



**Valleys  
Gymnastics  
Academy**

**Members Handbook**

Updated - December 2022

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# Introducing Valleys Gymnastics Academy



## About Valleys Gymnastics Academy

The AWARD WINNING Valleys Gymnastics Academy (VGA) provides valuable and inclusive opportunities for children and young people to develop physical literacy, fundamental movement skills, confidence and social skills through a variety of fun gymnastics classes and physical activities.

Recognised as Social Enterprise, VGA is a not for profit community gymnastics club based across five local authorities in Wales - Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf. Currently the club operates from a number of local authority leisure facilities, as well as a fully kitted 10,000 square foot gymnastics facility at Crumlin, and the clubs 'GO GYM' facility at Cwmbran Stadium.

VGA offers a wide range of gymnastics disciplines including Artistic Gymnastics (men's & women's), Freestyle Gymnastics (free running), Team Gym, Disability Gymnastics, General Gymnastics for all ages and Pre-School Gymnastics - all of which are delivered by fully qualified coaches who have a wealth of experience of coaching children and young people.

As a registered British and Welsh Gymnastics club, VGA has adopted all British Gymnastics policies relating to Ethics and Welfare, Child Protection and Equality. All of the clubs coaches, judges, volunteers and gymnasts are registered members, and insured through, British and Welsh Gymnastics.

The club has a fantastic track record of providing quality provision across South Central and East Wales, and consequently the club has won a number of awards over recent years in recognition of this:-

*\*2019 British Gymnastics National Club Award Winner\**

*\*2019 British Gymnastics Award for Equality and Inclusion\**

*\*2017 Social Business Wales Awards - Consumer Facing Award Winner \**

*\*2014 + 2016 Welsh Gymnastics Club of the Year\**

## Aims and Objectives

As mentioned above, VGA provides recreational and competitive level gymnastics and other physical activity opportunities for all age groups. The club's aims are set out below:-

- To provide facilities for, and encourage participation in gymnastics and other physical activities.
- To educate members and their families about the importance of physical activity, health and well-being.
- To help children and young people develop the physical literacy, confidence, self-discipline and social skills that can be transferred into everyday life.
- To introduce children and young people to gymnastics as an enjoyable physical activity.
- To offer young people and adults the opportunity to engage in physical activity.
- To provide volunteering opportunities for those with an interest in physical activity

## Management of Valleys Gymnastics Academy Ltd.

As a Company Ltd by Guarantee, it is the Board of Directors that are responsible for the overall management of Valleys Gymnastics Academy's business. The Directors have regular meetings to ensure VGA is serving the needs of its members, along with providing the strategic direction for the organisation.

At an operational level, the club's Managing Director works with a team of employed admin staff, coaches and volunteers to plan, deliver and continuously evaluate the club's services across all facilities and venues.

## Contact Details

<b>Main Contact Number</b>	01495 248070
<b>VGA St Tydfils Main Contact Number</b>	01685 673580
<b>General Enquiries</b>	office@vga.wales
<b>Membership Support</b>	Tracy.Bound@vga.wales
<b>Welfare Support</b>	welfare@vga.wales
<b>Website / Sign Up Portal</b>	<a href="http://www.valleysgymnasticsacademy.co.uk">www.valleysgymnasticsacademy.co.uk</a>
<b>Facebook Pages</b>	Valleys Gymnastics Academy (closed and open pages) St Tydfils Gymnastics
<b>Twitter</b>	@vgagymnastics
<b>Instagram</b>	Valleysgymnastics

