



Competitive Gymnast Handbook

Faverdale, Faverdale Industrial Estate, Darlington, DL3 0PP

01325 241339

Email: admin@darlingtongymnastics.co.uk

Welcome to Darlington Gymnastics Club!

Darlington Gymnastics Club (DGC) is a Company Limited by Guarantee, and a Community Amateur Sports Club (CH 10871). Established in 1970, DGC is a not-for-profit organisation and managed by committee and is run by volunteers. The club moved into its current premises on Faverdale in September 2014 after a huge (and ongoing) redevelopment project.

The aim of the club is to provide gymnastics experiences for children of all ages and abilities, providing the best facilities and coaching we can.

Darlington Gymnastics Club offers a variety of competitive sessions:

- **White squad**
White squad is designed for 4 - 7-year-olds. This squad trains twice per week, focusing on the basics and fundamentals of gymnastics, flexibility training and physical preparation. The gymnasts will be filtered into one of our 3 competitive squads once they reach competing age.
- **Red squad**
Red squad is a 2-piece competitive squad, competing in 2-piece events within the region. This squad trains twice per week. The primary focus of red squads training programme is to develop and master the fundamental skills needed for floor and vault.
- **Blue squad**
Blue squad is one of our 4-piece women's artistic squads. These gymnasts train twice per week and will compete at 4-piece (bars, beam, floor and vault) competitions within the region. Their training programme will focus on developing and building on skill level across all 4 pieces of apparatus.
- **Purple squad**
Purple squad is our more advanced 4-piece women's artistic squad. These gymnasts train 3 times per week and will be working towards competing at both regional and national events. Their training programme focuses on intense physical preparation, flexibility, and skill development across all 4 pieces of apparatus. At this stage, we would expect the highest level of commitment from both gymnast and parent.

Please take the time to read this handbook and save it for future reference. We hope that it answers some of the questions our members most frequently ask, but please ask a member of the coaching team or support staff if you would like any further information.

If you would like to support the club by volunteering your time and skills, we would love to hear from you!

Please email admin@darlingtongymnastics.co.uk

General Code of Conduct

- Gymnasts should attend for each session dressed appropriately.
- All jewellery (including stud earrings) must be removed (Religious jewellery can be taped safely).
- Long hair should be securely tied back in a bun.
- Mobile phones should be left with belongings or placed in the box available within the gym for safe keeping.
- Poor behaviour or bullying of any kind, by a child or parent, will not be tolerated by the club.
- All gymnasts, parents and visitors should show respect for each other, the coaching team and support staff.
- All gymnasts, parents and visitors should obey all rules or the spirit of all rules, displayed in the gym, in literature or communicated to them by any other manner.
- Parents and spectators should remain in the gym waiting / viewing area unless invited inside by a coach or member of staff.
- Fees should be paid promptly and in full.
- ALL members of DGC **must** take out the correct level BG (British Gymnastics) membership and the appropriate insurance cover it provides.

For Gymnasts

- All gymnasts must participate within the rules. They should listen to and respect their coaches.
- All gymnasts must respect fellow club members. Any behaviour perceived as intimidating or bullying will not be tolerated, and gymnasts may be asked to withdraw from the session. Repeated incidents may result in exclusion from Darlington Gymnastics Club.
- Gymnasts should always respect their coaches. Arguing with, ignoring or back chatting coaches will not be tolerated.
- All gymnasts are expected to follow DGC's Behaviour Policy.
- Meanness towards, or intolerance of others, will be dealt with firmly. Repeated incidents will result in further action being taken.
- Gymnasts should treat all equipment with appropriate care.
- Gymnasts should keep the gym and changing rooms tidy.
- Gymnasts must not use bad language.
- Gymnasts should not eat or chew during the session.
- Coaches should be informed of any injuries or illness before the beginning of a session or immediately upon the injury occurring.
- All gymnasts must be aware that they must be discreet and act appropriately whilst using Facebook and other social networking activities. Inappropriate use of social media may result in exclusion from DGC. DGC recommends all parents / carers adhere to the age guidelines recommended in the terms and conditions of social media apps.

