



Bicester & District Gymnastics Club

BDGC 006 – Coach Code of Conduct

Document Owner: Head Coach

Document Approver: Chairman

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1. Purpose & Scope

At Bicester & District Gymnastics Club, it's very important for all gymnasts to feel safe, supported, confident, and inspired during classes. This Code sets out the standards the club requires of everyone who coaches at BDGC, so that we provide an environment that is safe, positive, organised, supportive and professional.

This Code applies to all coaches, assistant coaches and coaching volunteers while carrying out club activities, whether engaged under a Coaching Services Contract or volunteering. Coaches are not employees of the club. Nothing in this Code changes that, and nothing in it restricts a coach from working or coaching elsewhere.

The Code should be read alongside any contract you have with the club, IGA policies and standards, and the club policies listed in section 15. Following this Code is a condition of coaching at BDGC, whatever your individual arrangement with the club.

2. Professional Conduct

- Always prioritise the safety and well-being of gymnasts.
- Conduct all coaching sessions with professionalism, respect, and integrity.
- Maintain a positive and supportive atmosphere at all times.
- Be a role model and uphold the highest standards of behaviour and language.
- Create a team atmosphere that encourages great sportsmanship, and provide high-quality coaching that engages, inspires, and excites all gymnasts.
- Be approachable and supportive to gymnasts, coaches, and other club members. Show respect and understanding to all members and communicate effectively with parents/guardians.
- Maintain professional relationships with gymnasts and parents/guardians.
- Use appropriate language and conduct at all times. No bad sportsmanship or slander.
- Differences of coaching opinion are normal and constructive discussion is encouraged, but disagreements must not be debated in front of gymnasts. If you disagree with a coaching decision, programme or session structure, raise it privately with the Head Coach or Lead Coach.
- Wear club kit when coaching and at competitions so that you are clearly identifiable as a BDGC coach to gymnasts, parents/guardians and venue staff.
- Coaches must ensure their appearance and conduct reflects the professional standards expected by the club at all times when representing Bicester & District Gymnastics Club.

3. Safeguarding & Welfare

- Follow the club's Welfare & Safeguarding Policy to protect all participants.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Report any safeguarding concern, incident, referral or disclosure immediately to the Welfare Officer (WO), following the club's safeguarding procedure and IGA child protection procedures.
- Listen actively to concerns raised by gymnasts and take appropriate action, escalating to the Head Coach and Welfare Officer if needed.
- Never engage in inappropriate communication with gymnasts (e.g., personal phone calls, texts, or social media).

- Ensure that children under 11 years old have a parent/guardian on-site during training.
- Safeguarding and welfare concerns must not be investigated, debated or discussed in the coaches' WhatsApp group. The Welfare Officer is the route for safeguarding and welfare matters; the Head Coach is the route for coaching and operational matters.
- Where BDGC gymnasts take part in any club activity away from the normal training environment, suitable safeguarding arrangements must be agreed as part of the planning (see section 9).

4. Smoking & Vaping Policy

- Smoking and vaping are strictly prohibited while wearing any club uniform, branded clothing, or club identification.
- Smoking and vaping are strictly prohibited at any time or location where you may be visible to gymnasts, parents, or guardians.
- Coaches must not smoke or vape on club premises, in the venue car park, or in the immediate vicinity of any club activity, training session, or competition.
- As a coach, you are a role model to young gymnasts who look up to you. Your conduct outside of coaching sessions can influence their attitudes and behaviors.

5. Coaching Standards

- Hold the appropriate qualifications and insurance as required by IGA Gymnastics.
- You are responsible for obtaining and maintaining your own qualifications, IGA membership, insurance and continued professional development, and for providing evidence of these to the club when asked.
- Work within the limits of your training and recognised competence. If you are still training towards a qualification, coach with the supervision IGA requires.
- Ensure that all training activities are suitable for the gymnasts' age, ability, and experience.
- Deliver sessions in line with the club's programme and the session structure agreed with the Head Coach, using appropriate skill progressions.
- Stay updated with best coaching practices and relevant changes in gymnastics regulations.
- Supervise gymnasts responsibly and ensure adequate coach-to-gymnast ratios.
- Stay actively engaged with the gymnasts and group allocated to you throughout the session.

6. Health & Safety

- Conduct regular equipment checks to ensure gymnasts' safety. Check all equipment before use.
- Ensure a first aider is present during all training sessions, and that all first aid incidents are recorded in the accident book by a qualified individual.
- Record and report any injuries or incidents in accordance with the club's Health & Safety Policy.
- Inform parents/guardians of any accidents occurring during class with full details.
- Ensure gymnasts are physically and mentally prepared for training sessions.

7. Data Protection & Confidentiality

- Adhere to the Privacy Policy and maintain confidentiality of all personal and club-related information.
- Ensure any data collected is used appropriately and stored securely.

- Record and share only the information needed for the safe and effective running of the club, and only with those who have a genuine need to know.
- Do not record detailed medical, personal, safeguarding or welfare information on registers or session records, and do not discuss it in WhatsApp groups.

