

# HUTT VALLEY GYMNASTICS

## SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY 2024



### 1. PURPOSE

Hutt Valley Gymnastics Centre (also referred to as the Club in this policy) is committed to creating a positive culture within the Club that prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. This includes both the prevention of harm to children and young people within the club as well as recognising and responding to concerns, disclosures, and allegations both within and outside of the Club.

#### The purpose of this policy is to:

- Protect children and young people from abuse and neglect and to safeguard their wellbeing
- Outline Hutt Valley Gymnastics Centre's commitment to protecting children and young people who interact with the Club
- Outline the behaviours and requirements expected of those involved in the activities of the Club in relation to the safeguarding of children and young people
- Provide staff members, volunteers and members with clear guidance on how to recognise and respond to suspected or confirmed cases of child abuse and neglect as well as how to prevent abuse from happening.
- Ensure reported concerns are referred to the appropriate child protection agencies or authorities as required so that children and young people receive the help they need as soon as possible.

### 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to anyone involved in the activities of Hutt Valley Gymnastics Centre, whether they are in a paid or unpaid/voluntary capacity with the Club. This includes (but is not limited to) the following people:

- All children and young people associated with the activities of the Club
- All staff members and volunteers, including visitors and contractors
- Persons appointed or elected to the Committee and subcommittees
- Support personnel appointed or selected to teams and squads (e.g. chaperones)
- Coaches
- Participants
- Members
- Any person participating in events and activities held by Hutt Valley Gymnastics Centre
- Any other person including spectators, parents/guardians

### 3. POLICY STATEMENT

Hutt Valley Gymnastics Centre seeks to create a culture of cooperation throughout the Club where differences are respected, overall goals are well publicised, transparency and consistent communication are exhibited, all stakeholders understand an expected level of behaviour within and representing the Club.



Hutt Valley Gymnastics Centre has zero tolerance for abuse or neglect in any context and has developed the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy to outline the Club's commitment to protecting the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people involved in the activities of the Club.

Hutt Valley Gymnastics Centre's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy should be read in conjunction with relevant New Zealand legislation as outlined in section 14 of this policy.

### 4. HUTT VALLEY GYMNASTICS CENTRE'S RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT

#### ***Overall***

The overall responsibility for safeguarding children and young people involved with the activities of the Club rests with the Committee of Hutt Valley Gymnastics Centre and sits within the responsibilities of the Centre Manager. The Centre Manager in collaboration with the Gymnastics Director and Head Coaches is charged with the implementation and embedding of this policy.

#### ***Hutt Valley Gymnastics Centre***

Hutt Valley Gymnastics Centre accepts the responsibility to create a culture where the safety and wellbeing of children and young people is prioritised and to implement and embed robust procedures to safeguard and protect children and young people and will:

- Provide effective leadership to promote, implement and embed this and other associated policies
- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people is our primary concern
- Designate and train individuals with responsibility for safeguarding (Child Safeguarding Representatives) whose role is to promote safeguarding, support the Club to provide a safe environment for children and young people, and respond to any concerns of abuse and neglect that are brought to their attention
- Develop procedures for responding to disclosure and/or allegations relating to child abuse or adopting such procedures as may be developed by Gymnastics New Zealand and communicated to the Club
- Implement standards of conduct that establish appropriate behaviours and boundaries for individuals in positions of trust to keep children and young people safe
- Involve and listen to children and young people about their protection, safety and wellbeing



- Undertake regular risk assessments and put in place appropriate safeguarding processes to remove or minimise identified risks
- Implement appropriate practices for sharing information, where it is necessary to protect a child or young person with the appropriate agency and /or other stakeholders, including Gymnastics New Zealand.
- Ensure any suspicions and allegations involving abuse of a child or a young person involved with the Club are reported in line with the applicable statutory requirements, including reported to the Club, the police, and/or Oranga Tamariki and to Gymnastics New Zealand Sport Integrity Unit without delay and a record made
- Always take action to address any poor practice and behaviours such as bullying and harassment that occur within the Club
- Ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all concerns are maintained and securely stored
- Implement safe recruitment procedures in line with the Children's Act 2014 and the Children's (Requirements for Safety Checks of Children's Workers) Regulations 2015, including waiting for clear police vetting and reference checks before starting any roles working with children and young people
- Ensuring staff members and volunteers receive supervision and a safeguarding induction and training and are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children and young people at risk
- Ensuring that everyone knows what to do if they are concerned about a child or young person's wellbeing, and promote a culture where everyone is encouraged to raise concerns early to minimise the impact on the child or young person without fear of negative repercussions, and
- Ensure that children and young people involved with the Club are aware that there is a policy and system in place to protect them and how this works.

