

FLAGSTAFF GYMNASTICS TEAM HANDBOOK

WELCOME TO TEAM 2023-2024

The staff and coaches here at Flagstaff Gymnastics would like to welcome your family to the exciting world of competitive gymnastics. If you are reading this manual, it is because your daughter has already impressed us with her gymnastics talent and potential. The following is a compilation of several rules, policies, philosophies, and tips that will answer most of your questions about competition. We are glad to have you as part of our team!

OUR PURPOSE AND MISSION

“Flagstaff Gymnastics strives to create opportunities for children to reach their potential through high quality instruction in a positive, caring environment!”

PHILOSOPHY

Our philosophy is to assist each athlete in reaching their potential, with respect to their goals. We strive to be positive role model leaders, and to bring out the best in each individual within the realms of physical, mental, emotional, and social development. Safety, fun and skill acquisition are the keys we use to achieve these goals and to make Flagstaff Gymnastics a wonderful environment for all athletes!

TEAM ACHIEVEMENT BAR

T.E.A.M.

Teachable – As gymnasts develop, we begin to add to the amount of work they do. We are training their muscles as well as especially their hearts. Gymnasts must have the ability and willingness to learn from coaches and each other.

Encourage – A gymnastics team is a community of gymnasts. To be the best we can be, we must encourage one another, cheer for one another and be respectful of one another.

Achieve – All together you are unstoppable. Practice does not make perfect. Perfect practice makes perfect.

Mental Toughness – We equip gymnasts with the tools to overcome or control their fear through skill progression, technique, and support.

Flagstaff Gymnastics Center

SPORTSMANSHIP

Team members are taught to pursue victory with honor. Gratification comes through improvement and striving to achieve personal best.

GOALS

Our goal for each gymnast is:

- To gain self-confidence
- To learn to be a team player
- To learn to be competitive and have fun at the same time
- To learn from successes and failures
- To learn to budget free time wisely
- To learn to have fun in a safe and educational program

TEAM SELECTION

Initial Team placement is made by our team top-notch coaching staff. When moving an athlete to a team, aspects such as courage, attendance, commitment, personal drive, and coachability will all be considered.

Moving up from one level to the next will be decided by our team coaching staff based upon scores from the previous season, attendance, skill level and attitude of the gymnast. Gymnasts must score an all-around of a 36.5 and/or have proficient skills for the next level. All decisions made will be in the best interest of the athlete.

TEAM POLICIES

1. Gymnastics **training is exclusive** to this club. Gymnasts may not train at any other gym, camp, or clinic while competing and/or representing Flagstaff Gymnastics without explicit consent from management.
2. Each gymnast is **required to attend** and be on time for all regularly scheduled practices. That means on the floor ready to go when practice begins and not talking or hanging around in the gym or in the lobby. If for some reason you will be late or absent, you are required to call the office and notify the coaches before the scheduled class.
3. Proper **workout attire** is a must at all times. A properly fitting leotard is the only acceptable workout attire. Hair should be appropriately tied so as not to interfere in any way during practice. No jewelry of any kind may be worn during the workout.
4. Absolutely **no food**, drink, candy, or cell phone is permitted on the workout floor. All snacks or meals must remain in the lobby area. Water bottles are the only exception to this rule. **NO FOOD IN LOCKERS – ANTS!**
5. Gymnasts **may not leave the workout or competition floor** without the expressed permission of the coaching staff.

