

1: CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COACHES

Coaches/Team Officials working with young people in _____ (name of club) should be suitable and appropriately qualified. All adults working with young gymnasts will be expected to go through appropriate recruitment and selection procedures that apply to all persons with substantial access to young people, whether paid or unpaid within Irish Gymnastics.

Coaches are responsible for setting and monitoring the boundaries between a working relationship and friendship with their gymnasts. This is particularly important when the Coach and gymnast are of the opposite sex. The Coach must realise that certain situations or friendly actions/telling jokes could be misinterpreted, not only by the gymnast but also by outsiders motivated by jealousy, dislike or mistrust and could lead to allegations of serious misconduct or impropriety.

Coaches can ensure that gymnastics has a beneficial impact when they adhere to the following guidelines:

- *Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every young gymnast and treat each one equally regardless of age, gender or ability*
- *Ensure that nobody involved with Irish Gymnastics acts towards, engages in any conduct or speaks to another person in a manner or engages in any other conduct which threatens, disparages, vilifies or insults another person on the basis of that persons' race, religion, colour, descent, national, ethnic or socio-economic background*
- *Be generous with praise and be positive during coaching sessions so that all young gymnasts always leave with a sense of achievement and an increased level of self-esteem*
- *Promote a culture that ensures all young people are listened to and respected*
- *Coaches must not train skills above their level of ability*
- *The activity being undertaken should be suitable for the age, experience and ability of the gymnast*
- *Gymnasts should have been systematically prepared for the activity being undertaken and made aware of their personal responsibilities in terms of safety*
- *Coaches must be able to recognise and accept when to refer a gymnast to other clubs or coaches. It is the responsibility of the Coach as far as possible, to verify the competence and integrity of the person to whom they refer the gymnast*
- *Be punctual and properly attired and display high standards of appearance*
- *NEVER consume alcohol before, during coaching/events or on trips with young people*
- *Plan appropriately for each session and ensure proper levels of supervision until the gymnast leaves the Club venue or event with an appropriate adult*
- *Don't shout at or lecture any young gymnast or reprimand/ridicule them when they make a mistake. (Young people learn best through trial and error. They should not be afraid to risk error to learn)*
- *Don't equate losing with failure and do not develop a preoccupation with winning. (The level of improvement made by the young gymnast is the best indicator of the Coach's effectiveness)*
- *Physical punishment or physical force must never be used*
- *Never use foul language or provocative language/gestures to a gymnast, opponents or officials*
- *Adhere to IG guidance on the use of mobile phones – see guidelines on page 16 of the Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Youth Sport in Irish Gymnastics*
- *Never undertake any form of therapy (hypnosis etc), in the training of young people*
- *Ensure gymnasts are safely attired (check their personal equipment) and that proper insurance arrangements are in place*
- *Set realistic but achievable performance goals ensuring a safe enjoyable environment*
- *Avoid taking coaching sessions on your own or avoid a situation where you are alone in a car or changing room with a gymnast*
- *Whenever the Club travels away, please refer to "Gymnastics Away Guidelines", page 15 of the Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Youth Sport in Irish Gymnastics*
- *Avoid any inappropriate touching when assisting any gymnast to perform a technique or when First Aid is being administered. Physical contact should only occur when necessary and in an open and appropriate way and always be intended to meet the needs of the gymnast*
- *When supporting, be certain the child and the parent's/carer's know what you are doing and why. The support being provided must be for the needs of the gymnast*
- *When conditioning, the use of weights is not permitted until gymnasts have reached full maturity – skills and exercises used for a gymnast's physical preparation are only to be done using a gymnast's own body weight/resistance. Coaches must not overload gymnasts beyond their limits*

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- *Make adequate provision for First Aid and do not encourage or allow gymnasts to perform while injured. (Keep an accurate record of each injury and ensure that another official /team official is present when a gymnast is being attended to and can corroborate the relevant details – see Accident/Incident form Irish Gymnastics “Code Sheet” 12 <http://www.irishgymnastics.ie/ethics/ethics.cfm>*
- *Ask parents/guardians or nominated Club Officials to be responsible for young people in changing rooms*
- *Never take body measurements or engage in certain types of fitness testing without the presence of other adults*
- *Ensure appropriate confidentiality to all gymnasts, as you may be privy to information about the young person or their family*
- *Challenge bullying in any form ie physical or emotional. Bullying is not an accepted behaviour towards anyone in IG – child, coach, volunteer or parent*

For more detailed advice on best practice with technical matters of coaching, please refer to Irish Gymnastics Coaching Resources or view: <http://www.irishgymnastics.ie/ethics/ethics.cfm>

I confirm that I have read the Coaches Code of Conduct and agree to abide by the guidelines.

Signature _____ Club _____

Print Name _____ Date _____