



**British**  
**Gymnastics**  
More than a sport

**Safeguarding Children:  
Safe Environment**



# Safeguarding Children: Safe Environment

## Approval

Approved by:	Name:	Dept.:	Date:
<b>Standards Committee</b>	Michelle Fulford	Corporate Services	17/07/14

## Document History

Version	Summary of Changes	Document Status	Date
0.1	Extracts of relevant sections of BG Child Protection Policy 2008 put into a separate document entitled Safeguarding Children: Safe Environment. Some amendments to terminology. Inclusion of new guidance on supervision and mixed age groups.	Approved	17/07/14
0.2	Amendments to Photography at Events.		
1.0		Live	07/10/2014

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## Duty of Care

All clubs and gymnastics activity providers have a responsibility for the safety and welfare of gymnasts, coaches, volunteers, officials, visitors and others. This responsibility applies to all clubs, regardless of their size or structure. There is a legal responsibility to ensure that participants are protected from harm whilst taking part in gymnastics. This is legally termed as the **'duty of care'** and is particularly significant when dealing with children.

When working with children, an adult who carries out a supervisory role would take on certain responsibilities while the child was in their care. This may include: -

- holding a responsibility for care and wellbeing during training;
- safe dispersal after training;
- providing first aid;
- providing/consenting to emergency medical treatment;
- supervision/chaperoning;
- team managing.

In order to fulfill the 'duty of care', gymnastics activity providers must make sure that the following areas are properly covered:

- safeguarding and welfare;
- safe environment, including safe apparatus and equipment;
- safe development of the individual through appropriate physical and psychological preparation and progressive skill development;
- provision of suitable first aid support and emergency procedures;
- exercising reasonable care at all times.

Those with an overall responsibility for running a club or providing gymnastics activity must ensure that policies and procedures are in place and implemented as part of their duty of care, although it is impossible to establish detailed guidelines for every aspect of every situation that may arise. However, BG Policy, training courses and resource materials are designed to provide the prudent club, welfare officer, coach, judge, official and parent with a sufficient basis of knowledge and guidance to enable them to meet their obligations in relation to safeguarding and the promotion of the welfare of young people in their care.

The policies in this section will assist gymnastics providers to ensure an approach to safeguarding and the promotion of welfare that meets reasonable expectations in relation to the standards required by organisations' that provide services for young people. Further information on appropriate standards in relation to coaching gymnastics is provided in BG Coach Education resources. Any reports of failure to comply with the guidance in this section will be investigated as breach of policy.

## Club Registration

When gymnasts register with a club it is essential that the club obtains appropriate personal information about them. The type of information that should be collected at the point of registration would include: -

- Name and address;
- Date of birth;
- Parent/Carer information;
- Emergency contacts;
- Medical details – allergies, existing conditions;
- Information on any disability or special needs, including English not being the first language;
- Medical consent;
- Consent for participation in gymnastics;
- Consent for photography and filming;
- Equality profile.

Clubs should ensure that this information is collected at the earliest opportunity to enable any necessary risk assessments based on medical information and/or disability to be completed prior to participation.

Parental consent should always be sought prior to participation in ‘regular club activity’. In addition, consent should be requested if there is an intention to film gymnasts for training purposes as standard part of club training and for participation in other activities beyond regular training, e.g. competitions.

In line with the [Data Protection Act 1998](#) informed consent must also be sought to use an individual’s personal information. This includes the following circumstances:

- using personal information for other reasons beyond that which was originally collected e.g. sharing the information with a third party, for example British Gymnastics;
- publication of images (photography and film).

## Welfare Officers

Although the responsibility for safeguarding falls on everyone, a critical element in safeguarding is the designation of an individual who is responsible for safeguarding and promoting welfare of young people. All BG clubs and gymnastics events are required to have a Welfare Officer to be responsible for:

- responding to child protection and poor practice concerns;
- providing support and advice in the implementation of procedures that safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- assisting the club to be more child-focused in its activities, e.g. involving children in decision making processes.

In order to avoid any potential conflicts of interest, the role must not be taken on by a key member of the coaching team or member of his/her immediate family, however an individual who has a more limited involvement in coaching can take on the role in the event that there is no other acceptable alternative.

## Provision of Safe Environment

Safeguarding is fundamental in the delivery of the sport and the conduct of those involved. Everyone must place the protection of young people as the paramount consideration, and ensure that the environment where the gymnastics activity takes place is one where young people are safe and helps to reduce the risk of young people being abused through their participation within the sport.

Clubs and organisations' must address the following environmental factors: -

- providing open training environment;
- ensuring there is a clear policy for use of changing rooms and toilets;
- maintenance of apparatus, equipment and other club property, e.g. minibus;\*
- provision of first aid facilities;\*
- storage of personal and sensitive information.

\* These areas are covered in detail in the [BG Health, Safety and Welfare Policy](#).

