


CHILD SAFE PRACTICES DO'S & DON'TS



SPORT INTEGRITY
AUSTRALIA



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INTRODUCTION



The Child Safe Practices have been developed to identify and prevent behaviour that may be harmful to children participating in gymnastics. The Child Safe Practices are defined within the National Integrity Framework's Child Safeguarding Policy.

The following 'Do's and Don'ts' have been developed as a supplementary guide to the Child Safe Practices, to provide practical and tangible actions that can and should be followed by anyone involved in the delivery of programs, services or activities to children participating in gymnastics.



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SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Under no circumstances is any form of 'sexual behaviour' to occur between, with, or in the presence of children. This includes, but is not limited to sexual intercourse, kissing, fondling, flirting between adults and children, sexual innuendo, inappropriate text messaging, inappropriate photography or exposure to pornography or nudity.

DON'T

Engage in unwanted or unwelcome sexual behaviour that would make a child feel offended, humiliated, or intimidated.

Undress in front of or expose yourself in any way to a child.

Flirt with, or make any innuendo or sexual connotations towards a child.

Have inappropriate conversation or enquiries of a sexual nature (for example, questions about a child's sexuality, or their sexual relationship with others).

Make jokes or innuendos of a sexual nature.

Do any of the above-mentioned actions in person or online.



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PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

You must act within the scope of your role (as specified in your position description or contract) when working with children who are involved in gymnastics.

DO

Treat all children equally, regardless of their gender, culture, race or disability.

Try to be identifiable (uniform/name badge) in your official role when delivering programs or activities.

Make sure, if giving a gift, that it has been approved by your gymnastics club, all children are receiving a gift, and it is done in the presence of their parent/guardian.

Ensure interactions with children are focused on learning and development and relevant to gymnastics.

Model professional physical and emotional boundaries.

Be respectful to the child's needs or concerns and respond appropriately.

Engage with children in a manner that would be seen by a reasonable observer as maintaining reasonable boundaries.

DON'T

Provide any form of support to a child or their family unrelated to the scope of their role, where there is no existing social, personal, or family relationship (e.g. financial assistance, babysitting, provide accommodation).

Transport a child unless specifically approved.

Engage in social activities outside the scope of your role, such as watching a child participate in another sporting activity, playing virtual video games together or attending their birthday party.

Use your personal phone, camera or video camera to take images of children.

Develop any special relationships with children that could be seen as 'favouritism'.

Wear your uniform or name badge when not undertaking an official role.

Give out personal gifts or special favours to a child other than the provision of official awards.

Confide in, or share overly personal information with a child (for example, sharing financial or relationship problems).

Ask a child to keep secrets, such as asking them not to tell their parent/guardian when you have communicated with them.

Treat the child as an 'adult' under guise of maturity.

Create an emotional dependency between yourself and the child (for example, isolating the child from their teammates, staff, parents/guardians by 'pitting the child against their teammates').



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USE OF LANGUAGE AND TONE OF VOICE

Language and tone of voice used in the presence of children should provide clear direction, boost their confidence, encourage and affirm them and not be harmful.

DO

Use clear, direct, age-appropriate language.

Use words, tone of voice, facial expressions and body posture to communicate calmness and respect.

Focus on a child's positive behaviour to build self-confidence, as well as competence.

Use language that is encouraging and supportive and that promotes a fun and inclusive environment.

Address a situation when negative language or tone is being used by a child, parent/guardian or other person and reinforce that it is not appropriate.

DON'T

Use stereotypes, innuendo or sarcasm when communicating with children.

Shame a child or make derogatory or belittling comments (for example, calling a child a loser or telling them they are too fat).

Use obscene gestures and language.

Humiliate, intimidate or regularly criticise a child.

Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.

Single out a child or denigrate them in front of peers or other members.



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POSITIVE GUIDANCE (DISCIPLINE)

To ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of all children participating in gymnastics; strategies that are fair, respectful and appropriate to the developmental stage of the children must be used. Children should always be provided with clear directions and given an opportunity to redirect their behaviour in a positive way.

