**A2 Gym and Cheer**

**Team Parent Handbook**



A2 Gym and Cheer

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**Welcome and Introduction**

Welcome to our A2 Family! If you are reading this information, then you have an athlete in our

Gymnastics Team Program. A2 Gym and Cheer opened in July 2009 and only offered preschool

and recreational gymnastics, cheerleading and tumbling classes, private lessons, and birthday

parties. Due to our fun, exciting, and family-oriented atmosphere, our programs grew quickly as

well as our customer’s interest in wanting more time in the gym. So along with our classes, we

now offer multiple gymnastics teams.

We are very excited to see our programs have flourished, since we began our team program. The

children who have been involved have succeeded by having fun while learning and growing in

the areas of strength, flexibility, skill acquisition and the ability to compete. We strive to help each

child develop positive self-esteem and confidence individually as well as learn to create and

sustain great relationships with their coaches and amongst their peers through teamwork. Again,

welcome to A2 Gym and Cheer and may you be a part of our family for many years to come!

**Philosophy**

At A2, we strive to create a welcoming environment that allows for positive and safe learning with

professional coaches who share their energy and ability to have fun, their knowledge and

experience, and their love and support to every athlete in our facility. This includes any additional

time, effort, work, and commitment that we put forth into the creation, development and running of

a successful team program. It is important that we are all on the same page, in knowing that

being on one of our teams requires each athlete’s individual commitment as well as every family’s

commitment. It is necessary to have strong work ethic, positive attitude, and overwhelming effort

combined with supportiveness, cooperation, dedication, and sacrifice to be a part of our team

program. Together, it is our hope that your athlete will be provided with a fulfilling and rewarding

long term experience.

**Gymnastics Teams**

All gymnastic team members will be participating and competing according to the rules and

policies set forth by the national governing body of USA Gymnastics. USA Gymnastics is

responsible in creating the competitive structure followed by the entire country for clubs who

choose to participate. Included in this responsibility are the developmental and age group

programs that direct our gymnasts from the beginning stages. The USA Gymnastics structure is

based on a progressive step by step building of physical, emotional, and psychological skills.

Proficiency of all aspects of the gymnast at each level is expected and required to insure a safe,

smooth progression through the levels.

**In-House Team**

The gymnasts will be mainly working on strength and flexibility as well as the basic core skills

that lay the foundation for gymnastics. This program is ideal for athletes moving out of our

recreational program, who are not quite ready to move into our more intense competitive

programs. Also, this program provides athletes with an introduction to competing, to ensure that

they are interested and would like to eventually pursue a more intense route. Individual basic

skills as well as short routines will be taught to gymnasts on these teams. The age ranges are

approximate, but typically are for athletes ages five through eighteen. These teams will

participate in a minimum of three in-house competitions at A2 and **possibly** one to two

competitions outside of A2, after the first of the calendar year through the spring. The

competitions that these groups attend are not sanctioned by USA Gymnastics, as they are

designed to allow flexibility in coaching and performance throughout the competition.

**Pre-Team and Levels 1 and 2**

The gymnasts will be mainly working on strength and flexibility as well as the basic core skills

that lay the foundation for gymnastics. This program is ideal for athletes moving out of our

recreational program, who are not quite ready to move into the more intense competitive

programs, or athletes who are interested in competitive gymnastics, approximately four to seven

years old but are unsure of their level of commitment at the time they begin. Individual basic

skills as well as short routines will be taught to gymnasts in these levels. These teams will

participate in a minimum of three in-house competitions at A2 and possibly one to two

competitions outside of A2, after the first of the calendar year through the spring. The

competitions that these groups attend are not sanctioned by USA Gymnastics, as they are

designed to allow flexibility in coaching and performance throughout the competition.

**Developmental Program (DP) Compulsory – Levels 3 - 5**

As a gymnast progresses and reaches these levels, they need more time in the gym. They are

more experienced and should be willing to make a significantly greater level of commitment than

pre-team gymnasts. The expectations and skill level of these athletes are now on a higher level.

These levels are to orient and educate the beginning competitors in the USA Gymnastics system

of competition. This program is designed for children who see intense, competitive gymnastics in

their future.

Compulsory routines are developed for the nation by USA Gymnastics. These routines are a

Pre-choreographed series of skills that each competitor must perform.

The philosophy of these routines is for the athletes to practice toward perfection of these basics.

Multiple age groups are created to provide more athletes with awards during a competition however

these groups are subject to change at the different competitions attended. The state age groups, which

are used for the state championship meets, are pre-determined by USA Gymnastics.

**Developmental Program (DP) Optional – Levels 6 - 10**

Optional competition consists of each gymnast performing her own routines for each event. The

Federation of International Gymnastics (FIG) produces the optional rules every 4 years in

conjunction with the Olympics. This rule book dictates what each routine needs to contain

(composition), the value of what is done (difficulty), and how to evaluate how well it is done

(execution). **By these levels, the gymnast has made a full commitment to the sport**. These levels

will be for the gymnast who is motivated to move up the ladder as far as her talent and hard work

will get her. These teams will be developed to compete regionally and nationally in competitions

that will facilitate achieving the high goals which they have set for themselves.