## Open Training Environment

It is essential that clubs work in partnership with parents/carers and are open about training sessions. Clubs should welcome parents who wish to observe and in the case of new or potential members encourage them to view a session and remain with their child until the child is happy to be left.

In some facilities there may be logistical problems in providing a suitable area for viewing. Clubs without viewing areas should designate a small area of the gym for viewing. This will need to be carefully managed and there may need to be limits on the number of spectators that can be safely accommodated. Clubs should also ensure that a viewing policy covering acceptable standards of conduct is in place.

An alternative way of providing viewing is to use CCTV technology. The use of CCTV would allow parents to view what is going on inside and, if appropriate, outside the building without taking up space in the gym. It is also possible to enable remote access with appropriate security systems in place.

It is not necessary to record images when using CCTV for viewing purposes. **Clubs that wish to record CCTV images must contact the Information Commissioner for advice on compliance with the [Data Protection Act 1998](#).**

BG will not support clubs who actively discourage parents from viewing by:

- obscuring windows;
- refusing reasonable requests to view;
- asking parents to leave without due cause;
- justifying the prohibition of viewing on spurious health and safety grounds.

The provision of an open training environment is much wider than simply providing parents with a viewing area. It involves creating a culture of openness between the club and parents. This will include:

- regular written and oral communication with parents;
- providing regular feedback on a child's progress;
- opportunities to discuss the child's progress and training regime;
- opportunity to raise concerns and receive feedback on the outcome;
- encouraging parents to become involved in the club;
- inviting parents to attend welfare briefings prior to an away event;
- encouraging parents to attend events or keep in close contact with their child;
- setting up parent forums;
- appointing a Parent Liaison Officer who is responsible for communication, information and encouraging involvement.

## Changing Facilities

All BG clubs must have a policy, or rules, relating to the use of changing facilities. There can be difficulties where the gymnastics activity is provided within a multi-use sports centre and will have to be subject to the availability and access to facilities, whether groups are mixed gender, and whether the changing facilities are open for public use.

Although clubs should develop a policy that best meets their specific circumstances, the following underlying principles **must** be adopted:

- where a club is fully responsible for changing facilities, adults must not be permitted to get changed in these facilities at the same time as children;\*
- there must be separate changing facilities, or times, for males and females;
- no-one should enter changing rooms whilst these are being used by members of the opposite sex;
- mobile phones must not be used in changing rooms;
- codes of conduct should address behaviour while using changing facilities;
- everyone should be aware that they must report any concerns or incidents without delay.

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 7 or 8 years old. Additional arrangements may be required if there are young people with disabilities in the group.

Clubs which are unable to provide safe changing room facilities are advised to suggest/ensure all members arrive wearing their leotards/shorts under their clothes.

\* Where a club has to use a shared changing facility that is accessible by adults, the club should ensure that the changing policy provides guidance for young people on what they should do in the event that they have a concern about an adult who is also making use of the facility.

## Supervision and Mixed Age Group Training

It is essential that appropriate ratios for supervision are adopted and everyone is clear of their supervisory responsibilities. Ratios should be determined by considering age, the type of activity and where it is taking place. For club training, BG would recommend a minimum ratio of one adult to fifteen gymnasts for low-level floor activity. Where events are external to the regular club training venue a minimum ratio of one adult to 10 gymnasts is required. This ratio should be increased for gymnasts aged under-eight years. In addition, there must always be a minimum of two responsible adults present. This ensures there is supervision in the event of an accident or incident that requires one of the adults to leave the group to accompany a child.

### Mixed Age Groups

British Gymnastics 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.

## Provision of Personal Care

There may on occasion be circumstances where some gymnasts will need help with personal and intimate care such as going to the toilet, changing and washing. In the main this is most likely to arise for pre-school children or some gymnasts with severe learning or physical disabilities.

### 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. BG would 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.

Taking account of the above factors, and the safeguarding concerns that can arise from coaches and others putting themselves in a position where they are alone with a child, BG views as unacceptable the routine provision of personal care by coaches. BG requires all intimate care to be carried out by someone other than the coach (except when the coach is also the parent) whose sole role in relation to the young person is to address these care needs.

In order to provide adequate support to gymnasts, British Gymnastics advocates that either a professional carer approved by the gymnast's family or the gymnast's parent or guardian should carry out the role of "carer."



Although it is acknowledged that some disabled children who take part in events that require an overnight stay may require overnight support, BG considers that it is not acceptable for BG coaches, or other BG members in responsible positions, to share a room with an unrelated gymnast in order to provide overnight support.

British Gymnastics suggests that the parents or guardians together with the coach consider and agree:

- i.) whether to provide a paid or voluntary professional carer to be awake during the night to give overnight support; **or**
- ii.) invite the gymnast's parent or guardian to provide the overnight support.

