



# **FENCING FEDERATION SOUTH AFRICA**

## **GENDER POLICY**

### **Approved AGM 2021**

Women and men united in championing the aspirations, ambitions and achievements of all fencers and leading by example on equality and diversity for the advancement and prosperity for all in the sport of fencing in South Africa.

#### **STATEMENT**

Fencing Federation of South Africa (FFSA) is firmly committed to using the sport of fencing to help create a better world for all - a world where inequality on any grounds, be it gender, class, race or ethnicity, is eradicated. FFSA acknowledges that even though considerable progress has been made in recent years much remains to be done to achieve gender equality. FFSA understands that achieving gender equality will require specific and planned measures designed to eliminate gender inequalities. This gender policy serves as a tool to promote gender equality and in doing so unlock fencers' potential and contribute to the broader well-being of South African society.

## 1. Goal

To support the achievement of gender equality in the sport of fencing and contribute to the equal and sustainable development of broader society. To strengthen FFSA's policy and operational framework to promote gender equality and gender mainstreaming.

## 2. Objectives

- 2.1. To advance women's equal participation with men as fencers and decision-makers in shaping and developing the sport of fencing.
- 2.2. To support all fencers in the achievement of their full potential while taking into consideration historical gender inequalities and gender differentials.
- 2.3. To mainstream gender into all aspects of FFSA; policy, projects/programmes, development and management.
- 2.4. To reduce gender inequalities in all aspects of fencing.
- 2.5. To promote a gender-responsive and responsible organisational culture in FFSA and the fencing community in South Africa.

## 3. Guiding Principles

- 3.1. Women's empowerment is central to achieving gender equality.
- 3.2. Promoting the equal participation of women as agents of change in the sport of fencing is essential to achieving gender equality.
- 3.3. Gender equality can only be achieved through partnership between the different genders.
- 3.4. Gender equality perspectives must be mainstreamed into every stage of development of all FFSA policies, programmes and projects.
- 3.5. The term gender is used as a broad term that includes, inter alia, the different definitions of gender as outlined in 4.1- 4.4.

## 4. Definitions

- 4.1. **GENDER:** A person's internal sense of their gender which may be the same or differ from their biological sex and/or gender expression.
- 4.2. **SEX:** A person's biological sex assigned at birth.
- 4.3. **GENDER EXPRESSION:** the way a person chooses to express their identity, typically through appearance, dress or behaviour.
- 4.4. **SEXUAL ORIENTATION:** A person's identity in relation to the gender or genders to which they are sexually attracted.
- 4.5. **FENCER:** Refers to anyone participating in the sport, whether at club, national or international level.
- 4.6. **COACH:** Refers to anyone involved in the training and development of fencers/athletes

- 4.7. **ADMINISTRATOR:** Refers to anyone involved in the organisation and/or management of a club, province or country
- 4.8. **SPECTATOR:** A person who is not directly involved with fencing who is present during fencing activities.
- 4.9. **REFEREE:** A person involved in the management and adjudication of fencing bouts.
- 4.10. **DT:** A person involved in the organisation and management of a competition.
- 4.11. **FIGURES OF AUTHORITY:** Refers to anyone in a position of authority or power over the training/coaching of fencers, management of competitions and bouts, administration of clubs/provinces/national fencing.
- 4.12. **TRANSGENDER:** Transgender is an umbrella term that describes people whose gender identity or expression does not match the sex they were assigned at birth. For the purpose of this policy, the term women shall include reference to transgender women. Given that FFSA does not have a policy on Transgender athletes yet, the International Olympic Committee's guidelines on participation in competition will apply.

## 5. Discrimination, Harassment and Abuse

### 5.1. Discrimination:

5.1.1. Discrimination is the act of treating an individual or group of people less fairly or less well, denying rights, benefits, or equitable treatment to an individual or group of people based on prejudice and bias.

5.1.2. Any form of discrimination based on gender, sex, sexual orientation or gender expression is unacceptable.

### 5.2. Harassment and Abuse:

Harassment is defined as unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity and/or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. This can be a single or repeated action in a verbal, physical, visual, online or written form.

5.2.1. Harassment and abuse are a form of discrimination. The following forms of harassment and abuse are defined. They can occur in isolation or in conjunction with other forms of abuse. Harassment and abuse may be conducted in person or online.

5.2.1.1 Psychological abuse — means any unwelcome act including confinement, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation, infantilization, or any other treatment which may diminish the sense of identity, dignity, and self-worth.

5.2.1.2 Physical abuse — means any deliberate and unwelcome act e.g., punching, beating, kicking, biting and burning that causes physical trauma or injury. Such act can also consist of forced or inappropriate physical activity (e.g., age-, or physique inappropriate training loads; when injured or in pain), forced alcohol consumption, or forced doping practices.

5.1.2.3 Sexual harassment — any unwanted and unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal, non-verbal or physical. Sexual harassment can take the form of sexual abuse.

5.1.2.4 Sexual abuse — any conduct of a sexual nature, whether non-contact, contact or penetrative, where consent is coerced/manipulated or is not or cannot be given.

5.1.2.5 Neglect — The failure of a coach or other person with duty of care towards the athlete to provide a minimum level of care to the athlete, which is causing harm, allowing harm to be caused, or creating an imminent danger of harm.

5.1.2.6 Harassment and abuse based on any grounds, including gender, sex, gender expression and sexual orientation is unacceptable.

## **6. Bystanding**

6.1. Bystanding is having suspicions or knowledge about any discrimination or harassment and failing to do anything about it.

