

## **ATTACHMENT H: CHILD SAFE CODES OF BEHAVIOUR**

---

The below Codes of Behaviour must be followed at all times. Any breach will be dealt with under this Policy. Please note, general Codes of Behaviour and coaches and judges codes of ethics are also outlined in the Member Protection Policy.

### **1. General behaviours**

- (a) Adhere to professional role boundaries.
- (b) Staff members who are Applicable Persons must not, of their own volition or at the request of a service user, act outside the confines of their duties (as specified in their position description).
- (c) Do not provide unauthorised (ie without express permission from a parent or guardian of the relevant child(ren)) transportation.
- (d) Do not engage in unauthorised activities with children who are clients or individual Members and who are not family members outside authorised gymnastic services, programs or events.
- (e) Do not provide any form of unauthorised support to a child who are not family members or their family, unrelated to gymnastic services, programs or events, for example, babysitting.
- (f) Do not seek unauthorised contact with Children who are not a family members outside gymnastic services, programs or events.
- (g) Do not accept any invitations to attend private social functions at the request of a Child who has participated or is participating in gymnastic services, programs or events – or at the request of their family – except where there is a preexisting relationship. Please note you must disclose all pre-existing relationships to GV, your relevant club or state / territory member association.
- (h) Do not develop any ‘special’ relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children).
- (i) If you become aware of a situation in which a Child requires assistance that is beyond the confines of that person’s role, or beyond the scope of GV’s usual service, they should at the earliest opportunity:
  - (i) refer the matter to an appropriate support agency; or
  - (ii) refer the Child to an appropriate support agency or contact the Child’s parent or guardian or seek advice from management.

### **2. Do not engage in any sexual misconduct**

Under no circumstances is any form of ‘sexual behaviour’ to occur between, with, or in the presence of, children participating in gymnastics. Engaging in sexual behaviour while participating in our sport is prohibited even if the young persons involved may be above the legal age of consent.

- (a) ‘Sexual behaviour’ will be interpreted widely, to encompass the entire range of actions that would reasonably be considered to be sexual in nature, including but not limited to:
  - (i) ‘contact behaviour’, such as sexual intercourse, kissing, fondling, sexual penetration or exploiting a child through prostitution; and
  - (ii) ‘non-contact behaviour’, such as flirting, sexual innuendo, inappropriate text

messaging, inappropriate photography or exposure to pornography or nudity.

### **3. Positive Guidance (Discipline)**

- (a) Strive to ensure that Children participating in gymnastics are aware of the acceptable limits of their behaviour so that we can provide a positive experience for all participants.
- (b) Children are encouraged to feel safe and to be safe and to have positive relationships and friendships with their peers.
- (c) Wherever possible, Children are encouraged to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities, especially on issues that are important to them.
- (d) Children are given information about their safe participation in organisational activities including access to information about child abuse prevention programs.
- (e) There are times when Personnel may be required to use appropriate techniques and behaviour management strategies to ensure:
  - (i) an effective and positive environment; and
  - (ii) the safety and/or wellbeing of Children or Personnel participating in gymnastics.

### **4. Positive coaching techniques**

All Personnel must use strategies that are fair, respectful and appropriate to the developmental stage of the children involved. The Child needs to be provided with clear directions and given an opportunity to redirect their misbehaviour in a positive manner.

Under no circumstances are our Personnel to take disciplinary action involving physical punishment or any form of treatment that could reasonably be considered as degrading, cruel, frightening or humiliating.

### **5. Promoting equality and diversity**

All Personnel must ensure that their approach and interactions with Children are sensitive, respectful and inclusive of all backgrounds and abilities. Where our organisation has involvement with Children who are Indigenous or Torres Strait Islanders, those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds or those with a disability, our Personnel will promote their safety (including cultural safety), participation and empowerment. For further information please refer to the GV Inclusion Policy.

### **6. Use of language and tone of voice**

Language and tone of voice used in the presence of Children should provide clear direction, boost their confidence, encourage or affirm them not be harmful to children – in this respect, avoid language that is:

- (a) discriminatory, racist or sexist;
- (b) derogatory, belittling or negative, e.g by calling a child a 'loser' or telling them they are 'too fat';
- (c) intended to threaten or frighten;
- (d) profane or sexual; and
- (e) inappropriate

## **7. Giving Gifts**

GV prohibits our Personnel from giving gifts/presents to Children to whom we provide a service other than the provision of awards.

