



Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy

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Darlington Gymnastics Club is committed to supporting all young people to enjoy and excel in sport and gymnastics and we fully recognise that all children need a safe, protective and nurturing environment if they are to fulfil their potential.

We are committed to work alongside the sports governing body (British Gymnastics (BG)) and other external agencies to achieve the highest standard in the safeguarding of all of those in our care.

This policy statement provides the framework for the clubs Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy. It runs alongside the British Gymnastics Documents:

- Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy
- Safeguarding Children: Safe Environment
- Safeguarding Children: Recognising & Responding to Abuse and Poor Practice

More detailed information, able to supplement this policy is available from all the above documents.

Introduction

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Therefore, everyone who works with children has a responsibility for keeping them safe, irrespective of their role and whether they are paid staff or volunteers.

Darlington Gymnastics Club acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance, complies with best practice and British Gymnastics requirements.

This policy recognises that the welfare and interests of children are paramount in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that regardless of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, socio-economic background, all children

- have a positive and enjoyable experience of sport at the club in a safe and child centred environment

- are protected from abuse whilst participating in gymnastics (or outside of the activity.)

Darlington Gymnastics Club acknowledges that some children, including disabled children and young people or those from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

As part of our safeguarding policy DGC will

- promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people
- ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people
- ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern
- ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all welfare and safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored
- prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals
- ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation.

The policy and procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone involved with the club. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the organisation.

In order to achieve the highest standards within the club DGC will:

- Ensure the overall responsibility for safeguarding sits at the highest level of the club
- Ensure there is at least one suitably trained, competent Welfare Officer within the club who will take the lead role in safeguarding issues. Their responsibilities will include:
 - promoting the welfare of children
 - ensuring that young people are listened to, and their views considered in any decision-making processes
 - ensuring everyone understands their roles and responsibilities
 - responding to issues and concerns of poor practice
 - liaising with BG and other bodies where appropriate and necessary
- Ensure the Welfare Officer has attended BG approved Safeguarding and Protecting Children awareness training and the BG `Time to Listen` course
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers, who are working with children receive appropriate training which is updated at least every 3 years
- All children and young people who attend the club, and their parents, are aware of behaviour that is not acceptable and how they can keep themselves safe
- Support whistle blowing and will take steps to ensure that anyone can raise concerns without the fear of repercussions
- Ensure confidentiality is maintained at all times and information is only shared when, and to whom, necessary

Providing a safe environment

Those with the responsibility of running a club must ensure that policies and procedures are in place, and implemented, as part of their duty of care.

Full guidance on the responsibilities of the club can be found in the BG document 'Safeguarding Children – Safe Environment' but are summarised below.

Club Registration

The club commits to collecting, in line with all data protection laws and in an appropriate time frame, all appropriate registration information required.

Any risk assessments required following the collection of this information will be completed prior to the individual's participation.

Parental consent will always be sought prior to participation.

The club will have a separate policy regarding Photography and use of Imagery and will comply with BG guidance on such.

Welfare Officers

As a BG registered club Darlington Gymnastics Club are required to have an appointed Welfare Officer who will be responsible for:

- Responding to safeguarding, child protection and poor practice concerns
- Provide support to the implementation of procedures and policies
- Assisting the club to be more child focused

This individual cannot be a key member of the coaching team or his or her family member / friend. Impartiality should be maintained between the coaching team and Welfare Officers wherever possible.

Safe environment (more detailed information is included in the BG policy Safe Environment)

- All training must be 'open' for viewing by family
- There should be a clear plan for changing room and toilet use – children should be allowed to get changed in whichever environment they feel comfortable with. Environmental constraints should not impact on

gymnasts' comfort and privacy.

- All equipment must be maintained to a high standard
- First Aid facilities and equipment should be at hand
- All Personal and sensitive information is stored as per GDPR rules

Supervision and Mixed Age Group Training

It is essential that appropriate ratios are adopted, and everyone is clear of their responsibilities within the coaching set up. Ratios will be determined by age, activity and venue. Regardless of ratio, there should always be 2 responsible adults present.

BG does not prohibit adults from training alongside children. Where this situation does occur, DGC will ensure that a safe environment is created for all gym users.

Provision of Personal Care

There may be occasion where some gymnasts will need help with personal care (such as toileting or changing). In preschool classes, these tasks will be undertaken by parents or carers. Parents should also be called in to help when accidents occur during Recreational classes. When this cannot happen (for example if the parent is not present) the child should be encouraged to look after themselves as far as possible. If adult support for intimate care is required, 2 coaches will always be present, and an incident form will be completed.

Supporting access for children with Disabilities and Special Needs

Darlington Gymnastics Club commits that it will make all reasonable adjustments to help include any child who wishes to participate. Where necessary the club will seek outside advice and support (including additional funding) to enable participation.

Involving Young People

`Children have the right to an opinion and for it to be listened to and taken seriously`

DGC commits to ensuring that children and young people have an opportunity to be consulted and, if appropriate, be involved in decisions that relate to their involvement. This involvement will be age appropriate, supported and fully inclusive.

Bullying

Bullying is a behaviour, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts an individual or group, physically or emotionally.