## Supporting Access for Children with Disabilities and Special Needs to Participate in Gymnastics

It is the responsibility of every club to consider the needs of children; making reasonable adjustments to help provide for the inclusion of any child who wishes to participate. All BG-registered organisations' should support young people and their parents to ensure the necessary support is in place for children with disabilities and other special needs to access gymnastics activity.

Under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, Local Authorities are required to provide services for any child who would be defined as a 'Child in Need'. This may include children with significant disability and children with impaired health and development. Although the Local Authority is responsible for ensuring appropriate needs are met, services may be provided by a voluntary organisation acting on behalf of the Local Authority.

BG expects that where a child with a disability requires support from a carer to access gymnastics activity, and the support is not already provided by a professional carer or family member, organisations' should look with parents at the child's needs and if appropriate approach Children's Social Care Services to request support. In the event that no support is available, the club or service provider should examine whether they can meet the needs of the young person without significantly affecting the organisation's ability to provide gymnastics activity to others. Not every child will need continual one-to-one support. Additional support may be required just for a temporary period until the child settles into the club; for a transition period (e.g. for the first half hour of the club) or for personal care.

### Key Points to Consider

- **Consultation and Working in Partnership**

Consult with families, Children's Social Care Services, Health and other relevant professionals and voluntary groups to determine a child's needs and identify support. Start by asking parents and, if appropriate, the child about the specific needs and if other professionals should be approached so there is a clear understanding of the support required.

- **Funding**

Additional funding may be required where there is requirement for one-to-one support or a higher ratio of staff to children (depending on needs). Funding sources include: Local Authorities, Community Councils, Lottery Grants, Private Businesses, Voluntary Services and Charities that provide grants to support children with disabilities. Local Authority schemes may be able to help with funding for one-to-one support workers.

- **Facilities**

Are they suitable and accessible? Are there reasonable adjustments that can be addressed?

- **Learning Needs**

Although BG does not require coaches to hold a BG qualification for coaching people with disabilities, specialist training may be beneficial to help with communication methods, ensuring a positive attitude towards inclusion etc.

## Involving Children and Young People

The British Government agreed, in 1991 to undertake the obligations set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by the British Government in 1991. One of the four core principles is the need to show respect for the views of the child. Article 12 of the Convention states: 'children have a right to an opinion and for it to be listened to and be taken seriously'.

The Government is therefore committed to giving children and young people a real say and real choices about the government policies and services that affect them.

All BG clubs should take a similar approach and ensure that young people have an opportunity to be consulted and, where appropriate, be involved in decisions that relate to their involvement in the sport as well as within the specific area of safeguarding policy and procedures.

Key principles when involving young people:

- The extent that a child can be involved in decision making will depend on their age and level of maturity and understanding;
- Children and young people's involvement and opinions must be acknowledged and appreciated;
- Children and young people should be treated honestly. Their expectations need to be managed and boundaries that may limit their involvement explained;
- Children and young people should be provided with timely feedback about how their involvement has shaped or influenced a policy or approach;
- All children and young people should be given the opportunity to be involved irrespective of race, religion, culture, disability, age, ethnic origin, language or the area in which they live;
- Children should always be provided with age-appropriate information to help them understand;
- Information for young people should be clear and accessible and in appropriate language and style of communication;
- Children should be supported to enable them to make a positive and effective contribution, e.g. by the Welfare Officer.

Some ideas on involving young people include:

- Establishing a young person's forum to seek the views of children in the club;
- Identifying a young person's representative to communicate young persons' views in formal settings such as Club Committee Meetings;
- Involving young people in helping develop literature, posters and website information on child safeguarding issues;
- Carrying out questionnaire based surveys to seek views and comments from young people;
- Holding meetings with young people when considering changes to policies and gather their views.

## Bullying

Bullying by children or adults on children within BG clubs and other affiliated organisations' must never be tolerated. All BG clubs must put in place a robust bullying policy that ensures that all forms of bullying are taken seriously and responded to appropriately in accordance with the following minimum standards.

Bullying is behaviour, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group; physically or emotionally. There is often a power imbalance that makes it hard for the victim/s to prevent or deal with the perpetrator's actions. The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to young people, to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm (including self-harm).

Bullying can occur between:

- An adult and young person.
- A young person and young person.
- A parent and own child.

Bullying may take many forms and may be conducted in person or through the actions of another person/other people. These include: -

- **Emotional:** for example, being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding belongings, threatening gestures), name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing/taunts, graffiti.
- **Physical:** for example, pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence.
- **Sexual:** for example, unwanted physical contact or sexually offensive comment/s.
- **Cyber:** for example, email & internet chat room misuse, mobile phone threats by text messaging & calls, misuse of technology (camera & video footage).

Bullying may also take the form of singling out individuals because they belong to a particular group or are different in some way from others (prejudice-based bullying) and may include: -

- **Racist and religious based bullying**
- **Homophobic/ bi-phobic/ trans-phobic:** because of their sexual orientation, or perceived, or actual gender identity
- **Disablist:** may focus on, or exploits, a particular aspect of the individual's disability.

