



Health, Safety, Welfare: Coaching Practice Policy 2020



St Bede's

Roman Catholic High School,
Green Lane, Blackburn, BB2 4SR

British
Gymnastics
More than a sport

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1.0 Introduction

Quantum Leap Gymnastics regards the health, safety and welfare of all its members to be of paramount importance, which should not be compromised. Therefore, it is our club policy to ensure so far as is reasonably practical, that procedures are in place to maintain a safe and healthy environment not only for our members but also for other persons who may be affected by the activities of Quantum Leap Gymnastic Club.

There are inherent risks in the sport of gymnastics but the majority can be controlled and kept to a minimum through the adoption and implementation of accepted best coaching practices. This policy sets out the health and safety measures in relation to the provision of coaching activities. All coaches responsible for the provision of gymnastic activities should ensure all activities are fully risk assessed and are ultimately responsible for ensuring appropriate control measures are in place to help ensure a safe environment is provided at all times.

1.1 Insurance

Membership of British Gymnastics incorporates a comprehensive insurance cover and our Club and all its members hold appropriate membership cover. Every member of Quantum Leap Gymnastics must have the appropriate level of British Gymnastics Membership to take part in any gymnastic activity. All our recreational gymnasts and non-coaching helpers/officials must have Bronze membership and all squad gymnasts and Level 1 coaches must have Silver Membership and all our Level 2 and senior coaches must have Gold Membership.

1.2 Responsibilities

As a club we recognise that whilst we use the British Gymnastics, Health, Safety & Welfare Policies, it is our responsibility as a Club to have and implement appropriate policies and procedures, relating to the activities we provide. Our Club works in partnership with our Venue, St. Bede's R.C. School, therefore all our policies procedures and arrangements work together and include those of St. Bede's R.C. School.

2.0 Safety and Responsibility in Gymnastics

Everyone in coaching owes a duty of care to those being coached. A general duty of care is owed to the participants to exercise reasonable care for their safety both in training and competition.

Our Club creates a safe environment by ensuring that;

- The health and safety of each participant is paramount. We ensure that so far as is reasonably practical that the place in which the gymnastics activity, training and coaching takes place and the equipment and facilities used, are safe.
- All coaches are fully qualified, experienced and competent in their role and only coach to the level of their qualification. All coaches must employ Best Coaching Practice at all times.
- All coaches must carry out their coaching duties with reasonable skill and care and in a reasonable, prudent and professional manner in accordance with the Club's and BG Standards of Conduct, Codes of Conduct and the Club's and Sports Coach UK codes of Ethics and Conduct.
- Meticulous physical and mental preparation of the gymnast is appropriate to their level of participation.
- Suitable and well maintained apparatus and adequate facilities in an appropriately safe environment.
- Best coaching practices are employed at all times.

2.1 The Prudent and Caring Coach

All coaches in our Club must ensure that the following principles are implemented and continually upheld: -

- A safe environment is provided at all times.
- Clear and adequate instructions are given prior to commencing an activity.
- Coaching methods and procedures are continually assessed for the safety of both gymnast and coach.
- Only competent and suitably trained and qualified persons supervise or coach an activity.
- That only suitable clothing be worn by gymnasts i.e. leotards or shorts/leggings and t-shirts for recreational gymnastic activities.
- The health status of each gymnast should be known before commencing a training session or competition. If a coach knows of any health reason, medical condition or injury which might affect the gymnasts' ability to train or compete, or which might

adversely affect his or her health if he or she were to train or compete, appropriate medical advice should be obtained before the gymnast undertakes any training activity or competes.

- Medical advice should be sought in case of injury and only persons who are qualified should administer first aid.
- An accurate record of injuries and actions should be maintained and kept up to date – this is done using our accident forms and incident recording book.
- Medical approval should be sought following a debilitating injury before permitting a gymnast to recommence training.
- Coaches must be immediately accessible and never leave the premises while a session is in progress.
- Always ensure that a minimum of two responsible adults are present during a training session. One of the adults must be an appropriately qualified coach, the second adult must not be one of the participating gymnasts.

2.2 Coaching Qualification Criteria

Gymnastic activities involve an inherent risk and in the desire to protect the gymnasts and ensure their safety and well-being our Club and British Gymnastics requires the following criteria to be implemented:

- The minimum qualification for a coach operating independently is a BG Coach/Level 2 qualification in the discipline being offered.
- Coaches responsible for running the club must also have completed the BG Club Management module.
- Qualified Level 1 Assistant Coaches work only under the direct supervision of a qualified BG Gymnastics Coach (or higher) but must not operate unsupervised.
- Coaches should only work in the sports specific areas in which they are qualified and only to the level they are qualified.
- All coaches designing and directing gymnast programmes must hold a minimum of Level 2 Coach.
- Our Club has a duty of care to ensure that coaches are safe to undertake the coaching of gymnasts within their knowledge and competence according to current best practice under the guidelines of British Gymnastics.
- All Coaches are required to complete a criminal record check and complete a BG recognised safeguarding course (if over 18). Level 1 coaches under 18 must complete the BG Foundation Safeguarding online course.

