



Anti Bullying Policy

Version 1.0 | Prepared 2 October 2026 | Review October 2027

Approval body	Policy owner	Approval date
Kingsbridge Gym Club Trustees and Committee	Club Welfare Officer welfare@kingsbridgegymclub.co.uk	To be recorded on adoption
Version	Summary	Prepared date
1.0	Anti bullying prevention, reporting and response procedures.	02/10/2026

Our commitment

Kingsbridge Gym Club wants everyone to enjoy gymnastics in a safe, welcoming environment. Bullying is unacceptable and every report will be taken seriously. Welfare takes priority over results, selection and performance. This policy explains how we prevent bullying, respond to concerns and support everyone affected.

It applies to gymnasts, parents and carers, coaches, employees, young leaders, volunteers, officials, trustees and committee members. It covers classes, squads, drop-in sessions, parties, holiday activities, competitions, changing areas, travel and club-related online contact. All under-18s, including employed helpers, are children for safeguarding purposes.

What bullying means

Bullying is hurtful behaviour, usually repeated, involving a real or perceived imbalance of power that makes it difficult for someone to defend themselves. Power may come from age, authority, strength, popularity, group pressure or access to information. Bullying can be deliberate, but a person does not have to prove intent for the club to act on harmful behaviour.

A single serious incident, discriminatory comment, threat or assault still requires action, even if it does not meet this definition. Bullying may occur between children, between adults, or between an adult and a child. Adult behaviour towards a child may also be abuse and must follow the safeguarding reporting procedure.

Calling behaviour banter or a joke does not excuse harm. Constructive coaching is respectful, proportionate and focused on learning; humiliation, intimidation or threats are unacceptable.



Recognising bullying

- Verbal or emotional: insults, persistent teasing, threats, ridicule, spreading rumours, deliberately excluding someone or encouraging others to isolate them.
- Physical or through belongings: hitting, pushing, intimidation, hiding, taking or damaging possessions, or forcing someone to do something.
- Sexual: unwanted touching, sexual comments, harassment or sharing sexual material. These concerns may require an immediate safeguarding or police referral.
- Online: abusive messages, group-chat exclusion used to target someone, impersonation, sharing humiliating images or videos, or encouraging others to harass them.
- Prejudice based: targeting someone because of disability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, appearance, background or another real or perceived difference.

In gymnastics this could include mocking a gymnast's body or ability, repeatedly humiliating someone after a mistake, threatening selection to silence a concern, pressuring a child through fear, or squad members targeting a newcomer. Competitive pressure never justifies bullying.

Preventing bullying

- Coaches and helpers must model respectful language, explain behaviour expectations and challenge hurtful behaviour promptly and calmly.
- Provide appropriate supervision, including during transitions and in waiting areas. Maintain safe arrangements for changing areas and online communication.
- Help gymnasts understand how to include others, recognise harm and ask for help. Provide accessible ways to report, allowing for age, disability, communication needs and language.
- Publish the welfare contact, introduce the Welfare Officer to members and ensure children know they can speak to any trusted adult.
- Parents and carers must support respectful behaviour, avoid humiliating criticism, and raise concerns privately with the club rather than confronting another child or family.

The Welfare Officer coordinates reports and support. Trustees oversee implementation, appoint an unconnected person where there is a conflict, and ensure staff and volunteers understand the policy.

If you see bullying

If safe, interrupt the behaviour and get help from a coach or responsible adult. Stay with the person affected if they want support. Do not join in, retaliate, share harmful content or attempt to investigate. Report what you saw even if the person affected is reluctant to speak.



Reporting a concern

Tell a coach or another trusted adult as soon as possible, or email the Club Welfare Officer at welfare@kingsbridgegymclub.co.uk. A child can ask a parent or trusted person to help them report. You do not need proof, and anonymous reports will be considered where enough information is available.