6.2 Bystanding is equally as unacceptable as the act of discrimination, harassment or abuse itself as it makes the bystander complicit in the transgression/s committed.

## **7. Responsibilities**

### **7.1. Leadership:**

FFSA is committed to providing strategic direction to, and leadership for gender mainstreaming across the FFSA structures and fencing community:

7.1.1. Encourage and actively promote a gender-aware and gender-responsive organisational culture that values gender equality and is free from the gender biases and stereotypes that perpetuate inequality.

7.1.2. Adapt organisational structure, systems, processes and accountability mechanisms as necessary in order to remove barriers to and create the necessary environment (both formal and informal) for effective gender mainstreaming where all individuals have equal opportunity to be heard and respected and therefore make a positive impact on fencing SA.

7.1.3. Implement and track a gender responsive budget and resource allocation that strives for equality and mainstreaming at all levels.

7.1.4. Monitor and evaluate gender-related performance and outcomes and use this information to inform strategic decision-making.

7.1.5. Guide and monitor the implementation of the Gender Policy through the relevant structures.

## **7.2. Figures of Authority:**

7.2.1. Vigilance – Being watchful and alert to issues of gender, harassment and discrimination.

7.2.2. Support – Aiding those struggling with issues relating to gender, expression, sexuality, harassment and discrimination.

7.2.3. Respect – Being mindful, aware and accepting of individual differences. Understanding that people are equal and deserving of equal treatment regardless of gender, sex, gender expression or sexual orientation.

7.2.4. Addressing infringements – Resolving offences, in a fair and equal manner, with the health and safety of all participants being the highest priority.

7.2.5. Accessibility – Being available to receive and take up complaints or reports of discrimination, harassment and abuse and report to the relevant structures.

7.2.6. Education – Informing and educating administrators, fencers, parents, coaches, spectators and anyone else involved in the fencing environment about equality, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, harassment, discrimination, and the protection measures at hand to address and prevent any such transgressions.

## **7.3. Responsibilities of Fencers:**

7.3.1. Sportsmanship – Respect and appreciation for the participants, accepting wins and losses, regardless of the gender, sex, gender expression or sexual orientation of the participant.

7.3.2. Vigilance – Being watchful and alert to issues of gender, sex, gender expression and sexual orientation.

7.3.3. Respect – Being mindful, aware and accepting of individual differences. Understanding that people are equal and deserving of equal treatment regardless of gender, sex, gender expression and sexual orientation.

7.3.4. Reporting infringements – Informing a relevant figure of authority, if possible the club, district, provincial or national Safeguarding officer, as applicable to the specific circumstances, of any observed or suspected occurrences of harassment, discrimination or abuse related to gender, sex, gender expression and/or sexual orientation.

## **7.4. Responsibilities of Spectators:**

All Club, District and Provincial Fencing Structures which host competitions, training and other events to which spectators are invited are to ensure the following is adhered to by spectators:

7.4.1. Sportsmanship – Respect for all participants, regardless of win or loss, regardless of gender, sex, gender expression or sexual orientation.

7.4.2. Respect – Being mindful, aware and accepting of individual differences. Understanding that people are equal and deserving of equal treatment regardless of gender, sex, gender expression or sexual orientation.

7.4.3. Vigilance – Being watchful and alert to issues of gender, harassment and discrimination.

7.4.4. Reporting infringements – Helping to protect the safety of all participants by informing a relevant figure of authority of any observed or suspected occurrences of harassment, discrimination or abuse related to gender, sex, gender expression and/or sexual orientation.

## **7.5. Responsibilities of coaches:**

7.5.1. Respect - Being mindful, aware and accepting of individual differences. Understanding that people are equal and deserving of equal treatment regardless of gender, sex, gender expression or sexual orientation.

7.5.2. Vigilance - Being watchful and alert to issues of gender, harassment and discrimination.

7.5.3. Sportsmanship - Respect for all participants, regardless of win or loss, regardless of gender, sex, gender expression or sexual orientation.

7.5.4. Accessibility - Being available and able to receive, take up and appropriately manage complaints or reports of discrimination, harassment and abuse.

7.5.5. Support - Aiding those struggling with issues relating to gender, expression, sexuality, harassment and discrimination.

7.5.6. Education - Informing and educating fencers, parents, and anyone else involved in the fencing environment about equality, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, harassment, discrimination, and the protection measures at hand to address and prevent any such transgressions.

7.5.7. Protection – Dealing with minor infringements, and reporting infringements on the subject of discrimination, harassment or abuse to the relevant structures and authorities.

## **8. Education**

8.1. Ongoing education and training for all persons in the fencing community, especially those assuming any leadership and administrative role in the South African fencing environment should undergo diversity and gender training.

8.2. Resources for the ongoing education of fencers, parents, spectators, coaches and referees on the subject of anti-discrimination and diversity will be made available, inter alia, FFSA website.

8.3. Ongoing awareness and promotion of gender using various available platforms.

## **9. Rights.**

**9.1. The right to protest:** Any person has the right to report or protest against an offence in accordance with the FFSA and FIE regulations. Any person reporting a case of discrimination, harassment or abuse has the right to not be targeted in any way, shape or form. Any person targeting a person who has reported an incident commits an offence.

**9.2. The right to opportunity:** Every person has the right to equal opportunity and attention, regardless of gender, sex, gender expression or sexual orientation.

## **10. Devoir**

- 10.1. It is the responsibility of all in the fencing community to uphold and advance the policy so that the goal of attaining gender equality is achieved.
- 10.2. Failure to adhere to the above policy will result in the offender being subject to a disciplinary process in accordance with the FFSA's Disciplinary Code and Procedures document.