

Dynamics Gymnastics Child Protection Policy

INTRODUCTION

Dynamics Gymnastics strives to ensure that children are protected and kept safe from harm whilst participating in classes. We endeavour to promote the highest standards of care for participants and will:

- Provide and implement procedures to safeguard the well being of all participants.
- Adopt good practice in recruitment, training and supervision of all employees and volunteers.
- Require all involved with Dynamics Gymnastics to adopt policies and procedures.
- Respond appropriately to all allegations and concerns.

PROCEDURES TO SAFEGUARD THE WELL BEING OF ALL PARTICIPANTS

Dynamics Gymnastics aims to provide good protection to ensure the safety of staff and participants. To avoid placing gymnasts and coaches in a vulnerable position, we:

- 1) **Require parents/carers to complete a record sheet** for each gymnast prior to their first class.

The record sheet requests information about the participant including medical notes and previous experience, contact details including emergency contact details and also requests consent for participation, an agreement that Dynamics Gymnastics can act in loco parentis in an emergency and an agreement to update Dynamics Gymnastics on any changes to the information included on the form. Where no updates have been given for 3 years, Dynamics Gymnastics will request that a new record sheet is completed.

- 2) **Create an open-door environment** within the bounds of Health and Safety

See the "Dynamics Gymnastics Health and Safety Policy" for further details.

- 3) **Appoint a designated trained and CRB checked Welfare Officer** to deal with child protection and welfare issues.

- 4) Adopt British Gymnastics' guidelines to **control the use of photographic and filming equipment** and **monitor the use of photographic materials** involving children.

The Class Manager/Head Coach maintains a register of anyone who records images during any part of a Dynamics Gymnastics class. By registering on the form, the permission to film, video or take photographic images is given on the basis that the person given the permission agrees not to cause or permit, directly or indirectly, any of the images to be published, shown, sold, distributed or otherwise disposed of by any method without prior written consent from the individual(s) concerned beyond their own family members.

The use of mobile phones within the gym is prohibited (except by the Class Manager or Head Coach for business or emergency purpose) unless registered as a photographic device on the Dynamics Gymnastics recorded images register.

Dynamics Gymnastics will only publish images of gymnasts with written consent from the parent/carer. In the event that permission is granted, no personal information will accompany the image except the name where agreed.

On occasions where video equipment is used as a coaching aid, the gymnasts and their parent/carer will be made aware of the purpose of the filming, two adults will be present at the time of filming and the video material will be stored securely.

In the event that the Class Manager or Head Coach suspects anyone of taking inappropriate images, they will ask the individual concerned to surrender any film and leave the gym. Any instance of the use of inappropriate images will be reported to the Welfare Officer and, subsequently, appropriate authorities.

- 5) Ensure coaches are trained to **use appropriate/recognised manual support and spotting techniques.**

Via British Gymnastics coaching courses, Dynamics Gymnastics coaches are trained to use appropriate/recognised manual support and spotting techniques. Coaches are also encouraged to avoid “overhandling” whilst being alert to the possibility of having to react to performance errors on the more complex skills. On the rare occasions that non-intentional physical contact occurs out of error on the performer or coaches part, coaches are encouraged to acknowledge the situation through an apology to the gymnast and report the incident to the Head Coach or Welfare Officer and parents.

- 6) Ensure that every effort is made to **prevent situations where an adult is alone with a child or group of children.**

At least two responsible adults are present at all Dynamics Gymnastics classes (one of whom may not be a qualified coach). These two adults remain at the facility until all gymnasts and young coaches have been safely dispersed. In the rare event that only one adult can stay they must wait with the remaining gymnast/s and/or coaches in a public place e.g. school or sports centre reception area.

Coaches and officials avoid transporting a child alone on a car journey. Where this is unavoidable, the journey only occurs with the full knowledge and consent of the Class Manager or Head coach and the child’s parents/carers.

- 7) **Supervise gymnasts in the gym** during the class time.

At the time a class is dismissed, a coach will be present at the gym door (or outer door depending on facility) to oversee the safe dispersal of the gymnasts. Any gymnast who is not collected on time will be invited to sit in the gym until a parent/carer arrives under the supervision of at least two adults. Where two adults are not available, the adult and gymnast will wait for the parent/carer in a public place e.g. sports centre reception/school foyer.

- 8) **Require parents/carers to take responsibility for their gymnast/s in the changing rooms and toilets before, during and after the session.**

In the event that a gymnast requests to use the toilet or access the changing rooms during their class time, the Class Manager or Head Coach will only monitor them leaving and returning to the gym. Should a gymnast need help with personal care, the parent/carer must remain accessible during the class time in order to be available to assist the gymnast as necessary. In the unexpected event that a gymnast or gymnasts need supervising in the changing rooms, however, adult coaches will work in pairs where possible.