DO

Set clear guidelines for expected behaviour.

Provide guidance that is non-violent, solution-focused, respectful and based on child development principles.

Address poor behaviour in a calm and firm manner.

Help children to behave within the limits set.

Create a 'safe space' for children to have a say and speak up if they feel unsafe or unsure.

Encourage children to talk about their feelings and the possible reasons for their emotions.

Only physically restrain a child in an emergency situation.

DON'T

Use training practices that are inappropriate for the stage of psychological and physical development of the child.

Impose any form of punishment that causes a child physical pain or discomfort.

Isolate a child from the group as a form of punishment.

Impose any form of punishment that is degrading, cruel or frightening.

Force a child to do something against their will.



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SUPERVISION

Supervision is a key aspect of ensuring that children's safety is protected. Adults must be alert to and aware of risks and hazards and the potential for accidents and injury throughout training and competition, and not just in their immediate area.

DO

Ensure you are always able to observe each child, respond to their individual needs and immediately intervene if necessary.

Ensure there are appropriate supervision ratios based on the age and gender of the children and the size of the group.

Keep trainings/competitions/events open to observation by parents/guardians – this creates an environment of transparency and safety.

Ensure any massage performed at a training or competition venue is conducted in an open and interruptible location.

Avoid one-to-one unsupervised situations with children, except in an emergency or for program delivery. In these cases, make sure the situation is identified and written permission is obtained from gymnastics and the child's parent/guardian in advance.

DON'T

Leave children unsupervised during official sport trainings/competitions/events.

Engage in unnecessary conversations with another adult that may distract from effective supervision of the group.

Text, talk or browse on a mobile phone when supervising children.

Exclude parents/guardians from attending training sessions.



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USE OF ELECTRONIC OR ONLINE COMMUNICATION

For any electronic or online communication with children, you must adopt a two-deep model, that is, copy in the organisation and a parent or guardian in all communication.

DO

When communicating with children you must ensure:

- the child's parent/guardian is included in all communication
- content is directly associated with your official role, such as advising that training has been cancelled
- language is appropriate and not personal in nature.

Inform the parent/guardian or the sport organisation if a child communicates with you outside your role, and kindly advise the child that the behaviour is inappropriate.

Follow any additional social media guidelines or policies gymnastics may have in place.

DON'T

Befriend the child on social media.

Communicate privately with a child via phone, email or social media.

Request children keep online communication a secret from their parents/guardians or others.

Use electronic communication to promote unauthorised 'social' activity or to arrange unauthorised contact.

Use inappropriate language or language that is sexual in nature.

Use any device's (including a mobile phone's) recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras and video cameras in locker rooms, changing areas, or similar spaces.



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PHOTOGRAPHS OF CHILDREN

To ensure the protection of a child's image and identity, it is essential that:

- the respective parent or guardian has provided prior written approval for any photographs to be taken or video footage to be captured
- the context of the photo or video is directly related to participation in gymnastics
- the child is appropriately dressed and posed
- the image or video is taken in the presence of other personnel.

DO

Ensure the context in which you are taking photos or videos of children is directly related to their participation in gymnastics and will only be used for official purposes.

Obtain permission from the child's parent/guardian before taking any photos or videos.

Store images (digital or hard copy) in a way that prevents unauthorised access by others.

Make sure images (digital or hard copy) are destroyed or deleted as soon as they are no longer required.

Speak up if you see someone acting suspiciously.

DON'T

Take photos or videos of children for personal use.

Take or store images of children involved in gymnastics on personal devices.

Distribute or publish photos or videos for official purposes (annual report, website, social media) without permission from the child's parent/guardian.

Forward, share or send on any photos or videos of a child.

Send photos or videos of a child, directly to a child, or to another person.



