

Sparta Gymnastics Child Protection Procedure

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CONTROLLING BODY: Sparta Gymnastics – Managing Director

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Sparta Gymnastics is committed to ensuring that the safety, welfare, and well-being of children are maintained at all times during their participation in activities run by Sparta Gymnastics and its member bodies. Every person and organisation bound by this procedure must always place the safety and welfare of children above all other considerations.

Sparta Gymnastics acknowledges that our staff (paid or unpaid) provide a valuable contribution to the positive experience of our juniors. Accordingly, any person involved in the instruction, management, or coaching of any member under the age of 18 years may be asked to undergo screening procedures, including police and other probity checks.

PROCEDURE APPLICATION

This procedure applies to all members of Sparta Gymnastics, including athletes, coaches, judges, employees, administrators, officials, volunteers, and members of the club.

This procedure applies equally to members involved in each of Sparta Gymnastics disciplines, including Men's Artistic Gymnastics, Women's Artistic Gymnastics, Rhythmic Gymnastics, General Gymnastics, Sport Aerobics, Trampoline Sports, and Sports Acrobatics.

This procedure covers behaviour occurring both within and outside the course of Sparta Gymnastics business, activities, and events, when the behaviour involves members and negatively affects relationships within Sparta Gymnastics' sport and work environment.

DEFINITIONS & PROCEDURE COVERAGE

Child Abuse

Relates to children at risk of harm (usually by adults, sometimes by other children) and often by those they know and trust. It can take many forms. Children may be harmed by both verbal and physical actions and by people failing to provide them with basic care.

Child Abuse Procedures

Child abuse may include:

- **Physical abuse:** Hurting a child or impairing their development, such as hitting, shaking, or other physical harm; providing alcohol or drugs; giving harmful nutritional advice; or training that exceeds the child's development or maturity.
- **Sexual abuse:** When an adult or another child encourages or forces a child to watch or engage in sexual activity, or subjects a child to inappropriate sexual conduct (e.g., sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, pornography, inappropriate touching or conversations).
- **Emotional abuse:** Ill-treatment of a child through humiliation, taunting, sarcasm, yelling, negative criticism, name-calling, ignoring, or placing unrealistic expectations on a child.
- **Neglect:** Failure to provide essential needs such as food, water, shelter, or clothing, or to protect a child from danger or foreseeable risk of harm or injury.

Child Protection Procedures

Members must not employ or engage any person (whether paid or unpaid) to coach or supervise a child under 18 years without first:

- Requiring that person to disclose whether they have been convicted of a serious sex offense.
- Conducting a police or appropriate probity check on that person.

A member must notify the appropriate authorities (such as the Commission for Children and Young People) of:

- Any applicants for employment rejected due to risks identified through screening processes.
- The name and identifying details of any person against whom relevant disciplinary proceedings have been completed in relation to child abuse, irrespective of the findings.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Administrators:** Must ensure the organization encourages the reporting of discrimination, harassment, or child abuse, regardless of the offender, and that appropriate training is provided to those managing and implementing this procedure.

Complaint Procedures and Disciplinary Action

Sparta Gymnastics has developed a Complaints Management Procedure to address any breaches promptly, seriously, sensitively, and confidentially. The organization is committed to ensuring fairness and natural justice during the investigation of any complaints.

Disciplinary action will be taken against anyone who:

- Is found to be in breach of this procedure.
- Victimizes or retaliates against a person who has made a complaint.
- Is found to have made a frivolous or vexatious complaint.

The discipline may range from an apology or counseling to suspension, dismissal, or other actions depending on the severity of the breach.

Complaint Handling Procedure

Procedural Steps:

Sparta Gymnastics will deal with any complaints promptly, seriously, and sensitively.

At any stage, it is the complainant's prerogative to proceed with or dissolve a complaint.

- **Discussion:** If a complaint arises, the complainant is encouraged to consider the following options:
 - Approach the person causing the problem and ask them to stop the behavior.
 - If the behavior continues, or if it's not possible to approach the person, contact a coach, manager, Member Protection Contact Officer, or Director of the club.
- **Member Protection Contact Officer:** If the complainant decides to proceed, the Officer will refer the matter for investigation.
- **Member Protection Grievance Officer:** The Officer determines whether to investigate and, if proceeding, informs the alleged wrongdoer, interviews parties, and keeps records.
- **Disciplinary Committee:** If no resolution is reached, the Committee decides on the appropriate action.
- **External Resolution:** If unresolved, the complainant may seek mediation or arbitration from an external organization, with the Officer's support.

Suggestions for Working with Children

- **Communication Boundaries:** Be mindful of how communication is perceived. Use positive, age-appropriate language, and explain methods of instruction, especially when physical contact is required.
- **Physical Contact Boundaries:** Ensure physical contact is relevant to skill development and seek permission where necessary.
- **Location Boundaries:** Avoid unaccompanied, one-on-one situations with children.
- **Knowledge Boundaries:** Stay informed on child protection legislation, policies, and practices.
- **Leadership Boundaries:** Avoid hurtful or inappropriate activities that could harm children physically or emotionally.

Coaching Children with Special Needs

Coaching children with special needs may require more frequent physical contact, but basic practices outlined in the procedure apply to all children. Coaches must ensure that dignity and respect are maintained for all children.

Cultural Considerations

Coaches must be sensitive to cultural differences regarding physical contact and communication. Diplomacy and care should be exercised, especially for children who may have experienced trauma.

Use of Images

- **Acquiring Images:** Always obtain parental/guardian consent before photographing or recording a child.
- **Displaying Images:** Avoid using both names and images together, and only use appropriate images that focus on the activity rather than the child.
- **Concerns about Image Use:** Ensure a process is in place for reporting concerns about inappropriate use of images.

Confidentiality and Reporting

Sparta Gymnastics will maintain confidentiality regarding complaints unless disclosure is necessary as part of the process or required by law.