6. Interaction between **gymnast and parent** (visually or verbally) during workouts or at gymnastics competitions is not appropriate. A distracted gymnast is a prime candidate for injury. Contact the front desk or the coach first if you need to communicate with a gymnast on the workout floor.
7. All gymnasts are expected to maintain the best **physical condition** possible.
8. All injuries must be promptly reported to the coach. **Injured athletes** are required to attend practice. They will be assigned a modified workout, keeping within doctor's restrictions. Please bring a signed note to practice informing the coach of the allowable skills for that practice.
9. No gymnast may be left at the facility unattended. When **dropping off a team member** please do so within a reasonable time frame. Please do not drop off anyone more than ten minutes before the start of the scheduled practice. Promptly pick them up at the conclusion of their practice.
10. **Coaching technique** and discipline are not subject to compromise with parents or gymnasts. The coaching staff has the final say in all competitive program matters.
11. All competitive gymnasts **must demonstrate proficiency** in all skills appropriate to their competitive level to be allowed to enter any competition. In addition, the gymnast must be in good health and have attended every workout the week prior to any competition. Special situations should be discussed well in advance of the competition with the coach.
12. Attitude is a large part of the sport of gymnastics. Work hard and try your best at every practice. There is no place in this facility for bullying, rudeness, or disrespect. You can only control your actions. **Your attitude...your effort...your gymnastics...!**
13. The majority of this section has focused on the gym and competition; however, the coaching staff believes that **the order of importance always needs to be family, education, and then gymnastics**. If you choose to be a member of our program, we make the assumption you have allowed appropriate time for family functions and that your child's study habits and schoolwork is of exemplary quality.

We do not advocate the use of this statement as an excuse for coming late to workouts, missing practices, etc. As with all things in life, it is your responsibility to fulfill your commitments.

TEAM TRAINING

Many things go into developing young gymnasts. There are four fundamental areas of development that are used during training: 1) Flexibility, 2) Strength, 3) Skills and 4) Mental aspects

- 1) **Flexibility development** is crucial to the long-term success of the gymnast. Superior flexibility adds to the aesthetic appeal of performances, allows the athlete to master skills more easily and plays a major role in preventing and reducing the seriousness of injuries.
- 2) **Strength development** – As with all sports one object is to make the difficult, look easy. This is much easier to achieve if the athlete has the strength to master the skills. In most cases the stronger the athlete is the better the athlete is. This is certainly true in gymnastics! Like flexibility, strict strength training can greatly reduce the chance of injury.
 - Strength development can and should be practiced at home. As strength and technique improve, resistance, range of motion and repetitions will increase. The gymnasts will

constantly be challenged to improve their strength and should never cheat on their conditioning assignments.

3) **Skill Development** – Skill Development should NOT be practiced at home. Skill development falls into two distinct but related categories:

- a) *Basics* – Basics or core skills are the building blocks of good, sound gymnastics. The gymnasts use these building blocks to construct their sequences and routines. If any of these building blocks are missing or defective, the entire performance is weakened.
- b) *Skill Acquisition* – After a good core of basics is achieved, advanced skills must be learned and perfected.

4) **Mental Aspects** – *The mental aspects of gymnastics are also very important. We try to build mental toughness and focus using situational training (competition simulation). The creation of stressful situations in the gym helps train the gymnasts for the same feelings they will experience during competition.*

Parent Commitment

1. Be supportive of the coaches and gym. Help your gymnast attend practices and be on time. This is critical for the wellbeing of your gymnast. If your child must miss a practice, please contact the coach before the scheduled class.
2. Please communicate with coaches regarding any problems with your gymnastics experience. Complaining to other parents will not solve your problem nor can we solve it for you if we do not know about it. The support of our team parents is essential for the unity of our team. Please talk to Karen or Shawna regarding any issues.
3. Please stay current with team activities by checking your email on a regular basis.
4. Participate in fundraisers and special events.
5. An adult representative from each team member's family is required to volunteer for three sessions at every competition hosted by FGC. If the family is unable to volunteer, \$150 buyout will be available.
6. Do not compare your athlete with any other gymnast. Instead, provide them with encouragement, support, and unconditional love.
7. Watch practice periodically so you may observe and encourage.
8. Do not coach your child. Your corrections distract from what the coach is doing by giving your athlete another thing to think about. It also interferes with the coach/athlete relationship which is critical for long-term success.
9. Inspire your gymnast to overcome obstacles. In every gymnast's career there is a wall they will need to climb over. Inspire them with encouragement.
10. Teach your gymnast to be dedicated. Help them to overcome issues and compete for the full season. A quitter never wins, and a winner never quits.