It is acknowledged that the competitive nature of sport can result in tensions that may lead to bullying but bullying cannot be condoned in any circumstance. Examples of bullying in gymnastics could be:

- a gymnast who intimidates fellow gymnasts inappropriately;
- a coach who adopts a win-at-all costs philosophy;
- a parent who pushes too hard;
- an official who places unfair pressure on a person.

### **Strategies to Discourage Bullying**

- Create an open environment and provide adequate supervision at all times;
- Encourage children to speak out and share any concerns with the person in charge, the Welfare Officer or other responsible adults;
- Take all signs or allegations of possible bullying seriously.

### **Responding to Victims of Bullying**

- Anyone becoming aware that a child is being bullied should offer the child reassurance and try to gain the child's trust;
- Explain that someone in authority may need to be informed;
- Keep accurate records of what happened together with names of those involved and any action taken;
- Report suspicions or concerns to the person in charge.

### **Confronting the Bully(ies)**

- Talk to the bully, or bullies; explain the situation and try to get the bully (or bullies) to understand the consequences of their actions;
- Seek an apology from the bully (or bullies) to the victim;
- Inform the bully's parents;
- Insist that any borrowed items are returned to the victim;
- Impose sanctions or disciplinary action if necessary;
- Report and record all actions taken;
- Provide support for the victim and his/her coach;
- Encourage the bully (or bullies) to change his/her behaviour.

## Supporting the Bullied

- Children who have been bullied will often need support from club officers to deal with the impact of bullying. This may include having a specific person to whom concerns can be raised in specific situation or providing a named senior gymnast as a “buddy” in changing facilities.
- They will need support external to the club from parents, other relatives and sometimes school teachers.
- The club may consider holding a reconciliation meeting to help address the issues between the bully and the bullied young person.
- The club can advised the child or parent to contact Kidscape (contact details in the information section), a charity that offers support to bullied children as well as day courses to help them deal with bullying and its after effects including how to avoid being bullied in future.

## Communication

All clubs should have a communication policy that covers the use of communication devices and the manner in which coaches can communicate with young people. The following key points must be included: -

- Mobile phones should be turned off in the gym except in the case where a phone is used as a club contact number or for emergencies.
- It is inappropriate for adult members to communicate with gymnasts under the age of 18 years by:
  - text message;
  - through internet chat rooms/networking sites;
  - e-mail.
- All communication by the above methods should be through the parent.
- Subject to parental consent, coaches can communicate with young people over the age of sixteen years either by group e-mails/texts or by copying correspondence to either the Welfare Officer or a senior official.
- Coaches should limit communications to training related issues.
- In the event of a gymnast showing a coach a text message, image or email that is considered to be inappropriate for a child to have, the coach must inform the Welfare Officer.

As technology has developed, the internet and its range of services can increasingly be accessed through various devices including mobile phones, computers and game consoles. Although the internet has many positive uses, it provides the key method for the distribution of images of child abuse. In addition, networking sites and chat-rooms have increasingly been used by people for the purpose of ‘grooming’ children and young people for abuse, and by children as a means of bullying.

Further information and guidance on this subject can be found in the [BG Good Practice Guidance on the Use of Social Networking Sites](#).

## 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, but also reduces the risk of injury due to a fall or error in performance. Detailed guidance on appropriate supporting techniques is provided as part of the BG Coach Education programme.

The key points on safe spotting and manual support are:

- the coach must ensure that support is only used when necessary and “over-handling” is avoided, however;
- the coach must always be alert to the possibility of performance errors or anxiety, which may increase the risk of injury;
- supporting techniques must not inhibit performance;
- physical contact should not be invasive of sensitive areas of the body, i.e. genital areas, buttocks or breasts.

Infrequent non-intentional physical contact can arise out of error on the performer or coach’s part. Such situations should not be ignored and need to be acknowledged through an apology to the gymnast, and reported to the Club Welfare Officer or head coach and parents. A written report should be made of any significant incident.

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 the Club Welfare Officer.

**In any circumstance where abuse is suspected, BG reporting procedures should be followed.**

## Flexibility/Stretching Exercises

There is a range of techniques and types of exercise for extending flexibility that involve the application of force. These techniques can also 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.

Coaches must follow the following guidelines:

- use slow, progressive and prolonged stretching exercises, within the “discomfort zone”, rather than what might be considered to be excessive force;
- avoid exercises that place the coaches and gymnasts body in “close proximity” and might be seen as unnecessary by the less-informed parent or observer;
- be sensitive to how the exercise might be perceived by the parents and children;
- 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;
- use partner exercises with more experienced gymnasts where possible.

## High Performance Coaching

Key factors in safeguarding young people include always ensuring there are at least two responsible adults present during training, and avoiding situations where a responsible person is alone with a child. However, a small proportion of young people involved in gymnastics who are training at the high performance levels may find that these principles are in conflict with the practicalities of intensive training.