Optional routines are choreographed by the coach or designated choreographer with input from

the gymnast. Optional routines are usually unique to each particular gymnast however the head

coach does have final say as to what will be performed in each routine.

**Xcel Program**

It is expected that many of the participants in this program enjoy gymnastics participation as part

of a variety of other interests and activities. Therefore, athletes are required to attend practices at least

twice a week from the entry level of Bronze through the Gold level (three days per week during

the summer training) / three days a week at the Platinum level and Diamond level. At this point in time, we do not have any Sapphire level gymnasts.

The philosophy of this program is to provide a fun and positive competitive experience that does

not require the same level of commitment as the traditional Developmental Program. The

expectations placed on the athletes are still high and the athletes will work toward achieving the

most challenging and difficult skills at their level with perfection. The Xcel program follows the

national rules set forth by USA Gymnastics and each athlete who participates is required to be a

member of USA Gymnastics.

If athletes are looking to move into the Xcel program from the Developmental Program, their

placement must follow the guidelines set forth by USA Gymnastics.

Also, we discourage athletes to move into the Developmental Program after competing even one

year in the Xcel program. We view each athlete individually and when needed, will make

recommendations of placement as they progress through our program but know that once the

Xcel program is chosen, it is very difficult to move into the DP program (as your athlete would

need to begin at a lower compulsory level).

**Practices**

In order to understand and appreciate what goes into the development of a competitive gymnast,

one must understand exactly what it is that we are trying to achieve during training. There are

four fundamental areas of development which need to be addressed during the training: strength,

flexibility, skills, and mental aspects.

**Strength development**

As with all sports, one object to the training is to make the difficult look easy. This is much easier

to accomplish if the athlete has the strength required to master the skills. In most cases the

stronger the better. This is certainly true of gymnastics. It is also true that strength training can

also play a role in the reduction of injuries.

**Flexibility development**

Flexibility is also critical to the long-term success of gymnasts. Superior flexibility adds to the

aesthetic appeal of the performance and allows the athlete to master skills more easily. It is a fact

that flexibility also plays a role in reducing the frequency and seriousness of injuries.

**Skill development**

Skill development includes working on the basics as well as acquiring new skills. If any of the

basic skills or core skills are missing or are not perfected, the entire performance is weakened.

More importantly, it makes the transition to more difficult skills almost impossible. This is why we

continually review and drill the basics. We also insist that conditioning be done correctly with good

form. Attention needs to be given to technique and execution.

**Mental development**

Mental toughness training allows athletes to tap into emotional and mental resources. Learning

these skills now will help our athletes know how to react and relax during different situations. Our

athletes will also learn how to reflect on themselves and brainstorm ideas to help renew their

minds. These skills will be used in practice and competition and will help our athletes to achieve

their goals. The success achieved in the above aspects during practice directly relate to the athlete’s

success in competition/performance. Practices and workouts are tailored to provide athletes

 opportunities to excel in the above and ultimately in the competitive arena.

If your athlete is struggling in any of the areas, then it is up to the coach’s discretion if the athlete’s

training will continue. The athlete, coach and myself will then develop a plan for return to practice and competition if necessary.

**Athletes Practice Attire**

Athletes are required to train and compete dressed in a manner which reflects positively on our

program at all times.

- For all athletes, leotards are required. Spandex shorts can be worn over the leotard, however, for

all athletes, shorts cannot be worn the week prior to a competition.

- Girls must have bare feet once they take the floor unless told to wear socks and sneakers

by their coach and/or doctor.

- For all athletes, hair must be pulled up and away from the face. It must be done well

enough that it does not fall out during practice. If necessary, please use gel, hairspray,

clips, barrettes and/or bobby pins to secure all fly away pieces and/or long bangs.

- For all athletes, the only acceptable jewelry that can be worn is small stud earrings and/or medical jewelry. No other jewelry is allowed such as but not limited to hoop earrings, belly button rings, tongue

rings, necklaces, bracelets, anklets, or beads in their hair.

- For all athletes, sports bras and/or regular bras may become necessary to wear as girls

develop. Briefs may also be needed.

- For all athletes, please try to pay attention to the changing needs of each individual

girl. It may become necessary to begin wearing deodorant for practice. Also, if there are

concerns in relation to the menstrual cycle of the athlete and the impact on her

performance, please notify the office and/or coach. Please know that tampons are

recommended during practices and competitions.

- For all athletes, fingernails and toenails need to be kept short and clean.

**Practice Expectations**

These expectations help to ensure that we create a productive learning environment for all in the

gym. The following is a list of guidelines we expect each athlete to follow:

- All athletes should attend all scheduled practices.