- In a competition or other BG event, the coach must possess a current qualification according to the following criteria and a BG approved criminal record disclosure:
 - i) A coach who holds a Coach level qualification may be present in the event arena and be responsible for activities to the level of their qualification.
 - ii) At other levels, the coach must hold a level of qualification appropriate to the level of performance of the gymnast in the particular discipline.
 - iii) A less qualified coach may assist a more highly qualified coach but only in those areas and to the level to which they are qualified.

2.3 Coaches and Helpers

A coach is anyone who holds a BG recognised coaching qualification. Anyone else is regarded as a helper

- A helper can assist with the session in terms of demonstration, assisting with the warm-up etc. but must not coach in any way i.e. they cannot support skills, teach progressions, supervise gymnast or run sessions.
- Helpers who assist in a session must be fully supervised by a Level 2 or above coach at all times.
- Helpers who are undertaking a Level 1 coaching qualification may coach skills within their syllabus once they have completed the practical elements of the course under the direct supervision of a level 2 or above coach. Once attained a level 1 qualification they are then qualified to coach the moves within the syllabus provided that there is a level 2 providing overall direction during the session.

2.4 Gymnast to Coach Ratios

The coach in charge must always make an assessment (i.e. risk assessment) of each situation and must determine a ratio of gymnasts to coaches that is reasonable, safe and effective.

There should **always** be at least **two** responsible adults in the gymnasium.

Award Scheme Coach

Award Scheme Coaches (ASC) will all be current bronze or silver club members of a BG Club and will be at least 14 years old at the start of the course. They can work with a maximum of 8 gymnasts under the direct supervision of a minimum Level 2 Coach.

Pre-School Classes

For independent child classes, a ratio of 8 gymnasts to 1 coach. This can be increased proportionally to the number of qualified assistant coaches i.e. 8 per additional directly

supervised assistant coach. For classes where the parent, guardian or carer is participating with the gymnast, a maximum ratio of 20 children to 1 coach is BG recommended.

Gymnastic Classes

All gymnastic classes will be supervised by qualified British Gymnastics coaches at all times. We will always work within the recommended coach to gymnast ratio set out by British gymnastics;

Which is 1 qualified coach to 16 gymnasts. Qualified assistant coaches may coach 8 gymnasts under the supervision of a qualified coach, (i.e. qualified lead coach = 16 gymnasts plus 8 gymnasts with an assistant coach = 24 in total).

Coaching Disabled People

When working with disabled people, a competent assessment of the risk to the individual and other participants must be made when determining the ratio of gymnast to coach. Depending on the nature of the disability, one-to-one supervision may be necessary. We are an inclusive club and will always welcome and include disabled gymnasts within our existing sessions following the guidelines set out in the British Gymnastics Health, Safety & Welfare Policy section 2.6.

General Comments

When groups are warming up, cooling down or working on low risk activities on a floor area, the ratio may be increased within the bounds of safety.

2.5 Age and Level of Participation

- Gymnasts will only participate at the level which is safe for them to do so
- All sessions are planned around the progression on specific award schemes i.e. BG Proficiency Awards and Quantum Leap Gymnastics Award Scheme for recreational gymnastic sessions. For Squad sessions gymnastic activities are planned around the Acrobatic NDP programme.
- All sessions begin with appropriate physical preparation.
- All coaches should incorporate appropriate work ethic and attitude at all times to help gymnasts to foster a positive attitude to training and participation.
- The gymnasts training programme (number of hours/days) will be sensitive to the needs of the gymnast outside the gym environment.
- All coaches must stay within the boundaries of their own qualifications

British Gymnastics Long Term Athlete Development Model (available on the BG website, 'technical', 'downloads'.) Guidance to coaches on the competitive performance pathways.

Children under eight years of age

Where gymnasts under the age of eight years are involved in activities of a duration of two or more hours, we would register with the Local Authority social services as recommended by British Gymnasts.

All our under eight years' gymnasts do not exceed training sessions of 2 hours long. All our pre-school sessions are 45 minutes long.

Age and Competition

It is British Gymnastics policy that for an event that leads to a national or UK final, the gymnast must attain the minimum age of nine in the calendar year in which the event is held.

6 years old in year of competition – can compete within club, school and leisure centre only

7 years old in the year of competition – up to county and County Sports Partnership level

8 years old in the year of competition – Up to regional and home country level

9 years old in year of competition – Up to BG/UK wide national level

Use of under 14yrs Children as volunteers

All our volunteers are aged 14yrs and over. Any gymnast who volunteers under the age of 14yrs does so after discussion with parents and parental consent as part of their sports leadership program within St. Bede's R.C. High School.

2.6 COACHING DISABLED PARTICIPANTS

Coaches are not required to hold additional qualifications to include a disabled gymnast in their sessions. The Equality Act 2010 states that a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. This means that as coaches we are legally required to comply with the duties placed on us by the Act as follows:

- Avoid treating any disabled person less favourably than other members of the public.
- Make reasonable changes to practice, policies and procedures in order to make it easier for disabled people to use our gymnastic facilities.
- Take reasonable steps to remove, alter or provide alternative means of avoiding physical features of premises that make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to use the facilities provided.

Reasonable changes and adjustments would include minor works such as improving lighting, helpful colour schemes and accessible signage. We have on site the modification of automatic entrance doors, ramps and accessible toilet facilities.

