

WESTSIDE GYMNASTICS

Written Communication Policy

This Policy outlines clear boundaries for written and electronic communication between adults and children at Westside Gymnastics.

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Purpose

This Policy sets out clear boundaries for written and electronic communication between adults and children at Westside Gymnastics, to protect children from harm and give staff, coaches and volunteers clear, unambiguous expectations.

Scope

This Policy applies to all staff, coaches, judges, volunteers and contractors, in relation to any written communication with a gymnast under 18 - including text message, email, messaging apps, and club administration platforms.

General Principles

- Wherever possible, communication about a gymnast under 18 is directed to their parent/guardian, not the child directly;
- Where direct communication with a gymnast is necessary (e.g. squad logistics), a parent/guardian is copied in or included, and another adult (e.g. another coach) is also aware of or party to the communication;
- Communication is limited to club business - training times, logistics, performance feedback - and must never be personal, secretive, or ask a child to keep a communication from their parent/guardian;
- Communication occurs during reasonable hours, consistent with training and business hours, except in a genuine emergency; and
- Group communication (e.g. squad group chats) is preferred over one-to-one messages with a child.

Prohibited Communication

Staff, coaches and volunteers must never:

- Send a private, one-to-one message to a gymnast under 18 without a parent/guardian visible on the thread;
- Use language that is sexualised, overly familiar, or that a reasonable person would consider inappropriate between an adult and a child; or
- Ask a child to communicate through a personal (non-club) account or number that isn't known to the club and the child's parent/guardian.

Club Systems

Where practicable, Westside Gymnastics will use official club communication platforms (e.g. club management software, official email) rather than personal phone numbers or accounts, and will retain records of communications relevant to a child safety concern.

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Responding to a Breach

A breach of this Policy is reported and managed in accordance with the Child Safe Complaints Handling Procedure. Where a message raises an immediate safety concern, the Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer (or GA Integrity, where relevant) should be notified without delay.

Related Policies and Procedures

- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Social Media Policy
- Child Safe Complaints Handling Procedure