## **8. Supervision**

GV Personnel are responsible for supervising the Children who participate in gymnastic services, programs or events to ensure those participants:

- (a) engage positively with gymnastics services, programs or events;
- (b) behave appropriately toward one another; and
- (c) are in a safe environment and are protected from external threats.

Our personnel are required to avoid one-to-one unsupervised situations with Children to whom we provide services, and (where possible) to conduct all activities and/or discussions with service recipients in view of other Personnel.

## **9. Mixed age groups**

GV does not prohibit adults from training alongside children. Clubs have a responsibility to ensure they consider the differences in needs based not only on age but also experience and stage of development for each of their participants. Where clubs have adults training with children, the club has a responsibility to create a safe environment for all its participants and where necessary, this includes putting safeguards in place to protect children and adults in our sport. For example, requiring adults who work with Children to hold a current working with Children check or such other similar check in the relevant jurisdiction.

## **10. Use of electronic communications and social media**

GV acknowledges the enormous value of technology and social media to communicate, promote our sport and celebrate the achievements and success of the people involved in gymnastics however we also recognise the risks that social media can pose.

Where interactions are open and transparent on social media that is generally accepted, however private messaging between two individuals is tantamount to a behind closed doors discussion and is not acceptable.

The main principles to abide by when communicating with a Child electronically are:

- (a) interactions on social media should always be open and transparent and communicating privately with a Child is inappropriate;
- (b) accordingly, Personnel should at all times adhere to the following guidelines as well as the [GV Social Media Policy](#) when using electronic communication;
- (c) when communicating with Children always ensure a parent and/or other Personnel is copied into the correspondence (e.g. a group chat);
- (d) communicate through official channels if social media is the only possible way to communicate (e.g. if mobile phone text messaging apps do not work overseas you can use Facebook messenger, however, use the Club's official FB page not your own personal account);
- (e) restrict communication to issues directly associated with delivering our gymnastics services, programs or events, such as advising that a scheduled event is cancelled;

- (f) limit the personal or social content in such communications to what is required to convey the service-related message in a polite, friendly manner;
- (g) follow the photographs of Children guidelines when posting any images on social media;
- (h) you must not post photographs of Children on personal social media accounts;
- (i) ‘share’ photos or posts from official gymnastics social media platforms instead of posting directly from a personal account;
- (j) do not communicate with Children via electronic communication one on one. (e.g. direct message, internet chat rooms, social networking sites and E-mail communication); coaches should not ‘friend’ athletes;
- (k) do not upload/post still/moving images or audio recordings of Children without the prior authorisation of their parent or guardian;
- (l) do not request Children to keep the communication a secret from their parents or others;
- (m) do not use such communication to promote unauthorised ‘social’ activity or to arrange unauthorised contact;
- (n) do not use inappropriate language when communicating with a Child;
- (o) do not communicate anything that a reasonable observer could view as being of a sexual nature (refer to section 2(a) of Attachment K); and
- (p) personnel are required to ensure appropriate monitoring of children when they use GV electronic communication equipment to ensure they do not inadvertently place themselves at risk of abuse or exploitation via social networking sites, gaming sites or through web searches, or inappropriate email communication.

## 11. Employment of Children

Many Association Members employ Children. There may be occasions where a young person working for an Association Member has a pre-existing relationship with a Child they oversee/coach/judge. For example, a coach and gymnast may go to the same school and be friends outside of gymnastics. GV recommends that in these circumstances the Association Member ensures the Children they employ:

- (a) are aware that they are in a position of authority and therefore have power over Children;
- (b) declare all pre-existing relationships especially where they communicate personally with another Child Participant; and
- (c) are aware that the Child Safe Policy and Codes of Behaviours apply to them due to them being in a position of authority.

## 12. Photographs of Children

Personnel should at all times adhere to the following guidelines as well as the [GV Photographic and Filming Policy](#) when photographing children. Children to whom we deliver programs or services should only be photographed while involved in gymnastics if:

- (a) the context of the photo is directly related to participation in gymnastics; and
- (b) the Child is appropriately dressed and posed.

Images are not to be distributed (including as an attachment to an email) to anyone outside GV other than the child photographed or their parent, without management knowledge and approval.

Images (digital or hard copy) are to be stored in a manner that prevents unauthorised access by others, for example:

- (a) if in hard-copy form, in a locked drawer or cabinet; or
- (b) if in electronic form, in a ‘password protected’ folder.

Images (digital or hard copy) are to be destroyed or deleted as soon as they are no longer required.

