

Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Youth Sport in Gymnastics Ireland

1: Code of Conduct for Coaches

Coaches/Team Officials working with young people in _____ (name of club) should be suitable and appropriately qualified. All adults working with young gymnasts will be expected to go through appropriate recruitment and selection procedures that apply to all persons with substantial access to young people, whether paid or unpaid within Gymnastics Ireland.

Coaches are responsible for setting and monitoring the boundaries between a working relationship and friendship with their gymnasts. This is particularly important when the Coach and gymnast are of the opposite sex. The Coach must realise that certain situations or friendly actions/telling jokes could be misinterpreted, not only by the gymnast but also by outsiders motivated by jealousy, dislike or mistrust and could lead to allegations of serious misconduct or impropriety.

Coaches can ensure that gymnastics has a beneficial impact when they adhere to the following guidelines:

- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every young gymnast and treat each one equally regardless of age, gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, disability, membership of the Traveller community or any other ground protected under the Equal Status Acts.
- Ensure that nobody involved with Gymnastics Ireland acts towards, engages in any conduct or speaks to another person in a manner or engages in any other conduct which threatens, disparages, vilifies or insults another person on the basis of that person's age, gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, race, disability, membership of the Traveller community or any other ground protected under the Equal Status Acts.
- Be generous with praise and be positive during coaching sessions so that all young gymnasts always leave with a sense of achievement and an increased level of self-esteem.
- Promote a culture that ensures all young people are listened to and respected.
- Coaches must not train skills above their level of ability.
- The activity being undertaken should be suitable for the age, experience and ability of the gymnast.
- Gymnasts should have been systematically prepared for the activity being undertaken and made aware of their personal responsibilities in terms of safety.
- Coaches must be able to recognise and accept when to refer a gymnast to other clubs or coaches. It is the responsibility of the Coach as far as possible, to verify the competence and integrity of the person to whom they refer the gymnast.
- Be punctual and properly attired and display high standards of appearance.
- NEVER consume alcohol before, during coaching/events or on trips with young people.
- Respect the decisions of all referees/officials, Committees and Councils.
- Show respect to opponents.
- Ensure all activities are inclusive and allow all gymnasts to participate in an enjoyable way.
- Ensure safe induction and supervision of coaching team.
- Put the welfare of participants first.

- Participate in continuous professional development when required and other supports to maintain and improve performance.
- Communicate decisions to athletes/participants in an effective and constructive manner in consideration of the age groups taking part.
- Report misconduct of participants or supporters, conscious of the fact that such matters may be followed up in accordance with Gymnastics Ireland's Rules and Regulations.
- Report incidents/accidents in accordance with and as required by Gymnastics Ireland's Rules and Regulations.
- Report incidents/accidents to parents or guardians.
- Never use unacceptable language or racial and/or sectarian or homophobic references towards a participant, an opponent, coach, official or supporter by words, deeds, or gestures.
- Never lose your temper.
- Never do anything which is likely to intimidate, offend, insult, humiliate or discriminate against any other person on the ground of their gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, age, disability, race, religion, and membership of the Traveller community or any other ground protected under the Equal Status Acts.
- Never use social media or social media apps for the distribution of offensive content, to taunt, bully or racially abuse others.
- Never enter, before, during or after, the sporting environment in which the sport is being conducted, unless authorised to do so.
- Plan appropriately for each session and ensure proper levels of supervision until the gymnast leaves the Club venue or event with an appropriate adult.
- Don't shout at or lecture any young gymnast or reprimand/ridicule them when they make a mistake (Young people learn best through trial and error. They should not be afraid to risk error to learn). Any allegations made in this regard may be dealt with under GI's Anti-Bullying policy, Anti-discrimination Anti-Harassment policy, or where appropriate, the Complaints & Disciplinary Rules & Procedures.
- Don't equate losing with failure and do not develop a preoccupation with winning. (The level of improvement made by the young gymnast is the best indicator of the Coach's effectiveness).
- Physical punishment or physical force must never be used.
- Never use foul language or provocative language/gestures to a gymnast, opponents or officials.
- Adhere to Gymnastics Ireland guidance on the use of mobile phones – see guidelines on page 16 of the Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Youth Sport in Gymnastics Ireland.
- Never undertake any form of therapy (hypnosis etc), in the training of young people.
- Ensure gymnasts are safely attired (check their personal equipment) and that proper insurance arrangements are in place.
- Set realistic but achievable performance goals ensuring a safe enjoyable environment.
- Avoid taking coaching sessions on your own or avoid a situation where you are alone in a car or changing room with a gymnast.
- Whenever the Club travels away, please refer to "Gymnastics Away Guidelines", page 15 of the Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Youth Sport in Gymnastics Ireland.
- Avoid any inappropriate touching when assisting any gymnast to perform a technique or when First Aid is being administered.
- Physical contact should only occur when necessary and in an open and appropriate way and always be intended to meet the needs of the gymnast.
- When supporting, be certain the child and the parent's/carer's know what you are doing and why. The support being provided must be for the needs of the gymnast.
- When conditioning, the use of weights is not permitted until gymnasts have reached full maturity - skills and exercises used for a gymnast's physical preparation are only to be done using a gymnast's own body weight/resistance. Coaches must not overload gymnasts beyond their limits.

- Make adequate provision for First Aid and do not encourage or allow gymnasts to perform while injured. (Keep an accurate record of each injury and ensure that another official /team official is present when a gymnast is being attended to and can corroborate the relevant details – see Accident/ Incident form Gymnastics Ireland “Code Sheet” 12 <http://www.irishgymnastics.ie/ethics/ethics.cfm>)
- Ask parents/guardians or nominated Club Officials to be responsible for young people in changing rooms.
- Never take body measurements or engage in certain types of fitness testing without the presence of other adults.
- Ensure appropriate confidentiality to all gymnasts, as you may be privy to information about the young person or their family.
- Challenge bullying in any form ie physical or emotional. Bullying is not an accepted behaviour towards anyone in Gymnastics Ireland - child, coach, volunteer or parent. Coaches must comply with GI's Anti-Bullying policy. Any breach of this policy may be dealt with under the Complaints & Disciplinary Rules & Procedures.
- Be aware and understand that any breach or failure to adhere to this Code of Conduct may result in an investigation being conducted under the Complaints & Disciplinary Rules & Procedures.
- Report breaches of this Code of Conduct to the appropriate person or committee.
- Review, comply with and be bound by Gymnastics Ireland’s Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) Policy/Strategy.

I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct and the policies and procedures of Gymnastics Ireland and agree to abide by their contents.

Signature

Club

Print Name

Date
