

# Whistler Gymnastics Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy

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## I. Introduction

This policy sets the expected standards of conduct for all individuals at Whistler Gymnastics (WG), promoting a safe, respectful, inclusive, and positive environment. It outlines overarching principles, addresses non-discrimination and anti-harassment, and defines prohibited activities. This policy complements the club's Progressive Discipline Policy and aligns with Safe Sport principles from Gymnastics BC (GymBC) and Gymnastics Canada (GymCan).

## **Scope of Application**

This policy applies to all Whistler Gymnastics athletes, coaches, staff, Board members, volunteers, parents, guardians, and spectators. It is in effect during all WG activities, including training, competitions, and club events. It also applies to conduct outside formal WG activities, such as on social media, if it negatively impacts club relationships, members, or reputation, as determined by the WG Board of Directors.

## **Whistler Gymnastics' Commitment to a Safe and Inclusive Environment**

Whistler Gymnastics is committed to an accessible, inclusive, and respectful sport environment, with a zero-tolerance policy for abuse, maltreatment, harassment, or discrimination. This commitment aligns with GymBC and GymCan's Safe Sport principles, prioritizing the welfare and safety of all, especially vulnerable individuals. Serious infractions may lead to immediate disciplinary action, bypassing standard progressive steps.

## **II. Guiding Principles and Values**

These principles form the ethical foundation for all conduct within Whistler Gymnastics:

### **Respect and Dignity**

All individuals must be treated with dignity, courtesy, and respect, regardless of role, background, or ability. Public criticism, demeaning remarks, or disrespectful communication (verbal, non-verbal, online) is prohibited.

### **Safety and Well-being**

The safety and well-being of all participants are paramount. The environment must be free from emotional, sexual, or physical abuse, bullying, hazing, harassment, stalking, or violence. Equipment must be clean, fitted, and maintained. The club supports a holistic approach to health, including nutrition, mental health, injury prevention, and rest.

### **Fair Play and Sportsmanship**

Individuals must act with integrity, honesty, and impartiality in all activities. This includes competing fairly, respecting rules, and demonstrating good sportsmanship towards opponents, teammates, coaches, and officials.

## **Integrity and Impartiality**

Decisions and actions, especially by those in authority, must be free from conflicts of interest, impropriety, or favoritism. Judges and officials must officiate impartially, adhering to rules and evaluating based solely on performance.

## **Inclusivity and Non-Discrimination**

Whistler Gymnastics fosters an inclusive environment where all individuals can participate regardless of age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, mental or physical disability, national origin, religion, or any other legally protected basis. The club aims to provide equal opportunities and remove barriers to participation.

## **III. Expected Conduct and Responsibilities**

All individuals must uphold the club's principles and contribute to a positive, safe environment.

### **General Expectations for All Individuals**

All employees, members, and participants of Whistler Gymnastics are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that conforms to the applicable standards of behavior. This involves complying with all applicable laws in British Columbia, as well as Whistler Gymnastics' By-laws, policies, and procedures, including this Code of Conduct, the Progressive Discipline Policy, the General Communications, Privacy, and Electronic Communication Standards Policy, the Social Media, Photography, and General Program/Facility Communications Policy, and any specific discipline or program rules.

Those in authority or interacting with vulnerable individuals must ensure safety and appropriate boundaries, including limiting physical interactions to non-threatening touch, ensuring multiple persons are present for sensitive discussions (Rule of Two), and parental awareness of electronic communication.

All members must comply with anti-doping policies. Reporting to activities under the influence of alcohol, non-prescription/illegal drugs, or mood-altering substances is prohibited. Consumption of cannabis, other mood-altering substances, and illegal substances is prohibited during WG activities. Adults may consume alcohol minimally at appropriate events but must never operate vehicles while impaired or provide alcohol/drugs to minors. Minors are strictly prohibited from consuming alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, or illegal substances.