Images are not to be exhibited on our website without parental knowledge and express approval, or such images must be presented in a manner that de-identifies the Child. Any caption or accompanying text may need to be checked so that it does not identify a Child if such identification is potentially detrimental.

To the extent practicable, images are not to be taken on personal devices.

Images of Children involved in gymnastics should not be stored on your personal device.

Images of children cannot be used inappropriately or illegally. GV may take images or otherwise record images of Gymnasts and attendees at GV events for the purposes of promotion of Gymnastics or by a designated GV contracted photographer except where informed in writing by a member that they do not wish to have their image captured.

GV requires that persons obtain permission before taking an image of a child that is not their own and ensure that the parent/guardian knows the way the image will be used.

GV also requires the privacy of others to be respected and prohibits the use of camera phones, videos and cameras inside changing areas, showers and toilets.

### **13. Physical contact with Children**

Gymnastics is a sport that requires close physical contact at times to ensure the safety of an athlete. As such it is ‘high risk’ area and strong, rigorous guidelines around contact must be followed. Any physical contact with Children must be appropriate to the delivery of gymnastics coaching such as spotting, fitting sporting equipment like grips, and appropriately correcting technique and must also be based on the needs of the Child (such as to assist or comfort a distressed child) rather than on the needs of the other person.

Some guidelines regarding physical contact are detailed below but this list is not exhaustive, and a common-sense approach should be taken, with safeguarding and the wants and needs of the Child front of mind at all times.

- (a) seek a Child’s permission to touch or interact when demonstrating an activity.
- (b) always communicate with a Child when physical touch may be necessary.
- (c) respect and respond to signs that a Child is uncomfortable with touch.
- (d) try to use verbal directions rather than touch (e.g., ask a Child to move in a particular way, rather than physically place them in the required position).
- (e) try to avoid and discourage younger children from inappropriate expectations of hugs or cuddles. This should be done gently and without embarrassment or offence to the child. For example, offer a high five as encouragement.
- (f) kindly and appropriately tell a Child who is inappropriately or excessively touching another Child to stop and raise the concern with staff members who are Applicable Persons.

- (g) use non-intrusive touch (e.g., congratulating a Child by shaking hands or a pat on the upper arm or back). Try to accompany such touch with positive encouraging words.
- (h) do not, under any circumstances, have contact with a Child that involves any intimate part of a Child's body e.g., genitals, backside or breast area.
- (i) do not initiate, permit or request inappropriate or unnecessary physical contact with a Child (e.g., massage, kisses, hugs, tickling and wrestling games, adjusting a Child's leotard, sitting on a Child to assist with sit ups/stretching).
- (j) do not facilitate situations that unnecessarily result in close physical contact with a Child.
- (k) do not inflict corporal punishment (physical discipline, smacking, long runs in hot weather, no water breaks, excessive exercise etc.).
- (l) do not engage in touch that would appear to a reasonable observer to have a sexual connotation
- (m) use only your hands to spot, correct technique or manipulate gymnasts into position (e.g. do not use your foot to adjust a child's position).

#### **14. Spotting and manual support**

Supporting and 'shaping' the gymnast is an essential part of coaching gymnastics in that it helps the gymnast to understand shapes, movement patterns and complex skills, and it also reduces the risk of injury due to a fall or error in performance.

The key points on safe spotting and manual support are:

- (a) always put the immediate safety of the Child above any other concerns (e.g. if a Child is going to fall and catching them might result in contact with a sensitive body part you must still catch them);
- (b) ensure that support is only used when necessary and "over-handling" is avoided;
- (c) be alert to the possibility of performance errors or anxiety, which may increase the risk of injury;
- (d) do not use supporting techniques that inhibit performance; and
- (e) infrequent non-intentional physical contact can arise out of error on the performer or coach's part. Such situations should not be ignored and should be acknowledged through an apology to the gymnast and reported to a senior Personnel. A written report should be made of any significant incident\* which is to be reported to the relevant club or member association. It is also good practice to explain and provide some written guidance, perhaps as part of an induction pack, to new Members and parents that some physical contact will be required but that only appropriate, non- invasive techniques should be used. If a gymnast or parent has any concerns, they should be raised with a senior Personnel at the relevant Affiliated Club or Member Association. In any circumstance where abuse is suspected, GV reporting procedures should be followed.

\*In this section a significant incident is defined as being:

- (i) the contact resulted in the Child experiencing or likely to experience significant harm;
- (ii) the contact involved an intimate part of a Child's body (e.g., genitals, backside or breast area) and the Child was significantly distressed as a result;
- (iii) the contact involved an intimate part of a Child's body (e.g., genitals, backside or

breast area) and was or appeared to be intentional; or

- (iv) the contact involved could be observed to be a criminal offence e.g. involving penetration.