See also the “Dynamics Gymnastics Changing and Toilet Facilities Policy” for further details.

Dynamics Gymnastics accepts that on occasion there may be situations where the unexpected does occur. In these situations, any incident is reported immediately to another colleague and a brief written note made of the event. Where appropriate the parent and Welfare Officer is informed.

RECRUITMENT, TRAINING AND SUPERVISION OF EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

Dynamics Gymnastics recognises that the vast majority of coaches and officials are committed, dedicated people who are motivated to work within the sport for commendable reasons. We also recognise, however, the importance of taking all reasonable steps to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. As such, the following procedures are adopted and applied consistently when appointing a coach or official in either a voluntary or paid capacity:

- When any form of advertising is used to recruit staff or volunteers, the following is reflected:
 - the aims of the organisation
 - responsibilities of the role
 - level or experience or qualifications required
 - the open and positive approach to child protection

- the use of CRB checks as part of the recruitment and selection process
- Anyone who expresses an interest in a job or role is asked to complete an application form designed to confirm the applicant's right to work, enable verification for the identity of the applicant and their suitability for the role and details of two referees who agree to provide written comment on the applicant's experience and suitability to work with children and young people.
- Short listed candidates are interviewed by a minimum of two Dynamics Gymnastics Managers to seek further information in support of the application form, to verify identity and qualifications and determine any further training needs.
- Successful applicants are supplied with a letter offering the role. The letter details the roles and responsibilities of the post.
- All employees are required to read and sign to agree to abide by the Code of Conduct on the understanding that failure to adhere to policies may result in disciplinary action and possible dismissal/exclusion from the club or organisation.
- Successful applicants are required to complete a self-declaration of criminal convictions. In addition to this, all Dynamics Gymnastics qualified coaches, officials and trainees aged 14+ are required to show or complete a British Gymnastics Criminal Records Bureau disclosure at the time of employment (renewable every 3 years).

Once in post, all coaches are supervised by the Class Manager or Head Coach (further details in the Dynamics Gymnastics Health and Safety Policy). Each coach is given the opportunity to receive feedback via an annual appraisal taking the form of a session observation and follow up discussion. The appraisal process aims to review and set targets, consider any concerns and establish training needs. Training needs are met as soon as possible via British Gymnastics or Living Sport courses.

REQUIRE ALL INVOLVED WITH DYNAMICS GYMNASTICS TO ADOPT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

To encourage everyone involved with Dynamics Gymnastics to adopt Dynamics Gymnastics policies and procedures, the Dynamics Gymnastics policy document is available to view on the Dynamics Gymnastics website and is summarised as necessary in each Code of Conduct (see separate Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures for further details).

All employees and volunteers are required to read and sign to agree to abide by the Code of Conduct for Coaches at the time of recruitment. Thereafter, via general supervision, annual appraisal and concerns raised, the Class Manager or Head Coach will identify any deviation from this and will respond appropriately adopting the disciplinary procedures where necessary.

Parents/carers are required to sign and return a record sheet for each new gymnast stating that they have read and agree to abide by the Code of Conduct for Parents/Carers before their gymnast attends their first class. The Dynamics Gymnastics Managers will identify any deviation from this and will respond appropriately via discussion with the parent/carer leading to prohibiting the parent/carer concerned from the facility where necessary.

The Code of Conduct for Gymnasts is shared with each class at the first session of each term or Holiday Programme and parents/carers are also encouraged to share the Code of Conduct with gymnasts prior to attending the first class. Thereafter, the Class Manager or Head Coach will identify any deviation from this and will respond appropriately via discussion with the gymnast and/or parent/carer leading to prohibiting participation where necessary.

RESPOND APPROPRIATELY TO ALL ALLEGATIONS AND CONCERNS

Dynamics Gymnastics recognises its duty to respond to suspicions of abuse, inappropriate behaviour or poor practice and has a designated Welfare Officer to whom concerns can be expressed in confidence.

Dynamics Gymnastics acknowledges that there are many forms of abuse including physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect and that somebody may abuse a child within their family, at school and sometimes in the sporting environment. We also recognise that we have a responsibility to act upon our concerns should we recognise a sign that a child might be being abused such as:

- Unexplained bruising or injury particularly in unusual places.
- An injury for which the explanation seems to be inconsistent.

