

Policy Name:
Safe Sport Policy



Policy Number:
BGC - 10

Policy Purpose

Brazeau Gymnastics Club (hereinafter referred to as “BGC” or the “Club”) is committed to providing a safe, healthy, inclusive, respectful, and Athlete-centred environment for everyone participating in gymnastics.

The purpose of this policy is to establish BGC’s commitment to safe sport and to provide clear expectations for the prevention and response to abuse, maltreatment, harassment, discrimination, bullying, neglect, and other unsafe or inappropriate behaviour.

BGC recognizes that everyone involved in gymnastics has a responsibility to contribute to a safe sport environment. Particular care must be taken to protect children, youth, and other individuals who may be vulnerable or dependent upon adults in positions of trust.

This policy is intended to complement, and be read together with, the BGC Harassment Policy, Discipline Policy, Communication Policy, Bylaws, applicable Alberta Gymnastics Federation (AGF) requirements, applicable legislation, and other BGC policies and procedures.

Where another applicable law, policy, code, or standard establishes a higher level of protection or a mandatory reporting requirement, the higher standard or legal requirement will apply.

1 Scope

This policy applies to all individuals participating in or representing BGC, including but not limited to:

- Athletes and participants;
- Parents/guardians;
- Head Coaches, Coaches and other employees;
- Board and Executive Committee members;
- Volunteers; and
- Any other individual participating in or representing BGC.

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This policy applies to BGC activities, including:

- Training and practices;
- Recreational and competitive programs;
- Competitions and events;
- Summer Camps;
- Fundraising and social activities; and
- Other activities or circumstances where an individual's conduct may reasonably affect the safety, well-being, or integrity of the BGC community.

2 Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

“Athlete” means an individual registered to participate in a class, program, session, camp, competition, or event offered by the Club.

“Board member” means an individual elected or appointed to the Board of Directors of BGC, including Executive Committee members.

“Club” means Brazeau Gymnastics Club.

“Club President” means the individual who is elected as the President by the members of the club, as per the Bylaw.

“Coach” means an individual who provides gymnastics instruction or coaching on behalf of BGC.

“Executive Committee member” means collectively, those individuals elected as executive officers of the Board, including the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

“Maltreatment” means conduct or behaviour that causes or has the potential to cause physical or psychological harm or otherwise violates an individual's rights, dignity, or well-being. Maltreatment may include physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, or other forms of abuse, neglect, harassment, discrimination, bullying, or prohibited behaviour.

“Members” means a person meets the membership requirements of Brazeau Gymnastics Club as defined in the Club Bylaws.

“Position of Trust” means a position in which an individual has authority, influence, responsibility, or supervisory responsibility over another individual. Coaches, Head Coaches, Board members, team managers, chaperones, and certain volunteers may hold a Position of Trust.

“Safe Sport” means the collective practices, policies, procedures, behaviours, and responsibilities intended to prevent and address abuse, maltreatment, harassment,

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discrimination, bullying, neglect, and other conduct that may negatively affect the safety or well-being of participants.

“Vulnerable Individual” means a person who may be at greater risk of harm because of age, disability, dependence, or another circumstance. This includes children and youth under the age of 18.

3 Interpretation

Shall, Must, Will or Require – indicates that actions are mandatory and apply to all situations.

Should – indicates direction to strive to achieve the outlined action, but it is not mandatory.

May – is discretionary, meaning the policy can be implemented if the Club chooses to do so. This is typically dependent on context and individual circumstance.

Where this policy refers to reporting a concern, reporting requirements under applicable legislation take precedence over any internal BGC reporting process.

4 BGC Safe Sport Commitment

BGC commits to ensuring that its policies and procedures, including parent handbooks, support a safe, inclusive, open, observable and transparent sporting environment for all of its Members. In developing and approving policies and procedures, BGC will ensure they are based on, and consistent with, best practices as established by youth sporting organizations in Canada.

BGC is committed to providing a gymnastics environment that is:

1. Safe and physically and psychologically healthy;
2. Inclusive and welcoming;
3. Free from abuse, maltreatment, harassment, discrimination, bullying, and retaliation;
4. Respectful of the dignity and rights of all participants;
5. Athlete-centred and appropriate to the age, ability, development, and needs of each Athlete;
6. Open, observable, and transparent;
7. Supportive of Athletes having a voice and being able to raise concerns;
8. Led by appropriately screened, trained, and qualified individuals;
9. Consistent with applicable legislation, AGF requirements, and recognized Canadian safe sport standards; and
10. Committed to responding appropriately and promptly when a concern is identified.

The welfare and safety of Athletes is a primary consideration in all BGC activities

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5 Responsibilities

Prioritizing, establishing, and maintaining a Safe Sport Environment involves the responsibility and practices of everyone involved in gymnastics at Brazeau Gymnastics Club to ensure the safety and development of all Members, employees, and volunteers.

