

SHARECROFT GYMNASTICS CLUB ANTI – BULLYING AND ANTI – HARASSMENT POLICY

Sharecroft Gymnastics aims to create a caring and supportive environment and group of people who are determined to see gymnasts develop and succeed happily. Our deep held belief is that gymnastics is a fantastic way of helping children develop skills for life besides improving their physical health. They learn self-belief, resilience, determination, to win graciously to accept failure but strive to be better. Understanding each child is integral to how we work as coaches and our new coaches will be mentored by more experienced members of the team to ensure continuity of approach and application. Sharecroft is registered with British Gymnastics and shares the same attitude to the health, safety and welfare of all students to be of paramount importance. Sharecroft Gymnastics will ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, that procedures are in place to maintain a safe and healthy environment for both students, coaches, helpers, volunteers, parents and any others who are associated with the club.

Sharecroft Gymnastics Club Anti-Bullying Policy is written in conjunction with British Gymnastics Safeguarding and child protection policy and guidance and links to our Codes of Conduct and safeguarding procedures and policies.

Sharecroft Gymnastics Club acknowledges that the competitive nature of sport can result in tensions between participants, but bullying will not be tolerated in any circumstances.

This policy outlines what Sharecroft Gymnastics Club will do to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying.

Sharecroft Gymnastics Club is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our members. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable. We believe it is important that participants, coaches, administrators, officials, volunteers and parents/guardians should, always show respect and understanding for the welfare of others.

If bullying does occur, members should be able to tell a trusted adult and know that incidents will be dealt with effectively. We are a transparent Club. This means that ANYONE who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a member of the team and/or the Club Welfare Officer - Pam Collier.

Sharecroft Gymnastics Club will:

- Create and support an inclusive environment that promotes a culture of mutual respect, and consideration, which will be upheld by all.
- Recognise that bullying can be perpetrated or experienced by any member of the Club community, including adults and children.

- Challenge practice and/or language which does not uphold the values of respect towards others.
- Encourage all members to use technology and social media positively and responsibly.
- Celebrate success and achievements to promote and build a positive Club ethos.
- This Policy aims to produce a consistent response to any bullying incidents that may occur.
- All officials, coaching and non-coaching staff, volunteers, children and parents/guardians should have an understanding of what bullying is, the club policy and how to report concerns and what they should do if bullying arises.
- All staff, including volunteers, are required to uphold and implement this Policy.
- Parents/carers must support their children and work in partnership with the Club.
- Gymnasts/participants to abide by the Policy and show respect, tolerance and teamwork with peers and coaches.
- Initially, incidents of bullying should be reported to the gymnast's coach. If necessary, the coach will report the incident to the Club Welfare Officer.
- Serious bullying incidents should be reported either in person to a member of the coaching team and/or the Club Welfare Officer.
- Where the alleged bully is a child, their parents should be informed and will be asked to come to a meeting to discuss the problem.
- Bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and, if proven, stopped.
- An attempt will be made to help the perpetrator change their behaviour through discussion.
- Bullies may be asked to read and sign a Code of Conduct form, agreeing to abide by its terms.
- If bullying continues the perpetrator may ultimately be permanently excluded from the Club.

Bullying is “behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally” (DfE “Preventing and Tackling Bullying” 2017); it can include name calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, uninvited physical contact, taking belongings, producing offensive written content, gossiping, excluding people from groups and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.

This includes these same unacceptable behaviours expressed online and can include upsetting and inappropriate messages by phone, text, instant messenger, through gaming, websites, social media sites, apps, and sending offensive or degrading photos or videos.

Bullying can be a form of peer-on-peer abuse and can be emotionally abusive; it can cause severe and adverse effects on children’s emotional development.

Bullying ban be;

- Emotional: Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding clothes or equipment, 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 focussing on the issue of sexuality

- Verbal: Name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing

- Cyber: All areas of internet, such as e-mail and internet chat room misuse. Mobile threats by text messaging and calls. Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities.

- Bullying can happen to anyone. This Policy is not confined to the protected characteristics for discrimination and covers all types of bullying including:

- Bullying related to race, religion, nationality or culture

- Bullying related to SEND (Special Educational Needs or Disability)

- Bullying related to appearance or physical/mental health conditions

- Bullying related to sexual orientation (homophobic bullying)

- Bullying of young carers, children in care or otherwise related to home circumstances

- Sexist, sexual and transphobic bullying

- Bullying via technology, known as online or cyberbullying

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. It is important for adults to be aware of these possible signs and should investigate if a person:

- Is frightened or unwilling of coming to gym
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious, or is lacking in confidence
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Feels ill during sessions
- Begins to do poorly in their performance
- Has possessions that are damaged or 'go missing'
- Has unexplained cuts and bruises
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- Is nervous and jumpy when a cyber message is received
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These signs and behaviours could also indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and be investigated.

