



# **HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY**

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## INTRODUCTION

The Independent Gymnastics Association (IGA) is committed to ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of all employees, contractors, volunteers, members, and visitors. We recognise that gymnastics, while highly beneficial, carries inherent risks. This policy sets out how IGA and affiliated clubs will meet their legal, ethical, and professional obligations to create a safe environment.

Health and safety are integral to our operations, underpinning all activities we undertake. We will:

- Prevent accidents and work-related ill health.
- Provide safe premises, equipment, and activities.
- Consult with our members and staff on matters affecting their health and safety.
- Ensure adequate training and supervision are provided.

## PURPOSE & SCOPE

This policy establishes the minimum health and safety standards expected across all IGA-affiliated clubs, programmes, and activities.

It applies to:

- All employees, self-employed contractors, volunteers, coaches, gymnasts, and visitors.
- All premises used for gymnastics training, competitions, camps, and events.
- All equipment and apparatus supplied or used in the course of gymnastics activities.



## LEGAL & REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

GA and its affiliated clubs are committed to full compliance with all applicable health, safety, and safeguarding laws, standards, and best practices in the United Kingdom, including but not limited to:

- **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974:** Requires employers and organisations to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety, and welfare of employees, volunteers, and participants. This Act places duties on employers, employees, and visitors alike.
- **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999:** Sets out requirements for the assessment of health and safety risks, implementation of preventive and protective measures, appointment of competent persons, and the provision of health and safety training and information.
- **Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013:** Imposes legal duties to report serious workplace accidents, occupational diseases, and specified dangerous occurrences to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).
- **Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002:** Governs the control of hazardous substances such as cleaning chemicals used within gym facilities.
- **First Aid at Work Regulations 1981:** Requires employers to provide appropriate equipment, facilities, and trained personnel to ensure immediate assistance in case of injury or illness.
- **Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992:** Establishes minimum health, safety, and welfare requirements for all workplaces, including cleanliness, ventilation, lighting, sanitary conveniences, and drinking water.
- **Children Act 1989 and 2004:** Places a statutory duty on organisations to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006:** Establishes the legal framework for ensuring unsuitable individuals are prevented from working with children and vulnerable adults.
- **Equality Act 2010:** Requires organisations to ensure that health and safety provisions do not discriminate unlawfully against any individuals.
- **Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique (FIG) Equipment and Apparatus Norms:** Defines international safety standards for gymnastics equipment and facilities.
- **Best Practice Guidance:** IGA adopts best practice guidance from sources including UK Coaching, Sport England, the Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU).

Affiliated clubs must be familiar with, and operate in compliance with, all these laws and standards.





## DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- **IGA:** The Independent Gymnastics Association, governing the policies and standards for affiliated clubs.
- **Affiliated Club:** Any gymnastics club, academy, or training centre formally registered with the IGA.
- **Health and Safety Officer (HSO):** A designated competent person within each club responsible for implementing health and safety measures, ensuring compliance, and leading incident management.
- **Risk Assessment:** A formal process of identifying hazards, evaluating the likelihood and severity of associated risks, and determining suitable control measures to minimise harm.
- **Hazard:** Anything that has the potential to cause harm, including physical conditions, equipment faults, human factors, and environmental risks.
- **Incident:** Any unplanned event that results in, or could have resulted in, injury, ill health, damage to property, or a near-miss.
- **Serious Incident:** An incident resulting in serious injury (e.g., broken bones, head injury), death, or significant health impacts, requiring mandatory reporting under RIDDOR.
- **Safeguarding Concern:** Any worry, suspicion, disclosure, or allegation that a child or vulnerable adult is suffering or at risk of harm, whether physical, emotional, sexual, or neglect.
- **First Aider:** A person who holds a valid and current First Aid at Work qualification or equivalent and is competent to provide initial emergency care.
- **Competent Person:** Someone with sufficient training, experience, or knowledge to assist in securing compliance with health and safety legislation and best practice.
- **Whistleblower:** Any individual raising a concern about malpractice, safety breaches, or safeguarding failures in the public interest.

## ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Ensuring a safe gymnastics environment requires clear roles and accountability at all organisational levels. The following responsibilities are mandatory for all IGA-affiliated clubs, staff, volunteers, and members:

### IGA Central Management

- Develop, implement, and review health and safety policies and guidance.
- Provide templates, resources, and training for affiliated clubs.
- Monitor compliance across the network through audits and reporting.
- Investigate major incidents or trends affecting multiple clubs.
- Act as the liaison point with regulatory bodies such as HSE where required.



### **Club Leadership (Owners, Managers, Committee Chairs)**

- Ensure full implementation of the IGA Health and Safety Policy within their club.
- Allocate sufficient resources (financial, human, equipment) for safety management.
- Appoint a competent Health and Safety Officer (HSO) in writing.
- Promote a positive health and safety culture across all club activities.
- Oversee safeguarding and child protection arrangements.

### **Health and Safety Officer (HSO)**

- Conduct and review comprehensive risk assessments at least annually.
- Ensure that all incidents, near misses, and dangerous occurrences are correctly reported and investigated.
- Maintain up-to-date health and safety documentation (e.g., risk assessments, training records, incident logs).
- Organise and monitor all required training, including first aid, safeguarding, and health and safety induction.
- Liaise directly with IGA regarding serious incidents and compliance concerns.
- Provide ongoing safety advice to staff, coaches, volunteers, and gymnasts.

### **Coaches and Session Leaders**

- Undertake all activities in accordance with risk assessments, coaching ratios, and safe practice guidelines.
- Maintain dynamic risk awareness during activities and intervene if conditions become unsafe.
- Complete pre-session facility and equipment checks before every training or competition.
- Report any concerns about safety, maintenance, or safeguarding immediately to the HSO or Club Leader.
- Model safe behaviours for gymnasts and enforce rules and procedures consistently.

### **All Staff and Volunteers**

- Co-operate fully with health and safety instructions.
- Attend all mandatory training sessions and updates.
- Actively identify hazards and suggest improvements.
- Report all accidents, incidents, or near misses, no matter how minor.

### **Gymnasts, Parents, and Visitors**

- Comply with safety instructions and signage.
- Wear appropriate clothing and footwear as advised.
- Use equipment only under supervision and as instructed.
- Report concerns, hazards, or incidents to staff promptly.
- Parents must update clubs on any medical or health issues that may affect participation.



## RISK ASSESSMENT & HAZARD CONTROL

Risk assessment is a legal requirement and a core pillar of safe gymnastics operations.

### Risk Assessment Requirements

All clubs must complete:

- General Facility Risk Assessment: covering all areas of the facility (gym space, entrances, changing rooms, toilets, storage, fire exits).
- Activity-Specific Risk Assessments: for each class type (recreational, competition squad, adults, toddlers) and gymnastics discipline (artistic, acrobatic, rhythmic, etc.).
- Event-Specific Risk Assessments: conducted before hosting external competitions, displays, or camps.
- Participant-Specific Assessments: where needed for gymnasts with additional needs or medical conditions.

Risk Assessment Process

Hazard Identification:

- Equipment defects.
- Floor surface hazards.
- Inadequate supervision or ratios.
- Poor lighting or ventilation.
- Stress, fatigue, or psychological factors.

Risk Evaluation:

- Likelihood of occurrence (rare to very likely).
- Severity of potential harm (minor to catastrophic).
- Risk rating calculated and prioritised.

Control Measures:

- Remove hazards where possible (elimination).
- Substitute dangerous equipment or activities with safer alternatives.
- Use engineering controls (padding, barriers).
- Implement administrative controls (rota adjustments, staggered classes).
- Provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) where required.

Communication:

- Share relevant risk controls with all staff and participants.



#### Monitoring and Review:

- Review risk assessments annually or after incidents/changes.
- Update control measures as needed.