One-to-one coaching has clear benefits for a small proportion of appropriately prepared and highly experienced gymnasts and is recognised as the best way to achieve excellence. The number of gymnasts who would benefit from training in this manner is small. In addition, due to the fact that this training tends to take place during the school day and outside standard club hours it can be very difficult to ensure there are always two responsible adults present.

Therefore, while it is always desirable that an additional responsible adult is present, in circumstances where it is not possible, gymnasts within the national system may train in a one-to-one situation; subject however to prior approval by BG Technical and Performance Director and National Coaching Staff and in liaison with parents/guardians. The squad and/or Club Welfare Officer must also confirm the gymnast's readiness to train in this manner, and that there are appropriate support mechanisms are in place. Requests will only be confirmed on the proviso that there is additional support staff in the building, available to assist in the event of an emergency.

Requests should be made in writing to the BG Performance and Technical Director and will only be granted if it is believed that it is in the best interest of the gymnast, and the governing body is assured that suitable provision is available to ensure the gymnast's welfare needs are met.

## Photography and Use of Imagery

### General Principles Concerning the Use of Photographs or Recorded Images

Implicit within the British Gymnastics policies and procedures for the Protection of Children is the commitment to ensure that all publications and media represent participants appropriately and with due respect. It is not the intention of British Gymnastics to prevent parents from taking pictures of their children, gymnasts of their friends, or enthusiasts of the sport of gymnastics but rather to ensure that photographic practices are carefully managed and effective prevention measures are in place to deter anyone with undesirable intentions from taking and publishing inappropriate images.

All BG registered organisations' must comply with the following guidelines:

- a photograph, video clip or other image of a gymnast should not be published whether in print or electronically (e.g. on a website) without written, informed consent from the gymnast concerned (or in the case of a child from their parent or guardian);
- no personal information, other than their name and their club, should accompany published images (particular provisions apply in connection to photography at public events such as competitions and displays below);
- while some editing of images is acceptable, images taken of gymnasts should not be modified, merged or manipulated in a way which might cause embarrassment or distress to the subject or cause the final image to be inappropriate;
- care must be taken to ensure that images of children who are under a court order are not recorded or published without permission;

- simultaneous “live” streaming of images onto a website should be approached with caution and prior guidance should be sought from BG. BG recommends pre-recording and, where appropriate, editing material to remove any inappropriate images before it is published;
- any instance of the use or publication of inappropriate images of gymnasts should be reported to British Gymnastics who may then inform the appropriate authorities;
- clubs are recommended to introduce a consent form, ideally as part of the process applied when a gymnast joins the club, concerning the taking of images for training purposes.

British Gymnastics recognises that there is a potential for abuse of any image placed on the Internet or within other forms of media. Although the exploitation of such images may be rare, British Gymnastics has a responsibility to provide guidance on how images of young people should be used to reduce the risk of potential ‘grooming’.

Those creating or administering websites should carefully monitor their content to eliminate the use of inappropriate images or improper text.

When determining whether it is appropriate to publish a photograph on a website or another form of media, consideration should be given to both the potential for inappropriate use of an image and the possibility that an individual could make contact with a child by using any personal and club details placed on line.

The following steps can be taken to reduce the risk from the publication of imagery:

- do not use any personal details if it is possible from the image to ascertain a specific location, or there are any details on your site about the training venue;
- if it is not possible to ascertain any training or competitive location, consider using a first name only next to an image;
- the dress of a child should be considered when using the photo: -
  - i.) If it is a posed shot for example taken during a medal presentation, try to ensure that the child is fully clothed in a tracksuit or similar attire;
  - ii.) If it is an action shot, try to use profile imagery and avoid full-length shots. Alternatively, use digital software to blur the child’s facial features;
- do not use images that can appear staged and potentially provocative;
- avoid using images that appear to focus unnecessarily directly on the groin area in movements where legs are in a split position;
- always use a parental consent form to request the use of a child’s image for publication. The parent should be encouraged to discuss the matter with their child before signing a consent form. (A sample form is contained in the appendices of this policy).

British Gymnastics should be informed of any inappropriate use of imagery on Gymnastics websites or any other form of media, which is not in keeping with this guidance. Anyone discovering a child’s image that appears to be being used illegally online should report the matter to [Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre \(UK\) \(CEOP\)](#), who provide a single point of contact for reporting abuse of children online.



## Photography at Gymnastic Events

### Official Photography

BG accredited photographers may be present at BG events, and in some cases events will be videoed and/or live streamed by BG TV. These images may be used by BG and our subsidiary companies for the purposes of promotion, education and development of the sport. They may also be shared with relevant third party organisations' for journalistic/promotional purposes.

