

# Safe Environments for QAS Supported Athletes

## ONSITE

### Creating a safe environment onsite

QAS facilities should feel safe and welcoming for QAS supported athletes accessing the facilities.

#### This includes:

-  Inviting entrance
-  Artworks, flags and an Acknowledgement of Country
-  Easy access to QAS staff for support
-  Clear contact details for QAS staff and/or security in case of an emergency
-  Appropriate lighting, especially in the carpark
-  No hazards or maintenance issues (for eg. broken toilet locks)

QAS staff should also be aware of people accessing the facilities who are visiting the QAS, accessing the co-located services and businesses or members of the public and put active measures in place to mitigate any risks to athletes.

### Supervising QAS supported athletes under the age of 18

You may be responsible for the supervision of QAS supported athletes under the age of 18. Whilst this may look different depending on your role, the facilities they are accessing, who they are accompanied by and why they are present, there are some strategies you can apply to ensure you are fulfilling your supervision duties.

-  Suggest bathroom breaks where everyone can go together so one athlete is not alone
-  Use open spaces for training, like a field or a gym, where practical
-  Share the responsibilities with a QAS colleague so if you are called away there is someone else to supervise

It is important to understand that if an incident occurs during this time, you are the adult with the duty of care whether they were with you or away from you.

## DEFINITIONS

-  **Child:** a person under the age of 12
-  **Young Person:** a person aged between 13-18
-  **Athlete:** any QAS supported athlete (any age / any category)
-  **Safeguarding:** having active measures in place to *prevent* institutional harm and abuse of athletes and *respond* to any safety concerns, disclosures, allegations or suspicions of harm and abuse of any athlete.
-  **QAS Staff or Contractor:** any person engaged by the QAS

## LATE PICK UP

**When a family member is 15 minutes late to collect a young athlete, you must:**

- Attempt to make contact with them
- Ask a colleague, or the second to last young athlete and their parent to wait also, so as to avoid being left alone with the young athlete
- Contact a supervisor if the child of young person is not collected within a reasonable time frame
- Follow up with the family after the fact to ensure they are clear on the pickup requirements and a suitable contingency plan is identified
- Contact police if you cannot contact a parent or other family member.

### DOES THIS INCLUDE DROP OFF & PICK UP?

Risks associated with drop off and pick up are easily mitigated with some simple steps and a proactive approach.

#### When you are responsible for the care of a QAS supported athlete under the age of 18 you are required to:

- Publicise the time and location of activities and when families can expect to drop off and collect their child
- Arrive before scheduled activities or events
- Don't conclude the activities until the pre-arranged finish time
- Communicate with families when there is to be a change in finishing time

- Wait until the last young athlete is collected before they leave activities
- Keep a register of family emergency contact numbers and always have access to a phone
- Don't allow a young athlete to go home with another parent or adult without permission

**Don't take children and young people home in your own car unless it is an emergency and you have permission from your QAS line manager, the athlete's family and the athlete consents to the travel arrangement. Apply the strategies listed below under *Transporting QAS Supported Athletes*.**

## Transporting QAS supported athletes

In appropriate circumstances, you may need to transport a QAS supported athlete in your private vehicle. Transport may only occur with the consent of a family member and if another person at QAS (manager etc) is informed via text or email.

#### When you are transporting QAS supported athletes in appropriate circumstances you can mitigate unnecessary risks by ensuring:

- ✓ The vehicle has adequate insurance
- ✓ The driver is fully licensed
- ✓ The circumstances are directly related to the delivery of a QAS activity
- ✓ If possible, another QAS staff member or contractor is present
- ✓ Prior authorisation is sought from management and from the young athlete's parent or guardian

QAS supported athletes under the age of 18 being transported in an approved circumstance should sit in the back of the vehicle. Parents and guardians, and a supervisor, should be advised of expected departure and arrival time.