## **15. Massaging**

During any gymnastics related activity or at any gymnastics event, or during any time employed or engaged by GV, staff members who are Applicable Persons must not engage in any form of massage with Children unless they are engaged in a professional capacity for the purpose of supporting that Child's physical conditioning, recovery, rehabilitation or injury prevention. Any doctor, who is an Applicable Person, should only provide medical services within the scope of their professional capacity - not the nature of services performed by a qualified masseur/se or physiotherapist.

Prior to engaging in any form of massage such persons must provide GV with a current copy of their accreditation or qualification. This information will be stored securely on the GV CRM system (iMIS). It is the responsibility of each person proposing to undertake massage in these circumstances to provide GV with these details.

If there is no qualified masseur(se) available the following guidelines may be considered by gymnasts:

- (a) soft tissue maintenance treatment can be undertaken by gymnasts themselves using a foam roller, tennis ball or spiky ball;
- (b) athletes are encouraged to do their own soft tissue day to day maintenance, and pre and post-event management;
- (c) soft tissue maintenance does not need the input of another person. Often it is unhelpful for athletes to feel that they are dependent on someone else to manage their muscles; and
- (d) massage for specific conditions, or recovery from injury, should be dealt with by a qualified soft tissue therapist, who has the knowledge to treat these conditions safely and effectively.

## **16. Flexibility/Stretching exercises**

There is a range of techniques and types of exercise for extending flexibility that involve the application of controlled force. These techniques can lead to the person applying the force coming into close proximity with the gymnast and having prolonged contact with areas of the gymnast's body. Personnel must follow the following guidelines when conducting flexibility or stretching activities:

- (a) use slow, progressive and prolonged stretching exercises, within the "discomfort zone", rather than what might be considered to be excessive force;
- (b) be sensitive to how the exercise might be perceived by the parents and children;
- (c) consider holding a parents' forum to explain the flexibility training techniques, so that the parent is more aware and therefore less likely to misinterpret the techniques being used;
- (d) where possible use stretching techniques that do not require or minimise physical contact;
- (e) be aware of hand placement when touching a gymnast;
- (f) do not use exercises that place the coaches and gymnast's body in "close proximity" and might be seen as unnecessary by the parent or observer; and
- (g) do not sit on or straddle a gymnast to encourage flexibility.

## 17. Personal Care

Taking into account the safeguarding concerns that can arise from coaches and others putting themselves in a position where they are alone with a child, GV views as unacceptable the routine provision of personal care to a Child by coaches or other Personnel.

GV requires that any personal care required during periods of time engaged in gymnastics activities (e.g. assistance in dressing, toileting etc.) only be carried out by someone whose sole role in relation to the Child is to address their personal care needs.

**Pre-school Children:** Parents of children under three years of age and of children who require assistance to use the toilet must remain with their child. GV would also recommend that clubs require parents of children aged 3-4 years remain nearby and contactable in case their child becomes distressed or requires assistance.

**Children with Disabilities:** Some children with disabilities, as a result of their need for practical assistance in daily living, may be more vulnerable to abuse and the risk may be greater where there are a number of carers. This may increase the likelihood of exposure to abusive behaviour and make it more difficult to set and maintain physical boundaries. It can be difficult, particularly for children with severe learning disabilities, to differentiate between different roles if carried out by the same person. This may lead to confusion and additional vulnerability. In order to provide adequate support to Children with a disability, GV advocates that either a professional carer approved by the child's family or the child's parent or guardian should carry out the role of "carer" during gymnastics related activities.

## 18. Transporting Children

Children are to be transported only in circumstances that are directly related to the delivery of gymnastics programs, events or services – e.g. they should not be given casual lifts outside transport to and from gymnastic related activity.

- (a) Children are to be transported only with prior written authorisation from the child's parent/guardian. Gaining approval involves providing information about the proposed journey, including:
  - (i) the form of transport proposed, such as private car, taxi, self-drive bus, bus with driver, train, plane or boat;
  - (ii) the reason for the journey;
  - (iii) the route to be followed, including any stops or side trips; and
  - (iv) details of anyone who will be present during the journey other than staff members who are Applicable Persons who are involved.
- (b) GV understands that in some smaller communities it may be appropriate for personnel to provide Children with transport to and from gymnastics. GV recommends that where possible this be avoided, however, where it cannot be avoided personnel must follow the points above and:
  - (i) ensure that you are not left alone, unsupervised with a Child;
  - (ii) ensure that the Child sits in the back seat, appropriately secured; and
  - (iii) do not make any unnecessary stops.