British Gymnastics competition entry forms will advise participants that photography and filming will take place at the event. BG will also announce the photography/filming arrangements at the event. Clubs must ensure that gymnasts/parents are informed of the photography arrangements for the relevant event. Any gymnast or parent who does not wish themselves or their child to be photographed/filmed at the event must advise the BG Events department or the event organiser. Although it is not always practical to manage the content of live streamed footage, British Gymnastics will ensure any identifiable images of the participant are not published.

### Personal Photography

British Gymnastics does not wish to discourage the use of video or photographic equipment at events for appropriate use, but will take all reasonable precautions to protect gymnasts against the possible inappropriate use of films or photographic images. BG Photography Regulations require anyone organising a gymnastic event to regulate the taking of photographs and apply, as a minimum, the BG Conditions for Photography at Gymnastic Events, (see Appendix 1 in BG Photography Regulations).

If the event organiser/welfare officer (or authorised representative of the event organiser/welfare officer) suspects inappropriate photography or filming, the officer/organiser should exercise his/her powers under the conditions to request the person to leave the venue and to surrender any film and/or delete any images relating to the event. Any person present at an event who has any concerns about any images being taken, by any person, should bring them to the attention of the competition organiser or other designated person.

### Use of Video as an Aid to Coaching

The use of video equipment can be a valuable aid to coaching. The points below should be implemented to safeguard against inappropriate practice:

- ensure that the performers and their parent/carer are aware of the purpose of the filming as a coaching aid and consent is obtained;
- ensure that the person designated for participants' welfare and one other responsible and approved adult is present to ensure that performers are protected against inappropriate filming;
- ensure video is stored securely to avoid inappropriate or unauthorised use.

## Transporting Gymnasts

The following guidance relates to coaches who transport gymnasts to training or events/competitions. Additional guidance is provided for the official provision of transport by a club for away events.

Gymnasts are required to train a large number of hours to achieve high levels of performance therefore great commitment is required not only from the gymnasts but also from their parents. In the past, it has often been the case that well-meaning coaches or officials have provided transport to members of their clubs to assist parents. However, it has been identified that some adults in the sport have used this as an opportunity to get young people alone and abuse has occurred. As a result, BG Safeguarding Policy requires that BG Coaches do not take children alone on car journeys, except in unforeseen circumstances.\*

The following are practical suggestions to help alleviate transport problems: -

- Make parents aware (preferably when their child joins the club) that it is the coaches' responsibility to coach and not to provide transport for their child.
- When a child accepts a place in a squad, the parent should be asked to commit to ensuring the child attends all training sessions and to be responsible for making the necessary transport arrangements.
- Encourage parents to share transport with other parents.
- Transport gymnasts in groups.

It is unacceptable for coaches to transport one child alone, and in the case of transporting a group of gymnasts best practice would require two responsible adults in the car. However, in exceptional circumstances where this is not possible, and subject to prior consent from all relevant parents, a coach could transport a group of gymnasts without another adult present. This is subject to the following conditions:

- the driver must ensure there are central pick-up and drop-off points to ensure they are not alone with a child;
- the driver should also provide parents with full details of any planned breaks in the journey and departure and arrival times;
- gymnasts must be seated in the back of the car with booster seats if required;
- the Club Welfare Officer should be made aware of the arrangements.

In the case of gymnasts attending National Squad training, parents should be encouraged to team up with the parents of another squad member who lives closest to them. On occasion that the parents are unable to provide transport, a coach or official could then transport the gymnasts as a pair.

\* Unforeseen would only apply in the event of an accident or where something unexpected has happened and there is no other alternative but to take a child alone in the car and to fail to act would put the child at risk of harm. Where these situations are unavoidable, and whenever possible, the full consent of either the Welfare Officer, Head coach or Official in the club and/or the child's parents should be obtained.

## Late Collection of Children

The following information provides guidance for clubs on how to respond where a parent, for whatever reason, does not arrive at the required time to collect their child.

All parents must be advised that in the event that they are delayed for any reason, they must:

- contact the club at the earliest opportunity;
- provide clear guidance on what they wish the club to do, e.g. consent for another parent to transport their child home.

The Club must:

- maintain a list of parent contact details and emergency numbers;
- never leave a child or young person alone unless she/he is over 16 and then only with parent's permission;
- carry out appropriate assessments of situations as they arise, acknowledging that some young people aged 16 and over can go home alone if their parent is delayed.

The Club Officers' must not:

- take the child home or to another location;
- ask the child to wait in a vehicle or the club with them alone;
- send the child home with another person without permission.

If the parent is considered by the club as being unduly late, the Club Officers should:

1. Attempt to contact the parent – from the information sheet completed on joining/renewing membership.
2. Attempt to contact the emergency contact person nominated.
3. If there is no reply from the emergency contact, ask the child if there is another family member who may be contacted.
4. Wait with the young person(s) at the club with at least one other official/coach/teacher/volunteers or parents.
5. Respond to any instructions received from the parent.
6. If no-one can be reached, contact the local police or Children's Social Care Services to enquire about the best course of action.

