

# Acceptable Behaviours Policy – Whistle blowing & Procedures: Ruthin & Denbigh Gymnastics Club Ltd

updated May 2020

## Club's Statement of Commitment

In Ruthin & Denbigh Gymnastic Club Ltd, we are committed to provide a safe, caring and friendly environment and strive to ensure our members flourish in a happy atmosphere whilst partaking in the sport of gymnastics. Safeguarding children and young people requires everyone to be committed to the highest possible standards of openness, integrity and accountability.

It is widely recognised that making young people unhappy can seriously affect their progress and well-being and that the impact of bullying can follow victims and perpetrators into adult life. As a British Gymnastics affiliated Club we take responsibility to fulfil our safeguarding and protection obligations promoting our Club as a “telling” Club with a “zero tolerance” response to unacceptable behaviours. Procedures we have in place enable the appropriate person to respond to any concerns immediately with the aim of dealing with their concerns effectively and promptly with a minimum of distress to all participants involved.

## Policy Aim

It is our aim to provide all members with a happy, safe and fulfilling experience when attending our gymnastics Club. We hope to help all our gymnasts achieve their potential by raising their self-esteem, giving positive feedback and ensuring all our sessions are planned, structured and fun. We aim for all our members to work as a team and do not tolerate competitive individual behaviour as we need to appreciate that each gymnast learns at a different pace and all participants have varying skills.

## Policy Objectives

1. To understand that every member is bound by the terms of BG's “Whistle blowing Policy” adopted by the Club.
2. To know that any form of abuse will not be tolerated and as a Club, we promote our “zero tolerance” approach to abusive behaviours.
3. To help all Club members understand what unacceptable behaviour and bullying are.
4. To ensure gymnasts, parents and coaches know what they should do if they are being treated unfairly or know of others being unhappy.
5. To outline the Club's procedure when responding to unacceptable behaviours.





### 1. Whistle blowing

Our Club is a telling Club. This means that if anyone is being treated unfairly or cruelly or is aware of this occurring to someone else, they are expected to tell a Coach or Welfare Officer, who they know will deal with their concerns effectively and promptly with a minimum of distress to all participants involved.

The term “whistle blowing” is often used in such circumstances to describe the raising of a concern about practices, procedures or conduct of an individual. In a gymnastics context a whistle blower may be:

- A coach or official
- A gymnast
- A parent
- A member of the public



BG understands that whistle blowers are often very reluctant to report concerns. Thus, BG recognises that whistleblowers may wish to raise concerns in confidence. In these circumstances, the identity of the whistleblower will be kept confidential. Any subsequent reason why disclosure may be required will be discussed in detail with the whistleblower before any action is taken.

*As an affiliated Club to BG, every member is bound by the terms of the adopted policy of BG “Whistle blowing Policy & Procedures and full details of this policy can be found in the policy download section on the Club’s website.*

### 2. Our Club’s “zero tolerance” approach explained

Our Club has a “zero tolerance” approach when responding to unacceptable behaviours/bullying. Bullying is an anti-social behaviour which will not be tolerated in our Club. It undermines confidence, self-esteem and the right to a feeling of ‘positive well-being’ as a member of our Club and can lead to a lack of concentration, depression and in some cases leaving the Club.

### 3. Unacceptable behaviours

There are many different types of bullying, but the main four are:

- Physical - hitting, kicking, taking or hiding belongings including money
- Verbal - name calling, teasing, insulting, writing unkind notes
- Emotional – being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, spreading rumours, looks
- Cyber – posting negative personal comments and demeaning others online

*As an affiliated Club to BG, every member is bound by the terms of the adopted policy of BG “Anti-Bullying and Abuse Policy and Procedures” and full details of this policy can be found in the policy download section on the Club’s website.*

### What bullying is NOT

What bullying is NOT also requires definition as this needs to be dealt with differently i.e. one-off incidents or unintentional hurt. These incidents should be dealt with in line with an educational route (Club’s procedure when responding to unacceptable behaviours option 1 & 2). Many alleged bullying incidents turn out to be disagreements and pro-active strategies to educate members about the nature of bullying complimented with strategies to help members resolve disagreements is a priority in this instance. The intent to bully is the important distinction.



## **What is bullying? – more information**

Bullying and harassment occurs where repeated deliberate actions by one or more people cause hurt to an individual or group and where it is difficult for the bullied person(s) to prevent or deal with this person's actions.

'Kidscape' ([www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)), a UK charity established specifically to prevent bullying and child sexual abuse, defines bullying as the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person that results in pain and distress to the victim. It splits bullying into the following categories:

- **Emotional** - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding belongings, threatening gestures)
- **Physical** - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- **Racist** - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- **Sexual** - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- **Homophobic** - because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality
- **Verbal** - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- **Cyber** - All areas of internet, such as email, social media & internet chat room misuse, mobile threats by text messaging & calls, misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera & video facilities

### **Bullying can occur between:**

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

It is acknowledged that the competitive nature of sport can result in tensions that may lead to bullying but bullying cannot be condoned under any circumstances.

### **Examples of bullying with in gymnastics could be:**

- A gymnast who intimidates fellow gymnasts i.e. abusive text messages, online messages, other social networking sites
- A coach who adopts a win-at-all costs philosophy i.e. shouting, name calling, or ignoring
- A parent who pushes too hard i.e. shouting at child
- An official who places unfair pressure on a person
- Older coaches intimidating younger coaches under the age of 18 years i.e. a senior coach shouting or intimidating an assistant coach

## **4. How to report your concern and get help?**

4.1 Most concerns and complaints can be resolved informally and rapidly by the Head Coach or Welfare Officer and we encourage such a discussion at registration, or at the end of the session. Alternatively you may telephone or email the Head Coach to raise your concern. If you require a more private area to discuss a matter please advise us of this.