TEAM COMPETITIONS

General Policies:

- 1) All compulsory and optional team members are expected to attend **all team competitions**. Xcel team members are encouraged to attend the majority of the competitions.
- 2) Religious reasons are acceptable reasons to miss a competition as long as we have notice at the start of the season.
- 3) If the coaches feel that because of absences the gymnast is not ready to safely compete, the coach has the option of removing the gymnast from the competition without a refund.
- 4) If your gymnast misses any practices the week prior to the meet, the gymnast may be scratched from the meet without refund.
- 5) There may be times when an emergency may occur and gymnasts cannot attend a competition. Please keep in mind that the competition fees and expenses are non-refundable.
- 6) Each meet will have a competition fee attached and a due date. Payment for meets cannot be late. Information will be distributed to gymnasts and parents as soon as it is available from the meet host. The parents are responsible for transportation to and from the meets as well as the fees and uniform. All meets also charge a door fee for spectators.

Meet Schedules:

- 1) The host team provides the competition time and day via e-mail and is usually TENTATIVE and LATE. Specifically, USA Gymnastics requires the hosting team to provide the time schedule to gyms participating in the meet at least 10 days in advance of the scheduled date.
- 2) Schedules are always subject to change depending on deadlines for entries, late entries or cancelations. Check your email prior to leaving for a meet for last minute updates.
- 3) PLEASE understand that the hosting teams DO NOT WELCOME calls from parents asking for the schedule.
- 4) We will provide you with the time schedules, maps, directions, and any information made available to the gym upon receipt. This will be done via email.
- 5) If you become desperate and it is within TWO WEEKS of the meet date, call or email the front office. DO NOT CALL or EMAIL THE HOSTING TEAM!!

MEET EXPENSES

- Participate in Scheduled Meets. All compulsory and optional team gymnasts should compete in ALL meets to which they are invited unless they are sick or injured.
- Meet fees include competition fees, coaching fees, insurance, and all expenses the gym incurs to send athletes to competition. The gymnasts hotel and travel expenses are paid individually.
- Gymnasts who are unable to attend a scheduled meet should email shawna as soon as possible. Most meets require that the fees be paid in full months before the competition in order to prevent being closed out. **MEET FEES ARE NON-REFUNDABLE FOR ANY REASON AFTER FGC'S DUE DATE.**

What to take to competition

- 1) Team leotard
- 2) Warm-up suit
- 3) Hair scrunches
- 4) Gym Bag
- 5) Hair spray or gel
- 6) Tape
- 7) Snack
- 8) Approximately \$15 to \$25 per person for the spectator door fees
- 9) Grips and wristbands (if used)

The Meet Takes How Long?

The average meet can take as little as two and a half hours or as long as five hours. Feel free to bring reading material or some other project with you to help pass the time while at one of your child's competitions.

COMPETITION FORMAT

Most competitions run in a format similar to the one listed below.

Open Warm Up – Usually a half-hour long. This time is for general stretching and getting equipment settings specific to the gymnast. *Please note that your gymnast needs to be at the gym 15 minutes before the stated open warm up time!

Timed Warm Up - Every gymnast present warms up on each of the apparatus. This procedure takes half an hour.

March In – All the gymnasts line up and march in to the gym to be presented to the audience and judges; the National Anthem is usually played. This takes about ten to fifteen minutes.

Competition – The gymnasts now actually compete and receive scores from the judges at each event. This may take an hour and a half to two hours to complete. It will take longer if it is an optional meet and one touch warmups are necessary.

Awards – If the organization running the meet is on the ball, you may only have to wait five to ten minutes before the awards are handed out. It has been known to take significantly longer to get the awards ready. Once they are prepared, it can take from half an hour to an hour to hand out the awards.

BEFORE THE MEET BEGINS...

- Remove all fingernail polish and all jewelry. No earrings.

- Hair must be sprayed or gelled back out of face. Bangs may not hang below eyebrows. (Hair should be pre-approved by coaches one week prior to meet if you are new to competitions.)
- Underwear and bra straps may not show.
- Provide your gymnasts with a healthy meal one hour prior to arrival time.
- Arrive 15 minutes before the Open-Warm-up time in leotard and with hair done
- Locate the gymnast's check-in station.
- Help your gymnast find their coach. DO NOT hand them over to anyone other than their coach.