If the Welfare Officer is unavailable, involved in the concern, or you do not feel able to approach the club, contact British Gymnastics directly: welfareandsafesport@british-gymnastics.org or 0345 129 7129. No club permission is needed to make an external report.

Immediate danger or urgent medical need: call 999. Never wait for an email reply if someone may be at risk. Concerns about abuse, serious violence, sexual harm, self-harm or an adult's suitability to work with children must be handled under the club's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, including referral to police, social care or the LADO where appropriate. A club enquiry must not delay a safeguarding referral.

How the club will respond

- Make people safe: stop the behaviour, assess immediate risk and agree protective arrangements. These may include additional supervision or separating activities without penalising the person affected.
- Listen: speak privately, take the concern seriously, reassure the person that reporting was right and explain the next steps. Do not promise secrecy or ask leading questions.
- Record: note dates, times, people involved, the person's own words, what was observed and actions taken. Distinguish facts from opinion and pass the record securely to the Welfare Officer.
- Assess and refer: the Welfare Officer considers the seriousness, pattern, power imbalance and safeguarding risks. Seek external advice when needed. Suspected abuse must not be investigated internally.
- Establish facts where suitable: for matters appropriate for a club enquiry, an impartial person hears those involved separately and fairly, using age-appropriate support. Do not confront children together or require repeated retelling.
- Agree action: inform parents or carers of children involved unless this could increase risk or compromise an external enquiry. Seek safeguarding advice if unsure. Explain the outcome and support plan within confidentiality limits.

The club aims to acknowledge non-emergency reports within two working days. It will explain who is handling the concern and agree when the next update will be provided. External enquiries may affect timescales; protective action must still be prompt. No one reporting honestly will be penalised for an allegation that is not substantiated.



Support and behaviour change

Agree support with the person affected, including a named trusted adult, regular check-ins and adjustments that help them participate safely. Consider support for witnesses and others affected. Do not tell someone to toughen up, fight back or change their behaviour to avoid being bullied.

A child displaying bullying behaviour also needs support. Explain the behaviour that must stop, explore contributing needs without excusing harm and agree a clear behaviour plan with appropriate adult involvement. Avoid labels such as bully, public shaming or collective punishment.

An apology or restorative meeting may help only where it is voluntary, safe and wanted by the person affected. Never require reconciliation as a condition of support or use mediation to address suspected abuse or coercion.

Consequences and review

Action must reflect seriousness, risk, age, individual needs and any repeated behaviour. It may include a warning, behaviour agreement, increased supervision, restrictions, temporary suspension or ending membership or a role. Use the relevant club conduct, complaints or employment procedure fairly; consider reasonable adjustments and record reasons. Temporary safety restrictions are protective measures, not a finding of guilt.

The Welfare Officer must check whether the behaviour has stopped and review the support plan with those affected. Record an agreed follow-up date and act again if concerns continue. Retaliation, intimidation or pressure to withdraw a report is a further concern and must be reported immediately.

If someone is unhappy with the response, they may request review under the club's Complaints and Grievance Procedure by a person not involved in the original decision. Safeguarding concerns may be raised directly with British Gymnastics or statutory services at any stage.

Confidential records and policy review

Keep records securely with access limited to those who need them to protect people or manage the case. Share information proportionately, retain it under the club's safeguarding and data protection arrangements, and preserve records needed for referrals or enquiries. Do not discuss cases in member groups or circulate allegations.

The Trustees and Welfare Officer will review this policy annually, and sooner after a significant incident or changes to guidance. On adoption, confirm the welfare contact, brief staff and volunteers, publish the policy and record approval. Read it alongside the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Codes of Conduct, Social Media Policy and Complaints and Grievance Procedure.

Further help and guidance

Childline: 0800 1111 | www.childline.org.uk

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000 | www.nspcc.org.uk

British Gymnastics guidance: www.british-gymnastics.org/safe-and-fair-sport/policies-procedures



NSPCC bullying guidance: www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying/