

Child Protection Code of Conduct

This is a Gymnastics Victoria Operational Policy approved by the Gymnastics Victoria CEO

Gymnastics Victoria is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of all children and young people, with a zero tolerance for child abuse. Everyone involved in any of the Gymnastics Victoria Gymsports is responsible for the care and protection of children under 18 and for reporting information about child abuse.

This document provides further guidance on adult interaction with children for people associated with Gymnastics Victoria and its affiliated clubs.

All persons involved in Gymnastics Victoria must abide by Gymnastics Victoria's Child Protection Policies:

- [Child Safe and Child Friendly Policy](#)
- [Member Protection Policy](#) (including updated [Codes of Behaviour](#))
- [Grievances and Complaints Policy](#)
- [Photographic and Filming Policy](#)
- [Child Protection Code of Conduct \(this document\)](#)

Introduction

Any form of abusive, derogatory, discriminatory, offensive or intimidating behaviour or language by adults towards children and young people, or children towards other children and young people, is not acceptable.

A person must not engage in any action that is, or may be perceived by a reasonable observer as, grooming behaviour.

Comments or actions that are negatively and unreasonably critical of a person's culture, ethnicity, language, gender identity, disability, sexuality, or age are unacceptable.

All Gymnastics Victoria club personnel, owners, club committee members, coaches, judges, GV Committee members, GV Board members, GV and Club employees, officials, State Team, volunteers, spectators, parents/guardians, partners, contractors and any other person associated with Gymnastics in Victoria (and any personnel affiliated clubs located in South Australia and NSW) are required to abide by this Code.

The following list of behaviours includes examples of what is acceptable and not acceptable behaviour.

Acceptable behaviours

All people involved in the care or unsupervised presence of children on behalf of, or in connection with, Gymnastics Victoria must:

- (a) conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their involvement with Gymnastics Victoria and as a role model to children and young people
- (b) treat all people with respect and be open to and accepting of diversity and difference in people's backgrounds, religion, work style and personal preferences
- (c) promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island children and young people (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island child or young person's self-identification)
- (d) promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children and young people with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination)

- (e) promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children and young people with a disability
- (f) listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused, that they are worried about their safety or the safety of another child
- (g) raise concerns, issues or problems about the suspected risk to a child with a Child Safety Officer
- (h) record and act upon all allegations or suspicions of abuse, discrimination or harassment
- (i) respect confidentiality when sharing information about children and young people in accordance with the Gymnastics Victoria Child Protection Policy and their reporting obligations
- (j) establish and maintain a child-safe environment in the course of their work
- (k) be professional in their actions
- (l) maintain strict impartiality; and
- (m) contact the police if a child is at immediate risk of abuse (telephone 000).

Unacceptable behaviours

All people involved in the care or unsupervised presence of children on behalf of Gymnastics Victoria must not:

- (a) spend time alone with a child or young person where there is risk, including overnight
- (b) take a child or young person to their home or encourage meetings outside program activities without a family member/guardian present
- (c) engage in rough physical games, hold, massage, kiss, cuddle or touch children in an inappropriate and or/culturally insensitive way
- (d) practice favouritism when building relationships with children
- (e) speak to a child or young person in a way that is or could be construed by any observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. Some examples are:
 - (i) swearing in the presence of a child
 - (ii) yelling at a child or young person, except in an emergency situation where the a child's safety may be in danger
 - (iii) dealing with a child while angry with the child; and
 - (iv) use of hurtful sarcasm.
- (f) using, possessing, or being under the influence of illegal drugs while in the presence of a child
- (g) using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol while supervising a child
- (h) providing or allowing a child to consume alcohol or illegal drugs
- (i) engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with a child except where a child is reporting this type of behaviour (once having this conversation immediately reporting it to your club management or the Gymnastics Victoria management
- (j) being naked in the presence of a child or showing images of you being naked to a child
- (k) possessing sexually oriented or morally inappropriate printed materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing, etc.)
- (l) sleeping in the same beds, sleeping bags or small tents with a child or young person; and/or

- (m) engaging in sexual contact with a child
- (n) Creating an alternative communication channel with a child outside of the workplace this includes social media
- (o) Make comments that intend to be humorous or not humorous with sexual references, inferences or connotations (examples of this can be inappropriate comments to children regarding nakedness, sex and/or using slang words with references to particular body parts)

For the purposes of this Policy, sexual contact is defined as sexual intercourse or the touching of an erogenous zone (including but not limited to the thighs, genitals, buttocks, pubic region or chest) for the purpose of sexually arousing or gratifying either person.