For Parents/Carers

- Parents / Carers must pay any session and insurance fees promptly.
- Parents / Carers must pay competition fees promptly and purchase all competition attire required.
- It is the parent's / carers responsibility to keep track of competition closing dates / changes in training times etc. distributed by letter, advertised on the noticeboards, or distributed by other methods.
- Bullying, intimidation or threatening of staff will not be tolerated and will result in exclusion from the club.
- Help your child to recognise any good sportsmanship and effort, supporting your child's involvement to enjoy the sport. This includes discouraging any form of argument or challenge of judges or officials.
- Encourage your child to learn the rules and participate within them.
- Recognising that good performance is as important as good results.
- Ensuring the club is kept informed of any injuries or illness.
- Endeavour to attend competitions to support other club members.
- Share any concerns or complaints about any aspect of the club through appropriate and approved channels.
- All members must ensure the club is aware of any medical conditions, allergies, or special needs that your child has so that we can appropriately meet their needs.

Viewing and Photography

We welcome parents to stay and watch their children take part in the sessions. We are happy to update you on your child's progress either at the end of the session or by email.

(admin@darlingtongymnastics.co.uk)

The club has a strict NO photography / video recording of sessions. This is to ensure the safety and welfare of all our members.

Where it is recommended that a routine is recorded as a training aid this will be discussed with parents and an appropriate plan made to ensure recording is done within guidelines.

A full copy of the policy is available on request.

Arrival and Departure from sessions

All gymnasts under the age of 16 should be accompanied into and collected from inside the gym. Any exception to this must be arranged in advance via admin@darlingtongymnastics.co.uk

Please ensure that children arrive and depart in suitable, warm sports clothing and footwear

Health, Accidents and Incidents

Your child's health, safety and wellbeing are important to us. We may not allow your child to take part in sessions if we feel that doing so may affect their wellbeing or the wellbeing of others.

Please do not bring your child to their session if they are unwell or injured.

Accidents can be an unfortunate risk to taking part in any sport. DGC makes every effort to minimise the risks associated with gymnastics. In the event of an accident within the gym, parents will be contacted as soon as possible, whilst the appropriate First Aid treatment / medical provision is provided for your child. If necessary, staff will accompany your child to hospital until you are able to be with them.

By attending sessions, you give permission to allow our staff to provide appropriate treatment (within the scope of their First Aid qualification), in the event of an accident.

DGC reserves the right to delay a child's re-entry into their sessions until they have had written medical clearance saying it is safe to do so or until they have seen a physiotherapist associated with the club.

We ask that you update your child's medical information promptly to accurately reflect any changes.

All members of DGC **MUST** take out British Gymnastics membership and the associated insurance that it provides.

If any other form of incident occurs in the gym, parents will be informed verbally, and appropriate actions taken.

Dress Code

Children should attend for sessions in appropriate clothing. Leotards should be worn for all training sessions. Crop tops and leggings / shorts are not to be worn, except during warm up. Shorts can be worn whilst training on bars or to give a gymnast confidence during their menstrual period. Shorts and T-shirts are suitable training attire for boys however we would encourage boys to wear leotards and shorts also.

Long hair should be securely tied back **in a bun**. When a ponytail extends below shoulder level, hair should be placed in a bun. This is expected at training sessions as well as competitions.

Jewellery (including stud earrings) should be removed.

Personal Belongings

Darlington Gymnastics Club will not be held responsible for the loss of any personal items. We strongly advise against expensive items or items of sentimental value being brought to gym.

General items found within the gym will be placed in the Lost Property and will be kept for a limited period before being donated to charity or discarded.

Expensive items / jewellery will be kept safely. Please contact the club if an item of value is lost.

Membership and Fees

Squad fees are paid via the Love Admin system. They are calculated as an average over the year, taking into account periods of closure (e.g., at Christmas) and holidays. They should, therefore, be paid monthly and not cancelled due to holidays or periods of absence. If a gymnast needs to take a break from the sport due to injury, fees can be suspended.

Repeated cancellation or late payment of fees will result in an administration fee being added to the charge.

