not just ethical duties or formal tasks, but real legal shields necessary for the association's survival, because they demonstrate that the group has implemented all organized measures to prevent damage, mitigating compensation claims and protecting the integrity of the sporting environment.

In the end, safeguarding is redesigning the soul of Italian sport, shifting the focus from performance to the person. Thanks to the collaboration between international regulations, national reforms, and the commitment of virtuous societies, the playing field is finally becoming what it must be: a place of joy, growth, and freedom, protected from every form of abuse and fully adhering to the highest constitutional values of wellbeing and respect for human dignity.

Bulgaria

The people's representatives from the Seventh Great National Assembly, in their endeavour to express the will of the Bulgarian people, by declaring their loyalty to the universal human values: freedom, peace, humanism, equality, justice and tolerance, have turned into a supreme principle the rights of the person, his dignity and security and have indicated their irrevocable duty to protect the national and state unity of Bulgaria. They have created a democratic, legal and social state relying on basic acts, one of which affects the nationality and belonging of the person.

The Constitution guarantees equality before the act and prohibits any form of discrimination. In the Art. 6 states: “All people are born free and equal in dignity and rights. All citizens are equal before the act. No restrictions on rights or privileges based on race, nationality, ethnicity, sex, origin, religion, education, belief, political affiliation, personal and social status or property status shall be allowed.'

The **Protection against discrimination act** is effective from 01.01.2004. It regulates the protection against all forms of discrimination and helps to prevent it. The purpose of this legal act is to provide every person with the right to be: a) equal under the law; b) equal in treatment and opportunities for participation in public life; c) effective protected against discrimination.

This act protects from discrimination all natural persons on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria. Associations of natural persons and juristic persons shall enjoy the rights under this act when they are discriminated because of the signs specified in Art. 1 regarding their membership or the persons employed by them.

The act defines and provides protection against any form of direct or indirect discrimination based on gender, race, nationality, ethnicity, human genome, citizenship, origin, religion or belief, education, beliefs, political affiliation, personal or public status, disability, age, sexual orientation, family position, property status, or any other characteristics established by act or in an international treaty to which the Republic of Bulgaria.

Direct discrimination according to it, is any less favourable treatment of a person based on the signs under para. 1 than another person is treated, has been treated or would be treated under comparable similar circumstances. ***Indirect discrimination*** is the placement of a person or persons bearing a sign under Art. 4, para. 1, or to persons who, without being the bearers of such a characteristic, together with the former suffer less favourable treatment or are placed in a particularly unfavourable situation resulting from an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice, unless the provision, criterion or practice are objectively justified in view of a legitimate aim and the means to achieve the aim are appropriate and necessary.

Also, in Section II, of the act on Protection from discrimination (2003), there is a specifically stated section regarding the **protection in exercising the right to education and training** (Articles 29, 32 and 35). The Minister of Education and Science and local self-government bodies have taken the necessary measures to prevent racial segregation in educational institutions, as obliged by this act.

The act states:

“The head of an educational institution shall take effective measures to prevent all forms of discrimination at the place of study by a person from the teaching or non-teaching staff or by a learner. Which automatically means that the project and its methods and techniques for dealing with discrimination in the educational system are exactly appropriate and applicable for the purposes of the act. In this way, both the training staff and the trainers will be informed and will be able to recognize discriminatory manifestations and be able to react to a situation that has arisen.

Educational institutions take appropriate measures in order to equalize the opportunities for the effective exercise of the right to education and training of persons with disabilities, except when the costs for this are unreasonably high and would seriously hinder the institution.

The persons carrying out training and education, as well as the compilers of textbooks and teaching aids, are obliged to provide information and apply methods of training and education in a way aimed at overcoming stereotypes about the role of women and men in all spheres of social and family life”.

The **Penal Code of the Republic of Bulgaria** includes several provisions aimed at combating discrimination, racism and related intolerance. These provisions were created to protect citizens from crimes motivated by prejudice and hatred based on race, nationality, ethnicity, religion and other characteristics, for example in Art. 162 mentions that whoever through speech, print or other means of mass information, through electronic information systems or in any other way preaches or incites discrimination, violence or hatred based on race, nationality or ethnicity, shall be punished with imprisonment up to four years and a fine of five thousand to ten thousand BGN, as well as public reprimand. Similar information is also mentioned in Art. 163 where again the punishment is flob and imprisonment.

The **Preschool and School Education Act** provides equal access to education for all children, regardless of their race, ethnicity or religion. Article 4 states that “Education is the right of every citizen and is provided under equal conditions, regardless of race, nationality, ethnicity, gender, religion, social status and health status”. Also, the educational system participates in various educational strategies, programs and campaigns aimed at the inclusion and integration of the Roma community.

Finally, the **Broadcasting Act** contains provisions that prohibit the broadcasting of programs that promote hatred, violence or discrimination. This act concerns the subject of the project, and it states that: Radio and television broadcasters are obliged not to broadcast programs and broadcasts that contain incitement to hatred, violence or discrimination based on race, gender, religion or nationality (**Art. 10**, 1).

The **National Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for Equality, Inclusion and participation of Roma (2021-2030)** is a framework document that sets the guidelines for the implementation of policies for socio-economic inclusion and participation of Roma. The strategy takes into account the lessons learned and builds on the achievements of the period of the implementation of the National Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for Roma Integration (2012-2020).

According to the strategy, not all Roma are subject to social exclusion, but all can be discriminated against and deprived of rights. The Strategy applies a general and targeted integrated approach to citizens in vulnerable Roma and does not exclude the provision of support to disadvantaged people from other ethnic groups.

The guiding strategic document in the development of the Strategy is the National Development Programme: Bulgaria 2030 ("NDP: Bulgaria 2030"), which defines the vision and the overall objectives of development policies in all sectors of government. The Strategy contributes to the achievement of the objectives of the NDP: Bulgaria 2030, focusing mainly on the accelerated economic development and reducing inequalities.

Main priorities for dealing with this ethnic minority and injustice towards them are: 1) Education and training; 2) Health; 3) Employment; 4) Housing; 5) Rule of law and anti-discrimination; 6) Culture and media; 7) Empowering Roma women.

The **National Action Plan against Racism and Xenophobia** in Bulgaria was officially launched on March 21, 2023. This plan is set to run through 2027. It aims to address issues of racism, xenophobia, and related intolerance through a range of measures, including public awareness campaigns, educational programs, and strengthened legal frameworks. The plan is part of broader efforts aligned with the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020-2025, which aims to combat racism across all member states through legislation, policy reforms, and community engagement.

Activities related to the plan are educational campaigns aimed at raising awareness about racism and xenophobia. They are conducted in schools, universities and public spaces, training of act enforcement officers, which includes training programs for police officers and other act enforcement officers to recognize and adequately respond to manifestations of racism and xenophobia, monitoring cases of racism and xenophobia related to establishing systems for monitoring and reporting cases of racism, xenophobia and related crimes

Bulgaria started the first **National Action Plan to Combat Antisemitism for the period 2023-2027**. This comprehensive plan aligns with the EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life (2021-2030). The development of this plan is influenced by experiences from other countries like Norway and was informed by a nationally representative opinion poll conducted in early 2022.

The Plan aims to address antisemitism through a variety of measures including education, act enforcement, and protection of Jewish communities. It emphasizes the importance of denouncing antisemitism promptly and unequivocally, regardless of its source. This initiative also includes the appointment of designated officials to oversee and coordinate efforts against antisemitism across different sectors of government and society.

The **Anti-Muslim Hate Program** in Bulgaria was launched on July 23, 2024. This program aims to prevent anti-Muslim hatred, protect the rights of the Muslim community, and promote religious tolerance. It includes initiatives such as awareness campaigns, training for teachers and students, and support for Muslim organizations through workshops and discussions

This program is part of Bulgaria's broader efforts to address various forms of discrimination and hate crimes, aligning with similar initiatives in Europe to combat anti-Muslim sentiments and ensure the security and rights of Muslim communities.

The 2024 **Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the Coordination Mechanism in Cases of Violence – 2024** shows a clear rise in reporting and case-handling activity under the inter-institutional coordination mechanism. Multidisciplinary teams held 1,729 meetings at the stage of initial signal intake and 247 follow-up case meetings, which suggests that the system

reacts at the moment of reporting but is less consistent in continued case management. The report also notes 89 meetings on procedural issues, more than in 2023.

The report identifies a sharp increase in registered violence signals: 2,054 reports in 2024, up from 1,474 in 2023. Most signals concerned physical violence (997), followed by psychological violence (683) and sexual violence (255); neglect cases were 165, while cyberviolence remained very low at 4 reported cases, which the report itself treats as likely underreporting rather than proof of low prevalence. Girls were more often victims overall, especially in the 12-16 age group, while boys were more affected in the 8-11 age group. Violence most often occurred within the family (920 cases, over 60% of all cases by place of occurrence), and the most frequently identified perpetrators were fathers (494 cases) and mothers (248 cases), followed by another child (228 cases).

In terms of reporting sources, the largest number of signals came from another adult (469), the police (328) and schools (200). Signals submitted by children themselves also increased to 101, and reports channelled through the National Child Helpline 116 111 rose strongly to 438. At the same time, the report explicitly flags the low number of reports from personal doctors and the health system as a continuing weakness. Its recommendations focus on stronger joint training, more consistent participation of all institutions, supervision for multidisciplinary teams, clearer feedback loops, continuity in inter-institutional work until case closure, and development of specialised programmes for perpetrators of violence.

The National Programme for Prevention of Violence and Abuse against Children (2023-2026) is the overarching policy framework for Bulgaria's child protection response to violence and abuse. It is designed to reduce violence and exploitation against children, improve coordination and reporting between institutions, build the capacity of professionals working with children, raise public awareness, and support a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of violence. The document is grounded in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and explicitly links child protection to prevention, recovery, rehabilitation, and inter-sectoral cooperation.

Substantively, the Programme gives particular attention to several structural risk areas: violence in the family, online violence, lack of a clear legal definition of corporal punishment, the need for better support to parents, and the heightened vulnerability of certain groups, including children with disabilities, children outside their biological families, migrant and refugee children, and children from marginalised communities. It also stresses that prevention must go beyond isolated services and include changes in public attitudes, stronger legal and institutional frameworks, and better support for child victims' recovery and reintegration.

The Action Plan **for the Implementation of the National Programme** translates the Programme into concrete measures, indicators, responsible institutions and deadlines. The plan begins with Strategic Goal, focused on guaranteeing effective protection from violence in the child's living environment, especially by creating a safe and supportive family environment and providing specialised support to parents and caregivers. From there, it expands into a wider operational architecture that includes children affected by parental conflict, children with disabilities and special communication needs, online safety, prevention of forced begging, labour exploitation and trafficking, legal reform, better data systems, support services for victims, training of professionals, and stronger inter-institutional coordination.

The later sections of the Action Plan show that it is not limited to awareness-raising. It also includes measures for review and updating of the legal framework, including juvenile justice-related legislation; monitoring through regular data collection and analysis; expanding access to response mechanisms such as 116 111; building a system for recovery and social reintegration of child victims; improving the professional competence of specialists across education, social, health, law-enforcement and judicial sectors; improving media literacy and protection from harmful media content; and strengthening national coordination mechanisms, including for unaccompanied and migrant children.

The **2024 Annual Report of the State Agency for Child Protection - violence-related findings** provides operational data that confirm both the scale of need and the increased pressure on the protection system. The National Child Helpline 116 111 received 28,307 calls and delivered 11,963 consultations in 2024; 52.2% of consultations were with children, 16.3% with parents, and the rest with other adults. The service provided psychological support to 6,248 children and 1,955 parents. The most frequent themes included children's need to talk, requests for information, emotional experiences during adolescence, and family or peer relationships.

The annual report also shows a rise in formal complaints and signals handled by SACP. In 2024, the Agency opened files on 3,988 new complaints and signals, compared with lower totals in both 2022 and 2023. Of these, 996 came from individuals, 423 from legal entities, 214 were opened ex officio, and 33 were submitted by children. Violence remained the largest single issue in incoming casework: the comparative table shows violence-related complaints/signals rising from 503 in 2023 to 589 in 2024. Other increases included children at risk (181 to 231), parental rights/contact disputes (202 to 221), cohabitation with a minor (12 to 17) and unacceptable behaviour in school or kindergarten (43 to 49).

The report further notes 1,271 consultations provided to citizens and legal entities, including 124 consultations specifically related to violence against children. The distribution of these violence consultations was 35% neglect, 29% physical violence, 22% psychological violence, 9% sexual violence, and 5% domestic violence. Taken together, the annual report suggests not only increased reporting, but also a broader pattern in which violence, risk, family conflict and school-related concerns continue to dominate child protection practice.

Child Protection Policies in sport

A child safeguarding policy is the practical tool through which a sports club or organisation turns general legal duties into everyday protection measures. It is a written commitment to create a safe environment for children through concrete actions such as safe recruitment, background checks, codes of conduct, training for coaches and volunteers, risk assessment, and clear reporting procedures. Its value lies not only in stating principles, but in making sure that every adult knows how to prevent harm, how to recognise signs of abuse, and what to do when a concern arises.

According to **Keeping Children Safe (KCS)**, a child protection policy should be based on four core standards. First, the organisation must have a clear written policy, approved by management, based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and centred on **the best interests of the child**. Second, all staff and volunteers must understand their responsibilities, follow a code of conduct, receive training and know who the safeguarding focal points are. Third, the organisation must have operational procedures, including risk assessments, safe recruitment, data and image management, and reporting channels. Fourth, it must ensure accountability through monitoring, evaluation and regular reporting to management or external bodies. A policy is therefore not effective if it remains only a document; it must be implemented, reviewed and understood by children, families, staff and volunteers.

The **Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU)** in the United Kingdom is one of the most developed examples of sport-specific safeguarding. Created in 2001 within the NSPCC, it supports sports organisations in building safe and inclusive environments for children. Its work combines standards, annual reviews, training, self-assessment tools, reporting templates, research and advocacy. One of its major contributions is the idea that safeguarding must become part of the culture of sports organisations, not just an administrative requirement. The CPSU also places strong emphasis on families, considering parents and guardians as essential partners in protecting children. Through campaigns such as "Keeping Your Child Safe

in Sport", it encourages parents to recognise what a safe sports club looks like, to speak up when they have concerns, and to maintain open conversations with children about their experiences in sport.

At international level, the **International Safeguards for Children in Sport**, developed by organisations including UNICEF UK, the CPSU and Keeping Children Safe, provide a global framework for sports organisations. These safeguards propose a pathway from preparation and assessment to implementation and long-term integration. Their eight areas of action include a written policy, response procedures, advice and support, risk reduction, codes of conduct, recruitment and training, partnerships, and monitoring and evaluation. This approach is especially useful for clubs because it shows that safeguarding is not limited to responding to abuse after it happens. It also includes preventing risks in transport, accommodation, changing rooms, social media, training methods, recruitment and partnerships.

The **European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC)** and the **European Network of Young Advisors (ENYA)** add an important child-rights and participation perspective. Their recommendations underline that children need safe spaces for play, sport and physical activity, as well as access to inclusive and non-stigmatising activities. Young people themselves have called for more diverse physical education, free access for vulnerable children, psychological support for young athletes, better management of pressure and workload, and training for adults to prevent violence, discrimination and exclusion in sports environments. This is particularly relevant because it reminds sports organisations that safeguarding should not be designed only by adults. **Children and young people must be consulted and involved** in defining what safety, respect and well-being mean in practice.

The International Olympic Committee also provides an important reference through its Code of Ethics and safeguarding guidelines. The IOC rejects all forms of harassment, discrimination and abuse, including psychological abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. It stresses that abuse often comes from an imbalance of power or an abuse of authority, which is especially relevant in coach-athlete relationships. Sports organisations are expected to adopt a **zero-tolerance approach**, publish safe sport strategies, appoint a trusted and qualified safeguarding person, implement mandatory education and prevention programmes, create confidential reporting channels, apply fair disciplinary procedures, and cooperate with public authorities when cases may involve criminal conduct. Established in 2022, the **IOC Safe Sport Unit** centralizes athlete protection by implementing the Games-Time safeguarding framework and a science-based Mental Health Action Plan. The unit provides specialized toolkits to help international and national sports organizations develop their own protection policies and mental health support procedures. Through continuous educational initiatives and reference documents on harassment and abuse, it fosters a culture of safety, ensuring every athlete competes in a fair and respectful environment.

Overall, these frameworks share the same message: a safeguarding policy is not just a formal requirement, but a system of daily responsibility. It must combine prevention, safe recruitment, training, risk management, reporting, support, accountability and child participation. For sports clubs, this means moving beyond technical coaching and creating an environment where performance never comes before dignity, safety and children's rights.

Taxonomy of safeguarding components

Building on the review of child protection policies and the academic evidence base, this section proposes a taxonomy of safeguarding components to structure the analysis of protection systems in sport.

Rather than approaching safeguarding as a set of isolated measures, the literature consistently highlights the need for a systemic perspective. In this regard, safeguarding can be understood as a continuum of interconnected functions, including **prevention, early detection, reporting, response and case management, governance, and restorative approaches.**

This taxonomy serves two main purposes. First, it provides an analytical framework to organise the evidence reviewed across different sources, identifying key components, common challenges and areas of convergence. Second, it establishes the conceptual basis for the development of the 360° Safe Play model, ensuring that all dimensions of safeguarding are addressed in a coherent and integrated way.

Each of the following sections presents the main insights from the literature for each safeguarding dimension, highlighting both core elements and implementation challenges in sport contexts.

Prevention

Prevention can be understood as the set of planned, continuous and proactive measures aimed at reducing risk factors and preventing situations of violence before harm occurs. In the field of child and adolescent protection, prevention involves promoting safe environments through clear policies, training, appropriate supervision, codes of conduct and organisational mechanisms that minimise the risk of abuse, neglect, discrimination or any other form of violence (UNICEF, 2024). From this perspective, prevention is not limited to reacting to incidents but seeks to build safe organisational cultures in which children's well-being is a structural priority.

The literature reviewed shows that one of the main barriers to **prevention is not only the absence of rules, but also the gap between formal safeguarding frameworks and the actual capacity of organisations to implement them**. Ares-Ferreirós et al. (2023), in a study involving 137 members of the university community linked to sport and education, identified low levels of normative, conceptual and procedural knowledge regarding violence against minors in sport, as well as a certain normalisation of problematic behaviours. Specifically, some participants rated practices such as training or competing while injured, using physical exercise as punishment, shouting because of poor performance, or deliberately excluding a minor from the group as low- or moderate-level concerns, despite these behaviours being potentially harmful to children's well-being.

Therefore, prevention also requires addressing the beliefs, perceptions and everyday practices that trivialise certain forms of violence among sport professionals. The study further suggests that audiovisual and participatory methodologies, such as case analysis through film, can be effective tools for raising awareness and training people in a safeguarding culture.

Along the same lines, Boillos Pereira and Idoiaga Mondragon (2023) highlight the importance of professionalising prevention through specific safeguarding roles capable of recognising risks, identifying reporting pathways and analysing how the club's internal structure, power dynamics and members' roles may influence the safety of children and adolescents. Their study shows that many small clubs face difficulties in translating general legal obligations into concrete operational procedures, reinforcing the need for simple tools, technical support and models adapted to grassroots sport.

A comparative analysis of sport protocols carried out by Jiménez (2024) shows that **effective prevention is usually translated into specific organisational measures**. The most frequently identified include appointing a designated safeguarding officer, continuous awareness-raising for coaching staff, athletes and families, dissemination of educational materials, safer recruitment and selection procedures, ethical codes of conduct, regulation of

the use of sport facilities and changing rooms, rules for travel and overnight stays, as well as guidance on digital communication, image use and social media. This highlights that prevention cannot rely on generic statements but must be based on clear rules applicable to everyday risk situations.

In this regard, Plataforma de Infancia España (2022) **stresses that training and capacity-building are central elements for preventing any type of violence, improving detection and strengthening institutional responses.** It highlights both the responsibility of public authorities to guarantee specialised initial and continuous training for professionals in regular contact with minors, and the obligation of sport organisations to facilitate such training. The document also adds a particularly relevant equity dimension: the need for specific training to adequately support children and adolescents with disabilities and promote inclusive sport. This suggests that prevention should incorporate competences not only in general child protection, but also in diversity, accessibility and inclusion.

Another particularly relevant preventive dimension is the **risk assessment approach**. The same guide proposes that sport organisations develop regular risk-mapping processes including: contextual analysis of spaces, schedules and relationships; identification and classification of risks according to probability and impact; design of mitigation measures adapted to available resources; and periodic review within a continuous improvement logic. Child participation is especially valuable at this stage, as children and adolescents may identify concerns that are invisible to adults.

The Framework Protocol for the Protection of Minors against Violence in Sport developed by the Regional Government of Andalusia (2023) reinforces this preventive vision by establishing as guiding principles the best interests of **the child, the right to be heard, respect for sexual orientation and gender identity, good treatment, the creation of safe environments, the training of all relevant actors, and the primacy of prevention.** It also proposes combining regular awareness campaigns, structural and institutional risk analysis, clear behavioural standards for professionals and families, and differentiated codes of conduct according to each stakeholder group. This approach is particularly transferable to grassroots sport because it translates general obligations into simple and practical instruments.

The literature also shows that prevention should not focus solely on problematic individual behaviours, but also on the **organisational culture of clubs**. Aguilar Gómez (2024), in a case study of a football club, warns that many preventive programmes focus on insults, aggression or visible behaviours by coaches, players or families, while paying less attention to dynamics generated by the organisation itself. The study concludes that more effective prevention requires reviewing ethical codes, clarifying institutional values, training and supervising staff, establishing fair participation criteria, improving communication with families, implementing internal protocols and incorporating equal opportunities on the basis of gender, among other measures. In other words, violence may also be fostered by toxic competitive cultures, favouritism, tolerance of verbal abuse or the absence of clear boundaries.

From a community perspective, UNICEF (2024) highlights **the importance of addressing prevention through children's everyday environments** (schools, leisure settings, social services and sport clubs) by creating a common language, shared tools and coordinated early detection and intervention pathways. This approach implies that clubs should not act in isolation, but in connection with other community actors capable of reinforcing child protection. Similarly, Gallardo Montero et al. (2011) remind us that sport, especially in school and community contexts, should be understood as an educational tool aimed at promoting values, inclusion and coexistence, rather than merely as a competitive performance space.

Within the field of rights-guarantee institutions, the Ararteko (Basque Ombudsman Institution) offers another relevant perspective by stressing **that school sport should be understood as**

a children's right and a tool for integral development, social inclusion and emotional well-being. For example, the annual report produced by its Office for Children and Adolescents warns about the risks associated with early sport specialisation and models excessively focused on performance. From a preventive perspective, it recommends promoting multi-sport and flexible practices compatible with children's developmental needs, avoiding premature pressure and early technification dynamics.

For the 360 Safe Play model, the evidence reviewed suggests that prevention should combine regulatory requirements with practical, simple and scalable tools. Requiring formal protocols alone is not sufficient; clubs and associations also need self-assessment tools, accessible training, operational templates, clear response pathways and support mechanisms capable of transforming legal principles into everyday safeguarding practices.

Therefore, the main preventive components identified in the literature and to be considered within the framework of this project are the following:

- mandatory and continuous safeguarding training for coaching staff and volunteers;
- clear designation of child protection responsibilities;
- codes of conduct for professionals, families and minors;
- safer recruitment and staff supervision processes;
- regulation of higher-risk spaces and situations (changing rooms, travel, digital communication);
- active participation of children and adolescents in identifying risks;
- effective communication with families;
- organisational cultures based on respect, inclusion and positive treatment;
- coordination with schools, social services and the wider community;
- realistic protocols adapted to the capacity of grassroots sport organisations.

Early detection

Early detection can be defined as the **ability to identify early signs of abuse, maltreatment, neglect or risk** (physical, emotional, relational or organisational) before harm escalates or becomes chronic. In the sports context, it constitutes an essential dimension of safeguarding, complementary to prevention, as it enables early intervention when there are still greater opportunities for protection, recovery and reduction of the impact on children and adolescents. It is not limited to recognising serious incidents once they have already occurred, but also involves identifying subtle warning signs, behavioural changes, concerning dynamics or structural factors that indicate an unsafe environment.

Various sources agree that **effective intervention depends on identifying risk signals as early as possible.** When child abuse occurs, the environment that should have been protective has failed, which reinforces the need to prevent or detect situations of violence at an early stage (UNICEF, 2024). Applied to grassroots sport, this means that clubs, coaches, families and institutional actors must develop an active awareness capable of listening, observing and acting in response to significant changes such as withdrawal, anxiety, fear of attending training, recurrent injuries, social isolation, loss of enjoyment, regressive behaviours or emotional distress.

The evidence reviewed also shows that one of the **main barriers to early detection is the normalisation of certain practices within sport**. Olmedo's doctoral thesis (2025), focused on sexual violence in school-age team sport, concludes that some inappropriate behaviours may come to be perceived as "normal" within sports culture, delaying their recognition, communication or reporting. This is particularly relevant in contexts where sexualised comments, non-consensual physical contact, humiliation, normalised shouting, excessive performance pressure or invasion of privacy are trivialised. Therefore, early detection requires

not only technical tools, but **also questioning practices that have traditionally been tolerated.**

A comparative analysis of eleven sports protocols carried out by Jiménez (2024) shows that early detection is commonly associated with the presence of accessible figures within the organisation (for example, protection officers, welfare officers or designated contact persons) who can receive concerns, interpret initial warning signs and activate appropriate channels. The study also highlights the need **to pay particular attention to situations of increased vulnerability**, such as travel, overnight stays, unsupervised spaces, changing rooms or moments of highly competitive pressure. It also identifies behaviours linked to grooming, bullying, hazing or inappropriate sexualised conduct between peers or by adults as relevant warning signs.

The literature reviewed suggests that early detection should not focus exclusively on individual indicators, but also on organisational signals. In this regard, Aguilar Gómez (2024), in a study on tertiary prevention (in a football club where conflicts or violent dynamics already existed), begins with an initial assessment of the institutional climate and identifies conflicts between coaches, verbal violence from families, gender discrimination, inequality among players and unresolved internal tensions. These elements may be understood as early indicators of systemic risk. In other words, before serious cases emerge, certain organisational cultures already display signs of insufficient protection.

From an innovative perspective, San Pedro et al. (2023) **highlight the potential of digital tools to strengthen early detection**. As an example, they present the Kanjo system, based on artificial intelligence, which allows children to express daily how they feel through basic emotions. When emotional risk patterns are detected, the system generates an alert so that professionals can assess the situation. According to the authors, this type of tool can significantly reduce detection times, increase case identification and promote children's participation in their own self-protection. Although such solutions require ethical validation and privacy safeguards, they point to a promising future direction for safeguarding.

Plataforma de Infancia España (2022) reinforces this perspective by stating that sports organisations should have resources and tools enabling them to detect violence as early as possible to minimise its impact on children's wellbeing. It adds that, once a possible situation of violence has been identified, the information should be communicated immediately to parents or legal guardians, unless there are indications that they may be involved. This approach links early detection to the need for clear response pathways and the obligation not to delay institutional action.

Within rights-guarantee institutions, the Ararteko (Ombudsman of the Basque Country) provides a particularly useful perspective by **identifying structural factors that may generate fewer protective environments in school sport**: territorial inequalities, economic barriers to access, loss of the educational function of sport, lack of institutional coordination or an excessive focus on competition. Although these are not classic indicators of abuse, they do constitute early warning signs of organisational risk that should be monitored by any comprehensive safeguarding system.

A particularly valuable contribution for the future 360 Safe Play model comes from the Basque Government and its Protocol and Toolkit for implementing the Spanish Organic Law on the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents against Violence in organised sport (2022). This document **proposes translating early detection into concrete questions addressed to different stakeholders**: children and adolescents, families and coaches. This approach is particularly powerful because it turns detection into a shared everyday practice rather than something delegated solely to specialists.

Among the questions aimed at children and adolescents are simple yet revealing issues: whether they enjoy doing sport, whether they feel respected by peers and coaches, whether

someone makes them feel bad, or whether they perceive that someone in the team seems unhappy. For families, suggested questions concern mood changes, unusual injuries, reluctance to attend training, relationship difficulties or concerning discourse around food and body image. For coaches, questions include respectful treatment, undue pressure, use of punishments, hazing, discrimination, safety in changing rooms, inappropriate physical contact, forced participation while injured, or awareness of the child's family and school situation.

This model of questions is especially relevant because it **transforms early detection from a passive approach** (based solely on waiting for disclosures or reports) **into an active** system of shared observation, everyday listening and preventive reflection among the main actors of the sports ecosystem. Instead of placing all responsibility on specialists or protection officers, it distributes the capacity to identify early warning signs among children and adolescents, families, coaches and club staff.

