



Policy Name:
Communications Policy

Policy Number:
BGC - 3

Policy

Brazeau Gymnastics Club (BGC) recognized that providing information between coaches and board members in a timely, accurate and consistent manner is fundamental to effectively serving the athletes and members of the Club.

Communications will be managed in order:

- To ensure the coaches and board members are informed about BGC policies, activities, programs and services.
- Take into account the concerns and views of coaches, board members and parents/guardians when creating programs, changing schedules, or implementing changes to the club.
- Ensure accessibility, transparency and accountability between coaches and board members.
- Present a consistent and positive image of the Club within the local community and the gymnastics community as a whole.

1 Guiding Principals

The guiding principals for communication include:

- Communications will be timely and fair.
- Communications will be clear and straightforward.
- Communications will be proactive rather than reactive.
- Communications will allow for the opportunity for feedback, in a constructive and safe manner.
- Communications will be open.

2 Definitions

“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.

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“**Coach**” means a paid staff member who has obtained certification through the National Coaching Certification Program.

“**Executive member**” means collectively, those individuals who are elected as executive officers of the board. This includes President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer

“**Board member**” means collectively, those individuals who are appointed to the Board of Directors, including all executive members.

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.

4 Communication Tools

Clear communication is important to ensure information is received by each member in a timely and effective manner.

1. The forms of communication will include phone calls, text messages, messenger app (e.g. WhatsApp), and email.
 - a. It is the responsibility of executive, board members and coaches to provide current and accurate contact information.
2. Messenger App groups will be created and monitored by the BGC President and BGC Vice-President.
 - a. There may be separate groups created to streamline communication and ensure that information being shared is shared with only the appropriate people. For example, an executive member group, a board of director group, or an event specific group.
 - b. Only members within the specific membership should be added or included in the messenger app group.
 - c. When a member leaves the organization, or changes position, their access to the messenger app group must be changed immediately.

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3. The Messenger App is a great tool for easy and quick clear communication, but should not be used for information that may need to be reference in the future.
4. Each member of the board will have an email issued to them for BGC related business.
5. Head Coaches are expected to create and maintain a BGC email using Gmail. The approved format for email is BGCcoach<name>@gmail.com. If the email is already taken, slight alterations may be use to create a unique email.
6. Coaches are expected to have an email provided on file for BGC related correspondence. The email address must be professional and non-offensive in case Parents or Guardians need to message the Coach.
7. The use of Club issued emails:
 - a. If a vote needs to occur between either executive meetings or board meetings, the vote must be done by email and either saved or printed for record. A formal vote must be completed at the next meeting as outlined in the Bylaws.
 - b. Information related to meeting minutes, schedules, policies and bylaws must be emailed to each member.
 - c. Emails should be checked regularly to allow for timely responses to occur. Due to the volunteer nature of the board, a specific response time is not included in this policy.
 - d. If a member will be away for an extended period of time without access to email, they should inform the Executive board and determine if an alternative needs to be put in place. For example, another board member monitors the account or an automatic out of office reply is provided.

5 Direction of Communication

Two-way communication will ensure that coaches, executive members and board members are aware of information that impacts the success of the Club.

In the parent’s handbook for both the competitive program and recreational program, parents/guardians have been informed that discussions about their athlete should first be addressed with the direct coach, then the head coach for the program, and finally the Executive board if required.

Communication between coaches and the board members is critical to ensure the smooth day-to-day operation of the Club. Information from the coaches will assist the board with budgeting for required equipment and supplies to allow them to focus on coaching.

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Information from the board will allow coaches to understand schedule requirements and any necessary decisions made about the daily operation of the club or requirements of coaches.

Board members will receive the minutes from the coaches meeting and are expected to review them and request clarification if required. Two members of the Executive will attend the coaches meeting to help relay information between coaches and the board.

Coaches and board members must work together to effectively and efficiently run the club. If any coach has a concern, they are encouraged to discuss it with the head coach first and then decide if it needs to be brought to the Board of Directors.

If there is information that needs to be discussed with an individual coach, the Executive will reach out to that coach, and if required the head coach as well, to set up a meeting to discuss the situation.

6 The Rule of Two

The rule of two (2x2) is recommended by the Alberta Gymnastics Federation within their safe sport policy. The rule of two means that a coach, or responsible adult, is never alone with or out of sight with any individual. BGC extends the rule of two to meetings that have the potential for high emotions, or conflict. This is to protect BGC staff and volunteers, as well as to decrease the potential for miscommunications, or personal attacks and harassment.

The rule of two is used to ensure that members are not alone when meeting to discuss concerns or contentious situations. This rule also decreases the chance for misunderstandings and avoid coaches or board members from being a situation where they feel out numbered.

6.1 Parent Meetings

The following situations require the rule of two to be followed:

1. Any time a Coach meets with a parent or guardian, they will require another member of the coaching team to be present, preferably the Head Coach for that program.
2. Any time a Board member meets with a parent or guardian, they will require another Board member to be present.

The information about the rule of two is provided to both competitive program and recreational program parents in the parent handbook provided at the beginning of a session. However, a coach or board member may need to remind a parent or guardian about this policy when they are requesting a meeting.