## Safety in changeroom facilities

All QAS supported athletes have a right to complete privacy when using any change room facilities. In the circumstances that you are required to supervise QAS supported athletes under the age of 18, and they require the use of changeroom facilities, you can mitigate risk and maintain your supervision responsibilities by:

- ✓ Ensuring facilities are not being used by members of the public or adult athletes at that time, or
- ✓ Ensure that the young athletes have access to private cubicles within the facilities.
- ✓ Stand outside of the facilities, monitoring who comes in and out
- ✓ Ensure there are no video or still image recording devices being used in the facilities
- ✗ Never dress or undress in the presence of an athlete using the facilities.

## SAFETY ONLINE

### Communicating online

Online communication with QAS supported athletes has both benefits and risks. Benefits can include the ability to easily contact athletes and staff, utilising platforms that can be accessible by young athletes / athletes, easy communication when travelling, and the ability for QAS staff and contractors to send notes and programs from sessions with athletes. Risks of online communication can however include information being misinterpreted, lack of boundaries around when staff and athletes communicate eg. time of day, frequency, and information becoming personal.

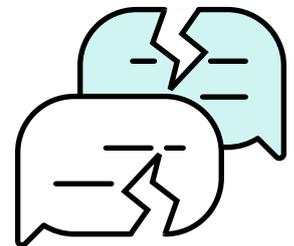
#### Safe Online Communication includes:

- ✓ where possible, always including a coach, QAS colleague, parent/carer or at least one other adult in group communication
- ✓ using clear language that is difficult to misinterpret
- ✓ keeping content professional and avoiding sharing personal information
- ✓ communicating inside of the hours reasonable to the service and your role (eg. Business hours).



#### Unsafe Online Communication includes:

- ✗ liking, sharing, or commenting on personal photos or posts from an athlete that are not related to their sport, or if related to the sport, without their consent and a justified reason to like/share/comment. If you are unsure, don't like, share, or comment
- ✗ requesting to meet in person for reasons not related to treatments, consultations or training sessions
- ✗ asking the athlete to keep secrets, including in relation to communication.



#### Safe use of Social Media includes:

- ✓ limiting contact to sport related content such as sharing information about athletes
- ✓ avoiding connecting with athletes on online social media platforms through personal profiles
- ✓ allowing athletes to navigate their online world without judgement, prejudice or unsolicited comments from staff or contractors
- ✓ reporting or addressing any online abuse or harassment that you may observe when it involves athletes through the academy and/or parents
- ✓ checking in on an athlete's wellbeing if you have any reason to suspect that they are experiencing abuse or harassment online
- ✓ always seeking permission to share or upload video or photos of an athlete, from them and/or their families.

## Communicating with purpose

When communicating with QAS supported athletes, consider the **intent** and **content**.

### INTENT

- What are my intentions?
- Are they appropriate?
- Can I justify contacting someone?
- Is it necessary?
- Would another adult have any reason to question my intentions?



### CONTENT

- Is the content of my communication relevant to the athletes' sport?
- Is it personal?
- Would I be comfortable if their parents read this?
- Would I be happy to read this if it were between my own child and a QAS support staff?



## ON THE ROAD

### Traveling with QAS supported athletes

Travelling for competition and training is an important and necessary part of a high performance athlete's program. It can provide significant benefit to their development, as it increases their experience, access to quality facilities and competing at national and international levels.

It can also expose QAS supported athletes to greater risk than onsite activities as it is difficult to control and to apply the same risk management strategies in a foreign environment. When preparing for traveling with a QAS supported athlete, the QAS staff should use the [QAS Travel Guidelines](#).

### Identifying and assessing risks on the road

**During any travel with QAS supported athletes, staff and contractor should regularly consider the following questions:**

- What are we about to do?
- What could go wrong? Worst case and best case.
- Who might be involved?
- What can we do to prevent it from happening / reduce the likelihood of it happening / reduce the impact if it does happen?

Have conversations with your colleagues, stay alert, be flexible and consider alternate options.