## Main Venue Addresses

### **Crumlin Facility**

Valleys Gymnastics Academy  
Unit 3h Croespenmaen Ind Est  
Crumlin  
NP11 3AG

### **St Tydfils (Merthyr Tydfil)**

Unit 6+7  
Cyfartha Ind Est  
CF17 8PE

### **GoGym (Cwmbran)**

Cwmbran Stadium  
Henllys Way  
Cwmbran  
NP44 3YS

## Satellite Venue Addresses

### **Ebbw Vale Sports Centre**

Lime Avenue  
Ebbw Vale  
NP23 6GL

### **Abertillery Sports Centre**

Alma Street  
Abertillery  
NP13 1QD

### **Abercynon Sports Centre**

Parc Abercynon  
Abercynon  
CF45 4UY

# Membership Information



## Membership of Valleys Gymnastics Academy Ltd.

There are two levels of membership for the organisation:-

**Child Member:** - Participants under the age of 16 who join the club become child members of the organisation.

**Full Adult Members:** - Participants over the age 16, including parents / guardians of child members become full adult members of Valleys Gymnastics Academy Ltd when completing the registration process.

## Club Membership Fees (as a participant)

As a participant member, there are two levels of annual fees:-

- Competitive recreational members (Flippers and Twisters) and Recreational Assessment members pay an annual club membership fee of £15.00
- Squad members pay an annual club membership fee of £25.00

## Signing Up for Club Membership

An online portal via the LoveAdmin management system on the club's website makes registering interest and signing up for membership an easy process! Click the 'Book Now' tab on the website and follow the instructions via the portal (<https://www.valleystgymnasticsacademy.co.uk>).

If you require any assistance with this process, please contact one of the club's admin officers (see Contact Details section).



## British / Welsh Gymnastics Membership

British / Welsh Gymnastics Membership is required each year for all members that participate in gymnastics based activities. The membership must be purchased through British Gymnastics, and this must be completed by the member's third session after joining the club. Without this membership, a member will be refused to participate.

Please note that the price of membership is variable depending on the training / competition level of the participant, and this is set by British / Welsh Gymnastics.

Please see the British Gymnastics website for more information on membership prices - <https://www.british-gymnastics.org>

## Training / Class Fees

These vary depending on the type of class, along with the number of training hours per week.

Fees are due monthly in advance, and are collected on the 1<sup>st</sup> of every month via the LoveAdmin online management system. If the fees have not been paid, VGA reserves the right to refuse members to train at the club.

Late fees can incur a £5.00 administration charge, and non attended sessions are still payable.

Monthly fees are worked out over a 12-month period, and any annual closures have already been taken into account and included into the monthly fees.

Please speak to one of the club's admin officers for more information regarding fees specific to a particular class or squad group.

## Non Attendance (one month period)

If participants do not attend any sessions over a one month period, and if fees have not been paid for that month, membership for that participant will be cancelled. Please contact one of the clubs's admin officers if there are any circumstances which may result in missed sessions.

## **Absences**

In order to secure spaces in a particular class, and to avoid membership cancellation, please inform one of the club's admin officers of any planned absences (see Contact Details section)

## **Membership Cancellation**

If membership is no longer required, please let one of the club's admin officers know (see Contact Details section)

## **Online Classes**

During periods of enforced closures, national lockdowns, or severe weather conditions, classes will move to online classes and no refunds will be offered.

# General Information



## Attending Classes

All members below the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult to the reception of area at the club's venues. All participants need to 'sign in' at the reception areas within the clubs venues / facilities.

## Coaching

All coaches at VGA are fully qualified and accredited through British / Welsh Gymnastics. In order to ensure classes are sessions are delivered to the highest of standards, the club's coaches regularly engage with ongoing and continuous professional development - including formal coach education courses, workshops and clinics on the best coaching practice.

All British and Welsh Gymnastics policies relating to coaching practice are continuously adopted and regularly reviewed by VGA's coaching team.

## Competitions

Squad, Team Gym and Competitive Recreational gymnasts may be invited to enter a variety competitions. This may include club based, local, regional and national level competitions - depending on their age and ability level.

To be considered for the competitions, gymnasts need to demonstrate that they are both physically and mentally prepared, and must have attended regular training sessions. It is the coaches of a particular class, group or squad that will determine if gymnasts are suitability prepared for particular competition.

VGA also hosts an annual Club Competition, aimed at all recreational gymnasts. Although entry for this competition is not compulsory, all gymnasts are encouraged to take part in this event which is designed to fun, inclusive and engaging for all.