- **All athletes are expected to arrive to practices on time, be ready to work out and work hard and not leave early.**

- **Missing practices prior to a meet runs the risk of scratching the meet. The coach has the final say on competition status. All components are taken into consideration, quality of skills at practice, consistency at practice, reason for missing practice, work ethic at practice.**

- Appropriate workout clothing and hair is required at all practices. There are usually extras

available in the office for those days that a bag gets left behind but athletes need to take

care of being ready before practice begins.

- No food or drink is allowed in the gym workout areas unless instructed by the coach.

- All athletes should bring a healthy snack and plenty of water to drink. All snacks and drinks

should try to be in a sealable container and crumb free.

- All athletes need to clean up after themselves. This includes while they are working out,

having snack.

- At times, all athletes must help move equipment, maintain pits as well as return items to

where they belong in the gym after each practice.

- All athletes should feel comfortable to ask for help if they feel that they need coaching or

spotting assistance or are experiencing fear. They should not be afraid to talk to their

coaches at any time during their practice.

- All athletes should make as much use as possible of practice time with proper form,

technique, skills, etc.

- All athletes should welcome, attempt, and keep appropriate corrections given by coaches.

- All athletes should try to be good team members by encouraging and supporting each

other in becoming better, stronger athletes.

- All athletes should conduct themselves in a respectful manner. We understand frustrations happen, however back talk and attitudes given to the coaches or other teammates will not be tolerated.

- All athletes should not talk to their parents (while parents are in the waiting room) during

their practice. If they do need to tell their parent something, they should tell their coach

first. Also, athletes should not text their parents during practice. If again they need to tell

their parents something, they should tell their coach first then they or their coach should

use the gym phone to contact their parents.

- Please do not allow athletes to bring anything of value to the gym. Theft has not been a

problem but we do not want items to become lost and/or stolen.

- We are responsible for the athletes’ whereabouts and safety while they are in the gym.

They may never leave their group/practice without going to the coach they are working

with and talking to them first. Also, no athlete should exit the building at any time without

a parent, guardian, or person responsible for picking up the athlete.

**Competitions**

All athletes will compete in competitions either at A2 or outside of A2. There are different types of

competitions that your child will attend. They are:

- Local Competitions (both sanctioned and unsanctioned by USA Gymnastics)

- Invitational or theme competitions

- State competitions

- Regional competitions

- National competitions

There is a lot of time and effort placed into the creation of the competition schedule and events

are chosen so that the maximum benefit of attending is provided for all team members. In some

circumstances, gymnasts need to attend some competitions as a qualifier to the more advanced

ones. At the qualifier, the gymnast needs to earn a specific score or placement to move on to the

next competition.

Your daughter is expected to compete in as many competitions as she can on the schedule. It is

your responsibility to commit to your daughter’s meet schedule by the date/deadline set when the

competition schedule is released. You will be responsible for payment of the competitions you

commit to, by initialing the meets she will be attending, signing the competition schedule and

returning it to the office. There are no refunds and/or exceptions to their schedule after the commitment deadline.

 Sometimes there is a question of whether an athlete is ready to compete at the meet-It is at the coach’s discretion after communication with Heather, the athlete and the parents if your athlete will be competing in all events at a meet. Coaches expect all gymnasts to be prepared and have practiced all required skills and should be able to do these skills without the assistance of a coach.

Families are also expected to make the commitment to travel to different locations for competitions

throughout the year. This includes traveling to some close and some far destinations. Parents can

choose which meets they want to travel to, and it is recommended that you try to travel if you can, to

further enrich the competition experience.

In some cases, it may be necessary for you to notify the office, (prior to the date/deadline to commit to the competition schedule), for meets that take place early in the season, such as between September through December. You will, however, be notified via email and you must reply by the date specified, confirming that your daughter is or is not able to attend.

 **Competition Attire / Team Uniforms**

Appearance is very important at competitions. Team uniforms are required for all athletes. Because of growth and the fabric/fit of the uniforms, it is necessary for leotards to be updated every other year. Each athlete must have the assigned A2 team competition uniform to compete. In an effort to preserve the team uniforms over the two years, we do not allow ¾ sleeved competition leotards to be worn to practices and it is not encouraged to wear them outside of A2 to places such as dance, or school. Please keep in mind that it takes approximately 8-12 weeks to receive uniforms once they are ordered. Because all our uniforms are special order, we require that payment is received up front for the uniform. The gym takes no part or responsibility in the resale of team uniforms however does require that uniforms are sold at no more than 50% of the price that they cost to purchase.