### ***Everyone***

- Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people is everyone's responsibility
- It is essential that everyone involved in the activities offered by the Club, including (but not limited to) gymnastics, parkour, cheerleading and Gymcamp (holiday programme), is fully aware of the signs of abuse and understands the appropriate steps to report these concerns
- Anyone involved in the Club's activities must comply with this Policy and specifically not engage in, allow, condone, or ignore incidents of inappropriate behaviours, collusion and abuse and be supportive of anyone who reports concerns.
- Anyone who has reason to believe that a child or young person both inside and outside of the Club's activities has, or is experiencing abuse or neglect, has a duty to report it to the Club and/or relevant statutory authority.

Failure to comply with this policy and associated procedures will be investigated and may ultimately result in disciplinary action against the individuals concerned or the involvement of police.



## **5. CHILD SAFEGUARDING REPRESENTATIVE**

The Child Safeguarding Representative is the trained person(s) within the Club responsible for providing advice and support to any individual who is concerned about a child or young person who wants advice about the Club's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The Child Safeguarding Representative acts on any concerns, disclosures, or allegations regarding child abuse in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. The Child Safeguarding Representative is also responsible for creating a child-safe culture in the Club, embedding relevant policies and procedures and ensuring training is provided to all who need it.

The Child Safeguarding Representative role should ideally be filled by an impartial person who can carry out the role without undue bias and influence. This individual(s) will receive safeguarding training from an external provider to ensure that they are able to fulfil their role effectively.

The contact details of the Child Safeguarding Representative(s) will be made available on the Club's website and noticeboards. This role will be supervised by the Committee and reviewed annually.

## **6. CONFIDENTIALITY & INFORMATION SHARING**

Where a staff member or volunteer receives confidential information from an individual receiving the information to ensure this information is kept confidential. Generally, this means that such information should not be shared, however there are certain exceptions (which includes exceptions provided in the Privacy Act 2020, and the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989) where confidential information may be shared.

These exceptions are:

- When the individual gives consent for the confidential information to be shared; or
- When there is a reasonable belief there is a risk to an individual's life, health, safety and/or wellbeing; or
- Where the confidential information is required to be disclosed by law or by an appropriate agency.

Therefore, giving information to others for the protection of a child or young person is a justifiable breach of confidentiality and, where there are concerns for a child's or young person's wellbeing or safety, is a legal duty.

The third-party organisations with whom confidential information may need to be shared may include:



1. An appropriate agency
2. Gymnastics organisations i.e. where the Club shares information with Gymnastics New Zealand and vice versa
3. Other organisations e.g. other sports or organisations or community clubs where risks posed by an individual cannot be managed without the disclosure of information.

No civil, criminal, or disciplinary proceedings may be brought against the person or entity who makes the report which discloses confidential information, provided the disclosure is made in good faith. Information will always be appropriately shared when there is a concern about a child unless it poses a risk to the child,

When gathering, storing, or disclosing personal information about individuals, workers must comply with the Information Privacy Principles set out in the Privacy Act 2020.

Hutt Valley Gymnastics Centre will report any safeguarding concerns about Gymnastics New Zealand members who may present a risk to others, to the Gymnastics New Zealand Sport Integrity Unit. In these cases, the Sport Integrity Unit will assume responsibility for any further information sharing decisions in consultation with the Club and relevant statutory authorities.

Where a safeguarding concern is external to the Club's activities, if it is not clear that confidential information should be shared, advice about whether sharing is appropriate can be sought from an appropriate agency without disclosing any personal information in the first instance.