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The rule of two does not apply for brief interactions during the period of time between classes, when only one coach or board member may be present. However, if there are issues, the coach or board member should report the situation and interaction to either the head coach or the executive board immediately.

6.2 Coaches Meeting

The rule of two to protect BGC staff and volunteers, as well as to decrease the potential for miscommunications, or personal attacks and harassment. Therefore, this policy will be used when board members are attending meetings or formal interactions with coaches. This includes monthly coaches' meetings and interviews.

The following situations require the rule of two to be followed:

1. At any coaches meeting, two (2) Executive members must be present.
2. Any interview for employment will require that two (2) Executive members be present.
3. Any exit interview will require that two (2) Executive members be present.
4. Any disciplinary action as outlined in the Disciplinary and Termination Policy must have two (2) Executive members present.

7 Grievance Procedure

Although BGC coaches and executive board members endeavor to run the Club to the best of their ability, there may be unforeseen problems occur. Parents are encouraged to not let a problem go unaddressed or assume a concern cannot be resolved. Concerns regarding an athlete's training and participation in either the competitive or recreational program, must be dealt with in a respectful and constructive manner. The appropriate chain of communication to address these concerns includes the following.

1. Discussions with the athlete, athlete's parent and the coach. The coach should make time to discuss concerns with parents about any child within one of their programs. However, if the coach is unable to resolve the concern, they can proceed to the next step of bringing in the head coach.
2. The head coach and the program coach will meet with the parent, and athlete, if necessary, to discuss the concern and work towards a resolution. If this meeting is unable to resolve the concern, the head coach may speak with the BGC President.
3. The head coach will meet with the BGC President about the concern and the steps that have been implemented to attempt to resolve it. The BGC will bring the concern and the

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attempts to resolve it forward to the Executive board. The Executive board will review the situation and determine the next steps to find a suitable resolution.

4. If the athlete or parent/guardian is not comfortable approaching the coach or head coach regarding the concern, they may contact the Executive Board directly. If this occurs, members of the Executive board, the head coach for the program and the parent/guardian will meet to find a suitable resolution.

With any grievance received the goal is to find a resolution acceptable to all members. However, this is not always possible. If a resolution cannot be found, the Executive board will meet to determine the options. The Executive board will act in the best interest of the members, the staff, and the club as a whole whenever making a decision related to a grievance.

It is not only parent grievances that should be addressed in a timely and productive manner.

1. If there are grievances between coaches that cannot be resolved between the individuals, the head coach should be contacted to assist with finding a resolution.
2. If the grievance is between a coach and the head coach, the BGC President should be contacted to assist with finding a resolution.
3. If the grievance is between board members that cannot be resolved between the individuals, the Executive board should be contacted to assist with mediation and finding a resolution.

The Executive board is elected by the members, and their job is to conduct the day-to-day operations of the club and act in the best interest of the members, the staff, and the club as a whole. All members are encouraged to communicate in a respectful and effective manner. If there are problems arising, the members will work to find a solution before the grievance procedure described above is required.

8 Cool Down Period

At times conversations can start to become highly emotional. In particular when coaches or Board members are dealing with a concern or grievance there is potential for the conversation to become emotional, which can decrease the effective communication. When handling concerns or conflicts, BGC requires a 24 hour cool down of all parties involved prior to meeting to address concerns. This allows all parties involved time to consider the situation, calm down and consider other ways of approaching the problem that might work more effectively. By respecting the 24 hours rule, BGC believes that concerns are more likely to be fully addressed in a reasonable discussion.

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Gymnastics can be an emotional experience. People may not always agree with the decisions made by others, such as parent’s not agreeing with a coach decision, a coach not agreeing with a head coach, or coaching staff not agreeing with a Board decision. Although individuals may not agree with the decision, it is expected that communication remains respectful. BGC has a 24 hour cool down policy that requires at least 24-hours to pass after a decision has been made prior to discussing it.

Parents/guardians will be informed of the 24 hours cool down policy within the parent handbook provided at the beginning of their child’s gymnastics session. Parents/guardians are not allowed to confront a coach or board member to discuss any “negative” competition or practice situation with the coaching and Board of Directors until at least 24 hours has passed from the completion of the competition or practice.

9 Social Media

Social media is used to communicate with club members, parents, guardians and share who the Club is and what is happening. BGC wants to ensure that accurate and positive information is shared online through the social media platforms. In the parent handbook, provided to parents/guardians of both the competitive and recreational programs, the Club social media information is provided.

1. The Social Media Coordinator is responsible for all posts on official BGC social media accounts. All posts on the related to BGC and BGC account must be approved by the Social Media Coordinator, or the BGC President, in their absence.
 - a. No post of club activities should be posted without the appropriate approvals.
2. Coaches and Board Members are encouraged to engage and share BGC related social media posts.
3. No Coach or Board member shall engage in social media discussions or posts that may reflect negatively on any Coach, Board member or the Club. Social media is not the place to discuss concerns.
 - a. If a Coach or Board member becomes aware of a post that reflects negatively on BGC, including a coach or Board member of BGC, the information is to be provided to the Executive board immediately. The member that identified the post can take a screenshot, but should not engage in the discussion even if it is to defend BGC or the person.

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