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# **WEIGHING & DIETING GYMNASTS POLICY**

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Version 1.1



## Version History

Version	Summary of amendments/changes	Published Date
Version 1.0	Document Created	Dec 2024
Version 1.1	<b>Updated:</b> Introduction & Purpose, Weighing Protocols, Dieting & Nutritional Oversight, Roles & Responsibilities  <b>Added:</b> Legal & Safeguarding Context, Guiding Principles, Jurisdiction-Specific Addenda / Compliance Considerations, Policy Implementation & Oversight, Definitions & Glossary.	Dec 2025

## Contact Information

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## Introduction

The Independent Gymnastics Association (IGA) is committed to ensuring the highest standards of health, safety, and welfare for every gymnast participating within our community. Gymnastics is a demanding sport that requires physical skill, discipline, and resilience; therefore, it is essential that all aspects of training and athlete management — including any discussion of weight or nutritional practices — are approached with care, professionalism, and respect for the individual.

This policy sets out clear and consistent expectations for how weighing, dieting, and related performance-support practices must be managed across all jurisdictions in which IGA members operate, including England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, and the Channel Islands. It seeks to protect gymnasts of all ages from physical or psychological harm and to ensure that no athlete is subjected to inappropriate pressure, scrutiny, or invasive practices that may negatively impact health or self-esteem.

IGA champions a culture where personal dignity, autonomy, and confidentiality are prioritised, and where gymnasts feel supported to express any concerns about body image, nutrition, or their general well-being. Coaches, staff, and volunteers share a responsibility to foster an inclusive and encouraging environment and to ensure gymnast welfare always comes before competitive outcomes.

## Legal & Safeguarding Context

IGA is committed to maintaining the highest standards of safeguarding across all territories in which our member clubs operate. Gymnasts must be protected from any practice — including those relating to weighing or dieting — that may cause physical, emotional, or psychological harm. This responsibility is embedded in national safeguarding legislation, guidance, and recognised best practice.



### Legal Duty to Safeguard and Promote Welfare

All individuals working with gymnasts have a legal and moral duty of care to act in the best interests of the athlete at all times. Protecting athletes from harmful or inappropriate weight-related practices is a core component of this duty.

Clubs, coaches, and support staff must follow safeguarding law relevant to their geographical location, including:

Jurisdiction	Core Safeguarding Requirements ( <i>examples referenced</i> )
England & Wales	Children Act 1989 & 2004; Working Together to Safeguard Children Guidance
Scotland	Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014; National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland
Northern Ireland	Children (NI) Order 1995; Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People Guidance
Republic of Ireland	Children First Act 2015; Children First: National Guidance
Channel Islands	Local safeguarding boards and child welfare legislation (e.g., Jersey & Guernsey Children's Laws)

These frameworks collectively require early identification of harm, robust reporting systems, and proactive risk management within sports settings.

### Safeguarding in the Context of Weighing and Dieting

Negative experiences related to weight, appearance, or food can contribute to serious and long-term risks including:

- Eating disorders
- Anxiety, depression, and stress
- Low self-esteem and body image disturbance
- Reduced performance or injury risk due to poor nutrition

Weighing or dietary interventions must:

- Be medically justified AND initiated and documented by medical professionals
- Be consent-based and confidential
- Never be used for comparison, criticism, or performance coercion
- Prioritise the long-term health and well-being of the gymnast ahead of any competitive goals



### **Definition of a Minor**

For safeguarding and consent purposes, IGA recognises a child/minor as any individual under 18 years of age, in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and relevant local law.

Minors must never be pressured to take part in weighing or dieting activity. Where consent is required, it must be provided by both:

- the gymnast (age-appropriate understanding), and
- a parent or person with legal parental responsibility

### **Equality, Dignity, and Anti-Discrimination Responsibilities**

Club practices must safeguard rights protected under legislation such as:

- The Equality Act 2010 (applies across Great Britain)
- Equivalent laws in NI, ROI, and Crown Dependencies

Coaches must ensure athletes are not treated unfairly on the basis of:

- Body shape or composition
- Disability or medical condition
- Age, sex, cultural or religious beliefs

### **Compliance & Oversight**

IGA member clubs must:

- Maintain compliance with this policy and applicable safeguarding legislation across their jurisdiction(s)
- Ensure all weighing or dietary decision-making is medically led and documented
- Conduct regular safeguarding training and awareness for all staff involved in athlete support

IGA reserves the right to intervene where club practices are inconsistent with these legal and welfare standards.