## **Persistent Failure to Collect a Child/Young Person on Time**

Parents, who persistently fail to collect a child on time or have not arrived after a reasonable period of time, and have given no prior notice or informed the club they are delayed, may be failing to provide adequate care for their child.

If the parent makes no effort to contact the club or provide reasonable explanation for the delays, the Club Welfare Officer and another club officer should arrange to meet with the parent to discuss the matter. It may be the parent/carer needs assistance to arrive on time.

If there is no change the Club Welfare Officer should either contact the children's team at the local Children's Social Care Services or seek advice from the BG Case Manager.

If a parent arrives to collect a child and there is concern that the parent's ability to take appropriate care of the child may be impaired (e.g. the parent is considered to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs to the extent that she/he is unfit to drive, and/or take care of the child) the club should seek advice from the police or Children's Social Care Service.

## Events and Trips

When a club takes gymnasts under the age of 18 years away from their normal training venue to competition, squad training, festivals or other events, there are many additional health, safety and welfare factors to consider.

When an event is local, it is often the case that clubs arrange for everyone to meet at the event venue. However where an event is further away, the best option is often for the club to co-ordinate transport arrangements. It is good practice for a club to ensure the following steps are taken in advance of any trip:

- check on driving license, car insurance and MOT (if the car is over three years old);
- ensure there are working seatbelts for each passenger, and booster seats as required;
- check driving experience (additional training may be required for anyone driving a mini-bus – contact Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) for further details);
- additional check on driver (see policies for recruitment of staff/volunteers);
- organise central pick-up and drop-off points (to avoid the driver being alone with a gymnast);
- obtain consent from parents to allow their children to be transported to an event;
- plan the route and breaks (if necessary);
- obtain contact numbers for parents.

It is recommended that BG registered clubs that wish to use volunteers to drive groups of gymnasts, keep a register of volunteer drivers and keep a record of checks carried out. It should be noted that under the BG personal accident insurance policy, any BG member traveling directly to or from a BG activity or event would be covered for injury resulting from an accident.

If the trip requires an overnight stay, or is abroad, there are further implications to consider and substantial planning will be necessary. Clubs or organisations' should appoint a Trip/Team Manager, who will be responsible for ensuring all the necessary plans are in place for a successful trip.

Clubs should ensure that there is included in the delegation a Welfare Officer or a person with the designated responsibility for safeguarding. At non-residential events the designated person need not always be on site but must be contactable and ready to act if required. Everyone should be made aware of the Welfare Officer's name and contact details if they are not at the event. Contact details must be included in the event programme.

Where events involve an over-night stay, it is vital to have a designated trained person who is not involved in the delivery of the training. (NB: Please note this is only applicable if the club is responsible for the provision of overnight accommodation). This person's role will depend on the scale of the event, but in addition to the responsibility for responding to concerns, tasks could include supervision and co-ordination of accommodation, holding pre-event welfare briefings and daily de-briefs, and monitoring compliance with codes of conduct.

In non-residential events, the role of the Welfare Officer could be undertaken by an existing member of staff or volunteer, but it is vital that the person identified is able to take a child-centered approach and has the confidence of young people taking part in the event. In representative events, a trained Head of Delegation can take on this role but a detailed risk assessment must be carried out to ensure the Head of Delegation has the capacity to fulfill the role along with his/her other duties.

It is important to have contingency plans in place before departing on any trip. It may be helpful to consider a 'worst case scenario' and to have procedures, and all the necessary information, in place to deal with any problem that might arise. At the least, the following issues need to be addressed to ensure a stress free trip: -

- **Risk Assessments:** The Team Manager/Group Leader must complete a risk assessment prior to the event and will need to ensure an ongoing process of risk assessment as new or unplanned situations arise, (see BG Health & Safety Policy for guidance).
- **Supervision:** BG recommends a minimum of 1:10 adult to child ratio as a minimum level for supervision on trips. This ratio may need to be increased if the group is made up of primary school aged children, or children with disabilities or special needs, or the trip is of a nature where more supervision may be required, e.g. trips abroad. If the group is mixed sex there should be at least one male and one female supervisor.

## Children under-8

**BG strongly recommends that clubs do not take children under-8 away abroad or overnight unless their parent/s or someone with legal parental responsibility can accompany them on the trip.** This is because younger children are likely to require higher levels of supervision and may need some assistance with elements of personal care that would not be normally be required during the day. It is also quite likely that children of a young age may not have gone away without a parent.

In the event that a club is considering taking a child under-8 on a trip abroad, or overnight, the trip organiser should complete a risk assessment that specifically addresses any additional hazards associated with younger children's needs. The club must be confident that suitable and sufficient controls/safeguards are in place before allowing an under-8 child to attend. If the event is of a competitive nature, the club must ensure the competition is at an appropriate level for the age of the child. See the guidelines on Age and Level of Participation contained in the [BG Health, Safety and Welfare Policy](#).