#### Hazard Reporting

- All staff, volunteers, and members have a duty to report new hazards immediately to their HSO or Club Leader.
- Hazards must be risk-assessed promptly, and interim safety measures applied if necessary.

## TRAINING SUPERVISION & COMPETENCY

Ensuring that all staff, volunteers, and contractors are adequately trained, supervised, and competent is fundamental to maintaining a safe gymnastics environment.

#### **Mandatory Training**

All coaches, club staff, volunteers, and relevant contractors must complete, as a minimum:

- Health and safety induction training upon joining.
- Safeguarding and child protection training appropriate to their role.
- Emergency first aid training, with at least one qualified first aider present during all activities.
- Fire safety awareness training, including knowledge of evacuation procedures.
- Manual handling training where applicable.

#### **Ongoing Professional Development**

Staff and volunteers are required to undertake refresher training and continuing professional development (CPD) to ensure they remain competent and up to date with evolving best practices:

- First Aid certification renewed every three years, or more frequently if required by updated regulations.
- Annual safeguarding refresher courses for all staff and volunteers.
- Role-specific training updates when changes occur to equipment, facilities, or legislation.

#### **Supervision Standards**

Appropriate supervision must be maintained at all times during training, warm-ups, competitions, and displays:

- Staff-to-gymnast ratios must be appropriate for the age, ability, and needs of the group, following guidance set by IGA.
- Supervisory staff must be positioned to maintain line-of-sight supervision wherever reasonably practicable.
- Gymnasts must never be left unsupervised within the training area, changing facilities, or event venues.





### **Competency Requirements**

- All coaches must hold valid, recognised coaching qualifications appropriate to the disciplines they deliver.
- Staff must demonstrate competence through assessments, observation, or other verification methods.
- Unqualified assistants may only operate under the direct supervision of a qualified coach.

### **Volunteer Induction**

All volunteers must complete an induction programme that outlines:

- Health and safety expectations.
- Emergency procedures.
- Safeguarding responsibilities.
- Communication channels and reporting requirements.

## **INCIDENT REPORTING & MANAGEMENT**

Prompt and accurate incident reporting is critical for the prevention of further incidents and for maintaining a culture of safety and accountability.

### **Immediate Response**

- First aid must be administered without delay by a qualified first aider.
- The area must be made safe to prevent further injury or escalation of harm.
- Emergency services must be contacted immediately for serious injuries (e.g., head trauma, suspected fractures, unconsciousness).

### **Recording the Incident**

- Complete an IGA Incident Report Form within 24 hours of the incident occurring.
- Capture all necessary details including the injured person's information, the nature of the incident, exact location, witness accounts, immediate actions taken, and any equipment involved.
- In cases involving minors, ensure a parent or guardian co-signs the report.

### **Reporting Serious Incidents**

- Notify the IGA Head Office within 24 hours for any incidents involving hospital treatment, head injuries, safeguarding concerns, or potential insurance claims.
- Serious incidents must be reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) as required by RIDDOR, without unnecessary delay.
- Marsh Sport insurance brokers must be informed of any incidents that could result in an insurance claim.



### **Investigation and Analysis**

- Conduct a thorough internal investigation to determine root causes.
- Review environmental conditions, supervision arrangements, equipment conditions, and adherence to risk assessments.
- Interview witnesses where appropriate.
- Identify corrective actions and lessons learned.

### **Corrective Action and Prevention**

- Implement immediate control measures to address identified risks.
- Update relevant risk assessments and training protocols.
- Share findings and learning outcomes with all staff and volunteers to prevent reoccurrence.

### **Record Retention**

- Maintain all incident records securely for a minimum of six years from the date of the incident.

## **MONITORING, EVALUATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

The Independent Gymnastics Association (IGA) and all affiliated clubs are fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults. Protecting individuals from harm, abuse, and exploitation is a non-negotiable priority and an essential part of creating a safe and supportive environment.

