

SAFE
& FAIR
SPORT



Safeguarding Policy
**WEIGHING
GYMNASTS**

V1/NOV 2023

British
Gymnastics



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WEIGHING GYMNASTS

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Introduction

- Everyone in gymnastics has a responsibility to create a safe and uplifting gymnastics experience for all. British Gymnastics acknowledges we all have a duty of care to safeguard the physical and psychological health of gymnasts.
- The mandatory requirements on Weighing Gymnasts detailed in this document, are underpinned by the British Gymnastics Safeguarding Policy or Home Nation equivalent, which contains information about who this policy applies to, and the scope and purpose. After reading this document, if you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Welfare and Safe Sport team at British Gymnastics or Home Nation equivalent.
- British Gymnastics acknowledges the complexities surrounding weighing in gymnastics. The need for this document is to prevent inappropriate practices and prevent potential areas of concern around weighing, due to some of the related psychological distress and risks of the development of mental health problems such as eating disorders/ disordered eating, anxiety, and depression. Inappropriate or excessive weighing of gymnasts is an example of poor practice which may be on the fringe of abuse and if/or repeated could amount to abuse. The use of belittling or humiliating language around body weight and body composition is an example of emotional abuse.
- For clarity and conciseness, the term 'coaches' used in this document represents coaches, helpers, and gymnastics activity instructors.
- This document was developed for the gymnastics community following consultation with advisory panels, UK Sports Institute practitioners and other external organisations to ensure gymnasts are at the centre of any decision making around weighing.
- This document also contains information about additional support and preventing poor practices, with further information about the complaints process detailed in the British Gymnastics Complaints and Disciplinary Policy and Procedures or Home Nation equivalent. Alongside the document, clubs and coaches should endeavour to implement good weighing practices (Weighing Gymnasts Guidance for Good Practice document).

Key responsibilities

- Clubs, coaches and sport science and medicine practitioners must ensure they follow the points contained in this document to ensure they implement safe weighing practices.
- To ensure that safe weighing practices are implemented, supporting information for parents/ carers and gymnasts can be found in 'What do I need to know...':

Associated policies & guidance

British Gymnastics & Welsh Gymnastics

[British Gymnastics Safeguarding Policy](#)

[British Gymnastics Standards of Conduct for Coaches, Officials & Instructors](#)

[British Gymnastics Standards of Conduct for Registered Clubs](#)

[British Gymnastics Complaints & Disciplinary Policy & Procedure](#)

Scottish Gymnastics

[Scottish Gymnastics Child protection & wellbeing policy & guidance](#)

[Scottish Gymnastics Code of Practice for Coaches & Officials](#)

[Scottish Gymnastics Complaints: Guidance for clubs affiliated to Scottish Gymnastics](#)



Safeguarding policy: WEIGHING GYMNASTS

1. It is always the gymnast's choice whether they are weighed. Their decision must always be respected and acted upon. Gymnasts and parents/carers (in the case of minors) must not be coerced to give consent for weighing.
2. Coaches must not weigh gymnasts. Gymnasts can choose to self-report their weight in a gymnastics setting. Other than self-reporting, in a gymnastics setting only qualified sport science or medicine practitioners* are permitted to weigh gymnasts**.
3. The gymnast must be over the age of 10 to be weighed in a gymnastics setting.
4. The weighing of gymnasts must only be undertaken with the gymnast's optimal long-term development in mind and with clear, scientifically valid rationale. A gymnast must only be weighed for growth/maturation or performance purposes, whereby weight is always combined with another measure:
 - 4.1 For growth and maturation purposes (e.g., using weight alongside height to identify when a gymnast is in their growth spurt using the Khamis-Roche method), no more than monthly and ideally at the same time each month.
 - 4.2 For performance purposes (e.g., calculating performance metrics such as power-to-weight ratio or relative peak force, for programming strength and conditioning exercises or for body composition assessments). Please note
5. body composition assessments must only be performed by a qualified sports science or medicine practitioner*, who holds a minimum of a current level 1 International Society for the Advancement of Kinanthropometry (ISAK) Qualification Accreditation.
5. Written consent must be gained from the gymnast and parent/carer (in the case of minors) every year by the qualified sport science or medicine practitioner, outlining the reason for weighing.
6. Verbal consent must be gained from the gymnast, this must happen each time a gymnast is to be weighed.
7. Qualified sport science or medicine practitioners* must not share the gymnast's weight data with anyone other than the gymnast. Tact and discretion must always be prioritised when measuring weight. Gymnasts may wish to share their weight data with parents/carers and coaches, it is always their choice whether they choose to do this. No one must coerce or encourage gymnasts to share their weight data. Any stored data must be aligned with data protection and GDPR regulations.
8. Gymnasts and parents/carers (in the case of minors) have the right to refuse or withdraw consent at any time without any consequence.