## **Guiding Principles**

These guiding principles underpin all decisions and actions related to the management of weight, nutrition, athlete development, and performance within IGA clubs. They reflect our safeguarding duties, our commitment to positive athlete experience, and our responsibility to protect gymnasts from physical or psychological harm.

### **Welfare First Approach**

All practices must prioritise the gymnast's long-term physical and mental health above performance outcomes. Coaches and staff must create an environment where gymnasts feel safe, listened to, and supported.



### **Respect for Autonomy and Dignity**

Gymnasts have the right to make informed decisions about their own bodies. They must never be pressured to conform to specific weight targets or dietary restrictions. Consent — and where applicable, parental consent — must always be obtained in advance of any weighing practice.

All interactions with athletes should be undertaken with sensitivity, protecting their dignity and privacy.

### **Psychological Safety and Positive Communication**

Language has a profound impact on self-esteem and body image. Any critical or negative comments about weight, shape, or appearance are strictly prohibited. This reflects the current ban on negative or demeaning language within your policy.

Communication must always be supportive, factual, and health-focused

### **Qualified Professional Oversight**

Discussions or interventions relating to body weight, body composition, or diet must only be undertaken by qualified medical or nutritional professionals. Coaches must not advise outside their professional competence.

### **Evidence-Informed Practice**

Any assessment or advice involving weight management must be based on recognised best practice and scientific evidence — particularly for growing athletes whose development varies widely.

### **Transparency, Consent, and Confidentiality**

Gymnasts must understand:

- Why any measurement or dietary advice is being requested
- How their information will be used
- Their right to decline or withdraw at any time

Weight-related information is personal data and must be handled confidentially.

### **Supportive Team Approach**

Clubs must promote open communication and collaboration between:

- Athletes
- Parents/guardians (for minors)
- Coaches and staff
- Healthcare and mental-health professionals

Welfare Officers should be included wherever risk of harm is identified.

### **Non-Comparison Policy**

No gymnast should be compared to another in relation to weight or body composition. Comparative statements can be harmful and are prohibited under the current policy.



### **Inclusion and Non-Discrimination**

All gymnasts must be treated equitably and without bias relating to body shape, medical needs, disability, age, gender, ethnicity, or cultural beliefs.

## **Weighing Protocols**

IGA recognises that weighing gymnasts can present significant physical and psychological risks if managed improperly. Therefore, weighing must only take place in exceptional circumstances where it is necessary to support a gymnast's health and development — never for purely performance-driven reasons.

The following protocols apply to all IGA member clubs and personnel.

### **Purpose and Rationale**

Weighing must only be undertaken when:

- There is a clear medical or welfare reason, such as monitoring growth or investigating potential RED-S (Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport)
- A qualified healthcare professional has determined that weighing is appropriate and beneficial
- It forms part of an individualised health plan agreed with the gymnast and, if a minor, their parent/guardian

Weighing will not be used to:

- Pressure gymnasts to change body shape or size
- Compare athletes with each other
- Evaluate performance capability

### **Who May Conduct Weighing**

Only a certified healthcare professional — such as a GP, registered dietitian, physiotherapist, or qualified sport-science practitioner — may weigh a gymnast. Coaches must never conduct weight measurements or interpret weight data.

Coaches may only be informed of relevant functional recommendations, not numerical weight data.

### **Location and Environment**

Weighing must not occur in the gymnastics environment or anywhere visible to other gymnasts.

Measurements must take place:

- In a private, clinical or medical setting
- In a confidential and supportive environment
- With appropriate chaperoning where required (e.g., same-sex if desired by gymnast)

Privacy and dignity must always be preserved.



### **Consent and Information Sharing**

Consent must be:

- Informed — gymnast understands the reason and process
- Voluntary — no coercion or fear of consequences
- Ongoing — can be withdrawn at any time

For minors under 18:

- Dual consent is required from gymnast + parent/guardian

Results are confidential and may only be shared with:

- The gymnast
- Parent/guardian (if a minor)
- The relevant healthcare professional(s)

No data may be shared more widely without explicit permission.

