

Aquila

TRAMPOLINING



Safeguarding and Welfare Policy

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Aquila Trampoline Club	
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Aquila Trampoline Club

Privacy Notice for Members, Parents, Carers and Prospective Members

1. Our commitment

Aquila Trampoline Club is committed to providing a safe, positive, inclusive and enjoyable environment for everyone involved in Trampoline Gymnastics.

The welfare of children, young people and adults at risk is of paramount importance. Everyone has the right to participate in gymnastics in an environment where they feel safe, respected, listened to and supported, and where concerns about their welfare are taken seriously.

Aquila is a registered British Gymnastics club. We follow the safeguarding requirements, policies, procedures and Standards of Conduct established by British Gymnastics and its Safe & Fair Sport framework. British Gymnastics states that it is committed to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk and providing a safe and enjoyable experience in gymnastics.

This Aquila policy explains how those principles are applied within our club and how a gymnast, parent, carer, coach or other person can raise a welfare or safeguarding concern.

Where there is any conflict between this document and a current mandatory British Gymnastics safeguarding requirement, the current British Gymnastics requirement will take precedence.

2. Who this policy applies to

This policy applies to everyone involved with Aquila Trampoline Club, including:

- gymnasts;
- parents and carers;
- coaches;
- the Welfare Officer;
- club officials;
- volunteers;
- helpers;
- committee or management members; and
- visitors participating in club activities.

Aquila coaches gymnasts from age 5 through to adulthood. Our safeguarding responsibilities therefore extend both to children and, where applicable, to adults at risk.

3. Our Welfare Officer

Aquila's Welfare Officer is:

Helen Fiander

Email: welfare@aquila-tc.co.uk

Helen is regularly present at training sessions, is known to our gymnasts and coaches, and is available to speak privately with gymnasts, parents, carers or coaches who have a concern or simply wish to discuss something in confidence.

A Welfare Officer is an essential role within a British Gymnastics club. British Gymnastics describes the role as including responding to concerns involving children and adults at risk and supporting clubs in implementing procedures that safeguard and promote welfare.

British Gymnastics requires Club Welfare Officers to hold appropriate safeguarding credentials, Welfare Officer training and a current criminal-record check.

The Welfare Officer is there to:

- provide a trusted point of contact for gymnasts, parents, carers and coaches;
- listen to concerns;
- provide safeguarding and welfare advice;
- ensure concerns are handled appropriately;
- refer matters to British Gymnastics or statutory authorities where necessary;
- promote good safeguarding practice throughout Aquila;
- support coaches and club officials in understanding their safeguarding responsibilities; and
- periodically review club safeguarding arrangements.

The Welfare Officer does not need to investigate every concern personally. Her role includes ensuring that the concern is passed to the appropriate person or organisation where necessary.

4. Everyone has a responsibility for safeguarding

Safeguarding is not solely the responsibility of the Welfare Officer.

Every Aquila coach, official and volunteer has a responsibility to:

- put the gymnast's welfare first;
- behave professionally and appropriately;
- remain alert to signs that someone may be experiencing harm or distress;
- listen to concerns;
- report safeguarding concerns promptly;
- avoid promising secrecy;
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries; and
- follow British Gymnastics and Aquila procedures.

A person does not need to be certain that abuse or harm has occurred before raising a concern.

If something feels wrong, appears inappropriate or causes concern, it should be reported.

5. What is a safeguarding concern?

Safeguarding concerns can take many forms. They may include suspected or disclosed:

- physical abuse;
- emotional abuse;
- sexual abuse;
- neglect;
- bullying or cyberbullying;
- harassment;
- discrimination;
- inappropriate sexual behaviour;
- grooming;
- exploitation;
- coercive or controlling behaviour;
- self-harm or serious concerns about wellbeing;
- inappropriate behaviour by a coach, volunteer, parent or another gymnast;
- abuse occurring outside the club that becomes known to us;
- breaches of professional boundaries; or
- concerns about an adult who may be at risk of abuse or neglect.

A safeguarding concern can arise from a single serious incident or from a pattern of behaviour that may initially appear relatively minor.

Welfare also extends beyond preventing abuse. Aquila wants gymnasts to feel able to speak when something about their gymnastics experience is making them uncomfortable, unhappy or worried.

6. How to raise a concern

We want speaking up to be straightforward.

A gymnast, parent, carer, coach or other person can raise a safeguarding or welfare concern by:

- speaking privately to Helen Fiander, Welfare Officer, at training; and
- emailing welfare@aquila-tc.co.uk.

A gymnast may also speak to a coach or another adult at Aquila whom they trust. That person must then pass an appropriate safeguarding concern to the Welfare Officer.

Nobody will be criticised for raising a genuine concern in good faith, even if it later proves to have an innocent explanation.

7. When to contact British Gymnastics directly

A person does not have to raise a safeguarding concern through Aquila first.

If someone:

- does not feel comfortable raising the matter with the club;
- believes the concern involves the Welfare Officer or senior people within Aquila;
- believes the club has not responded appropriately;
- considers the matter serious enough to warrant direct referral; or
- simply wishes to seek independent advice,
- they can contact the British Gymnastics Welfare & Safe Sport Team directly.

British Gymnastics currently provides a dedicated reporting route for safeguarding concerns and concerns about the behaviour of coaches or clubs.

British Gymnastics Welfare & Safe Sport can currently be contacted on:

0345 129 7129

welfareandsafesport@british-gymnastics.org

British Gymnastics also provides access to its regional and national Welfare Officer network.

Current reporting information should always be checked through the British Gymnastics Safe & Fair Sport – Report a Concern service.

8. Immediate danger or emergency

If somebody is in immediate danger or requires urgent medical assistance, protecting them takes priority over the normal club reporting process.

In an emergency:

- call 999 where police, ambulance or other emergency assistance is required;
- take reasonable immediate steps to protect the person from further harm; and
- inform the Aquila Welfare Officer as soon as it is safe and appropriate to do so.

British Gymnastics similarly advises that where there is immediate risk of harm, appropriate emergency action should be taken rather than waiting for the normal welfare process.

9. If a gymnast tells us something

If a gymnast discloses something worrying to a coach, Welfare Officer or other trusted adult, we will:

- remain calm;
- listen carefully;
- take what they say seriously;
- allow them to speak in their own words;
- avoid leading or repeatedly questioning them;
- reassure them that speaking up was the right thing to do;
- explain that we may need to share the information with someone who can help;
- make an appropriate factual record; and
- pass the concern to the Welfare Officer or appropriate safeguarding authority.

We will not promise to keep a safeguarding disclosure secret.

Information will nevertheless be treated sensitively and shared only with people who have a genuine safeguarding reason to receive it.

10. Confidentiality and information sharing

Safeguarding matters will be handled as confidentially as reasonably possible.

However, confidentiality does not mean secrecy.

Where there is a safeguarding concern, information may need to be shared with:

- Aquila's Welfare Officer;
- British Gymnastics;
- a British Gymnastics Regional or National Welfare Officer;
- children's or adult social care;
- the police;
- medical professionals; or
- another appropriate safeguarding authority.

Information will normally be shared only where it is relevant and necessary for safeguarding or legal purposes.

Parents or carers will usually be involved where a concern relates to their child, unless doing so could increase the risk to the child, prejudice an investigation, or otherwise be contrary to appropriate safeguarding advice.

Safeguarding records will be managed separately and carefully in accordance with Aquila's privacy arrangements and applicable British Gymnastics guidance.

11. Concerns or allegations about a coach, official or volunteer

Any safeguarding allegation or serious concern involving an Aquila coach, official, Welfare Officer, volunteer or other adult working with gymnasts must be taken seriously.

The matter must not simply be dealt with as an ordinary disagreement or employment/club-management issue where a safeguarding concern may exist.

