



IGAT

SAFEGUARDING CHILD AND PROTECTION POLICY

Version 1.0



Version History

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Contact Information

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Overview

At the Independent Gymnastics Association (IGA), safeguarding and protecting children is our highest priority. We are committed to ensuring a safe and supportive environment for all our members, regardless of their role within IGA. We believe that every individual shares a joint responsibility in creating and maintaining this safe space. Our comprehensive safeguarding policy includes clear guidelines on recognising and reporting abuse, procedures for handling concerns, and mandatory training for all staff and volunteers. By working together, we can uphold the highest standards of safety and care for our young athletes.

Our Approach To Safeguarding

Independent Gymnastics Association (IGA) has adopted the Child Safe Organisation framework as a driver for embedding a safeguarding culture throughout our entire association and gymnastics community. This enables IGA to promote a culture of openness and trust that ensures safeguarding is at the heart of everything we do. Our framework is based upon principles. These are informed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Relevant legislation, guidance from the NSPCC, Our values, behaviours and understanding the best practice.

Definitions

Safeguarding Children

Safeguarding children refers to the actions, policies, and practices that ensure the safety and well-being of children. This includes protecting children from abuse and maltreatment, preventing harm to their health or development, ensuring children grow up with safe and effective care, and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Well-Being

Well-being refers to the overall health, happiness, and prosperity of an individual. For children, it encompasses physical health, mental health, emotional security, social connections, educational opportunities, and living conditions that allow them to thrive and develop positively.

Child at Risk

A child at risk is any child who is experiencing or is likely to experience harm, abuse, neglect, or exploitation. This designation requires a protective response from responsible authorities to ensure the child's safety and well-being.

Adult at Risk

An adult at risk is an individual aged 18 or over who may be unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation due to their age, disability, illness, or other factors that make them vulnerable. This includes adults who may be subjected to physical, emotional, financial, or sexual abuse, neglect, or exploitation.



Child Safe Organisation Principles

Safeguarding Children Comes First

The safety and well-being of children are the top priority in all our activities, decisions, and policies. This means the best interests of the child are paramount. Every action taken by the organisation should reflect this commitment including when to maintain confidentiality and when to share information about them. This is embedded into the culture of our organisation, leadership and governance.

Children Are Listened To and Informed About Their Rights

We ensure that children have a voice in matters that affect them and are informed about their rights. Their opinions and concerns are taken seriously and acted upon appropriately. Children have the right to participate in decisions about their lives. Their views, wishes, feelings and experiences are evident in our work with them.

Equality is Upheld and Diverse Needs Are Respected:

We recognise and respect the diverse backgrounds, identities, and needs of all children. Our practices are inclusive and non-discriminatory, ensuring that every child feels valued and supported. All children have a right to protection from harm and abuse, regardless of age, ability, gender, racial heritage, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, identity or additional vulnerabilities including protected characteristics.

Suitability and Support of Personnel:

All individuals working with us, including staff, coaches, and volunteers, are carefully vetted to ensure they are suitable for working with children. They are also provided with the necessary support and resources to promote safeguarding effectively. All members of our organization are required to have a current and clear DBS check. Additionally, they must attend a safeguarding course, with the NSPCC in Sport being our recommended provider.

Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation:

We continuously monitor and evaluate our safeguarding practices to ensure they are effective. Feedback from children, parents, and staff is used to make improvements where necessary. There are a suite of policy, procedure and guidance that is monitored and reviewed to adapt all new legislation.

Transparent Reporting and Accountability:

We have clear, transparent processes for reporting concerns or incidents. All reports are taken seriously, investigated thoroughly, and handled with confidentiality and sensitivity.



The Building Blocks of Our Safeguarding Work

Culture and Values:

At IGA, safeguarding is at the heart of our culture and values. We are deeply committed to creating a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for all our members. Our values emphasise the importance of vigilance, respect, and care in all interactions. By upholding the highest standards of safeguarding, we aim to protect and empower every child, ensuring they can thrive both in and out of the gym.

Safe Recruitment:

Recruitment of our safeguarding officers at the IGA is conducted with the utmost care and diligence. We are committed to appointing staff who are not only fully qualified but also possess the necessary skills and knowledge to uphold our high standards of child protection. Our selection process includes comprehensive background checks, including clear and up-to-date DBS certifications, and a thorough evaluation of their experience in safeguarding roles. We prioritise candidates who demonstrate a deep understanding of safeguarding principles, a proactive approach to child safety, and a genuine commitment to fostering a secure and supportive environment for all our members.

Actively Managing Safeguarding Risks:

At the IGA, we are continuously managing risk within the gymnastics community to ensure the safety and well-being of all our members. Our proactive approach involves regularly reviewing and updating our safety protocols, conducting thorough risk assessments for all activities, and maintaining open communication channels for reporting concerns. We provide ongoing training for our staff and coaches to identify and mitigate potential risks effectively. By fostering a culture of vigilance and responsibility, we strive to create a secure environment where gymnasts can focus on their development and achieve their full potential safely.

Guidelines on Recognising A Safeguarding Concern

At the IGA, the safety and well-being of children and young people are our utmost priorities. This guide provides a clear and comprehensive outline on how to report a safeguarding concern. Whether you are a staff member, volunteer, parent, or participant, it is crucial to understand the steps to take if you suspect a child is at risk of harm, abuse, or neglect.

Recognising the signs:

Before reporting a concern, it is essential to recognise the signs of potential abuse or neglect. These can include:

- **Physical Abuse:** Unexplained bruises, burns, or fractures.
- **Emotional Abuse:** Excessive withdrawal, fearfulness, or anxiety.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Inappropriate knowledge of sexual behavior for their age, or unexplained discomfort or injuries in the genital area.
- **Neglect:** Poor hygiene, malnutrition, or unattended medical needs

Immediate Actions:

If you suspect a child is in immediate danger:

Ensure Safety: Make sure the child is safe from immediate harm. If necessary, call emergency services (999 in the UK).