## **7. SAFE PRACTICE GUIDELINES / SAFEGUARDING CODE OF BEHAVIOUR**

All Staff members, volunteers and Club members must comply with the expectations of behaviour documented in the Gymnastics New Zealand Code of Behaviour:

<https://www.gymnasticsnz.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Gymnastics-New-Zealand-Code-of-Behaviour-final-25Jan21-wip.pdf>

### ***Positions of Trust***

- Any person who is engaged with Children or Young People through their position with Hutt Valley Gymnastics Club holds a position of trust.
- These individuals must understand their responsibilities and appropriate use of their position of trust.
- A position of trust is a privilege and must not be used to cause harm of any form to children and young people in their care. This includes the instigating or engaging in a sexual relationship or behaviour (directly or indirectly) with a child or young person.
- An individual who breaches this position of trust may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal or referral to the New Zealand Police.

## **8. RESPONDING TO DISCLOSED OR SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT**



Failed attempts to disclose child abuse or neglect can have a devastating impact on the child or young person involved. It is critical that when a disclosure is made, there is an immediate response with the aim of investigating the alleged child abuse or neglect and stopping the child abuse or neglect. Hutt Valley Gymnastics Centre has a zero tolerance of child abuse or neglect of children and young people and will treat all disclosures, suspected abuse, and allegations seriously, consistently, and with a high degree of sensitivity.

### ***Prohibitions***

The Hutt Valley Gymnastics Safeguarding and Child Policy prohibits all persons to whom this policy applies from:

- a) Discussing any concerns or allegations with those not a party to the matter - within or outside Hutt Valley Gymnastics Centre - such prohibition not being designed to limit, in any way, their rights and responsibilities to report their concerns or allegations, but rather as part of the Club's commitment to ensuring privacy, confidentiality, and natural justice; and/or
- b) Making deliberately false, misleading, or vexatious allegations

### ***Rights***

Individuals covered by this policy (as outlined in section 2: Scope) retain the right to report directly to relevant authorities, such as the New Zealand Police or Oranga Tamariki, any concerns they may have in relation to the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person, regardless of whether they have also reported the matter internally.

### ***Handling allegations***

- a) An allegation should be addressed at the relevant level (club/organisation or national level). This should be facilitated by the designated Child Safeguarding Representative at the level where the complaint arises. The officer should follow the procedures outlined in Appendix A of the Gymnastics New Zealand Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- b) If a matter results in the lodging of a report of concern with either the New Zealand Police or Oranga Tamariki, the Child Safeguarding Representative or Centre Manager must notify Gymnastics New Zealand immediately.

### ***Criminal Action Relating to Child Abuse***

If individuals involved in Hutt Valley Gymnastics Center are charged with or investigated by the New Zealand Police for criminal matters relating to child abuse, neglect or placing children or young people at risk, the Club may consider a range of actions against the accused individual including but not limited to dismissal and/or being stood down during an investigation.



### ***Whistleblowing and Anonymous Complaints***

In cases of child abuse there can be many barriers that community members face when reporting the abuse. To help reduce these barriers, Hutt Valley Gymnastics Centre acknowledges that at times, an allegation of child abuse may be made anonymously. Where possible, all allegations should be encouraged to be made openly so the proper investigative processes may be followed. If a person still wishes to remain anonymous, Hutt Valley Gymnastics Centre will support this decision, utilising the steps in the Gymnastics New Zealand Whistleblowing Policy.

### ***Recording Allegations of Child Abuse or Neglect***

Hutt Valley Gymnastics Centre will keep a record of all children and young people's wellbeing concerns to better identify and respond to patterns of abuse and/or inappropriate behaviour.

A Safeguarding Incident Record is used to document any allegation, suspicion, disclosure, incident or concern regarding child safety or wellbeing. If the appropriate agency i.e. the Police or Oranga Tamariki are notified, this information will be used in a Report of Concern. Hutt Valley Gymnastics must be notified immediately when a Report of Concern is made to the appropriate agency.

Hutt Valley Gymnastics records all allegations of breaches of this policy in a confidential electronic system that can only be accessed by restricted personnel as a part of our risk mitigation processes. To prevent access to these records by unauthorised persons, Hutt Valley Gymnastics stores any documentation associated with an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child or young person by having:

- a) Hard-copy documentation stored in a locking filing cabinet (or similar)
- AND
- b) Soft copy documentation stored in a password-protected file

Hutt Valley Gymnastics maintains and regularly monitors records of child abuse reports as part of our incident management processes to ensure that they are responded to effectively in accordance with this policy and that requirements for reporting to external authorities are complied with.

