

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Introduction:

At City of Worcester Gymnastics we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of gymnasts and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We take all incidents of bullying seriously. However, we acknowledge that, as in wider society, bullying does happen from time to time and recognise that preventing, raising awareness and consistently responding to any cases of bullying should be a priority to ensure the safety and well-being of our pupils.

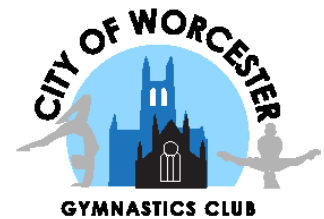
In line with the Equality Act 2010, it is essential that our gymnastics club:

- Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

This policy is closely linked with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and our Club's Code of Conduct for both Coaches and Gymnasts. We have an approach of 'it could happen here' and therefore even if there are no reports of bullying, it does not mean it is not happening and it may be the case that it is just not being reported. At City of Worcester Gymnastics, we are aware that pupils could be bullied in our club setting, and recognise that preventing, raising awareness and consistently responding to any cases of bullying should be a priority to ensure the safety and well-being of our gymnasts. The purpose of this policy document is to ensure that the aims, responsibilities and procedures with regard to dealing with bullying in the club are made clear to all staff, parents and Trustees. The implementation of this policy will create an



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ethos where bullying is regarded as unacceptable so that a safe and secure environment is created for everyone to learn and work in. All members of the gymnastics club have a responsibility to recognise bullying when it occurs and to take appropriate action in accordance with the club's policy. This will happen in the following ways:

The club will meet the British Gymnastics requirement for all clubs to have an Anti bullying Policy in place.

- The club will work closely with other professionals (British Gymnastics and Welfare Officers) to ensure that children stay safe as stated in The Children Act 1989, The SEN and Disability Act 2001 and The Children Act 2004.
- All trustees, coaches, volunteers, gymnasts and parents/guardians will have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All trustees, coaches, volunteers will know what the club's policy is on bullying and will consistently and swiftly follow it when bullying is reported.
- All gymnasts and parents/guardians will know what the club policy is on bullying and what they can do if bullying occurs.
- Gymnasts and parent/ guardians will be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- A positive, caring ethos will be created within the club environment where everyone can work, train and express themselves, free from the fear of being bullied.

Aims:

1. To ensure that all children are able to come to gym free from the behaviours described above.
2. To make clear to parents that bullying is not tolerated in any form.
3. To give children strategies for dealing and managing difficult behaviour from other gymnasts including bullying.



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4. To ensure that everyone in the gymnastics community understand what bullying is and what it isn't.
5. To have procedures that are clear, sufficiently detailed and relevant to tackling effectively bullying behaviour.

What is Bullying?

In order to deal with bullying successfully it is important that all coaches, volunteers and parents share an understanding of what we mean by bullying. The Anti-Bullying Alliance and its members have a shared definition of bullying based on research from across the world over the last 30 years: "The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online" (Our definition of bullying (anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk) Physical and emotional: Bullying can include physical and emotional abuse such as name calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, kicking, hitting, taking belongings, producing offensive graffiti, gossiping, peer isolation (e.g. excluding people from groups) and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.

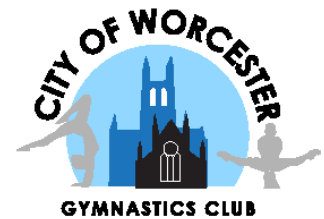
Online bullying:

The same unacceptable behaviours can be expressed online; this is sometimes called online bullying or cyberbullying. Specifically, this can include sending offensive, upsetting and inappropriate messages by phone, text, instant messenger, through gaming, websites, social media sites and apps, and sending offensive or degrading photos or videos. All forms of bullying can cause severe and adverse effects on children's emotional development. We take all forms of bullying seriously.

Bullying is recognised as being a form of child-on-child abuse; children can abuse other children. Abuse is abuse and it should never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up". Bullying can happen to



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anyone. This policy covers all types and forms of bullying including but not limited to:

- Bullying related to physical appearance
 - Bullying of young carers, children in care or otherwise related to home circumstances
- Bullying related to physical/mental health conditions
- Physical bullying • Emotional bullying
- Sexualised bullying/harassment
- Bullying via technology, known as online bullying or cyberbullying
- Prejudiced-based and discriminatory bullying (against people/pupils with protected characteristics) which may include:
 - Bullying related to race, religion, faith and belief and for those without faith
 - Bullying related to ethnicity, nationality or culture
 - Bullying related to Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND)
 - Bullying related to sexual orientation (homophobic/biphobic bullying)
 - Gender based bullying, including transphobic bullying
 - Bullying against teenage parents (pregnancy and maternity under the Equality Act).

Signs of Bullying

Staff should be vigilant in looking out for signs of bullying or other child protection issues including:

- Physical: unexplained bruises, scratches, cuts, missing belongings, damaged clothes, loss of appetite, stomach aches, headaches, bedwetting.
- Emotional: losing interest in gymnastics, being withdrawn or secretive, unusual shows of temper, refusal to say why unhappy, high level of anxiety, mood swings, tearfulness for no reason, lack of confidence, headaches and stomach aches, signs of depression.
- Behavioural: 'losing' more items than usual, sudden changes in behaviour and mood, concentration difficulties.