Grounds for Refusing to Include

We will ensure disabled people are included within existing classes where it is appropriate to do so. However, some circumstances that may constitute reasonable grounds for refusing:

- Presence of health issues that contra-indicate participation on medical grounds. In this instance, disabled persons may need to provide evidence from a medical professional to verify that it is appropriate for the individual to participate in a particular activity.
- Identification of an unacceptable level of risk being posed to the health, safety or well-being of: i.) either the disabled person ii.) or others they are likely to come in contact with if included within existing classes.
- Recognition of the necessity to irrevocably change programme(s) provided in existing classes in order to accommodate the disabled person within them.

In the event that a coach refuses to accept a person with a disability into existing classes, British Gymnastics will only support that coach if they do so on reasonable grounds that can be shown to be supported by evidence.

Classes Specifically for Disabled People

In acknowledgement that it is not always possible or appropriate to include disabled people in mainstream gymnastics classes, if there is demand within the community to provide specific disability sessions we will look to provide/hold such sessions. Coaches who deliver classes specifically for disabled people will complete the British Gymnastics Disability Awareness Add-On Module.

Medical Considerations

A gymnast may present with a medical condition which may or may not be connected with their disability. If a gymnast has a medical condition where participation in gymnastics is in question, they must seek medical advice through their GP prior to participation, to ensure that the activity will not have a detrimental effect on their health or well-being.

The following are examples of medical conditions where expert advice is to be sought prior to participation in gymnastics:

- Pregnancy
- Detaching Retina
- Confirmed Atlanto Axial Instability

- Rodded back
- Brittle bones

This list is by no means exhaustive. There are also other medical conditions that may contra-indicate participation and as coaches we will seek expert medical advice if participation is in question, before attempting to devise a training program.

Atlanto-Axial Instability.

In people with Down's syndrome, the ligaments which normally hold the joints stable can be very slack. This can lead to an unusually wide range of movement at some joints-much greater than in the general population. As well as affecting the ordinary limb joints, this can affect one of the joints in the neck; the atlanto-axial joint. This joint is the highest joint in the spinal column and it lies just at the base of the skull. There is movement at this joint whenever you nod or shake your head.

In some people with Down's Syndrome, in addition to a slack ligament, the actual bones of the atlantoaxial joint may be poorly developed. These differences could make the joint more unstable and more likely to dislocate than in people without Down's Syndrome. (This instability is known as atlanto-axial instability)

Due to the changes within the joint, some people with Down's Syndrome who have confirmed atlantoaxial instability may be at a greater risk of whip lash type injuries (from activities such as trampolining), which could lead to paralysis. They may also be at a greater risk of serious injury arising as a result of chronic pressure on the neck. (Gymnastic activities such as headstands or backward rolls could cause this type of pressure on the neck)

What Coaches need to do

In order to safeguard the participation of gymnasts with Down's Syndrome, as a Club, **WE WILL** ensure that all gymnasts with Down's Syndrome are medically screened prior to participating in any gymnastic activity.

British Gymnastics Screening Policy

British Gymnastics has a policy of screening all participants with Down's Syndrome prior to them taking part in gymnastic activities. The aim of the screening is to provide access to gymnastics for everyone who can benefit from involvement in this sport and who are at no greater risk than other gymnasts.

Screening must be undertaken by a qualified medical practitioner. Those who are eligible to undertake the necessary tests include General Practitioners; Orthopaedic or Paediatric Consultants; School Medical Officers/Doctors; Chartered Physiotherapists.

Once screened, if the participant does not have atlanto-axial instability, then they will be approved to participate in gymnastics. However, if a participant is confirmed as having atlanto-axial instability, the British Gymnastics Chief Medical Officer will stipulate the level of gymnastic activity that is permitted for the participant (permitted activity will be determined on a case-by-case basis and could include; total exclusion from all gymnastics activity or allowing the individual to participate in a limited number of disciplines and/or skills within gymnastics).

Advice regarding Dwarfism for British Gymnastics

As a club we would first seek advice from British Gymnastics on the risks associated with participation in gymnastics for dwarfs.

- It is advised that Dwarfs should not participate in high impact and rebounding disciplines.
- Rebounding, jumping and impact activity should be avoided to minimise the risk of injury.
- Hyper-extension of the spine, pressure on the neck and weight bearing on the head should be avoided to minimise the risk of injury

Examples of activities regarded as non-suitable for the above reasons are:

- Forward and backward rolls
- Headstands
- Flicks and handsprings
- Bridges
- Jumping/rebounding/somersaults

Examples of skills with reduced risk for this population are:

- Log rolls
- Foot balancing
- Running/locomotion (without Jumping)
- Dancing (without impact/jumps)
- Elements such as cartwheels (if the participant's arms are longer enough and strong enough to take body weight without the head making contact with the floor)

2.7 General Health and Fitness

Coaches will always check the health, fitness and welfare of participants before the start of every session. Participants are always encouraged to inform their coach if they do not feel that they can join in a session and Parents should always inform Coaches before a session begins if their child is injured, upset or unfit to take part in training.

For gymnasts that have been absent from training due to injury or illness, the Coach will always consult with Parents/Guardian/Carers (and on advice given by medical experts) to ascertain whether they are well enough to recommence training and where necessary adjust their training plan.