8. Session Operations

The Head Coach coordinates the coaching programme and is responsible for making sure each session is appropriately staffed and supervised. So that this works for everyone:

- Arrive in sufficient time to be ready for the start of your session and to receive any briefing from the Head Coach or Lead Coach.
- If you are running late, tell the Head Coach directly as soon as reasonably possible.
- If you are unable to deliver a session you have agreed to, tell the Head Coach directly and as early as possible. The coaches' WhatsApp group is not the first point of notification. No reason needs to be given and no medical detail is required.
- You are responsible for arranging a suitable substitute in line with any contract you have with the club. A substitute must be a coach the club has approved to coach at BDGC, holding the qualifications, IGA membership, insurance and DBS check appropriate to the group.
- Tell the Head Coach who will be covering, in advance, so that qualifications, supervision and coach-to-gymnast ratios can be checked before the session. The Head Coach may decline a substitute who is not suitable for the group. This is a safeguarding and ratio check, not permission for the absence.
- If you cannot arrange a substitute, tell the Head Coach as early as possible so that the club can arrange alternative cover or make other arrangements for the session. Once the Head Coach is aware, the WhatsApp group may be used to find an available coach.
- The club keeps a record of which coach delivered each session for safeguarding, ratio and invoicing purposes. It does not record reasons for a coach's absence.

9. Club-Funded Training & Activity Involving BDGC Gymnasts

The club encourages coaches to develop their knowledge, skills and qualifications. Coaches are responsible for their own qualifications and development, and the club does not restrict where a coach independently works, trains or coaches outside BDGC, subject to their contractual, professional and safeguarding obligations.

- Where the club agrees to fund or contribute towards a course or qualification, the arrangement will be set out in a written funding agreement. Club-funded training is coordinated through the Head Coach so that the club can support you with mentoring, opportunities to practise and developmental feedback, and can plan its coaching needs.
- This support is intended to help coaches become confident and competent in what they have learned. Formal qualification and assessment outcomes remain a matter for the applicable IGA course and assessment requirements.
- Any training, practice, assessment or filming that involves BDGC gymnasts, whether at BDGC or at another club or facility, is club activity and must be agreed in advance with the Head Coach. Where children are involved, suitable safeguarding arrangements must be in place and, where necessary,

agreed with the Welfare Officer. Depending on the circumstances this may include parental knowledge and consent, supervision, coach qualifications and competence, insurance, transport, safeguarding arrangements at the external facility, photography and filming consent, and the use, sharing and storage of any video.

- A waiver, consent form or participation form required by another club or facility does not replace the club's responsibility to consider appropriate safeguarding arrangements for its own gymnasts.

10. Communication & Raising Concerns

- The coaches' WhatsApp group is an operational tool for coach availability, cover, timetable and session arrangements, training information and essential updates.
- It must not be used for personal disagreements, criticism of other coaches, confidential or medical information, complaints about individual gymnasts, or welfare and safeguarding matters. Anything that needs a private conversation should be taken through the appropriate route below.
- Coaches are encouraged to raise questions, concerns and ideas. The appropriate routes are:
 - Coaching or programme matters: Lead Coach or Head Coach.
 - Safeguarding or welfare matters: Welfare Officer.
 - Your contract or services arrangement with the club: the Chair or Treasurer.
 - Club governance matters: the Committee.
- Report any breach of this Code, concern or misconduct to the Head Coach or Welfare Officer.
- Cooperate fully with any club investigations related to safeguarding, misconduct, or health and safety.
- Follow all guidelines outlined by Bicester & District Gymnastics Club and IGA Gymnastics.

11. Breach of this Code

Any breach of this Code will be taken seriously. For coaches providing services under a contract with the club, a breach will be dealt with under the terms of that contract. Depending on the seriousness of the matter, this may include suspending the engagement while the matter is reviewed, or terminating the contract. For volunteers, a breach may result in the club ending the volunteer role. Where a breach raises safeguarding concerns, the club will also follow its Welfare & Safeguarding Policy and IGA procedures.

12. Monitoring Compliance

The adoption of this policy is subject to monitoring and auditing. The outcomes from these reviews will inform and improve practices as part of BDGC's commitment to continual improvement.

13. Review

This Policy will be reviewed at least annually.

14. Amendment and Termination

This Policy can be amended, replaced, or terminated at any time at the sole discretion of BDGC. If you have any questions about whether you are reviewing the latest Policy, please confirm with the Owner of this document identified below.

15. Acknowledgment & Agreement

By coaching at Bicester & District Gymnastics Club, you agree to abide by this Coach Code of Conduct and the club's policies. For coaches providing services under a contract with the club, this Code forms part of the standards required for those services. Any breach will be dealt with as set out in section 11.

For further details, please refer to the following club policies:

- BDGC 010 - Welfare & Safeguarding Policy
- BDGC 013 - Health & Safety Policy
- BDGC 011 - Privacy Policy
- BDGC 004 - Risk Management Policy

For any queries or concerns, please contact the Head Coach or Designated Welfare Officer (DWO).

IGA Insurance Policy: <https://www.independentgymnastics.com/insurance/>

Document Controls

Category	Description
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Status (Draft, Published, Retired)	Draft

History

Revision #	Change Description	Author Initials	Date
0.1	Document Conception	PK	05/02/25
0.2	Aligned with the Coaching Services Contract. Added purpose and scope, session operations, club-funded training and activity involving BDGC gymnasts, communication and raising concerns, and coach acknowledgement. Removed employment-related wording and duplication. Contents and page numbering corrected.	PK/HA	14/09/26