## Disability Gymnastics

VGA is one of few sports clubs in Wales to hold 'Disability Sport Wales Gold Standard Accreditation'. This is awarded to clubs who demonstrate that their opportunities, policies and practices are fully inclusive across all levels of the organisation.

The club has a range of classes on offer, both independent / mainstream and disability specific classes, all of which are delivered by fully qualified and experienced coaches. Please feel free to speak to one of the clubs admin officers for more information regarding the clubs disability provision and practices.

## Clothing / Attire

All gymnasts are required to wear a leotard to training / classes after four weeks from joining the club - this applies to both boys and girls. Leggings or shorts can also be worn in addition, and these should be worn over the leotard.

Squad gymnasts will be required to purchase VGA's club leotard which is to be worn at all competitions where gymnasts represent VGA (these leotards will vary depending on the discipline).

Long hair must be tied back securely, and no jewellery or watches are to be worn when taking part in any of the clubs activities (as per the British Gymnastics Health and Safety policy).

## Health and Safety

As mentioned previously, VGA adopts all British and Welsh Gymnastics policies relating Health, Safety and Welfare. These govern all of VGA's practices with regards to gymnastics delivery. Please see the British Gymnastics website for further specific information - <https://www.british-gymnastics.org/safeguarding-and-compliance-policies>

## Volunteering

Volunteering has been at the heart of VGA since the club was formed. Volunteer positions exist throughout all levels of the organisation, and without these, the club would not be able to deliver the the standard and number of engagement opportunities across South East and Central Wales.

The club is always looking to recruit new volunteers, so please feel free express interest to one of the clubs admin officers at anytime. All volunteers will be subject to an enhanced DBS check, and all relevant training will be provided by the club.

## Personal Details

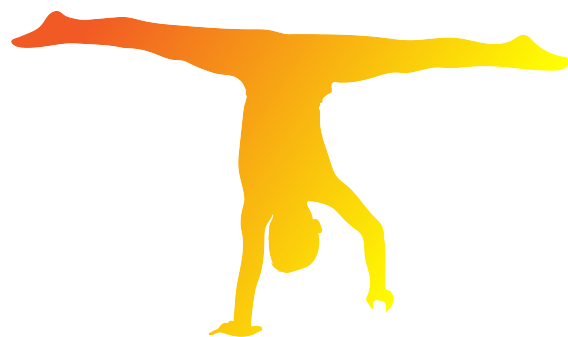
If contact details (and particularly email addresses) change, please sign in to the online account (LoveAdmin) and amend accordingly asap.

VGA will not share personal information with any other organisations, except in exceptional/ emergency circumstances (with your consent) if it is believed that the sharing of such information is vital to protect participants and others (this includes Track and Trace Procedures). VGA may also need to provide certain information when submitting competition entries to outside competition organisers.

## COVID-19

The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted many of the practical processes and procedures at all of the club's venues. VGA has a library of COVID-19 specific risk assessments, policies and operational plans in place to ensure all members are protected at all times. Whilst these have been emailed to all members, these can be requested by contacting one of the clubs admin officers (see contact details section).

# Classes, Sessions and Activities



## Pre-school Gymnastics Classes

VGA offers a complete programme of pre-school activities:-

- Music and Movement for pre-schoolers - ages 0-4 years\*\*
- Pre-school Play gymnastics - for walking age - 4 years\*\*
- Structured pre-school classes - ages 2-4 years (Mini Movers)\*\*
- Rising 3's - suitable for participants aged 3-4 years (Mighty Movers)

\*\* children must be supervised by their parent / carer at all times during these sessions

## Recreational Gymnastics Classes

VGA's independent and fully inclusive recreational gymnastics classes are designed for children aged 4 and upwards, and provide a safe and fun introduction to gymnastics based activities. The image below provides an overview of the recreational pathway, along with some detail of the content included in each class / session type:-