Rescue Medication

If a participant has a medical condition that may require the administration of emergency medication, the club will consult with parents/guardians/Carers, risk assess and put in place the appropriate controls

- Participants who require asthma inhalers – they must either keep a labelled inhaler at the gym in the first aid kit or bring their labelled inhaler to gym every session and place it next to the first aid on the table.
- Where self-administration of medication is not possible we will arrange with Parents/Guardians/Carer for them to stay in close proximity during training sessions or seek consent for administration to be carried out by a named coach.

2.8 Nutrition

Coaches will always promote the benefits of healthy eating to all their gymnasts. It is recommended that gymnasts boost their energy stores 1 ½ hours before a training session through the intake of carbohydrates and non-gaseous fluids.

It is essential that gymnasts bring a bottle of water that can be refilled during training.

Gymnasts that attend training sessions that last longer than 2 hours should always bring a snack to training with them

Ideally a gymnast should not carry excessive body mass since this may lead to under performance, ineffective technique and increased risk of injury due to excess loading on the body structure.

Coaches will be vigilant for symptoms that may be an indication of a dietary related illness such as Anorexia or Bulimia Nervosa. In these circumstances Coaches will bring this to the attention of the parents/guardians/carers

2.9 Personal Clothing

The Code of Dress for gymnastic activities is designed to safeguard the participants and coaches. The following points should be adhered to during training and events.

- All gymnasts and coaches should wear appropriate club clothing, which does not impede the freedom of movement required by the activity and is not too loose as to constitute a hazard.
- The wearing of clothing with buckles or clasps are dangerous and are prohibited.
- Raised adornments on gymnasts clothing are dangerous and are prohibited.
- Long hair may become a hazard and it should be tied back at all times to avoid accidents.
- Participants should work in bare feet.
- Long fingernails present a risk to the gymnast, partners and coaches. The coach is responsible for ensuring the length of fingernails is compatible with the activity.
- Sensitivity to religious beliefs should be afforded with regard to the dress code but safety is paramount and any clothing that is considered by the coach to be a safety hazard should be changed or participation may be prohibited. Any concessions on dress will be within the bounds of reasonable safety. The element of risk will be explained to the coach/gymnast (parent or guardian) and every attempt to control the risk will be adopted.
- Coaches and gymnasts should be aware of the risks associated with wearing spectacles and minimise the risks by wearing flexible frames, elastic sports band or contact lenses to ensure safety

The Code of dress for participants at BG Competitions will be stated by the FIG in the sport specific code.

Coaches at events:

Coaches active in the event arena should dress smartly:

- Coaches should wear the club competition tracksuit at all competitions

2.10 Body Piercing and Adornments

Jewellery and adornments worn in body piercing are inappropriate for safe practice in gymnasts.

This applies to both coaches and gymnasts.

All jewellery should be removed before gymnasts take part in any gymnastic activity. Coaches should remove all jewellery before spotting or supporting any gymnastic activity.

Jewellery that cannot be removed.

It may be impossible to remove a ring i.e. wedding ring in such cases these should be taped. Newly pierced stud earrings need to be covered with protective tape but must be removed as soon as possible (normally after 6 weeks).

For the avoidance of doubt any jewellery which can be removed, must be removed.

Religious or medical bracelets must be covered with a sweatband and secured with tape.

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3.0 DISCIPLINE AND CODES OF CONDUCT

A good standard of behaviour and code of conduct within the gymnasium will greatly reduce the risk of injury and enhance concentration and the work ethic. These standards should be applied equally to all participants. We expect everyone at Quantum Leap Gymnastics to respect each other and adhere to our codes of conduct at all times.

3.1 COACHES CODE OF CONDUCT

Coaches are expected to be polite and courteous at all times to all other Coaches, all parents/guardians, all gymnasts, and any other adult helpers in the gym. Bullying or use of inappropriate language in the gym will not be tolerated.

- Coaches are expected to act in 'loco parentis' once a child is left in their care. This role commences at the start of the gymnastics session through to the end of the class, when gymnasts are discharged to the care of their parents/guardians/carers.
- Coaches hold a valid and nationally recognised governing body coaching qualification and ensure that their coaching knowledge and practice are according to current best practice (unless they are in the role of Coach under Instruction).
- Coaches are British Gymnastics members and have current DBS certificates.
- Coaches must place the well-being and safety of the gymnast above the development of performance. They should follow all guidelines set down by British Gymnastics.
- Coaches must encourage and guide performers to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and performance.
- Coaches must ensure the activities they direct or advocate are appropriate for the age, maturity, experience and ability of the individual.
- Coaches should consistently display high standards of behaviour and appearance.
- Coaches are to provide a 'safe' training environment for all gymnasts.
- Coaches must never allow gymnasts to leave the training areas without a responsible adult.
- Coaches must make themselves known to parents/guardians/carers of new gymnasts to ensure that gymnasts only leave the training venue with someone they know.
- Coaches must check equipment before use.
- A qualified First Aider must always be on site.
- Coaches must never give a gymnast a lift home unless another gymnast or adult is present.

- Coaches must never train in a one to one situation with gymnasts.
- Coaches are to ensure that gymnasts are fit to train.