- Unexplained sudden changes in behaviour (i.e. withdrawing, very quiet, sudden outbursts of temper or emotion).
- Inappropriate sexual awareness or language or engaging in sexually explicit behaviour.
- Is prevented from socialising with other children or has difficulty making friends.
- Is distrustful of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected, (i.e. parents, coach, family friend).
- Loss of weight for no apparent reason.
- The child becomes increasingly dirty or unkempt.
- Something another child has said which suggests a child is being abused.
- The child describes an act or behaviour that appears to be abusive.

It is not the responsibility of Dynamics Gymnastics coaches or officials to decide that the child is being abused but it is our responsibility to act upon concerns as follows whether they relate to a child's home or community situation or involve incidents within the club:

1) **Responding to concerns about possible abuse outside sport.**

Dynamics Gymnastics' primary responsibility is to ensure that concerns and any relevant information are passed on to the police or social services without delay. These organisations have the statutory responsibility to make enquiries to establish if a child is at risk of harm. Individuals within Dynamics Gymnastics are aware of British Gymnastics' guidance and pass any concerns to the Head Coach and/or Welfare Officer who will complete a Child Protection incident form to be sent to the relevant statutory organisation within 24 hours.

If a child indicates that he/she is being abused, or information is received which gives rise to concern that the child may be being abused, the person receiving the information is advised to:

- Stay calm and ensure that the child is safe and feels safe.
- Tell the child that he/she is not to blame and it was right to tell you.
- Show and tell the child that you are taking what he/she says seriously and recognise any difficulties inherent in interpreting what the child says.
- Keep questions to a minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said and make a record of all that has been said, heard or seen.
- Be honest and explain that you may have to tell someone else to help to protect the child.

The person receiving the information is advised not to:

- Dismiss the concern
- Panic
- Allow shock or distaste to show
- Probe for more information than is offered
- Make promises you cannot keep e.g. agreeing not to tell someone else
- Speculate or make assumptions
- Approach the alleged abuser
- Make negative comments about the accused person

Dynamics Gymnastics has a commitment to work in partnership with parents where there are concerns about their children and would therefore, in most circumstances, talk to parents to clarify any initial concerns. If, however, there is suspicion that the parents or carers may be the abuser or the parent may not be able to respond appropriately to the situation, speaking to them regarding the matter might place the child at greater risk. In these circumstances, the suspicion is reported to the Welfare Officer who may seek advice from Social Services with respect to consulting with parents.

2) **Responding to concerns against coaches, officials or members of Dynamics Gymnastics.**

Dynamics Gymnastics will take seriously any allegations made against a coach, volunteer, official or anyone else working closely with members. Anyone who has concerns does not have the responsibility to decide if abuse is being perpetrated nor to investigate it but does have the responsibility to act on those concerns by reporting it to the Welfare Officer.

As it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between what may constitute abuse and what may be poor practice, the following guidelines are used to select the appropriate course of action:

- If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly poor practice the Welfare Officer will refer the case to the Dynamics Gymnastics managers who will respond by adopting disciplinary procedures.
- If, following consideration, the allegation constitutes suspicion that a child has been abused, the club Welfare Officer will refer the incident to Social Services (or if necessary go directly to the Police) and Dynamics Gymnastics managers will make an early decision about whether to temporarily suspend any accused individual, pending further Social Services or Police enquiries.
- The Welfare Officer will seek advice from the NSPCC or from the Social Services should they be unsure what action to take.

As the accusation may be a misunderstanding or a fallacious allegation and he/she may be innocent, confidentiality must be maintained by all parties until a case has been proven.

3) Responding to suspected abuse of a position of trust.

Dynamics Gymnastics recognises that young people of 16 or 17 years in England can legally consent to some types of sexual activity but that they may still be relatively immature emotionally. In order that this vulnerability is not exploited, Dynamics Gymnastics coaches, volunteers and officials are aware that any behaviour which might allow a sexual relationship to develop between them and a gymnast or coach of this age in their care must be avoided and is unacceptable so long as the relationship of trust continues. This includes making contact or holding discussions with gymnasts via social networking sites or texting.

Anyone concerned about a related incident has a duty to report their concerns to the Welfare Officer who will maintain an accurate record of the suspected abuse and report it to Social Services.

In the event of any media enquiries relating to a suspected child abuse incident, Dynamics Gymnastics will follow these guidelines:

- Note the journalist's name, who they represent and any contact details.
- Note what the journalist is asking you and ask for any clarifications.
- Establish whether the journalist has any deadline.
- Formulate an appropriate official response.

Written: Feb 2010
Review due: Feb 2013