## 19. Overnight Stays

Personnel must not stay overnight with a Child who participates in gymnastics services they deliver unless it is in direct relation to the service delivery of gymnastics (e.g. competitions) and is

with the prior written authorisation of the parent/guardian.

(a) Exemptions include:

- (i) Personnel who are immediate family members to the Child; and
- (ii) Personnel who have a pre-existing relationship with a Child and the overnight stay is not related to gymnastics (e.g. you coach a young Child who is friends with your daughter and they have a sleep over at your house). All pre-existing relationships with Children where you may have contact with them outside of gymnastics must be disclosed to the relevant manager.

(b) Overnight stays are to occur only with the authorisation of your designated senior manager and of the parents/guardians of the children involved. GV strongly recommends that clubs do not take children under 10 away abroad, interstate or intra-state overnight unless their parent/s or someone with legal parental responsibility can accompany them on the trip.

(c) Practices and behaviours by Personnel during an overnight stay must be consistent with the practices and behaviour expected during delivery of gymnastic programs, services or events at all other times.

(d) Minimum standards of conduct that must be observed by Personnel during an overnight stay include:

- (i) providing Children with privacy when bathing and dressing;
- (ii) observing appropriate dress standards when Children are present – such as no exposure to adult nudity;
- (iii) respecting the rights of Children to contact their parents, or others, at any time, but especially if they feel unsafe, uncomfortable or distressed during the stay;
- (iv) respecting parents expecting that their Children can, if they wish, make contact;
- (v) ensuring children only share hotel rooms or bedrooms with children of the same gender;
- (vi) ensuring Children who are transgender are consulted on their choice of sleeping arrangements;
- (vii) do not allow children to be exposed to pornographic material, for example, through movies, television, the internet or magazines
- (viii) not leaving Children under the supervision or protection of unauthorised persons such as hotel staff or friends;
- (ix) now allowing sleeping arrangements that may compromise the safety of Children such as unsupervised sleeping arrangements, or an adult sleeping in the same bed/room as a Child;
- (x) not allowing adults to share a room with a Child other than their own Child;
- (xi) not allowing adults to enter the Child's room or spend time in a Child's room (except in an emergency). If an individual adult presence is required, there should always be more than one Child in the room with the adult; and
- (xii) do not remove a Child's clothing unless you have their permission and have at least one other adult with you.

## 20. Change Room/Bathroom Arrangements

Personnel may be required to supervise Children in change rooms/bathrooms but must balance that requirement with a Child's right to privacy. In addition:

- a) parents should only be in the changing room with their Children if the age range of the session is for an age group where parental help is generally required. This is normally around 8 years or under. Additional arrangements may be required if there are Children with disabilities in the group and these should be clearly reflected in the Affiliated Club policy;
- b) clubs that are unable to provide safe and private changing room facilities are advised to suggest/ensure all Participants arrive wearing their leotards/shorts under their clothes. Suitable notices explaining the above conditions of use should also be posted prominently in and around the changing facility;
- c) where an Affiliated Club has to use a shared changing/bathroom facility that is accessible by adults, the Affiliated Club should ensure that there is appropriate supervision at all times;
- d) where changing facilities/bathrooms are not able to be supervised by staff (e.g. they are off the gym floor and out of sight) GV recommends Children use bathroom/change rooms in groups of 3;
- e) Personnel must avoid one-to-one situations with a Child in a change room area;
- f) Personnel must knock or announce themselves before entering change rooms;
- g) Personnel must try to have at least one other adult with you when you are in a change room with children;
- h) Personnel must make every effort to get changed in an individual closed cubicle;
- i) Personnel must ensure adequate supervision in 'public' change rooms when they are used to prevent abuse by members of the public, adult service users, peer service users, or general misbehaviour, while also respecting a child's privacy;
- j) Personnel must not enter a change room of the opposite sex;
- k) Personnel must not isolate themselves and a Child from others in the change room;
- l) Personnel must not allow mobile phones to be used in changing rooms; and
- m) Personnel must not use bathroom facilities at the same time as a Child. Where possible adults/Personnel should have separate change room and bathroom facilities to children.
- n) A 'buddy system' may be implemented whereby, in the absence of the availability of a parent or guardian to accompany a Child to the bathroom, Children can nominate 2 or more 'buddies' of a similar age and gender who can accompany them.