

The following information is extracted from The British Gymnastics Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

It is fully adopted by Cheshire Gymnastics, a club that is striving for excellence in all of its activities with the safety and happiness of all members its first priority.

Bullying is behaviour, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group; physically or emotionally. There is often a power imbalance that makes it hard for the victim/s to prevent or deal with the perpetrator's actions. The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children and young people, to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm (including selfharm). Bullying can occur between:

- An adult and child/young person
- A child/young person and child/young person
- A parent and their own child

Bullying may take many forms and may be conducted in person or through the actions of another person/other people. These include:

- Emotional: Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding belongings, threatening gestures), name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing/taunts, graffiti.
- Physical: Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence.
- Sexual: Unwanted physical contact or sexually offensive comment/s.
- Cyber: Email, Social Media and internet chat room misuse, mobile phone threats by text messaging and calls or misuse of technology (ie photographs/ video footage). Bullying may also take the form of singling out individuals because they belong to a particular group or are different in some way from others (prejudice-based bullying) and may include:
  - Racist and religious based bullying.
  - Homophobic/ bi-phobic/ trans-phobic: Because of their sexual orientation, or perceived, or actual gender identity.
  - Disablist: May focus on, or exploits, a particular aspect of the individual's disability. It is acknowledged that the competitive nature of sport can result in tensions that may lead to bullying but bullying cannot be condoned in any circumstance. Examples of bullying in gymnastics could be:
    - A gymnast who intimidates fellow gymnasts inappropriately.
    - A coach who adopts a win-at-all costs philosophy.
    - A parent who pushes too hard.
    - An official who places unfair pressure on a person.

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### Strategies to Discourage Bullying

- Create an open environment and provide adequate supervision at all times.
- Encourage children to speak out and share any concerns with the person in charge, the Club Welfare Officer or other responsible adults.
- Take all signs or allegations of possible bullying seriously.

### Responding to Victims of Bullying

- Anyone becoming aware that a child or young person is being bullied, they should offer reassurance and try to gain their trust.
- Explain that someone in authority may need to be informed.
- Keep accurate records of what happened and what was said, together with names of those involved and any action taken.
- Report suspicions or concerns to the person in charge. Confronting the Bully(ies)
  - Talk to the bully, or bullies; explain the situation and try to get them to understand the consequences of their actions.
  - Seek an apology from the bully (or bullies) to the victim.
  - Inform the bully's parents.
  - Insist that any borrowed items are returned to the victim.
  - Impose sanctions or disciplinary action if necessary.
  - Report and record all actions taken.
  - Provide support for the victim and his/her coach.
- Encourage the bully (or bullies) to change his/her behaviour. Supporting the Bullied
  - Children who have been bullied will often need support from club officers to deal with the impact of bullying. This may include having a specific person to whom concerns can be raised in specific situation or providing a named senior gymnast as a “buddy” in changing facilities.
  - They will need support external to the club from parents, other relatives and sometimes school teachers.
  - The club may consider holding a reconciliation meeting to help address the issues between the bully and the bullied person.
  - The club can advise the child, young person(s) or parent(s) to contact either:
    - Kidscape (Email [info@kidscape.org.uk](mailto:info@kidscape.org.uk) or call 0207730 3300), a charity that offers support to bullied children, as well as day courses to help them deal with bullying and its after effects including how to avoid being bullied in future.

If you have any concerns please email [welfare@cheshiregymnastics.com](mailto:welfare@cheshiregymnastics.com)

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