### **Frequency and Monitoring**

Weighing should be:

- Occasional, not routine
- Undertaken only when medically indicated
- Avoided during early adolescence unless part of a clinically-led growth assessment

Daily or weekly weighing is strictly prohibited. Weight alone must never be used as a measure of health or performance.

### **Record Keeping and Safeguarding**

Healthcare professionals must record:

- Reason for weighing
- Date/time and setting
- Who was present
- Outcome and recommended next steps

Any distress, refusal, or concern noted during weighing must trigger referral to:

- The Club Welfare Officer, and/or
- A mental-health professional

### **Right to Refuse**

A gymnast may decline or withdraw from the weighing process at any time, without justification and without negative consequences. This right must be actively communicated to them.



### **Prohibited Practices**

The following must not occur under any circumstances:

- Public or group weighing
- Recording or displaying weights where others can see
- Weighing to set weight-based targets for minors
- Comments linking weight to skill level, selection, or competitive success
- Use of weighing as punishment or coercion

Such practices are considered poor practice and potential emotional abuse.

## **Dieting & Nutritional Oversight**

IGA is committed to ensuring that all nutritional guidance given to gymnasts promotes healthy growth, performance, and psychological well-being. Dieting must never be used to manipulate gymnasts' weight or appearance at the expense of their physical or mental health. The primary goal at all times is holistic athlete health.

### **Balanced Nutrition as a Foundation**

Gymnasts require adequate energy availability and nutrient-dense diets to support:

- Training demands
- Growth and development
- Injury prevention and recovery
- Cognitive function and mood stability

### **Medical & Professional Guidance Only**

All advice relating to nutrition, weight change, or body composition must only be provided by:

- A registered dietitian or sports nutritionist
- A qualified medical practitioner if related to health conditions

Coaches, parents, and other staff must not provide dieting or weight-loss advice unless they hold appropriate qualifications — reinforcing the existing requirement to avoid advice outside professional expertise.

### **Prohibition of Restrictive Dieting**

The following practices are strictly prohibited:

- Low-calorie or rapid weight-loss diets
- Cutting major food groups (e.g., carbohydrates, fats)
- Water restriction, fasting, or “making weight” strategies
- Diets intended to alter appearance or meet aesthetic expectations

No gymnast should ever feel pressure to change their weight or food intake to fit a performance or body-image ideal.



### **Identifying and Supporting RED-S and Eating Disorders**

Coaches and welfare officers must be trained to monitor for:

- Persistent fatigue or recurrent injury
- Noticeable weight changes or restrictive eating
- Anxiety around food and eating
- Excessive exercise for weight control
- Signs of distress relating to body image

Any concern must result in referral to a healthcare professional — with priority given to well-being over training participation.

Where an eating disorder is suspected:

- Training load must be medically reviewed
- A multi-disciplinary care plan must be implemented
- Return-to-training decisions must be medically led

### **Consent and Communication**

For dietary interventions:

- Gymnasts must understand the purpose and expected impact
- Consent is required — and for minors, joint consent from parents/guardians
- The gymnast's views must be central in all decisions

Information is confidential, shared only with:

- The gymnast
- Parent/guardian (for minors)
- The relevant medical/nutritional professional(s)

### **No Linking Diet to Selection or Punishment**

Food must never be used as:

- A reward or punishment
- A tool to manipulate behaviour
- A criterion for competition selection

These actions constitute poor practice and potential emotional harm.

### **Positive Food Culture in the Club Environment**

Clubs must ensure:

- No negative or judgemental comments about food or body size
- Meal-time pressures are eliminated
- Posters, messaging, and social media reinforce body positivity
- Hydration, rest, and recovery are encouraged as part of overall nutrition



## Education and Signposting

IGA encourages regular education for:

Group	Focus
Gymnasts	Energy balance, fuelling for sport, healthy body image
Parents/Guardians	Supporting nutrition and recognising warning signs
Coaches & Staff	Roles, boundaries, and safeguarding responsibilities

Clubs must also share access to trusted eating-disorder resources and referral pathways, as referenced in your current policy's signposting.

## Safeguarding, Welfare & Wellbeing

IGA is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment where every gymnast can thrive physically and psychologically. Safeguarding must underpin all decisions relating to weighing, dieting, and performance development. Where there is any conflict between performance outcomes and welfare, welfare must always come first.

