

The Responsible Athletics Coach. Ribble Valley Athletic Club

All athletes need to be nurtured for if their talents are to be optimised. The coach is often the single most influential person in the athlete's sporting career. Without a caring and supportive coach, no athlete is likely to stay in the sport or to reach his or her full personal potential.

UK Athletics, the AAA of England and the other Home Country Associations are currently developing a comprehensive welfare plan for everyone involved in the sport, from clubs, to coaches and officials, to athletes and their parents/carers. As Ribble Valley athletics coaches we are invited to adopt the following principles that will guide this initiative and to share our pursuit of best practice in athlete welfare.

- Coaches will respect the rights, dignity and worth of every athlete and treat everyone equally, regardless of background or ability.
- Coaches will place the welfare and safety of the athlete above the development of performance.
- Coaches will develop appropriate working relationships with athletes (especially under 18's), based on mutual trust and respect. They will not exert undue influence to obtain personal benefit or reward.
- Coaches will encourage and guide athletes to accept and take responsibility for their own behaviour and performance.
- Coaches will be appropriately qualified and update their licence as and when required by UK Athletics.
- Coaches will ensure that the activities they guide or advocate are appropriate for the age, maturity, experience and ability of the individual.
- Coaches will, at the outset, clarify with athletes (and where appropriate their parents or carers) exactly what is expected of them and what athletes are entitled to expect from the coach.
- Coaches will cooperate fully with other colleagues (e.g. other coaches, officials, team managers, sport scientists, doctors, physiotherapists and governing body staff) in the best interests of the athlete.
- Coaches will consistently promote positive aspects of the sport (e.g. fair play) and never condone rule violations or the use of prohibited or age-inappropriate substances.
- Coaches will consistently display high standards of behaviour and appearance.

Coaches who operate outside the guidelines of the Athletics Welfare Policy or breach the parameters of their qualification will be subject to UK Athletics Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures and may have their licence revoked.