Tiny Tumblers	Little Leapers	Junior Jumpers	Rising Rebounders	Flippers & Twisters
<p>Our Tiny Tumblers classes introduce gymnasts to the fundamental movement patterns and skills of gymnastics.</p> <p>Gymnasts will learn the key shapes and positions of gymnastics, as well as starting the journey for learning basic gymnastics skills (rolling, jumping and balancing skills)</p>	<p>Gymnasts in our Little Leapers classes continue to learn and perfect fundamental movement skills, along with learning skills on gymnastics apparatus.</p> <p>Jumping, rolling, cartwheels and handstand skills are of a particular focus here.</p>	<p>Junior Jumpers are able to perform the key shapes and positions of gymnastics with ease.</p> <p>Floor and vault skills are a particular focus for Junior Jumpers - working towards intermediate skills on these apparatus.</p>	<p>In these classes gymnasts are working at towards a higher skill level (walkovers, round offs, straddle through vaults for example)</p> <p>Running, Jumping, basic strength and coordination exercises are built into these sessions in preparation for more advanced gymnastics.</p>	<p>Gymnasts who are invited into these sessions aim to compete at grassroots level competitions - both locally and nationally.</p> <p>Gymnasts skills are at a more advanced level here (backflips, handspring, somersault etc.)</p> <p>Gymnasts usually attend 2 to 4 sessions per week.</p>



# Competitive Gymnastics

Gymnasts that demonstrate a natural aptitude for gymnastics, including desired physical and mental characteristics, will be invited to join one of the following groups:-

**Recreational Assessment Programme** - Gymnasts who show certain physical qualities (strength, flexibility, coordination, power), along with a good work ethic, may be invited to an assessment program. Here, VGA's squad coaches monitor and assess gymnasts suitability for Women's Artistic, Men's Artistic or TeamGym Squads. If gymnasts are not suited for VGA's Squads, they will be offered a space in one of the clubs progressive recreational gymnastics classes.

**Competitive Squads** - gymnasts that demonstrate the desired physical and mental characteristics required for a particular discipline of competitive gymnastics will be offered a place within a competitive squad group. Training within a competitive squad is more frequent, and thus requires a greater level of commitment. Training is more intense, and is focused around training towards regional and national level competitions. VGA offers the following competitive disciplines:-

- Women's Artistic Gymnastics (including Disabilities Squads)
- Men's Artistic Gymnastics
- TeamGym

Squad gymnasts are continuously monitored by their coach/es with regards to their suitability and readiness to advance further and enter upcoming competitions. All squad gymnasts are expected to maintain a skill and conditioning level which is appropriate to their age and competition level. Both parents / guardians and gymnasts should be aware that if attendance is poor, or attitude towards training is poor, then this may affect their selection for future competitions.

Squad level gymnasts that demonstrate a desired level of progress and development may be encouraged to attend Welsh Squad trials. VGA has a strong history and track record of supporting gymnasts with selections onto Welsh Squads for Women's and Men's Artistic Gymnastics.

