



SAFEGUARDING POLICY: HYDRATION

Version 1.1



Version History

Version	Summary of amendments/changes	Published Date
Version 1.0	Document Created	July 2024
Version 1.1	Added Purpose & Scope, Recognising & Responding to Dehydration and Accountability & Implementation	July 2025

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Introduction

Everyone at IGA has a responsibility to foster a safe and positive gymnastics environment. We recognise our duty of care to safeguard the physical and psychological well-being of gymnasts.

- The mandatory guidelines regarding hydration outlined in this document are supported by the IGA Safeguarding Policy. This policy details its scope and purpose, and if you have any questions or concerns after reviewing it, please contact the Welfare and Safe Sport team at IGA.
- This document aims to establish good practices and prevent inappropriate hydration methods. Practices like restricting fluid intake or access to toilets constitute physical abuse.
- In this document, the term 'coaches' refers to coaches, assistants, and instructors involved in gymnastics activities.
- Additional support and guidelines to prevent improper practices are also included in this document. For further information, refer to the complaints procedure outlined in the IGA Complaints and Disciplinary Policy and Procedures. Clubs and coaches should also implement good hydration practices as per the Hydration Guidance for Good Practice document.
- Restricting access to water or toilets as a behaviour management strategy is unacceptable and may constitute physical abuse. Hydration practices must always support the physical and psychological wellbeing of gymnasts.



Key Responsibilities

- Clubs, coaches, and support personnel at IGA are required to adhere to the guidelines outlined in this document during gymnastics sessions to ensure the implementation of safe hydration practices.

Related Policies and Guidelines

IGA's Safeguarding Policy

IGA's Code of Conduct for Coaches & Officials and Instructors

IGA's Code of Conduct for Registered Clubs

Purpose

This policy outlines IGA's commitment to promoting safe hydration practices as part of its safeguarding responsibilities. It applies to all coaches, clubs, officials, and support staff involved in gymnastics activities and is informed by NHS and Public Health England guidance.

Hydration Policy

Gymnasts at IGA should have regular opportunities to hydrate during sessions or activities, and they are encouraged to drink fluids as they see fit.

If a gymnast needs to use the restroom during a session or activity, they should be allowed to do so at the earliest opportunity.

Clubs and venues must ensure appropriate supervision to prevent gymnasts from being denied access to fluids or the restroom throughout gymnastics sessions or activities.

Cubs Must:

- Coaches must offer hydration breaks at least every 20–30 minutes during activity, and more frequently during hot weather or high-intensity training.



- Gymnasts should be encouraged to drink fluids before, during, and after training.
- Training sessions should be adjusted or paused if athletes show signs of overheating or dehydration.
- Coaches must never restrict hydration or toilet access for behavioural reasons.
- Toilet breaks should be allowed promptly when requested.

Recognising & Responding to Dehydration

Coaches and support staff should be trained to recognise early signs of dehydration, which may include:

- Headaches or dizziness
- Dry lips or mouth
- Fatigue or irritability
- Reduced urination

Any gymnast showing signs of dehydration should be encouraged to rest and hydrate. If symptoms persist or escalate (e.g., confusion, collapse, vomiting), it must be treated as a medical emergency.

Environmental Factors

Hydration needs increase in warmer temperatures and poorly ventilated spaces. Coaches should adjust session intensity, provide more frequent water breaks, and closely monitor participants' wellbeing in these conditions.

Education & Parent Awareness

Clubs are encouraged to provide hydration guidance in their welcome packs or athlete induction materials. Parents and gymnasts should understand the importance of drinking before, during, and after training sessions.

Other Recommendations

- Include hydration education in staff induction and safeguarding training.
- Welfare Officers should observe hydration practices during club visits or audits.
- Clubs must review hydration policies annually and update them in line with new guidance.



Accountability & Implementation

- Each club must nominate a named individual (e.g., Welfare Officer or Head Coach) responsible for monitoring adherence to the hydration policy.
- Hydration and toilet access must be included in all risk assessments for sessions, competitions, and camps.
- Hydration reminders and signage should be visibly displayed in gym environments.
- Coaches are encouraged to integrate hydration checkpoints into their session planning.
- Welfare Officers should observe hydration practices during club visits or audits and report any concerns.
- Failure to implement safe hydration practices will be treated as a breach of IGA safeguarding policy and may lead to disciplinary review under the Complaints and Disciplinary Procedure.
- Gymnasts and parents may report concerns related to hydration access through the club welfare officer or directly to IGA.

The Importance of Hydration:





Preventing Poor Practice

Query:

If you are uncertain or uncomfortable about something you have said, done, or witnessed during practice, it's perfectly fine to discuss it with someone you trust. This could be a coach, fellow gymnast, friend, welfare officer, parent, or club manager.

Reflect:

Pause and reflect on the situation, considering if there could have been alternative actions. Ask yourself: Would this behaviour be appropriate in a non-gymnastics context?

Seek:

If you're uncertain or need assistance, there are several resources available to help. This includes reaching out to other coaches, welfare officers, or contacting IGA at any time without it being considered an official complaint. Please note that all home nation governing bodies have a duty of care and will handle concerns appropriately when raised.

Making Mistakes:

It's perfectly normal to make mistakes! If you do, take responsibility, apologise, and use it as a learning opportunity to prevent it from recurring.

Raise:

If you feel the need to raise a concern, please reach out to your club's welfare officer. They will handle your concern appropriately.

Recommendations:

Foster a psychologically supportive environment in gymnastics by encouraging open, honest, and transparent conversations. Provide regular opportunities for feedback and promote an atmosphere where asking questions and respectful challenges are welcomed.