Depending on the circumstances, Aquila may:

- immediately refer the matter to British Gymnastics;
- seek advice from the British Gymnastics Welfare & Safe Sport Team;
- refer the matter to statutory safeguarding authorities or the police;
- take appropriate interim steps to protect gymnasts while the concern is considered; and
- restrict or suspend an individual's club duties where appropriate and permitted.

Aquila will not conduct its own detailed investigation where doing so could interfere with a British Gymnastics, police or statutory safeguarding investigation.

British Gymnastics provides a defined reporting pathway for serious safeguarding complaints and alleged breaches of its Standards of Conduct involving registered clubs and members.

If the concern relates to Aquila's Welfare Officer, it should be raised with the Head Coach or directly with British Gymnastics rather than being referred back to the Welfare Officer concerned.

12. Coaches and safeguarding requirements

Aquila will ensure that coaches and other relevant adults meet the membership, qualification, safeguarding and criminal-record requirements applicable to their role under British Gymnastics rules.

British Gymnastics states that coaches working in registered clubs require appropriate criminal-record checks, and its club registration requirements include current safeguarding credentials for relevant coaching roles.

Safeguarding training must be maintained in accordance with current British Gymnastics requirements. British Gymnastics currently states that recognised safeguarding training is normally refreshed every three years.

Coaches must also follow the current British Gymnastics Standards of Conduct and Aquila's Code of Conduct for Coaches, Officials and Volunteers.

13. Professional boundaries

Coaches occupy a position of trust.

They must maintain appropriate professional boundaries with gymnasts at all times.

This includes avoiding:

- favouritism or inappropriate special relationships;
- sexualised comments or behaviour;
- humiliating, intimidating or degrading coaching practices;
- unnecessary private meetings in isolated locations;
- inappropriate gifts;
- inappropriate physical contact;
- relationships that exploit the coach/gymnast imbalance of power; and
- communication with children that would reasonably be considered secretive or inappropriate.

Coaching should be positive, respectful and appropriate to the gymnast's age, maturity and individual circumstances.

British Gymnastics' Standards of Conduct apply to coaches, instructors, officials and those involved in managing and delivering gymnastics within registered clubs.

14. Communication with under-18 gymnasts

For gymnasts under the age of 18, routine Aquila communications should normally take place through their parent or carer.

Aquila's WhatsApp groups are principally parent/carers groups and under-18 gymnasts are normally not included.

Where direct communication with an older junior gymnast is genuinely necessary for an appropriate gymnastics reason, it must:

- be professional;
- relate to legitimate club activity;
- use appropriate communication channels;
- avoid secrecy;
- include or otherwise keep parents/carers appropriately informed; and
- comply with current British Gymnastics safeguarding and communication requirements.

Coaches must not use private electronic communication to develop inappropriate personal relationships with junior gymnasts.

15. Physical contact, supporting and spotting

Trampoline Gymnastics is a sport in which appropriate physical contact may sometimes be necessary for safety, coaching, supporting or responding to an accident.

Any physical contact must:

- have a legitimate coaching or safety purpose;
- be appropriate to the gymnast's age and the activity;
- be proportionate to what is required;
- respect the gymnast's dignity and personal boundaries;
- never be sexualised or punitive; and
- comply with British Gymnastics coaching and safeguarding practice.

Gymnasts should be helped to understand why physical support may be required.

Where appropriate, coaches should explain what they are going to do before providing physical support.

If a gymnast expresses discomfort with particular contact, this should be listened to and respected wherever it can safely be accommodated.

16. Changing, toilets and personal care

Gymnasts' privacy and dignity must be respected.

Adults should avoid placing themselves unnecessarily in situations where they are alone with an undressed child.

Where a young gymnast or a gymnast with additional needs requires assistance with personal care, appropriate arrangements should normally be agreed with the parent or carer in advance.

Any concern about behaviour in toilets, changing areas or similar private spaces should be reported promptly to the Welfare Officer.

17. Photography and video

Aquila sometimes uses photographs or video for legitimate coaching purposes and, with appropriate permission, for club publicity.

The club maintains separate arrangements governing photography and video.

For children, appropriate parent/carers permission must be obtained in accordance with Aquila's Photography and Video Policy and British Gymnastics safeguarding guidance.

British Gymnastics states that parental/carers consent should be obtained in relation to photographs and video of children.

Where video is recorded solely for coaching purposes:

- it must have a genuine coaching purpose;
- it must be stored appropriately;
- it must not be shared for unrelated purposes; and
- it should be deleted when no longer required.

Aquila's normal expectation is that coaching-only footage is deleted within 30 days.

Any concern about inappropriate photography or filming should be reported immediately to the Welfare Officer.

18. Bullying and inappropriate behaviour

Aquila does not accept bullying.

This includes:

- physical bullying;
- verbal abuse;
- threatening behaviour;
- deliberate exclusion;
- persistent teasing or humiliation;
- discriminatory bullying;
- online or social-media bullying; and
- bullying between gymnasts, adults or both.

Reports of bullying will be taken seriously.

Depending on the circumstances, the matter may be addressed through coaching intervention, Aquila's Codes of Conduct or complaints procedures, or treated as a safeguarding issue and referred to the Welfare Officer or British Gymnastics.

19. Equality, inclusion and additional needs

Safeguarding applies to every gymnast.

Aquila recognises that some people may face additional barriers to speaking up or may be at increased risk of harm.

We will seek to make reasonable adjustments and communicate in a way that takes account of a person's:

- age;
- disability;
- communication needs;
- neurodiversity;
- level of understanding; and
- individual circumstances.

Information about additional needs should never be used to dismiss, minimise or discredit a person's safeguarding concern.

20. Mental health and emotional wellbeing

Aquila recognises that welfare includes emotional as well as physical wellbeing.

Coaches are not expected to act as mental-health professionals, but they should respond appropriately where a gymnast appears distressed or asks for help.

A concern about a gymnast's emotional wellbeing should be discussed sensitively with the Welfare Officer and, where appropriate, their parent or carer.

Where there is concern that someone may be at immediate risk of serious harm, appropriate emergency or specialist support should be sought.

21. Parents and carers

Parents and carers are important partners in creating a safe gymnastics environment.

We ask parents and carers to:

- follow Aquila's Parent/Carer Code of Conduct;
- treat gymnasts, coaches and other families respectfully;
- provide accurate information about medical conditions or additional needs relevant to safe participation;
- keep emergency contact details up to date;
- raise welfare concerns rather than allowing them to continue;
- respect coaches' professional boundaries with gymnasts; and
- support their child in speaking openly if something is worrying them.

A parent should never feel that raising a genuine welfare concern will disadvantage their child's place at Aquila.

22. Gymnasts' voice

Gymnasts should feel that they can speak up.

We want gymnasts to know that:

- they have the right to feel safe;
- they can say when something makes them uncomfortable;
- they can speak to Helen, a coach, a parent/carers or another trusted adult;
- adults should listen to them;
- they will not get into trouble simply for raising a genuine concern; and
- they can contact British Gymnastics themselves if they do not feel able to speak to someone at Aquila.

Aquila aims to foster a culture in which listening to gymnasts is part of normal good coaching rather than something that happens only when a serious problem arises.

23. Competitions and activities away from Aquila

Aquila's safeguarding responsibilities continue when gymnasts represent the club at competitions or other organised activities.

Coaches and officials must continue to follow British Gymnastics and Aquila safeguarding requirements.

Where Aquila organises an activity involving travel or overnight stays with gymnasts under 18, the club will follow current British Gymnastics travel and safeguarding requirements.

British Gymnastics requires a suitably trained person to have designated welfare responsibility for trips involving under-18 gymnasts, with additional requirements applying to overnight and overseas travel.