Furthermore, the proposal broadens the traditional notion of early detection by incorporating not only individual indicators of harm, but also relational and organisational factors. In this sense, it allows observation to be structured around four major areas of risk:

- **emotional wellbeing / self-directed violence**, linked to psychological distress, excessive pressure, loss of enjoyment, recurrent injuries or concerns about body image;
- **interpersonal violence**, related to bullying, humiliation, abuse of authority, discrimination, hazing or inappropriate sexualised behaviours;
- **contextual or structural violence**, associated with favouritism, unequal access, unfair rules, unsafe facilities or toxic competitive cultures;
- **participation and voice,** linked to the real capacity of children to express concerns, be heard and know where to seek help.

From the perspective of the 360 Safe Play project, this represents a highly valuable contribution to Work Package 2, as the approach can be directly transformed into practical tools such as self-assessment checklists, regular safeguarding climate surveys, participatory team dynamics, guidance for families or internal early warning systems adapted to grassroots sport.

The following table translates these principles into guiding questions useful for early detection, participatory reflection and the co-creation of safer sporting environments.

Table 1. Guiding questions for early detection and the co-creation of safer sporting environments

Type of risk	Children and adolescents	Families	Coaches and staff
Emotional wellbeing / self-directed violence	• Do you enjoy training? • Are there days when you do not want to come? • Do you feel under pressure? • Does anyone seem sad or isolated? • Are you very worried about your body or weight?	• Do they enjoy doing sport? • Has their mood changed since they started? • Do they show anxiety before competing? • Do they refuse to attend training? • Do they talk excessively about weight/food/performance?	• Do you observe sadness, anxiety or irritability in any child? • Has any child stopped enjoying sport? • Are there repeated injuries? • Do you know how to act when concerning emotional signs appear?
Interpersonal violence	• Do your teammates treat you with respect? • Does anyone mock you or exclude you?	• Does your child mention insults, mockery or fear of someone?	• Have you detected bullying? • Social exclusion? • Normalised humiliation? • Excessive shouting?

	• Does the coach shout at or humiliate you? • Does anyone touch you in a way that makes you uncomfortable?	• Do they speak badly about the coach or avoid mentioning them? • Have you noticed changes after training sessions or matches?	• Sexual jokes? Hazing? • Do you know how to intervene?
Contextual / structural violence	• Does everyone get equal opportunities to play? • Do you feel treated fairly? • Can you give your opinion? • Are there spaces where you do not feel safe?	• Do you perceive favouritism? • Unequal treatment based on gender, level or economic situation? • Are the facilities adequate?	• Do rules disadvantage some children? • Do competitions generate excessive stress? • Is the changing room safe? • Are facilities properly supervised?
Participation and voice	• Do you know who to talk to if something goes wrong? • Are you listened to in the club? • Does your opinion matter?	• Do you know who to contact if a problem arises? • Do you know the protocol?	• Do children know the help channels? • Are children consulted about wellbeing and safety?

Source: Based on Basque Government Protocol and Toolkit to initiate the implementation of the requirements arising from the Spanish Organic Law on the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents against Violence and to continue promoting a culture of wellbeing for children and adolescents in organised sport in Euskadi (2022).

Therefore, for the 360 Safe Play model, the literature reviewed suggests **that early detection should not be conceived as a passive function based on waiting for reports, but as an active system of observation, listening and continuous monitoring.** This requires combining training, a culture of trust, clear indicators, child participation and practical tools that help coaches, families and clubs recognise problems while it is still possible to intervene in a rapid, proportionate and protective way.

Across the literature reviewed, the main components of early detection identified are as follows:

- specific training to recognise behavioural, emotional and physical warning signs;
- existence of accessible and well-known figures for concerns or consultations;
- systematic observation of children's wellbeing and enjoyment;
- attention to behavioural changes, absenteeism or withdrawal;
- monitoring of risk spaces (changing rooms, travel, social media, transport);
- active listening to children and adolescents;
- fluid communication channels with families;
- regular review of the club's organisational climate;
- use of screening tools, questionnaires or safe digital solutions;
- immediate connection with reporting and response pathways.

Reporting

Reporting can be understood as the set of processes, channels and responsibilities that allow a suspicion, concern or incident of violence to be communicated to the relevant internal or external authorities to trigger an appropriate protective response. It includes both formal communication mechanisms (written protocols, designated contact persons, forms, digital channels or external reporting routes) and the subsequent management of the information received: initial assessment, referral to specialists, documentation, follow-up and case closure. In the field of safeguarding, international consensus emphasises that these systems must be accessible, safe, confidential, child-friendly and capable of generating trust among both children and adults.

The literature reviewed agrees that no protection system can function effectively if situations of violence remain hidden. In this regard, Ravetllat Balleste et al. (2022) state that, to respond effectively, it is essential to establish mechanisms that make it possible to identify the highest possible number of cases. The authors highlight three particularly relevant levels. **First**, a general duty to report applicable to all citizens when there are indications of violence against children and adolescents. **Second**, an enhanced duty for professionals who regularly work with minors, including staff in sport, leisure, education or health. **Third**, the explicit recognition of the right of children and adolescents themselves to communicate situations of violence in a safe and accessible way.

This latter element is particularly important for grassroots sport, where reporting systems have traditionally been designed from an adult-centred perspective. The evidence reviewed suggests **that children should not be seen only as subjects to be protected**, but also **as agents capable of raising concerns, expressing distress and participating in the construction of safer environments**. This requires age-appropriate channels, clear language, trust in the receiving persons and guarantees against negative consequences for speaking up.

A comparative analysis of eleven sports protocols conducted by Jiménez (2024) shows that the strongest reporting systems incorporate several common elements: visible and easy-to-find channels, the possibility to request help or submit complaints, rapid response, protection against retaliation, clarity about who receives the information and the possibility of escalating cases to competent external bodies. The study also identifies two decisive factors: the real accessibility of the Protection Officer and the simplicity of the procedure. In other words, it is not enough for a protocol to exist; it must be known, usable and trusted.

Research by Aguilar Gómez (2024), focused on a **football organisation**, shows that reporting mechanisms can also be integrated into the ordinary management of the club through clear procedures for communication with families and responses to incidents. Measures identified include convening the parties involved, active listening, reasoned explanation of internal rules, disciplinary measures when appropriate and regular follow-up meetings. This approach is important because it shows that reporting should not be understood only as the formal denunciation of serious cases, but also as the institutional capacity to manage conflicts in an early, fair and transparent manner.

Another particularly promising emerging line is **digital innovation applied to communication channels**. San Pedro et al. (2023) present the tool b-resol as a digital channel aimed at adolescents that allows them to communicate anonymously to designated professionals any suspicion, concern or incident of violence suffered or witnessed. According to the authors, this type of solution facilitates early detection, improves case documentation, reduces barriers to seeking help and may create a deterrent effect against violent behaviour. For the 360 Safe Play model, this experience highlights the potential of integrating safe digital tools adapted to young people’s communication habits.

From a preventive and peer-support perspective, the study on the “Brave Club” in school settings (Roca-Campos et al., 2021) offers lessons transferable to sport. The authors show that **protection should not depend exclusively on adults**, but also on **empowering peer groups to reject violence, support those affected and communicate concerning situations.** Applied to grassroots sport, this reinforces the value of promoting team cultures in which seeking help is not perceived as “snitching”, but as a courageous and prosocial behaviour.

The Framework Protocol for the protection of minors against violence in sport developed by the Regional Government of Andalusia (2023) also includes practical elements of great interest, such as the dissemination of the **European helpline 116111**, a free support line for children and adolescents. This type of external resource is particularly valuable when the child

does not trust people in their immediate environment or when the situation concerns members of the club itself.

Similarly, Plataforma de Infancia España (2022) stresses that all sports organisations should establish accessible, safe and effective communication or reporting channels, known to everyone involved in sporting activities and socialised both internally and externally. The document emphasises several key principles: **protection of privacy, child adaptation, effective participation of the child and reduction of secondary victimisation.** The latter means avoiding situations in which children have to repeatedly recount the facts to multiple people, unnecessarily reliving the traumatic experience.

In addition, the guide reminds that every reported case must receive an appropriate response in accordance with the established protocol. This includes justifying decisions taken, maintaining clear communication with the parties involved, providing support to the victim and working towards the restoration of their rights. It also recommends maintaining open communication with families, unless there are indications of violence within the family environment itself.

Within rights-guarantee institutions, the Ararteko provides a particularly relevant perspective by recommending explicit mechanisms to ensure that the voices of children are heard and considered in the planning, implementation and evaluation of sporting activities. This guidance is directly applicable to child reporting systems, as it reinforces the idea that **communication channels should be designed with the real participation of children, and not merely for them**.

For the 360 Safe Play model, the evidence reviewed suggests that reporting should not be limited to a legal obligation or a formal complaints mailbox. It should be **conceived as a comprehensive system of listening, trust and response**, where everyone knows whom to approach, how to do so and what will happen next. In grassroots clubs, this requires simple procedures, clearly identifiable persons, multiple channels (face-to-face and digital), defined response times and visible guarantees of protection. Only in this way will communicating concerns cease to be exceptional and become a normalized practice of collective care.

Overall, the main reporting components identified in the literature and reviewed protocols are as follows:

- existence of clear, visible and well-known internal channels across the organisation;
- appointment of an accessible and trained contact person;
- possibility of referral to specialised external resources;
- safe, confidential and age-appropriate mechanisms;
- digital or anonymous options where appropriate;
- protection against retaliation;
- rigorous documentation and case follow-up;
- rapid and proportionate response;
- reduction of secondary victimisation;
- active participation of children and adolescents in the design of channels;
- an organizational culture that encourages help-seeking and communicating concerns.

Response & Case management

Response systems can be understood as **the set of planned and reactive measures aimed at addressing safeguarding concerns once they have been identified.** In the field of child protection in sport, an effective response involves moving beyond mere vigilance toward a structured framework that ensures the **child's well-being** is a **structural priority**. Save the Children Italia (2024) reinforces this by defining response systems as part of a holistic "Sistema di Tutela" (Safeguarding System), which replaces passive observation with organized actions

categorized into four pillars: **awareness, prevention, reporting, and response**. Furthermore, Scarfone (2024) describes safeguarding as an organizational process where the context prevails over individual roles, utilizing people and procedures to remedy abuse effectively when prevention fails. The literature reviewed suggests that the **management of a protection concern cannot be improvised** but must rely on rigorous, pre-established protocols.

The "do no harm" principle serves as a fundamental guiding pillar across various authors, ensuring that child protection interventions do not inadvertently create new risks or exacerbate existing trauma for the child. In the context of safeguarding, this principle requires organizations to **take full responsibility** for ensuring that their staff, operations, and programs do not put children at risk of abuse. According to UNICEF and the International Rescue Committee (2023), the "do no harm" approach is inextricably linked to a **survivor-centered framework**, which prioritizes the child's recovery while trusting them as the **expert of their own life**. This is particularly critical when navigating confidentiality; caseworkers must be highly skilled in managing sensitive information to ensure they "do no further harm" by avoiding unauthorized disclosures that could lead to retaliation or social stigma. Furthermore, **the work of addressing personal biases** and **cultivating positive attitudes** among staff is described as a "continual" effort necessary to uphold the "do no harm" standard. In the “Practical Guide” by Defence for Children International (DCI) Belgium (2023) the very definition of “Safeguarding” incorporates this concept. The application of this principle is most visible in the management of reporting procedures. UNICEF and IRC (2023) emphasize that organizational policies—especially those concerning mandatory reporting—must be informed by "do no harm" to balance legal requirements with the child's safety.

Similarly, Bosisio (2024) argues that **Child Protection Policies (CPP) act as "soft law" instruments that transform an organization's culture**, ensuring that the **rights of the child** are a constant point of **reference** in every decision and moving the focus toward a structural commitment to a **child-safe culture**. UNICEF UK and Safe Sport International (2016) emphasize that the response must be guided by a clear triptych: reporting (establishing internal and external circuits), responding (taking immediate action to protect the child, including police involvement), and recording (maintaining secure documentary follow-up). Bastianon and Colucci (2024) emphasize that policies must enable a **rapid and adequate response to any report of inappropriate behavior,** noting that Organisational Models (MOC) must include "early warning" tools and "quick-response" measures. Along the same lines, the Council of Europe (2021), through its CSiS project, specifies that the system should rely on "focal points" or **Child Safeguarding Officers** (CSOs) who act as the vital link between the organisation and external expert networks. In the same idea Scarfone (2024) identifies "Rapid Response" as a fundamental pillar requiring synergy between Safeguarding Officers and federal prosecutors to "sieve" and prioritize urgent interventions.

The management of internal risks is also a central element of the institutional response. Keeping Children Safe (2024) **highlights the importance of specific protocols for allegations involving staff members,** arguing that organizations must immediately assess the "threshold" of gravity to determine whether to conduct an internal investigation or transfer the file to judicial authorities. Furthermore, Defence for Children International (DCI) Belgium (2023) reminds us that **a reaction must never be an isolated process;** the intervener should rely on their team and hierarchy to ensure a proportionate response and reduce the individual emotional burden.

In this regard, **case management** is defined as the **process by which an organization accompanies a child from the initial detection of a risk to its final resolution.** UNICEF and the International Rescue Committee (2023), in their "Caring for Child Survivors" (CCS) guidelines, propose a comprehensive six-step model:

1. **Introduction and engagement**, focusing on trust and informed consent.
2. **Assessment**, gathering information without retraumatizing the child.

3. **Case action planning**, co-constructing a plan with the child and their non-offending family.
4. **Implementation**, which involves active advocacy to ensure access to medical or legal services.
5. **Follow-up and monitoring**, to reassess risks and progress.
6. **Closure and evaluation**, ensuring safety objectives are met while measuring the child's satisfaction.

Defence for Children International Belgium and the PARCS project (2023) complement this by emphasising the administrative dimension of case management, insisting on formal notification to management and the **use of a confidential register** to ensure the traceability of every step. Additionally, Ina Vladova (2023) suggests that the case manager's role should extend to supervising training environments to detect subtle power imbalances that might hinder the reporting process. To ensure the integrity of this process, Hartill, Ferracuti, and Barchielli (2023) argue that strategic responses must be based on solid evidence, advocating for **the systematic monitoring of reporting outcomes to identify gaps be.**

From a community perspective, effective case management requires **intersectoral coordination to prevent children from "falling through the cracks"** of different institutions. UNICEF España (2024) proposes a model based on "Mesas Técnicas" (technical tables) where professionals from health, education, and sport coordinate complex cases at the local level. This vision is supported by the Council of Europe's Roadmap for Belgium (2021), which recommends **an "educational alliance"** between the sporting movement and statutory child protection agencies to break down historical silos.

Another particularly relevant dimension is the **sensitivity to specific vulnerabilities.** DCI Belgium (2021) and UNICEF/IRC (2016) agree that case management must be sensitive to gender, age, and disability, incorporating material facilitators for children in poverty or technological alert tools for children with disabilities. Finally, Suzanne Everley (2025) highlights the importance of child agency, suggesting that **case management** should move away from seeing **the child** as a passive object and instead integrate them **as an active participant in decisions affecting their "best interest."**

For a 360° Safe Play model, the evidence reviewed suggests that case management should combine **regulatory requirements** with **systemic and proactive tools.** Therefore, the main components to be considered for a holistic protection model are:

- **Adopt a "do no harm" approach** to prioritize the child's safety and recovery in every intervention.
- **Use unified forms and a common language** to ensure consistency among all local actors.
- **Implement a continuous improvement loop** based on rigorous incident registers and regular risk evaluations.
- **Establish a "reporting-responding-recording" triptych** to create a clear operational framework for handling concerns.
- **Empower specialized Child Safeguarding Officers (CSOs)** to act as focal points and supervise training environments for power imbalances.
- **Adopt evidence-based case management** to ensure full traceability from initial engagement to case closure.
- **Integrate specific vulnerability facilitators** tailored to gender, age, disability, and economic status.
- **Foster child agency and participation** by involving children as active participants in decisions affecting them. The logic must be: Anything done for them without them is not for them.

- **Define clear thresholds for internal vs. judicial action**, particularly regarding allegations involving staff members.
- **Promote collective decision-making** through a team-based approach to ensure proportionate responses and shared responsibility

Governance

Hums and MacLean (2009, cited in Haag et al., 2016) define sports governance as **the exercise of power and authority within sports organizations, including the establishment of policies to determine the organizational mission, eligibility, and regulatory authority.** Governance is not limited to administrative management; it is the driving force that transforms a moral intention into a secure operational structure. In the context of child protection, it involves **integrating the safety of minors** not as a peripheral concern, but **as a central strategic priority of the institution.** For decision-makers, this means shifting from a reactive stance in the face of crises to a proactive stance focused on prevention.

Save the Children Italia (2024) In the "STePS Toolkit," governance is presented as the foundation for a formal commitment to safeguarding. The authors argue that child protection must be incorporated directly into the **culture and governance** of the organization to be effective. According to this framework, an organization only becomes "safe" when it establishes **clear governance mechanisms** that facilitate the implementation of protection systems, ensuring that **leadership roles**—from top management to volunteers—have **defined responsibilities** regarding the safety of minors. The toolkit emphasizes that where protection is not treated as a priority at the governance level, the probability of abuse or malpractice increases.

Plataforma de Infancia España (2022) emphasize that protective governance also requires **active anti-discrimination measures**, ensuring that sports participation does not reproduce inequalities based on gender, disability, origin, socio-economic situation, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics. From this perspective, **equal treatment and inclusion** are not peripheral issues, but **central components of good governance.**

Carska-Sheppard and Ammons (2021) emphasize that the concept of “tone from the top” is a crucial element for the success of protection initiatives. **Formal and visible commitment from leaders lends weight to policies** and encourages compliance by all members of the organization. Plataforma de Infancia España (2022) states that clubs and sports organisations should integrate child protection as a cross-cutting institutional responsibility, incorporating it into their management structures, decision-making processes and organisational culture. For Bosisio, R. (2024) effective governance requires coordinating protection policies with other institutional codes, such as professional ethics and deontology, to create a unified operational structure. This approach ensures that **the rights of children** are not peripheral but serve as a **constant point of reference for the entire management team.**

Suzanne Everley (2025) asserts that the content and direction of policies defined by decision-makers shape attitudes and actions during implementation on the ground. If leaders view protection solely as a legal obligation, this can lead to a certain institutional detachment. Conversely, leadership that places the child at the center of its concerns fosters a culture where well-being takes precedence over mere procedural compliance. Hartill, M., Ferracuti, S., & Barchielli, B. (2023) argue that protection can only be a strategic priority when **the highest decision-making levels of sports organizations commit to creating and sustaining a safe environment,** recognizing that abusive practices often derive from the institutional context rather than just individual actions.

Plataforma de Infancia España (2022) point that the designation of **a person responsible for protection** (Protection Officer, Welfare Officer or equivalent) also appears as **a central**

governance component. Although the specific profile may vary depending on territorial legal frameworks, the evidence agrees that having an identifiable, accessible person with clear responsibilities improves internal coordination, family trust and the capacity to respond to incidents. Wilson and Rhind (2022) explain that commitment from the highest levels of authority exerts the greatest influence on the organization's safeguarding culture. Without this support, frontline staff (Child Safeguarding Officers—CSOs) often lack the legitimacy and resources necessary to fulfill their mission.

Ina Vladova (2023) points that protection is a moral obligation of sports institutions, but that its implementation depends on the employment of trained and paid professionals. **The lack of funding to recruit specialists is identified as a major weakness,** particularly jeopardizing small clubs that lack the necessary resources to assume these new responsibilities. UNICEF (2020) notes that **financial support for a child protection system** must be considered one of **the fundamental functions of the state and organizations** and must not depend solely on external funding or temporary projects**.** For policymakers, a**llocating a specific budget** is the most concrete governance measure to ensure the sustainability of these actions. The CSiS project (Belgium, 2022) notes that resource allocation must be **guided by scientific evidence**, such as data on the prevalence of violence, to justify the human and financial investment to stakeholders. Decision-makers have the responsibility here to translate research data into budgeted action plans.

José Manuel Fresno (2020) recommends, in his analysis of the Bulgarian system, elevating the chairmanship of national child protection councils to a high political level, such as that of deputy prime minister, to strengthen decision-making power and coordination among ministries (Sports, Health, Education, Justice). The Council of Europe (2022), for its part, emphasizes that child protection is a **shared responsibility that requires a multi-agency approach.** Decision-makers within federations must therefore establish formal partnerships with social services, the police, and protection agencies to create a robust safety net around the child. In the same vein, the report by the Australian Institute of Family Studies (2024) demonstrates that regulatory frameworks are more effective when they operate as a network rather than in isolated silos. Governance must therefore promote "place-based collaboration" where local stakeholders meet regularly to discuss risks specific to their area.

Plataforma de Infancia España (2022) insist on the importance of strengthening the **relationship between sports organisations and families.** It is emphasised through stable **channels of communication, collaboration and shared responsibility in care.** The literature suggests that families should not be seen merely as spectators in the sporting process, but as key actors in risk detection, the sharing of relevant information and the creation of protective environments. This cooperation should always be guided by the best interests of the child and adapted to the reality and organisational capacity of each entity.

Anne Tiivas (CPSU, 2018) explains that protection standards serve as a benchmark to help funders and sports providers make informed decisions and challenge harmful practices. Adopting these standards has often become a prerequisite for obtaining public grants, which compels decision-makers to be accountable for their implementation. Wilson and Rhind (2022) identify Safety Management Systems (SMS) as essential tools for maintaining robust cultures of protection. **These systems include tracking reports, continuous evaluation, and regularly updating protocols to adapt to new risks.** Suzanne Everley (2025) notes a frequent absence, in current policies, of guidelines on managing power dynamics during reporting processes. **Decision-makers have a responsibility** to create independent and safe complaint mechanisms, so that the club's hierarchy cannot suppress cases to protect its reputation.

Regarding to Plataforma de Infancia España (2022) among the key obligations identified for sports organisations is, first, the need to **promote the participation of children and**

adolescents in all aspects related to their education, development and overall wellbeing. Suzanne Everley (2025) points out that a policy is only effective if it is interpreted and applied correctly at the point of contact with the child. If decision-makers do not consult children when drafting rules, they risk producing documents perceived as administrative burdens rather than as tools for protection.

Furthermore, Ina Vladova (2023) highlights the risk that protection officers' recommendations will be ignored if they lack sufficient authority within the organization. The choice of hierarchical structure and the **degree of independence granted to the protection officer** is therefore a major governance decision that directly impacts the safety of young athletes. Finally, Cuzzocrea, V., & Morgilli, L. (2025) emphasises that the introduction of specialized roles like the Safeguarding Officer is described as a turning point for the governance of sport.

This evolution acknowledges that exercising authority in modern sports organizations requires **qualified professionals** who can integrate legal, psychological, and organizational expertise to meet protection needs effectively. It marks a shift in how authority is used to actively intercede in risk scenarios and promote shared values of safety.

In conclusion regarding on governance to build a "360°" child protection model, governing bodies must incorporate the following pillars, validated by all sources:

- **Culture of safety and wellbeing at all levels**: Governing bodies must transform child protection from a mere legal obligation into safety actions from senior management to volunteers.
- **Leadership and resources:** Ensure sustainable financial support for Child Safety Officer (CSO) positions with a clear mandate, sufficient time, and recognized authority within the organizational structure.
- **Institutionalization of protection:** Adopt a written policy approved at the highest level, incorporating the principles of children's rights.
- **Systematic recruitment and training:** Implement a secure recruitment system that includes background checks and mandate ongoing training at all levels, including for leadership. (Children rights, inclusive sport and adequately support minors with disabilities).
- **Network governance:** Move beyond the strictly sports-based framework to actively collaborate with public authorities and child protection experts, thereby facilitating the management of complex cases.
- **Active participation of children:** Shift from passive protection to participatory protection by including the voices of minors in risk assessment and the design of safe spaces. The logic must be: Anything done for them without them is not for them.
- **Continuous improvement cycle:** Establish internal and external audit mechanisms, based on concrete performance indicators, to ensure that policies evolve in line with on-the-ground practices.
- **Independent reporting and accountability:** Establish autonomous and safe complaint mechanisms outside the club or federation hierarchy—such as for example through an ombudsman or external protection agencies—to ensure that the organization's leadership cannot suppress or deny cases to protect its institutional reputation.

Child protection in sports is the direct result of a **deliberate policy choice**. Decision-makers are the only ones capable of transforming the organization's culture so that the well-being of the child becomes the ultimate criterion for success, beyond athletic performance or institutional reputation

Restorative justice mechanisms

For Daniele Novara (2011) the modern institutional origins of the restorative justice are closely linked to the evolution of youth justice systems, particularly in Scotland. In this context, it is part of a "welfare-oriented" model guided by the fundamental principle of "needs, not deeds," which aims **to prioritize the child's best interests and avoid early criminalization.** Theoretically, the practice draws its roots from the **relational management of tensions.**

The fundamental principle of restorative justice rests on the **crucial distinction** between conflict and violence:

- **Conflict** is considered a **natural component of human relationships and a relational skill.** In a conflict, damages are reversible, there is consensus on the struggle, the forces involved are balanced, and there is no intent to annihilate the other party.
- **Violence** is seen as the inability to stay in conflict. It is characterized by irreversible damage, the identification of the problem with the person themselves, and a unilateral resolution through domination or humiliation.

Stil for Daniele Novara (2011), the restorative approach posits that violence is not an inevitable consequence of conflict, but rather a failure of the relationship. In the sports environment, it proposes **transforming authority into an educational lever** to create an environment of peace. This approach recognizes the dignity of each person (for example, through the "VAR of honesty") **rather than applying purely retributive punishment.** In the same idea the article by FAPMI-ECPAT (2022) mentions that these educational methods are inspired by a desire to transform authority into a tool for peace education, citing in particular initiatives such as the Plataforma 090 (« 0 violence, 90 minutes ») and the concept of the ‘Peace Referee’, which aim to make sport a space for social transformation rather than punishment.

Rabe et al. (2026) define restorative practice as a method that facilitates conflict resolution and communication between young people, supported by coaches, parents, and community members. Its primary goal is to **allow those involved to find meaningful resolutions to the harm caused,** promote individual accountability, and help victims achieve a sense of justice.
FAPMI-ECPAT (2022) emphasizes that **amateur sport is an ideal environment for these methods** because it is a social and educational experience where values such as commitment and solidarity can become drivers of social transformation. Rather than relying solely on systematic punishment, restorative justice transforms authority into a tool for creating a peaceful and educational environment.

Giffoni et al. (2023) highlight the importance of distinguishing conflict from violence to **determine when to intervene.** Conflict is considered a relational competence where damage is reversible. It is within this framework of disagreement or opposition that dialogue tools should be used, as they provide feedback “keeping the relationship within viable paths”. Rabe et al. (2026) indicate that restorative practice is ideal for facilitating communication between young people to find meaningful resolutions to the harm suffered. These tools are effective for promoting individual accountability within the group.

FAPMI-ECPAT (2022) advocates for the use of these tools (such as symbolic blue or green cards) to replace social punishment with a pedagogy of "Buentrato" (good treatment). The goal is to **transform a tense situation into an educational and socializing experience.** Ríos and Ventura (2022) specify that intervening **as soon as minor conflicts appear** (verbal or physical quarrels) allows young people to learn to reflect on the feelings of others before the situation escalates into bullying. Firmin et al. (2021) add that a **non-judgmental approach** is much more reliable when it originates from formal, supervised peer-support structures rather than informal friendship networks.

Rabe et al. (2026) warn that the application of these methods to cases of sexual violence or harmful sexual behavior (HSB) remains highly debated and requires extreme caution. They are not appropriate if the victim is not a willing participant or if the process risks reinforcing the trauma. Giffoni et al. (2023) explain that violence (unlike conflict) is characterized by an inability to remain in the relationship, a desire to annihilate the other, and irreversible damage. In these cases of relational destruction, simple conflict mediation tools are insufficient and can be dangerous. Bode et al. (2023) remind us that in the face of serious or systemic abuse, **the responsibility must never rest on the child.** In these situations, following formal safeguarding protocols and reporting to authorities must take precedence over any attempt at informal restorative resolution within the club.

FAPMI-ECPAT (2022) asserts that a safe environment requires active listening so that children feel supported and not judged. **Implementing facilitated spaces**, such as the regular assemblies organized by Athletic Club (2022), allows children to express their concerns in a secure framework. Bode et al. (2023) specify that survivors must be given a safe space to express their thoughts to break the culture of silence that often protects abusers in sports.

FAPMI-ECPAT (2022) suggests that **adult referents (coaches, delegates) must be trained in empathic listening and help-seeking relationships** to generate healthy interactions. The concept of the "resilience tutor" is central here: they must possess listening skills, empathy, and the ability to set democratic boundaries. Ríos and Ventura (2022) point out that coach training must go beyond technical and tactical aspects to include **emotional education and empathy exercises**, helping them understand what young people feel in various situations.