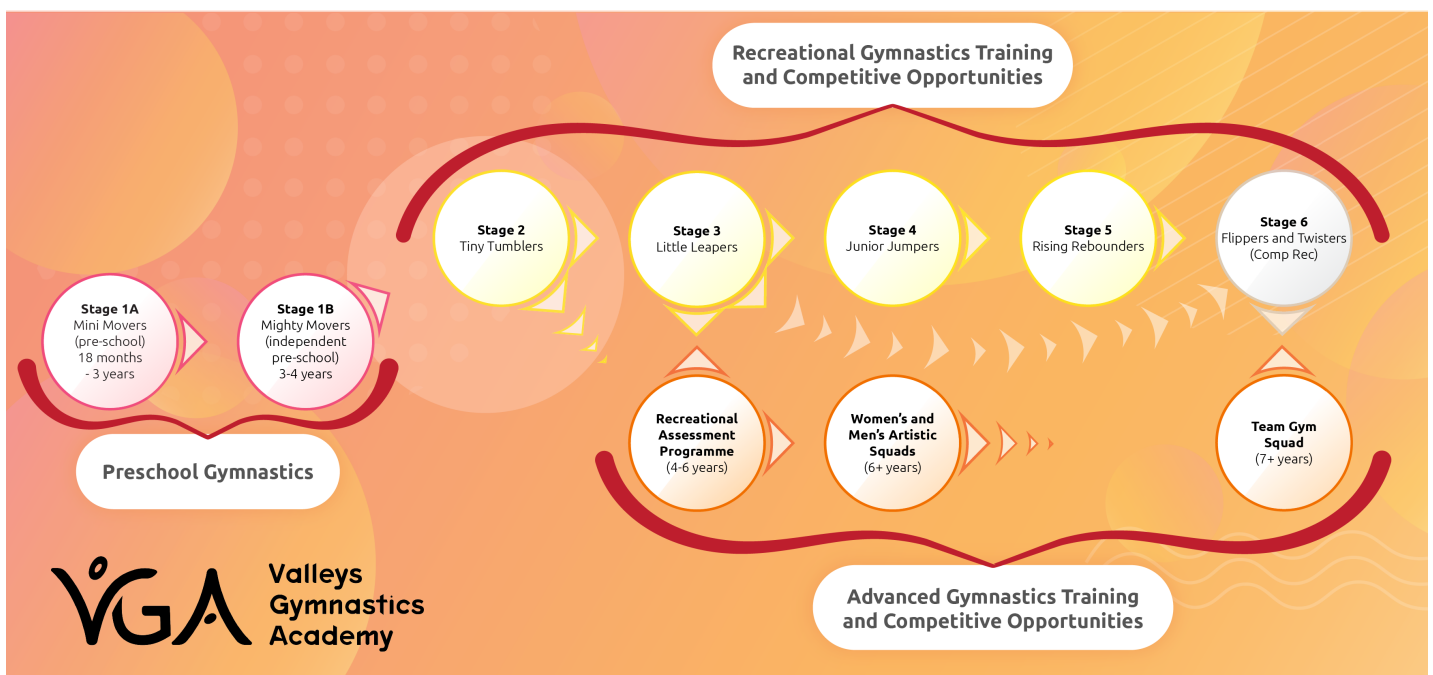
**Please note** that only a small percentage of VGA's membership is invited to the Recreational Assessment Programme and Competitive Squads. A gymnast's happiness and welfare is paramount, and therefore gymnasts will be not pushed or forced to a level which is perceived to be beyond their capability, or something that they do not wish to do.

## It's My Journey

Everyone's journey within gymnastics will differ based on numerous factors:-

- Reasons and motivations for engaging in gymnastics
- Physical attributes and qualities suited to a particular discipline of gymnastics
- Physical and psychological qualities required for more advanced gymnastics
- Rate of development and progression at any level will be unique to the individual
- Social engagement and friendship groups

At VGA, we endeavour to provide progressive opportunities for all ages and abilities. The image below highlights the club's recreational and competitive pathways that gymnasts may follow. These pathways focus on an individual's stage of development, rather than their age. Coaches within each of the classes below will continually monitor and assess gymnasts suitability to move and progress onto a different class type / stage.



## Freestyle Gymnastics / Freerunning

VGA's freestyle / freerunning sessions provide participants with the opportunity to learn and practice skills associated with running, jumping, balancing and acrobatic elements. The sessions have a relaxed and friendly atmosphere, with qualified freestyle and gymnastics coaches on hand to offer advice and support.

Normally participants are encouraged to arrive 15 minutes prior to the start of a session, as there is typically a high demand for these sessions. However, due to COVID-19 measures, these sessions are currently pre-bookable, so it is therefore advised that participants do not turn up without calling the club in advance to check on the status of a particular drop in session.

Various sessions run across the club's venues, so please see the club's website for additional details. Alternatively, please feel free to ring the club to speak to one of the club's admin officers.

## School Holidays and Half Term Activities

The social aspect of membership is an integral part of VGA's services. During half terms and summer holidays, the club offers a wide range of fun and engaging sessions and activities. Examples of these include arts and crafts, themed gymnastics sessions, hula hooping, multi-sport sessions, nerf parties and sleepovers!