Darlington Gymnastics Club will not tolerate bullying in any form.

All forms of bullying will be taken seriously and responded to appropriately. DGC coaches should document any bullying that is witnessed, alert the Head Coach (or lead coach for that session) and the Welfare Officer. The Welfare Officer will lead any investigation and response.

Communication

Darlington Gymnastics Club refers you to its Social Media Policy to cover the use of communication devices and Social Media.

Photography and Use of Imagery

Please refer to DGC Photography and Imagery Use Policy and the BG Photography Policy in Safeguarding Children: Safe Environment for full guidance

Spotting and manual support

Supporting and handling of a gymnast is essential to ensure good shapes, movement patterns and the development of complex skills. It reduces the risks of injury to gymnasts due to falls or errors of movement.

Darlington Gymnastics Club commits to:

- Ensuring that all skills are coached by appropriately trained (via the BG Coach Education Programme) and experienced staff
- Ensuring all coaching staff undergo Manual Handling training. This will allow them to assess a situation and minimise (and look to eliminate) all risk to themselves and the gymnasts.
- Ensuring that all physical contact is minimal and appropriate and avoids all sensitive areas of the body (genitals, buttocks and breasts)
- Where contact has been inappropriate (by way of error on the coaches' part) or has caused injury (such as a scratch from a nail), an apology should be given to the gymnast, an explanation to the parent and an incident form completed. If serious enough any incident should be reported to the Welfare Officer.
- It is the absolute right of any gymnast to refuse to be handled / spotted. If this situation arises alternative methods should be investigated. If necessary, following full discussion with the child and their parents, this move may be removed from the gymnasts training plan if the safety of the gymnast or coaches cannot be ensured.

Adults in position of trust in dual roles

In some situations, an adult involved with the club may hold dual roles (for example coach and physiotherapist). It is the responsibility of the adult involved to maintain appropriate professional boundaries and ensure there is a clear distinction between their club role and their professional role and must ensure that it is clear which role they are acting in at any given time.

Transporting Gymnasts

British Gymnastics requires that BG coaches **DO NOT** take a child alone on car journeys (unless in exceptional, unforeseen circumstances). Darlington Gymnastics Club fully supports this position and will not tolerate any coach travelling alone with any child.

If a group of children need to be transported DGC will;

- Ensure two responsible adults are in the car
- Ensure full consent is sought from all parents
- Arrange a central collection / drop off point
- Ensure children are seated in the back (with appropriate booster seats)
- Ensure the Welfare Officer is aware of arrangements

Late Collection of children

The late collection of children is sometimes unavoidable. If this situation arises DGC refers coaches and club officers to the BG policy 'Safeguarding Children: Safe Environment' for detailed advice.

DGC commits to:

- maintaining accurate records to allow parents to be contacted in an emergency
- never leaving a child / young person alone (unless over 16 and then only with parental permission)
- not allowing a child to leave with another person without express parental permission
- Children who leave the gym unaccompanied – to meet with Parents in the car park or to travel home alone – must complete a permission slip.
Coaching staff will monitor children leaving the site.

Parents who persistently fail to collect a child on time or who have not arrived after a reasonable period and have not informed the club of the delay may be failing to provide adequate care for their child.

If the parent makes no attempt to provide a reasonable explanation, the Welfare

Officer and another club officer should arrange to meet with the parent to discuss the matter. If there is no change, the Welfare Officer should contact the relevant local authority Children's Social Care Team.

If a parent arrives to collect a child and there is a concern that the parent is unable to take care of the child (i.e. by being under the influence of drink or drugs), the club should seek advice from the police or Emergency Children's Social Care Team.

Missing Children

It is highly unlikely that a child will go missing from the club. If this does happen DGC will follow the guidelines set by BG (and further documented in DGC's Emergency Action Plan)

- Ensure all other children are appropriately looked after while a thorough search is conducted
- Inform the child's parents.
- Organise all available adults by areas to be searched. Take the time to organise a search carefully
- Search the immediate area. Call and shout for the child as clearly and loudly as possible
- Request all those searching to report back at a specified time and to a specified person (the coordinator)
- The coordinator should compile a time line, complete a list of people searching and areas searched, and make a note of the circumstances the child went missing in and where they were last seen and by whom
- Prepare a detailed physical description of the child
- Report the situation to the police if the initial search is unsuccessful. This **MUST happen no later than 30 minutes** after the disappearance is noted.
- Follow police guidance thereafter
- Refer the incident to BG Safeguarding and Compliance Team

Action in the event of a concern being raised

At a club level

The primary objective is to ensure that children remain safe. The response should be appropriate to the situation and DGC encourages all members of the coaching staff to ensure they are fully aware of the content on the BG Policy Safeguarding Children: Recognising and Responding to Abuse & Poor Practice. DGC Directors feel that this policy and the processes that it sets out are Gold Standard and therefore adopts them in full.

Monitoring

The policy will be reviewed a year after development and then every three years, or in the following circumstances:

- changes in legislation and/or government guidance
- as required by the Local Safeguarding Children Board, UK Sport and/or Home Country Sports Councils and British Gymnastics
- as a result of any other significant change or event.

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Next review: February 2024