Ares-Ferreirós et al. (2023), drawing on the work of Novara (2011), provide a useful distinction for **trainers**: one must differentiate between "conflict" (which is a relational skill where damage is reversible) and "violence" (which involves destruction and an inability to manage conflict). Giffoni et al. (2023) insist that it is neither desirable nor effective to ask interveners (such as coaches) **to be anything other than a "bridge"**. Their role is to build a relationship of trust and to direct the individual toward experts (a support network) if complex psychological needs arise.

Adriaens et al. (2024) specify that adult **training should focus on "active bystander" skills**: knowing how to **notice signs, judging the severity of a situation, and knowing whom to refer to**, rather than attempting to treat traumatic scars themselves

An integral ("360°") protection model relies on several cross-cutting pillars identified in the sources:

- **Networking:** No club can act alone; coordination between the public sector, private sector, and civil organizations (doctors, psychologists, police) is essential to reduce secondary victimization.
- **The "Buentrato" (good treatment) culture:** Promoting a culture that values the dignity of both the opponent and oneself, transforming sport into a tool for social protection
- **Specialized adult training (conflict vs. violence):** It is crucial to train coaches and volunteers to differentiate between "conflict"—a relational skill where damage is reversible—and "violence," which involves destruction and an inability to manage tensions
- **Designated protection officer and safe facilitated spaces:** A trained figure to coordinate protocols and serve as a central referent, and safe places where children can express they thoughts, as seen in the Athletic Club (2022) model.
- **Bystander intervention:** Training both adults and peers as "active bystanders" who can detect early signs of maltreatment and intervene appropriately

- **Emotional management tools:** Training must include emotional education and empathy exercises to enable adults to act as "resilience tutors" who foster healthy, non-judgmental interactions
- **Contextual adaptation:** Protection policies should not be rigid but adapted to the specific culture of each sport and the specific amateur structure

Equity lens

Applying an equity lens to sport safeguarding means recognising that sport is not a neutral or level playing field in which all children and young people participate under the same conditions. As Spaaij et al. (2015) argue, sport both reflects and reproduces **broader social hierarchies**, while processes of inclusion and exclusion operate unevenly across different social positions. In this sense, sport must be understood as a space shaped by power relations, organisational cultures, unequal access to resources, normative expectations and everyday practices that may normalise exclusion or violence.

From this perspective, **safeguarding cannot rely only on generic or universal responses.** It must consider how risks, barriers to participation, opportunities to report and access to protection are differently experienced depending on gender, perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, disability, age, socioeconomic status, migration background, ethnicity, family context and position within club hierarchies.

The assessment therefore applies an explicitly intersectional lens, recognising that children's experiences in sport are never shaped by a single factor alone. These different dimensions may overlap and reinforce one another, **intensifying vulnerability, exclusion or mistrust in reporting pathways.** For example, a child may face discrimination linked to gender expression or perceived sexual orientation, while also encountering additional barriers related to language, disability, economic insecurity, family context or limited status within the team.

For this reason, the assessment does not assume a single or uniform experience for all girls, all boys or all LGBTQI children. Instead, it pays attention to how inequalities combine in specific contexts and shape both the risks children face and the protection they are able to access. An equity and intersectional lens is therefore necessary to identify which children may be more exposed to silencing, discrimination, exclusion or violence, and why. It also helps ensure that safeguarding models do not remain formally inclusive while failing to respond to differentiated realities and needs.

Gender

Gender discrimination in grassroots sport is not expressed only through isolated acts of exclusion or direct violence, as it is articulated through a set of **practices, discourses, norms, and institutional inertias that affect boys, girls, and young people** differently. In this sense, sport cannot be understood as a neutral space: it is a field of socialisation where body models, forms of leadership, hierarchies of value, and expectations about what is considered "appropriate" for boys and girls are learned. Therefore, analysing gender as a discriminatory axis requires observing both material inequalities - resources, training time, facilities, coaches, visibility - and the symbolic and discursive forms that normalise these inequalities.

A first way of identifying discrimination lies in the structural inequality of resources and opportunities. In grassroots sport, this inequality can be evidenced in the distribution of training schedules, the quality of facilities, the availability of equipment, access to qualified technical staff, or the investment allocated to male and female teams. When girls' teams train at worse times, receive less technical support, or have less visibility within the club, discrimination does not appear as an explicit prohibition, but as an everyday organisation that hierarchises some practices over others. This is particularly relevant in **grassroots and non-professional sport**

settings, where clubs may have strong community ties but limited resources, uneven safeguarding capacity and informal decision-making structures.

These conditions can create environments in which abuse, discrimination and exclusion are more likely to occur and less likely to be addressed in a timely and child-centred way. This structural dimension connects with the review by Sáenz Olmedo et al. (2022), which places **sexual harassment and sex-based discrimination** within a broader framework of power relations, inequality, and the normalisation of practices that particularly affect children and adolescent athletes.

A second dimension is related to the very construction of sporting excellence. In many contexts, performance is measured according to parameters historically associated with the male body model: explosive strength, speed, power, competitive aggressiveness, or resistance to pain. This pattern turns certain characteristics into the universal measure of sporting validity and places girls in a **permanent position of comparison with an ideal** that has not been built from bodily diversity or from a plurality of ways of practising sport.

From critical studies on sex, gender, and sexuality in sport, Kettley Linsell (2020) questions precisely the ways in which sporting categories reproduce normative assumptions about bodies, gender, and competitive legitimacy. This construction of excellence also produces a hierarchy among sports. Those disciplines considered more prestigious, more competitive, or with greater economic return are often associated with masculinised values, while feminised practices are perceived as less intense, less professional, or closer to aesthetics than to performance. Thus, discrimination is not only manifested in **who can participate, but also in which sports are considered important,** which bodies are recognized as athletic, and which achievements receive social recognition. In the case of girls and young women, this can translate into constant pressure to demonstrate competence, especially when they occupy masculinised spaces or exercise sporting leadership.

A third form of discrimination can be observed in soft essentialism, understood as the **naturalisation of differences between boys and girls under the appearance of individual choice**. Larsson (2021) shows that, in youth sport, coaches and sport managers tend to attribute values such as care, aesthetics, or expressiveness to girls, while boys are “naturally” associated with competitiveness, aggressiveness, and an interest in winning. This logic is discriminatory because it turns a social construction into a supposed spontaneous preference. These risks may be **explicit**, such as insults, exclusion or discriminatory comments, but they may also be **implicit**. Implicit exclusion can occur when club routines, language, facilities, uniforms or team expectations assume that all children are heterosexual, cisgender or comfortable with binary gender roles. Sport scholarship continues to identify heteronormativity as a constitutive feature of many sporting cultures, especially where masculinity, femininity and sexuality are regulated through narrow norms of appearance, behaviour and belonging (Magrath & Anderson, 2022)

On the contrary, it is often formulated as respect for freedom of choice: “girls choose other sports,” “boys are more competitive,” or “girls prefer less aggressive activities.” However, this explanation **hides the social conditions that produce these choices**. As Magrath and Anderson (2022) note, sport has historically socialised boys and men into norms of “physical toughness, emotional stoicism, and the rejection of anything deemed to be feminine—including homosexuality” (p. 889).

As Larsson (2021) shows, soft essentialism turns socially constructed gender expectations into supposed individual preferences, while Magrath and Anderson (2022) highlight how sport has historically r**einforced ideals of physical toughness and emotional stoicism among boys**. In safeguarding terms, this can make boys minimise pain, hide distress or accept humiliation, aggression or coercive discipline as normal. Discrimination therefore operates not

only through explicit insults or exclusion, but also through routines, language and expectations that reinforce heterosexual, cisgender and binary gender norms, shaping who belongs in sport and how children are allowed to express discomfort or report harm.

A fourth dimension is the “non-problem” discourse, through which sport institutions deny, minimise, or depoliticise inequalities. This discourse appears when clubs, coaches, or federations state that “there is no gender discrimination here,” that “everyone is treated equally,” or that talking about gender introduces unnecessary conflict. Larsson’s (2021) research shows that, although some young people express experiences of unequal treatment, speaking about these experiences may become problematic within the sporting context itself. Therefore, discrimination operates not only in **access or resources**, but also in the **possibility of naming injustice**. At this point, the stigmatisation of those who protest emerges. Girls or young women who report derogatory comparisons, less training time, or unequal treatment may be labelled as exaggerated, conflictive, or “angry feminists.” This label works as a mechanism of social control: it not only discredits the person who speaks out but also warns other athletes of the consequences of questioning the established order. In this way, **silence becomes a form of adaptation** to the sport system, especially at ages when belonging to the group and receiving the coach’s approval are particularly important.

Another central form of discrimination is sexist or **sex-based harassment.** Unlike sexual harassment, it does not necessarily seek a sexual favour, but degrades or belittles someone because she is a girl, young woman or woman. As Sáenz Olmedo et al. (2022) note, it includes behaviours that violate dignity and create an intimidating, degrading or offensive environment. In grassroots sport, this may appear through sexist jokes, comments about the body, ridicule of abilities, comparisons with boys or the devaluation of girls’ achievements, normalising discrimination in everyday practice.

In environments where male authority remains dominant, girls may also be less likely to see themselves reflected in leadership, coaching or decision-making structures, which can **weaken trust and reduce willingness to disclose concerns**. The impact is therefore not only immediate but cumulative: repeated exposure to dismissive or gendered treatment may narrow girls’ sense of legitimacy and safety within sport.

The most serious form of this discriminatory continuum is **sexual harassment and sexual violence.** Specialised literature points out that sport presents conditions of vulnerability: hierarchical relationships between coach and athlete, normalised physical contact, concentration of technical authority, dependence on performance, and fear of losing sporting opportunities.

This concern is also reflected in the literature on sexual violence and safeguarding in sport, which shows that abuse often emerges within ordinary relationships of trust and authority rather than through immediately visible or isolated incidents. Sáenz Olmedo et al. (2022) analyse precisely how the coach-athlete relationship can become a space of risk when power, trust and authority are used to cross physical or emotional boundaries. In this regard, Benítez Jiménez (2024) highlights the need for protocols against sexual violence in sport and leisure settings, as well as the importance of protection officers for children and adolescents. Her work emphasises that the diversity of sporting contexts and the heterogeneity of regulations make a **uniform response difficult,** but it also shows that the sport environment is not exempt from **punishable conduct or situations** that may be blurred by the specific characteristics of this context.

A specific concern within sexual violence in grassroots sport is **grooming**, because it often does not appear as an isolated or immediately recognisable act of abuse, but as a gradual process embedded in everyday relationships of trust, authority and dependence. Grooming occurs when an adult or a person in a position of power builds closeness with a child,

progressively isolates them, normalises inappropriate comments or physical contact, and shifts the boundaries of what is considered acceptable under the appearance of training, care, discipline or performance improvement. In sport, these behaviours can be **particularly difficult to identify,** especially when physical contact, intense emotional bonds and unequal power relations are already part of everyday practice.

Gender discrimination and violence in grassroots sport must be understood as part of the **same structural problem**. Sport is not a neutral space: it can reproduce social inequalities, gender stereotypes, unequal power relations and narrow ideas about masculinity, femininity, strength, toughness or obedience. These norms affect who feels legitimate, who is listened to, whose discomfort is minimised, and which forms of abuse are normalised or reported. Girls, boys and children who do not fit dominant gender expressions may face exclusion, harassment, ridicule, misrecognition, sexist or sexual violence, and institutional responses that silence or revictimise them.

A gender-responsive assessment must therefore look beyond explicit incidents and examine the everyday practices that shape participation, value certain bodies, distribute resources unequally and decide whose experiences are believed. Only through this structural perspective can grassroots sport become a safer, more equal and genuinely educational space.

LGBTQI+

This section analyses LGTBIQ+ discrimination in youth sport as a multidimensional phenomenon shaped by **intersecting forms of exclusion, everyday practices and institutional structures.** Discrimination should not be understood only as direct violence or individual prejudice, but also as the result of heteronormative and cisnormative rules, binary spatial arrangements, symbolic inclusion without real transformation, and insufficient safeguarding responses (Hartmann-Tews et al., 2020; Lawley, 2020; Spaaij et al., 2019).

Gender identity and gender expression constitute one of the most relevant axes of exclusion. Hartmann-Tews et al. (2020) show that **non-cisgender people are among the most vulnerable groups within the LGTBIQ+ umbrella** in European sport contexts, as they are often required to fit into a rigid binary system organised around male and female categories. This particularly affects **trans, non-binary and gender-fluid people**, whose identities challenge the traditional organisation of sport and its dependence on binary classification systems (Hartmann-Tews et al., 2020).

LGTBIQ+ discrimination in sport is not only expressed through direct violence, but also through subtle, normalised and institutional mechanisms (Spaaij et al., 2019; Lawley, 2020), where one of them is identified as a form of pseudo-inclusion. Spaaij et al. (2019) show that **many sport clubs publicly value diversity while resisting meaningful change in everyday practice.** This produces superficial diversity discourse, or “happy talk”, where institutions state that everyone is welcome but do not transform the norms, routines or power relations that generate exclusion, having important implications for the safeguarding dimension of early detection, as violence against LGTBIQ+ people might appear through indirect or normalised practices.

This structural perspective also requires moving beyond formal declarations of inclusion and examining how discrimination is experienced in everyday sporting spaces. Lawley (2020) develops this argument through the distinction between “conceived spaces” and “lived spaces”, where policies and campaigns may describe sport as inclusive at an institutional level, but discrimination is often experienced in concrete spaces such as **changing rooms, locker rooms, pitches, stands or team environments.** These everyday spaces may become places of fear, insecurity, surveillance or concealment for LGTBIQ+ athletes, which means that inclusion cannot remain only at the level of policy but must be experienced in the spaces where sport actually takes place).

Changing rooms are one of the clearest examples of this gap between formal inclusion and lived experience. Rioja Martínez et al. (2023) identify locker rooms as spaces of **particular vulnerability for trans people,** both before, during and after transition, as it is generally organised according to a binary and cisgender logic, they may generate fear of rejection, unwanted bodily exposure, anxiety and potential transphobic violence. The same study also shows unequal patterns of acceptance, since some trans women reported greater acceptance from women teammates, while access to men's changing rooms was described as producing more hostility and rejection. For children specifically, this may result in **concealment, self-censorship, avoidance of changing rooms or travel situations, non-participation in team rituals, or complete withdrawal from sport.** It may also undermine trust in adults where coaches and club staff lack the language, confidence or willingness to respond appropriately. The impact is therefore not only personal but institutional: when children perceive that clubs cannot protect them without exposing them further, safeguarding pathways lose credibility.

Language is another key mechanism of discrimination. Greenspan, Griffith, Hayes, and Murtagh (2019) show that LGTBIQ+ youth and allies often feel unsafe in school athletic contexts because of peer discrimination and the inaction of athletic staff. Homophobic and transphobic slurs, often justified as jokes or "banter", operate as **forms of surveillance over gender and sexuality;** words such as "fag" or "dyke" are not harmless expressions, since they reinforce hegemonic masculinity and femininity and communicate to LGTBIQ+ young people that their identities are not fully accepted in sport spaces.

Direct verbal violence against trans people also illustrates the intersectional nature of this discrimination. Rioja Martínez et al. (2023) collect testimonies including insults such as "marimacho", "bicho raro" or "chico-chica", which **combine transphobia, sexism and homophobia.** These expressions do not only attack individuals, but also police bodies, gender expression and belonging within sport (Rioja Martínez et al., 2023). For this reason, prevention cannot rely only on general declarations of inclusion, but must also equip professionals to identify and respond to the specific forms of language, stigma and exclusion that LGBTQI children and adolescents may experience in sport.

In this regard, **professional development is essential.** Greenspan, Whitcomb, and Griffith (2019) propose the SAFE model, a programme designed to promote affirming school athletics for LGBTQI+ youth. This model includes training on stigma and risk, the relationship between positive sport climates and educational outcomes, the use of youth narratives to humanise policy, and practical tools for change. Its main contribution is that it translates inclusion into concrete professional competences for coaches, physical education teachers and school staff. The literature points to the need for a shift in safeguarding and prevention practices. Gender and LGBTQI-related discrimination should not be addressed only through abstract definitions, but **through a trauma-informed and cross-cutting approach integrated across the whole safeguarding cycle:** prevention, detection, reporting, response and follow-up. As Clerincx et al. (2023) argue, this means recognising how violence affects the body, emotions and nervous system, and understanding that victims or witnesses may respond to fear or harm through freezing, silence, avoidance or withdrawal. The "window of tolerance" is useful in this sense because it helps professionals avoid victim-blaming and respond through safety, emotional regulation and trust.

This is particularly relevant for LGBTQI children and adolescents, or for those perceived as not conforming to dominant heterosexual and binary norms, who may fear judgement, **minimisation or revictimisation.** Safeguarding systems should therefore include accessible, nearby and trusted reporting channels, with clear, neutral and well-trained contact points who have specific knowledge of sexual and gender diversity (Clerincx et al., 2023). More broadly, sport safeguarding guidance treats education, procedures and communication as central elements of prevention, rather than secondary add-ons. Effective systems are expected to recognise that some children may be more vulnerable due to specific personal, social or

contextual factors, and to adapt safeguarding measures accordingly (Council of Europe, n.d.; International Safeguards for Children in Sport, 2021).

Disability

The body of literature shows that the central axis of discrimination is, undoubtedly, disability, understood in its functional, sensory and intellectual heterogeneity, and in relation to different levels of support. However, this axis does not operate in isolation. It is clearly crossed by an **intersectional framework** involving gender, ethnicity, class, age and territorial inequalities. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this section, and in order not to leave certain dimensions invisible, the analysis focuses particularly on the factors that appear as especially decisive in the reviewed literature: age, geopolitical and territorial location, and access to equipment, adaptations and support infrastructures.

In this sense, age emerges as a key vector. Physical participation tends to decrease over the **course of adolescence,** while the transition from pediatric services to community and adult resources generates a material discontinuity in supports, equipment and professional mediation (Downs et al., 2020). Added to this is an axis linked to severity of disability and complexity of support needs, the works of Duvall and al. (2020) and Jeanes and al. (2018) show that young people who require powered wheelchairs, complex adaptations or more intensive supports are more frequently excluded from mainstream sport, or only gain access to **marginal, underdeveloped or non-competitive modalities**.

Finally, Downs and al. (2020) also point to additional vulnerabilities among young people from rural areas, recent immigrants and older youth who lack transport, economic resources or adequate environments. These elements suggest that territory, geopolitical location and the availability of appropriate equipment do not function merely as contextual factors, but as **conditions that can intensify or reduce exclusion.** Therefore, they should be understood as complementary and aggravating axes, even if they are not equally developed across the whole corpus.

The discrimination derived from these axes appears, first, as a barrier to access. The texts are very clear on this point: the difficulty is not limited to architectural accessibility, although this remains decisive, but also includes the lack of adequate programs, the scarcity of adapted equipment, the insufficiency of trained staff, the absence of accessible information about the available offer, and the precariousness of transport and funding systems (Declerck and al., 2021; Züll, A., 2019; Downs and al., 2020). In Züll, A. (2019), for example, families identify as the main reasons for not attending sports clubs the lack of knowledge of an appropriate club and their type of equipment, transport difficulties, cost, and fear that their child will not be able to participate safely.

In Declerck and al. (2021), sports clubs and centers themselves identify perceived **lack of demand, insufficient budget, and the absence of trained supervisors as barriers to expanding the adapted offer.** In Duvall et al. (2020), this barrier to access becomes radicalised for those who use powered wheelchairs: the offer is very scarce, the specific technology is costly, and sports classification systems further complicate the real possibility of participation.

Second, discrimination takes the form of **relational and participatory exclusion,** particularly in relation to disability. The literature shows that exclusion is not limited to the absence of access to sport facilities or programs but also emerges in the quality of social relations that disabled children and young people experience within supposedly inclusive environments.

Disability inclusion in grassroots sport cannot be assessed only by whether disabled children are formally allowed to participate, but by examining the **quality of their participation and**

the extent to which sporting environments adapt to their needs. Klenk et al. (2019) show that organised community sport can be both inclusive and exclusionary. While it may create belonging, acceptance and social bonds, it can also reproduce rejection, unequal interactions and superficial forms of inclusion. This is especially evident when disabled participants are expected to **adapt to existing norms of mainstream sport**, rather than sport being reshaped around diverse bodies, capacities and support needs. As a result, children with more complex disabilities or greater support requirements may remain marginalised or invisible. Discrimination therefore operates not only through explicit exclusion, but also through symbolic violence, such as peer neglect, bullying, exclusion from group activities and the failure to recognise disabled children as legitimate participants.

Third, discrimination must be read as **structural inequality and ableism.** Jeanes et al. (2018) show that many inclusion policies and practices in community clubs continue to be organised from normative parameters: inclusion is accepted as long as the young person with disability can approximate the competitive, organisational, and bodily standards of dominant sport. Clubs “accommodate” difference, but only when it is not “too different”; in this way, young people with mild or moderate disabilities arein some ways “privileged”, while access is restricted for those who present more complex needs.

Along the same lines, clubs and associations tend to **promote competitive pathways that replicate the logic of mainstream sport,** which leaves out those who do not fit that structure or do not wish to participate under those criteria. Klenk et al. (2019) deepen this diagnosis by attributing much of the lower participation not to a lack of desire, but to discriminatory organisational practices, lack of information, and limited institutional capacity to sustain meaningful participation. Duvall et al. (2020) confirm this **structural inequality at the extreme of greater functional complexity:** even where there are international events or adapted programs, the modalities for powered wheelchair users remain minimal and, often, the movement of the chair itself is not even a central part of the sporting practice.

The specific needs generated by this constellation of discriminations are relatively clear. First, **accessibility must be understood in an integral sense.** It cannot be limited to ramps or elevators, but must include adapted equipment, accessible buildings and transport, economic affordability, clear and understandable information about available resources, and continuity between health, school and community services (Declerck et al., 2021; Downs et al., 2020; Züll, 2019).

Second, **specialised training is essential for coaches, instructors, physical education teachers and all other agents who mediate sporting practice.** The literature shows that lack of training is not a neutral gap, but can become a direct mechanism of exclusion: adaptations may not be made, risks may be overestimated, or young people may be redirected away from group activities instead of being supported to participate (Declerck et al., 2021; Downs et al., 2020; Züll, 2019).

Third, **support and transition networks are particularly important, especially during the passage to adult life.** This includes bridging resources, partnerships between rehabilitation centres and community organisations, family accompaniment, and the development of self-advocacy and orientation skills that help young people navigate adult recreational sport and physical activity settings (Downs et al., 2020; Declerck et al., 2021).

Finally, **the design of sporting practice itself must be adapted.** This involves assistive technologies, specific equipment and, where necessary, alternative modalities that are not subordinated to conventional competitive logics, especially for young people with high support needs (Duvall et al., 2020; Strobel & Gerling, 2025). Strobel and Gerling (2025) further show that technological accessibility is not only an instrumental issue, but also a question of recognition: it shapes which bodies and movements are considered legitimate in sport. The

example of fitness trackers that fail to account for wheelchair users — “But, I don’t take steps” — illustrates how apparently neutral technologies may reproduce normative assumptions about movement and athletic participation

The dimensions of safeguarding, in this framework, do not yet appear as an exhaustive protocol, but rather as a demand for critical rereading: to protect means to guarantee accessibility, train those who sustain practice, reinforce support networks, recognise differentiated needs, and demedicalise the meaning of sport in order to restore its condition as a social, meaningful, and desirable practice for children and young people with disabilities.

Socio-economic diversity

Socioeconomic class emerges in the bibliography as an axis of discrimination that does not operate in isolation but rather intersects with other markers of inequality such as race/ethnicity, language, gender, age, migrant status, and territory. In this sense, class inequality cannot be reduced to a **mere lack of income.** Drawing on Bourdieu’s concepts of social and cultural capital, as mobilised by Tandon et al. (2021), it also encompasses the unequal distribution of knowledge, recognition and networks: how the sports system operates, which pathways are valued, how scholarships are accessed, which sports are socially prestigious, and which connections enable sustained participation.

Likewise, some sports appear to be more socially selective and more closely associated with prestigious lifestyles, while others are comparatively more accessible; football, for instance, appears to be one of the subfields least structured by economic and cultural capital, whereas racket sports, nature-based activities, fitness, yoga, and water sports are considerably more selective (Mutz and Müller (2021).

Class also intersects with language belonging, as it is shown **families who do not speak the dominant language show lower rates of participation** in organised sport and fewer opportunities to try different sports, while neighbourhoods with fewer resources tend to have fewer facilities, poorer conditions of access, and less stable opportunities for participation (Tandon et al. (2021); Fleming et al. (2023)). Therefore, socioeconomic axis must be understood through an intersectional lens: it is shaped not only by how much money a family has, but also by where they live, what language they speak, what networks they can rely on, and to what extent they fit within the dominant cultural norms of sport. Within this framework, **exclusion is not incidental but structural:** contemporary sport cultures increasingly channel participation toward more expensive clubs, leagues, and circuits, while school-based or recreational options are relegated to positions of lower prestige or competitiveness (Hernandez et al. 2023).

Second, **class-based discrimination also manifests itself as a symbolic and affective barrier.** It is not only a question of being unable to pay, but also of not feeling welcome, not feeling good enough, or perceiving that, without access to the more expensive pathways, there is no genuine possibility of recognition or progression. Tandon et al. (2021) show that children from low-affluence families are significantly more likely to report fear of injury, not feeling welcome on teams, cost, and transportation as barriers. Hernandez et al. (2023) further suggests that this culture generates feelings of powerlessness, competitive disadvantage, and lack of control among low-income families, especially when the prospect of scholarships is uncertain or experienced as humiliating. In this respect, class inequality also operates as a form of symbolic violence: it encourages the internalisation of the idea that “real” sport belongs to those who can afford it.

Urban geography therefore functions as a further mechanism through which socioeconomic inequality is reproduced in sport. As Fleming et al. (2023) suggest, access is partly determined by postcode: families living in more deprived urban neighbourhoods are more likely to

encounter facilities that are fewer in number, poorer in quality, less well maintained, or perceived as less safe.

Therefore, exclusion is not only produced by individual economic resources, such as the ability to pay fees or buy equipment, but also by the **spatial distribution of sporting infrastructures.** When local facilities are perceived as unsafe, unhealthy, or inadequate, they become less attractive and less usable, especially for families. In this sense, the neighbourhood itself acts as a filter of exclusion: it shapes which bodies feel entitled to participate, which families can sustain regular involvement, and which young people are offered safe and dignified opportunities to engage in sport.

Third, discrimination appears as a specific vulnerability in relation to health and protection. For families with **limited health coverage or more precarious access to care,** a sports injury is not simply a physical incident, but also a **potential economic and care-related crisis.** Hernandez et al. (2023) emphasises that the consequences of specialisation and injury may be more severe for low socioeconomic groups precisely because of inequalities in insurance, healthcare access, and delays in treatment. Fleming et al. (2023), in turn, shows that racialised and urban families reported higher levels of concern regarding both practical and health-related barriers to returning to sport, reinforcing the point that safety cannot be considered separately from social inequality.

Finally, the bibliography also cautions that certain sport-based responses to **poverty may operate as mechanisms of social control rather than vehicles of social justice.** Darnell and Millington (2018) argue that sport contributes to social justice only when it clearly distinguishes between charity and justice, and when it does not merely intervene “upon” poor or marginalised populations but also questions the structures that produce such inequality. From this perspective, offering sport opportunities to impoverished young people is insufficient if the underlying model reproduces hierarchy, dependency, or surveillance instead of redistribution, recognition, and structural transformation (Darnell and Millington, 2018).

Cultural diversity

In childhood and youth sport, the migratory axis highlights **how discrimination is shaped** not only by migrant status itself, but also by its intersection with ethnicity, race, religion, language, gender and, in some cases, disability. The literature shows that migrant and racialised children and young people may face barriers linked to belonging, recognition, communication, cultural norms and institutional expectations. From this perspective, the issue is not simply whether sport spaces are diverse, but whether they create the conditions for migrant participants and families to feel included, understood and treated as legitimate members of the sporting community (Flensner et al., 2020; Burrmann et al., 2017).

A first major axis of discrimination is **ethnicity and “race”.** Flensner et al. (2020) show that racism is **not merely an external social condition** affecting migrant youth from outside the field of sport; rather, it is something that sports leaders and participants must **actively negotiate within everyday sporting practice**. Their study suggests that trust and safe spaces do not arise automatically from participation in sport but must be deliberately constructed in contexts where racism is already present in the wider society. This means that racism in sport cannot be reduced to isolated insults or overt hostility on the field. It also operates through routine and often less visible forms of exclusion that weaken young people’s sense of security, recognition and belonging.

At the same time, the problem is structural. As Konoval (2021) argues**, racial inequality** is sustained through the underrepresentation of minoritized coaches and role models, as well as through informal networks and “old boys’ clubs” that shape who is seen as legitimate in positions of leadership and expertise. From this perspective, ethnicity and race function as

systemic barriers not only to participation, but also to visibility, aspiration and advancement within sport.