### **Club Safeguarding Structure**

- Each club must appoint a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO), whose role is to lead safeguarding efforts, ensure compliance with safeguarding policies, and act as the main point of contact for safeguarding issues.
- The DSO must be clearly identified to all club members, staff, and parents.

### **Recruitment and Vetting**

- All individuals working in a regulated activity with children or vulnerable adults must undergo enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks before commencing their roles.
- Recruitment processes must include reference checks, face-to-face interviews, and verification of qualifications.
- Roles and responsibilities relating to safeguarding must be clearly outlined in job descriptions.



### **Safeguarding Training**

- All staff, coaches, and volunteers must complete safeguarding and child protection training within their first month of engagement and renew this training annually.
- Training must cover identifying signs of abuse, appropriate handling of disclosures, and safe working practices.

### **Codes of Conduct**

- IGA requires all affiliated clubs to implement clear, written codes of conduct for staff, volunteers, parents, and gymnasts, setting clear expectations for behaviour, boundaries, and interactions.
- Breaches of codes of conduct must be treated seriously and investigated promptly.

### **Responding to Safeguarding Concerns**

- Any safeguarding concern, suspicion, or disclosure must be reported immediately to the DSO using the Safeguarding Concern Report Form.
- All concerns must be recorded objectively, accurately, and confidentially.
- The DSO must determine if concerns need to be referred to external agencies such as the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Children's Social Care, or the Police.

### **Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

- Information relating to safeguarding concerns must only be shared on a strict need-to-know basis.
- Records of safeguarding concerns must be stored securely and separately from other club records.

### **Whistleblowing**

- All staff, volunteers, gymnasts, and parents must have access to a confidential whistleblowing procedure to report concerns about adults' behaviour or practices without fear of retaliation.

### **Safeguarding Standards Compliance**

- Clubs must comply with the IGA Safeguarding Policy and relevant statutory guidance such as 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (HM Government).
- Clubs will be subject to safeguarding audits by IGA where required.



## PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH & SAFETY

Psychological well-being is essential to the overall health and performance of gymnasts, staff, and volunteers. IGA recognises the importance of creating a psychologically safe environment where individuals feel supported, valued, and able to thrive without fear of bullying, harassment, or undue pressure.

### **Promoting Positive Mental Health**

- Clubs must promote a positive mental health culture through clear messaging, open-door policies, and access to supportive services.
- Staff must actively encourage open dialogue about mental health during regular check-ins and team meetings.
- Gymnasts' emotional and psychological needs must be considered when planning training loads, competition schedules, and recovery periods.

### **Mental Health Support Structures**

- Provide signposting to external mental health support services such as Childline, Samaritans, and Mind.\n- Display mental health support materials in club areas accessible to staff and gymnasts.
- Consider appointing a Mental Health Champion at club level who can support staff and gymnasts informally and escalate concerns when necessary.

### **Training and Awareness**

- Deliver annual mental health awareness training to coaches, staff, and volunteers, with content on recognising signs of distress, burnout, eating disorders, bullying, or anxiety.
- Equip coaches with skills to promote resilience, positive coping strategies, and balanced lifestyles among gymnasts.

### **Bullying and Harassment**

- Enforce a zero-tolerance policy towards bullying, harassment, discrimination, and victimisation.\n- Ensure gymnasts and staff have multiple avenues to raise concerns, including anonymous reporting options if required.
- Investigate bullying or harassment reports promptly, sensitively, and thoroughly.

### **Monitoring Psychological Health**

- Conduct annual anonymous well-being surveys to gauge mental health trends within the club.
- Analyse results and incorporate findings into action plans to enhance the support offered.
- Address feedback constructively, and communicate improvements and actions taken in response to concerns raised.





### **Confidentiality in Mental Health Matters**

- Maintain confidentiality when gymnasts, staff, or volunteers disclose mental health issues, unless there is a risk of harm to themselves or others.