**Gymnastics Uniforms Include:**

 -Competitive tank leotard (for pre-team and In-House athletes)

-3/4 sleeve competition leotard

-Warm up pants

-Gym bag/backpack (optional for pre-team athletes and In-House)

**Other Necessary Items for Gymnasts (may include the following):**

-Music (for floor routines)

-Grips (for bars)

-Ankle or Wrist Supports

-Ankle or Wrist Weights

-Flexibility Bands

**Gym Bag Contents:**

The bags/backpacks that are required of the athletes in the program should be taken to and from competitions. Bags should be packed with the necessary items needed for your child to have at their competition. Those items are but not limited to:

- Team practice leotard (if purchased) for emergencies

- Hair accessories in the event of a hair emergency (such as hairspray, clips, elastics, brush or comb, scrunchy or bow)

- Notebook and pen

- Band-Aids

- Tape and pre-wrap

- Water and healthy snack

- Floor music

- Grip bag, grips, wristbands, grip brush and small spray bottle

- Nail polish remover. All nail polish needs to be removed before a competition

- Nail clipper. Nails need to be kept clean and short

- Feminine Supplies (for those old enough)

-Deodorant

-Hand Sanitizer

**Competition Expectations**

 All athletes are expected to attend all the meets that they committed to for the year. Competitions are a time for the athlete to demonstrate all that they have working to achieve. It should be a positive experience for the child, regardless of outcome. At every competition, something good does happen! And although it is very easy to focus on the things that did not go as planned or did not meet the expectation set forth by the athlete, it will be okay. Again, something positive, fun, and exciting happens at every competition. It is the goal of the athlete, coach, and parent to determine what that is and focus on it. There will always be areas that need to be improved upon but that is for when the athlete returns to the gym and/or practice. Competitions are not about winning but finding success by achieving individual and team goals!

 - Athletes should arrive to competitions 15 minutes prior to the scheduled stretch time and must stay with their coach and team until the end of the competition or until their coach dismisses them (this includes the award ceremony).

- Athletes need to arrive and be ready to perform both physically and mentally. Specifically, athletes need to arrive in the proper attire and be well groomed in appearance which includes clean attire, hair secured away from the face with the designated team hairstyle, no jewelry (except small stud earrings and/or medical jewelry) and no fingernail/toenail polish can be worn. They also need to be well-rested, confident about what they are there to do and have a positive attitude and outlook.

- Athletes must bring a healthy snack and plenty of water to drink (it is not always possible for your child to have their snack during the competition but if the coach is able to allow it then he or she will).

- Once athletes have located their coach, they must remain in the competition area that is designated for athletes throughout the course of the competition. Also, there should be no contact between the athlete and her parents at any time during the competition unless there is an emergency at which time, the coach or designated person will locate the parent.

 - Athletes must keep all of their belongings in their competition bag which is to be placed in the designated area.

- Athletes should obey all warm-up regulations and rotation schedules during the length of the competition.

- Athletes need to be courteous, respectful and polite to all competition officials, coaches, hosts and hostesses, competitors and associated persons. Gymnasts should be prepared to assist the coach with any boards, mats, music, bar settings or any other equipment that may need to be moved or adjusted during the competition.

 - Athletes should again feel comfortable speaking with their coaches and/or asking for help.

- Athletes should want to encourage and cheer on each other throughout the competition.

- Athletes need to stay focused, exhibit self-control and be calm during a competition. They need to refrain from inappropriate behaviors such as crying or being rude to teammates or any other competitors, coaches or officials at a competition. If these behaviors take place during a competition, an athlete may risk not being able to compete in their next event or competition.

 - Athletes need to accept their received scores without criticism or comment. They are part of a team, and the team needs all competitors to be in control and ready to perform. It is easy to bring down the spirit of the entire team down with pouting or crying.

- Athletes need to remember that they are not just representing themselves; they are representing A2 Gym & Cheer, and the state of NH as well.

 - Athletes should accept any awards presented to them with courtesy and gratitude. It is customary to accept awards with a firm handshake and a warm smile. Congratulating and shaking hands with other athletes is encouraged as well.

- Athletes should demonstrate the highest regard for their sport and their hard work by conducting themselves with grace and courage during all competitions. This includes accepting all feedback and scores in a positive manner, and by thanking their coaches, parents, officials (when appropriate) as well as the organizers of the competitions.

**Injury**

Athletes do sometimes get hurt when at the gym (and in some circumstances outside of the gym). If the injury appears to be short term or lasting under 10 days for recovery, then the athlete can take the time off to rest and recuperate. If a gymnast is up for attending a practice for light stretching and conditioning, then she is allowed to as long as she does not attempt any movement that is forbidden by her doctor. If the injury is more long term such as but not limited to a cast or brace for 4-6 weeks, then the gymnast should take one to two weeks to rest and recuperate. When she is feeling able, she is allowed to return to the gym for light stretching and conditioning if approved by her doctor. If a child sees a doctor for an injury, the child cannot return to the gym without a doctor’s note that clears them to be in the gym. If a child is injured while in the gym, the coach will contact the parents to inform them of the injury.

 If the injury requires emergency assistance, the coaches will first call the paramedics, and then contact the parents.