A second crucial axis is the **intersection of religion and gender**, particularly in relation to Muslim girls and women. Ahmad et al. (2020) show that their participation in sport is shaped by a form of double marginalisation. On the one hand, they may face family and community expectations related to modesty, privacy, respect and gender norms. On the other hand, they encounter sports institutions that often misunderstand these needs or interpret them through stereotypes.

The contribution of Ahmad et al. (2020) is especially relevant because the study places **Muslim women's voices** alongside those of sport facilitators, revealing not only barriers to participation but also significant mismatches in perception. Sport organisations often treat Muslim women as a homogeneous or "problematic" group, overlooking both their agency and the diversity of their experiences. In practice, exclusion frequently takes the form of institutional non-adaptation rather than direct prohibition. Women-only spaces, particularly in swimming and leisure activities, are a clear example: they are not merely symbolic preferences, but material and emotional safe spaces that enable participation without forcing girls and women to compromise their cultural or religious values (Ahmad et al., 2020).

Migratory status and citizenship constitute another important axis of inequality. Burrmann et al. (2017) argue that belonging in sport depends on membership, efficacy and affiliation. Their framework is useful because it shows **that sport cannot generate belonging if young people are formally present but not fully accepted**. They also explain that migrant youths may experience acculturative stress when they are forced to balance incompatible expectations between family, ethnic community and host society, resulting in what they describe as a precarious sense of belonging. Their case studies show that sport can indeed generate self-efficacy and social recognition, but these outcomes remain ambivalent. Participation may provide an anchor, yet belonging remains unstable if young people continue to be treated as provisional, marginal or unequal members of the sporting community (Burrmann et al., 2017).

In their broader reflections on inclusive sport, Santos-Pastor and Rivera García (2023) argue that meaningful **inclusion requires welcoming and discrimination-free environments.** This is important because intercultural discrimination does not always appear as direct aggression or explicit racism; it may also be embedded in everyday coaching and pedagogical practices. González Padrón et al. (2023) show that **athletes exposed to racism**, both in elite and grassroots sport, may experience subtle but harmful forms of mistreatment, such as aggressive tones of voice, authoritarian communication, lack of affectivity and limited attention to psychological needs.

Taken together, the literature shows that **intercultural discrimination** operates through institutional assimilation, symbolic exclusion, racialised access barriers and structural inequality. Flensner et al. (2020) warn that "**integration**" may become assimilation when minority youth are expected to abandon language, norms or cultural practices to fit in. Similarly, Ahmad et al. (2020) show that Muslim women's needs are often treated as obstacles rather than legitimate claims for adaptation. Konoval (2021) highlights racialised barriers to leadership, while Shepherd (2019) warns that diversity initiatives may remain superficial if they do not produce real institutional change. From this perspective, intercultural safeguarding requires attention not only to diversity, but also to the everyday norms and power relations that shape who is recognised, who must adapt and whose needs are considered legitimate in sport. For this reason, the needs generated by intercultural discrimination require **responses that go beyond generic awareness-raising.** The literature points to the need for genuine intercultural competence, including critical self-reflection on bias and paternalistic assumptions (Shepherd, 2019), as well as for culturally appropriate safe spaces, such as women-only

sessions where necessary (Ahmad et al., 2020). It also highlights the importance of intercultural mediation, accessible reporting channels and safe referral mechanisms that can protect young people from retaliation and build trust between institutions, families and communities (Coutinho et al., 2024; Flensner et al., 2020). Finally, **inclusive language and real minority representation** in coaching and leadership are essential if sport is to challenge invisibility and redistribute recognition and opportunity more equitably (Konoval, 2021).

Table 2. Safeguarding dimensions in intersection with equity lens

Equity lens	Prevention	Early detection	Reporting	Response and case management	Governance
Gender	• **Professionalise** prevention • Focus on the dynamics of the organisation • Promote **mixed technical teams** to facilitate the recognition of women as figures of legitimate authority. (McDowell et al. .2016)	**Monitor repeated "low-level" behaviours:** comments about girls' bodies, devaluation of girls' achievements, pressure to tolerate pain, sexist nicknames, and boys being punished for showing fear or vulnerability. (Sáenz Olmedo et al; 2024).	• Need for clear, accessible and known **channels** • Guarantee **confidentiality.**(UNICEF & International Rescue Committee, 2023).	• Fast, protective, **revictimizing** response • Avoid the response to depend on the **prestige of the aggressor**. (Sáenz Olmedo et al., 2024).	• Ensure **gender-balanced leadership** and decision-making bodies • **Mandatory protocols**, negative certificate of sexual offenses for people who work with minors, staff training, etc.(Clerincx et al., 2023).
LGBTQI+	• Review club language, posters, forms, uniforms, changing rooms and team rules **to remove assumptions that all children are heterosexual, cisgender or comfortable with binary gender roles**. (Rioja Martínez et al. (2023). • Use **inclusive languag**e; Train staff on names, pronouns, privacy and non-outing.	• Be aware that in many cases, **violence is not a direct aggression** • Control specific situations or patterns. (Sáenz Olmedo et al., 2024).; **Pay attention to indirect signs**: avoidance of locker rooms, withdrawal from team rituals, sudden drop in attendance, jokes about sexuality, gossip, misgendering, etc. • Pay attention to **informal language** used between peers	• **Enhanced confidentiality:** the victim may want to keep its gender or sexual identity secret • Incorporate LGBTQI+ people in **all** the club positions	• Active, immediate and **pedagogical** • Intervene in discriminatory behaviours **before** those are normalised • **Break institutional silence** and neutrality, to make visible all gender and sexual identities. (Rioja Martínez et al., 2023).	• **Review bureaucracy** (registration forms, federative forms, dressing rooms, etc.) that might exclude LGBTQI+ people • Inclusive governance can't be limited to creating mixed spaces, but must guarantee **diverse participation** in the club structure. (Haag et al., 2016)
Disability	• **Specialized training** for personal • Ensure **comprehensive accessibility** (equipment, transportation).(Declerck et al., 2021; Downs et al., 2020; Züll, A., 2019).	• Monitor **symbolic exclusion**: being left out of drills, overprotection, peer neglect, children being treated as "too risky", exclusion from	• Provide **accessible reporting formats**: easy-read materials, visual tools, oral reporting options, supported communication and trusted adults. Reporting	• Incorporation of material **facilitators** and responsive attention to the complexity of the **necessary supports** (Wilson and Rhind (2022).	• **Specific budget** allocation for adaptations and training in inclusive sports. • Dematerialise sport for people with disabilities, restoring its status as a desirable social practice rather than a merely

		changing rooms or travel, or withdrawal linked to inaccessible routines (Klenk et al. (2019)	information should explain **rights,** confidentiality and next steps in accessible language (Duvall et al., 2020; Strobel & Gerling, 2025).		therapeutic activity. (Jeanes et.al 2018)
Socio-economic diversity	• Implement a **confidential system of redistributive fees** and equipment provision that removes the barrier of "real sport" being accessible only to those who can afford it (Tandon et al. (2021).	• Identify the **fear of injury** (due to lack of medical coverage). • **Detect signs** of "affective vulnerability," such as feeling unwelcome or lacking control due to economic competitive disadvantage (Hernandez et al. (2023).	• **Facilitate processes** that are **not humiliating** when applying for scholarships or financial support (Tandon et al. (2021); Fleming et al. (2023).	• **Intersectoral coordination** with social services to prevent family crises caused by sports expenses.	• Distribution of resources that does not depend exclusively on family fees, moving from a "charity" model (offering sport to poor families) towards a **"social justice" approach** that questions and addresses the structures that produce inequality (Darnell and Millington (2018)
Cultural diversity	• Development of **intercultural competence** and creation of private sessions (e.g., women only) if culturally required) (Ahmad et al., 2020).	• Observe **subtle exclusion**: language barriers, mockery of names, food, clothing or religious practices, authoritarian communication toward racialised children, low expectations, lack of affective support or family mistrust of the club. (González Padrón et al. (2023).	• Offer reporting routes with **language support** and **intercultural mediation.** Ensure children and families understand what can be reported, who will respond, what confidentiality means and what will happen next. (San Pedro et al. (2023).	• **Avoid 'institutional assimilation'**: not forcing the renunciation of cultural norms in order to participate (Burrmann et al). (2017).	• Build **partnerships with local community actors,** migrant associations, intercultural mediators and minority families. The document's multilingual annex stresses that safeguarding materials must be understandable across languages and that interpretation must not compromise confidentiality. (Flensner et al. (2020) .

VOLUME 2: Sport associations and federations best practices

This second volume of Deliverable 2.1 focuses on the **identification, selection and analysis of best practices** developed by **sport associations, federations and related organisations** in the field of **child safeguarding and protection in sport**. Its main purpose is to gather practical evidence that can inform the design of the 360 Safe Play Model, complementing the conceptual, legal, policy and academic foundations developed in the first volume of this report. While Volume 1 provides the broader framework for understanding child protection in sport — including European and national legal frameworks, public policies, scientific literature and existing safeguarding approaches — Volume 2 brings this analysis closer to practice. It explores how different sport organisations have **translated child protection principles** into concrete tools, procedures, training strategies, reporting mechanisms and organisational cultures. In this sense, the best practices collected here are not presented as models to be replicated mechanically, but as practical references that can help identify useful components, lessons learned and transferable ideas for the 360 Safe Play system.

The work carried out in this volume has been closely connected to the development of Volume 1. The exploration of legal obligations, policy recommendations and academic evidence has informed the criteria used to identify and analyse the practices included in this mapping. Therefore, the selection process has not been isolated from the broader state-of-the-art review but rather built upon it. The practices have been examined considering key dimensions highlighted throughout the first volume, such as prevention, early detection, reporting, child participation, safeguarding governance, capacity building, restorative approaches, inclusion and coordination with relevant stakeholders.

This volume also seeks to **bridge the gap between formal child protection frameworks and the everyday realities of sport clubs and federations**. Many safeguarding policies are well developed at the institutional level, but their effective implementation depends on how they are adapted to grassroots contexts, how accessible they are for coaches, volunteers, families and children, and how they respond to the specific risks that may arise in sport environments. For this reason, particular attention has been paid to practices that provide concrete mechanisms, user-friendly tools or organisational procedures that can realistically be transferred or adapted to different sport settings. These practices were **presented and discussed within the consortium through a dedicated webinar**, with the aim of identifying key lessons and practical conclusions that can further nurture the 360 Safe Play model.

The analysis presented here is intended to support the next phases of WP2, especially the co-creation sessions with children, families, sport professionals and local stakeholders, as well as the development of the 360 Safe Play toolkit and system. By identifying what already works, under which conditions, and with which limitations, this volume contributes to building a model that is both evidence-based and practice-oriented. Ultimately, the aim is to ensure that the 360 Safe Play Model is grounded not only in legal and academic knowledge, but also in the accumulated experience of sport organisations that have already taken steps to make sport safer, more inclusive and more protective for children.

Report on Consortium Webinar (29th April)

Preparation and facilitation of the webinar

The preparation process started with the **work of the desk research team**, which developed a **common framework for collecting and documenting best practices**. This framework was informed by the initial desk research phase on European and national child protection policies,

legal frameworks, academic evidence and safeguarding experiences in sport. On this basis, the team designed a standardised information online form to be completed by all partners. The form was intended to collect comparable information on each practice, including its aims, target groups, implementing organisation, context of application, safeguarding dimensions addressed, available resources, outcomes, transferability potential and equity considerations.

For the purposes of this mapping, a **best practice was understood as** any initiative, tool, programme, protocol, resource, training model or institutional framework that contributes to preventing, detecting, reporting or responding to violence against children in grassroots sport. The collection was not limited to sport organisations, but also included examples from child-rights organisations, public authorities, ombudsmen, NGOs, safeguarding bodies and European or international sport frameworks. Priority was given to practices that included transferable elements relevant to the 360 Safe Play model, particularly in relation to safeguarding governance, prevention, early detection, child-friendly reporting pathways, case management, response mechanisms, training, child participation and restorative or repair-oriented approaches.

Each partner was asked to identify and submit **at least five best practices** from their national context, field of expertise or relevant European and international references. The use of a common form ensured that the information collected by the consortium could be compared and analysed according to shared criteria. It also helped move the process from a simple compilation of examples towards an analytical mapping of practices that could contribute to the design of a practical and applicable model for grassroots sport organisations.

Once the practices had been submitted, the research desk team reviewed the full set of contributions and **selected the examples that each partner would further develop**. Each partner was asked to prepare two PowerPoint presentations based on the practices selected by the research team. The selection was guided by several criteria: a strong focus on sport and violence against children; the amount and quality of information available; the need to ensure that all safeguarding dimensions were represented; the inclusion of an equity perspective; and the diversity of elements required to inform and enrich the future 360 Safe Play model. Attention was given to practices addressing gender, LGBTQI+, disability, socio-economic and cultural diversity, in line with the intersectional approach of the project.

The research team also identified which of the **selected practices each partner would present during the webinar**. Partners were asked to prepare short presentations of approximately seven minutes, focusing not only on the general description of the practice, but especially on the safeguarding dimension and equity lens covered by each experience. The presentations were also expected to highlight the elements considered most useful for the construction of the 360 Safe Play model, such as governance arrangements, reporting channels, practical tools, training approaches, coordination mechanisms, child participation methods or transferable implementation lessons.

In parallel, the research desk team designed the agenda and methodology of the webinar. The meeting was conceived as a participatory space for exchange, validation and collective learning among partners. The agenda was shared with the consortium in advance to allow partners to prepare their interventions and to understand the role of the webinar within the broader WP2 process.

The session followed this structure (agenda):

10:00 – Welcome
10:05 – Presentation of the desk research analysis
10:20 – Presentation of best practices by each team
11:30 – Break
11:40 – Learnings, identification and prioritisation of the key elements to be included in the model
12:45 – Final remarks and next steps

The **first part of the webinar** provided a common evidence base through the **presentation of the desk research analysis**. This helped situate the selected practices within the broader European and national child protection framework and ensured that the exchange was connected to the legal, policy and academic findings gathered for Deliverable 2.1. The **second part of the session was dedicated to the presentation of the selected best practices by the partners**. Each presentation followed the common orientation provided by the research team, with emphasis on the practice's relevance for safeguarding in sport, its equity and inclusion dimensions, and its potential contribution to the 360 Safe Play system. In the next section we will present the summary of each best practice presented and the Key learning for the 360 Safe Play model.

In parallel with the presentations, participants used Wooclap to enter ideas, actors, risks, needs, tools and criteria that they considered relevant for building the model. These contributions were linked to the different safeguarding dimensions - prevention, early detection, reporting, response and case management, restorative approach and governance - and made it possible to collect not only technical content, but also institutional priorities, practical concerns and shared views on how a safeguarding system applicable to diverse organisational realities should operate.

Once the initial contributions had been collected, they were organised and grouped to identify the main emerging ideas within each dimension. This process made it possible to move from a broad and heterogeneous set of contributions to a more structured selection of priorities. These ideas were then returned to participants in voting format, so that each partner could allocate a score according to the importance they attributed to each element for the future model.

The **final part of the webinar was designed as a collective reflection exercise**. Partners discussed the main lessons emerging from the practices and identified the key elements that should be considered in the future model. This discussion focused on how the selected experiences could be adapted to grassroots sport clubs and organisations, especially those with limited human, technical and financial resources. It also helped identify the gap between formal safeguarding policies and everyday practice, highlighting the need for the 360 Safe Play model to be practical, visible, applicable and reviewable.

Overall, the preparation of the webinar followed a structured and collaborative methodology. It combined desk research, partner contributions, common documentation tools, predefined selection criteria and a participatory exchange format. This process ensured that the best practices discussed during the webinar were relevant to the project objectives, aligned with child-rights and safeguarding standards, and useful for informing the next steps of WP2, including the co-creation sessions, the development of the training toolkit, the early detection and reporting mechanisms, and the future validation of the 360 Safe Play model.

Best practices presented on the webinar and first learnings for 360 Safe Play Model

Safeguarding Policy & Gender Equality Strategy (2024), adopted by ASD Arcobaleno Borgosesia in 2024, is a club-level safeguarding practice focused on prevention, governance and reporting. It targets minors, coaches, staff and athletes, and addresses physical, psychological and sexual abuse, bullying and gender-based discrimination. Its main objective is to create a safe and inclusive sporting environment that prevents all forms of abuse while actively promoting gender equality among athletes and staff. The practice is led by the Board of Directors and includes a designated Safeguarding Officer, who acts as the main contact point for complaints and oversight. It also includes a confidential reporting email, a code of conduct, periodic training for coaches and managers, and an organisational control model to assess risks within the club.

Key learning for the 360 Safe Play model (from now on, KL360): This practice shows that safeguarding works better when it combines clear rules, visible leadership and accessible reporting mechanisms. For the 360 Safe Play model, the key learning is that every sports club should have a clearly identified safeguarding reference person, simple reporting channels, and explicit “dos and don’ts” on physical contact, verbal communication, sexist language and discriminatory behaviour. The practice also highlights the importance of transparency: safeguarding documents should be available to families, athletes and staff, helping to build trust and shared responsibility within the sports community.

A useful improvement for 360 Safe Play would be to strengthen the visibility and accessibility of the Safeguarding Officer or equivalent role in each participating club. The model could include a simple profile of this role, a child-friendly explanation of when and how to contact them, and a standard communication template for families, children, coaches and volunteers. Another improvement would be to ensure that all external collaborators, especially part-time coaches or occasional staff, receive the same safeguarding information and commit to the same code of conduct. The key learning is that safeguarding cannot depend only on internal staff: everyone who interacts with children in the sports environment must understand the rules, reporting pathways and gender equality principles.

Malpractice Prevention and Safeguarding Protocol (2024) is a protocol aimed to prevent malpractice, negligence and unsafe behaviours in sports settings. It focuses on athletes, coaches and technical staff, and addresses risks such as physical or psychological abuse, lack of supervision, inappropriate conduct and breaches of professional ethics. It includes a Code of Ethics, a confidential reporting channel and a Safeguarding Officer responsible for receiving and managing concerns.

KL360: The main learning is that safeguarding should also cover every day professional practices, not only serious abuse cases. Coaches and staff need clear guidance on safe behaviour, supervision, communication, physical contact, travel, locker rooms and one-to-one interactions with children. 360 Safe Play could include a short duty of care and malpractice prevention checklist for clubs and coaches. This would help identify risk situations early and clarify what behaviours are unacceptable. The key learning is that child protection must be part of daily sports practice, not only a response when an incident occurs.

Child Protection in Sport Unit – CPSU, England/UK is a national safeguarding support unit created in 2001 within the NSPCC. It supports sport organisations, governing bodies and grassroots clubs through safeguarding standards, self-assessment tools, templates, guidance, training and designated safeguarding roles such as club welfare officers.

KL360: For 360 Safe Play, this could mean adding a short self-check for clubs covering prevention, reporting channels, designated safeguarding roles, staff/volunteer training, event

safety, case management and follow-up. It could also include a clear club-level safeguarding focal point, like the CPSU welfare officer model. This would make the 360 Safe Play system more operational, easier to implement in small volunteer-led clubs, and more sustainable over time. The tool should remain simple to avoid becoming too document-heavy for grassroots organisations.

A relevant element that could improve the 360 Safe Play model is the inclusion of a simple club safeguarding self-assessment and review tool, inspired by the Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU). The key learning is that safeguarding should be built into the everyday governance of sports clubs, not treated only as a policy or training activity. Clubs need practical entry-level tools to identify gaps, assign clear responsibilities and regularly review their progress.

Sport Ireland Safeguarding Guidance (2019) is a national safeguarding guidance framework for sport organisations in Ireland. It combines safeguarding roles, role-based training, reporting procedures, risk assessment, child safeguarding statements and audit/self-assessment tools. It is implemented through governing bodies and clubs, with key roles such as the Club Children's Officer and Designated Liaison Person.

KL360: A useful addition to the 360 Safe Play model would be the introduction of a clearer role-based safeguarding structure inside sports clubs. The Sport Ireland model shows the value of distinguishing between different responsibilities, such as a person who supports child welfare within the club and a designated person responsible for reporting and liaison with external child protection services. This could help 360 Safe Play move from general safeguarding principles to a more operational system with clear internal roles, reporting routes and accountability.

The key learning is that safeguarding works better when clubs combine training, risk assessment, named responsibilities, reporting procedures and regular self-audit in one coherent framework. For 360 Safe Play, this could mean adding simplified role descriptions for club safeguarding contacts, tiered training modules for coaches and volunteers, and practical tools such as a child safeguarding statement, risk assessment template and short self-audit checklist. This would strengthen prevention, early detection and response, while making the model easier to implement and monitor in grassroots sports clubs. The tools should remain simple and adapted to small volunteer-led organisations to avoid creating excessive administrative burden.

COACH - Countering Online Anti-Gypsyism and Cyber Hate (2022) is a CERV-funded programme implemented in Bulgaria and Slovakia to counter illegal online hate speech against Roma communities. It combines online counter-narrative campaigns, monitoring of harmful content, data collection, training for NGOs and activists, and advocacy with decision-makers.

KL360: Safeguarding systems should not rely only on rules or reporting channels. They need to combine awareness-raising, monitoring, training, stakeholder coordination and positive narratives that promote respectful and inclusive sport environments.

For the 360 Safe Play model, a relevant improvement would be to strengthen the behaviour-change and positive narrative dimension. The model already includes prevention, early detection, reporting, training, co-creation, a learning platform and a videogame. These tools could be further used not only to explain what violence is, but also to show positive behaviours, respectful team dynamics, safe ways to ask for help and everyday practices that prevent harm. The key learning from COACH is that harmful behaviour is more effectively addressed when education, monitoring, awareness campaigns and stakeholder engagement work together. Applied to 360 Safe Play, this means developing practical tools to detect harmful behaviour, train coaches and volunteers, involve families, engage public authorities and federations, and

promote a culture of respect, inclusion and non-violence in grassroots sports clubs. This would make the model more preventive, practical and sustainable.

Mataró Safe Sports, protocol for the protection of children and adolescents against violence in the sports field (2026) is a municipal protocol for the protection of children and adolescents against violence in sport. It establishes a local safeguarding framework led by the Municipality of Mataró through its Sport Services. The protocol covers prevention, early detection, reporting, response, referral and monitoring, and requires sports entities to appoint a trained Protection Delegate, define reporting circuits, document cases objectively and coordinate with external services such as Social Services, police or child protection bodies when needed.

KL360: The main learning for 360 Safe Play is that safeguarding becomes stronger when clubs are connected to a clear local protection system. The Mataró practice shows the importance of having defined reporting pathways, early detection indicators, trained safeguarding roles and coordination with municipal and child protection services. This can help 360 Safe Play reinforce the link between sports clubs, families, public authorities and external protection services.

A useful addition to the 360 Safe Play model would be to include a more detailed local referral and escalation pathway for sports clubs. This could describe who receives a concern, how it is documented, when it should be escalated, and which external services should be contacted. The key learning is that clubs need practical and step-by-step guidance, not only general reporting principles. This would make the model clearer, safer and easier to apply in real situations, especially for small grassroots clubs. At the same time, it should be adapted to each local context because municipal services, legal obligations and data protection rules may differ between countries.

We do sports to live and coexist (2023) is a municipal programme from Castelldefels, Spain, focused on improving coexistence in and around sports facilities. It works through prevention, early detection, mediation, training, dialogue circles and shared responsibility between clubs, coaches, families, facility staff and public authorities. A key element is the voluntary Coexistence Delegate, who supports coordination, communication, monitoring and mediation across the sports environment.

KL360: The practice shows that safeguarding in sport should not rely only on written protocols. It needs clear local leadership, a trusted reference person, continuous monitoring and practical training for the people who are present in clubs every day. This is highly relevant for 360 Safe Play, which already aims to combine awareness-raising, prevention, early detection, reporting and restorative practices through a community-based child protection system.

360 Safe Play could strengthen the model by including a clearly defined club-level safeguarding/coexistence focal point, inspired by the Coexistence Delegate role. This person could help detect early warning signs, support communication between children, families and coaches, activate reporting pathways, and ensure follow-up after training. To make this transferable beyond well-resourced municipalities, the model should also include a “minimum version” of this role for small grassroots clubs with limited staff and resources.

FEEC Safeguarding Protocol for Children and Adolescents in Sporting Activities (2024) is a federation-level protocol developed by the Federació d’Entitats Excursionistes de Catalunya. It aims to prevent, detect and respond to maltreatment and sexual violence against children and adolescents in FEEC-linked sports activities. It includes prevention measures, risk identification, notification circuits, a protection delegate role, reporting forms, acceptance documents, a protection mailbox and follow-up procedures.

KL360: The main learning for 360 Safe Play is that safeguarding needs to be translated into concrete daily practices. The FEEC protocol is especially useful because it identifies specific risk situations in sport, such as travel, accommodation, changing rooms, one-to-one situations and digital communication channels, and links them to practical prevention measures. This helps clubs and federations understand where risks may appear and how to reduce them before harm occurs.

Element to improve in the 360 Safe Play model would be to include a risk-situation checklist adapted to different sports contexts. This could help clubs review everyday situations where children may be more vulnerable and define simple preventive measures for each case. The key learning is that safeguarding becomes more operational when it is connected to real situations in sport, not only to general rules. For 360 Safe Play, this would make prevention clearer, more practical and easier to apply across grassroots clubs, while allowing adaptation to each sport and national context.

Catalan Framework Protocol for the Protection of Children and Adolescents against Violence in Sport (2023; latest revised version 2025) is a regional safeguarding framework promoted by the Generalitat de Catalunya / Consell Català de l'Esport, with expert support from Fundació Vicki Bernadet. It provides sports organisations with procedures to prevent, detect, report and respond to violence against children and adolescents in sport. It addresses physical, psychological and sexual violence, neglect, bullying, cyberbullying, harassment and gender-based violence, with attention to gender, disability, cultural diversity and social exclusion.

KL360: The main learning for 360 Safe Play is that safeguarding needs a clear organisational structure, not only general principles. The Catalan protocol shows the value of combining prevention, training, reporting channels, case management and coordination with external protection, health and justice services. It also highlights the importance of appointing a protection delegate or safeguarding focal point inside each sports organization, so that responsibilities are clear and follow-up is ensured.

An aspect that could strengthen the 360 Safe Play model would be to reinforce its governance and practical toolkit dimension. This could include a clear safeguarding focal point in each club, simple reporting forms, referral pathways, checklists, follow-up templates and annual review tools. The key learning is that safeguarding works better when it is embedded in the daily culture and management of sports organisations, not only activated when a crisis occurs. For 360 Safe Play, these elements would make the model more operational, easier to implement and more consistent across different grassroots sports contexts, while still requiring adaptation to each national or local legal framework.

SAVE FOOTBALL (2024) is a Spanish programme/service aimed at creating safer grassroots football environments by transforming adult behaviour and club culture. It works with children, coaches, volunteers, families and club management, addressing physical and psychological violence, bullying, harassment and discrimination. The programme combines online training, safeguarding protocols, a reporting mailbox, a designated club focal point, ongoing monitoring and a certification label for clubs that meet defined requirements.

KL360: The main learning for 360 Safe Play is that adults around children — especially coaches and families — are a key factor in preventing violence in sport. SAVE FOOTBALL shows that safeguarding should not only focus on children's awareness or reporting mechanisms, but also on changing adult behaviour, language, expectations and club culture. Its use of training, protocols, a focal point, reporting tools and certification standards offers a practical example of how to make safeguarding visible and accountable in grassroots clubs.

A relevant improvement for the 360 Safe Play model would be to include clearer club commitment and recognition mechanisms, such as minimum training requirements, adoption of safeguarding protocols, a designated focal point and a simple recognition or certification process for participating clubs. The key learning is that safeguarding becomes more sustainable when clubs have concrete commitments and visible incentives to maintain good practices. For 360 Safe Play, this could help ensure that training and protocols are not one-off activities, but part of a continuous culture-change process involving coaches, families and club management.

ADI LGTBI+ (2025) is a voluntary guideline, protocol and toolkit for grassroots sport clubs and federations in Spain. It aims to prevent and respond to discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. The practice includes an inclusion decalogue, guidance on changing rooms and sport categories, anti-harassment procedures, diversity training, a reporting channel through the ADI Observatory, and annual monitoring reports.

KL360: This practice shows that LGBTIQ+ inclusion needs to be translated into very practical club-level tools, not only stated as a general principle. For 360 Safe Play, it reinforces the importance of including clear guidance for coaches, volunteers and club managers on how to prevent discrimination, manage sensitive situations and create inclusive spaces for children and adolescents.

360 Safe Play could strengthen its LGBTIQ+ dimension by adding a specific inclusion checklist for clubs, with practical guidance on changing rooms, language, team categories, anti-harassment procedures and respectful treatment of children with diverse gender expressions. It could also include a specific reporting and referral pathway for discrimination incidents, with strong data protection safeguards because these cases may involve sensitive personal information. Finally, the monitoring system could include indicators on LGBTIQ+ discrimination, underreporting, age groups affected and follow-up actions taken, building on the ADI Observatory model.