## Birthday Parties

From themed warm up games and challenges, to using the gymnastics equipment with the club's fully qualified coaches, VGA's Birthday Party sessions provide the perfect blend of physical activity and fun!

There are currently four options for birthday parties:-

1. Gymnastics / freestyle parties at VGA Crumlin
2. Nerf parties at VGA Crumlin
3. Pre-school parties at VGA Crumlin
4. VGA St Tydfils Parties

# Codes of Conduct



# Code of Conduct

## For Coaches, Judges and Volunteers

The essence of good ethical conduct and practise is summarised below. All Club Coaches, Officials and Helpers must:-

- Consider the well-being and safety of participants before the development of performance.
- Develop an appropriate working relationship with performers based on mutual trust and respect.
- Hold the appropriate, valid qualifications and insurance cover.
- Ensure at least 2 responsible people are in the gymnasium during training sessions.
- Make sure all activities are appropriate to the age, ability and experience of those taking part and ensure all participants are suitably prepared physically and mentally when learning new skills.
- Display consistently high standards of behaviour and appearance, dressing suitably and not using inappropriate language at any time whilst involved with club activities.
- Respect the gymnasts feelings and treat him / her with dignity and respect.
- Never consume alcohol immediately before or during training or events.
- Obtain prior agreement from the parent/guardian of performers before transporting them anywhere (training/competitions).
- Never have performers stay overnight at your home.
- Never exert undue influence over performers to obtain personal benefit or reward.
- Always report any incidents, referrals or disclosures immediately to the VGA Welfare team (where appropriate), following the appropriate guidelines set out in the BG Child Protection Policy.
- Never condone rule violations or use of prohibited substances.
- Make sure that confidential information is not divulged unless with the express approval of the individual concerned.
- Promote the positive aspects of the sport (e.g. fair play).
- Encourage performers to value their performances and not just results.
- Volunteer their time and make a contribution to the club which is commensurate with the social aims of the organisation.
- Ensure that appropriate risk assessments are undertaken according to the BG policy.
- Adhere to the training times as per hire arrangement and understand that they will be financially liable for use outside these times.
- Ensure that they do not approach gymnasts or parents from another club with a view of convincing them to move to VGA.
- Familiarise yourself and follow all guidelines laid down by British Gymnastics. The Health, Safety and Welfare Policies can be accessed at [www.british-gymnastics.org](http://www.british-gymnastics.org)

# Code of Conduct

## For Parents / Guardians

- If your child takes part in club activities, encourage them follow the guidance provided and adhere to the #ItsMyJourney culture of the club.
- Discourage and avoid challenging / arguing with all staff and volunteers involved with the club.
- Understand VGA has an open viewing policy and encourages parents and guardians to watch sessions where facilities are available. However, there may be instances where this may pose a distraction to gymnasts, and we ask that parents take this into account. We encourage parents to understand the #ItsMyJourney ethos and to avoid and judgment and comparison while observing sessions.
- Help children and young people recognise the benefits of gymnastics in terms of health, well-being, social interaction and progression - not just in terms of results and rewards.
- Where appropriate, set a good example by recognising good sportsmanship and applauding the efforts and performances of all.
- Ensure that you are familiar with the protocol expected when attending competitions.
- Recognise that not everyone will want to take part in gymnastics based activities, and therefore understand the need to listen to children and young people's views with regards to participation.
- Try ensure that you and your child are dressed appropriately for the activity you are taking part in and have plenty to drink, along with having any small equipment / training aids that they need. If this is an issue at any point, please liaise with one the club's admin officers ([reception@vga.wales](mailto:reception@vga.wales)).
- Keep the club informed if your child is ill or unable to attend sessions.
- Maintain open communication with the club by using the correct and appropriate channels.
- Share any concerns or complaints about any aspect of the club through the approved channels. Informal discussions, including those on social media can have a negative impact on the wellbeing of club members, and are discouraged. Where issues arise, we encourage you to report them promptly through the following channels:-
  - [welfare@vga.wales](mailto:welfare@vga.wales)
  - [reception@vga.wales](mailto:reception@vga.wales)
  - [office@vga.wales](mailto:office@vga.wales)
- Use correct and proper language at all times to demonstrate respect to others, and so set an example to children and young people.
- Never punish or belittle a child for poor performance or making mistakes, we ask you to reinforce this message with others.
- Always collect your child promptly at the end of a session. Gymnasts are not allowed to leave the gym alone.
- Support your child's involvement and help them to enjoy their sport and achieve his/her full potential - adopting the #ItsMyJourney ethos.
- Understand that there may be consequences and repercussions for not adhering to this Code of Conduct.