Sharecroft Gymnastics Club recognises that bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals; it can create a barrier to not only the performance of a gymnast, but more importantly it can have serious consequences for mental wellbeing. By effectively preventing and tackling bullying, Sharecroft Gymnastics Club can help to create a safe and disciplined environment, where members are able to fulfil their potential in a fun, safe and secure setting.

To support our anti-bullying ethos, Sharecroft Gymnastics Club:

- Monitors and reviews our Anti-Bullying Policy and practices on a regular basis
- Supports staff to promote positive relationships, to help prevent bullying
- Recognises that some members of our community may be more vulnerable to bullying

and its impact than others and provides appropriate support, if required.

- Will intervene and tackle bullying behaviour appropriately and promptly.
- Ensures our members are aware that bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively.
- Requires all members of the Sharecroft Gymnastics Club community to work with us to uphold the Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Reports back to parents/carers regarding concerns on bullying, dealing promptly with incidents/complaints.
- Seeks to learn from good anti-bullying practice elsewhere.
- Utilises support from other relevant organisations when appropriate.

The following steps may be taken when dealing with all incidents of bullying:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with by the member staff who has been approached or witnessed the concern.
- In the case of persistent and recurring bullying or, if the concern is severe, it will be raised to the Welfare Officer.
- The Welfare Officer will provide appropriate support for the person being bullied making sure they are not at risk of immediate harm.
- The Welfare Officer will interview all parties involved if deemed necessary.
- The Welfare Officer will inform other staff members, and parents/carers, where appropriate.
- Sanctions and support for individuals will be implemented, in consultation with all parties concerned.
- If necessary, other agencies may be consulted or involved, such as the police or other local services including children's social care.

Where the bullying takes place between club officials off site or outside of Sharecroft Gymnastics Club (including cyberbullying), the Club will ensure that the concern is fully investigated. Appropriate action will be taken, including providing support and implementing sanctions in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

A clear and precise account of the incident will be recorded by the Welfare Officer in accordance with existing procedures. This will include recording appropriate details regarding decisions and action taken.

When responding to cyberbullying concerns, Sharecroft Gymnastics Club will:

- Act as soon as an incident has been reported or identified.
- 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.
- Liaise with parents regarding parental controls if appropriate.
- 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 the use of the procedures and 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.
- Banning or restricting the use of mobile devices within the gymnastics hall and child led areas.
- Requesting the deletion of locally held content and content posted online if they contravene conduct policies.

Gymnasts who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Reassuring the child and providing continuous support.

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with the Welfare Officer or a staff member of their choice that they are comfortable with.
- Being advised to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to concerns and build resilience as appropriate.
- Working towards restoring self-esteem and confidence.
- Providing ongoing support; this may include working and speaking with staff, offering welfare meetings or drop-ins, engaging with parents/carers.

Gymnasts who have perpetrated the bullying will be helped 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 knowledge and support regarding their behaviour or actions.
- If online, requesting that content be removed and reporting accounts/content to service provider if appropriate.
- Sanctioning, in line with the relevant Code of Conduct (in extreme circumstances this may mean the removal of membership from the Club).
- Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance.

Sharecroft Gymnastics Club takes measures to prevent and tackle bullying among gymnasts; however, it is equally important to recognise that bullying of staff, volunteers and parents/carers, whether by pupils, parents or other staff members, is also unacceptable.

Adults who have been bullied or affected will be supported by:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the concern with the Club Welfare Officer.
- Advising them to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to concerns and build resilience, as appropriate.
- Where the bullying takes place off site or outside of normal hours (including online), the Club will still investigate the concern and ensure that appropriate action is taken in accordance with the relevant Code of Conduct.

- Reporting offensive or upsetting content and/or accounts to the service provider, where the bullying has occurred online.
- Reassuring and offering appropriate support.
- Working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance.

Useful links

Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

Childline: www.childline.org.uk

Family Lives: www.familylives.org.uk

Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk

MindEd: www.minded.org.uk

NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk

The BIG Award: www.bullyinginterventiongroup.co.uk/index.php

Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk

Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk

Changing Faces: www.changingfaces.org.uk

Anti-Bullying Alliance Cyberbullying and children and young people with SEN and disabilities: www.cafamily.org.uk/media/750755/cyberbullying_and_send_-_module_final.pdf

Childnet International: www.childnet.com

Digizen: www.digizen.org

UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk