

Star-Mites Gymnastics

Member Protection & Codes of Behaviour Policy

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Approved by	Directors
Review Year	2025



Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to set out clear expectations for how all members of Star-Mites Gymnastics should behave and interact, both within the club and in the wider sporting community. Gymnastics is a sport that relies on trust, discipline, and teamwork, and maintaining a safe and respectful environment is essential for every child and adult who participates. Member protection ensures that the rights, safety, and wellbeing of every individual are prioritised above all else.

This policy applies to everyone who is involved in the club, including athletes, parents, guardians, coaches, officials, staff, contractors, and volunteers. It extends beyond the gymnastics floor to cover competitions, club events, travel, digital communication, and social media use. In other words, any time a person is acting as a representative of Star-Mites Gymnastics, this policy sets the standards of conduct expected.

The scope of this policy also includes how concerns are reported and managed. While Gymnastics Australia and the WA Department of Sport and Recreation provide overarching guidelines, this document explains how those principles are implemented at a local club level. It ensures that everyone, regardless of their role, knows what behaviour is acceptable, what is not, and what steps to take if they feel unsafe or disrespected.

By defining expectations clearly and providing pathways for support, this policy aims to build a club culture where everyone feels valued, respected, and confident that their welfare is protected.

Definitions

It is important to define some of the key terms used in this policy to avoid confusion and ensure everyone understands the expectations. “Member protection” refers to the rules and processes that keep members safe from harassment, bullying, abuse, or unfair treatment. It is about safeguarding people from harm while promoting fairness, equality, and respect.

“Harassment” is behaviour that makes someone feel intimidated, offended, or humiliated. This may be physical, verbal, or digital. For example, mocking a child for a mistake, sending hurtful messages online, or using threatening gestures in the gym are all forms of harassment.

“Bullying” refers to repeated, harmful behaviour where one person seeks to intimidate, control, or isolate another. In a gymnastics setting, this might look like deliberately excluding a child from activities, spreading rumours, or ganging up against them in training.

“Codes of Behaviour” are detailed guidelines for how different groups in the club — athletes, parents, and coaches — are expected to act. These codes are not optional; they are requirements for continued participation in the club. Together, they create consistent standards across the whole community.

By making these definitions clear, we ensure that members know exactly what these terms mean and can identify when behaviour does not meet the standards of the club.

Policy Statement

Star-Mites Gymnastics is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for all members. We believe that sport should enrich lives, build confidence, and promote physical and emotional wellbeing. To achieve this, our club must actively prevent and respond to behaviours that harm individuals or damage our culture.

This policy is grounded in the principles of Gymnastics Australia’s Member Protection Policy, the WA Government’s Child Safe Sport Framework, and broader Australian standards on respect, safety, and equality in community sport. We aim to exceed compliance with these requirements by embedding protection and respect into the daily life of the club.

We recognise that safeguarding members is not only about preventing harm, but also about promoting positive conduct. That means celebrating diversity, supporting children and young people in their development, and modelling behaviours that encourage teamwork, resilience, and respect.

By committing to this policy, all members of Star-Mites Gymnastics agree to uphold the values of honesty, integrity, fairness, and care for others. These values apply whether on the competition floor, at training, or in the way we interact online.

General Standards of Behaviour

All members are expected to act with integrity and respect at all times. This means treating others with kindness, using encouraging language, and creating an environment where everyone feels included. Even small actions — such as listening when someone speaks or offering encouragement after a mistake — help build a positive culture.

Negative behaviours such as yelling, swearing, gossiping, or deliberately excluding others have no place at Star-Mites Gymnastics. These actions can cause long-term harm to confidence and trust, and they directly undermine the supportive environment we work hard to maintain. Everyone, from athletes to parents to staff, has a responsibility to ensure their behaviour supports rather than damages the wellbeing of others.

Respect also extends to facilities and equipment. Members are expected to use equipment safely and responsibly, following all coaching instructions. Careless or reckless use of equipment can put both the individual and others at risk. Pride in the club's facilities also reflects pride in the club community as a whole.

By setting high standards of behaviour, we create an environment where athletes can focus on learning and improving, coaches can teach effectively, and families can feel confident that their children are in safe hands. These standards are not negotiable — they are essential to the functioning and reputation of Star-Mites Gymnastics.

Role-Specific Codes

While general standards apply to everyone, different groups within the club have unique responsibilities. For this reason, Star-Mites Gymnastics has developed three role-specific Codes of Behaviour — for athletes, parents/guardians, and coaches/officials. These are provided in full in the appendices to this policy.

Athletes are expected to train with respect, follow instructions, support teammates, and represent the club positively both inside and outside the gym. Parents and guardians are expected to model respectful behaviour, support their child's development, and maintain positive relationships with coaches and staff. Coaches and officials are expected to uphold the highest professional standards, prioritising safety, fairness, and inclusion at all times.