**Parental Role**

Parents we love that you send your child to our gym and hope that you share the passion of gymnastics as much as we do! However, we ask that you leave the coaching to us and cherish your role as your child’s parent! So much of what we (as coaches and staff) say and do impacts your child’s thinking but the influence that you have is far greater than you can imagine. In my experience, children hear, see, feel, and adopt every emotion that the trusting adults in their lives demonstrate. I firmly believe that how we all respond to a practice, competition, or gym situation is how the child thinks that she is expected to respond. It is easy when your child is happy, having fun, progressing and overall things in and outside of the gym are going well. The challenge lies when there is a struggle, heartache, or failure. Granted, there are some days that your child is just upset (usually because she is overtired, dehydrated, or coming down with something). And there are some days when outside of the gym, there are changes, situations and/or things going on that are having a negative impact on your child and her performance. We can only control what occurs during the time that we have them (and although we do not want you to alter how you ask, reply and reflect on their gym experience), we do ask that you try to be continually upbeat, supportive, encouraging and positive when addressing your child in regard to the gym.

Some examples of inappropriate comments versus recommended appropriate comments:

- You finally beat Sally! That was one of the best routines I have seen you do.

- How many (current difficult skill) did you make today? How was practice?

- I’ll give you $20 if you win today. Do your best and have fun.

- Those judges always score you low. Work hard and you’ll do better next time.

- I cannot believe they moved Sally up and not you! As long as you are safe and happy with your progress, then I’m happy.

 Being a great athlete is not the result of a million repetitions. Being a great athlete is the result of a million corrections.

**Practice Expectations for Parents**

- Please use caution when dropping off and picking up your athlete from practice. If you cannot come into the building, then please pull up to the front door to drop off and pick up but ensure that it is safe to do so. We do not want any athlete to leave the gym and walk unattended to a parking space to meet you.

- Bring your child on time to practice. This means that prior to the start of the practice, they are dressed appropriately in the workout attire, hair is pulled up and they have visited the bathroom, if necessary.

- Pack a healthy snack and plenty of fluids for your child to consume during the length of their practice. Check to see if they are leaving practice with water remaining or if they are finishing it all.

 - You are welcome to view practice, however we recommend that you stay for approximately fifteen minutes at the beginning and return for fifteen minutes at the end. We say this because your child’s training changes when you are in the gym. And whether they are excited and/or worried to see you, it can impact their focus and effort during practice.

- Do not walk on to the gym floor at any time. If you need to speak to your child, contact the office first and/or attempt to contact one of the coaches that is preferably closest to the waiting rooms.

- Do not yell out to your child and/or coach from the waiting room. If you would like a position on the coaching staff, please let Heather know by completing an application.

- Trust the coaches and the practice that they have planned for your child. There are certain things that your child needs to know/master/correct in order to advance their training. It will not always make sense to you or your child. Trust first and then feel free to ask.

- Refrain from texting your child during their practice. If you need to get a message to them, please contact the office via phone and/or email.

- Refrain from speaking to the coaches for long periods of time. They sometimes do have one to two minutes to speak with you however the beginning and end of practice is not time to discuss your child’s progress, your concerns, your child’s concerns, etc.

- Schedule a time through the office or email with Heather and the coach/coaches if you would like to talk in depth about your child.

**- Please do not communicate with our coaches at their home, on their cell phones (calling or texting), or via facebook or other social media sites regarding your child and/or any other gym related business. Please go through Heather or the office. Each coach does have an A2 email that can be used for communication, however the main email which includes Heather should be included/copied on all communication.**

 - If it is necessary for you to communicate via texting (and it should only be to Heather’s cell phones), please respect the hours when the gym is closed and hold off on sending messages before 9:00 a.m. or after 7:00 p.m. Monday – Friday (the only exception to this is when at weekend competitions). Also, please do not text or email on Sundays, again unless we are at a competition, and expect to always receive a reply.

- Email the office in advance of a practice if your child is going to be late, leave early and/or miss the practice. You must provide a reason as to why your child is late, leaving early or missing, specifically medical.

- If any athlete misses practices one to two weeks leading up to a competition, the athlete may not be allowed to compete in the competition.

**Competitions**

The competition schedule is emailed to you. We do our very best to get the schedule out as early as possible in the fall and we give you approximately two weeks to one month to review all the competition weekends to determine which meets your daughter will be attending. When we send the schedule, we provide you with a date/deadline that you must return the signed copy of the competition schedule to the office, indicating which meets your daughter will be attending via initialing those meets and the fees associated with each one. By the date specified, you will be responsible for payment of all competitions. There are no adjustments, refunds or credit given after the commitment date, even though you may have not yet paid your competition fees in full and/or still have additional time to pay. If your child does not compete in a meet due to such things as injury, illness, inadequate preparation or if they choose to leave the competitive program, you were or are still responsible for the payment of that meet.

**Expectations for Parents**

- Parents are responsible for checking their email on a regular basis and reading all updates and announcements related to competitions posted on the team Facebook page or at the gym, when applicable. We will send along competition details as soon as we receive them however it is very typical that the information is not known to us until one week beforehand. That is why we request that you block off the entire weekend we provided you on the competition schedule. In some circumstances, the host organization will state that a competition will be on just one day of the weekend however that has been known to change so please be cognizant of that.

- Prior to a competition, ensure that your daughter gets enough sleep (no sleep-overs), gets enough of the proper kinds of food and drink, gets to and from the gym/venue on time, has the proper clothing and accessories as well as a healthy snack and plenty to drink in their gym bag (i.e. water or sports drink).

- Leading up to competition, it is highly important for parents to be in tune to the emotional aspects that your child will be experiencing before, during and after the competition. It continues to be your role to provide unconditional love, encouragement, and support. Your love should not be based on whether they make their kip or stick their vault during competition; your support should not be dependent on your gymnast scoring a 36.00 in the all-around or nailing their tumbling pass in their routine; and your encouragement is not conditioned on her somehow making you look good by being the best in her age group, on her team or how she/they place in the final standings. Your support for your daughter should stem from the realization that she as an individual is trying her best to achieve her personal goals that ultimately enhance or affect the team goals. It is through performing these tasks that you show your respect for your athlete and the effort she is putting into her sport. Any more or any less does a disservice to your child and will limit her ability to succeed.

- Parents must show good sportsmanship during all competitions. Failure to act in a positive and supportive manner regardless of outcome can risk you being banned from further competitions and ultimately team events back at A2 such as practices and/or any other activities. Please remember your children watch you and read you better than anyone else.

- Spectators can cause a team deduction when “out of line” at competitions. Some examples of unacceptable behavior are: \*Talking to or yelling out to gymnasts once they are on the competitive floor; \*Talking to judges, or any of competition officials including competition hosts and/or directors to inquire about any aspect of the competition; \*Walking onto the competitive floor for any reason including athlete injury; \*Removing your child from the floor without prior approval; \*Speaking to your child’s coach once the athletes have entered the competition area (this includes sending texts, calling them or yelling out); \*Complaining at competitions whether it be if the competition is running late or if something else is not going according to your plan (parents from other clubs would love to hear negative remarks made by us so that they can share it with others); \*Talking about other athletes either from A2 or another club; \*Cheering too loudly or inappropriately especially if it interrupts the officiating process; \*Approaching the head table (scoring table) asking for a score. \*Taking flash pictures as they are dangerous for the athletes and strictly prohibited.

- There needs to be an established level of trust at competitions. Trust that the coaches will take care of the physical and mental needs of your child. We know when they are not feeling well or are nervous or overly excited. Trust that we know when they need a drink or a snack or need to go to the bathroom. We also know when they need to be ready to stretch, warm-up, or compete an event. It is not always clear to you and sometimes it seems that it takes an eternity. Trust that we know this, we are trained for it and will do whatever necessary to have your daughter’s competition go as smoothly as possible.

- Know that not all competitions run perfectly. You cannot change that nor can we. Trust that if there is an injustice to your child or the team, we are already aware of it. You making a scene in the waiting area is not needed or helpful and is embarrassing for your child (that is who it is all about, right?). Sometimes, we are not able to correct it but if we can, we will. The time to discuss it with you is after the competition when we return to the gym.

- Know that the flashed scores at competitions are not your child’s official scores. Volunteers are working the competitions – many times it is children/gymnasts of the host club – and they do make mistakes. Again, the coaches will have the official scorecards or score reports at the end of a competition and it does not always match what you may have.

- Attend every competition if you can. Having a strong cheering section does wonders for team motivation and it is something we can be proud of!! Cheer for all A2 athletes as well as other clubs – it is okay to be overly supportive – at the end of the day, children are competing and trying their best. Enthusiasm is contagious, appreciated and means more to a child than you will ever know.

- Represent A2 well! Competition directors, officials and other coaches do notice. To be a well-respected club with nice athletes and parents is an accomplishment. We have that in the gym; no reason to not show it outside of the gym.

**Communication**

The key to any successful relationship is communication and we want to have open and flowing communication between A2 and our families/customers.

- We ask that all of your contact information (phone numbers, email address, etc.) is up to date.

- We share information through emails, phone calls, voicemails, texts, our website, our Facebook page, team meetings and individual parent meetings if necessary.

- If you do email or call the office, a reasonable response time is 24 – 48 hours.

- If you have a general question (regarding practices/meets, etc.) you may ask the coach before or after practice (again only if it requires a brief response).

- If you have specific concerns regarding your daughter or the program that you would like to discuss in detail, you must set up a time to speak with Heather first before approaching the coaches.

- Parent Meetings are an excellent way to share information. It is important that you attend all parent meetings when scheduled. We do not have them often but when we do, it affords us the opportunity to communicate certain important information regarding the program. We appreciate your support in this.