During the meet...GYMNAST'S Etiquette

- Gymnasts must remain in the designated competition area throughout the course of warm-ups and competition and obey all warm-up regulations and procedures.
- Be courteous, respectful, and polite to all meet officials, hosts, competitors, coaches, and teammates.
- Gymnasts should stay with the team until the competition is over and the coach releases them. Once a gymnast has entered the competition area there should be no contact between the gymnast and her parents.
- Gymnasts should stay for the awards dressed in their FGC warm-ups until the end of all of the awards during their session. Leaving early is not only discourteous, but also means they will miss the team award at the end.
- Each gymnast should accept her place in the awards line-up and the scores she receives with dignity and without criticism. There is no place for crying and uncontrolled emotions during gymnastics meets. Gymnasts cannot control the scores they receive, nor can they control the performances of any other gymnast. Gymnasts can only control their own performance.
- Gymnasts are expected to sit quietly and respectfully during the duration of the awards. Do not stand because you will photo bomb other athletes. No food, books, iPads, phones, etc. are permitted in the awards. Please pay attention so you do not miss your award.

During the meet...PARENT'S Etiquette

- Team spirit is always a big help and encouraged. Wear the team colors, or better yet one of our club t-shirts.
- Once your gymnast is in the competition area, they are the coach's responsibility. Do not talk to them, text them, or approach them until the awards ceremony. Gymnasts **ARE NOT ALLOWED** to talk or have contact with their parents until the competition is over. This has less to do with control than it does with FOCUS. Any distraction could disturb the focus necessary to have a successful routine. The coach's job at the meet is to monitor the gymnast's condition and teach her to respond appropriately. If the gymnast is too excited, the coach calms her down. If the gymnast is too complacent, the coach pumps her up and motivates her to do her best. The emotional dynamic is fluid in a competition. An excellent vault score may cause a gymnast to be over-confident. A terrible bar routine may serve as an educational moment. At these

times, the gymnast needs to focus on her coach's advice, not distractions from off the competitive floor.

- In any competition, parents, friends, and relatives of the gymnast **ARE NOT ALLOWED** onto the competitive floor. **YOU MUST** remain in the spectators' area along with all other relatives and friends. Your child could be immediately scratched from the meet if a parent is in the competitor's area.
- In case of injury during warm-up or competition, **YOU MUST** stay in the spectator area. Proper medical attention will be provided.
- **DO NOT** coach your child. Coaches should coach, everyone else should encourage. Injury may result from changing the gymnast's focus away from the coach's technique. Even the most helpful comment from you could have disastrous consequences.
- **NO FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY** is permitted during a meet. The sudden flash of light could cause a gymnast to be injured. Check out your camera in advance. Many cameras come with an automatic flash that will go off if it detects low light levels. If you cannot manually disable this device, please do not take pictures during the competition.
- The coaches' focus during the meet is solely on the gymnasts and the competition before them. Do not talk to, text, call, or approach them during the meet.
- NEVER approach a judge. Please show proper respect to all Officials and Coaches at every competition. They are all there for one reason, to support your child's interest in gymnastics. Under no circumstance should you attempt to contact any official on the competition floor during or after the meet (*judges, score keepers, etc.*) If you have any questions regarding the meet or your child's scores you must contact your coach. Even the coach is not allowed to approach the judges regarding routines or scores during the meet, instead they must submit an inquiry through the Meet Director. Points could be deducted not only from your gymnast but the team score as well for failure to follow these rules.
- Please show proper respect to all competitors. You NEVER KNOW who is sitting near you (*I.E. parents of the gymnast you just made a remark about*). **CHEER FOR ALL MEMBERS OF OUR TEAM!**
- All gymnasts are expected to stay until the end of the awards ceremony whether they are receiving an award or not. They need to cheer all award recipients - especially their teammates.
- Your gymnast becomes your responsibility at the beginning of the awards ceremony. The coaches will escort your gymnast to the awards area. Then the coaches usually have to leave. Coaches rarely get to watch the awards as they are warming up the next group. So please watch your gymnast during the awards and arrange a meeting place.

