



Anti-Bullying Policy

Manchester Academy of Gymnastics is fully committed to providing a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for every participant. This Anti-Bullying Policy is aligned with the safeguarding principles and standards of **British Gymnastics (BG)**, our governing body, and sets clear expectations for behaviour, prevention, reporting, and response.

1. Purpose & Scope

This policy applies to all members of Manchester Academy of Gymnastics (MAOG) including gymnasts, coaches, volunteers, parents/guardians, visitors and contractors, and covers behaviour in the gym, at competitions, on trips and online (social media and messaging platforms).

2. Definitions

Bullying is behaviour that is repetitive, intentional and involves an imbalance of power that causes distress or harm. It can be:

- *Physical*: hitting, pushing, damaging property;
- *Verbal*: name-calling, threats, insults or racist/sexist/homophobic language;
- *Social/Relational*: exclusion, spreading rumours, humiliation;
- *Cyber-bullying*: abusive messages, sharing images without consent, impersonation, doxxing.

One-off incidents may also be addressed under behaviour or safeguarding procedures if serious.

3. Policy Statement

MAOG operates a zero-tolerance approach to bullying. Everyone has the right to train and compete free from harassment, fear and intimidation. All concerns will be taken seriously, responded to promptly, and recorded. Retaliation against a person who raises a concern is prohibited.

4. Prevention & Culture

- Clear codes of conduct for gymnasts, coaches and parents/guardians, shared at induction and revisited annually.
- Positive coaching practices: praise effort, model respectful communication, set clear boundaries.
- Age-appropriate education for gymnasts on kindness, inclusion, bystander action and online safety.
- Visible reporting routes to the Welfare Officer and trip leads; posters and handbooks signpost support.
- Supervision plans for changing rooms, waiting areas and travel consistent with safeguarding guidance.

5. Reporting Concerns

Concerns about bullying can be reported by any gymnast, parent/guardian, coach or volunteer to a Coach or the **Club Welfare Officer** in person or by email. Reports can be made verbally or in writing and may be anonymous where appropriate. If a child is at immediate risk, contact emergency services. The Welfare Officer will acknowledge the concern, explain next steps and keep the reporter updated as appropriate.

6. Responding to Incidents

MAOG will respond proportionately and fairly, following BG safeguarding and club disciplinary procedures:

- Initial fact-finding and risk assessment to safeguard those involved;
- Support offered to the person targeted (and to others affected);
- Parents/guardians informed where minors are involved;
- Actions may include mediation/restorative approaches, behaviour contracts, training/education, warnings, suspension or removal from the club;
- Where allegations meet a safeguarding threshold or possible criminal offence, referrals will be made to BG and/or statutory agencies.

7. Support & Protection

We will provide appropriate support to those impacted by bullying, including adjustments to training, supervision, and signposting to specialist services. Anyone raising a genuine concern will be protected from victimisation.

8. Online Conduct

Members must use social media and messaging responsibly. Coaches and volunteers must follow BG/club guidance on communication with young people. Sharing personal data or images without consent, cyber-harassment and creating hostile group chats are prohibited and may lead to sanctions.

9. Data Protection & Record Keeping

Records of concerns, actions and outcomes will be kept securely and retained in line with data protection law and BG guidance. Access is limited to authorised personnel with a legitimate need to know.

10. Roles & Responsibilities

Welfare Officer: primary contact for concerns; ensures procedures are followed and records maintained.

Coaches/Volunteers: model positive behaviour; challenge poor conduct; report and record concerns.

Parents/Guardians: reinforce respectful behaviour; raise concerns promptly.

Gymnasts: treat others with respect; speak up if worried; support peers.

11. Training & Review

All staff and volunteers will receive periodic training/briefings on anti-bullying and safeguarding. This policy will be reviewed annually, after any significant incident, or when British Gymnastics issues updated guidance.

Last Updated: October 2025