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PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH CHILDREN

Any physical contact with children must be appropriate to the delivery of gymnastics programs or services and based on the needs of the child, such as assisting with the use of equipment, technique, treatment by a health practitioner or administering first aid.

DO

Seek a child's permission to touch or interact when demonstrating an activity.

Check that physical contact is acceptable to a particular child. Even non-intrusive touch may be inappropriate if a child who indicates they do not wish to be touched.

Respect and respond to signs that a child is uncomfortable with touch.

Use verbal directions rather than touch (for example, ask a child to move in a particular way, rather than physically place the child in the required position).

Discourage children from inappropriate expectations of hugs or cuddles. This should be done gently and without embarrassment or offence to the child. For example, offer a high five as encouragement.

Kindly and appropriately tell a child who is inappropriately or excessively touching another child to stop and raise the concern with a relevant person within gymnastics.

Use non-intrusive gestures to comfort a child who is experiencing grief and loss or distress, such as a hand on the upper arm or upper back.

Use non-intrusive touch (for example, congratulating a child by shaking hands or a pat on the upper arm or back). Try to accompany such touch with positive encouraging words.

Report any physical contact initiated by a child that is sexualised and/or inappropriate (for example, acts of physical aggression) as soon as possible to gymnastics. This ensures the situation can be managed in the interests of the safety of the child and any other participants.

DON'T

Under any circumstances, have contact with a child that involves any intimate part of a child's body (for example, genitals, bottom or breast area).

Initiate, allow or request inappropriate or unnecessary physical contact with a child (for example, massage, kisses, tickling and wrestling games) or facilitate situations that unnecessarily result in close physical contact with a child.

Single out the same child when performing demonstrations.

Have unnecessary contact with a child (for example, assisting with toileting when a child does not require assistance).

Force a child to do something against their will.



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OVERNIGHT STAYS AND TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Overnight stays involving children should only occur with gymnastics approval, and consent of each child's parent or guardian. Practices and behaviour during an overnight stay must be consistent with the practices and behaviour expected during the delivery of gymnastics at all other times.

DO

Obtain written approval prior to the overnight stay. Written approval could include electronic messaging formats such as email or SMS.

Ensure children are provided with privacy when bathing, toileting and dressing.

Observe appropriate dress standards when children are present – such as no exposure to adult nudity.

Ensure the safety of children is not compromised by inappropriate sleeping arrangements (for example, children sharing a bed, or an adult sleeping in the same bed as a child).

Always allow children to contact their parents, or another adult, if they feel unsafe, uncomfortable, distressed, or for any other reason, during the stay.

Make sure there are appropriate levels of supervision. General rule is a minimum of 2 adults with a ratio of 1:8.

Plan appropriate accommodation. If children share a room, they should be the same age and gender and must not share beds.

Plan for emergencies. If you need to administer first aid, do so only if you are qualified and in the presence of others.

Keep parents and guardians informed and let them know:

- the aim of the trip
 - destinations and venues
 - competition details
 - supervision levels
 - roles and responsibilities of accompanying adults
 - estimated time of arrival and departure.
-



Keep children informed and let them know:

- what's expected of them
 - roles and responsibilities of adults accompanying them
 - their rights
 - who to talk to if they have any concerns.
-

Avoid being with a child in an isolated or unobserved situation.

Ensure that if mixed-sex teams travel, they are always accompanied by a male and female chaperone.

Establish a two-deep leadership model when doing room checks, attending team meetings and/or other activities. Two-deep leadership is when 2 authorised adults should be present and observable by others, and interruptible environments should be maintained.

DON'T

Expose children to pornographic material, for example through movies, television, the internet or magazines.

Leave children under the supervision or protection of unauthorised persons such as accommodation staff or peers.

Share a room and/or bed with a child.

Be alone in a room with a child. If an adult presence is required, there should always be more than one child in the room with the adult.

Remove a child's clothing, even in an emergency, unless you have their permission and at least one other person is with you.

Enter a child's room or invite them into your room when travelling.

Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.



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USE OF, POSSESSION OR SUPPLY OF ALCOHOL OR DRUGS

DON'T

Use, possess or be under the influence of an illicit drug.

Use or be under the influence of alcohol.

Be impaired by any other legal drug such as prescription or over-the-counter drugs.

Supply alcohol or drugs (including tobacco).

Supply or administer medicines, except when permitted by law or with the consent of the parent, guardian or carer of the child and under a valid prescription for that child and at the prescribed dosage.

PARENT/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT

DO

Ensure that a parent/guardian is involved in any significant decision, including the signing of any documentation in relation to their child's participation in gymnastics (for example, overnight stays, photos/videos, sanctions, reports).

Conduct all training sessions in open locations and allow parents/guardians to watch their child during training.

Make parents/guardians aware of the standard of behaviour required when watching their child during trainings. Parents/guardians displaying inappropriate conduct may be asked to leave, but may not be denied access for an undetermined amount of time.



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TRANSPORTING CHILDREN

Children are only to be transported in circumstances that are directly related to the delivery of gymnastics programs, events or service.

DO

Always seek written approval from the child's parent/ guardian before travel.

Ensure approval involves providing information about the proposed journey, including the:

- form of transport to be used
 - reason for the journey
 - route to be followed, including any stops or side trips
 - details of anyone who will be present during the journey.
-

Make sure the child sits in the back seat, appropriately secured.

Ensure you are not impaired by alcohol or any other mind-altering substances and have an unrestricted drivers' licence.

DON'T

Transport children in your sport if not necessary.

Allow other unauthorised adults to travel with you (for example, stopping to pick up a friend on the way to the event you are taking your players to).

Make any unnecessary or unplanned stops during the journey.

Where practicable, do not be alone and unsupervised with a child.

Allow a child to sit in the front seat.

Take children to your home.



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DROP OFF AND PICK UP OF CHILDREN

Open and transparent communication in relation to the drop off and pick up of children is a proactive approach to ensuring their ongoing safety and wellbeing.

DO

Ensure children and their parents or guardians know the time and location of training and events, including start and finish times.

Arrive before scheduled practice times to ensure that children are not left unsupervised.

Have a list of parent/guardian emergency contact numbers and a phone that is working.

Ensure you are aware of alternative pick up arrangements for children and that the parent/guardian has provided consent.

Ensure that if a parent/guardian is late, you make reasonable attempts to contact them.

DON'T

Leave the training or event until all children have been collected by their parent/guardian.



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CHANGE ROOMS ARRANGEMENTS

Children are particularly vulnerable in changing rooms due in part to various stages of dress/undress and because they are isolated areas. There is also a risk of child-to-child problems, such as bullying if the changing room is left unsupervised.

DO

Encourage children to come dressed ready for trainings or games if there are no private/safe change room facilities.

Provide safe and private change room facilities where possible.

Ensure that there is always appropriate supervision where the change room/toilet facility is accessible by adults or in 'public' change rooms.

Knock or announce yourself and wait for approval before entering change rooms.

Have at least one other authorised adult with you in a change room with children.

Implement a buddy system in the absence of the adult supervision to accompany a child to the bathroom (for example, children can nominate 2 or more 'buddies' of a similar age and gender who can go with them).

Get changed in an individual closed cubicle.

Make every effort to recognise when a child goes to the change room during practice and competition and, if they do not return in a timely fashion, check on their whereabouts.

DON'T

Undress or get changed in the presence of children.

Be alone and unsupervised with a child in a change room area.

Isolate yourself with a child from others in the change room (for example, take them into a cubicle with you).

Enter a change room of the opposite sex.

Allow mobile phones to be used in change rooms.

Use bathroom facilities at the same time as a child.

Unnecessarily allow parents into change rooms unless a child requires physical help getting changed (for example, younger children or children with disabilities).

Place pressure on a child to change and/or shower in public if they feel uncomfortable to do so.



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