SOME GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS DURING A STRESSFUL MOMENT

- 1) Be supportive of your gymnasts no matter if they win or lose. The important thing to remember is this is only one meet. You want to build confidence so they can compete another day.
- 2) We know that you are excited about your child's participation in gymnastics and want her to be successful, but as a parent you actually have the least amount of control over your gymnast's

performance. This combination of high emotional stake in the performance with little or no direct control over the outcome can produce stress and can lead to some bizarre behavior.

3) Danger Signs: Watch for these. If you recognize yourself in these descriptions, you probably need to reevaluate your actions, your role, and your attitudes.

- Wanting to observe every practice intently.
- Praising or punishing your child for what you see during observations of workout.
- Finding your sense of worth and happiness dependent on the success of your gymnast.
- Constantly comparing your child and her progress to others in the group, on the team or in competition.
- Verbally abusing the gym, the coaches, and the program while still placing your child under their control.

Inappropriate Comments

“You finally beat Sally.”

“How many (current difficult skill) did you make today?”

“I’ll buy you a new leotard if you win today.”

“That judge always scores you low.”

“I cannot believe they moved Sally up and not you!”

“If you don’t get that skill by next week, you are done with gymnastics.”

“I’m not wasting my money when you aren’t trying.”

Appropriate Comments

“You scored your highest yet!”

“How was practice?”

“Do your best and have fun.”

“Work hard and next time you’ll do better.”

“As long as you are happy, safe, and progressing, I’m happy.”

“Don’t worry. The skill will come when you are ready.”

“Try your best at every practice and always listen to your coaches.”

Disciplinary Action

The rules and policies which govern the gymnasts and their parents have been outlined in this team handbook. In the event that there is an ongoing pattern of disruption or infractions, it may be necessary to impose disciplinary action in an attempt to improve the situation.

The list of disciplinary actions below is not intended to be all inclusive. They are presented as an expression of our beliefs as to what actions are appropriate.

- 1) The gymnast will be encouraged to change her behavior.
- 2) The gymnast will be given the option to take a break and return when she feels ready.
- 3) Athletes will be sent home if they are cussing, self-harming, or harming others.

NUTRITION

Good nutrition is the key to a healthy gymnast. Well-balanced meals throughout the week are vital, as is staying hydrated.

Gymnasts should eat light and healthy at least 45 minutes prior to practice.

The night before meets, gymnasts should be fed a high carbohydrate and protein meal. Good sources of carbs are: pastas, rice, breads, and fruits. Protein sources that should be considered are: meats, dairy, beans, eggs, and grains.

The day of the meet, sweets, heavy foods, and carbonated drinks should be avoided.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Special events are held to foster unity. Most events are attendance optional, but we encourage all gymnasts and families to be as involved as possible. A variety of events throughout the season may include but are not limited to: Water Day, Fun Mondays, Team bonding field trip, Christmas Party, Awards Celebration. Information will be distributed to gymnasts and families in a timely manner.

MONTHLY TUITION

Team is a year-round commitment.

The tuition for the competitive program is determined on a yearly basis with gym closings and holidays already taken into account.

1. Team tuition is charged through an autopay system at the beginning of each month. Those who use autopay receive a 15% discount off the normal monthly team tuition.
2. Team tuition at Flagstaff Gymnastics is designed to benefit team members who are dedicated to the sport of gymnastics. The competitive team is already greatly discounted in comparison to other gym programs and is in fact effectively subsidized by the recreational program.
3. There are no make-ups, discounts, or prorated accounts due to absence of any nature. This includes, but is not limited to injuries, vacations, illnesses, etc. Since team members pay a fraction of the hourly rate that recreational students pay, we **DO NOT PRORATE** for missed days, weeks, or months. Gymnasts who miss weeks and months at a time are encouraged to go to the recreational program so they can pay for the classes they attend.
4. Team members need to stay active in the sport to progress at a safe rate.

5. Notice of intent to cancel enrollment on team must be made online in the Parent Portal at least **one month** prior to the gymnast's last workout. You are responsible for payment for team whether your gymnast's attends practice or not until the time you notify the office VIA WRITTEN NOTICE.