Stay Calm: Keep calm and do not confront the suspected abuser. Focus on supporting the child.

Reassure the Child: If a child discloses abuse, listen without judgment, reassure them that they did the right thing by telling you, and let them know that they are not to blame.

Reporting the Concern:

Follow these steps to report a safeguarding concern:

Document the Concern: Write down what you have noticed or what the child has told you. Include dates, times, and any other relevant details. Use the child's own words when possible.

Contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO): Report your concern to the club's designated safeguarding officer immediately. If the DSO is unavailable, you can contact our safeguarding team.

- Designated email for all safeguarding concerns: safeguarding@igauk.com

OR Complete a Safeguarding Report Form: Fill out the IGA safeguarding report form, providing as much detail as possible. This form can be found directly via our website <https://www.independentgymnastics.com/safe-sport/>



Our Safeguarding Procedures

What Happens next?

Once a concern is reported:

Assessment by DSO: The DSO will assess the information provided, and will submit the information directly to our safeguarding team and determine the appropriate action.

External Referral: If necessary, the DSO will refer the case to the relevant external authorities. They will provide all the documented information and cooperate fully with any investigations.

Confidentiality: The information shared will be kept confidential and only shared with those who need to know to protect the child.

Support for the Child: The child involved will receive appropriate support and guidance. This may include counseling, medical assistance, or other services as needed.

IGA's Safeguarding Support

Allocation of an Officer: Once the DSO or persons reporting the safeguarding concern has contacted IGA. The case will be allocated a case number and safeguarding officer. Our officers maintain solid relationships with local authorities, including social services and law enforcement agencies. These partnerships ensure that any concerns are thoroughly investigated and addressed in accordance with legal and safeguarding protocols.

Review Procedures: The Safeguarding Officer will then review and document the incident which will be reviewed to ensure all procedures were followed correctly and to identify any areas for improvement.

Provide Support: Our safeguarding officer is dedicated to providing support to ensure that the correct steps are taken to address any safeguarding concern. We are committed to guiding you through the reporting process, offering advice, and taking necessary actions to protect the well-being of the child involved. In some cases, a safeguarding officer may conduct a club visit to perform a thorough risk assessment, ensuring that all potential risks are identified and managed effectively. This hands-on approach helps maintain a safe environment for all our members and reinforces our commitment to safeguarding within IGA. Clubs must allow safeguarding officers to conduct a club visit if a safeguarding concern has been raised, to ensure thorough assessment and appropriate action. Refusal to allow our officers to visit the club in question will result in a suspension from club activities.

Steps Moving Forwards: Once a safeguarding issue has been thoroughly investigated at IGA, an outcome will be determined. In some cases, this decision may involve collaboration with local authorities, such as social services or the police, who will provide guidance and support throughout the process. Alternatively, our dedicated safeguarding officer will assess the findings and propose a comprehensive plan to enhance safety measures within our environment.



Outcomes of Safeguarding Concerns

Comprehensive Planning

Once all investigations are completed, our safeguarding officer at IGA will implement a comprehensive plan for the coach and club involved. This plan will focus on ensuring that all safety protocols are thoroughly reviewed, updated, and strictly adhered to. It may include additional training for staff and volunteers, reinforcing policies and procedures, and conducting regular audits to monitor compliance. By taking proactive steps to enhance safety measures, we are committed to maintaining a secure environment where every member feels protected and supported in their gymnastics journey at IGA.

Temporary Suspension

At IGA we take any safeguarding concerns or breaches of conduct seriously. In some cases when local authorities or the police are involved a member of IGA may be suspended whilst the investigation takes place. When a member is temporarily suspended, it means that they are temporarily prohibited from participating in any IGA activities or accessing their facilities pending the outcome of an investigation or disciplinary process. This measure is taken to ensure the safety and well-being of all individuals within our community. Our goal is to maintain a supportive and secure environment where everyone can thrive, and decisions regarding suspension are made with careful consideration and adherence to our safeguarding policies. We are committed to handling such matters confidentially and fairly, prioritising the safety and welfare of our members above all else.

It's important for all IGA members to understand that a temporary suspension does not imply guilt; it is simply a precautionary measure to ensure safety.

Suspension from IGA

In serious cases, a member of IGA may face permanent suspension, which entails a permanent termination of their membership and all associated privileges within our organisation. This decision is made following a thorough investigation and careful consideration of the circumstances involved. Permanent suspension is implemented to safeguard the well-being of our community and uphold the values of integrity, respect, and safety that IGA stands for. It means that the individual is no longer permitted to participate in any IGA activities, enter our premises, or represent our organisation in any capacity. We take such actions seriously, ensuring that they are carried out in accordance with our safeguarding policies and with the best interests of our members and the broader community in mind.



Helpful Documents and Information

Important Contacts

NSPCC

Our voice Helpline is currently available 11am–6pm Monday to Friday. You can still email help@NSPCC.org.uk or complete our report abuse online form at any time for free. If you think a child is in immediate danger, please call the police on 999 straight away.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk>

Childline

You can talk to us about anything. No problem is too big or too small. Call us on 0800 1111 or chat to us online. Childline is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

<https://www.childline.org.uk>

Helpful Documents:

Our website is home to a comprehensive collection of safeguarding documents that are available for download. Whether you need to access our safeguarding policy, reporting forms, training materials, or guidelines on safe practices, these documents are easily accessible. They are essential resources designed to provide clear guidance and support to our members, ensuring that safeguarding measures are understood and followed consistently throughout IGA.