As a community club we are committed to enabling as many children as possible to take part in sport. If you have any problems meeting the costs of classes or need to pay your fees in a different way, please email treasurer@darlingtongymnastics.co.uk. We will make every effort to support your child to remain involved in the sport and will look to support you with the costs associated with gymnastics.

Cancellations and Refunds

Darlington Gymnastics Club is under no obligation to refund any money paid as fees or Competition entries where the gymnast decides to stop training or withdraw from a competition.

Injuries

Should your child suffer an injury which means they are unable to attend sessions, Darlington Gymnastics Club will hold their place until they are able to return. In the event of an injury, you must notify the club as soon as possible (admin@darlingtongymnastics.co.uk).

Behaviour

Darlington Gymnastics Club has the expectation of high standards of behaviour. Poor behaviour will be managed as per our Behaviour Procedure (available on request).

Competitive Gymnastics

The transition to more advanced training and the increase in training times can cause problems for some children. The coaches are aware of how difficult these early stages can be. Parents should let the coaches know if they have any concerns so that the appropriate, prompt action can be taken.

Your child may require some additional equipment. Your child's coach will keep you informed about what equipment is required but it may include:

- Hand /palm guards
- Woollen gloves
- Bar loops
- Wrist bands

Once your child is old enough to compete (this is in the year they turn 8 years old), they will need to buy the clubs competitive uniform (long or short sleeved leotard and tracksuit), again your child's coach will guide you with this. There is a limited supply of previously used competition leotards available to buy.

The ultimate decision regarding a gymnast's entry to a competition rests with the coaching team. Information regarding entry will be circulated prior to the closing date. Entry fees should be paid promptly, late entries will only be accepted at the discretion of competition organiser.

Regular attendance at training prior to a competition is required. We would expect all gymnasts to attend all training sessions in the 4-week period before a competition. If a gymnast is failing to reach the required standard to compete due to the number of missed sessions, DGC reserves the right to withdraw a gymnast from the competition. Refunds of entry fees will not be given in these circumstances.

Where a gymnast is unable to attend a competition due to family commitments, they will continue to train alongside the competing gymnasts, and not follow a different training plan.

Competition Attire (prices as of March 2023)

- Competition leotard, (long sleeved £90, short sleeved from £60)
- Competition Tracksuit, (from £100)
- Club rucksack £21

Competition Code of Conduct

- Gymnasts should arrive in plenty of time for the competition.
- Gymnasts should arrive in competition attire with hair firmly secured. Please note that there are no changing facilities at many of the competition venues.
- Gymnasts are representing the club and their behaviour should be of an impeccable standard.
- Gymnasts should be supportive of each other and recognise good effort and performance over prizes.
- Parents and gymnasts should always respect the decisions of judges. Any queries are welcomed to be discussed in the training session after the event. Other gymnast's results will not be discussed or compared.
- In accordance with competition rules attendance at medal presentations is mandatory. Non-attendance may result in personal or team disqualification.

Movement between squads

Movement between squads is done following discussion amongst the coaching team. Moves may be made on a trial or permanent basis. The welfare of the child will always take priority when deciding the timings of any move.

Welfare

If you are concerned about the welfare of your child, any other child or see behaviour that you are uncomfortable with, please alert a coach or contact our Welfare officer on welfare@darlingtongymnastics.co.uk

Details of DGC's Welfare officer are also available on the board in the gym.

Alternatively, you could contact one of the Regional Welfare Officers:

Enid Harrison – enid.harrison@british-gymnastics.org

Lynda Kouche – north.rwo@british-gymnastics.org

Fundraising

Children that are chosen for the competitive side of the club, have their fees heavily subsidised and are therefore expected to support any fundraising activities run by the club.

The club is always looking for volunteers to help with coaching, judging, fundraising, as committee members or welfare officers. Please email treasurer@darlingtongymnastics.co.uk if you would be interested in helping.

Leaving the club...

If your child decides to leave the club, please let us know why. We welcome all feedback as we work towards improving our services. We ask that you treat the club and its coaches with respect and give us notice of any intention to leave to attend a different club.

Refunds on fees paid can be considered on a case-by-case basis but would typically not be expected to be paid.