FUNDRAISERS

Team members are encouraged to participate in fundraisers. They will help us build unity and funds for competitions. Fundraisers are brainstormed and coordinated by parents and presented to the office for approval.

- Recruiting Funds
 - Gymnasts will receive \$40 for every new person they recruit to gymnastics or cheerleading. New people are defined as those who have not attended FGC in over a year.
 - Gymnasts will receive \$65 for every new student they recruit to Flagstaff Christian Preschool. New students are 3 and 4 year olds who have not attended FGC or FCP.
- Banner Funds
 - Gymnast may sell advertising banners as a fundraiser. One size only (3'x2') for \$100. The banners cost \$20.00 so the athlete receives \$80.00 in their account.
 - Business receives a banner with their logo and four lines of text in full color.
 - Banner will be hung for one year. Renewal fee is \$50.00 for an additional year.
 - There is no limit to the amount of fundraising a gymnast may receive.

Parent Volunteers for fundraising are needed and greatly appreciated.

MISCELLANEOUS

- Except in the case of an emergency, team coaches should not be called at home or on their cell phones. Please leave all messages on the voice mail system at the gym or in the coach's message box. The coaches will check their boxes periodically and return your calls at their earliest convenience.

- Immediately following the Spring Competition Season, Flagstaff Gymnastics will have an awards banquet for the compulsory and optional team gymnasts. Each gymnast will be recognized for her accomplishments by her coaches. Please make every attempt to attend.

- When planning for family vacations, please try to schedule them early in the summer or during a week that the gym is closed. This will allow for minimal time out of the gym.

- It is the gymnast's responsibility to help keep the gym clean. Tape, pre-wrap, ice, water bottles and other garbage should always be thrown away after its use. Having a team locker is a privilege, please keep them clean.

We look forward to a successful gymnastics competition year!

Flagstaff Gymnastics Center

Flagstaff Gymnastics Team Agreement

Both the parents (if applicable) and/or guardian including the gymnast should read the Flagstaff Gymnastics Team Handbook before signing this form.

I/We have thoroughly read and understand the Flagstaff Gymnastics Team Handbook. I/We have gone over the handbook with my/our child, and we support the philosophy of the Flagstaff Gymnastics team. We hereby agree to follow all of the rules, procedures and policies presented in the team handbook.

I/We understand that my/our child agrees to be actively involved in practices, competitions, clinics, camps, and fundraisers scheduled by the team unless excused by the coach or front office.

I/We understand that all team members are expected to act in a mature, responsible, uplifting, and honorable manner at all times by following the rules below. Failure to adhere to any of these rules may result in dismissal from the team:

1. Gymnasts must observe good health practices including following healthy eating habits and getting sufficient sleep.
2. Safety first. All safety rules governing USA Gymnastics will be adhered to during all gymnastic activities undertaken by Flagstaff gymnasts.
3. Inappropriate dress, disruptive behavior, emotional outbursts, abusive or foul language and any other sort of misconduct are strictly prohibited and are grounds for immediate dismissal from teams.
4. Team members are expected to carry out all assignments and conditioning given to them immediately and to the best of their ability. Cheating and/or sitting around will not be tolerated.
5. Members of our team have a responsibility to set a good example for other gymnasts. Always strive to be courteous, respectful, helpful, **encouraging** and enthusiastic.
6. Always contact the coach before being absent from any scheduled workout. Frequent unexcused absences and tardiness are grounds for removal from the team.

I/We understand that if, at any time, we cannot be a *supportive* and *positive* force in and outside of the gym and in the life of our child we will relinquish our place on the team. **Negative talk to other parents outside of the facility, in the lobby or seating area will not be tolerated.**

I/We understand that if I/we approach a judge or meet official before, during or after any competition to question, comment on, complain about or discuss a score or the judging of a meet we are making the decision to remove our child from the team.

I/We understand that as the parent(s) of a Flagstaff Gymnastics Team member, I/we have agreed to fulfill all the time and financial obligations such as tuition, registration fees, meet fees, uniforms, and other obligations related to my/our child's participation.

Parent Signature/Date _____

Gymnast's Signature/Date _____