# Code of Conduct

## For Members and Participants Aged Under 18 Years

We are fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the well being of all our members. The club believes it is important that members, coaches, administrators and parents associated with the club should, at all times, show respect and understanding for the safety and welfare of others. Therefore, members are encouraged to be open at all times and share any concerns or complaints that they may have about any aspect of the club with the nominated Welfare Officers (these can be found on VGA's website, social media platforms and on display boards at VGA's venues and facilities).

As a member of VGA you are expected to abide by the following club rules:

- All members must participate within the rules, listen to and respect coaches, judges and their decisions.
- All members must respect opponents and fellow club members and must note that bullying in any form will not be tolerated.
- Members should keep to agreed timings for training and competitions or inform their coach if they are going to be late.
- Members are encouraged to follow and adopt the #ItsMyJourney ethos within their training.
- Members must wear suitable attire for training and events as agreed with the coach. Keep all long hair tied back. Remove all body jewellery.
- Members must pay any fees for training or events promptly.
- Recognise the purpose of the sessions you are taking part in, along with level of effort and commitment required.
- Members must not smoke, consume alcohol or take drugs of any kind whilst representing the club, or at one of the clubs premises.
- Members should treat all equipment with respect.
- Members must inform the head coach of any injuries or illness they may have before the warm-up begins.
- To attend regularly and notify the club if a session will be missed.
- Members should not eat or chew gum during a session.
- Members must not use bad language.
- Members should remain with coaches at the end of a session until collected by their parent or guardian.
- Where gymnasts are asked not to bring certain foods into session or events (due to allergies), this must be adhered to.
- Members must understand that breach of this Code will result in consequences commensurate with the nature of the breach.

# Anti Bullying Policy

## Statement of Intent

Valleys Gymnastics Academy is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our members. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our club. We believe it is important that participants, coaches, administrators, committee members and parents should, at all times, show respect and understanding for the welfare of others. Our Anti-Bullying Policy has been designed with our entire membership in mind; we recognise that an abuser may be from different groups within our organisation and that bullying can take different forms.

If bullying does occur, members should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with effectively. We are a transparent club. This means that ANYONE who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell staff and/or Club Welfare Officer.

## What is Bullying?

Bullying can be:

- Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding or tormenting.
- Verbal: name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours or teasing.
- Physical: any use of violence.
- Racist: racial taunts, graffiti or gestures.
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact or abusive/inappropriate comments.
- Cyber: all areas of Internet, such as email and chat room misuse. Mobile threats by text messaging and calls.

## Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Nobody deserves to be a victim of bullying; everybody has the right to be treated with respect. As a club we take bullying seriously.

## Objectives of this Policy:

- All officials, coaching and non-coaching staff, volunteers, committee members, children and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All officials, coaching and non-coaching staff, volunteers and committee members should know what the club policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All children and parents should know what the club policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.

## Bullying will not be tolerated. Procedures:

1. Report bullying incidents to the Club Welfare Officer(s).
2. Where the alleged bully is a child (children), if applicable, parents should be informed and will be asked to come to a meeting to discuss the problem.
3. Where the alleged bully is an adult, the individual accused will be asked to meet with a Club Welfare Officer and / or Line Manager as appropriate.
4. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and stopped.
5. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour through discussion about bullying.
6. Bullies may be asked to sign a behaviour contract.
7. If bullying continues the bully will be asked to leave the Club.