### **Specific Responsibilities**

#### **Athletes/Participants**

Athletes must arrive on time, prepared, and adhere to clothing/equipment rules. They must not use equipment without coach permission, ridicule others, or engage in violence, foul language, or inappropriate gestures. They must follow coach instructions, perform skills only when authorized, be aware of surroundings, and not leave premises without advising staff.

Participants unable to conduct themselves appropriately or actively participate may be required to withdraw. Athletes have a right to an environment free from harassment and bullying and should report such incidents to a coach or staff member.

### **Coaches**

Coaches must coach within their NCCP certification, adhere to background check policies, and report criminal investigations to GymBC. They are responsible for a safe training environment, selecting appropriate activities, avoiding health compromises, and providing athletes/parents with necessary information. They must support staff at camps and cooperate with new coaches during athlete transfers. Recruiting athletes or employed coaches from other clubs is strictly prohibited. Sexual relationships with athletes under 19 are prohibited; with athletes 19 or older, they are also prohibited due to power imbalance.

### **Parents/Guardians**

Parents/guardians must encourage athletes to follow rules, resolve conflicts peacefully, and respect officials' decisions. During classes, they should allow coaches to instruct, refrain from addressing their child (unless emergency), and be fully attentive in "Parent and Tot" classes. Bullying incidents should be reported immediately to a coach or staff.

### **Judges and Officials**

Judges and officials must maintain and update their knowledge of rules, work within their role, and conduct events according to GymBC, GymCan, and FIG rules. They must act professionally, fairly, equitably, considerately, independently, honestly, and impartially. Confidentiality is paramount. They must dress appropriately, remain unbiased, avoid public criticism of other judges, and not applaud or show partiality.

### **Whistler Gymnastics Staff, Board Members, and Volunteers**

These individuals must act in the best interest of WG, with honesty and integrity, maintaining member confidence and ensuring responsible financial affairs. They must be professional, lawful, independent, and impartial, maintaining decorum. They should stay informed about WG and the sport, exercise diligence, respect confidentiality, ensure members can express opinions, and have thorough knowledge of WG governance documents, including By-laws and approved policies, especially this Code and privacy/confidentiality policies (e.g., General Communications, Privacy, and Electronic Communication Standards Policy ), is essential.

## **IV. Prohibited Conduct**

Whistler Gymnastics has a zero-tolerance policy for any form of abuse, maltreatment, harassment, or discrimination. The following behaviors are strictly prohibited:

## **Maltreatment**

Any volitional act causing harm or potential for harm. This includes:

- **Psychological Maltreatment:** Deliberate conduct harming psychological well-being (e.g., unwarranted criticism, demeaning comments, social isolation, denying support).
- **Physical Maltreatment:** Deliberate conduct harming physical well-being (e.g., hitting, kicking, forcing painful stances, withholding hydration/nutrition, encouraging premature return from injury).
- **Sexual Maltreatment:** Any act targeting an individual's sexuality, gender identity, or expression, committed, threatened, or attempted against that person (e.g., sexual assault, sexual harassment, voyeurism, non-consensual touching of a sexual nature).
- **Neglect:** Lack of reasonable care or inattention to needs (e.g., failing to protect welfare, not providing recovery time, inadequate supervision, unsafe environment).
- **Grooming:** Deliberate conduct to sexualize a relationship with a minor (e.g., inappropriate jokes, private communications, shared rooms with non-family minors).
- **Boundary Transgressions:** Disrespecting individual boundaries in power-imbalanced relationships.
- **Interference with Process:** Directly or indirectly interfering with policy processes (e.g., falsifying information, discouraging participation).
- **Retaliation:** Adverse action against someone for making a good faith report or participating in a process.
- **Aiding and Abetting:** Facilitating, promoting, or encouraging maltreatment.
- **Failure to Report:** Adult individuals' ongoing obligation to report actual or suspected psychological, sexual, physical misconduct, or neglect involving a vulnerable individual to WG, GymBC, or law enforcement.
- **Intentionally Filing a False Allegation:** Submitting an allegation known to be false.