24. Safeguarding records

Safeguarding concerns and actions taken will be recorded appropriately.

Records should:

- be factual;
- distinguish fact from opinion;
- include relevant dates and times;
- record what was said as accurately as reasonably possible;
- record actions and referrals made; and
- be stored securely with access restricted to appropriate people.

Safeguarding records are not part of ordinary coaching notes and may need to be retained for longer than normal membership records.

They will be handled in accordance with applicable British Gymnastics guidance, data-protection law and Aquila's Privacy Notice.

25. Complaints, conduct and safeguarding

Not every complaint is a safeguarding issue.

A disagreement about fees, timetables or ordinary club administration would normally be dealt with under Aquila's Complaints Procedure.

However, where a complaint contains information suggesting:

- abuse;
- harm;
- inappropriate adult behaviour;
- serious bullying;
- breach of professional boundaries; or
- another safeguarding concern, the safeguarding process takes priority.

A safeguarding concern should not be delayed simply because a related complaint is being considered.

26. Whistleblowing and speaking up

Coaches, volunteers and club officials must be able to raise concerns about unsafe or inappropriate practices within Aquila.

Nobody should be discouraged from reporting a genuine safeguarding concern because the person involved is:

- a senior coach;
- a longstanding club member;
- a friend;
- a parent;
- a club official; or
- otherwise influential within Aquila.

Where someone believes they cannot safely raise a matter internally, they should contact British Gymnastics or an appropriate statutory authority directly.

27. Recruitment and suitability

Aquila will take reasonable steps to ensure that people working with gymnasts are suitable for their roles.

Depending on the role, this includes:

- appropriate British Gymnastics membership;
- relevant coaching qualifications;
- required DBS/criminal-record checks;
- recognised safeguarding training;
- role-specific British Gymnastics training; and
- ongoing compliance with British Gymnastics Standards of Conduct.

A DBS check is one safeguarding measure and does not replace appropriate supervision, training, professional conduct or a culture in which concerns are reported.

28. Review and monitoring

Aquila will keep its safeguarding arrangements under review.

The Welfare Officer will support the club in reviewing policies and safeguarding practice, consistent with the role identified by British Gymnastics.

This policy will be reviewed:

- at least annually;
- following a significant safeguarding incident;
- where lessons are identified from a concern or complaint;
- following significant changes to the way Aquila operates; or
- when British Gymnastics or relevant legislation introduces material changes.

29. Related Aquila documents

This policy should be read alongside:

- Aquila Trampoline Club Privacy Notice;
- Code of Conduct – Gymnasts;
- Code of Conduct – Parents and Carers;
- Code of Conduct – Coaches, Officials and Volunteers;
- Complaints Procedure;
- Photography and Video Policy;
- Health, Safety and Welfare Policy; and
- relevant risk assessments and operational procedures.

30. British Gymnastics policies

As a British Gymnastics registered club, Aquila follows applicable current British Gymnastics policies, procedures and standards, including its:

- Safe & Fair Sport safeguarding arrangements;
- Standards of Conduct;
- safeguarding reporting procedures;
- Welfare Officer requirements;
- criminal-record/DBS requirements;
- Safe Sport policies; and
- relevant coaching and welfare guidance.

British Gymnastics maintains its current safeguarding policies and reporting information through its Safe & Fair Sport resources.

Aquila will therefore avoid duplicating detailed British Gymnastics procedures unnecessarily and will follow the current BG procedure where a matter needs escalation or referral.

31. Contacting Aquila about a welfare concern

Welfare Officer: Helen Fiander

Email: welfare@aquila-tc.co.uk

You can also select “Welfare Officer” using the contact form on the Aquila Trampoline Club website.

Helen is regularly present at training and can be approached for a private conversation.

If there is an immediate risk of harm, contact the emergency services on 999.

Concerns can also be raised directly with the British Gymnastics Welfare & Safe Sport Team using the current contact and reporting routes published by British Gymnastics.