3.2 PARENT/GUARDIAN/CARER CODE OF CONDUCT

Parents/Guardians/Carers are expected to be polite and courteous at all times to all other Parents/Guardians/Carers, Coaches, and gymnasts, and any other adult helpers in the gym. Bullying or use of inappropriate language in the gym will not be tolerated.

- Parents/Guardians/Carers can always approach a Coach in charge with any questions, queries or concerns regarding their child and their gymnastics. This should be done before a training session beginnings or at the end of a training sessions. Coaches cannot be pulled out of a session unless it is urgent. If you need to discuss an issue at length it is best to make an appointment and arrange a convenient time for everyone outside of training times.
- Parents/Guardians/Carers should promote good sportsmanship at all times.
- Parents/Guardians/Carers are expected to be polite and courteous at all times to all other Parents/Guardians/Carers, all gymnasts, coaches and any other adult helpers in the gym. Bullying or use of inappropriate language in the gym will not be tolerated.
- Parents/Guardians/Carers must ensure their child is fit to partake in gymnastics activity prior to the start of a gymnastic session.
- Parents/Guardians/Carers should contact the gym if their child is going to be absent from a session. This can be done by email, phone call or text message
- Parents/Guardians/Carers should bring their child into the gym on time and collect them at the end of the class on time. If children arrive late when their session has already begun they should expect to sit and wait until the coach tells them, it is safe and appropriate to join in.
- It is the responsibility of Parents/Guardians/Carers to look after their child until the class commences, and then immediately following the end of the class. It is the responsibility of Parents/Guardians/Carers to ensure their own child's safety whilst in the corridor and entrance lobby.
- For the protection, safety and well-being of all our gymnasts, Parents/Guardians/Carers are not to enter the changing rooms. If you need to assist your own child, please use the toilet facilities.
- Parents/Guardians/Carers are to ensure their child is appropriately dressed for their class, with hair tied up and all jewellery removed before entering the gym. Parents/Guardians/Carers should make sure that their child brings a bottle of water to gym. It is not the Coaches responsibility to provide drinks for gymnasts.

- Parents/Guardians/Carers must ensure that all changes in contact details are brought to the attention of the Coach in charge of the class. Updates should be provided in writing.
- New Parents/Guardians/Carers should introduce themselves to the Coach in charge as this will ensure gymnasts only leave the gym with someone the coach recognises.
- Parents/Guardians/Carers must inform a Coach if someone different is going to collect their child from the gym.
- Parents/Guardians/Carers are expected to ensure the payment of training fees, competition fees & annual insurance is paid on time.
- For health and safety reasons Parents/Guardians/Carers are not to wait in the gym whilst their child is training (except for Gym Tot classes). Parents/Guardians/Carers may wait outside the gym and view through the window, however, if Parents/Guardians/Carers are seen to be using mobile phones whilst viewing their child, for the safety and wellbeing of all our gymnasts, they will be asked to move away. Parents/Guardians/Carers of Gym Tots are not allowed to use their mobile phones in the gym.
- Parents/Guardians/Carers are kindly requested to make sure that their child does not bring items of value to the gym.
- When visiting competition venues Parents/Guardians/Carers should be respectful to all competition officials and promote good sportsmanship at all times. Parents/Guardians/Carers should not approach Judges or challenge decisions made by the Competition Organiser or any other competition officials. Poor conduct displayed by Parents/Guardians/Carers may result in Our Club being disqualified from the competition or receiving a Club sanction.

3.3 GYMNASTS CODE OF CONDUCT

All gymnasts are expected to be polite and courteous at all times to all other gymnasts, Coaches, and all Parents/Guardians/Carers and any other adult helpers in the gym. Bullying or use of inappropriate language in the gym will not be tolerated.

- Gymnasts are expected to be polite and courteous at all times to all other gymnasts, their coaches and any other adult helpers in the gym. Bullying or use of inappropriate language in the gym will not be tolerated.
- Gymnasts who are upset, worried or concerned about anything should come and speak to a coach.
- Gymnasts are expected to arrive for training on time in their training attire. Gymnasts must train in suitable gymnastics clothing, i.e., leotard and shorts. Gymnasts should

wear comfortable clothing to allow freedom of movement while at the same time not being open, loose or floppy for safety reasons. Leggings/joggers/shorts and T-shirt can be worn at Recreational sessions.