## Chaperones for QAS supported athletes under the age of 18

### APPOINTING CHAPERONES

**When planning travel you should ensure that any person accompanying QAS supported athletes under the age of 18 has:**

- a valid Blue Card
- received a copy of the relevant policies, Safeguarding Expected Behaviours, the QAS Travel Guidelines and has signed acknowledgment of these documents.
- undertaken the relevant safeguarding training

### RESOURCES FOR CHAPERONES

**At all times, chaperones must have access to:**

- emergency contact information for all people travelling including details and addresses for all venues, accommodation and transport services
- access to 24-hour local or online medical support services
- Contacts for local or online crisis mental health support services



### PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES FOR CHAPERONES

It is important to maintain professional boundaries while traveling with any QAS supported athletes, despite being in a unique and sometimes, a more intimate environment than usual. The *Maintaining Professional Boundaries with QAS Supported Athletes* resource provides information and advice around this.

**Below is a summary of how these apply ON THE ROAD:**

- Ensuring all QAS supported athletes understand your role, especially if it is different due to the traveling (eg. A talent identification manager acting as a chaperone).
- Always act professionally – friendly but not a friend
- Treat everyone fairly and not singling anyone out or favouring one athlete
- Not entering the bedroom of an athlete unless it is an emergency and you are accompanied by one or more other chaperone
- Not drinking alcohol or consuming drugs (illicit or prescribed) in the presence of athletes
- Always being fully dressed and/or appropriately clothed when in the presence of athletes.

High performance travel generally take place across a number of environments. These include but are not limited to airports, planes, buses, city streets, hotel rooms and lobbies, restaurants and sporting facilities.

Some environments are considered to be a higher risk to the safety and wellbeing of QAS supported athletes than others, so additional strategies need to be applied to reduce these risks. Supervision and communication are key strategies to reduce risks, particularly during transit and in public spaces.

Given the personal nature of a hotel, where athletes are required to shower, change and sleep, significant planning is required to ensure the risks associated with accommodation are considered and mitigated as best as possible.

## ANYTIME

### Photos, videos and images of QAS supported athletes under the age of 18

**QAS supported athletes may only be photographed or filmed by a QAS staff or contractors when:**

- they have given consent
- in a context that is directly related to their sport, the QAS, or other high performance activity
- when they are appropriately dressed and in a public space (not a changeroom, bathroom or clinical room)

**If the QAS supported athlete is under the age of 18, there must also be:**

- Informed parent or guardian consent including how the images are going to be used and stored
- Another QAS staff or contractor present

If a QAS supported athlete does not wish to be photographed, or their parent or guardian has not provided permission for them to be filmed, they should not be singled out or made to feel excluded. There may be reasons to opt out of photos that the athlete or their parent or guardian does not want to share, and they should have the right to opt out without judgement.

This could include serious risks of family violence from another parent or family member that may escalate if an athlete's whereabouts is exposed through the sharing of photos online.

Remember you never know what someone else might be experiencing.

**The QAS should also ensure that:**

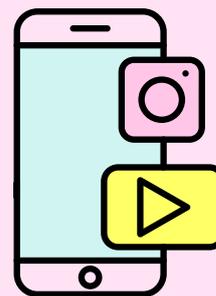
- Any image of a QAS supported athlete under the age of 18 is de-identified before publishing in any format (unless consent is obtained to publish identifying information) and must not be published without parent or carer consent, including in annual reports or on social media.
- Where possible, images are taken on a work device rather than a personal device.
- Images are stored in a manner that prevents access from an unauthorised person, in a locked drawer or cabinet if the images are in hard copy or in a password protected folder if the images are digital.



**STRATEGY – Whenever you take or share a photo or video of a child or young person ask yourself: would I be ok with someone else taking and sharing this if it were my own child?**

## PHOTO AND VIDEO CHECKLIST

- Have you asked the athlete if they are OK to have photo or video taken of them?
- Do you have consent from a parent or carer if they are under 18?
- Is the context related to QAS activities?
- Is everyone appropriately dressed?
- Is there another adult at QAS aware that photos or video are being taken?
- Do you have permission to share it publicly or to include identifiable information (e.g. name)
- Have you applied the 'my own child' rule – would I be ok if it was my child who was having their photo taken/shared publicly?



*The Queensland Academy of Sport (QAS) is committed to the safety and wellbeing of our athletes. We are committed to creating an environment where athletes from any background are heard, treated fairly and free from abuse. This applies onsite, online and on the road.*