

## **Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults and Children Policy**

### **Policy statement**

*Gymfinity Kids has a duty of care to safeguard all children and young people involved in Gymnastics related activities from harm. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be considered. GK will promote the safety and protection of all children involved in gymnastics activities through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines.*

### **Definitions:**

#### **‘A Child’**

A child is anyone who has not yet reached his or her 18th birthday. ‘Children’ therefore means ‘children and young people’ throughout. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, does not change their status or entitlement to services or protection under the Children Act 1989. The word child/children will be used throughout this policy.

#### **‘Safeguarding children’**

The process of protecting children from abuse or neglect, preventing impairment of their health and development, and ensuring they are growing up in circumstances with the provision of safe and effective care that enables children to have optimum life changes and enter adulthood successfully.

#### **‘Child Protection’**

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. Effective child protection is imperative as part of the wider work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. However, all agencies and individuals. However, all agencies and individuals should proactively work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children through good practise so that need for action to protect children from harm is reduced.

#### **‘Who is responsible for safeguarding children’**

Working Together 2006 says, “Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is the responsibility of the local authority (LA) working in partnership with other public organisations, the voluntary sector, children and young people, parents and carers, and the wider community” i.e. We are ALL responsible. Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility. Therefore, everyone who works with young people and children has responsibility to keep them safe. It is also important to recognise that some children and young people are more vulnerable than others. This may include children with specialist behavioural, physical and mental needs. GKs goal is to create an environment where all children can achieve and be happy. All GK staff have a duty of care when working with children.

#### **Responding to allegations or suspicions**

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in GK to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting these to the appropriate officer or the appropriate authorities. GK will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child. Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation,
- A child protection investigation
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence and inform the disciplinary investigation, but all available information will be used to reach a decision.

### **Concerns outside the immediate sporting environment (e.g. a parent or carer)**

Report your concerns to the Club Child Protection Officer, who should contact social services or police or the GK head office as soon as possible.

### **Gymfinity Kids Child Safeguarding Objectives**

- To promote positive practise and challenge bad practise
- To ensure everyone who comes into contact with children is able to distinguish and recognise the signs of abuse, neglect and neglect and be able to respond accordingly.
- To grow a capable and knowledgeable workforce.
- To ensure that all coaches and staff are trained at an suitable level
- To ensure that all staff working in GK and working with children have had the necessary prerecruitment checks, safeguarding training and DBS checks.

### **Gymfinity Kids Club Responsibilities**

All Gymfinity Kids clubs must ensure that:

There is a designated child protection person at each site who takes the lead on all safeguarding issues. The responsibilities of this person should include:

- Promotion the welfare of children and the importance of safeguarding
- Responding to bad practise concerns
- Liaising with local agencies such as social services if required

All GK staff and volunteers who are working with children receive suitable training updated every three years and have access to guidance on child protection, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children.

They support whistle blowing and feel that they can to raise concerns.

Confidentiality is maintained in relation to concerns and issues that arise.

### **Gymfinity Kids Good Practice Guidelines:**

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets).
- Treating all young people/disabled adults equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first, before winning or achieving goals.
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process.
- Making the sport fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and in relation to guidelines provided by the Coach Education Programme. Care is needed, as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the child is constantly moving.
- Involving parents/carers wherever possible. For example, encouraging them to take responsibility for their children in the changing room.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults – avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.

- Securing parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given

**Practice never to be condoned:**

- Encourage children or adults to bully vulnerable children or adults verbally, racially or physically.
- Allow allegations to go unrecorded or unactioned.
- Text or use social networking sites with gymnasts or parents.
- Coaches must not provide intimate care i.e. toileting, assisting with changing.

**Gymfinity Kids Staff Training**

- Each Gymfinity Kids team member will attend a recognised 3-hour good practice and child protection awareness training workshop / online course.
- Relevant team members to gain a national first aid training.
- All staff should have achieved coaching qualifications from a relevant governing body or GKs own SMART MOVES staff training programme.

**Use of photographic/filming equipment at Gymfinity Kids**

There is research that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of children. All clubs should be vigilant, and any concerns should be reported to the Club Child Protection Officer.

With regards to using filming as a coaching aid there is no intent to prevent club coaches and teachers using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, children and their parents/carers should be made aware that this is part of the coaching programme and their consent obtained, and such films should be stored safely.

If the club is commissioning a professional photographer or inviting the press to an event, it is important that they understand your expectations of them in relation to child protection. They must have identification which they wear throughout. Permission must be obtained by parents to take photos and videos.

All parents must sign a relevant photography waiver on joining GK. It should be noted that some parents do not want their child to be photographed or are not allowed (adopted /fostered children for example). Coaches and staff should take care to ensure this is adhered to at all times.