- Gymnasts with long hair must make sure that it is tied up before they enter the gym.
- Training commences promptly at the times stated on the notice board. Gymnasts who arrive late for their training session should expect to sit and wait until a coach tells them it is safe and appropriate to join in the session.
- Gymnasts of all ages must be brought into and collected from the gym by a responsible adult. Gymnasts will not be allowed to leave the gym by themselves unless this has been pre-arranged by parents with the coaches.
- Gymnasts are required to arrive and depart from the gym suitably dressed in outer clothing, such as leggings/ joggers/ shorts and a t-shirt/hoody, **not just a leotard**. Gymnasts should wear a coat to and from the gym in the winter months.
- Gymnasts must always tell a coach if they feel unwell or have an injury before the start of their gymnastics session.
- Gymnasts must always wait for their coach to tell them to start training and only use the gymnastics equipment when instructed to do so by their coach.
- Gymnasts should train in bare feet unless there is a medical reason that prevents this. If there is a medical reason, this should be brought to the attention of the Coach in charge of the gymnastic session.
- Gymnasts who use of an inhaler must have it clearly marked with their name on it. It should be handed to the Coach in charge at the beginning of the class for safekeeping and collected again at the end.
- Gymnasts are asked not to bring valuable items to gymnastics, Quantum Leap Gymnastics cannot be held responsible for lost or stolen items. It is advisable for items of clothing to be labelled with the gymnast's name and that the gymnast brings a bag to place their belongings in whilst they are training.
- Gymnasts should bring a drink with them to training.
- Gymnasts who bring mobile phones to gym **must not** use them whilst in the gym. Mobile phones are not to be taken into the changing rooms, they should be switched off and placed in the box in the gym
- Gymnasts should always tell a Coach if they need to leave the gym and an appropriate adult (a Coach, Gymnastic Helper or **your** Parent) will take you to the changing/toilet facilities.
- Shoes must be worn when leaving the gym/training area.

4.0 SAFETY IN COACHING

The following precautions are taken during activities to ensure that optimal levels of safety are maintained at all times:

- **Preparation of the Gymnast** The physical and psychological preparation of the participant is of prime importance to facilitate the safe learning of skills or movements.
- **Appropriate strength, flexibility and body awareness** together with psychological factors must be developed prior to teaching a skill.
- **Progressive Learning** The use of carefully selected progressive sub-skills, which relate to the complete skill, will always be used as good practice and time for consolidation in performance will always be allocated.
- **Competent Spotting/Supporting.** Supporting and Spotting are integral with the safe learning of gymnastic skills and involve the techniques of observation and handling, to ensure the safe performance of the skill. No gymnast will be expected to perform a gymnast skill unaided until they (the gymnast) and their coach feels they are competent and ready to do so. Spotting and supporting techniques will always be used to provide physical and psychology support to the gymnast.
- **Suitable Apparatus** Coaches are responsible for carefully erecting and checking the suitability of the apparatus for height, width and stability in every session it is used. Coaches will always ensure that a safe and appropriate landing surface is provided at all times in accordance with the level of activity and the ability and experience of the participant. Even when gymnasts are laying out equipment it is always the role of the coach running the session to ensure equipment is safe to use. Coaches will always conduct a risk assessment of the environment to ensure that it remains safe throughout any session/gymnastic activity.
- **Safe Landings** Correct landing techniques and methods of falling safely are effectively taught and encouraged at all times.

Flexibility Training for Gymnasts

To protect the gymnasts in our care and to protect ourselves against possible allegations of poor practice, coaches must carefully consider their actions and how they might be perceived by an observer.

Important factors for a safe and successful gymnastics flexibility programme:

- Encourage a good flexibility programme from the beginning as young children are more flexible and once a good range of movement is achieved it is easier to maintain.

- For a flexibility programme to be effective the gymnast must be motivated and want to improve in this area.
- Develop an understanding of why flexibility is essential for gymnastics. The gymnast must understand that if they do not improve / maintain their flexibility it will limit their skill development, the quality of their work and make them more susceptible to injury.
- Always remember there are a variety of ways to stretch, not just 'hands on' passive stretching. Situations where the gymnast is using their own body weight are usually more effective and longer lasting.
- It is important to maintain a balance between passive and active stretching.
- Stretching must only be done in a suitably warm environment and only when the gymnast is thoroughly warmed up.
- Regular, gradual and progressive stretching with a focus on achievable and measureable targets is likely to be far more effective.
- Expectations must be consistent with all other factors related to gymnastic development i.e. age, potential, physiology and training situation.
- It is not necessary or desirable to experience extreme discomfort in order to become more flexible – in fact it is this aspect of a flexibility programme that is likely to put the gymnast off and make it less effective.
- In all situations the gymnast must be in control and able to say STOP.

To be avoided:

- Unrealistic expectations for a 'quick fix'.
- Situations where gymnasts may feel 'exposed' i.e. for stretching box splits it is better to have gymnast lying on stomach as opposed to lying on back, better to have gymnasts wearing shorts etc.
- Coach stretching gymnast to the point of excessive pain or extreme discomfort.
- Exercises that place the coach's and gymnast's bodies in 'close proximity' and could be considered inappropriate.

The coach should never:

Touch a gymnast's inner thigh, groin area or buttocks during stretching exercises.

Use their full body weight to push down on a gymnast.

Work alone and with only one gymnast.

Work alone in a secluded or separated area in the gym where they cannot be observed by other adults.

It is impossible to establish guidelines for every situation that may occur in our sport and common sense should be used at all times. If any coach is unsure of the appropriateness of any stretching activity they should not be afraid to discuss it with someone they trust or alternatively contact British Gymnastics.

Use of Weight Training

All physical preparation is progressive and where possible, use the gymnast's own body mass (or that of another gymnast) will be used as the resistance. This is particularly relevant in early childhood and periods of adolescent growth. Single weight discs, ankle and wrist weights are used to increase the resistance but this will depend upon the age and stage of maturation of the gymnasts and are only used for gymnasts who train in a squad and not used in recreational gymnastic sessions.