4.2 The Club wishes to resolve all and any concerns/complaints speedily and with the minimum of distress to all participants involved.



4.3 The Club's "RDGC Ltd Breach of Behaviour Policy – A Procedure to Raise a Concern/Complaint" serves as the good practice guide, to give structure and a course of action in the event of a concern/complaint being raised about a Gymnast, Coach, Official, Volunteer, Parent or Guardian. This document is available to download off the Club's website, or is available on request from the reception in class.

4.4 **Any concerns about the specific Welfare of a child or concerns about allegations of child abuse and staff discipline should be directed to our designated Welfare Officer of the Club who is trained to follow the guidance outlined BG Safeguarding Children Recognising & Responding to Abuse and Poor Practice.**

**Be Safe Contacts- Trust your instincts (Ruthin and Denbigh Gym Club Ltd)**

**Welfare Officer(s): Bethan Lindquist**

**Email: Beth\_Madoc-Jones@hotmail.co.uk**

**Tel: 01745 407800**



**5. Club's procedure when responding to unacceptable behaviour**

Anyone becoming aware that a child is being bullied should offer the child reassurance and try to gain the child's trust. The Club's procedure for any coach, leader or volunteer associated with the Club who is approached with a concern of abuse/bullying is to:

- Explain that someone in authority may need to be informed and that any disclosure cannot be guaranteed to be kept confidential.
  - Keep accurate records of what happened together with names of those involved and any action taken.
  - Report suspicions or concerns immediately to the person in charge (Head Coach or Welfare Officer).
- Records are to be kept of all incidents of unacceptable behaviours/bullying, anyone reporting a concern should provide as much detail as possible. This could include:
  - Names of people involved
  - Other witnesses
  - Dates of events
  - Any other relevant documentation

**Response procedures**

- **Option 1 – Educational chat to whole class** - the Head Coach and/or Welfare Officer will take time out during a training session to talk to the whole class to identify that there are unacceptable behaviours occurring by members of our Club. This will be a general "chat" to reiterate the Club's "zero tolerance" approach and to understand the consequences and effect of their actions.





- **Option 2 – Educational chat to the specific training group of the victim** – the Head Coach and/or Welfare Officer will take time out during a training session to talk to the victim’s specific training group to identify that there are unacceptable behaviours occurring by members of our Club. This will be a general “chat” to reiterate the Club’s “zero tolerance” approach and to understand the consequences and effects of their actions.

*Should the decision be made to carry out the above options prior to the end of the session the parent will be informed in private of the concern their child has raised and the action taken immediately following the session. We will involve parents and the child in deciding how to monitor the situation.*

- **Option 3 – We will listen to “both sides”** in private and record information to report to the parents of the children involved. We will involve the parents and children in deciding the outcome and any sanctions which may need to take place to encourage the bully(ies) to change their behaviour. BG offer guidelines when confronting bully(ies)
  - Talk to the bully(ies), explain the situation and try to get the bully(ies) to understand the consequences of their actions.
  - Seek an apology from the bully(ies) 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(ies) to change his/her behaviour.
- **Option 4 -** The clubs procedure to investigate a breach of behaviour will be investigated following the guidance of the **“Managing Behaviour Policy – A procedure to raise a Concern/Complaint”**. In cases where bullying continues the management committee has the power to take appropriate action as detailed in this policy.

### 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 through introductory talks with the Welfare Officer present.
- Proactively hold group talks/workshops to highlight different aspects of bullying
- Invite outside agencies in the training sessions or Club’s activity days to highlight different aspects of bullying
- Take all signs or allegations of possible bullying seriously.

### Supporting bullied children

- 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”.
- 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 advise the child or parent to contact Kidscape, 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 at [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk).

### **Confidentiality**

All concerns and complaints are treated with discretion. British Gymnastics' (BG) "Whistleblowing Procedures" are adopted by the Club to provide the necessary steps to ensure members, their parents/guardian and others feel able to raise a concern without fear of negative repercussions. It is the aim of the Management Committee that, parent/guardians feel confident that their concern will not penalize their child. Parents need to be assured that they will be supported when reporting an incident and that the procedure that will follow will have a minimum of distress to all participants involved.

### **Sharing of information**

There may be circumstances when information may need to be shared with those involved in order that the complaint be fully investigated and parents assured that information will be provided on a strictly need to know basis in line with BG confidentiality and information sharing guidance. The Management Committee will follow guidelines and training provided by BG and as an affiliated Club can seek any advice through any part of the process from BG and/or its legal helpline for clubs.

### **Further reference**

**All RDGC Ltd policies are for reference on our website or available in reception in class.**

### **Particular reference**

**Managing Behaviours Policy -A Procedure to raise a concern/complaint**

Chairperson name\_\_Tamsin Jones\_\_\_\_\_Signature\_\_\_\_\_T. C. Jones \_\_\_\_\_  
Adopted by Ruthin Gymnastic Club at AGM meeting held \_\_6<sup>th</sup> March 2015 \_\_\_\_\_  
Adopted by Denbig Gymnastic Club at AGM Meeting held \_\_6<sup>th</sup> March 2015 \_\_\_\_\_  
Adopted by Ruthin and Denbig Gymnastics Club Ltd at AGM Meeting held 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2017  
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