### Protection from Harm

Gymnasts must be protected from harm including:

- Emotional or psychological distress
- Body image pressure
- Disordered eating behaviours
- Invasive or inappropriate scrutiny of their bodies
- Excessive training linked to weight control

Negative or demeaning language relating to weight or appearance is strictly prohibited, reflecting your current position. Any such behaviour is treated as a safeguarding concern.

### Early Recognition and Response

Coaches and staff must monitor for concerns including:

- Noticeable weight changes
- Excessive fatigue or reduced performance
- Anxiety or discomfort around food or weighing
- Mood changes, irritability, isolation
- Reluctance to train or increased injury frequency

Concerns must never be ignored.

Immediate actions:

1. Report to the Club Welfare Officer
2. Consult with a qualified healthcare professional
3. Involve parents/guardians if the gymnast is a minor - unless concerns around parents actions are suspected



### **Safe Communication and Supportive Relationships**

Gymnasts must feel comfortable raising concerns without fear of judgement or consequence. This is consistent with the supportive culture described in your current introduction.

Staff responsibilities include:

- Building trust through open and respectful communication
- Avoiding assumptions or personal opinions about weight or diet
- Encouraging gymnasts to speak openly about well-being
- Making welfare a regular topic in check-ins, not only during issues

Where concerns affect mental health, referrals to appropriate professionals are required.

### **Privacy, Confidentiality & Dignity**

Conversations about weight or diet must:

- Take place in private
- Include chaperones for minors
- Respect the athlete's dignity at all times

### **Incident Reporting & Escalation**

Any practice that:

- Pressures gymnasts regarding weight
- Uses food or weighing as a punishment
- Compares one gymnast's body to another's
- Creates humiliation, fear, or distress

...must be formally reported as a safeguarding concern.

Welfare Officers must:

- Record concerns and actions taken
- Refer to external safeguarding bodies or medical professionals where necessary
- Follow all statutory reporting procedures for their jurisdiction

### **Athlete-Centred Decision Making**

Gymnasts have the right to:

- Be included in discussions about their own welfare
- Decline participation in weighing or dieting practices
- Access support without stigma or disadvantage

### **Promoting Positive Culture and Resilience**

Clubs must actively foster:

- Positive self-image and confidence
- Recognition of achievements unrelated to physique
- Healthy relationships with food, training, and rest
- Education focused on performance fuel and wellbeing, not aesthetics



## Roles & Responsibilities

Safeguarding gymnasts' physical and mental wellbeing is a shared responsibility. Everyone involved in delivering or supporting gymnastics must clearly understand their role in ensuring that any practices relating to weighing, diet, or performance management are ethical, lawful, and centred on the gymnast's welfare.

### IGA

IGA is responsible for:

- Establishing, implementing, and reviewing this policy
- Ensuring alignment with national safeguarding laws and best practice
- Providing guidance, and resources to support compliance
- Oversight of safeguarding concerns and enforcement of policy breaches
- Promoting a culture where athlete autonomy and safety always come first

IGA may take action where clubs fail to uphold safeguarding standards.

### Clubs and Club Leadership

Clubs must:

- Adopt this policy and ensure full compliance across all activities
- Provide training to coaches, welfare staff, and volunteers
- Maintain an environment where welfare is prioritised over performance
- Ensure qualified medical or nutrition professionals are consulted for weight and diet matters
- Audit and oversee coach conduct, communication, and decision-making
- Provide access to appropriate wellbeing and safeguarding support

The Club Welfare Officer holds a key coordination role in monitoring concerns and safeguarding practice.

### Coaches and Support Staff

Coaches and support personnel must:

- Encourage healthy practices and positive self-image
- Maintain professional boundaries — no weighing or dieting advice unless qualified
- Never make negative comments about weight or appearance
- Avoid discussing weight in the gym environment
- Report any concerns immediately to the Club Welfare Officer
- Support athletes with sensitivity and respect for autonomy

Under no circumstances may a coach use weight, appearance, or food as a basis for punishment, selection, or motivation.



### **Welfare Officers**

Welfare Officers must:

- Act as the first point of contact for wellbeing and safeguarding concerns
- Maintain confidentiality while ensuring appropriate escalation and documentation
- Oversee compliance with mental and physical wellbeing protocols
- Coordinate referrals to external medical or safeguarding professionals
- Train and support staff in child protection and weight-sensitive practices

Welfare Officers must be empowered to challenge poor practice without fear of repercussion.