This fits well with 360 Safe Play's existing commitment to a gender and LGBTIQ+ intersectional approach, child-centred reporting, early detection, training and inclusive safeguarding in sports clubs.

PARCS 2.0 Additional Practical sheets: Ensuring that your organisation's Child Safeguarding policy takes account of vulnerabilities and specific needs (2024) is a toolkit designed to help sports clubs and federations improve their child safeguarding policies, especially for children who may face additional vulnerabilities, such as LGBTQIA+ children, children with disabilities or children from socio-economically diverse backgrounds. It provides practical tips to move from general safeguarding principles to concrete actions, with the involvement of professionals, volunteers, parents and children.

KL360: The main learning for 360 Safe Play is that safeguarding tools should actively consider children's different vulnerabilities and needs. The model should ensure that inclusion is not only mentioned as a principle but translated into practical measures for clubs and federations. A relevant improvement for the 360 Safe Play model would be to include practical guidance on how to adapt safeguarding measures for children in vulnerable situations. This could include short checklists or factsheets on disability, LGBTQIA+ inclusion, socio-economic vulnerability and cultural diversity. The key learning is that safeguarding becomes more effective when clubs know how to adapt procedures, communication and support to different children's realities.

Child Friendly (6-12) Booklet on Violences (2025) is an illustrated guide developed for children aged 6–12 to help them understand, speak about and react to different forms of

violence. It uses visual and accessible language to explain children's rights, adults' responsibilities, boundaries and possible actions. The booklet is led by a federation and distributed through clubs and committees.

KL360: The main learning for 360 Safe Play is that children need their own child-friendly safeguarding materials. Talking about violence should be normalised in a safe, simple and age-appropriate way, so children can recognise harmful situations, understand their rights and know how to ask for help. A relevant improvement for the 360 Safe Play model would be to develop a child-friendly version of the safeguarding system, using illustrations, simple language and practical examples. This could complement the videogame, toolkit and training materials. The key learning is that safeguarding is more effective when children are not only protected by adults but also given accessible tools to understand what is happening, express concerns and activate support.

Violence Intervention: How to train future protection delegates in sport (2023) is a training proposal based on challenge-based learning. Instead of training protection delegates only through theory or simulated cases, it places them in front of real safeguarding challenges from sports clubs. The practice helps future protection delegates analyse intervention systems, reporting channels, organisational roles, family involvement, federation support and the real usability of protocols in clubs.

KL360: One important takeaway for 360 Safe Play is that training should be practical, situated and connected to real club contexts. Protection delegates, coaches and volunteers need to understand not only the legal framework, but also how safeguarding works in practice: who is responsible, how concerns are reported, how families are involved, how resistance inside clubs can appear, and how external referral pathways are activated.

One way to reinforce the 360 Safe Play model would be to include a challenge-based training module for club safeguarding focal points, coaches and volunteers. This module could ask participants to analyse a real or realistic club situation, identify risks, review reporting channels, assess whether protocols are understandable, and propose practical improvements. The key learning is that safeguarding training should not only transmit information; it should help adults practise decision-making, communication and problem-solving in real situations. This would make the model more useful for small clubs, where protocols may exist but are not always understood, adapted or applied consistently.

Discrimination Free Schools was a national-level Bulgarian training programme and educational toolkit implemented in 2011–2012. It aimed to raise awareness of discrimination, prejudice and exclusion in schools and to equip teachers, university lecturers and students with practical tools to recognise and overcome them. The practice used manuals, classroom exercises, films, discussions and human rights materials to promote tolerance, empathy and respect for diversity.

KL360: The main learning for 360 Safe Play is that anti-discrimination work must be practical, participatory and embedded in the whole organisation, not limited to awareness-raising. Interactive methods such as films, role-play, exercises and group discussions can help coaches, volunteers, children and families reflect on stereotypes, exclusion and harmful behaviours in a safe and accessible way.

360 Safe Play could strengthen its model by adding a specific anti-discrimination and inclusion training module for sports clubs. This module could adapt the school-based toolkit approach to sport settings, addressing discrimination linked to ethnicity, race, religion, social background, gender, disability and LGBTIQ+ identity. It should include ready-to-use activities for coaches and clubs, but also guidance on how to integrate inclusion into everyday club culture, policies and team dynamics.

Analysis of the discussion during the webinar

The subsequent analysis of the results combines **three levels of information**: a qualitative reading of the open contributions entered during the good-practice presentations; a quantitative reading of the scores assigned by participants to the prioritized ideas in each dimension; and an interpretative reading of the webinar debate, taking into account the reflections, tensions and questions that emerged around the transferability, feasibility and limits of the practices presented.

The partners then voted on the prioritized ideas through a 100-point system for each safeguarding dimension. Each participant could distribute the points according to the importance they attributed to each idea for the future model. This dynamic generated an internal ranking for each dimension and made it possible to observe both the main areas of consensus and the ideas that, despite receiving lower scores, continue to function as necessary conditions for ensuring the quality and coherence of the system.
In the dimensions with 15 respondents, a total of 1,500 points was considered, while in the dimensions with 14 respondents, a total of 1,400 points was considered. Comparisons between dimensions have been made cautiously, as the number of respondents is not identical across all blocks.

A high score indicates consensus on the centrality or urgency of an idea within the corresponding dimension. A low score does not imply irrelevance; it may indicate that the idea is perceived as a supporting condition, a more technical element or a dimension that needs to be integrated into other tools. For this reason, recurring ideas - common language, clear roles, pathways, children's voice and equity lens - have been read as transversal elements of the model, even when they do not always occupy the first position in the voting.

The global reading of the results shows a coherent sequence of action. The model should start with visible prevention rooted in club culture; it should detect risks through trust, risk mapping and listening to children; it should facilitate reporting with care, confidentiality and accessibility; it should respond through escalation steps and external support; it should use restorative practices only when appropriate; and it should sustain the whole system through governance, defined roles and continuous review.

Table 3. Priorities Identified by Partners Across Safeguarding Dimensions

Dimension	Main priority	Global reading
Prevention	Make prevention visible and practical	Prevention must be visible, applicable and placed at the centre of the sport structure.
Early detection	Create safe and trusted spaces where children can speak	Trust and safe spaces for speaking are the core of detection.
Reporting	Protect confidentiality and data by defining who receives the information without causing revictimisation	The channel is not enough: confidentiality, care and non-revictimisation are required.
Response and case management	Create clear escalation steps and contacts or support agents	The central concern is knowing how to escalate, when to act and with whom to coordinate.

Restorative	Create safe facilitated spaces	Restoration requires safe spaces, facilitation and clear limits in relation to formal protection.
Governance	Clarify who does what: coaches, management teams, safeguarding officers, families and children	Shared responsibility must be translated into concrete responsibilities.

The set of priorities shows that partners are not calling for an abstract model, but for an operational architecture. Prevention, detection, reporting, response, restoration and governance appear as connected layers of the same system. The coherence of the model will depend on its capacity to prevent these dimensions from becoming separate blocks and to ensure that each concrete tool specifies who acts, when they act, with which safeguards and with what follow-up.

Analysis by safeguarding dimensions

Prevention

Table 4. Prevention Priorities in the 360 Safe Play Model.

Voted priority	Share of total	Brief analytical reading
Make prevention visible and practical (recognition tools and safeguarding as a priority within the sport executive structure)	17.7%	Main priority of the dimension.
Stop the normalisation of violence in sport	13.9%	Second priority, closely linked to the first.
Create a common language around violence	12.9%	Transversal condition for the coherence of the model.
Build a preventive club culture, not only a set of documents	12.7%	Institutional priority linked to cultural change.
Use club codes of conduct and ethics as everyday tools	11.5%	Operational instrument for putting the protocol into practice.
Involve families as active agents and create a direct communication channel	11.3%	Element of community co-responsibility.
Apply an equity and discrimination lens from the beginning	10.1%	Condition to be integrated into preventive tools.
Train all adults, not only safeguarding officers	9.9%	Lowest-scored element, but necessary to sustain the system.

Prevention is the dimension in which the demand for a visible, understandable and usable model emerges most strongly. The highest-voted idea accounts for 17.7% of the points in the block, but the most relevant aspect is the coherence between the first priorities: making prevention visible, stopping the normalisation of violence, creating a common language and building a preventive club culture. This combination shows that partners do not locate the main problem in the absence of documents, but in the distance between written protocols and everyday practices.

The keywords provided by participants - practical usability of protocols, simple tools, posters to put in clubs, examples of what is acceptable and what is not, clear definitions of bad practices, codes of conduct, club ethics, no normalisation, transform club culture, families, safe spaces, equity lens, discrimination axis and zero tolerance - reinforce this reading. The vocabulary used does not point to an abstract idea of prevention, but to concrete tools, shared language and the capacity to transform club culture.

From an institutional design perspective, the model should avoid reducing prevention to a statement of principles. It should produce brief and visible materials for clubs, incorporate codes of conduct as living tools, ensure that the equity lens appears in every preventive instrument and guarantee that all adults who work with children receive minimum training. The relatively low score of training and equity should not lead to reducing their importance, but to integrating them more organically within prevention tools.

The prevention dimension shows that safeguarding cannot be reduced to the existence of formal rules or protocols. Its effectiveness depends on the capacity of the organisation to make protection visible, understandable and actionable in everyday sport practice. The priorities identified by partners suggest that violence in sport is often sustained not only by explicit harmful behaviours, but also by cultural normalisation, silence, ambiguity and the absence of shared criteria about what is acceptable and what is not.

For this reason, prevention in the 360 Safe Play model should operate as a cultural and institutional mechanism. It should help clubs move from a reactive understanding of safeguarding to a preventive culture in which adults, children and families can recognise risks before they become serious. This requires a common language on violence, abuse, discrimination, poor practice and unacceptable conduct, but also concrete tools that translate this language into daily routines: visible materials, codes of conduct, examples, checklists, training activities and spaces for dialogue.

The key implication is that prevention must be embedded in the ordinary life of the club. It should not appear as an external obligation or as an annex to a policy, but as a visible expression of how the club understands care, authority, relationships and responsibility. In this sense, prevention is also the first place where the equity lens must be activated, because what is considered “normal” in sport may affect children differently depending on gender, disability, cultural origin, social class, migration background or other axes of inequality.

Early detection

Table 5. Early detection Priorities in the 360 Safe Play Model.

Voted priority	Share of total	Brief analytical reading
Create safe and trusted spaces where children can speak	28.1%	Main priority of the dimension.

Define risk indicators, map situations by space and activity, and include specific signs of discrimination	24.7%	Second priority, closely linked to the first.
Strengthen adults' capacity to recognise signs	17.9%	Central consensus block.
Turn detection into an organised internal practice	15.2%	Necessary to avoid occasional actions or actions dependent on specific individuals.
Use anonymous and low-threshold tools to detect situations	14.1%	Supporting tool to facilitate the expression of discomfort or risks.

Early detection is the dimension with the most concentrated consensus. The main priority, creating safe and trusted spaces where children can speak, accounts for 28.1% of the points in the block.

The second priority, defining risk indicators and mapping situations by space and activity with specific signs of discrimination, accounts for 24.7%. Together, they concentrate more than half of the points, indicating that detection must combine relational conditions and technical tools. Participants' keywords - trusted adults, safe and trusted spaces, simple questions, warning signs, risk indicators, risk maps by venue and activity, anonymous surveys, low-threshold tools, exclusion/discrimination patterns and build trust in reporters - show that early detection does not only mean that adults observe better. Above all, it means that children have trusted adults, safe spaces and accessible channels to express that something is wrong before the situation becomes serious.

The model should incorporate regular wellbeing and safety questions, risk maps by club spaces and moments, indicators of exclusion or discrimination, and low-threshold mechanisms.

This dimension is directly connected to the equity lens, because not all children perceive the same spaces as safe. Finally, inclusion must also transform the physical organisation of sport. Rioja Martínez et al. (2023) show that safe, private or gender-neutral changing spaces can reduce anxiety and increase participation among trans and non-binary athletes. However, changing rooms should not be treated as an isolated issue, but as part of a broader institutional strategy that includes inclusive codes of conduct, anti-LGTBIQ-phobia policies, staff training, clear reporting procedures and accessible information about rights and protection mechanisms disabilities.

The results on early detection point to a significant shift in how risk should be understood. Detection should not depend exclusively on the adult capacity to identify warning signs, because this approach places too much weight on observation and too little on the conditions that allow children to express discomfort. The strong priority given to safe and trusted spaces indicates that detection is not only technical; it is also relational.

The 360 Safe Play model should therefore combine two logics. On the one hand, it needs structured tools: risk indicators, risk maps by space and activity, regular wellbeing questions, attention to exclusion and discrimination patterns, and low-threshold mechanisms. On the other hand, it must create an environment in which children and young people feel that speaking is possible, safe and meaningful. A child will not necessarily report a concern simply because a channel exists; they are more likely to speak when they trust the adults around

them, when they know they will be believed, and when they do not fear punishment, exposure or exclusion. This dimension also reveals that safety is not experienced equally by all children. A space may be formally open to everyone and still be unsafe for some. Changing rooms, travel situations, informal conversations, selection processes or moments of competition may generate specific risks for children affected by discrimination or unequal power relations. Early detection should therefore include an equity-based reading of spaces, interactions and silences.

Reporting

Table 6. Reporting Priorities in the 360 Safe Play Model.

Voted priority	Share of total	Brief analytical reading
Protect confidentiality and data, and define who receives the information without causing revictimisation	16.5%	Main priority of the dimension.
Avoid revictimisation	15.3%	Central safeguard of the process.
Emotionally support the child during the process	15.2%	Condition of care and protection.
Make reporting child-friendly	15.1%	Necessary for the channel to be understandable and usable by children.
Clarify internal and external reporting pathways	14.4%	Tool to avoid confusion and improvisation.
Guarantee accessibility	14.4%	Transversal condition of the channel.
Offer several reporting channels	9.1%	Lower-scored, but useful if the channels maintain quality and safeguards.

In reporting, the scores are widely distributed among the first six ideas, indicating that partners perceive this dimension as a system of interdependent safeguards. Confidentiality and data protection occupy the first position, but avoiding revictimization, emotionally supporting the child and making reporting child-friendly are very close. This distribution suggests that the channel is not sufficient if the process around it is not safe, understandable and caring.

The keywords - clear reporting pathways, confidential communication channels, anonymous mailbox, internal and external circuits, child-friendly, avoid revictimization, accessibility, independent CSO and data protection - place reporting as the entry point to protective action. No protection system works if violence remains hidden; at the same time, a poorly designed channel can generate mistrust, undue exposure of data or unnecessary repetition of the child's account.

The model should explain concretely what happens after a report is made: who receives the information, how data are protected, how the child is informed, how the child is prevented from having to repeat their story, which external channels exist and what emotional support is

activated. The fact that offering several channels was the lowest-scored option should not be interpreted as a lack of interest in multiple channels, but as prioritizing the quality of the process over the number of available routes.

The reporting dimension shows that a safeguarding system is only as strong as the trust it can generate when a concern appears. The discussion makes clear that reporting cannot be understood simply as the availability of a mailbox, an email address or a designated contact person. A reporting channel becomes protective only when the process around it guarantees confidentiality, data protection, emotional support, accessibility, child-friendly communication and protection from revictimisation.

The key issue is not the number of channels, but their quality, credibility and capacity to activate protection. The model should explain who receives the concern, how the information is recorded, who has access to it, how the child is accompanied, when external services or authorities are involved, and how the process avoids additional harm. Reporting should therefore be framed as the moment in which the institution demonstrates whether its commitment to safeguarding is real. A safe reporting system does not only collect information; it protects the person who dares to speak.

Response and case management

Table 7. Response and Case management Priorities in the 360 Safe Play Model

Voted priority	Share of total	Brief analytical reading
Create clear escalation steps, with information on the contacts or agents to call or rely on in each dimension	23.9%	Main priority of the dimension.
Connect clubs with external support: an integrated system between institutions and sports organisations	19.6%	Second priority, closely linked to the first.
Clearly define the role of the safeguarding officer or main protection figure according to the country	13.9%	Key element for institutional responsibility.
Apply a do-no-harm approach	12.1%	Necessary principle to avoid responses that increase harm.
Use rigorous protocols to manage concerns	11.6%	Condition to avoid improvisation.
Include guidance for communication with families	10.6%	Supporting tool in case management.
Document decisions and follow-up actions	8.4%	Lower-scored, but necessary for accountability and improvement.

Response and case management show a clear priority: creating escalation steps. This idea accounts for 23.9% of the total points in the block and clearly exceeds the others. The second priority, connecting clubs with external support, accounts for 19.6%. This indicates that the

consortium perceives the moment after detection or reporting as a particularly sensitive area if there are no clear pathways, severity criteria and external references.

Participants' keywords - clear escalation steps, notification circuits, external referrals, psychological support, protection delegate role, common language, do-no-harm, rigorous protocols and families - confirm that response cannot be improvised. The model should ensure that clubs know when to act internally, when to escalate, when to refer and with which services to coordinate. It should also prevent the lack of internal capacity in clubs from becoming a risk factor in serious or complex cases.

The role of the safeguarding officer or equivalent figure appears as an institutionally critical point. The independence and impartiality of this figure are important, but not always easy to guarantee in small clubs or structures with limited resources. For this reason, the model should offer minimum criteria on functions, limits, supervision channels, external support and proportional recording of decisions. Documentation, despite being the lowest-voted option, is essential for accountability, provided that it does not become a disproportionate bureaucratic burden.

Response and case management reveal one of the most critical transitions in the safeguarding system: the movement from concern to action. The priorities identified by partners show that clubs need clarity at precisely the moment when uncertainty, fear of making mistakes, lack of expertise or conflicts of interest may be strongest. Without clear escalation steps, severity criteria and external support, organisations may minimise concerns, overreact, delay action or manage cases informally in ways that increase harm.

The 360 Safe Play model should therefore provide a structured but proportionate response architecture. Clubs need to know when a situation can be managed internally, when it must be escalated, when external services should be contacted and which agents can provide specialised advice. This is particularly relevant for grassroots organisations, where safeguarding responsibilities may fall on people with limited time, training or independence. The role of the safeguarding officer or equivalent protection figure is central, but it cannot be treated as a purely symbolic appointment. The model should define their functions, limits, training needs, supervision channels and access to external support.

This dimension also highlights the importance of a do-no-harm approach. Responding does not automatically mean protecting; a poorly managed response can expose the child, intensify conflict, compromise confidentiality or produce secondary victimisation. Documentation and follow-up, although less prioritised in the voting, are therefore essential for accountability and institutional learning. The model should promote records that are useful, proportionate and safe, avoiding both improvisation and excessive bureaucracy. Case management should be understood as a disciplined protection process, not as an informal problem-solving exercise.

Governance

Table 8. Governance Priorities in the 360 Safe Play Model

Voted priority	Share of total	Brief analytical reading
Clarify who does what: coaches, management teams, safeguarding officers, families and children	21.4%	Main priority of the dimension.

Involve federations, public authorities, civil society and children	19.5%	Second priority, linked to networked governance.
Guarantee safe recruitment and background checks	17.5%	Basic condition for institutional protection.
Adopt a written safeguarding policy	15.5%	Necessary formal framework, but insufficient if not implemented.
Review and improve the system annually	11.0%	Mechanism to prevent the model from becoming static.
Use self-assessment and certification tools	8.8%	Instrument for quality and monitoring.
Establish decision-making bodies with diversity criteria	6.4%	Lower-scored, but relevant for integrating the equity lens.

Governance confirms that the model needs clear institutional architecture. The main priority is clarifying who does what, with 21.4% of the points. The second is involving federations, public authorities, civil society and children, with 19.5%. The third is ensuring safe recruitment and background checks. This order shows that partners understand governance as a matter of responsibilities, resources and coordination, not only as an administrative dimension.

The keywords - who does what, written policy, known at all levels, financial support, training at all levels including leadership, background checks, public authorities, civil society, self-assessment, certification, annual review and diversity criteria - point to a model that must combine formal structure and real implementation capacity.

A written policy is necessary, but it is only effective if it is known, reviewed, funded and sustained by people with defined functions. This dimension shows a common tension in safeguarding: protection is said to be everyone's responsibility, but if this responsibility is not translated into concrete roles, it may end up being no one's responsibility. The model should propose a networked governance structure involving clubs, federations, administrations, specialized services, civil society, children and families. It should also incorporate annual review mechanisms, self-assessment, certification and decision-making spaces with diversity criteria, even if the latter received a lower score.

Therefore, the priorities show that partners are concerned with a central tension: safeguarding is often described as everyone’s responsibility, but this principle can become ineffective if it is not translated into concrete, assigned and reviewable roles. When responsibility is too general, it can become invisible; when it is clearly distributed, the organisation becomes more capable of acting.

The 360 Safe Play model should therefore define governance as the infrastructure that sustains prevention, detection, reporting, response and review. This includes clear roles for coaches, management teams, safeguarding officers, families, children, federations, public authorities, civil society and specialised services. It also includes safe recruitment, written policies, training at different organisational levels, financial and technical support, annual review, self-assessment and certification tools. Governance is not only about having a policy; it is about ensuring that the policy is known, resourced, implemented, monitored and improved. This dimension also raises a question of institutional realism. Grassroots clubs cannot be expected to implement complex systems without guidance, support and proportionality, as the model should therefore balance ambition and feasibility: it must maintain strong protection

standards while offering tools that clubs can realistically use. Equity should also be part of governance, not only of direct intervention. Decision-making spaces, review mechanisms and leadership structures should include diversity criteria so that the system can identify blind spots and respond to the needs of children who are more exposed to exclusion or discrimination.

Restorative practices

Table 9. Restorative Priorities in the 360 Safe Play Model

Voted priority	Share of total	Brief analytical reading
Create safe facilitated spaces	20.4%	Main priority of the dimension.
Including emotional and relational skills in training	16.4%	Second priority, linked to the quality of facilitation.
Ensure that restorative measures never replace formal protection procedures	15.3%	Central institutional boundary.
Teach children non-violent communication skills	15.1%	Educational and preventive tool.
Use restorative tools only in appropriate cases	12.5%	Necessary criterion to avoid inappropriate use.
Link restoration and prevention	12.1%	Useful connection for addressing conflicts before they escalate.
Make participation voluntary	8.2%	Lower-scored, but a non-negotiable principle.

The restorative dimension is one of the most delicate aspects of the model. The highest-voted idea is to create safe facilitated spaces, with 20.4% of the points. This is followed by emotional and relational skills, ensuring that restorative measures never replace formal protection procedures, and teaching children non-violent communication. This combination shows that partners recognize the educational potential of restorative tools, but also their limits.
The keywords - safe facilitated spaces, mediation, non-violent communication, little violences, children's voice, do-no-harm, appropriate cases, voluntary participation and reintegration - place restoration within a cautious framework.

These practices can be useful to prevent escalation, work on relationships, address minor forms of violence and rebuild trust. However, they can become problematic if used in inappropriate situations, if they pressure the affected person or if they displace formal procedures that are necessary to protect the child, so the model should clearly distinguish between situations in which restorative tools may be appropriate and situations that require notification, external referral or formal procedures. Voluntariness, despite receiving fewer points, must remain a non-negotiable principle. No child should participate in a restorative process if they do not feel safe or if participation may increase harm, pressure or revictimization.

The restorative dimension introduces an important but delicate question: how can sport organisations repair relationships, address harm and promote non-violent communication

without weakening formal protection duties? The priorities suggest that partners recognise the value of restorative approaches, especially for prevention, relational repair, reintegration and the development of emotional and communication skills. However, they also point to the need for clear boundaries. Therefore, restorative practices should not be presented as an alternative route to safeguarding procedures. They may be useful in certain situations, particularly when dealing with conflict, low-level harmful behaviours, group dynamics or the rebuilding of trust, but they can become unsafe if applied to situations involving abuse, coercion, serious violence or risk of further harm. The model should therefore establish suitability criteria, ensure trained facilitation, guarantee voluntary participation and define when restorative tools are inappropriate.

The most important principle is that restoration must never be used to protect the institution from formal action, to pressure the affected child into reconciliation, or to minimise harm. A restorative approach is only protective when it is based on safety, consent, preparation, impartial facilitation and the possibility of stopping the process at any time. In the 360 Safe Play model, restorative practices should be framed as a complementary educational and relational tool, always subordinated to safeguarding obligations and the do-no-harm principle. This cautious integration would allow the model to promote a culture of dialogue and accountability without confusing repair with protection.

VOLUME 3. Recommendations to build 360 Safe Play system

Lessons learned

This synthesis brings together key insights to inform the design of the safeguarding model in WP2. It has been developed by integrating evidence from both Volume 1 and Volume 2 of this report, including the analysis of legal and policy frameworks, safeguarding dimensions, the equity lens (gender, LGBTQI+, disability, socio-economic diversity and cultural diversity), and the webinar including the reflection on best practices presented in Volume 2.

Rather than reproducing individual findings, it identifies cross-cutting elements that are consistently associated with more effective protection systems in sport, across prevention, early detection, reporting, response and governance.

The section also incorporates an equity lens, recognising that risks, barriers and access to protection are not evenly distributed and require differentiated approaches depending on the characteristics and contexts of children and adolescents.

Prevention

- Prevention is most effective when understood as a **continuous and proactive safeguarding function**, focused on reducing risks before harm occurs and embedding children's well-being as a structural priority within sport organisations.
- The literature shows that the existence of formal safeguarding policies alone is insufficient. A recurring challenge is the **implementation gap between written frameworks and the real operational capacity of clubs and associations**, especially in grassroots sport settings.
- Effective prevention requires addressing the **normalisation of harmful practices** that may be perceived as acceptable within sport culture (e.g. punitive training methods, exclusionary behaviours or excessive pressure). This suggests that prevention must include **culture change,** not only rule-setting.
- Awareness-raising and training appear as central preventive mechanisms. Evidence indicates that **participatory and practice-based learning approaches** (e.g. case discussion, audiovisual tools, real-life scenarios) can strengthen safeguarding understanding more effectively than purely formal instruction.
- Small and community-based clubs may need **simple, practical and scalable tools** to translate legal duties into day-to-day safeguarding practice. Technical requirements without implementation support may limit preventive impact.
- Prevention is consistently linked to **clear organisational measures**, including designated safeguarding roles, safer recruitment, codes of conduct, supervision systems, and specific rules for higher-risk contexts such as changing rooms, travel, overnight stays and digital communication.
- Training should include an **equity and inclusion perspective**, particularly regarding disability, accessibility, gender and diversity. Preventive systems are stronger when they recognise different vulnerabilities and barriers to participation.
- Regular **risk assessment and risk-mapping processes** are identified as valuable preventive tools. Reviewing spaces, routines, relationships and organisational dynamics allows clubs to identify risks early and adapt mitigation measures over time.
- Children and adolescents can make a meaningful contribution to prevention when involved in identifying concerns and unsafe situations. **Their participation helps** detect issues that may remain invisible to adults.

- Prevention should address not only individual misconduct but also **organisational culture**. Toxic competitiveness, favouritism, tolerance of verbal abuse, poor communication or unclear values can generate unsafe environments even without explicit incidents.
- **Community coordination** is a relevant preventive factor. Clubs are better positioned to protect children when connected with schools, social services and other local actors rather than operating in isolation.
- The evidence suggests that child-centred sport models should prioritise **development, inclusion and well-being over early performance pressure**, helping prevent harmful dynamics linked to premature specialisation or excessive competitive demands.
- Applying an equity lens to prevention highlights that risks are not evenly distributed and that safeguarding measures must be adapted to address structural inequalities affecting different groups of children and adolescents.

Equity lens: Prevention

Gender

- Prevention must address **structural inequalities** in access to resources (training time, facilities, coaching quality and visibility), as these everyday organisational arrangements can normalise unequal treatment between boys and girls.
- Preventive strategies should explicitly challenge "soft essentialism" and the perception that gender inequality is a "**non-issue**", ensuring that stereotyped expectations (e.g. competitiveness vs care) are recognised as risk factors.
- Prevention must include clear safeguards against **sexist harassment and early forms of sexual violence** (e.g. normalised comments, body-related remarks or coach–athlete power dynamics), which often emerge in everyday practice before escalating.

LGBTQI+

- Prevention must move beyond symbolic inclusion and address how **heteronormative and binary structures** (e.g. changing rooms, team organisation, language) generate everyday exclusion and risk.
- Particular attention should be given to spaces such as l**ocker rooms and team environments**, where LGTBIQ+ young people may experience fear, concealment or vulnerability despite formal inclusion policies.
- Preventive measures should include the use of **inclusive language** and the transformation of everyday practices (not only policies), as indirect and normalised forms of discrimination often precede explicit violence.

