

Star-Mites Gymnastics

Child Safeguarding & Working With Children Policy

Version	2025
Approved by	Star-Mites Gym Sports - Directors
Review Year	2025



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1. Purpose

Star-Mites Gymnastics is committed to a safe, inclusive and supportive environment for all children and young people.

This policy aligns with the Working With Children (Screening) Act 2004 (WA), WA Child Safeguarding Framework, Gymnastics Australia's Safeguarding Children & Young People Policy (2024) and Sport Integrity Australia's National Integrity Framework.

2. Scope

This policy applies to employees, contractors, volunteers, trainees, directors, athletes, parents/guardians and visitors to Star-Mites venues, programs, competitions and events.

3. Definitions

Child/Young Person: an individual under 18 years.

Safeguarding: actions to promote child wellbeing and protect from harm.

MPIO: Member Protection Information Officer – Star-Mites MPIO is Lauren Murray (lauren@starmites.com.au).

WWC Check: Working With Children Check required by WA law for child-related work.

4. Policy Statement

All child-related roles require a valid WWC Check and ongoing compliance monitoring.

Star-Mites adopts GA Adult–Child Interaction Guidelines covering supervision, appropriate physical contact, transport and change-room use.

Parental/guardian consent is mandatory for images of children; opt-out is always respected.

We provide child-friendly information on speaking up and respond promptly to all concerns.

5. Responsibilities

Directors/Management: implement policy, maintain WWC register, appoint/support MPIO, ensure visible reporting pathways.

Coaches/Staff: model safe behaviours, complete safeguarding training, avoid 1:1 unsupervised settings.

Parents/Guardians: support rules, keep medical/emergency details current, report concerns.

Children: treated with respect; encouraged to speak up and are listened to.

6. Adult–Child Interaction Rules

Supervision: aim for two adults present; no closed-door 1:1 interactions.

Transport: no transporting children alone unless unavoidable and approved by parent/guardian; document the approval.

Change Rooms: staff do not change or shower with children; supervision is observable and age-appropriate.

Physical Contact: only for skill correction or safety; explain first; keep contact minimal and appropriate.

Digital Communication: coaches use club-approved channels; no private messaging with minors.

7. Recruitment & Screening

Advertise child-related roles with safeguarding responsibilities explicit.

Pre-engagement checks: WWC verification, identity, at least two referees with direct supervision insight.

Induction: safeguarding training, Codes of Behaviour, reporting obligations, emergency procedures.

Maintain a secure WWC register with renewal reminders and immediate action for negative notices.

8. Reporting & Response

How to report: speak to a Coach/Manager, email the MPIO (Lauren Murray), or use the online Child Safety Concern Form; external reporting to Sport Integrity Australia is available where applicable.

Timeframes: acknowledge within 2 business days; initial risk assessment within 5 business days; urgent safety actions taken immediately.

Process: triage for internal handling or external referral (e.g., Police/WA Department of Communities/SIA); preserve evidence; maintain confidentiality.

Outcomes: communicate findings where lawful; develop safety plans; record securely in safeguarding register.

9. Education & Training

All personnel complete safeguarding induction and biennial refreshers; child-safe messaging embedded into staff meetings and coaching clinics.

Parents and children receive age-appropriate information on rights and reporting pathways; child-friendly posters displayed in the gym.

10. Breaches of Policy

Consequences may include education, warnings, suspension, dismissal, termination of membership and/or reporting to Police, WWC Screening Unit, GA or SIA.

Victimisation of a person who reports a concern is prohibited and itself a breach.

11. Review

Reviewed and approved in 2025 by the Directors; reviewed annually or earlier if law or GA guidance changes.

Appendices

Appendix A: Child Safety Code of Conduct

Adults act respectfully at all times; no favouritism; language must be positive and age-appropriate.

Avoid situations where you are alone with a child; ensure visibility and openness in interactions.

Physical contact occurs only when necessary for safety or skill correction and is explained beforehand.

Immediately report any suspected harm, grooming, or boundary violations to the MPIO.

Appendix B: Reporting Pathway Flowchart

Step 1: Concern arises → Step 2: Report to Coach/Manager/MPIO (or external SIA if applicable) → Step 3: Immediate safety actions → Step 4: Triage & investigation/referral → Step 5: Outcome & safety plan → Step 6: Secure record.

Appendix C: Consent Form (Photography & Video)

Parent/Guardian Name, Child Name, Class, Consent scope (internal display/website/social media/competition media), Duration, Right to withdraw, Signature/Date.

Star-Mites Gymnastics

Policy Appendices

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Appendix A: Child Safety Code of Conduct

At Star-Mites Gymnastics, every adult who works with or around children has a responsibility to create a safe, respectful and encouraging environment. This Code of Conduct outlines the standards of behaviour that must be followed at all times and explains clearly what is and is not acceptable.

All children must be treated with respect, regardless of their age, gender, cultural background, or ability level. Respect means using polite language, listening when children speak, and recognising their feelings. Coaches, staff and parents should never ridicule, belittle, or shame a child, even in a joking manner, as this undermines confidence and trust.

Positive and encouraging language should be used in all interactions. Feedback to gymnasts should focus on effort, improvement and safe technique. Correction is important, but it should be framed constructively, so the child feels supported rather than criticised. Praise for persistence and resilience is just as valuable as praise for achievement.

Favouritism must be avoided. Every child has the right to equal opportunities for coaching, participation and recognition. Showing preference for one child over others, or giving unfair attention, can create resentment and harm team spirit. Coaches and officials must actively ensure that attention and opportunities are shared fairly among all participants.

Adults must never be alone with a child in a private setting. Training, feedback and support must occur in open, visible spaces, or with another adult present. If a private conversation is necessary, it should be held in sight of others. This protects both the child and the adult from misunderstandings or inappropriate situations.

Physical contact is sometimes necessary in gymnastics for spotting, skill correction or safety. However, such contact must always be appropriate, explained beforehand, and limited to what is necessary for the child's safety or technical guidance. Touch must never be secretive, unnecessary, or done in a way that could cause embarrassment or distress.

Any concerns about child safety must be reported immediately to the Club Manager or Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO). Adults must never ignore warning signs, disclosures or suspicions. The wellbeing of the child comes first, and reports will be handled confidentially and respectfully.

By following this Code of Conduct, all adults contribute to a culture where children feel safe, valued, and empowered to thrive. Breaches of this Code are treated seriously and may result in disciplinary action, suspension, or referral to authorities. The protection of children is a shared responsibility and is at the heart of Star-Mites Gymnastics.

Appendix B: Reporting Pathway

Star-Mites Gymnastics has a clear and simple reporting process to ensure that any concerns about child safety, behaviour, or wellbeing are acted upon immediately and appropriately. This pathway is designed to be easy to understand and easy to follow, so that no concern is ever ignored or overlooked.

A report begins when a concern arises. This may come from a child, a parent, a coach, a volunteer, or any other member of the community. A concern could be about inappropriate behaviour, a safety hazard, suspected bullying, or something more serious like abuse. No concern is too small to raise.

The first step is to tell the appropriate person. Concerns should be reported directly to the child's Coach, the Club Manager, or the MPIO. If the issue involves a coach, then it should go directly to the MPIO or Club Manager. All staff are trained to receive reports calmly, respectfully, and without judgement.

Once a concern is raised, the safety of the child is assessed immediately. If there is any risk of harm, steps are taken straight away to make sure the child is safe. This may include removing an adult from contact, contacting parents, or calling emergency services if necessary.

Following the safety check, the concern is investigated or referred to the correct authority. Less serious matters may be handled within the club, for example by meeting with the parties involved to resolve a misunderstanding. More serious concerns, especially those relating to abuse, must be referred to external agencies such as the Department of Communities (Child Protection), Police, or Sport Integrity Australia.

The person who raised the concern, and the parents or guardians if appropriate, are kept informed about the outcome. This communication must be clear, respectful, and protect confidentiality. While not every detail of an investigation can be shared, families are entitled to know that their concern has been taken seriously and acted upon.

A secure written record is kept of every report, including the nature of the concern, the action taken, and the outcome. Records are confidential and only accessible to authorised club leaders and investigators. This ensures accountability and protects the rights of both the child and the adult involved.

The reporting pathway ensures transparency, fairness and most importantly, the safety of every child. By following this process step by step, the club demonstrates its commitment to safeguarding and to building a culture where raising concerns is welcomed and supported.

Appendix C: Consent Form for Photography & Video

Star-Mites Gymnastics recognises that photography and video can play a positive role in celebrating achievements and promoting the sport. However, we also understand that images of children must be managed responsibly to protect privacy and safety. This appendix explains our consent requirements and how images will be used.

Each year, parents or guardians are required to complete a written consent form for their child. This consent must be renewed annually, so families can reconsider their preferences as children grow and circumstances change. The form is clear and straightforward, giving parents control over how their child's image is used.

Consent covers several possible uses. Internal displays include noticeboards, newsletters, and in-gym presentations where children's photos may be shown to celebrate participation. Families may choose to allow or decline this use without affecting their child's involvement in the club.

The club website is another area where photos may be displayed. This is a public platform, and parents must explicitly agree before a child's photo is published. Images used online will never include personal information such as surnames, addresses, or contact details.

Social media is a powerful tool for engagement, but it also carries risks. Parents must decide whether they consent to their child's photo being posted on the official Star-Mites Gymnastics social media accounts. Any images used will be respectful, age-appropriate, and consistent with our child safety policy.

At competitions, photographs and videos may be taken by event organisers, media outlets, or official photographers. By giving consent, parents acknowledge that their child may be included in this coverage. However, if consent is withheld, the club will take steps to limit images within our control and inform organisers where possible.

Families may withdraw consent at any time. If parents no longer wish for their child's images to be used, they can contact the club in writing via email. From that point forward, the club will cease using the child's image in new publications or media, although it may not be possible to remove material already published.

This process ensures that parents remain in control of their child's image and that the club uses photographs and videos in a safe, respectful and transparent manner. The consent form is part of our broader safeguarding strategy, protecting children while still allowing us to celebrate their achievements and share the positive spirit of Star-Mites Gymnastics.