### **Gymnasts**

Gymnasts have the right to:

- Make informed decisions about weight and diet matters
- Decline weighing or dietary interventions without negative consequences
- Be communicated with respectfully and never compared to others
- Report concerns and seek support in confidence
- Participate in decisions about their own welfare

Gymnasts are encouraged to speak openly with trusted adults about wellbeing.

### **Parents / Guardians**

Parents and guardians must:

- Provide informed consent for minors regarding weighing, monitoring, or dietary interventions
- Support a positive body-image and healthy lifestyle at home
- Communicate concerns about wellbeing to the club
- Collaborate with medical professionals and coaches to uphold welfare
- Encourage enjoyment, development, and self-esteem over results

Parents are valued partners in safeguarding athlete wellbeing.

### **Medical and Nutrition Professionals**

Medical and nutrition experts must:

- Lead weighing and dietary practices, where clinically appropriate
- Provide evidence-based, individualised recommendations
- Monitor for signs of RED-S, disordered eating, or mental health concerns
- Communicate guidance to coaches and parents in a welfare-led manner
- Document interventions and provide safeguarding referrals where needed

These professionals ensure weight and diet decisions are safe and developmentally appropriate.



## Jurisdiction-Specific Addenda / Compliance Considerations

Because IGA operates across multiple legal jurisdictions — each with its own safeguarding and child-welfare laws — this policy must be interpreted and applied in a manner consistent with local statutory requirements. Where local law or guidance provides stronger protections than the baseline policy, those stronger standards must prevail.

Below is a summary of key jurisdictional regimes relevant for clubs when implementing the policy, along with special compliance notes.

### England & Wales

#### Key Legal / Safeguarding Frameworks

- The duty of care for children and young people in sport is well established. Sports organisations are expected to have effective safeguarding policies, codes of conduct, safe recruitment, and staff training.
- National guidance emphasises that safeguarding must protect children from abuse, harm, or neglect, and ensure their welfare and wellbeing.

### Scotland

#### Key Legal / Safeguarding Frameworks

- In Scotland, “child protection” is defined by statutory guidance as protecting a child from abuse or neglect. Safeguarding in sport should align with this statutory child-protection framework.
- Sports clubs working with children must respect that definition and ensure measures are in place to prevent maltreatment, impairment of health or development, and to ensure safe and effective care.

### Northern Ireland

#### Key Legal / Safeguarding Frameworks

- The statutory expectation in Northern Ireland is that sports clubs have a legal and moral obligation to safeguard children and young people participating in sport.
- Governing Bodies are required to adhere to updated “Safeguarding in Sport Standards for NI,” including safe environments, welfare oversight, and child-protection measures.

### Republic of Ireland

#### Key Legal / Safeguarding Frameworks

- Organisations working with children in sport should follow guidance set out under frameworks analogous to “child wellbeing and protection in sport,” embedding safeguarding policies and procedures aimed at preventing harm, supporting wellbeing and promoting safe participation.
- International best-practice documents (e.g., from global child-rights frameworks) widely referenced in Irish sporting child-protection guidance stress the importance of safeguarding physical and psychological welfare in sports for minors.



### **Channel Islands (e.g., Jersey, Guernsey / Alderney)**

Because jurisdictions in the Channel Islands are separate from the UK and Ireland, local statutory safeguards must be respected.

#### Jersey

- The Children and Young People (Jersey) Law 2022, in effect from March 2024, establishes legal duties on all persons and organisations working with children to safeguard welfare and promote wellbeing.
- The associated statutory guidance emphasises a “child-centred”, collaborative, coordinated approach, requiring practitioners to consider wellbeing, consent, non-discrimination, and respect for children’s rights and dignity.

#### Guernsey & Alderney

- The Children (Guernsey & Alderney) Law 2008 (and subsequent updates) governs child welfare and protection in the Bailiwick.
- The local child-protection authority (e.g., the Islands Child Protection Committee) holds responsibility for promoting children’s welfare and coordinating protective measures for sports and recreation contexts.

