

Synergy Gymnastics Club CIC Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Policy

Document History

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Synergy Gymnastics Club CIC Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Policy

Background and Overview

- Synergy Gymnastics London CIC (the Club / SGL) aims to create a caring and supportive environment for gymnasts to develop and succeed happily. The Club believes that gymnastics is not only beneficial to physical health but also helps children develop skills for life, such as self-belief, resilience, determination, and the ability to accept failure but strive to be better.
- Understanding each child is integral to how our coaches work, and new coaches will be mentored by more experienced members of the team to ensure continuity of approach and application.
- The Club is registered with British Gymnastics and shares the same attitude towards the health, safety, and welfare of all students, coaches, helpers, volunteers, parents, and any others who are associated with the Club.
- Synergy Gymnastics London CIC will ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that procedures are in place to maintain a safe and healthy environment for everyone involved.
- The SGL Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Policy is written in conjunction with British Gymnastics Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and guidance, SGL Online Safety Policy, and links to our Codes of Conduct and safeguarding policies.
- SGL acknowledges that the competitive nature of sport can result in tensions between participants, but bullying and harassment will not be tolerated in any circumstances.
- This policy outlines what Synergy Gymnastics London CIC will do to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying and harassment.

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Statement of Intent

- SGL is committed to providing a caring, friendly, and safe environment for all our members. Bullying and harassment of any kind are unacceptable. We believe it is important that participants, coaches, administrators, officials, volunteers, and parents/carers should always show respect and understanding for the welfare of others.
- If bullying or harassment occurs, participants should be able to tell a trusted adult and know that incidents will be dealt with effectively. We are a transparent Club, which means that ANYONE who knows that bullying or harassment is happening is expected to tell a member of the team and/or one of the Club Welfare Officers.

SGL will:

- Create and support an inclusive environment that promotes a culture of mutual respect and consideration, which will be upheld by all.
- Recognise that bullying and harassment can be perpetrated or experienced by any member of the Club community, including adults and children.
- Challenge practices and/or language that does not uphold the values of respect towards others.
- Encourage all members to use technology and social media positively and responsibly, in conjunction with the SGL Online Safety Policy.
- Celebrate success and achievements to promote and build a positive Club ethos.

Objectives of this Policy

- This Policy aims to produce a consistent response to any bullying or harassment incidents that may occur.
- All officials, coaching and non-coaching staff, volunteers, children, and parents/carers should understand what bullying and harassment can involve, the Club policy, how to report concerns, and what they should do if bullying or harassment arises.

Responsibilities

- It's the responsibility of the SGL Management Team and the Welfare Officers to communicate the Policy and ensure fair and consistent application of disciplinary measures.
- All staff and volunteers must uphold and implement this Policy.
- Parents/carers must support their children and work in partnership with the Club.
- Gymnasts/participants must abide by the Policy and show respect, tolerance, and teamwork.

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Policy Procedures

- Incidents of bullying should be reported to a lead coach, who if required, will report it to the Club Welfare Officer (CWO).
- Incidents referred to the CWO should be reported in writing.
- The Club Welfare Officer should keep a written record and timeline of alleged incidents of bullying or harassment.
- If the alleged bully is a child, their parents should be informed and asked to come to a meeting to discuss the problem.
- Bullying behaviour or threats must be investigated and stopped, and the perpetrator may be sanctioned, asked to sign a Code of Conduct form, or ultimately excluded from the Club.
- The Club Welfare Officer will decide whether an incident needs to be reported to an outside body such as British Gymnastics or the Police.

Defining and understanding bullying

- Bullying is intentional behaviour that hurts another individual physically or emotionally, including name-calling, taunting, physical contact, offensive comments, exclusion, and spreading rumours.
- This can also include online behaviour such as inappropriate messages, cyberbullying, and degrading photos or videos.
- Bullying can have severe emotional effects and is not confined to protected characteristics or discrimination.
- Signs of bullying include fear or unwillingness to attend the gym, withdrawal, anxiety, poor performance, damaged possessions, and unexplained cuts or bruises. These signs could also indicate other problems but should be investigated.

Preventing and tackling bullying

- Synergy Gymnastics London recognises that bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals; it can create a barrier to not only the performance of a gymnast, but more importantly it can have serious consequences for mental wellbeing. By effectively preventing and tackling bullying, SGL can help to create a safe and disciplined environment, where members are able to fulfil their potential in a fun, safe and secure setting.

To support our anti-bullying ethos, SGL:

- Monitors and reviews our Anti-Bullying Policy and practices on a regular basis.
- Supports staff to promote positive relationships, to help prevent bullying.
- Recognises that some members of our community may be more vulnerable to bullying and its impact than others and provides appropriate support, if required.
- Will intervene and tackle bullying behaviour appropriately and promptly.
- Ensures our members are aware that bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively.
- Requires all members of the SGL community to work with us to uphold the Anti-Bullying Policy.

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- Reports back to parents/carers regarding concerns on bullying, dealing promptly with incidents/complaints.
- Seeks to learn from good anti-bullying practice elsewhere.
- Utilises support from other relevant organisations when appropriate.

Responding to Bullying Allegations

The following steps may be taken when dealing with all incidents of bullying:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the member staff who has been approached or witnessed the concern will assess whether the person being bullied is at risk of immediate harm.
- The member of staff who has been approached or the lead coach of the session will assess the immediate situation and where appropriate will take steps to resolve the incident.
- Where the allegation cannot be resolved immediately, the member of staff will contact the Club Welfare Officer (CWO) and report the concern. Initial contact with the CWO should be either a face-to-face conversation or a phone call. A written report should also be sent from the staff member to the CWO.
- The Club Welfare Officer will investigate the alleged bullying incident in order to collect facts and any relative evidence or statements from affected parties and witnesses.
- The Club Welfare Officer will interview all parties involved if deemed necessary.
- The Club Welfare Officer will decide whether the allegation is accurate and on the appropriate course of action.
- If necessary, the Club Welfare Officer will provide appropriate support for the person being bullied – again making sure they are not at risk of immediate harm.
- The Club Welfare Officer will inform other staff members, and parents/carers, where appropriate.
- Sanctions and support for individuals will be implemented, in consultation with all parties concerned.
- If necessary, other agencies may be consulted or involved, such as the police or other local services including children’s social care.
- Where the bullying takes place between Club Members off site or outside of SGL (including cyberbullying), the Club will ensure that the concern is fully investigated. Appropriate action will be taken, including providing support and implementing sanctions in accordance with the Code of Conduct.
- A clear and precise account of the incident will be recorded by the Welfare Officer(s) in accordance with existing procedures. This will include recording appropriate details regarding decisions and action taken.

Cyberbullying

When responding to cyberbullying concerns, SGL will:

- Act as soon as an incident has been reported or identified.

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- Provide appropriate support for the person who has been cyberbullied and work with the person who has carried out the bullying to ensure that it does not happen again.
- Liaise with parents regarding parental controls if appropriate.
- Encourage the person being bullied to keep any evidence (screenshots) of the bullying activity to assist any investigation.
- Take all available steps where possible to identify the person responsible. This may include:
 - Looking at the use of the procedures and systems
 - Identifying and interviewing possible witnesses
 - Contacting the service provider and the police, if necessary.
- Work with the individuals and online service providers to prevent the incident from spreading and assist in removing offensive or upsetting material from circulation. This may include:
 - Support reports to a service provider to remove content if those involved are unable to be identified or if those involved refuse to or are unable to delete content.
 - Banning or restricting the use of mobile devices within the gym and child led areas.
 - Requesting the deletion of locally held content and content posted online if they contravene behavioural/conduct policies.

Support

Children who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Providing continuous support and reassurance.
- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with the Welfare Officer(s) or a staff member of their choice that they are comfortable with.
- Being advised to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to concerns and build resilience as appropriate.
- Working towards restoring self-esteem and confidence.
- Providing ongoing support; this may include working and speaking with staff, offering welfare meetings or drop-ins, engaging with parents/carers.
- Individuals who have perpetrated the bullying will be helped by:
 - Discussing what happened, establishing the concern and the need to change.
 - Informing parents/carers to help change the attitude and behaviour of the child.
 - Providing appropriate knowledge and support regarding their behaviour or actions.
 - If online, requesting that content be removed and reporting accounts/content to service provider if appropriate.
- Sanctioning, in line with the relevant Code of Conduct (in extreme circumstances this may mean the removal of membership from the Club or being banned from premises).
- Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance.
- SGL takes measures to prevent and tackle bullying among participants; however, it is equally important to recognise that bullying of staff, volunteers and parents/carers, whether by pupils, parents or other staff members, is also unacceptable.

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Adults who have been bullied or affected will be supported by:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the concern with the Club Welfare Officer(s).
- Advising them to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to concerns and build resilience, as appropriate.
- Where the bullying takes place off site or outside of normal hours (including online), the Club will still investigate the concern and ensure that appropriate action is taken in accordance with the relevant Code of Conduct.
- Reporting offensive or upsetting content and/or accounts to the service provider, where the bullying has occurred online.
- Reassuring and offering appropriate support.
- Working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance.

Useful links and supporting organisations:

- Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- Childline: www.childline.org.uk
- Family Lives: www.familylives.org.uk
- Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk
- MindEd: www.minded.org.uk
- NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk
- The BIG Award: www.bullyinginterventiongroup.co.uk/index.php
- Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk
- Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk
- Changing Faces: www.changingfaces.org.uk

Cyberbullying:

- Anti-Bullying Alliance Cyberbullying and children and young people with SEN and disabilities: www.cafamily.org.uk/media/750755/cyberbullying_and_send_-_module_final.pdf
- Childnet International: www.childnet.com
- Digizen: www.digizen.org
- UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk

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