### ***Legislative Requirements***

When handling allegations of child abuse or neglect involving a child or young person, the person handling the complaint should consider their legal obligations, and that of the organisation which they are representing, including without limitation, under relevant employment legislation.

## ***Confidentiality and Privacy***



Hutt Valley Gymnastics Centre expects all individuals covered by this policy to maintain the confidentiality and privacy of all concerned (including the respondent), except if doing so would compromise the welfare of the child or young person, or the investigation of the allegation.

### **8.1 Responding to a Disclosure or Allegation Made Against a Staff Member**

When responding to a disclosure or allegation about a staff member (paid or voluntary), the welfare of the child or young person will remain paramount throughout. The same level of concern and action will be applied as with any other situation of suspected abuse and Hutt Valley Gymnastics Centre will not collude with the alleged abuser.

#### ***Receiving a Disclosure or Allegation***

All staff members and volunteers of Hutt Valley Gymnastics Centre, paid or unpaid, are required to recognise, respond to, and report immediately (or where reasonably practicable no later than before ending a shift) any wellbeing concerns, suspicions or complaints of a staff member or volunteer being involved in any child abuse or neglect using:

- a) The procedure for responding to disclosed or suspected child abuse or neglect as found in Appendix A of the Gymnastics New Zealand Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

If a Child is at imminent risk or harm or in immediate danger, you must immediately report the situation directly to the police by phoning 111.

When a disclosure or allegation is made regarding a staff member, the Child Safeguarding Representative will provide support to the child or young person and the person making the allegation, if this is not the same individual. The Centre Manager will act on behalf of the Club with employment matters relating to that staff member. The same person must not fulfil both these roles.

### **8.2 Allegations Against a Child Safeguarding Representative**

If an allegation is against a Child Safeguarding Representative, staff members or volunteers should raise the issue immediately with another Child Safeguarding Representative (if there is more than one appointed) or with the Centre Manager. Again, one person will support those making the complaint and a different person will manage the relationship with the Child Safeguarding Representative.

## **9. SETTLEMENT**

Hutt Valley Gymnastics Centre will not enter into settlement agreements where the safety and protection of children or young people are a concern.



## **10. SAFE RECRUITMENT - SAFETY CHECKS FOR NEW AND EXISTING EMPLOYEES**



Before making any appointment, Hutt Valley Gymnastics Centre will complete a robust safety checking process (including police vetting, identity confirmation, and relevant reference checks) to ascertain the suitability and safety of an employee or volunteer for the role they have applied for.

In accordance with the Children's Act 2014 (and the related regulations), Hutt Valley Gymnastics Centre requires all of its staff members to undergo periodic safety checks every three years, which includes police vetting.

All new and existing staff members and volunteers will be made aware of their safeguarding responsibilities as part of their staff induction and ongoing training. This will apply to:

- a) All paid staff members including coaches
- b) All volunteer coaches and committee members
- c) Other volunteer roles who have regular contact with children and young people
- d) Team managers and chaperones who travel with athletes to events and training camps including (but not limited to) the New Zealand Gymnastics Championships, international and club tours, and out of town competitions and camps
- e) Host families when billeting athletes

## **11. INDUCTION AND TRAINING OF STAFF MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS**

Hutt Valley Gymnastics Centre recognises that induction training for new employees and volunteers is critical to the safety of children and young people. Hutt Valley Gymnastics Centre believes that trained staff are critical to the safety of children and young people. The Club believes that trained staff are essential and will provide time and resources to support this process.

Hutt Valley Gymnastics Centre Staff Members and Volunteers:

- a) As part of their induction programme, all coaches will be required to complete basic training in safeguarding and child protection in sport. This will highlight why it is needed and their responsibilities in their role.
- b) The Club's Child Safeguarding Representative(s) should complete basic training in safeguarding and protecting children and young people in sport and receive further training relating to their role.
- c) Further in-house training will be provided to ensure that they understand the processes within the organisation for reporting or responding to reports of abuse or suspected abuse.
- d) All staff members and volunteers will receive training as part of their induction to ensure they understand their responsibilities and the processes within the Club.