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Bullying Prevention

We foster a clear understanding that bullying, in any form, is unacceptable. We believe that preventing bullying is the responsibility of our gymnastics community at City of Worcester Gymnastics and when there are incidents of bullying we will work together to deal with the situation and to learn from what has happened. Preventing and raising awareness of bullying is essential in keeping incidents in our club to a minimum.

How we respond to Bullying Concerns

In our club, gymnasts are encouraged to talk to coaches, volunteers and welfare officers when they are unhappy or have concerns. Gymnasts in our club understand that they have a right to feel and be safe and a responsibility to support others to feel and be safe. Gymnasts are encouraged to report bullying to:

- A trusted adult
- Their coach or other trusted adult in the club
- Welfare Officer

Children are taught that it is important to talk to a trusted adult if bullying is taking place outside of the club. At City of Worcester Gymnastics we believe strongly that the best way to minimise and address bullying when it happens is not by sanctions alone. It is important that children understand the impact that their behaviour choices have on others and identify what changes in their own behaviour are required to ensure that bullying stops. As such for each case of bullying that we may have to deal with, there will be a bespoke body of work/support given to both the victim and the perpetrator.

The following steps will be taken when dealing with any incidents of bullying reported to the school:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the coach/volunteer who has been approached or witnessed the concern. All concerns of bullying must be passed on to the Head Coach and one of the welfare officers.
- The club will provide appropriate support for the person being bullied – making sure they are not at risk of immediate harm and will involve them in any decision-making, as appropriate.
- The Welfare officers will be informed of all bullying concerns, especially where there may be safeguarding issues.



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- The Head Coach or another appropriate member of leadership such as a welfare officer will interview all parties involved.
- A clear and precise account of bullying incidents will be recorded by the club in accordance with existing procedures. This will include recording appropriate details regarding decisions and action taken.
- The club will speak with and inform other coaches where appropriate.
- The club will ensure parents/carers are kept informed about the concern and action taken, as appropriate and in line with child protection procedures.
- Appropriate sanctions and support, will be implemented in consultation with all parties concerned.

When responding to online bullying, the club will:

- Act swiftly as soon as an incident has been reported or identified
- Ascertain facts and gain as much information as possible
- Provide appropriate support for the person who has been cyberbullied, and work with the person who has carried out the bullying to ensure that it does not happen again.
- Encourage the person being bullied to keep any evidence (screenshots) of the bullying activity to assist any investigation.
- Take all available steps where possible to identify the person responsible.

This may include:

- looking at use of the club systems
- identifying and interviewing possible witnesses
- Contacting the service provider and the police, if necessary.
- Work with the individuals and online service providers to prevent the incident from spreading and assist in removing offensive or upsetting material from circulation.

This may include:

- Support reports to a service provider to remove content if those involved are unable to be identified or if those involved refuse to or are unable to delete content.
- Searching gymnasts' electronic devices, such as mobile phones, in accordance with the law.
- Inform the police if a criminal offence has been committed.
- advising those targeted not to retaliate or reply.
- providing advice on blocking or removing people from contact lists.
- helping those involved to consider and manage any private information they may have in the public domain.



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Procedures for parents:

Parents are encouraged to report concerns and bullying to the club. This would normally be their coach, Head coach or Welfare Officer

- If a parent has any concerns about their child, they should speak to their coach immediately. If a parent thinks bullying is the issue, the matter will be referred to the Head Coach and/or Welfare Officer.
- If a parent feels unable to talk to the coach, they can make an appointment to speak directly with the Head Coach or Welfare Officer
- The club will work with both the child and the parents to ensure that any bullying is stopped and that support is given where needed.
- Parents should not confront the bully or their parents. This can complicate the situation and distress the gymnast.
- The club will deal directly with all children involved and their parents directly. Parents will be kept informed of any actions the club is taking.
- If parents feel that their concern has not been dealt with appropriately they should follow the club's complaints policy. All members of the club community, including gymnasts, coaches, parents and trustees, are expected to treat everyone with dignity respect at all times. This includes both face to-face contact and online.

How do we support victims of bullying?

Being a victim of bullying is a traumatic experience and can impact a child in many different ways. A one size all model is not suitable when supporting children who may have been bullied. The child is at the centre of any support plan in place and their views are taken into consideration when devising the plan. Children who have been bullied may be supported in the following ways:

- Reassuring the pupil and providing immediate pastoral support.
- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with their coach, Head Coach or Welfare Officer of their choice.
- Being advised to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to any further concerns.
- Working towards restoring self-esteem and confidence.



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- Providing ongoing support.
- Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance

Children who are perpetrators of bullying will be supported by:

- Discussing what happened, establishing the concern and the need to change.
- Informing parents/carers to help change the attitude and behaviour of the child.
- Providing appropriate education and support regarding their behaviour or actions this include accessing therapeutic support



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