

Policy for Collection of Gymnasts

Kestrel Acrobatics and Tumbling have a responsibility for the safety and welfare of gymnasts, coaches, volunteers, officials and visitors. There is a legal responsibility to ensure that participants are protected against harm or danger whilst taking part in gymnastics or related activities. This is legally termed the 'Duty of Care'. This becomes particularly relevant when dealing with children - the definition being any person under the age of 18 years old.

When working with children, an adult who carries out a supervisory role takes on certain responsibilities while the child is in their care. This includes ensuring their safe return after training. The legal terminology for this relationship is that the person would be acting 'in loco-parentis' – the literal definition being 'for the parents'. In British Gymnastics terms, this is referred to as 'in place of a parent' and acting as a reasonable adult would be expected to.

The expected standard for behaviour is based on reasonableness and our Duty of Care starts from the time a child arrives at a club or event, until the child is returned to the care of their parent or nominated guardian. In order to fulfil the Duty of Care, gymnasts **MUST** be handed back to a parent or nominated guardian at the end of the session and any reports of failure to comply with the guidance in this section will be investigated as breach of policy by British Gymnastics and can result in prosecution.

Our coaches can never leave a child or young person alone unless she/he is over 16 and then only with parent's permission. We must also carry out appropriate assessments of situations as they arise, acknowledging that some young people aged 16 and over can go home alone if their parent is delayed, but only with notification this is ok.

Kestrel Acrobatics and Tumbling must stress, that gymnasts cannot and will not be released from our care, unless a parent or duly nominated person for collection is physically present at the appropriate collection point for the venue – which does not include being met outside of the premises in any circumstances. For example at Thornbury Leisure Centre, the collection point is in whichever hall is being utilised for that day's session. At other events away from the leisure centre, the collection point will be communicated as soon as reasonably possible.

There has been an instance at another club where coaches allowed a child to leave and a person who was legally not allowed to have any contact with the child was waiting for them on the car park. Thankfully on this occasion, no abduction was attempted, but the coaches were in serious trouble as they were legally still responsible as they had not dispensed with their Duty of Care correctly, by not ensuring that the gymnast was returned to a nominated adult. We hope that you can see from this real scenario that was communicated by British Gymnastics to all Welfare Officers, why it is important for both the safety of your children and the Coaches that the collection policy **MUST** be adhered to.

Late Collection of Children

In the event that you, a parent or nominated person be delayed for any reason, the club must be contacted at the earliest opportunity ideally on **07763 240101**, failing that contact the **Leisure Centre Reception on 0300 333 0300**. Clear guidance must be provided on what action the club should adopt e.g. consent given for another parent to transport their child home on their behalf, authorisation for another person to collect, giving some sort of description of that person so that our Coaches can be certain that the child is being handed back to the person responsible for collection.

Please note the Coaches cannot take the child home, to another location, wait in a vehicle, or at the club with them alone as that is in direct contravention of Welfare and Safeguarding of Children Policies.

If the parent is considered by the club as being unduly late, the Club has to follow the below procedure in accordance with British Gymnastics Policy on Welfare:

1. Attempt to contact the parent
2. Attempt to contact the emergency contact person nominated.
3. If there is no reply from the emergency contact, ask the child if there is another family member who may be contacted.
4. Wait with the young person(s) at the club with at least one other official / coach / teacher / volunteers or parents.
5. Respond to any instructions received from the parent
6. If no-one can be reached, contact the local police or Children's Social Care Services to enquire about the best course of action.

PLEASE REMEMBER THIS POLICY IS IN PLACE TO ENSURE THE BEST POSSIBLE SAFETY AND WELFARE FOR YOUR CHILDREN AND THE COACHING STAFF THEMSELVES