Progressive use of weights in training is only used in Squad groups.

Overuse and Growth Related Injuries Due to the complex nature of the sport and the need for frequent, repetitive practice of skills or movements, participants in gymnastics are susceptible to overuse injuries. This is particularly relevant during the pubescent growth spurt periods. Coaches must be conscious of the need for meticulous physical preparation, a varied programme, use of appropriate techniques and a suitable environment to reduce the risk of overuse related injuries. Coaches must be continually vigilant in observing the growth pattern of young participants and sensitive to signs of soreness or pain particularly in growth plate areas. Advice should be sought from a qualified physiotherapist or medical practitioner.

Excessively repetitive exercises, poor facilities or bad technique may lead to 'overuse injuries'. Coaches must take the necessary precautions to reduce the possibility of this type of injury by varying the programme, ensuring correct techniques are taught, adequate fitness is developed and suitable apparatus is used. The coach must take into consideration the age, stage of maturation and psychological and emotional state of the performer with regard to the demands of the training programme.

4.1 RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk assessment is a process that identifies potential hazards in an activity, assesses the level of risk and then puts in place safe practices to control that risk. In other words, recognising anything that could realistically cause harm and taking all reasonable steps to reduce the likelihood of harm occurring.

All building and secure fixtures are risk assessed by St Bede's R.C. High School. However, Quantum Leap Gymnastics carrying out their own risk assessments on all their own gymnastic equipment, gymnastic activities and gymnastic environment to ensure the safety and well-being of all gymnasts, coaches and volunteer helpers within the club.

Risk assessments can be carried out in a wide variety of circumstances or for particular tasks: for example, lifting a heavy piece of equipment, checking a facility, performing a gymnastics skill, wearing a piece of clothing, running an event or even implementation of the club rules and procedures. Quantum Leap Gymnastics have Codes of Conduct for all its members which should be adhered to at all times and have been carefully considered to reduce risks to its members.

For all our Coaches the process of identifying the potential hazards, judging the level of risk and putting in safe practices to control the risk is one they are routinely familiar with in their Coaching Role and this takes place throughout all training sessions without the necessity to make a written record.

Quantum Leap Gymnastics has an appointed Health and Safety Officer who with the support of coaches undertakes regular inspections. Quantum Leap Gymnastics uses the British Gymnastics Template Risk Assessment Form. It is the responsibility of Coaches to ensure that a safe environment is provided at all times. In addition, the following checks are carried out to ensure the safety of the following:

The Facility/Building – these checks are regularly carried out by St. Bede's R.C. High School for the condition of: the building, heating, lighting, ventilation, floor plates, and ceiling and wall fixings.

Gymnastics Equipment - all apparatus is examined for defects or damage and coaches ensure that it is correctly erected and stored, on every occasion. An approved agent appointed by St. Bede's R.C. High School carries a full annual equipment inspection and our appointed Health and Safety officer or coach undertakes regular inspections of the safe storage and condition of all gymnastic equipment.

Manual Handling - Coaches and volunteers are often required from time to time to move items of equipment etc. As part of all Coach training and their day-to-day role, know-how

and should put into practise at all times the safety considerations that need to be given to the weight, size and bulk of equipment and the hazards associated with moving each piece of equipment and how to carry it out safely.

First Aid and Emergency Facilities - First Aid facilities are available at all times. There is always a First Aider on site at all gymnastic sessions. All first Aiders are identifiable on the Club Gymnastic Notice Board. The first aid box is always clearly visible in the gym. There is also first aid equipment at the reception desk. There is always a phone available at the reception desk and in the gym for use in emergencies.

4.2 GUIDELINES FOR GYMNASTICS APPARATUS

There are many different types and designs of gymnastics apparatus and training aids. Some apparatus may be permanently fixed and other pieces of equipment may require frequent assembly, dismantling or transportation and storage. It is impossible to produce an exhaustive statement to cover the safe use of all gymnastics apparatus and the many differing situations in which it may be used. However, the following recommendations will provide a guideline to cover a comprehensive range of gymnastic situations.

Assembly of Apparatus should be assembled or erected according to the manufacturer's instructions and the handling of apparatus should be supervised at all times by a qualified coach. Adequate instruction must be provided to all personnel handling equipment.

All coaches must be diligent in providing a safe environment and the selection of matting is made on the basis of functional suitability and safety, with particular reference to the following factors:

- The age, ability, degree of experience and level of physical preparedness of the participants.
- The type of activity planned and the inherent risks associated with the activity.
- The nature of the apparatus and type of movement to be attempted. Consideration should be given to the height of the apparatus, the degree of momentum that the gymnast may generate and the point at which the gymnast may be at greatest risk.
- Matting of sufficient area, thickness, resilience and shock absorbency is always provided.
- Additional matting or a safety-landing module (safety mat) is always placed upon the base matting particularly when the participants are inexperienced in the particular activity.

- Matting is non-slip; in good condition and free of damage. Coaches and gymnasts must be vigilant in ensuring that gaps do not appear due to the separation or slipping of matting.
- Matting or padding should also be provided around parts of the apparatus against which the gymnast may collide in the event of an erroneous attempt at an activity particularly, during the early learning stages.