5.1 Board of Directors

The BGC Board of Directors, including the Executive Committee are responsible for:

1. Supporting and maintaining a Safe Sport Environment;
2. Ensuring BGC policies and procedures address Athlete, volunteer, and coach safety and well-being;
3. Ensuring individuals involved with BGC are aware of applicable policies and expectations;
4. Taking reports and concerns seriously and responding appropriately;
5. Ensuring appropriate action is taken when a concern is identified;
6. Supporting appropriate education and training for Coaches, staff, volunteers, and Board members;
7. Reviewing this Policy regularly and updating it when required; and
8. Ensuring that legal and mandatory reporting obligations are respected.

5.2 Coaches and Volunteers

Coaches and volunteers are individuals in Positions of Trust; however, other Members may also be in a Position of Trust. Anyone considered to be in a Position of Trust have an increased responsibility to:

1. Model respectful and appropriate behaviour;
2. Put the safety and well-being of Athletes first;
3. Maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
4. Follow the Rule of Two;
5. Maintain open, observable, and transparent interactions with Athletes;
6. Report suspected or witnessed misconduct or unsafe behaviour;
7. Follow BGC policies and procedures;
8. Complete required screening, education, and training; and
9. Take reasonable steps to prevent foreseeable harm.

5.3 Athletes

Athletes are expected to:

1. Treat others with respect and dignity;
2. Follow reasonable safety instructions and BGC rules;
3. Report concerns about their own safety or the safety of another person;
4. Respect the boundaries of coaches, staff, volunteers, and other Athletes; and

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5. Participate in creating a positive and inclusive gymnastics environment.

5.4 Parents/Guardians

Parents and guardians are expected to:

1. Support a respectful and safe environment;
2. Treat Athletes, coaches, volunteers, and other families respectfully;
3. Raise concerns through appropriate channels;
4. Avoid behaviour that could reasonably intimidate, threaten, harass, or interfere with coaches, Athletes, volunteers, or Board members; and
5. Support their Athlete in understanding and following BGC's Safe Sport expectations.

6 Rule of Two

BGC adopts the Rule of Two as a key component of its Safe Sport practices.

The Rule of Two means that a coach or other adult in a Position of Trust should not be alone or out of sight with a Vulnerable Individual.

BGC will strive to ensure that:

1. Interactions between a coach or other adult in a Position of Trust (responsible adult) and an Athlete are open and observable;
2. The Coach (or responsible adult) is never alone with, or out of sight with, any Vulnerable Individual or Athlete;
3. One-on-one interactions occur in a location where another responsible adult can observe the interaction;
4. Two responsible adults are present whenever reasonably possible, particularly in situations where an Athlete may be vulnerable;
5. One responsible adult must be the same gender as the Athlete or Vulnerable Individual;
6. Private meetings, changing-room situations, transportation, travel, and other potentially vulnerable situations are managed in accordance with the Rule of Two;
7. Electronic communications with Athletes are conducted through appropriate and transparent channels; and
8. Any necessary exception to the Rule of Two is handled in a manner that prioritizes the Athlete's safety and is documented or reported where appropriate.

BGC's Communication Policy also applies the Rule of Two to certain meetings between coaches, parents/guardians, Board members, and other individuals where there may be heightened emotions or conflict.

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The Rule of Two does not eliminate the need for appropriate judgment. Individuals must take reasonable steps to maintain Athlete safety when circumstances make strict adherence temporarily impractical

7 Professional Boundaries

Individuals in Positions of Trust must maintain appropriate professional boundaries with Athletes.

Examples of inappropriate conduct include, but are not limited to:

- Developing inappropriate personal or romantic relationships with Athletes;
- Sexual comments, jokes, messages, gestures, or contact;
- Unnecessary or inappropriate physical contact;
- Private meetings or secret communication that are hidden from parents, guardians, or other responsible adults;
- Contacting Athletes through personal social media accounts in a manner inconsistent with BGC expectations; and
- Any conduct that exploits the authority or trust associated with a coaching or leadership position.

Physical contact may be appropriate in gymnastics for instruction, spotting, safety, or emergency purposes. Such contact must be appropriate to the circumstances, necessary, professional, and respectful of the Athlete's dignity and boundaries.

8 Communication

Communication, including electronic communication, involving Athletes must be professional, appropriate, transparent, and consistent with the BGC Communication Policy.

Coaches, volunteers, and other individuals in Positions of Trust must not use electronic communication to circumvent the Rule of Two or create inappropriate private relationships with Athletes.

Where electronic communication with an Athlete is necessary, individuals should use approved Club communication methods whenever possible and should include a parent/guardian or another responsible adult when appropriate to the Athlete's age and circumstances.

BGC recognizes that electronic communication may occur through email, text messaging, messenger applications, social media, or other digital platforms. The same standards of respectful and professional conduct apply regardless of the communication method.

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9 Reporting Safe Sport Concerns

Everyone involved with BGC has a responsibility to report suspected or witnessed misconduct, abuse, maltreatment, harassment, discrimination, or other serious safety concerns.