### **Overarching Compliance Principles**

Across all jurisdictions:

1. Higher standard prevails — If local law or statutory guidance provides stronger protections than IGA’s baseline policy, those stronger standards must be adopted.
2. Multi-agency cooperation — Especially in the Channel Islands, clubs must be prepared to cooperate with local safeguarding partners, child-welfare authorities, and multidisciplinary services as required by local law.
3. Consent & confidentiality consistent with local data-protection regimes — In jurisdictions with data-protection legislation (e.g., the Data Protection (Jersey) Law 2018), any health or personal data (e.g., weight, dietary information) must be handled in compliance.
4. Safeguarding training & safe-recruitment — Clubs must provide safeguarding education and ensure staff, volunteers, coaches meet local standards for working with children. This aligns with international child-protection guidance for sport.
5. Referral & reporting obligations — Where concerns arise (e.g., signs of harm, eating disorders, emotional distress), clubs must follow local safeguarding procedures, liaise with local authorities / statutory bodies, and document actions.

### **Policy Review & Local Adaptation**

- Each IGA-affiliated club must review and, where necessary, adapt the policy at least annually to ensure ongoing compliance with changes in local law or statutory guidance.
- IGA’s central governance team should monitor legislative developments in all jurisdictions (e.g., updates to children’s laws in the Channel Islands, new statutory guidance in UK nations, child-welfare frameworks in ROI) and issue updated policy guidance accordingly.
- Clubs must document the local version of the policy they apply (including any jurisdiction-specific addenda), and maintain records of training, consent forms, safeguarding referrals, and welfare audits.



## Policy Implementation & Oversight

This policy must be fully embedded within all clubs and environments operating under IGA governance. Implementation and oversight ensure that gymnast welfare, rights, and protections are consistently upheld in accordance with local safeguarding expectations and recognised sports governance standards.

### Adoption and Dissemination

All clubs must:

- Formally adopt this policy as a mandatory element of safeguarding practice
- Communicate its requirements to coaches, staff, volunteers, parents/guardians, and gymnasts
- Display or make available the policy in training environments, handbooks, and digital channels

Clubs must evidence adoption as part of safeguarding compliance reviews.

### Mandatory Training and Competency

Clubs must ensure that:

- All staff working with gymnasts complete regular safeguarding in sport training
- Coaches understand professional boundaries regarding weighing and nutrition
- Welfare Officers receive additional specialist training related to mental health and eating disorder recognition
- Records of safeguarding competencies and renewals are maintained for audit

Training is considered a legal and moral expectation for sports organisations working with children.

### Compliance Monitoring

IGA will oversee compliance through:

- Review of incident reports and follow-up actions
- Requests for evidence of consent procedures, professional involvement, and training status

Failure to comply may result in sanctions, including suspension of membership or competition eligibility.

### Clubs' Local Accountability

Clubs are responsible for:

- Maintaining up-to-date local versions of this policy
- Aligning their safeguarding procedures with local statutory obligations
- Implementing action plans promptly when improvement is required
- Ensuring staff understand reporting responsibilities and escalation routes

This aligns with local child-welfare safeguarding standards for sports environments.



## **Reporting & Incident Management**

Any concerns relating to:

- Weighing practices
- Disordered eating or body image distress
- Breaches of consent, confidentiality or respectful conduct
- Emotional harm linked to body comparison or pressure

...must be recorded and referred to:

1. The Club Welfare Officer in the first instance
2. External safeguarding authorities, where required in local law

Clear multi-agency cooperation is expected across different jurisdictions.

## **Data Protection and Confidential Record Keeping**

Clubs must:

- Record health-related information securely
- Restrict access to those with a legitimate safeguarding need
- Comply with relevant national and local data-protection laws (including in the Channel Islands)

Consent records, safeguarding concerns, and medical recommendations must be retained in secure systems.

## **Continuous Improvement and Review**

IGA will:

- Review this policy at least every year, or sooner if law or best practice changes
- Update guidance following safeguarding policy revisions across the UK and Ireland
- Collect feedback from gymnasts, parents, and professionals to evaluate welfare impact

Regular review ensures the policy continues to prioritise gymnast wellbeing and aligns with evolving safeguarding standards in sport.

## **Definitions & Glossary**

The following definitions are provided to ensure clarity and consistency in applying this policy across all IGA-affiliated clubs and jurisdictions.

### **Athlete / Gymnast**

Any person participating in gymnastics activities under the governance of IGA, whether recreational, competitive, or developmental. Applies to children and adults.