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE**

A comprehensive and robust emergency response framework is essential to minimise risks, protect life, and ensure swift and effective action during critical incidents.

### **• First Aid Readiness:**

- Maintain well-stocked, easily accessible first aid kits at multiple key points throughout the facility, including training halls, changing areas, and public spaces.
- Conduct monthly inspections of first aid kits to ensure they are complete, in-date, and replenished after use.
- Install and maintain Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) where feasible, ensuring regular servicing and that a sufficient number of staff are trained in AED use.
- Please refer to First Aid policy for full compliance details

### **• Fire Safety:**

- Conduct a comprehensive fire risk assessment annually, reviewed immediately after any significant changes to facilities or operations.
- Ensure fire detection and alarm systems are operational and maintained by qualified professionals.
- Install fire extinguishers suited to different types of fires (water, foam, CO2) and inspect them annually.
- Clearly mark and illuminate all fire exits, keeping routes unobstructed at all times.
- Display emergency evacuation procedures prominently in all areas.

### **• Evacuation Plans:**

- Develop tailored evacuation procedures for various emergencies, including fire, gas leaks, structural failure, medical emergencies, and security threats.
- Conduct training for all staff, volunteers, and gymnasts on evacuation routes and assembly points.
- Carry out at least two full evacuation drills per year, including simulations of different emergency scenarios.
- Assign roles such as Fire Marshals, First Aid Responders, and Emergency Leaders to ensure accountability during drills and real emergencies.



- **Communication During Emergencies:**

- Maintain an up-to-date emergency contact list, including local hospitals, emergency services, utility companies, and designated safeguarding leads.
- Establish a clear communication chain to disseminate information quickly and accurately during an emergency.
- Train staff on how to effectively communicate with gymnasts, parents, and emergency responders during critical incidents.

- **Post-Emergency Review:**

- Conduct a structured debrief after every emergency or drill.
- Record successes, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement.
- Update emergency response plans and training materials based on lessons learned.

## POLICY REVIEW AND UPDATES

The Health and Safety Policy is a dynamic document that requires regular review to ensure ongoing relevance, effectiveness, and legal compliance.

### **Scheduled Reviews:**

- Conduct a full policy review annually, led by IGA Health and Safety specialists.
- Include comprehensive reviews of associated policies, such as safeguarding, risk assessment protocols, and first aid procedures.

### **Triggered Reviews:**

- Initiate immediate reviews following major incidents, changes in relevant legislation, significant organisational restructuring, or the identification of systemic safety issues during audits or inspections.

### **Consultation and Collaboration:**

- Actively consult club leaders, coaches, volunteers, gymnasts, parents, and external experts during the review process.
- Solicit feedback through surveys, focus groups, and direct consultations to capture a wide range of insights.

### **Approval and Implementation:**

- Policy updates must be approved by the IGA Board of Directors before implementation.
- Upon approval, distribute the updated policy to all affiliated clubs, ensuring that staff and volunteers are briefed on key changes.
- Mandate that clubs update their internal documentation and training materials in line with revised policies.

**Communication of Changes:**

- Communicate policy changes clearly and promptly via multiple channels, including email circulars, IGA website updates, webinars, and training sessions.
- Provide summaries of significant changes and implications for day-to-day operations.

**Version Control and Record-Keeping:**

- Maintain a version-controlled master copy of the Health and Safety Policy.
- Archive previous versions securely for a minimum of six years.
- Document all changes with detailed version histories, including dates, reasons for changes, and approval records.

## USEFUL CONTACTS

**Independent Gymnastics Association (IGA)**

Email: [info@igauk.com](mailto:info@igauk.com)

Tel: 0345 319 7000

**IGA Safeguarding Team**

Email: [safeguarding@igauk.com](mailto:safeguarding@igauk.com)

Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

Website: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/index.htm>

**Marsh Sport Insurance**

Website: <https://www.marshsport.co.uk/ngb-schemes/independent-gymnastics-insurance-zone.html>