Disability

- Prevention requires ensuring **integral accessibility**, including adapted equipment, transport, infrastructure and continuity of support, as lack of access constitutes a primary safeguarding risk rather than only an inclusion issue.
- Clubs must incorporate **specialised training** for staff to avoid exclusion through overprotection, misinterpretation of risk or inability to adapt activities.
- Preventive approaches should address relational exclusion (e.g. invisibility, lack of reciprocity, peer neglect), recognising these as early indicators of unsafe environments, not only social challenges.

Socio-economic diversity

- Prevention must include **economic and logistical accessibility measures** (reduced fees, non-stigmatising support, equipment provision, transport), as financial barriers directly increase vulnerability and risk of exclusion.
- Preventive systems should address **symbolic exclusion**, ensuring that children from low-income backgrounds do not experience sport as a space where they are "not welcome" or structurally disadvantaged.
- Clubs should critically review competitive and selective models that link recognition and safety to financial capacity, as these dynamics can generate early dropout, distress and unsafe participation contexts.

Cultural diversity

- Prevention requires developing **intercultural competence**, including critical reflection on bias, ethnocentrism and racialised assumptions within coaching and organisational practices.
- Clubs should create culturally appropriate safe spaces (e.g. women-only sessions where needed) and adapt practices to **religious and cultural requirements**, rather than expecting assimilation.
- Preventive strategies must address both **overt and subtle forms of racism**, including everyday exclusion, lack of representation and biased talent identification processes.

Early detection

- Early detection functions as a continuous safeguarding capacity to identify early warning signs of risk before harm escalates, enabling timely and proportionate intervention.
- Warning signs are often **subtle, cumulative and context-dependent**. Behavioural changes such as withdrawal, anxiety, reluctance to attend training, loss of enjoyment, recurrent injuries or emotional distress may indicate underlying safeguarding concerns.
- The **normalisation of harmful practices** within sport culture constitutes a key barrier, as behaviours such as excessive pressure, shouting, humiliation or inappropriate physical contact may be perceived as acceptable, delaying recognition and response.
- Early detection extends beyond individual indicators to include r**elational and organisational signals of risk**. Conflicts, verbal aggression, discrimination, inequality or unresolved tensions may signal unsafe environments before explicit incidents occur.
- Accessible and trusted safeguarding figures within organisations play a central role in early detection. **Designated contact persons** can facilitate the interpretation of concerns and the activation of appropriate internal pathways.
- Certain **contexts present increased risk** and require heightened attention, including changing rooms, travel, overnight stays, unsupervised spaces, digital communication and periods of high competitive pressure.
- Early detection is strengthened by **systematic observation of children's well-being and experience** in sport, including enjoyment, sense of safety, relationships and perceived fairness within the team or club.
- Children and adolescents play a key role in early detection when they are enabled to express **how they feel, identify concerns and share observations about their environment**. Their perspective provides access to information that may remain invisible to adults.

- Families contribute to early detection through the identification of changes in mood, behaviour or attitudes towards sport, highlighting the importance of maintaining open and fluid communication between clubs and them.
- Structured tools can support early detection by translating safeguarding into **concrete and observable questions addressed to children, families and coaches.** This approach shifts detection from a passive model based on disclosure to an active system of shared observation and reflection.
- Early detection can be organised around **multiple dimensions of risk**, including emotional well-being, interpersonal dynamics, organisational culture and children's participation and voice, allowing a more comprehensive understanding of safeguarding concerns.
- Digital tools and monitoring systems show potential to strengthen early detection by capturing **patterns of emotional distress and facilitating timely alerts,** although their use requires appropriate ethical and privacy safeguards.
- Early detection depends on clear internal processes to record, share and escalate concerns. Without **structured pathways**, initial signals may remain informal and fail to trigger action.
- Organisational and structural factors, such as unequal access, excessive competitiveness, lack of coordination or loss of the educational function of sport, can act as early indicators of systemic risk and should be monitored within safeguarding systems.
- Effective early detection relies on combining **training, culture, participation and practical tools**, enabling clubs and stakeholders to identify and respond to concerns at an early stage.

Equity lens: Early detection

Gender

- Monitor the **continuum of violence**, identifying normalised sexist comments, jokes, body-related remarks or differential treatment as early warning signs of harassment or grooming processes.
- Pay attention to **"grey areas" in coach–athlete relationships** (e.g. excessive closeness, private communication, boundary crossing), especially in contexts of power imbalance and dependency.
- Detect behaviours that are often normalised as part of sport (e.g. unwanted physical contact, invasive supervision, control of private spaces), which may obscure early stages of abuse.

LGBTQI+

- Recognise that violence often appears through **indirect or normalised practices**, rather than explicit aggression (e.g. "banter", informal language, exclusionary dynamics).
- Pay attention to **informal peer language** (homophobic or transphobic slurs) as mechanisms of surveillance and early indicators of unsafe environments.
- Monitor **specific spaces of vulnerability**, particularly changing rooms and team environments, where fear, concealment or distress may signal underlying discrimination.
- Identify signs of **withdrawal, discomfort or lack of belonging** linked to repeated negative experiences or perceived rejection in sport settings.

Disability

- Identify forms of **symbolic and relational exclusion**, such as peer neglect, lack of reciprocity, exclusion from group activities or “feeling invisible”, as early indicators of unsafe participation contexts.
- Detect **overestimation of risk or overprotection** by staff as potential mechanisms of exclusion.
- Use **assistive technologies and environmental monitoring tools** (e.g. sensors, alert systems) to identify physical risks before they escalate into harm.
- Pay attention to both **physical and psychosocial indicators of harm**, not only visible risks.

Socio-economic diversity

- Identify early warning signs such as **irregular attendance, withdrawal, silence, shame or limited continuity in participation**, which may reflect underlying economic vulnerability rather than lack of motivation .
- Detect barriers such as **cost, transport difficulties, family responsibilities or fear of injury due to lack of medical coverage** as safeguarding concerns.
- Recognise **“affective vulnerability”** (feeling unwelcome, not good enough, or structurally disadvantaged) as an early indicator of exclusion and risk.
- Pay attention to fragile participation strategies (e.g. intermittent engagement, dependence on informal support), which may signal risk of dropout or unsafe continuity .

Cultural diversity

- Observe **everyday and subtle forms of racism or exclusion**, including aggressive tones, authoritarian communication or lack of affective support toward racialised athletes.
- Detect **mismatches between institutional expectations and cultural needs** (e.g. discomfort, withdrawal, lack of participation), especially when adaptation is absent.
- Pay attention to **silence, non-reporting or reluctance to engage**, which may be linked to fear of stigma, loyalty dynamics or lack of trust.
- Identify early signs of **institutional assimilation pressures**, where young people feel required to renounce cultural practices in order to participate.

Reporting

- Reporting systems are most effective when understood as an integrated safeguarding function that combines **communication, documentation and response**, enabling concerns or incidents to be translated into timely protective action.
- No safeguarding system can function effectively if situations of violence remain hidden. The ability to surface concerns depends on the existence of clear, accessible and trusted **reporting mechanisms**.
- Reporting operates across multiple **levels of responsibility,** including a general duty to communicate concerns, reinforced obligations for professionals working with children, and the recognition of children and adolescents as active agents capable of reporting situations affecting them.

- Traditional reporting systems in sport have often been **adult-centred**. Evidence shows the need to design child-friendly mechanisms that are accessible, understandable and safe, ensuring that children can report concerns without fear of negative consequences.
- Effective reporting systems require channels that are **visible, easy to use and clearly communicated**, as well as clarity about who receives the information and how cases are managed or escalated.
- The accessibility and trustworthiness of designated safeguarding figures (e.g. protection or welfare officers) are critical factors influencing whether concerns are reported and acted upon.
- Reporting should not be limited to the formal denunciation of severe incidents, but also include the capacity to manage concerns and conflicts at an early stage through transparent, fair and structured processes within the organisation.
- Protection against r**etaliation and guarantees of confidentiality** are essential to enable reporting, particularly for children and adolescents and in hierarchical sport environments.
- Reducing **secondary victimisation** is a key principle in reporting processes, requiring that children are not repeatedly exposed to recounting harmful experiences unnecessarily.
- **Digital and anonymous reporting channels** can help reduce barriers to communication, facilitate documentation and align safeguarding systems with young people's communication practices.
- **External reporting pathways and support resources** are important complements to internal systems, particularly when trust in the organisation is limited or when concerns involve internal actors.
- Peer dynamics can support reporting when team cultures promote **help-seeking and collective responsibility,** framing communication of concerns as a positive and protective behaviour rather than as disloyalty.
- The effectiveness of reporting systems depends not only on formal structures, but also on organisational culture. Environments that foster trust, openness and respect are more likely to enable the communication of concerns.
- Reporting mechanisms should be designed with the **active participation of children and adolescents**, ensuring that their perspectives shape how channels operate and are used in practice.
- Effective reporting requires **clear procedures for case management,** including documentation, communication with involved parties, follow-up and alignment with established protocols.
- Reporting is closely connected to subsequent safeguarding stages, requiring direct links with response, referral and protection pathways to ensure that communicated concerns lead to appropriate action.

Equity lens: Reporting

Gender

- Ensure reporting systems explicitly allow **reporting of "low-intensity" behaviours** (e.g. sexist jokes, body comments, differential treatment), recognising them as part of the **continuum of violence**, not only severe incidents.
- Prevent reporting processes from being conditioned by **sport dependency dynamics** (selection, playing time, progression), which may discourage girls from reporting situations involving authority figures.

LGBTQI+

- Allow reporting **without requiring disclosure of sexual orientation or gender identity**, recognising that visibility itself can be a risk.
- Enable reporting of **indirect or normalised discrimination** (e.g. “banter”, exclusion, hostile environments), not only explicit aggression.
- Address **lack of knowledge about rights and protection mechanisms**, ensuring that reporting systems are understandable for LGBTQI+ young people.

Disability

- Adapt reporting systems to account for **dependency relationships with adults**, where the potential perpetrator may also be a caregiver or key support figure.
- Ensure reporting does not rely solely on **verbal or written disclosure**, incorporating alternative communication methods suited to different functional and cognitive needs.
- Recognise that some situations may remain unreported due to **communication barriers or lack of accessible formats**, not absence of harm.

Socio-economic diversity

- Enable reporting of **non-incident-based harms**, such as inability to participate due to cost, transport or equipment, as safeguarding concerns (not only misconduct).
- Avoid reporting mechanisms that require **formal procedures or documentation**, which may exclude families with fewer resources or institutional familiarity.
- Recognise that **non-reporting may be linked to shame or perceived illegitimacy** of economic difficulties, rather than absence of need.

Cultural diversity

- Ensure reporting systems do not assume a **shared cultural understanding of what constitutes harm**, recognising that some behaviours may not be named or identified in the same way.
- Address **barriers linked to language, trust and institutional distance**, which may prevent migrant or racialised families from reporting concerns.
- Recognise that underreporting may be influenced by **fear of stigma, community pressure or precarious belonging**, rather than lack of incidents.

Response & Case management

- Effective response systems require a **structured and pre-established framework**, as the management of safeguarding concerns cannot rely on improvised or ad hoc actions once risks have been identified.
- Response should be understood as part of a **holistic safeguarding system**, where it operates in connection with prevention, early detection and reporting, rather than as an isolated function.
- The “**do no harm**” principle emerges as a fundamental guiding element, requiring that all interventions prioritise the child’s safety, recovery and well-being, while avoiding actions that could generate further harm, retraumatisation or unintended consequences.
- A **survivor-centred approach** is essential in response and case management, recognising children as active agents, respecting their perspectives and prioritising their recovery and best interests throughout the process.

- Managing **confidentiality** is a critical component of response systems, requiring careful handling of sensitive information to prevent risks such as retaliation, stigma or further exposure of the child.
- Effective response systems rely on clear **operational structures,** including defined reporting, responding and recording processes, ensuring that concerns are addressed, documented and followed up in a consistent and secure manner.
- Rapid and proportionate responses are essential once a concern is identified, including the ability to assess the **severity of the case and activate appropriate internal or external actions**, including referral to judicial or specialised services when necessary.
- Designated safeguarding roles, such as **Child Safeguarding Officers,** play a key role in coordinating responses, acting as focal points within organisations and facilitating links with external protection systems.
- Response systems must include **clear procedures** for managing allegations involving staff members, including assessing thresholds of severity and determining when to initiate internal processes or refer cases to external authorities.
- Case management should be understood as a structured process that accompanies the child from **initial identification of risk through to resolution**, including assessment, planning, implementation, follow-up and closure.
- Effective case management requires **maintaining detailed and confidential documentation systems**, ensuring traceability, accountability and continuity throughout the process.
- Response should **not be carried out in isolation**. Team-based approaches and organisational support structures are necessary to ensure proportionate decision-making and reduce the burden on individual staff members.
- **Monitoring and evaluation** of response processes, including the analysis of reporting outcomes, are important to identify gaps, improve systems and strengthen safeguarding practice over time.
- **Intersectoral coordination** is a key component of effective response and case management, requiring collaboration between sport organisations, social services, education and health systems to ensure comprehensive protection.
- Response systems should be **sensitive to different vulnerabilities**, including gender, age, disability and socio-economic factors, adapting interventions to the specific needs of each child.
- Child **participation** is a central element of case management, requiring that children are actively involved in decisions affecting them, rather than treated as passive recipients of protection.

Equity lens: Response & Case Management

Gender

- It is essential that **responses do not depend on the prestige, authority or status of the alleged perpetrator**, given the structural power imbalances identified in sport.
- Case management should explicitly address **power asymmetries and dependency relationships** (e.g. coach or athlete), which condition both disclosure and response processes.

LGBTQI+

- Case management should ensure **strict confidentiality in handling cases**, as disclosure may involve risks related to unwanted exposure of sexual orientation or gender identity.

- Responses must consider that harm may be linked to **specific spaces** (e.g. changing rooms), requiring structural adjustments beyond resolving the individual incident.

Disability

- Case management may require **modifying sport structures (rules, formats, subgroups)** to ensure continued participation when mainstream systems generate exclusion or disengagement.
- Responses are often operationalised through **individualised adaptations led by key actors**, translating general inclusion policies into concrete case-level actions.

Socio-economic diversity

- Response should include **practical adjustments (e.g. access to care, transport, fees)** when economic barriers threaten safe participation or continuity.
- Case management must address **structural barriers identified in the case**, not only the individual situation, to prevent exclusion after incidents such as injury.

Cultural diversity

- Response must ensure **culturally appropriate intervention conditions** (e.g. safe spaces, gender-sensitive support) when managing cases involving cultural or religious factors.
- Case management should avoid **misinterpreting conflicts as lack of integration**, recognising structural and cultural dimensions in the situation.

Governance

- Governance plays a determining role in safeguarding by translating child protection from a moral commitment into a structured and operational system.
- The incorporation of safeguarding into governance structures and organisational culture is essential. Where protection is not prioritised at this level, the likelihood of abuse or malpractice increases.
- Leadership commitment ("**tone from the top**") shapes organisational culture, influencing how safeguarding policies are understood, prioritised and implemented in practice.
- Clear allocation of responsibilities across all organisational levels, from senior management to volunteers, is a core governance function.
- The designation of **identifiable and accessible safeguarding roles** (e.g. Protection Officers or Welfare Officers) strengthens coordination, trust and organisational capacity to respond to concerns.
- The effectiveness of safeguarding roles depends on their **level of authority, legitimacy and access to resources** within the organisational structure. Without sufficient institutional support, their capacity to act is limited.
- Resource allocation is a critical governance function. The implementation of safeguarding systems depends on the availability of **trained professionals and sustainable funding**, particularly in resource-constrained grassroots contexts.
- Safeguarding governance requires integrating **anti-discrimination and inclusion principles,** ensuring that sport does not reproduce inequalities related to gender, disability, socio-economic status or other factors.
- Governance should promote **coordination across sectors and institutions**, recognising child protection as a shared responsibility that requires collaboration with social services, education, health systems and protection agencies.

- Strengthening **relationships with families** is an important governance component, supporting information sharing, risk identification and the creation of protective environments around children.
- **Accountability and oversight** mechanisms are essential to ensure that safeguarding policies are implemented effectively, including the use of standards, monitoring systems and continuous evaluation processes.
- **Independent and safe reporting mechanisms** are necessary to prevent conflicts of interest and ensure that organisational hierarchies do not suppress or minimise safeguarding concerns.
- Governance systems should incorporate **continuous improvement processes**, including data collection, evaluation of cases and adaptation of policies to emerging risks and evidence.
- The participation of children and adolescents in governance processes is a key element of **effective safeguarding**, ensuring that policies are informed by their perspectives and experiences.
- Governance **decisions** directly influence the effectiveness of safeguarding in practice, including how policies are interpreted, applied and prioritised in everyday organisational contexts.

Equity lens: Governance

Gender

- Governance should address the **"non-problem" discourse**, ensuring that gender inequality can be named and recognised within organisational structures.
- Decision-making structures should explicitly consider how **resource allocation, visibility and sporting value are gendered**, rather than assuming neutrality.

LGBTQI+

- Governance must review **formal structures and procedures (e.g. registration systems, categories, changing room policies)** that reproduce binary and cisnormative assumptions.
- Inclusion policies should move beyond symbolic commitment ("happy talk") to ensure **real transformation of everyday practices and organisational norms**.

Disability

- Governance must ensure that inclusion is not based on **assimilation to normative sport models**, but on adapting organisational structures to diverse support needs.
- Decision-making should incorporate **case-by-case assessment of reasonable adjustments**, recognising the heterogeneity of disabilities.

Socio-economic diversity

- Governance should avoid models based solely on **family financial contribution**, recognising that this reproduces structural inequality in access and continuity.
- Strategic decisions should address **territorial and infrastructural inequalities**, acknowledging that access is shaped by neighbourhood and resource distribution.

Cultural diversity

- Governance should prevent **institutional assimilation**, ensuring that participation does not require abandoning cultural or religious practices.

- Leadership structures should address **underrepresentation of racialised and migrant groups**, recognising its impact on belonging and legitimacy within sport.

Restorative justice mechanisms

- Restorative justice mechanisms are grounded in a relational approach that distinguishes between conflict and violence, recognising conflict as a natural and potentially constructive part of relationships, while identifying violence as a breakdown of relational dynamics that requires different forms of intervention.
- In sport contexts, restorative approaches emphasise the **transformation of authority into an educational tool,** aiming to promote dialogue, accountability and social learning rather than relying exclusively on punitive or retributive responses.
- Restorative practices can support conflict resolution by f**acilitating communication between those involved**, helping to repair harm, promote individual responsibility and contribute to a shared sense of justice within the group.
- Grassroots sport environments are particularly suitable for **restorative approaches**, as they combine educational, social and relational dimensions where values such as respect, solidarity and coexistence can be actively developed.
- The effective use of restorative mechanisms depends on the ability to distinguish between situations where dialogue-based approaches are appropriate and those where they are not. These tools are suitable for managing conflicts with reversible harm, but not for cases involving violence, abuse or significant power imbalance.
- The application of restorative approaches in cases of serious violence, including sexual violence or harmful sexual behaviour, **requires extreme caution** and may be inappropriate if it risks reinforcing harm or placing additional burden on the victim.
- In situations involving **severe or systemic abuse**, formal safeguarding procedures and reporting mechanisms must take precedence over informal restorative processes.
- Early intervention in **minor conflicts** through restorative practices can help prevent escalation into more harmful dynamics, supporting the development of relational skills and empathy among young people.
- Safe and facilitated spaces are essential for **restorative approaches**, enabling children and adolescents to express concerns, share experiences and engage in dialogue without fear of judgement.
- Restorative practices contribute to breaking the "**culture of silence**" by encouraging open communication and creating environments where concerns can be expressed and addressed collectively.
- The effectiveness of restorative approaches depends on the role of trained adults who can **facilitate dialogue, provide emotional support and maintain appropriate boundaries** without assuming therapeutic roles beyond their competence.
- Training for coaches and staff should include **emotional, relational and communication skills**, enabling them to support conflict resolution processes and understand the experiences and perspectives of children.
- Adults involved in restorative processes are expected to act as **facilitators or "bridges"**, building trust and referring to specialised services when situations exceed their capacity or involve complex safeguarding concerns.
- Restorative approaches can be strengthened by structured **peer-support mechanisms** and active bystander strategies, promoting shared responsibility for identifying and addressing harmful behaviours.
- Effective implementation requires **integration within a broader safeguarding system**, including coordination with specialised services, designated safeguarding roles and clear protocols to ensure that restorative practices are applied appropriately and safely.

- Promoting a culture of "**good treatment**" (buentrato) is a key element of restorative approaches, reinforcing respect, dignity and positive relationships as foundational principles within sport environments.

Equity lens: Restorative justice mechanisms

Gender

- Restorative approaches should not be applied in situations marked by **power asymmetries (e.g. coach–athlete relationships)**, where dialogue may mask coercion or reinforce unequal dynamics.

LGBTQI+

- Restorative processes must ensure that participation does not expose young people to **identity-related risks (e.g. involuntary disclosure or additional vulnerability)**, particularly in contexts where discrimination is subtle or normalised.

Disability

- Restorative mechanisms require **adapted communication and facilitation**, ensuring that children with different cognitive or communicative needs can participate meaningfully in dialogue processes.

Cultural diversity

- Restorative dialogue should be facilitated with **cultural sensitivity**, recognising that expressions of conflict, authority and communication may vary across cultural backgrounds.

Gaps-and-implications analysis

This section provides an analysis of the gaps and recommendations relating to the various parts of the report: regarding legislation and policy reviews, regarding the safeguarding aspects and discrimination issues, and key points raised during the webinar.

Strategic and policy-level implications

International framework: from theory to mandatory practice

Although international treaties such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) have been widely ratified, a gap persists between legal principles and their practical application in the sporting arena. Sport has long been perceived as an intrinsically "good" activity, which has hindered the establishment of systems for handling complaints and the analysis of specific risks (abuse of authority, overtraining, commercial exploitation).

- **Recommendations:**
  - Incorporate the **articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child** (**CRC)** (notably Article 12 on the right to be heard and Article 19 on protection against violence) as a **mandatory requirement in the statutes** of all international federations.
  - Adopt a "due diligence" approach: sports organisations must **no longer ignore violence** under the pretext of institutional autonomy.

- Make the 'International Safeguards for Children in Sport' **the standard** minimum requirement for any organisation receiving **public or international funding.**

European framework: coordination and inclusion

The European Union and the Council of Europe have robust frameworks (the Lanzarote Convention, the EU Work Plan for Sport), but cross-sectoral coordination remains fragmented. Financial barriers (cost of equipment, infrastructure) limit access to sport for vulnerable children, despite the 'European Child Guarantee'. There is also a lack of disaggregated data to monitor children's health and safety outcomes.

- **Recommendations:**
  - Make the awarding of European grants conditional upon the implementation of 'Safe Sport' policies, including the **systematic criminal background checks of all staff.**
  - Develop **multidisciplinary structures** such as 'Barnahus' (Children's Houses) to support victims of abuse in sport, to prevent secondary victimisation.
  - Combat digital inactivity by i**ntegrating digital wellbeing** into sports programmes.

National frameworks: analysis of implementation disparities

Spain

Spain has a pioneering law, the LOPIVI (Organic Law 8/2021), which mandates protection officers in sport, but its application varies across regions. There is a gap between the legal obligation and the capacity of small amateur clubs to implement complex protocols without adequate legal or financial support.

- **Recommendations:**
  - Provide **simplified regional reference protocols** for small neighbourhood associations.
  - Strengthen the role of the Protection Officer so that it is not merely symbolic; by ensuring they receive **specific training** on disability and inclusion.

Italy

The sports reform (Decrees 36 and 39 of 2021) marked a turning point, but the **'culture of silence'** remains a major obstacle. The absence of reports is often mistakenly interpreted as an absence of problems, whereas it is often due to cultural barriers or fear of reprisals.

- **Recommendations:**
  - Ensure the **complete independence of the Safeguarding Officer** from the club's management to avoid conflicts of interest.
  - Make ongoing training (every six months) mandatory for coaches on **detecting signs** of all kinds of violence.

Bulgaria

The Bulgarian system responds when a report is made but lacks consistency in long-term case management.

- **Recommendations:**
  - Develop a national roadmap to integrate Child Safeguarding Officer roles in sport

- Improve feedback loops between social services, the police and sports clubs to ensure continuity of support until the case is closed.
- Establish specialised programmes for perpetrators of violence to prevent reoffending in other settings.

Cross-cutting gaps in sport-specific policies

The reports by **ENOC** and **ENYA** highlight persistent shortcomings that directly affect the well-being of young athletes.

- **Specific gaps:**
  - **Breaches of integrity:** Persistence of humiliating practices such as public fitness tests or the disclosure of health data (weight, height) in front of peers.
  - **Over-specialisation:** Excessive pressure to perform at the expense of the right to rest and leisure (Article 31 of the CRC).
  - **Lack of participation:** Children are rarely consulted when drafting codes of conduct that directly concern them.

- **Final recommendations:**
  - **Co-create programmes:** Actively **involve young people** in designing internal regulations and reporting mechanisms so that they are seen as credible by them.
  - **Overall well-being:** Ensure that young professional athletes have free access to **psychological support** to manage competition-related stress.
  - **Safe environment:** Strictly **prohibit the sharing of sensitive spaces** (showers, changing rooms) between adults and minors, and regulate private contact on social media to prevent *grooming*

Recommendations to develop a 360° Safe Play model for grassroots sport:

1. Governance and institutional framework as a foundation

- **Management commitment:** Every organisation must have a written safeguarding policy, officially approved by the highest level of management, affirming that the child's welfare is paramount. This document should be i**ncluding the articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.**
- **Link to funding:** To encourage adoption of the model, the granting of public subsidies should be **conditional** upon the effective implementation of these safeguarding protocols.
- **A breaking the silence approach:** The model should emphasise that the first step in tackling violence is **to talk about it** and to build a network of adult allies who are there to support and protect children. It should consider all forms of violence, including sexual violence and incest, as well as sexual exploitation.
- **Independence of the Safeguarding Officer:** Every amateur club must appoint a trained safeguarding officer, who must have **functional independence from management** to avoid conflicts of interest when reports are made.

2. Recruitment and training

- **Systematic vetting:** The model must require **mandatory checks** of criminal records (history of sexual violence) for all staff, including volunteers, before they take up their posts.
- **Continuing professional development:** Compulsory training must be provided to coaches every six months on recognising signs of violence, disability, inclusion of all children.

- **Universal Code of Conduct:** Establish **clear rules of conduct** prohibiting physical or humiliating punishment and strictly regulating private contact on social media (prevention of grooming).

3. Risk management and spaces

- **Activity-specific risk assessments:** Carry out specific **risk analyses** for each training session, away trip or accommodation. If a risk is deemed too high and uncontrollable, the activity must not take place.
- **Protocol for "sensitive areas":** Strictly prohibit adults and minors from sharing showers and changing rooms and ensure adequate physical privacy within the facilities.
- **Independent reporting channel:** Set up a **reporting mechanism independent** of the club, accessible to children and using language appropriate to their age, to break the 'culture of silence'. This could be linked to the role of children's ombudsmen.

4. Partnership with families or guardians

- **Active involvement:** Draw inspiration from the "Play your part" model to turn families or guardians into **vigilant partners**. The club must organise annual awareness-raising sessions to encourage open conversations between adults and children.
- **Children's participation:** Young must be consulted when drafting internal regulations and designing sports programmes so that the measures are seen as credible by them.
- **Protection of physical integrity:** The must **prohibit humiliating practices** such as public fitness tests or the disclosure of health data (weight/height) in front of peers.
- **Right to rest:** Ensure a balance between sport and school life by limiting excessive training loads to respect the right to rest and leisure (Article 31 of the CRC).

5. Accountability and improvement

- **Annual review process:** The club must undergo an **annual self-assessment** to verify that protection standards are maintained and updated in line with legislative changes.
- **Transparency of procedures:** Clearly publish on the club's website **the steps for respondin**g to a concern and the contact details of the protection officer.
- **Support for victims:** Provide easy access to mental health services and specialist support (Welfare Officer) throughout the investigation process to prevent secondary victimisation

Translating gaps into action: operational implications for the 360° Safe Play model

In addition to the gaps identified in legal and policy frameworks, the analysis of safeguarding dimensions and the application of an equity lens (gender, LGBTQI+, disability, socio-economic and cultural diversity) reveal further structural challenges related to implementation, accessibility and differentiated vulnerabilities in sport contexts.

Building on these findings, this section translates the identified gaps into operational implications for the development of the 360° Safe Play model for grassroots sport.

The analysis is structured according to the core safeguarding dimensions, ensuring a systemic and coherent approach to child protection. For each dimension, the main gaps identified in the literature and empirical analysis are presented, followed by their corresponding implications for the model.

This approach allows the model to move beyond general recommendations, defining concrete system-level requirements that respond directly to the weaknesses identified across sport

contexts, while integrating an equity perspective to address differentiated risks, barriers and access to protection.

1. Prevention

The analysis highlights that prevention in sport safeguarding remains unevenly developed, with a persistent gap between formal commitments and effective implementation in everyday practice.