Concerns should be reported as soon as reasonably possible.

Reports may be made to:

- The Head Coach;
- The Club President; or
- A member of the BGC Executive Committee.

If the concern involves one of the individuals listed above, the report should be made to another appropriate member of the Executive Committee or Board.

A person making a report is not required to investigate the concern or determine whether misconduct occurred. The purpose of reporting is to ensure that the concern is brought to the attention of an appropriate person or authority.

Reports should include, where known:

- The name(s) of the person(s) involved;
- What occurred or was observed;
- Date, time, and location;
- Names of witnesses;
- Any relevant documentation or evidence; and
- Any immediate safety concerns.

10 Confidentiality and Privacy

BGC will make reasonable efforts to protect the privacy of individuals involved in a Safe Sport concern.

Information will be shared only with individuals who have a legitimate need to know, subject to legal, investigative, reporting, or safety requirements.

Confidentiality does not mean that information can be withheld when disclosure is required by law or necessary to protect an individual from harm.

Individuals must not discuss confidential complaints, investigations, or personal information through social media, group chats, or other inappropriate channels.

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11 Response and Investigation

When BGC receives a Safe Sport concern, the Club will determine the appropriate response based on the nature and seriousness of the concern.

The response may include:

1. An initial assessment of the concern;
2. Immediate safety measures;
3. Referral to the appropriate external authority;
4. Notification to AGF or another governing organization where required;
5. An internal investigation where appropriate and legally permissible;
6. Appointment of an independent or external investigator where appropriate;
7. Temporary changes to duties, supervision, training, or participation;
8. Disciplinary action where a violation is established; and
9. Other measures necessary to protect participants and maintain a safe environment.

BGC will make reasonable efforts to ensure that investigations are fair, impartial, timely, and appropriately documented.

An individual who is the subject of a complaint will be treated fairly and will have an opportunity to respond to allegations, subject to applicable law and the requirements of any external investigation.

Where a concern involves potential criminal conduct, child abuse, sexual misconduct, or another matter requiring external reporting, BGC will not attempt to replace or interfere with the investigation conducted by the appropriate authorities.

12 Interim Safety Measures

Where BGC believes that immediate action is necessary to protect participants, the Club may implement interim measures while a concern is being assessed or investigated.

Interim measures may include:

- Changes to coaching or supervision;
- Temporary removal from coaching or volunteer duties;
- Restrictions on contact with an Athlete or participant;
- Changes to training schedules or locations;
- Temporary suspension from BGC activities; or
- Other reasonable measures necessary to protect safety.

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Interim measures are precautionary and do not, by themselves, constitute a finding that misconduct occurred.

13 Relationship to other BGC Policies

This policy should be read together with all applicable BGC policies.

Where a concern involves harassment, discrimination, bullying, or related conduct, the BGC Harassment Policy may also apply.

Where a concern involves discipline or conduct, that does not fall within another specific policy, the BGC Discipline Policy may apply.

The BGC Communication Policy applies to communication practices and includes additional expectations regarding the Rule of Two and meetings between coaches, parents/guardians, Board members, and other individuals.

Nothing in those policies limits an individual's obligation to report suspected child abuse, criminal conduct, or other matters where reporting is required by law.

14 Education and Training

BGC will encourage and, where appropriate, require coaches, staff, volunteers, Board members, and other individuals in Positions of Trust to complete relevant safe sport education and training.

Training may include, as applicable:

- Safe Sport education;
- Respect in Sport or equivalent training;
- National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) training;
- Rule of Two education;
- Background screening requirements; and
- Other education required by BGC, AGF, or applicable governing organizations.

15 Screening

BGC will establish and maintain appropriate screening practices for individuals working with Athletes, particularly children and youth.

Screening may include:

- Criminal record checks;
- Vulnerable sector checks where applicable;
- Reference checks;
- Interviews;
- Verification of qualifications and certifications; and

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- Other screening measures considered appropriate by BGC or required by a governing organization.

Individuals must disclose information when required by applicable BGC policies, agreements, or law.

16 Compliance

All individuals participating in BGC activities are expected to understand and comply with this policy.

Failure to comply may result in appropriate action under BGC's applicable policies and procedures, which may include warnings, education, restrictions, suspension, removal from duties, termination of employment or volunteer responsibilities, termination of membership, or other appropriate consequences.

Serious conduct may also be referred to AGF, law enforcement, Child Intervention, or another appropriate authority.

Where an applicable external organization has jurisdiction over a matter, BGC will cooperate with that organization as required

17 Policy Review

BGC will strive to maintain policies and procedures that reflect current safe sport practices.

This policy will be reviewed periodically by the Board of Directors to ensure that it remains clear, practical, and consistent with the Club's operational and financial requirements.

The Club reserves the right to amend this policy. Updated policies will be communicated through the Club's usual communication channels.

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