**Respect and Trust**

To be respectful and trustworthy as a club, certain behaviors must be demonstrated by the athletes, the coaches, and the parents. We set the example and are role models for all members of our gym as well as any other clubs we encounter throughout the season. Respectful behaviors include but are not limited to the following:

- Possessing the ability to be a good listener

- Giving your attention to one another whether it be during practices and/or at meetings

- Having an open mind

- Accepting constructive criticism

- Identifying any questions, concerns, issues and/or areas in need of improvement in a nonconfrontational way

- Taking time to think and reflect before you speak or act (a.k.a 12-24 hour rule)

- Welcoming corrections, suggestions, or solutions when areas are identified of needing improvement

- Willing to reach resolution

- Showing good sportsmanship

- Demonstrating kindness and helpfulness

- Showing support and encouragement towards all A2 members

- Having a positive, upbeat, and contagious attitude

- Being able to smile, laugh and have fun.

 I feel it prudent to mention the following negative behaviors that will not be tolerated at any time at A2. It is the responsibility of all to enforce that these behaviors are not allowed.

- Talking in a negative way to one another, whether it be yelling, being sarcastic and/or making rude or inappropriate comments

- Rolling eyes or making under the breath negative comments

- Speaking negatively about another athlete in the program which includes inappropriately critiquing, comparing, or criticizing any children in the program

- Speaking negatively about a parent in the program

- Speaking negatively about a coach in the program

- Speaking negatively about the program in general.

 I do realize the time, effort, and money you put into having your daughter be a part of our team program. I can assure you that the best interest of all children is always at heart although everything does not always go according to plan. Gymnastics requires hard work, is not always fun and there are many demands placed on the girls, the coaches, and the parents. I promise to provide you with opportunities to speak with me if you do have a concern or issue. I will continue to make myself available via phone, email and individual parent meetings and will always look to find resolution.

**Financial Obligations**

There is a financial commitment that comes with being part of our team program.

**Registration Fee**

- A **non-refundable registration fee** is due when your child enrolls or re-enrolls each year.

The fee is:

o $75.00 Level 1 and Level 2

o $100.00 all other team athletes

The team enrollment period will be held each year during the month of July.

- The registration fee covers the administrative costs associated with the team program.

**Uniform Fee**

- Leotards are required and ordered every other year for athletes in our program. If you enter the program in the off year or if your child outgrows their leotard or uniform, then it will be necessary to order a new one. Please know that your child will only be able to use the new one for one competitive year because all athletes are required to compete in the same leotard or uniform.

- Warm-ups are black capri pants and an A2 jacket or top. The capri pants are required for all. The warm-up jacket or top are recommended but optional for all athletes.

- Because all our uniforms are custom ordered, a payment is expected at the time that we order, whether that be in full or in a payment plan that has been previously discussed and approved by Heather. All uniform fees are non-refundable.

- Leotards and warm-ups range in price. Tank leotards are historically between $80.00 - $100.00, ¾ sleeve length leotard are at least $300. The capri pants that we offer range between $35.00 - $45.00.

- All DP (level 3 and higher) and Xcel (Bronze and higher) athletes are required to have a team bag this year. The cost for the bag is between $75.00. Pre-Team and In-House athletes do have the option to also purchase a team bag however it is not required.

**Team Tuition Fees**

- The team program is a year-long commitment that is broken down into two subparts: the summer and the school year. When you register, you are reserving a spot for your child in the team program and our tuition figures are calculated on the number of athletes in the program for the entire year.

- For all gymnasts, there is a summer requirement for practicing. We are typically closed the first week in July and the last week in August (through Labor Day) each summer but run a seven or eight week practice session beginning about the second week in July through August. Tuition is expected and paid for the two months and all athletes must participate in the summer practices to be eligible/hold their spot on a fall team (regardless of planned summer vacations so please plan accordingly).

- For the school year, the season runs from September – June. Payment of your daughter’s tuition is expected for all 10 months of the year. This monthly tuition covers the instruction/training of the competitive athletes during the week in our facility. This includes paying the instructors, covering materials and equipment and any other costs incurred by the competitive program in their training.

- If your child leaves the program before the ten months is completed, one month notice is required. For example, if your child is going to leave in January, then you must notify us by December 1 and the tuition for December is due in full.

- Tuition is due the first week of every month. We do accept cash, check or debit/credit cards for tuition payments. Tuition is non-refundable. **However, your card that is on file will be run around the 5th of every month, unless paid prior.**

- As an athlete increases her skill and proficiency level, it requires that she spends more time in the gym. The cost of tuition subsequently increases when that occurs however the hourly rate of tuition is discounted accordingly.

Late Payment Fee - Effective this year, there will be a $15.00 late fee on all tuition not paid by the 15th of the month. If there are extenuating circumstances, you must notify the office by the first of the month.

Returned Check Fee - There will also be a returned check fee of $12.00 added to your tuition, if necessary.

**Refunds/Make-ups/Discounted Tuition (due to injury)**

- **There are no refunds or make-ups for any time missed by a team gymnast.** You pay for your daughter’s spot on team, not the time she attends. In the occurrence of the gym being closed due to unexpected situations, make-ups may be offered at the owner’s discretion.

- Tuition is sometimes discounted when an athlete is injured and not able to attend practice at all or for more than half. This is a case by case basis and will be communicated to the parent during the injury.

**USAG Membership**

- All gymnasts in our program must be a registered athlete member of USA Gymnastics and be able to produce or have their coach supply a current, valid membership number assigned by USA Gymnastics. Athlete membership season begins each August 1 and runs through the following July 31. All athlete memberships are automatically null and void each July 31. USA Gymnastics now emails the parent to renew their athlete’s membership, after A2 initiates the renewal process. Processing of memberships begins in July and takes about 1-2 weeks and all athletes must have their new or updated athlete membership prior to any clinic participation and/or competition involvement.

- A Membership includes the right to participate in USA Gymnastics sanctioned events for which the athlete is qualified, 20 secondary insurance coverage at USA Gymnastics sanctioned events, and an athlete card. Memberships also make parents aware of the SafeSport Policy, which A2 has adopted for our program.

**Competition Fees**

- All competition fees need to be paid in full or installments by the date states. If your fees are not paid in full by the date, your child will be scratched from states , you are still responsible for the payment of those competitions as you committed to them. If you need additional time to pay your competition fees, then please speak directly to Heather and a payment plan can be created.

- These competition fees cover all competition and clinic expenses incurred for gymnasts and coaches. This includes the individual competition fee (there is a fee associated with each competition that your child attends), the team competition fee, and the coach’s fees and expenses, and if necessary, coach’s overnight travel expenses which may include meals and lodging. Please note that depending on number of athletes in the meet, not all coaches who train the level will be obligated to attend.

- The individual competition entry fee for each meet is listed on your competition schedule, and the coaching fee is $25.00 for each competition.

- The office will email reminders that competition fees are due in full by the date specified however we will not send out bills. You are allowed to make as many payments as you wish towards your child’s competition fees via cash or check only. **We will accept credit card payments also for the competition fees, however we will add a 3% credit card processing fee to all credit card payments.**

- Additional competitions may be added during the season. You will always have the right to say no to any competitions added after the fact however if your child does participate (and we will confirm your agreement that she compete via email), then you will be responsible for the payment which will be above and beyond the initial competition fees. You can make payments during the year to offset/cover these extras however if you do not, then you will have a balance at the conclusion of the competitive season.

**Private Lessons**

- Private lessons are not recommended but they are available to your daughter. Please contact the office via email for days and times that privates can be scheduled. The office will forward the information to the coach and facilitate the scheduling.

* 30 Minute Private - In-House, Level 1, and Level 2 $40
* 30 Minute Private - All Excel, Levels 3-10 $50
* 1 Hour Private - All Excel, Levels 3-10 $75

**Choreography Fees**

- Choreography is required for optional level gymnasts and all Xcel Platinum and Diamond gymnasts. With choreography, also comes the requirement of purchasing music for floor routines.

- For gymnasts that receive individual floor routines, you/your gymnast must choose a music selection that the coach ultimately approve. You then purchase the music for your child and forward it to the gym. You and your gymnast must then schedule a time outside of the practice schedule to learn the choreography created by the coach. Payment is expected at the time of the choreography (for floor routines, it varies between $250 and $350). The payment is made directly to the coach who choreographed the routine.

**Appreciation**

I sincerely appreciate that you took the time to get to this page! I know that there are many topics covered and I may be adding addendums as this handbook is continually a work in progress. But I honestly value the time you spent reading and understanding it as much as I hope you value the time that went into writing it until now. I felt it necessary to provide you with this handbook to formalize so many of the policies and expectations we collectively have talked about, created, and improved upon since we began the team program. At the end of every day, I take time to reflect on the work. It is about the girls – every single one of them – and I am blessed every day to do what I do and have the experiences that I have. I strive to create a safe, positive, and supportive environment in that we can all grow, learn and flourish. I am confident that we continue to develop into a greater, more amazing program and I am excited that you and your daughter are along for this journey. Let’s have fun, make it memorable, leave our impression and not forget to smile, laugh, and enjoy. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the team coaches and staff. They are instrumental in what is done every day and for that I am grateful. Go get it, A2!

Heather Fusco

#A2B1 - One Club, One Passion, One Family

**A2 Gym and Cheer Team Handbook Signature Page**

 I have read and understand the handbook for the 2022-2023 season. I will use this handbook as a reference while my child is on team. I understand the expectations and policies set forth and will do my best to adhere to them. If I have an issue or concern, I know that I can be heard by scheduling a time to meet with Heather to discuss it. I have read and understand what the financial obligations are. I will do my best to maintain a positive and encouraging attitude for the benefit of my child. After carefully reviewing this handbook, please fill out and sign this page and bring it to the office for our records. Thank you for your cooperation.

Athlete’s name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date of birth: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Athlete’s signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Mother’s signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Father’s signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_