These codes are not just lists of rules; they are guides to help each group understand what it means to contribute to a safe and positive culture. They also provide concrete examples of behaviours that are unacceptable, such as bullying, undermining coaches, or showing favouritism.

By aligning the expectations of athletes, parents, and coaches, we ensure consistency across the club. Everyone knows their role, and everyone is accountable for contributing to the safety and wellbeing of the community.

Social Media and Digital Conduct

In today's world, digital communication is part of everyday life. While social media can be a positive tool for celebrating achievements and connecting with the community, it also presents risks. At Star-Mites Gymnastics, we have clear expectations for how digital platforms should be used.

All communication through email, messaging platforms, or social media must be respectful, age-appropriate, and aligned with the values of the club. Members must not use digital communication to bully, harass, or spread negative comments about others. This includes private group chats, text messages, and public social media posts.

Images of children are especially sensitive. No photos or videos of athletes should be shared online without written parental consent. Even when consent is provided, images must be respectful, never exploitative, and should not include personal details such as surnames or addresses. The club has a separate consent form for photography and video, which outlines parents' rights to control how their child's image is used.

Breaches of digital conduct can be just as harmful as face-to-face misconduct. They will be investigated seriously and may lead to disciplinary action, including removal from club platforms or referral to external authorities if necessary. By setting clear digital standards, we protect the reputation of the club and the safety of our athletes.

Reporting and Support

It is important that every member feels safe to raise concerns and confident that they will be taken seriously. Star-Mites Gymnastics has a clear reporting process to ensure that all issues are addressed fairly and promptly.

Any member who feels unsafe, disrespected, or concerned about behaviour should report the issue to the Club Manager or the Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO). At Star-Mites, the MPIO is Lauren Murray, who can be contacted at lauren@starmites.com.au. Reports will always be handled with confidentiality and sensitivity.

When a report is received, the first priority is the safety and wellbeing of the child or member involved. Immediate steps will be taken to address risks, and an investigation will follow where appropriate. Some matters may be resolved internally, while others — particularly those involving serious misconduct or child safety — may be referred to external agencies such as Sport Integrity Australia, WA Police, or the Department of Communities.

Members who make a report in good faith are protected from retaliation or negative consequences. Speaking up is an act of courage, and the club values and respects those who contribute to a safer environment by raising concerns.

Breaches and Consequences

Breaches of this policy, including the Codes of Behaviour, will not be ignored. The club is committed to responding fairly, consistently, and proportionately to all incidents.

Minor issues may be addressed through education, coaching, or mediation, particularly where a member is willing to take responsibility for their behaviour and improve. More serious breaches, such as harassment, abuse, or deliberate endangerment, may result in suspension, termination of membership, or referral to external authorities.

Consequences will always take into account the nature and seriousness of the behaviour, the impact on others, and whether the member has previously breached the policy. By applying consequences fairly, the club reinforces that every member has a responsibility to maintain the safety and integrity of the community.

Ultimately, the aim is not only to punish poor behaviour but also to prevent it from recurring, and to restore a safe and respectful environment for all.

Review Statement

This policy is a living document. It must remain relevant, effective, and consistent with current laws, guidelines, and community expectations. For this reason, the policy is reviewed annually by the club's leadership, with input from Gymnastics Australia, WA Sport and Recreation, and members of the club community.

The review process examines whether the policy is being followed, whether reporting processes are working, and whether updates are required to address new challenges, such as changes in digital communication or competition rules. Feedback from athletes, parents, and staff is welcomed as part of this process.

The review year for this policy is 2025, with the next scheduled review in 2026 unless urgent updates are required sooner. Updates will be communicated to all members and published on the club's website.

By committing to regular review, Star-Mites Gymnastics ensures that its Member Protection & Codes of Behaviour Policy remains a strong foundation for a safe, respectful, and thriving community.

Appendix A: Athlete Code of Behaviour

At Star-Mites Gymnastics, athletes are the heart of our community, and it is essential that all gymnasts understand their responsibilities in creating a safe, respectful and supportive club culture. The Athlete Code of Behaviour exists not only to set boundaries but to help gymnasts understand how their choices impact others and their own experience.

Every gymnast is expected to show respect for themselves and for those around them. This means arriving prepared to train, following instructions from coaches, and caring for equipment and facilities. Respect also means using kind language, supporting teammates, and acknowledging that everyone learns at a different pace.

Positive behaviour includes encouraging others, celebrating effort as much as results, and recognising the achievements of teammates. By lifting each other up, gymnasts build trust and create an environment where everyone feels valued. This also means taking responsibility for mistakes, learning from them, and striving for improvement rather than blaming others.

Gymnastics requires discipline and focus. Athletes are expected to listen carefully to coaches, follow safety guidelines, and avoid behaviours that put themselves or others at risk. This includes refraining from reckless stunts, rough play, or ignoring instructions, as such actions can cause harm.

It is also important that gymnasts take care of their own wellbeing. Athletes should communicate openly with coaches if they are experiencing pain, injury, or distress. Hiding these issues not only risks further harm but also prevents coaches from providing the right support.

Outside the gym, athletes are representatives of Star-Mites Gymnastics. Whether at competitions, community events, or online, gymnasts are expected to act with integrity, humility and sportsmanship. This includes showing respect to officials, competitors, and spectators, regardless of the outcome of events.

Unacceptable behaviours include bullying, teasing, excluding others, or any form of harassment. Such conduct undermines the safety and enjoyment of others and will be taken seriously. Athletes are encouraged to speak up if they feel unsafe or witness unacceptable behaviour.

By upholding this Code, athletes not only protect themselves but also help build a club culture that is inclusive, respectful, and empowering. Gymnasts are reminded that the goal is not only to develop skills but also to grow as people, demonstrating the values of teamwork, discipline, and respect in everything they do.

Appendix B: Parent/Guardian Code of Behaviour

Parents and guardians play a vital role in shaping the sporting experience of their children. At Star-Mites Gymnastics, we believe that a positive and respectful relationship between parents, coaches, and athletes is essential for children to thrive. The Parent/Guardian Code of Behaviour outlines expectations to ensure that children are supported in a safe and encouraging environment.

Parents are expected to model respect and integrity at all times. This includes treating coaches, staff, other parents, and children with courtesy. The language used around children should always be supportive and constructive. Negative comments, criticism of coaches during training, or disparaging remarks about other children can harm confidence and create unnecessary tension.

Supporting children involves encouraging effort and commitment rather than focusing solely on results. Gymnastics is a long-term journey of development, and children should be praised for perseverance, resilience, and improvement. This mindset helps reduce pressure and allows young athletes to enjoy their sport and develop lifelong skills.

Parents should also respect the authority and expertise of coaches. While questions and communication are welcomed, instructions to athletes during training or competition should be left to the coaching team. Mixed messages can confuse children and undermine trust in the program. Constructive feedback should always be directed through appropriate channels rather than in front of athletes.

Being reliable and respectful of commitments is another expectation. Parents should ensure children arrive on time, are properly prepared, and attend scheduled training sessions and competitions. Communication about absences or injuries should be provided promptly, as this helps coaches adjust training and maintain safe practices.

Parents are also expected to create a safe and supportive environment outside the gym. This includes ensuring children have proper rest, nutrition, and balance between sport, school, and family life. Parents who model healthy lifestyles and manage stress positively set powerful examples for their children.

At competitions, parents represent the club as much as athletes. Cheering should always be positive, respectful, and sportsmanlike, never critical of judges, officials, or other competitors. Star-Mites Gymnastics does not tolerate aggressive sideline behaviour, and breaches will be addressed seriously.

Ultimately, parents are partners in creating a safe and nurturing environment. By supporting coaches, modelling respect, and encouraging their children with kindness and patience, parents help build a community where athletes can flourish both in gymnastics and in life.

Appendix C: Coach/Official Code of Behaviour

Coaches and officials hold positions of trust and authority within Star-Mites Gymnastics. The way they conduct themselves directly shapes the culture, safety, and success of the club. The Coach/Official Code of Behaviour sets high standards to ensure all children are treated fairly, training is conducted safely, and the values of respect and integrity are consistently upheld.

Coaches must place the welfare and safety of gymnasts above all else. This means designing training sessions that are developmentally appropriate, prioritising injury prevention, and responding promptly to concerns. Safety equipment must be used correctly, and spotting techniques must always respect the child's dignity while preventing harm.

Professionalism is a core expectation. Coaches and officials should maintain appropriate boundaries with children, avoiding behaviour that could be misinterpreted as favouritism, secrecy, or inappropriate familiarity. All communication must remain respectful, age-appropriate, and focused on the child's sporting development.

Inclusion is a key value. Coaches are expected to provide equal opportunities for participation, regardless of ability, background, or gender. Discrimination, exclusion, or stereotyping of athletes is unacceptable. Adjustments should be made to support the needs of children with disabilities or unique learning styles.

Fairness is also essential. Coaches and officials must apply rules consistently, treat all athletes with impartiality, and avoid creating situations where bias could be perceived. Integrity in judging, scoring, or coaching decisions protects the credibility of the sport and the trust of athletes and families.

Education and role modelling are equally important. Coaches should encourage resilience, sportsmanship, and respect in athletes by demonstrating these values themselves. This includes managing stress calmly, accepting outcomes gracefully, and dealing with conflicts respectfully.

Coaches and officials are also responsible for continuous learning. Ongoing professional development, completion of child safety training, and staying updated with Gymnastics Australia standards are not optional but core responsibilities. This ensures that the highest standards of safety and coaching excellence are maintained.

Breaches of this Code are taken seriously. Any form of misconduct, harassment, or unsafe behaviour will result in disciplinary action and possible referral to external authorities. Coaches and officials are reminded that their influence extends beyond skills; they are shaping the character, confidence, and wellbeing of every child they mentor.