Dismantling and Storing Equipment Gymnastics - apparatus should be dismantled according to the manufacturer's guidelines and should be directly supervised by a qualified person. When moving apparatus ensure that the pathway is free from obstructions and that recognised safe handling techniques are employed. Ensure that equipment is securely stored and that wooden equipment and matting is not exposed to moisture or close to heating devices. Moisture or heat may cause warping or separation of the wooden laminations.

Rebound equipment such as trampettes and trampolines must be secured when not in use, to prevent access by unqualified or unauthorised persons.

4.3 GYMNASTICS APPARATUS INSPECTION GUIDELINES

Constant vigilance is required by the facility provider, coach and club management to ensure that the apparatus is in good order and a log of regular inspections and action taken should be maintained. Any damage to equipment should be recorded and reported immediately to the facility provider and taken out of service until the damage has been repaired. Coaches should also frequently check the location of gymnastics apparatus to ensure that sufficient space and height is maintained around the apparatus.

St. Bede's R. C. High School appoint appropriately qualified personnel carry out a full annual inspection/repair service. In addition, interim safety inspection checks are made at frequent intervals by a qualified coach or the facility provider. All equipment is checked every time it is used and stored away. All matting and apparatus is regularly cleaned usually every half term.

5.0 FIRST AID AND EMERGENCY PROVISION

Quantum Lap Gymnastics provides the following first aid provision;

- A telephone, together with clear instructions on how to dial out for emergency services is always available at the reception desk. There is always a phone in the gym for emergency use.
- A list of relevant numbers, including the nearest hospital Casualty Department is readily available at the reception desk.
- A First Aid Kit is always available in the gym and there is additional first aid provision at the reception desk.
- A suitably fully qualified first aid person is always present when any gymnastics activities are being performed.
- Names of identified first aiders are displayed in the Club noticeboard.
- A register is always kept of all participants, together with a contact number for their next of kin, parent or guardian and any medical conditions.

(NB: Although this information is securely stored to comply with data protection legislation, is easily accessible by appropriate personnel in the event of an accident).

First Aid Box Minimum Requirements

- HSE leaflet 'Basic First Aid at Work'
- 20 individually wrapped sterile adhesive dressings (assorted sizes)
- 2 sterile eye pads
- 4 individually wrapped triangular bandages
- 6 safety pins
- 6 medium sized (approximately 12cm square) individually wrapped sterile unmedicated wound dressings
- 2 large sized (approximately 18cm square) individually wrapped sterile unmedicated wound dressings
- Disposable gloves

First aid boxes should not contain any tablets, ointments/creams or medicines.

In addition, we may keep other items that are specific to the needs of gymnastics e.g. asthma inhalers.

Whenever gymnastic activities are taking place it is imperative that the following emergency procedures and provisions are accessible and fully understood by all participants:

First Aid Procedures and Serious Injuries.

All Coaches are aware of pre-planned arrangements ready to put into operation in the event of a serious injury.

One person qualified in first aid will carry out emergency First Aid and then seek the help of qualified medical personnel. The following minimum procedure will be adopted in the event of any accident that occurs:

- Stop the class and direct other members of the class not immediately involved in the accident away from the injured person, and contact a suitably qualified person and/or the emergency services;
- Inform the management of the facility and contact the parents, guardian or immediate family of the injured person;
- Stay with the injured person until the emergency services arrive;
- Ensure a responsible adult accompanies the injured person to the treatment centre;
- Complete an appropriate Accident Report form.

The Coach will retain contact with the injured person, to remain informed and follow up action or treatment.

Reporting Accidents

In the event of an accident, no matter how minor it may appear at the time, a coach will record the accident and/or complete an accident report form and inform the parents/guardian of the person who had the accident/injury. Should there be any legal action the accident report form will supply important details about the incident and may lead to an individual being vindicated of any blame.

British Gymnastics must be notified as a matter of urgency in the event of any accidents that result in a visit to hospital. Failure to supply this information may result in the insurance company refusing to settle a claim. Clubs who employ people must also comply with the RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995) on 0845 300 9923 and report all legally reportable accidents and dangerous occurrences to the relevant enforcing authority.

6.0 FIRE SAFETY AND OTHER MISCELLANEOUS SAFETY ISSUES

All fire safety issues are carried out by St. Bede's R. C. High School. However, in the event of a fire/safety issue that requires vacating the building it is the responsible of Quantum Leap Gymnastics Coaches to ensure all members safely exit the facilities should the fire alarm sound.

Coaches will guide its members to the nearest fire exit and assemble together on the car park where a register a check of everyone in attendance at that particular session can be accounted for.

BUILDING EVACUATION PROCEDURE

1. Everyone should leave the building in an orderly manner via the nearest emergency exit.
2. All gymnasts should remain with a designated coach/appropriate adult and follow their instruction on leaving the building.
3. Everyone should assemble at the far end of the carpark.
4. One designated person should check the reception, toilets, changing rooms and training areas to make sure there is no one still in the building.
5. One designated person should take the gym phone and the first aid equipment box out of the building with them.
6. One designated person should take the gym laptop with all emergency and personal contact details of all its members.
7. Everyone should assemble for a register to be taken to establish that everyone is out of the building.
8. Wait for the emergency services to arrive and wait on their instruction.