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Safeguarding policy: WEIGHING GYMNASTS

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*A qualified sport science and medicine practitioner refers to individuals who have a minimum of an undergraduate sports science or sports medicine related degree or equivalent and are registered with British Gymnastics (or equivalent) through the Sport Support Services.

**Coaches in dual-role positions – Some coaches may hold relevant degrees/ qualifications and or professional accreditation (i.e., physiotherapist, nutritionist) that would enable them to fulfil a range of support roles within the sport. If the individual with a dual-role coaches within the club setting in any capacity, they are not permitted to weigh gymnasts in that club as per the policy due to their coaching role (please see the Safeguarding Children: Safe Environment policy for more information on dual-roles).

Support & preventing poor practice

Everyone should feel able to ask a question, ask for help, or raise a concern; no matter who you are, or how you are involved in gymnastics. Use the information below to help say something if you see or experience something that doesn't feel right.



Query

If you are not sure or feel uncomfortable on a practice/comment you implemented, experienced or observed, it is ok to raise a query with someone you feel comfortable with. This could be with a coach, gymnast, friend, welfare officer, parent or club manager.

Reflect

Take the time to reflect on what has happened and whether anything could have been done differently. Would it be acceptable outside of gymnastics?

Seek

It is ok if you are not sure or do not know the answer, there are lots of people that can help including other coaches, welfare officers and British Gymnastics National Welfare Officer Team (welfareofficer@british-gymnastics.org), Scottish Gymnastics wellbeing and safe sport team (safegym@scottishgymnastics.org) or Welsh Gymnastics safeguarding (safeguarding@welshgymnastics.org) or the Northern Ireland welfare officer (welfareofficergni@gmail.com). You can contact British Gymnastics, Scottish Gymnastics or Welsh Gymnastics for advice at any point, this will not be taken as an official complaint.

NOTE: All home nation governing bodies have a duty of care, therefore if they have any concerns this will be escalated appropriately.

Making mistakes

It is ok to make a mistake! If this happens, take accountability for it, apologise, and learn from it to stop it happening again.

Raise

If you believe that you need to raise a concern, contact your club welfare officer. They will then be able to deal with your concern accordingly.

Recommendations

Create a psychologically safe environment for everyone in gymnastics by promoting open, honest and transparent conversations, with regular opportunities for feedback.

Encourage and promote an environment for asking questions and respectful challenge.

Regularly reflect on the day/session/event (see our Positive Coaching module).

Encourage everyone to reflect daily.



Contact information

British Gymnastics Safe and Fair Sport
Safe and fair sport (british-gymnastics.org)

British Gymnastics: 0345 129 7129
welfareandsafesport@british-gymnastics.org
or welfareofficer@british-gymnastics.org

Welsh Gymnastics: 029 2033 4960
safeguarding@welshgymnastics.org

Scottish Gymnastics: 0131 271 9733
or safegym@scottishgymnastics.org

Northern Ireland
welfareofficergni@gmail.com

Regional Welfare Officer details
british-gymnastics.org/safesport/safeguarding#14