A first structural gap concerns the **implementation gap between policies and practice**. While many organisations formally adopt safeguarding frameworks, these are not consistently translated into operational procedures, particularly in grassroots and volunteer-based contexts. This limits the real preventive capacity of clubs and shifts safeguarding towards a symbolic rather than practical function.

- **Implication for the model**: Prevention must be operationalised through simple, scalable and context-adapted tools (e.g. templates, checklists, clear protocols), ensuring that safeguarding requirements are feasible and actionable in grassroots settings.

A second key gap relates to the **normalisation of harmful practices within sport culture**. Behaviours such as excessive pressure, punitive training methods, shouting, exclusion or body-related comments are often perceived as part of “normal” sport environments, delaying recognition of harm.

- **Implication for the model**: Prevention must explicitly address organisational culture, not only individual behaviour, incorporating awareness-raising processes that challenge everyday practices, beliefs and norms that may legitimise harm.

A third gap concerns the **limited capacity of staff and volunteers to identify and manage risk**. Evidence shows low levels of conceptual and procedural knowledge regarding violence against children, as well as difficulties in recognising “grey areas” such as grooming processes, boundary crossing or emotional harm.

- **Implication for the model**: Prevention must include continuous, practice-oriented and mandatory training, going beyond formal compliance to develop competences in recognising subtle risks, power imbalances, trauma-informed approaches and differentiated vulnerabilities.

Another important gap is the **lack of systematic risk assessment approaches**. Preventive action is often reactive rather than proactive, with limited use of tools to identify risks related to spaces, routines, relationships or organisational dynamics.

- **Implication for the model**: Prevention should incorporate regular risk-mapping processes, including analysis of high-risk contexts (e.g. changing rooms, travel, digital communication) and relational dynamics, enabling early identification and mitigation of risks.

The analysis also identifies a **gap in the involvement of children and families or guardians in prevention processes**. Safeguarding systems are often designed from an adult-centred perspective, without systematically incorporating children’s experiences or families’ observations.

- **Implication for the model**: Prevention must integrate child participation and guardian engagement as core components, recognising them as key actors in identifying risks, shaping safer environments and strengthening protective factors.

Finally, there is a **lack of coordination between sport organisations and broader community systems** (e.g. education, social services, health), limiting the capacity to address risks in a comprehensive way.

- **Implication for the model**: Prevention should adopt a community-based approach, promoting coordination and shared responsibility across sectors to strengthen protective environments beyond the club.

Equity implications in prevention

Applying an equity lens highlights that preventive gaps and risks are not evenly distributed and require differentiated responses:

- **Gender**: Preventive systems often fail to address structural inequalities (e.g. unequal access to resources, visibility or recognition) and the normalisation of sexist practices and gender stereotypes. Prevention must explicitly target these dynamics and include safeguards against early forms of harassment and abuse.
- **LGBTQI+**: Prevention frequently remains at a symbolic level, without transforming heteronormative and binary structures that generate exclusion in everyday spaces (e.g. changing rooms, team dynamics, language). Preventive measures must address indirect and normalised forms of discrimination.
- **Disability**: Lack of accessibility (infrastructure, equipment, transport) and insufficient staff training create structural barriers that function as safeguarding risks. Prevention must ensure integral accessibility and address relational exclusion (e.g. invisibility, lack of participation).
- **Socio-economic diversity**: Financial, logistical and symbolic barriers limit safe participation. Prevention must include measures such as fee reduction, equipment provision and non-stigmatising support, as well as addressing feelings of exclusion or “not belonging”.
- **Cultural diversity**: Preventive approaches often fail to recognise cultural differences and may reproduce assimilation dynamics. Prevention must include intercultural competence, culturally appropriate adaptations and attention to subtle forms of racism and exclusion.

2. Early detection

The analysis shows that early detection is one of the weakest and most underdeveloped components of safeguarding systems in sport, often limited by cultural, organisational and procedural barriers.

A first key gap relates to the **normalisation and invisibility of early warning signs**. Many indicators of harm (such as withdrawal, anxiety, loss of enjoyment, excessive pressure or relational discomfort) are often interpreted as part of sport practice rather than as potential safeguarding concerns. This delays recognition and intervention.

- **Implication for the model**: Early detection must be reframed as an active and continuous process, incorporating clear indicators and shared understanding of what constitutes risk, including emotional, relational and organisational dimensions.

A second gap concerns the **lack of systematic observation and structured tools** to identify risks. Detection often depends on individual sensitivity rather than on organised processes, which leads to inconsistent responses and missed signals.

- **Implication for the model**: Clubs should implement structured detection tools (e.g. guiding questions, wellbeing check-ins, climate assessments), enabling regular and systematic observation of children's experiences and environments.

A third gap is linked to the **limited capacity of staff to recognise subtle or non-visible forms of harm**. Training often focuses on severe or explicit cases, while early-stage risks (e.g. grooming behaviours, boundary crossing, peer exclusion) remain harder to identify.

- **Implication for the model**: Early detection must be supported by targeted training that includes recognition of "grey areas", power dynamics, emotional distress and evolving risk patterns.

Another critical gap concerns the **absence of a shared detection culture involving multiple actors**. Detection is often seen as the responsibility of specific roles (e.g. safeguarding officers), rather than a collective responsibility across coaches, families or guardians and children themselves.

- **Implication for the model**: Early detection should be distributed across the sport ecosystem, promoting shared responsibility and equipping children, families or guardians and staff with tools to identify and communicate concerns.

The analysis also highlights a **lack of attention to organisational and contextual signals of risk**. Issues such as toxic competitiveness, inequality, unresolved conflicts or unsafe environments are rarely recognised as early indicators of safeguarding concerns.

- **Implication for the model**: Detection systems must go beyond individual behaviours and include monitoring of organisational climate, relational dynamics and structural conditions within sport settings.

A further gap relates to **limited mechanisms to capture children's voices and experiences in real time**. Children's perceptions of safety, discomfort or unfairness are not systematically collected or used as part of detection processes.

- **Implication for the model**: Early detection should incorporate participatory mechanisms (e.g. regular feedback, safe spaces for expression, anonymous tools) that allow children to communicate their experiences in accessible and meaningful ways.

Finally, there is a **weak connection between early detection and reporting pathways**. Even when concerns are identified, they are not always recorded, shared or escalated appropriately, limiting the effectiveness of the safeguarding system.

- **Implication for the model**: Detection must be clearly linked to reporting and response mechanisms, ensuring that early signals trigger proportionate and timely action.

Equity implications in early detection

An equity perspective reveals that the ability to identify and interpret early warning signs varies significantly across different groups:

- **Gender**: Early signs of gender-based violence (e.g. sexist comments, control, differential treatment, boundary crossing) are often normalised or minimised. Detection systems must recognise the continuum of violence and pay attention to power dynamics in coach–athlete relationships.
- **LGBTQI+**: Harm frequently appears through indirect or normalised practices (e.g. "banter", exclusion, misgendering), making it less visible. Detection must include attention to informal language, concealment behaviours and discomfort in specific spaces such as changing rooms.

- **Disability**: Risks may be expressed through relational exclusion (e.g. isolation, lack of participation, invisibility) rather than explicit incidents. Detection systems must account for different communication needs and avoid relying solely on verbal disclosure.
- **Socio-economic diversity**: Early warning signs may include irregular attendance, withdrawal, silence or reduced participation, often linked to economic barriers rather than lack of motivation. Detection must recognise these patterns as safeguarding concerns.
- **Cultural diversity**: Non-reporting or silence may reflect fear, mistrust or cultural differences in expressing harm. Detection must consider language barriers, cultural norms and institutional distance when interpreting behaviours and signals.

3. Reporting

The analysis shows that reporting systems remain one of the most critical bottlenecks in safeguarding, with persistent gaps related to accessibility, trust, usability and connection with response mechanisms.

A first major gap concerns the **underreporting of safeguarding concerns**, which is widely recognised as a structural issue. Children, families or guardians and even staff may avoid reporting due to fear of retaliation, loss of sporting opportunities, lack of trust in the organisation or uncertainty about how the process works.

- **Implication for the model**: Reporting systems must explicitly address underreporting by creating safe, trusted and well-communicated channels, ensuring protection against retaliation and fostering a culture where raising concerns is normalised and supported.

A second gap relates to the **adult-centred design of reporting mechanisms**. Many systems are not adapted to children's capacities, language or communication preferences, limiting their accessibility and usability.

- **Implication for the model**: Reporting mechanisms must be child-friendly, using clear language, multiple formats and accessible entry points, ensuring that children can understand how to report and feel confident doing so.

A third gap concerns the **lack of clarity and visibility of reporting pathways**. In many cases, children, families or guardians and staff do not know who to contact, how to report or what will happen after a concern is raised.

- **Implication for the model**: Reporting systems must ensure transparency and clarity, including clearly identified safeguarding roles, visible contact points and step-by-step communication of procedures.

Another important gap is the **limited trust in internal reporting structures**, particularly when concerns involve individuals in positions of authority or when organisational reputation is prioritised over protection.

- **Implication for the model**: Reporting systems must include independent or external pathways (e.g. ombuds services, helplines), ensuring that concerns can be raised safely even when trust in the organisation is limited.

The analysis also highlights a **narrow understanding of reporting as formal complaints only**. Early concerns, discomfort or "low-intensity" issues are often not reported because they are not perceived as serious enough or because systems are too formal.

- **Implication for the model**: Reporting should be understood as a continuum, allowing the communication of concerns at different levels (questions, doubts, early signals), not only formal complaints, enabling earlier intervention.

A further gap concerns the **risk of secondary victimisation during reporting processes**. Children may be required to repeat their experiences multiple times or may not receive appropriate support, which can discourage reporting and increase harm.

- **Implication for the model**: Reporting systems must follow a “do no harm” approach, minimising repetition, ensuring confidentiality and providing immediate and appropriate support throughout the process.

Another structural gap is the **limited integration of digital and anonymous reporting options**. Traditional channels may not align with how young people communicate or seek help.

- **Implication for the model**: Reporting systems should include safe digital tools and, where appropriate, anonymous options, reducing barriers and facilitating access for children and adolescents.

Finally, there is often a **weak connection between reporting and subsequent response and case management**. Reporting mechanisms exist, but do not always lead to timely, coordinated or effective action.

- **Implication for the model**: Reporting must be fully integrated within a broader safeguarding system, ensuring clear links with response protocols, case management procedures and external referral pathways.

Equity implications in reporting

An equity lens highlights that barriers to reporting are not experienced equally and may be intensified for specific groups:

- **Gender**: Reporting may be constrained by power relations and dependency on coaches or institutions, as well as by the normalisation of sexist behaviours. Systems must enable reporting of both severe and “low-intensity” forms of gender-based harm.
- **LGBTQI+**: Fear of involuntary disclosure of sexual orientation or gender identity may prevent reporting. Systems must guarantee confidentiality and allow reporting without requiring identity disclosure.
- **Disability**: Reporting mechanisms often rely on verbal or written communication, excluding some children. Systems must include alternative communication formats and consider dependency relationships with caregivers or staff.
- **Socio-economic diversity**: Formal or complex procedures may act as barriers for families or guardians with fewer resources or institutional familiarity. Reporting systems must be simple, accessible and non-stigmatising.
- **Cultural diversity**: Language barriers, mistrust of institutions and fear of stigma may limit reporting. Systems must include intercultural mediation, accessible information and culturally sensitive approaches.

4. Response and case management

The analysis highlights that response and case management systems are often fragmented, inconsistent and insufficiently structured, limiting their capacity to ensure effective protection once a concern has been identified.

A first critical gap concerns the **lack of structured and predefined response protocols**. In many sport contexts, responses to safeguarding concerns depend on ad hoc decisions rather

than on clear, standardised procedures, which can lead to delays, inconsistencies or inadequate actions.

- **Implication for the model**: Response systems must be based on clear, pre-established protocols that define roles, responsibilities and procedures, ensuring that concerns are handled in a consistent, timely and coordinated manner.

A second gap relates to the **absence of a holistic case management approach**. Safeguarding responses often focus on immediate action but lack continuity, follow-up and structured processes to accompany the child throughout the case.

- **Implication for the model**: Case management should be formalised as a continuous process, including stages such as assessment, planning, implementation, follow-up and closure, ensuring that children receive sustained and coherent support.

Another key gap is the **limited application of a "do no harm" and survivor-centred approach**. Inadequate handling of cases may lead to re-victimisation, breaches of confidentiality or actions that prioritise organisational interests over the child's well-being.

- **Implication for the model**: Response systems must adopt a child-centred and trauma-informed approach, prioritising safety, confidentiality and recovery, and ensuring that children are treated as active participants in decisions affecting them.

A further gap concerns the **lack of clarity in managing allegations involving staff or authority figures**. Organisations often face difficulties in determining thresholds of severity, managing conflicts of interest or deciding when to escalate cases to external authorities.

- **Implication for the model**: Clear criteria and procedures must be established to distinguish between internal management and mandatory referral to external services, particularly in cases involving power asymmetries or potential criminal behaviour.

The analysis also identifies a **weak integration between sport organisations and external protection systems**. Coordination with social services, health systems or judicial authorities is often limited, which may result in fragmented responses and gaps in protection.

- **Implication for the model**: Response systems must include formalised pathways for intersectoral coordination, ensuring that cases are managed through a network of relevant actors and that children do not fall through institutional gaps.

Another important gap is the **insufficient documentation and monitoring of cases**. Lack of secure record-keeping and systematic follow-up limits accountability, learning and continuous improvement.

- **Implication for the model**: Case management must include robust documentation systems, ensuring traceability, confidentiality and the ability to analyse patterns and outcomes over time.

A further challenge relates to the **over-reliance on individual actors**, particularly safeguarding officers, without adequate organisational support. This can lead to inconsistent responses and excessive responsibility placed on single individuals.

- **Implication for the model**: Response must be embedded in team-based and organisational structures, ensuring shared responsibility, supervision and support for those managing cases.

Finally, there is a **limited integration of response systems within a broader safeguarding cycle**. Response is often treated as a separate function rather than as part of a continuous process connected to prevention, detection and reporting.

- **Implication for the model**: Response and case management must be fully integrated within the safeguarding system, ensuring feedback loops that inform prevention, improve detection and strengthen overall system effectiveness.

Equity implications in response and case management

An equity perspective highlights the need for differentiated and context-sensitive responses:

- **Gender**: Responses must explicitly address power imbalances (e.g. coach–athlete relationships) and ensure that decisions are not influenced by the status or prestige of the alleged perpetrator.
- **LGBTQI+**: Case management must ensure strict confidentiality, particularly where disclosure of sexual orientation or gender identity may pose additional risks. Responses should also address structural issues (e.g. unsafe spaces) beyond individual incidents.
- **Disability**: Responses may require individualised adaptations (e.g. communication methods, support structures), ensuring that children with different needs can access protection and continue participating safely.
- **Socio-economic diversity**: Case management should consider material barriers (e.g. access to care, transport, costs) that may affect recovery and continued participation, not limiting response to the incident itself.
- **Cultural diversity**: Responses must be culturally sensitive, avoiding misinterpretation of behaviours and ensuring appropriate conditions (e.g. gender-sensitive support, mediation) to protect the child effectively.

5. Governance and system-level conditions

The analysis confirms that governance is a determining factor in the effectiveness of safeguarding systems, as it shapes whether child protection is treated as a formal requirement or as a structural organisational priority.

A first fundamental gap concerns the **limited integration of safeguarding within organisational governance and strategic decision-making**. In many cases, safeguarding remains peripheral, fragmented or treated as a compliance requirement rather than as a core function.

- **Implication for the model**: Safeguarding must be institutionalised within governance structures, including formal policies approved at the highest level, clear strategic priorities and integration across all areas of organisational activity.

A second gap relates to the **lack of leadership commitment and "tone from the top"**. Without visible and sustained commitment from leadership, safeguarding policies may lack legitimacy, resources and effective implementation.

- **Implication for the model**: Leadership must actively promote safeguarding as a central value, ensuring that children's well-being is prioritised over performance, reputation or short-term outcomes.

Another key gap concerns the **insufficient allocation of resources**. Many organisations, particularly at grassroots level, lack the financial and human resources required to implement

safeguarding measures effectively, including training, specialised roles and monitoring systems.

- **Implication for the model**: Governance must ensure sustainable resource allocation, including funding for safeguarding roles, training and operational tools, recognising protection as a core organisational responsibility.

A further gap is the **limited authority, independence and clarity of safeguarding roles**, such as Protection or Welfare Officers. In some cases, these roles are symbolic or lack the capacity to act effectively.

- **Implication for the model**: Safeguarding roles must be clearly defined, accessible and endowed with sufficient authority, independence and resources to manage concerns, coordinate actions and build trust within the organisation.

The analysis also highlights a **lack of accountability and monitoring mechanisms**. Safeguarding systems are not always systematically evaluated, and there is limited use of data to assess effectiveness or identify gaps.

- **Implication for the model**: Governance must include accountability frameworks, such as regular audits, monitoring systems and performance indicators, ensuring continuous evaluation and improvement of safeguarding practices.

Another important gap concerns the **weak integration of safeguarding within multi-agency and community systems**. Sport organisations often operate in isolation, limiting their capacity to respond to complex cases or systemic risks.

- **Implication for the model**: Governance should promote intersectoral collaboration, establishing formal partnerships with social services, education, health systems and protection agencies to create a coordinated protection network.

A further gap relates to the **limited participation of children and families or guardians in governance processes**. Safeguarding systems are often designed without incorporating the perspectives of those directly affected.

- **Implication for the model**: Governance must include mechanisms for meaningful participation of children and families or guardians, ensuring that policies and practices reflect their experiences and needs.

The analysis also identifies a **lack of transparency and accessibility in safeguarding systems**. Information about procedures, roles and rights is not always clearly communicated, reducing trust and usability.

- **Implication for the model**: Governance must ensure transparency, including clear communication of safeguarding processes, roles and contact points, accessible to all stakeholders.

Finally, there is a **limited integration of equity and inclusion within governance frameworks**. Safeguarding policies may not fully address structural inequalities affecting different groups of children and adolescents.

- **Implication for the model**: Governance must explicitly incorporate an equity perspective, ensuring that safeguarding systems address differentiated risks, barriers

and needs across gender, LGBTQI+, disability, socio-economic and cultural dimensions.

Equity implications in governance

An equity lens highlights that governance decisions play a central role in either reproducing or addressing structural inequalities:

- **Gender**: Governance must move beyond the assumption of neutrality and actively address gender inequalities in resource allocation, leadership and recognition, as well as challenge the perception of gender inequality as a “non-issue”.
- **LGBTQI+**: Governance structures must review policies, procedures and organisational norms (e.g. registration systems, categories, use of spaces) that reproduce binary and heteronormative assumptions.
- **Disability**: Governance must ensure that inclusion is not based on assimilation to normative sport models, but on adapting structures, resources and decision-making processes to diverse needs.
- **Socio-economic diversity**: Governance must address structural inequalities linked to cost, access and territorial distribution of resources, avoiding models that rely exclusively on family financial capacity.
- **Cultural diversity**: Governance must prevent institutional assimilation, promote intercultural competence and ensure representation of diverse groups within leadership and decision-making structures.

Emerging debates and design implications

The following debates summarise the main institutional choices that should guide the model. They identify risks that may affect implementation and translate them into design decisions for the 360 Safe Play framework.

Table 10. Emerging debates and design implications for the 360 Safe Play model

Debate	Risk identified	Design decision for the model
Protocol vs culture	Protocols may exist formally but fail to modify everyday routines, behaviours and informal norms.	Each protocol should be accompanied by practical tools, examples, visual materials and routines for daily use.
Shared responsibility vs concrete responsibilities	Safeguarding may become diluted if responsibility is expressed only in general terms.	The model should include a matrix of roles, functions, escalation steps and reviewable responsibilities.
Common language vs local interpretation	Concepts such as violence, poor practice, discrimination or neglect may be interpreted differently across clubs and countries.	The model should provide common definitions and examples while allowing contextual adaptation.
Multiple channels vs safe channels	An increase in the number of reporting channels does not guarantee safer reporting if confidentiality, care and accessibility are weak.	The model should prioritise confidentiality, child-friendly design, accessibility, data protection, emotional support and non-revictimisation.

Debate	Risk identified	Design decision for the model
Internal management vs external support	Clubs may lack the expertise, authority or independence to manage complex cases alone.	The model should define escalation criteria, external referral pathways and support networks with specialised actors.
Safeguarding officer as internal figure vs independent figure	The person responsible for safeguarding may face conflicts of interest, limited authority or insufficient impartiality.	The model should establish minimum quality criteria for the role, including independence, supervision, training, limits and access to external advice.
Restoration vs formal protection	Restorative practices may be misused if they replace formal protection procedures or pressure the affected child.	The model should define suitability criteria, ensure voluntariness and establish the principle of non-substitution.
Equity as principle vs equity as methodology	The equity lens may remain declarative if it does not modify tools, procedures and evaluation mechanisms.	The model should include a mandatory equity check in every dimension, material, channel and review process.
Simplicity vs accountability	Clubs need simple and usable tools, but safeguarding also requires records, follow-up and organisational learning.	The model should use minimum, clear and proportional documentation that supports accountability without overburdening clubs.

Debate	Risk identified	Design decision for the model
European coherence vs local adaptation	A single rigid model may not fit different legal, institutional and organisational contexts.	The model should define common minimum standards, quality criteria and modular tools adaptable by country, federation and club type.

These debates provide a framework for implementation rather than a list of secondary issues. They indicate where the model must define minimum standards, where it must allow adaptation and where it must establish safeguards that cannot be optional.

The institutional value of the 360 Safe Play model will depend on its capacity to combine simplicity with accountability, common European coherence with local applicability, and practical club-level tools with robust protection guarantees. The model should therefore be designed as a modular but demanding system: simple enough to be used by clubs, and strong enough to protect children, support decision-making and sustain continuous improvement.

Annexes

Search protocol

1) Question & scope

1.1 Review question

"What legal/policy frameworks and evidence-based best practices exist to prevent, detect, and respond safely to violence against children in grassroots sport settings, and what transferable elements should be embedded in the 360 Safe Play System?"

1.2 Scope (PEO)

- **Population:** children and adolescents **6–14** (include up to **18** when sources define "children/minors" broadly or set general safeguarding duties for all minors)
- **Exposure/Issue:** violence affecting children in sport contexts (physical, psychological/emotional, sexual, neglect; bullying/harassment; discrimination/exclusion; online abuse **when linked to sport or when general law/policy sets relevant safeguarding/reporting duties**)
- **Setting:** grassroots sport organisations (clubs, community sport, coaches/volunteers, sport associations/federations when setting safeguarding standards; school sport only if it functions as a sport club ecosystem or provides transferable safeguarding requirements)
- **Expected outcomes (what we extract):** prevention measures; early detection indicators/mechanisms; reporting/referral pathways; response/case management protocols; training/interventions; governance/accountability.

1.3 Time window + exceptions

- **Default: Legislation, regulations (if relevant, last 10 years); best practices** last **6 years. "Better short time slot to deepen the research".**
- **Include even if older (exceptions):**
  - Foundational **laws/regulations** still in force (child protection acts, mandatory reporting duties, criminal code provisions relevant to minors)
  - Seminal safeguarding frameworks or sport governance standards **still applicable**
  - Authoritative international conventions that define obligations (when referenced in national frameworks)

1.4 Languages

- **Core:** English
- **National:** Spanish, Italian, Bulgarian
- **Additional (as relevant/available):** French/Catalan (project languages)

1.5 Geography

- **EU level** + **Spain / Italy / Bulgaria**
- "Gold standard" non-pilot practices may be included if they are:
  - widely adopted across EU sport settings **or**
  - supported by evaluations and clearly transferable to grassroots clubs.

2) Inclusion/exclusion criteria (screening rules)

2.1 Include

- **EU and national legal & policy**: directives/regulations, national laws, statutory guidance, ministerial/authority guidance

- **Sport governance**: federation/association safeguarding frameworks, codes of conduct, disciplinary/complaints procedures, duty of care standards
- **Research evidence**: peer-reviewed studies; systematic/rapid reviews; programme evaluations; implementation studies
- **Practice guidance** (credible bodies): toolkits, protocols, training manuals (UN agencies, Council of Europe, national authorities, established NGOs)
- **Outputs granted CERV/Daphne projects**: include only when they provide **operational tools**, evaluated approaches, or clearly defined safeguarding mechanisms relevant to sport

2.2 Exclude

- Opinion/editorials without operational guidance
- Items not related to children/adolescents or not applicable to safeguarding minors
- Settings not meaningfully sport-related (unless clearly transferable and explicitly linked)
- Duplicates; superseded versions (keep latest; log earlier version only if relevant for change tracking)
- Paywalled/inaccessible full texts (record as **"not retrieved"** with reason)
- Pure communication products (news posts, general campaign pages) without substantive guidance/tools

2.3 Prioritisation (to take into consideration online if deliverable / document it too extense).

- **Tier 1 (must include):** binding laws/statutory guidance; safeguarding authority guidance; federation standards that govern clubs
- **Tier 2:** evaluated programmes; strong frameworks with clear implementation tools
- **Tier 3:** local toolkits (include if practical and credible)

3) Information sources (where to search)

Lane A — Bibliographic databases

- Scopus / Web of Science
- Google Scholar (bounded approach; record how many results screened per query)

Lane B — EU / international institutional

- EU child rights/violence/sport policy portals (relevant directorates/services)
- Council of Europe (child safeguarding; sport integrity; violence prevention)
- UNICEF / WHO (violence prevention frameworks applicable to child safeguarding)
- Eurochild and recognised child-rights networks (policy/practice guidance)
- Output(s) of granted EU projects (CERV/Daphne/Erasmus+, among others).

Lane C — National + sport sector (ES/IT/BG)

Per country:

- child protection authority / ombuds / relevant ministries
- sport council/ministry / safeguarding units
- major sport federations (youth-sport heavy)
- established NGOs in child protection and safeguarding in sport

Optional (if all above completed):

1) **Grey literature search method**
   - Use targeted web searches limited to trusted domains + document types (PDF) + local-language keywords
   - Log each query (source "Google/website"), date, and screening limit (e.g., "first 50 results")
2) **Backward Snowballing searching (controlled)**

- Identify additional studies by reviewing the reference lists (bibliographies) of a set of already-included “seed” articles.
- For each seed article, extract and screen its reference list.
- Screen references by title/abstract and, where needed, by full text, using the same inclusion/exclusion criteria as the main search.
- Deduplicate records (DOI/title match) before assessing eligibility.
- Predefine limits (language, time window, document type) and a stopping rule (e.g., one iteration, or stop when no new eligible studies are found).

4) Build and record the search strategy (strings + documentation) Add: gender, disabilities, risk exclusion, etc.

4.1 Keyword blocks (expanded)
Block 1 — Child safeguarding/violence

- safeguarding; “child safeguarding”; “child protection”; “child welfare”; “child rights”
- violence; abuse; maltreatment; harassment; bullying; exploitation
- “safe sport”; “duty of care”; “code of conducts”
- reporting; disclosure; referral; complaints; whistleblowing
- “early detection”; “warning signs”; “risk indicators”; “screening”
- Intersectional axis: gender, disabilities, exclusion risk…

4.2 Example core string (English)
(safeguarding OR "child protection" OR "safe sport" OR abuse OR violence OR harassment OR bullying) AND (sport* OR "sports club*" OR grassroots OR coach* OR volunteer* OR "youth sport" OR federation) AND (training OR toolkit OR protocol* OR guideline* OR reporting OR referral OR "early detection" OR "complaints mechanism")
(“child safeguarding” OR “child violence” OR “child rights” OR “child protection” OR harassment OR abuse) AND (sport OR activities OR “sports clubs” OR “community sport” OR “safeguardig officer” OR association) AND (Policy OR law OR “best practice” OR “training” OR detection OR protection”)

4.3 Country add-ons (use in databases as needed)

- Spain: Spain OR Spanish OR Catalonia OR Generalitat
- Italy: Italy OR Italian OR Ministero OR CONI
- Bulgaria: Bulgaria OR Bulgarian

4.4 Recording (non-negotiable)
Maintain a **Search Log** with:

- Source (database/site), exact query string, date searched, filters, number of hits, export file name

5) Screening workflow (PRISMA-lite)

1. **Deduplicate** (record count removed)
2. **Stage 1: Title/abstract** (or executive summary for grey literature)
3. **Stage 2: Full text screening** (apply criteria; record exclusion reasons)

Standard exclusion reasons list:
Not child-focused • Not sport-relevant • No operational guidance • Duplicate/superseded • Not retrievable • Out of scope

PRISMA-lite evidence: flow counts + brief description of simplifications (e.g., limited databases; partial double screening)

Country snapshot pack

Bulgaria: country snapshot – Child Protection in Sport

The Bulgarian system is built upon a solid general child protection framework, though its specific integration into the sports sector is still in a development phase. The main pillars include:

- **Child Protection Act:** (last amended in 2023), which serves as the primary legal foundation.
- **National Strategy for the Child 2019–2030:** Sets the broad strategic directions for child welfare.
- **National Programme for Prevention of Violence and Abuse against Children (2023–2026):** Accompanied by a detailed Action Plan, it aims to reduce violence and exploitation through inter-sectoral cooperation.
- **International Conventions:** Bulgaria has adopted the Lanzarote Convention and grounds its framework in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Unlike more specialized models, sport-specific safeguarding obligations in Bulgaria are less consolidated, and sport is currently viewed as an "emerging area" within the protection agenda. The system is highly institutionalized, with the State Agency for Child Protection (SACP) and the inter-institutional coordination mechanism playing central roles. There are currently fewer consolidated sport-specific duties (such as mandatory protection delegates) compared to the Spanish or Italian models. The emphasis is on applying general child protection mechanisms to sports environments. The proposed "roadmap" for Bulgaria suggests a shift toward creating Child Safeguarding Officer roles within sport to bridge existing gaps.