- **Medical Issues/First Aid:** A list of emergency contact numbers, medical information on each child attending the event and a first aid box should be taken on any trip.
- **Trips Abroad:** Permission must be obtained from BG to take gymnasts abroad by completing a [BG Travel Checklist](#).
- Clubs must arrange adequate **travel insurance**. This can be arranged through BG insurers.
- **Overnight Stays:** When large groups are traveling it is advisable to ensure accommodation is booked well in advance. This can help to ensure that groups are kept together in a hotel. It is not good practice for anyone over the age of eighteen to share a room with anyone under the age of sixteen. Room allocation should, if possible, be planned prior to the trip.
- **Facility Providers/Tour Operators:** To help ensure that any arrangements made with facility providers or tour operators are formalised, BG recommends the use of a Service Provision checklist or agreement such as the one contained in the appendices of this document.
- **Costs:** When a trip is being planned it is essential to consider the full cost of the trip. As well as individual cost of travel, food and accommodation and other extras, the club should

consider how volunteers are funded and if staff will be paid to go on the trip. It is good practice to advise a recommended amount for spending money.

- **Consent Forms:** It is essential for parents to complete a consent form for a trip. This is especially important when the event involves an overnight stay.
- **Communication with Parents:** Parents need to be fully informed of all details in relation to the trip.

As a minimum, parents should be informed of:

- transport arrangements;
- key timings – pick up, departure and return;
- destination and contact details;
- room allocation;
- the Code of Conduct;
- contact details for trip staff;
- trip requirements – pocket money, kit etc.

This is not a full list of factors that should be considered, but it should assist with planning for a trip. The checklist in the appendices of this document will also support clubs when planning a trip.

## Hosting Gymnasts

British Gymnastics is unable to regulate or insure against the hosting of gymnasts in any situation other than within establishments licensed for the provision of overnight accommodation. Clubs who wish to host gymnasts under the age of 18 years with families or accommodate gymnasts within gymnasium facilities, school halls etc. should seek advice from the local Children's Social Care Services and may need to seek additional insurance cover as British Gymnastics insurance may not provide cover in these circumstances.

### Hosting with Families

If the club does not have appropriate procedures in place to ensure families are suitably vetted, hosting should not be considered as an option. Clubs that are prepared to carry out vetting procedures should undertake appropriate risk assessment prior to hosting taking place and they must consider the following: -

- seek parental consent;
- ensure the host family has knowledge of any medical or dietary needs of their guests;
- ensure children are hosted in pairs that are appropriately matched;
- host families should be clear about the arrangements for transporting the children;
- children staying with host families should have easy access to a telephone and to their coach and Welfare Officer;
- parents should be made aware that children may not be as fully supervised as they are in the gym. BG has developed a sample form contained in the appendices of the policy, which should be completed by any family wishing to host a gymnast in their home.

## Hosting in Unlicensed Establishments, e.g. gymnasiums or schools

BG recognises that groups attending large gymnastics festivals are often accommodated within 'dormitories' in schools or gymnastics centres'. This arrangement may not be ideal but may be the only available option. The following guidance should be considered:

- ensure groups are sharing with other groups they know;
- ensure there are separate sleeping and washing areas for males and females, and staff and gymnasts. It would also be appropriate to allocate rooms in age groups where possible;
- adults should not share the dormitory with young people but should be accommodated in a nearby room;
- ensure that there is waking night staff to conduct regular patrols of the accommodation and prevent unauthorised entry;
- ensure accommodation is safe and secure (fire exits, emergency procedures etc.);
- ensure Welfare Manager/Event Organiser visits the accommodation prior to the event to ensure it is satisfactory and address any concerns.

## Missing Children

In the rare event that a child goes missing from a club, the following guidelines have been devised to outline the actions that should be taken. At the point that a child has been identified as missing the club should:

- ensure that other children in the group are looked after appropriately while a search for the child concerned is conducted;
- inform the child's parents if they are present, or nominate an appropriate person to telephone them and advise them of the concern. Reassure them that everything is being done to locate the child;
- organise all available responsible adults by areas to be searched. It is best to take a short time to organise the search properly so that all places are searched fully;
- search the area in which the child has gone missing including changing rooms, toilets, public and private areas and the club grounds;
- request all those searching report back to a nominated adult at a specific point;
- make a note of the circumstances in which the child has gone missing and where he/she was last seen;
- prepare a detailed physical description of the child, including:
  - approximate height;
  - build;
  - hair and eye colour;
  - clothing he/she was wearing, as this will be required by the police;
- report the concern to the police if the search is unsuccessful. This must happen no later than 30 minutes after the young person's disappearance is noted, even if the search is incomplete;
- follow police guidance if further action is recommended and maintain close contact with the police;
- ensure that you inform all adults involved including the parents, searchers and police if at any stage the child is located;
- refer the concern ASAP to the BG Ethics and Welfare department.