Physical Contact / Touching

All coaches, volunteer, staff and officials are required to follow the Gymnastics Victoria Codes of Behaviour located in the Member Protection Policy.

The people listed in the introduction of this document are prohibited from using physical discipline in any way for behaviour management of children and young people. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, scratching or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviours by children and young people.

Physical contact may be required in an emergency situation to remove children and young people quickly from danger or threat of danger.

Appropriate contact between the people listed in this document is part of normal human relationships. Some considerations and guidelines include the following:

- (a) consider the child or young person's age, developmental level, maturity and level of care required, for example, touching a child to gain their attention, guiding or comforting a distressed child or young person
- (b) work in an open environment; for example, in confidential interviews or a one-to-one meeting, the door should be open with visual access (NB: exceptions may apply for professions with strict confidentiality requirements such as meetings with a sports psychologist)
- (c) be alert to cues from children about how comfortable they are in your proximity and respect their need for personal space
- (d) be sensitive when interacting with children who may misinterpret your actions, such as those who may have been traumatised by abuse or adolescents seeking attention from a member of the opposite sex
- (e) be aware of cultural norms that may influence the interpretation of your behaviour
- (f) be cautious about physical contact in games or practical instruction. If you need to make physical contact for demonstrations, explain the activity and what you will do, maintain a safe and appropriate distance
- (g) physical contact should be made in a way that makes children feel comfortable, for example, shaking hands or a high 5. Unless a person is appointed as a medic, physio or masseuse massaging a child or allowing a child to massage you is considered inappropriate physical contact
- (h) the use of images of children as screen savers or backgrounds on personal electronic devices is not appropriate.
- (i) The collection, storage and use of photographs or images of children by Clubs or Gymnastics Victoria must be for gymnastics promotional purposes only.
- (j) be aware that the giving and receiving of gifts, giving extra attention, accepting a different standard of behaviour from a child or young person having 'special time' with a child or young person must be appropriate and justified as a strategy to meet teaching and learning outcomes

- (k) obtain permission from the club and parents when meeting with children or young people for activities outside of program hours
- (l) the provision of your personal contact details should be justified in terms of gymnastics, educational or professional purposes only
- (m) it is not appropriate for club personnel, owners, Committee members, Coaches, Judges, GV Committee members, Board management, employees, officials, State team officials, volunteers, spectators, partners and contractors to initiate out of gymnastics contact with a child unless it is in the context of an emergency
- (n) all forms of non-essential physical contact must be avoided wherever possible.

Transportation and off-site events

Other than in an emergency or other abnormal situation where no other option could be reasonably foreseen, it is not acceptable to transport children or young people without written permission from their parent, carer or guardian.

It is prohibited to have unnecessary and/or inappropriate physical contact with children or young people while in vehicles.

Children and young people should be transported directly to their destination. No stops should be made other than those that are reasonably scheduled for meals or comfort stops.

Confidentiality

Disclosing personal and sensitive information to club personnel, owners, Committee members, Coaches, Judges, GV Committee members, Board management, employees, officials, volunteers, spectators, partners and contractors:

When children or young people are having written or verbal interaction with club personnel, owners, Committee members, Coaches, Judges, GV Committee members, Directors, employees, officials, volunteers, spectators, partners, or contractors that interaction is confidential to the organisation and not to the individual. This means that an employee, volunteer, official, or Board member is able to talk with other employees, volunteers, officials, or Board members in a way that identifies the child or young person. With this in mind, the privacy of the child or young person should be respected at all times. When considering breaching their privacy who and how many people are told should be based on what is believed to be in the best interests of the child or young person.

Disclosing Information to People External to the Organisation

Club personnel, owners, Committee members, Coaches, Judges, GV Committee members, Board management, employees, officials, volunteers, partners and contractors should not discuss confidential matters about children or young people with other people in a way that identifies that child or young person except when they have the express permission of the child or young person or it complies with Gymnastics Victoria's Child Protection Framework. In circumstances where the Club or Gymnastics Victoria office believes that there is not enough knowledge within the organisation to provide the best possible assistance to a child or young person, they are able to seek expertise external to the club and Gymnastics Victoria. When communicating with people outside the club the child or young person's identity should be protected.

Key contacts

- Gymnastics Victoria Office - (03) 9005 4700
- Department of Health and Human Services Child Protection - <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/children,-families-and-young-people/child-protection>
- Child Protection Crisis Line – 24 Hours, seven days a week. Telephone: 13 12 78
- Victoria Police – Phone: 000