Bulgaria utilises a coordinated national mechanism for managing reports of violence:

- **National Child Helpline 116 111:** A critical tool that has seen a strong rise in use, with 438 reports channelled through this service in 2024 alone.
- **Multidisciplinary teams:** Upon receiving a signal, the system mobilizes mixed teams for initial intervention (conducting over 1,700 intake meetings in 2024).
- **Coordination mechanism:** Reporting involves a shared responsibility between police, schools, and social services under a formal inter-institutional framework.

While a foundational infrastructure exists, its effective application to the sports sector faces several challenges:

- **Mainstreaming sport:** There is a documented need for a sport-specific roadmap to translate general protection policies into practical field-level routines for clubs.
- **Continuity of care:** While the system reacts quickly to initial reports, there is less consistency in long-term case management and follow-up.
- **Health system gap:** Reports indicate a continuing weakness in the low number of signals coming from personal doctors and the broader health system.
- **Under-reporting of cyberviolence:** Despite the rise in reported physical and psychological violence, cyberviolence reports remain extremely low (only 4 cases in 2024), which is viewed as evidence of significant under-reporting

Spain: Country Snapshot – Child Protection in Sport

Spain’s framework is a layered system centred on Organic Law 8/2021 (LOPIVI). This law represents a decisive turning point because it explicitly recognizes sport as a setting where violence against children can occur. This national framework is further strengthened by Law 39/2022 on Sport, which directly imports LOPIVI’s safeguarding duties into the sports system, making the protection of minors a matter of "special protection".

Sports entities working regularly with minors have strict legal obligations:

- **Safeguarding protocols:** Implementation of protocols to create safe environments, focusing on prevention, early detection, and intervention.
- **Child Protection Delegate:** Mandatory appointment of a designated figure to serve as a child-facing access point, disseminate protocols, and initiate communication if violence is detected.
- **Background checks:** Requirement of a negative certificate from the Register of Sexual Offenders and Trafficking in Human Beings for any role involving regular contact with minors.
- **Complementary measures:** Implementing monitoring systems, promoting child participation, reinforcing communication with families, and ensuring specific training on disability and inclusive sport.

Spain imposes a general duty to report any signs of violence against a child, a duty that is reinforced for professionals in the sport and leisure sectors. Clubs are part of the "protection chain" but are not meant to conduct quasi-criminal investigations internally. Concerning procedure, their role is limited to early detection, immediate protection, documentation, and cooperation with social services, the police, or the Prosecutor's office.

While the legal framework is ambitious, a significant implementation gap remains:

- **Grassroots clubs:** Small associations often lack operational protocols, child-friendly reporting channels, and specialized safeguarding expertise.
- **Operationalisation:** Many organizations still struggle to define the practical daily role of the delegate and establish clear internal case-management procedures.
- **Regional dependency:** The effectiveness of some obligations depends on the development of specific regulations at the level of Autonomous Communities.

The regions of Catalonia and Euskadi serve as models for operationalizing national requirements:

- **Catalonia:** Uses a Framework Protocol (2023/2025) that translates national duties into concrete internal governance tools and referral pathways, emphasizing the child's right to be heard.
- **Euskadi (Basque Country):** Features a strongly systematized regional model under Law 2/2024, which treats safeguarding as a shared responsibility across sport, education, and community environments.

Italy: Country Snapshot – Child Protection in Sport

The Italian system has undergone a radical transformation, moving from informal management to a strict legal obligation through the Sport Reform. This framework is built upon two major legislative pillars: Legislative Decrees 36/2021 and 39/2021. A historic milestone was also marked by the amendment of Article 33 of the Italian Constitution, which now officially recognizes the educational and social value of sporting activity, mandating that the State guarantee safety within these environments. CONI (Italian National Olympic Committee) oversees this system through its fundamental principles and its Permanent Observatory for Safeguarding Policies.

The shift from an ethical expectation to a legal duty imposes several concrete obligations on amateur sports associations (ASD) and sporting societies (SSD):

- **Organisational and Control Models (MOG):** Entities must adopt risk management models and codes of conduct by August 31, 2024.
- **Appointment of a Safeguarding Officer:** Every structure must formalize the appointment of a manager responsible for preventing abuse, violence, and discrimination by December 31, 2024.
- **Vetting and background checks:** Criminal record checks (the anti-pedophilia certificate according to D.Lgs. 39/2014) are mandatory for all staff working regularly with minors.

- **Practical protocols:** The framework mandates strict rules regarding the separation of changing rooms, the prohibition of unsupervised one-on-one sessions, and the regulation of digital contact between coaches and minors to prevent grooming.

The Italian model relies on a "cascade" structure (CONI > Federations/EPS > Local Clubs). The Safeguarding Officer is not a police investigator but a guarantor of integrity. They receive reports, monitor protocol implementation, and act as the internal point of reference. Concerning procedure, the system requires transparent reporting channels that ensure whistleblower confidentiality and rigorous documentary traceability. In the event of unlawful acts, the protection of the individual must always prevail over the organization's reputation, with direct cooperation directed toward federal prosecutors or the ordinary justice system.

Despite an ambitious legislative framework, several challenges remain:

- **Administrative burden:** Small structures (ASD/SSD) often perceive these obligations as complex and bureaucratic.
- **Need for support:** Clubs require pre-validated templates (such as those offered by entities like OPES) to reduce costs and facilitate compliance.
- **Cultural barriers:** Obstacles to reporting still exist, where a lack of formal complaints is sometimes wrongly interpreted as an absence of underlying issues.

The report highlights several successful implementations:

- **Caserta (Tam Tam Basketball):** Prioritizes the total well-being of the athlete over sporting results.
- **Borgosesia (ASD Arcobaleno):** Initiated a child protection policy centered on education.
- **Genoa (Sportiva Sturla):** Established strict procedures against negligence and psychological abuse.
- **Veneto (Volley Silea):** Focuses on digital safety by prohibiting unsupervised private contact between coaches and athletes.

Comparative matrix by country

National legal framework	Sport-specific safeguarding obligations	Designated safeguarding role	Reporting obligations	Background checks	Protocols / Codes of conduct required	Inclusion / Anti-discrimination requirements	Main gaps	Implication for 360 Safe Play
Italy Art. 27/33 of Constitution; Legislative Decree 33/36/39 (Art. 16)-2021 (Sports Reform); CONI Guidelines; Penal Code Art 609-undecides; Civil Code art.2048	Mandatory adoption of Organizational and Control Models (MOG) and Codes of Conduct; transition from ethical expectation to formal legal duty for all local sports facilities (amateur & professional): Recent Sports Reform.	Cascade model: Permanent observatory / Federations and Sports Promotion Entities + National Safeguarding Officer / Safeguarding Officer sports facilities	Internal reporting via Safeguarding Officer; emphasis on accessibility, privacy and formal logging; recommendation to make reporting of all kind of violence mandatory for all personnel to state authorities.	Mandatory Anti-Pedophilia Certificate (D.Lgs. 39/2014) for all staff; vetting mechanism to prevent convicted abusers from professional contact with children.	Mandatory Organizational and Control Models (MOG) and Codes of Conduct to map risks; national plans for prevention of bullying and cyberbullying.	D.Lgs. 39/2021 prevents discrimination (race, religion, disability, age, orientation); D.Lgs. 66/2017 (disability inclusion); focus on psychophysical well-being.	Mandatory duties in place but complex for small clubs; "culture of silence" persists; lack of national data collection.	Tools should simplify compliance for small associations, align with anti-bullying protocols, and support the transition toward mandatory reporting.
Spain Art. 39 of Constitution; LOPIVI (Organic Law 8/2021); Law 39/2022 (Sport); Law 1/1996 (Legal Protection of Minors); Organic Laws 10/2022 – 3/2020 – 5/2000 ; Law 15/2022; General Disability Law; Law 4/2023; Regional frameworks (Catalonia Law 14/2010; Euskadi Law 2/2024).	Mandatory obligation to protect and communicate in case of doubt; protocols for safe environments, monitoring, anti-discrimination, family communication, child participation, and inclusive-sport training.	Child Protection Delegate Everyone in contact with children is responsible	Reinforced professional duty to report immediately to social services, police, or Prosecutor; clubs detect and document but do not investigate.	Mandatory negative certificate from the Register of Sexual Offenders and Trafficking in Human Beings for all roles with regular contact with minors.	Mandatory protocols for building safe environments, prevention, early detection, and intervention for all entities working with minors.	Law 39/2022 prohibits discrimination (age, race, disability, orientation); mandatory inclusive-sport training and LGTBI rights/accessibility protocols.	Advanced legal framework, but uneven operationalisation in grassroots sport; small clubs lack resources, child-friendly complaint channels, and clarity CSO' role and identifying a risk situation.	Tools should help clubs operationalise legal duties and translate broad laws into internal governance and case-management procedures.
Bulgaria Child Protection Act (amended 2023); National Strategy for the Child 2024–2030; National Programme for	Emerging area; roadmap exists for integrating safeguarding roles in sport, though less	Child Safeguarding Officer role is emerging; roadmap points toward	Inter-institutional coordination mechanism; multidisciplinary teams; National	General child protection norms require vetting, but less explicit sport-specific requirements	National Programme includes measures against violence in educational settings; sport-specific protocols are	Protection Against Discrimination Act; National Strategy for Roma (2021-2030); focus on children with	Enabling infrastructure exists, but sport-specific field is still being built; weak continuity in follow-up; low	Tools should help structure and mainstream sport-specific safeguarding practice and

Prevention of Violence and Abuse (2023–2026).	consolidated than Italy or Spain.	formalizing this in sports organizations.	Child Helpline 116 111.	compared to Italy or Spain.	currently under construction.	disabilities and rural areas.	reporting from health system.	improve feedback loops between clubs and social services.

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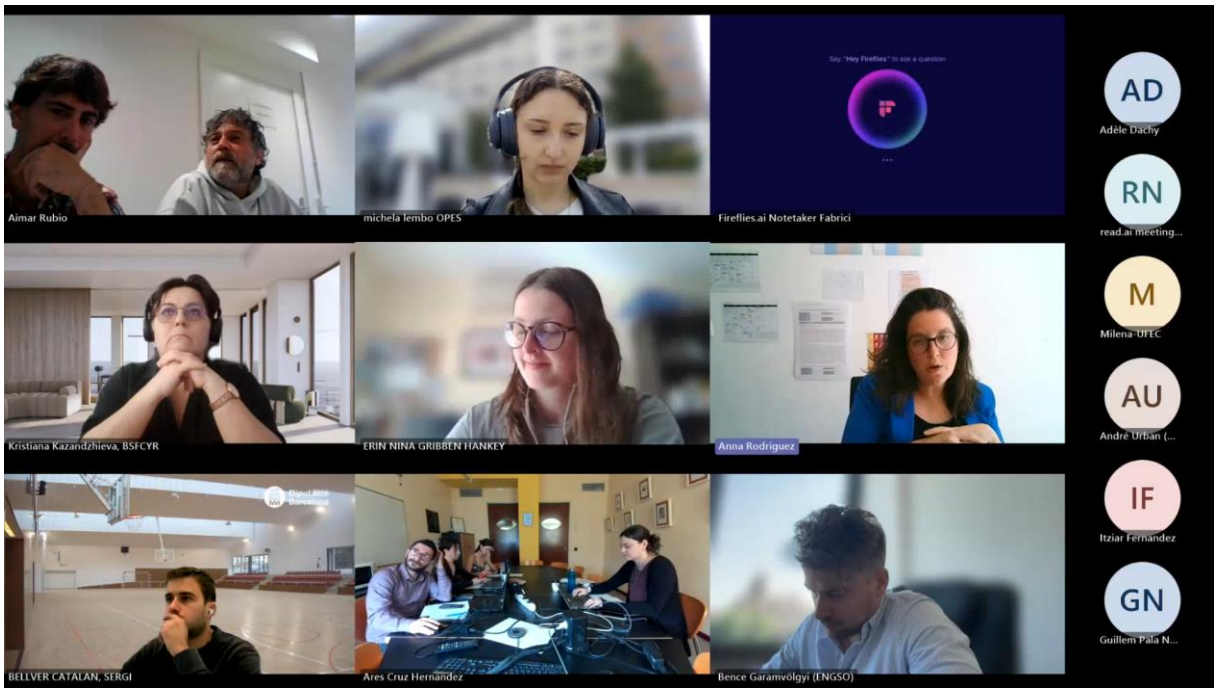
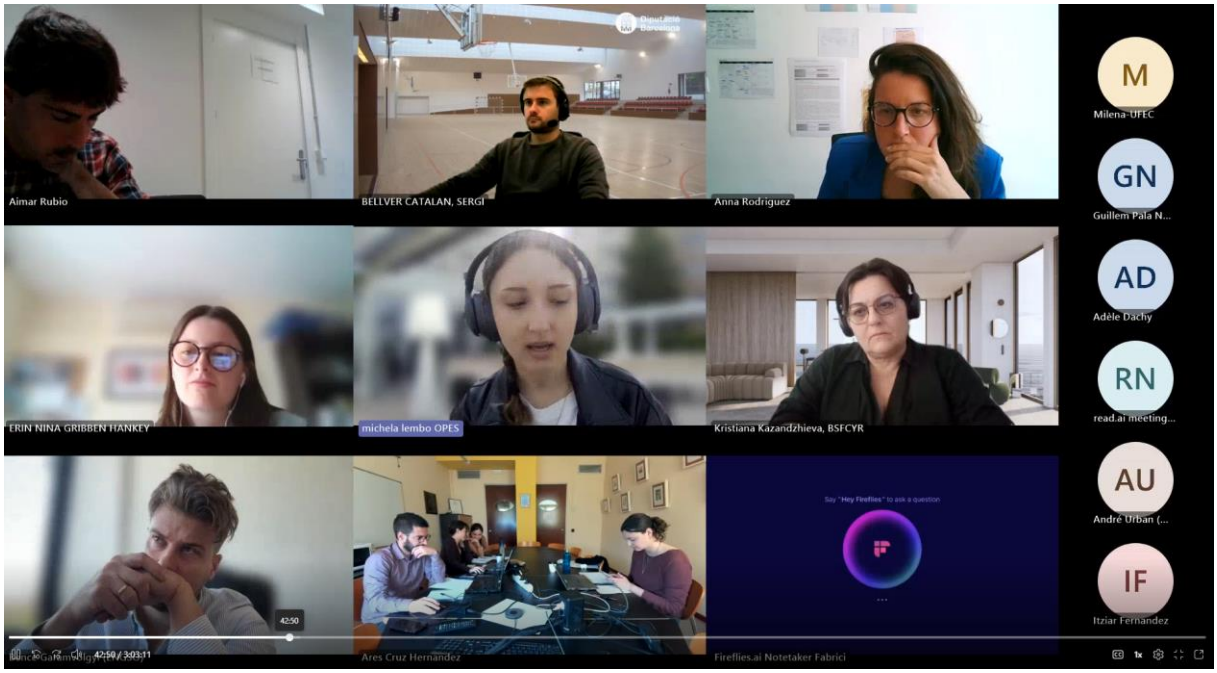
Attendance record to consortium's webinar

Name	Institution
Ferran Peiro	DIBA
Sergi Bellver	DIBA
Milena de Murga	UFEC
Erin Gribben	UFEC
André Urban	OPES
Michela Lembo	OPES
Pierre Trbovic	DEI BELGIQUE
Anna Rodriguez	DEI BELGIQUE
Adèle Dachy	DEI BELGIQUE
Bence Garamvölgyi	ENGSO
Itziar Fernandez	EDE
Aimar Rubio	EDE
Iskandar Cabezas	EDE
Kristiana Kazandzhieva	BSFCYR
Fabricio Busi	FPT
Ares Cruz	FPT
Guillem Palà	FPT
Lara Sanchez	FPT
Rahila Raya	FPT
Joana Forn	FPT

Webinar screenshots




Aimar Rubio
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Anna Rodriguez
ERIN NINA GRIBBEN HANKEY
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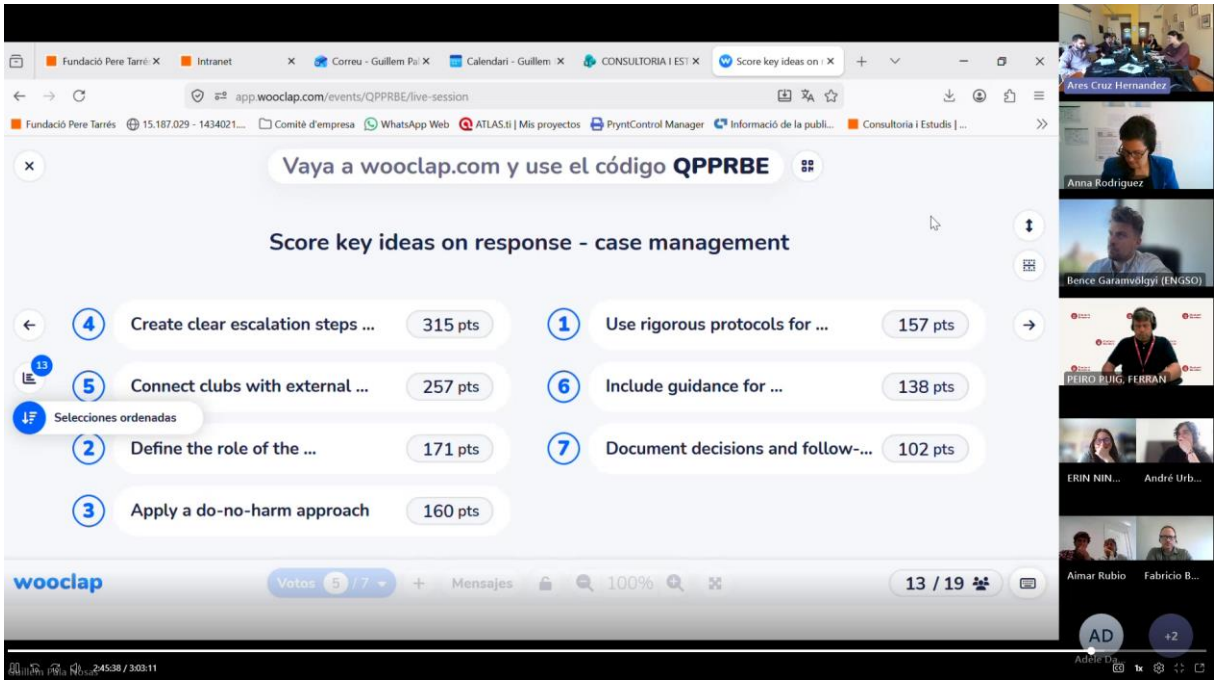
app.wooclap.com/events/QPPRBE/live-session
Vaya a wooclap.com y use el código QPPRBE
Score key ideas on response - case management
4 Create clear escalation steps ... 315 pts
1 Use rigorous protocols for ... 157 pts
5 Connect clubs with external ... 257 pts
6 Include guidance for ... 138 pts
Selecciones ordenadas
2 Define the role of the ... 171 pts
7 Document decisions and follow-... 102 pts
3 Apply a do-no-harm approach 160 pts
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Votos 5 / 7
Mensajes
100%
13 / 19
Ares Cruz Hernandez
Anna Rodriguez
Bence Garamvölgyi (ENGSO)
PEIRO RUIG, FERRAN
ERIN NIN...
André Urb...
Aimar Rubio
Fabricio B...
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Best practices collected

Title	URL	Summary
COACH - Countering Online Anti-Gypsyism and Cyber Hate	https://amalipe.bg	Counters online antigypsyism and cyber hate by equipping youth, CSOs and stakeholders with awareness, reporting and counter-narrative tools.
Essay Program on Saving of Bulgaria's Jewish Community during WWII	http://www.foundationbulgariainternational.com	Uses essay writing on the rescue of Bulgaria's Jewish community during WWII to promote tolerance, historical memory and reflection against discrimination.
"Discrimination Free Schools" Project	https://kzd-nondiscrimination.com/?page_id=6950	Provides school-based training and toolkits to help educators and students recognise and prevent discrimination and bullying.
Blinded by Hate Program	https://www.bghelsinki.org	Uses human-rights and anti-hate educational materials to prevent discrimination, intolerance and bias-motivated violence.
Supporting Roma students for successful completion of secondary education	https://pglp-kn.com/?page_id=808	Combines monitoring, mentoring and support to help Roma students remain in school and complete secondary education.
Programa ATERPE — Área de Protección a la Infancia del Athletic Club	https://www.athletic-club.eus/programa-aterpe/informacion/	Athletic Club's child-protection policy uses a Child Protection Officer, training, protocols and reporting channels to create safe sport spaces.
Good Practice Guide for Safeguarding in Sport – Oviedo City Council (EQUIP Programme)	https://cnedoviedo.es/guia-de-buenas-practicas-de-proteccion-en-el-deporte-adolescentes/	Local guide translating safeguarding duties into practical recommendations for adolescent sport settings.
Guidelines to Promote Trans, Intersex and Non-Binary Inclusion in Grassroots Sport (ADI LGTBI+)	https://banderaslgtb.com/adi-lgtbi-decalogo-deporte-base/	Decalogue for trans, intersex and non-binary inclusion in grassroots sport, focusing on respectful facilities, names and participation.
i-Protect – Platform for Child Safeguarding in Sport	https://deportejoven.es/entornos-seguros-infancia-deporte/	EU platform and toolkit for grassroots sport stakeholders with resources to protect minors' integrity and prevent or respond to violence.
KIROLA ON	https://www.bizkaia.eus/es/kirolak/kirolaon	Child-friendly digital channel to report violence or concerns in school sport and follow up securely.
Save Football	https://savefootball.es/	Quality certification and training model helping football clubs prevent violence and conflict through safer emotional and social environments.

Additional factsheets – PARCS 2.0	How can I ensure that my organisation's child safeguarding policy takes particular account of children....	Factsheets adapt safeguarding guidance for children in poverty or precarity, LGBTQIA+ children and children with disabilities in sport.
We do sports to live and coexist	https://www.castelldefels.org/ca/serveis/participacio-ciutadana/convivencia/fem-esport-per-viure-i-conviure	Castelldefels programme to improve coexistence in sports facilities through diagnosis, community awareness and improvement actions.
Protocol for the protection of children and adolescents against violence in the sports field	https://www.cornella.cat/ca/viure-a-cornella/cornella-humana/esport/vull-fer-esport/valors-a-lesport	Municipal sport-values and child-protection framework linking ethical sport, LOPIVI protocols and a protection delegate.
Incidence and prevalence of eating disorders in competitive athletes	https://www.federginnastica.it/safeguarding.html	Safeguarding-office practice focused on identifying and monitoring eating-disorder risks among competitive athletes.
Hospitalet de Llobregat violence prevention protocol	https://www.l-h.cat/gdocs/d1668687.pdf	Municipal protocol for preventing, detecting and responding to violence against children and adolescents in sports activities.
A Mataró Esport Segur	https://www.mataro.cat/ca/temes/esports/esport-segur/esport-segur/protocol-versio-final-3-0_portada-1.pdf	Local protection protocol and safe-sport strategy to guide prevention, reporting, response and governance in municipal sport.
Regulation of sporting activities	https://www.clubsportroma.it/safeguarding.html	Club safeguarding page defining safe, respectful and inclusive sport, with conduct codes and organisational controls.
French Cycling Federation child-friendly booklet	https://velo.ffc.fr/engagements-ffc/preventions/violence/	French Cycling Federation comic-style booklet helps children identify, discuss and report violence in sport.
MOG and social contacts	https://www.volleysilea.it/index.php/accredito/safeguarding	Club safeguarding compliance materials set roles, conduct rules and contact channels for reporting abuse or discrimination.
Malpractice proceedings	https://www.sportivasturla.it/safeguarding/	Club-level safeguarding procedure for handling misconduct and maintaining accountability in sport activities.
FEEC protocol	https://www.feec.cat/qui-som/protocols/	Federation protocol creates intervention circuits for violence, maltreatment and sexual abuse in mountain-sport activities.
Promotion of gender equality	ASD Arcobaleno - Documentazione	Sport Arcobaleno safeguarding model sets conduct and organisational rules to support safe, inclusive and discrimination-free sport.
El abuso sexual infantil queda fuera de juego	https://www.csd.gob.es/es/el-abuso-sexual-infantil-queda-fuera-de-juego	Activity guides for coaches and PE teachers to prevent and detect child sexual abuse in sport across age groups.
Preventive Framework of the Swedish Sports Confederation	https://www.rf.se/rf-arbetar-med/trygg-inkluderande-och-jamstalld-idrott/trygg-idrott	Swedish sport framework uses safe-sport routines, register checks and RF support to protect children.

Aanspreekpersoon Integriteit in Flanders	https://www.sport.vlaanderen/veilig-sportklimaat/regelgeving-en-beleid/?utm_source=chatgpt.com	Flanders integrity contact-person model gives clubs and federations a designated reporting and guidance role for integrity concerns.
“4 V’s for Safety”	https://nocnsf.nl/nederland-sport-veilig	NOC*NSF’s four safety basics are a conduct code, confidential contact person, background checks and skilled coaches.
Sport Ireland Safeguarding Guidance	https://www.sportireland.ie/ethics/news/safeguarding-guidance-for-children-and-young-people-in-sport	National guidance supports sport bodies with risk assessment, safeguarding statements and child-protection policies and procedures.
Child Protection Sport Unit	https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/outside-the-home/sports-clubs/	NSPCC/CPSU guidance helps parents and clubs assess safe sport through safeguarding officers, policies, training and reporting processes.
FCEH protocol	https://www.fceh.cat/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Protocol-contra-les-viol%C3%A8ncies-en-lesport_-FCEH.pdf	Winter sports federation protocol for preventing and addressing violence in sport, including reporting and response pathways.
Esport segur. (Re)conèixer, parlar i actuar	https://esport.gencat.cat/web/.content/home/arees_dactuacio/esport_i_genere/violencia_masclista_esport/guia_breu_esport_segur.pdf	Short Generalitat guide helps adults recognise, talk about and act on violence in sport.
Protocol Marc de protecció d’infants i adolescents	https://esport.gencat.cat/web/.content/home/secretaria_general_de_lesport/Consell_Catala_Esport/normativa/acord_gov_23_protocol_proteccio_violencia.pdf	Catalan framework protocol for protecting children and adolescents from violence in sport, covering prevention, detection and intervention.
If It Happens, Don’t Ignore It	https://www.savethechildren.es/sites/default/files/2024-04/00_GUIA_per_a_docents.pdf	Save the Children toolkit for teachers to address online violence through classroom guidance and practical activities.
PROTEGEmos	https://educowebmedia.blob.core.windows.net/educowebmedia/educospain/media/docs/landing/protegemos/protegemos-para-entidades-sociales.pdf	Educo guide supports social entities in starting and implementing organisational child-protection policies.
Pro Safe Sport+ Training kit	https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/pss/training-kit	Council of Europe training kit provides factsheets for preventing, identifying and responding to sexual violence in sport.
Violence intervention: how to train future protection delegates in sport	https://www.revistaretos.org/index.php/retos/article/view/98567/73800	Academic article proposes training future sport protection delegates to identify violence and implement safeguarding roles.
Violence, do we identify it and debate it?	https://www.peretarres.org/es/facultad/investigacion/maleta-pedagogica-lopivi/actividades/actividad11	Pere Tarrés workshop helps adolescents identify forms of violence and debate prevention and response actions.
Spain: LOPIVI + RD 193/2023	https://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2023-7417	Legal framework combining child-safeguarding obligations in sport and leisure with accessibility and non-discrimination duties.
Myths and Facts Workshop for Safe Sport	https://www.peretarres.org/es/facultad/investigacion/maleta-pedagogica-lopivi/actividades/actividad14	Interactive workshop for monitors to clarify LOPIVI duties, safe spaces and essential prevention and detection mechanisms.

Belgian Criminal Record Extract Model 2	https://gallilex.cfwb.be/sites/default/files/imports/49972_000.pdf	Legal screening tool requiring criminal-record checks for roles involving regular contact with minors.

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