



IGAT

AAI SCREENING POLICY

Version 1.0



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Purpose of Policy

This policy outlines the importance of screening for Atlanto Axial Instability (AAI) for participants with Down's syndrome prior to engaging in gymnastics, trampolining, and rebound therapy activities. The purpose of AAI screening is to ensure the safety and well-being of individuals with Down's syndrome who wish to participate in these activities, as they may be at higher risk for spinal injuries related to AAI.

Importance of AAI Screening

AAI is a condition commonly associated with Down's syndrome, where the top two bones in the spine (the atlas and axis) are misaligned, which can increase the risk of neck instability and injury, particularly during high-impact or high-risk activities like gymnastics and trampolining.

Screening for AAI is crucial because:

- **Prevention of Serious Injury:** AAI can lead to spinal cord compression or injury, which could cause permanent damage or even death. Early identification through screening can prevent participation in high-risk activities for those at risk.
- **Safeguarding Participants:** Participants with AAI are more vulnerable to neck injuries during activities like flips, jumps, and twists common in gymnastics and trampolining. Ensuring that appropriate screening is completed helps maintain a safe environment for all gymnasts.
- **Compliance with Policy:** Medical and safeguarding standards require that participants with Down's syndrome undergo appropriate screening before engaging in activities where spinal injury could occur, ensuring compliance with health and safety standards.

Requirements for Clubs

All IGA-affiliated clubs must ensure that AAI screening is carried out for any individual with Down's syndrome wishing to participate in gymnastics, trampolining, or rebound therapy activities. This must be done before the participant's first session, and at regular intervals if medically advised.

Clubs must:

- **Use the Official AAI Screening Form:** The AAI Screening Form provided by IGA (Can be found under tools & templates in Safe Sport) must be completed prior to participation in gymnastics or trampolining.
- **Screening by a Qualified Medical Professional:** The form must be signed and completed by a qualified medical practitioner or chartered physiotherapist. A medical professional should be knowledgeable about the risks associated with AAI and capable of assessing whether the participant is fit to engage in the activities.
- **Record Keeping:** The completed AAI Screening Form must be retained by the club and securely stored. Clubs are required to maintain these records for a minimum of 5 years for safeguarding purposes. These records should also be made available to IGA upon request.
- **Ongoing Monitoring:** If a participant has previously been screened and approved for participation, a re-screening may be required at regular intervals, or if there are any medical concerns raised. The club must stay in regular contact with the medical professional who completed the screening to ensure the participant's continued safety.



Responsibilities of Medical Professionals

A qualified medical practitioner or chartered physiotherapist must conduct the AAI screening, as they possess the training and expertise to assess the participant's suitability for gymnastics and trampolining. Their responsibilities include:

- **Assessing the Risks:** Evaluate the participant's medical history and assess whether there are any indications of AAI or related issues that would restrict participation in activities.
- **Completing the Screening Form:** The medical professional must complete the AAI Screening Form and ensure all required tests and questions are answered.
- **Providing a Medical Opinion:** The professional must provide a clear indication of whether the individual is safe to participate in activities or if restrictions need to be applied. In the event of uncertainty, they must provide a recommendation for further evaluation or a specialist referral.

Compliance and Enforcement

Clubs that fail to implement this policy will be in violation of IGA safeguarding standards. Non-compliance could result in a review of the club's affiliation with IGA and the suspension of participation for affected individuals until appropriate screening is completed.

IGA will regularly review clubs' adherence to this policy during safeguarding audits, and clubs are encouraged to stay informed about best practices in safeguarding and participant safety.

Conclusion

The safety of all participants is IGA's highest priority. AAI screening is a crucial step in preventing serious injury to gymnasts with Down's syndrome. By adhering to this policy, IGA-affiliated clubs will ensure that participants are medically cleared to participate in gymnastics and trampolining activities safely, while also ensuring compliance with health and safety regulations.

Should you have any questions regarding this policy or the screening process, please contact the IGA National Safeguarding Officer.