## **Harassment, Bullying, and Hazing**

- **Harassment:** Vexatious conduct or comments known to be unwelcome, inappropriate, or offensive, often based on protected grounds.
- **Bullying:** Physical, verbal, or psychological attacks causing fear, distress, or harm, typically repetitive but can be a single severe instance. WG has zero tolerance for bullying.
- **Hazing:** Abusive, humiliating initiation practices that degrade or endanger mental/physical health.

## Other Prohibited Activities

- **Violence:** Any act or threat of violence.
- **Theft or Damage to Property:** Theft or damage to WG property or equipment.
- **Disobedience and Lack of Participation:** Rude behavior, tantrums, lack of engagement, pushing, not following instructions.
- **Unapproved Photography/Videography:** Due to privacy reasons, parents are not allowed to photograph or film their child while in class. For detailed guidelines on photography and videography, refer to the Social Media, Photography, and General Program/Facility Communications Policy.

## V. Reporting Concerns and Complaints

Whistler Gymnastics encourages open communication and takes all concerns seriously.

### Reporting Procedures

- **Severe Misconduct:** Report directly to local police, RCMP, or child protection agencies (e.g., Ministry of Children and Family Development helpline: 1-800-663-9122).
- **Less Severe Misconduct (Direct Communication):** First, attempt to respectfully address the issue directly with the individual involved.
- **Club Level Reporting:** If direct communication is unsuccessful or inappropriate, contact Whistler Gymnastics leadership (President or Board member).
- **Provincial Level Reporting (to GymBC):** If club-level attempts are unsuccessful, or concerns are GymBC-related, submit a written complaint to GymBC.

### Confidentiality and Protection Against Retaliation

All complaint information is confidential, disclosed only as needed or required by law. Whistler Gymnastics prohibits retaliation against anyone making a good faith report or participating in a process. False or malicious reports are considered harassment.

## VI. Policy Violations and Disciplinary Action

Whistler Gymnastics uses a fair, consistent, and progressive approach to managing unacceptable conduct, aligning with its Progressive Discipline Policy.

### Investigation Process

Incidents of bullying or other prohibited conduct will be investigated by club management, with plans implemented for safety. Documentation of meetings, interviews, and decisions will be maintained.

## Disciplinary Sanctions

Disciplinary actions escalate with persistent infractions:

- **Level 1 - Verbal Warning:** Addresses minor violations early, with clear expectations for change. Noted, but not placed in permanent file.
- **Level 2 - Documented Warning:** For subsequent or severe infractions. Discussion is documented, copy provided to individual and Board, and placed in employee's file (if applicable). Individual signs for receipt.
- **Level 3 - Suspension:** For serious infractions or repeated Level 2 offenses. Written documentation details offense, suspension length, and reasons. Copy provided to individual and placed in file. Suspended members are prohibited from facility use unless specified.
- **Level 4 - Termination/Revocation:** For repeated serious infractions or a single extremely serious one. Employment or membership may be terminated. No refunds for terminated memberships. Terminated employees are prohibited from accessing WG-operated areas.

## Serious Infractions and Immediate Measures

For serious infractions (e.g., violence, threats, bullying, harassment, repeated written warnings), the Board may bypass progressive steps and apply immediate disciplinary sanctions, including termination/revocation. Violence, criminal activity, or moderate to severe cyberbullying may result in immediate suspension pending investigation.

### Whistler Gymnastics Disciplinary Action Matrix

Infraction Level	1st Infraction	2nd Infraction	3rd Infraction	4th Infraction
Member/Participant	Verbal Warning	Written Warning	14 Day Suspension	Revocation
Employee	Verbal Warning	Written Warning	14 Day Suspension	Termination

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After an incident, the situation will be monitored by coaches, team managers, and/or parents to ensure resolution. All incidents, meetings, and action plans will be documented.

## **VII. Policy Review and Amendments**

This policy will be periodically reviewed by the Whistler Gymnastics Board of Directors to ensure relevance, effectiveness, and compliance with laws and GymBC/GymCan policies. Members will be notified of significant changes.