### **Minor / Child**

Any individual under 18 years of age.

Where consent is referenced in relation to minors, dual consent (gymnast + parent/guardian) is required.



### **Safeguarding**

The proactive process of protecting children and adults from physical, emotional, or psychological harm, preventing poor practice, and promoting welfare in all activities.

### **Child Protection**

A specific component of safeguarding focused on responding to concerns or disclosures where a child may be suffering or at risk of abuse, harm, or neglect.

### **Duty of Care**

A legal and moral obligation on all individuals working with gymnasts to act in their best interests, prioritising safety and welfare over all other considerations.

### **Consent**

A voluntary, informed agreement to participate in a process (e.g., weighing).

Consent must be:

- Freely given — no pressure or consequences for refusal
- Informed — clear understanding of purpose and process
- Ongoing — can be withdrawn at any time

This aligns with the consent expectations set out in the current policy.

### **Confidentiality**

The obligation to keep health and personal information private and share it only with those who have a legitimate safeguarding or medical reason.

### **Body Composition**

The proportion of muscle, fat, bone, and other tissue in the body.

More meaningful than general weight alone for health and performance assessment — and only to be assessed by qualified professionals.

### **Weight Measurement / Weighing**

The act of recording body weight on a scale or similar equipment.

Under this policy:

- Coaches cannot weigh gymnasts
- Weighing must occur only in clinical/private settings
- Weighing is not permitted within gymnastics environments

### **Restrictive Dieting**

Any approach to food intake that:

- Limits key nutrients
- Reduces energy availability below healthy needs
- Eliminates food groups without medical justification

Strictly prohibited for minors and discouraged for all gymnasts except under clinical supervision.



### **Disordered Eating / Eating Disorders**

Food-, exercise-, and body image–related behaviours or diagnosed conditions that negatively impact health, wellbeing, or performance.

Signs must be identified early and followed by professional medical intervention.

### **RED-S (Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport)**

A medical condition caused by insufficient energy intake to meet the demands of training and health, affecting:

- Growth & development
- Hormonal function
- Bone health
- Cognitive function
- Performance

Any suspected case requires referral to a qualified healthcare professional.

### **Welfare Officer**

A trained club representative responsible for receiving concerns, coordinating safeguarding and wellbeing measures, and escalating issues as needed. This role is already acknowledged within your current responsibilities guidance.

### **Poor Practice**

Actions that may not reach the threshold of abuse but place a gymnast at risk of harm — e.g., negative comments about body shape or weight, comparisons between gymnasts, or inappropriate pressure regarding diet. Existing policy prohibits such behaviours.

### **Abuse**

Any behaviour causing harm or distress, including emotional abuse such as humiliation or shaming about weight or appearance. This includes conduct that undermines an athlete's mental health or sense of self-worth.

### **Qualified Professional (in this policy's context)**

A clinician registered in their field and competent to offer weight and nutrition guidance, such as:

- General Practitioner (GP)
- Registered Dietitian / Sports Nutritionist
- Physiotherapist
- Clinical Psychologist (for mental health)

Only these professionals may lead weighing or dietary interventions.



## Useful Contact Information

- **IGA:**

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

Tel: [0345 319 7000](tel:03453197000)

- **IGA Safeguarding:**

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

### External Support & Signposting

The following organisations provide independent advice and assistance relating to mental health, body image, and eating difficulties:

#### Beat Eating Disorders (UK)

- Support for individuals, parents, and professionals
- <https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk>
- Helpline: 0808 801 0677

#### Mind

- Mental health support services in the UK
- <https://www.mind.org.uk>
- Info Line: 0300 123 3393

#### Childline (UK)

- Confidential helpline for children and young people
- <https://www.childline.org.uk>
- ☎ 0800 1111

#### Samaritans

- Emotional support 24/7
- <https://www.samaritans.org>
- ☎ 116 123

#### Bodywhys (Republic of Ireland)

- Eating disorder support services
- <https://www.bodywhys.ie>
- Helpline: 01 2107906

### Local Safeguarding Partners / Child Protection Authorities

#### Emergency Contacts

- If a gymnast is at immediate risk of harm, call the local emergency services:
- UK: ☎ 999
- Republic of Ireland: ☎ 112 / 999
- Channel Islands: ☎ 999