## 12. DEFINITIONS



Term	Definition
Appropriate agency	This may include any of the following agencies: Oranga Tamariki, The Ministry of Health, The Ministry of Social Development, The Ministry of Education, The Ministry of Justice, The New Zealand Police
Bullying	An act seeking to harm, intimidate or coerce someone. This may include intentionally or the misuse of power within a relationship. Bullying may be a one-off act, or has the potential to be repeated over time.
Child abuse	The harming (whether physically, emotionally, or sexually), ill-treatment, abuse, neglect, or deprivation of any child or young person.
Child (or children)	Person/s under the age of 14 years
Child protection	The actions taken to ensure the safety of a child or young person.
Child Safeguarding Representative	The person or persons within the Club responsible for providing advice and support to any individual who is concerned about a child or wants advice about the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. They are responsible for acting on any concerns, disclosures or allegations in relation to child abuse. A Child Safeguarding Representative must have appropriate training to carry out their role.
Confidential information	Information provided in a situation where the individual had a reasonable expectation that information or communication would be kept confidential.
Core worker	A child or young person worker whose work in an organisation means that when that person is present with a child or a young person in the course of that work, that person: Is the only child or young person worker present; or Is the child or young person worker who has primary responsibility for, or authority over, the child or young persons present. This definition is adopted from the Children's Act 2014.
Cyberbullying	The use of digital technology to bully a person, typically (but not limited to) by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature.
Disclosure	Information about abuse or neglect provided by a child, young person, parent, caregiver, or any other person. Disclosure can also include things you have noticed in relation to a child or young person.
Emotional abuse	Any act or omission that results in impaired psychological, social, intellectual, or emotional functioning and development of an individual.

Family harm	Any violent act inflicted by one family member on another. It has many forms including physical, sexual, emotional, or economic abuse.
Grooming	When someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and sexually abuse them. Grooming includes exerting power or control over a child or young person to maintain secrecy.
Harm	Harm involves conduct that puts a child or young person in a position where they can be manipulated, exploited, or sexually abused.
Harassment	Harassment covers a wide range of behaviours of an offensive nature including any behaviour that demeans, humiliates, or embarrasses a person. Harassment can include threats, derogatory jokes, racial slurs, personal insults, or unwanted touching.
Neglect	Any act or omission that results in impaired physical/emotional functioning, injury or development of a young person and can include: Physical neglect - not providing the necessities of life Neglectful supervision - leaving children or young people alone or without someone safe to look after them. Emotional neglect - not providing comfort, love, and attention the child or young person needs. Medical neglect - failure to meet the child or young person's health needs. This includes not getting the child or young person help if they are injured or in pain due to their sport. Educational neglect - allowing chronic truancy, failure to enrol children and young people in school, or inattention to their special educational needs.
Personal information	Information about an individual that would identify them.
Physical abuse	Any behaviour or action which inflicts physical harm on a child or young person. It can be unexplained bruises, welts, cuts, abrasions, unexplained fractures or dislocations, burns, poisoning, or fabricated illness. This can include but is not limited to injuries caused by over-training, training, or competing with existing injuries; unsafe equipment or facilities; poor technique; and violent or aggressive behaviour.
Position of trust	The relationship created by someone who is engaged with children or young people through their role in an organisation is a position of trust. This means they have or are perceived to have power, influence, or authority, as dictated by their roles or duties assigned to them by an organisation. A position of trust is one of privilege. However, this power and influence can lend itself to abuse in the wrong hands.
Regulated service	Any of the services listed in Schedule 1 of the Children's Act 2014.
Resort of Concern	When an individual contacts either Oranga Tamariki or the New Zealand Police to raise concerns regarding the safety of a child or young person, this is called a Report of Concern.

Safeguarding Incident Record	All concerns, disclosures, or allegations regarding child abuse or neglect are recorded in the Club's Safeguarding Incident Record.
Safety check	The requirements for safety checks for anyone working with children or young people in any capacity are set out in section 31 of the Children's Act 2014 and regulations made under section 32 of the Act.
Sexual abuse	This involves forcing or enticing a person to take part in sexual activities, as well as non-contact activities such as 'look-at', or discussing sexual images, activities or behaviours. A sexual relationship between an adult and a child or young person will always be wrong, unequal, and unacceptable.
Specified offence	Any of the offences against the Crimes Act 1961; the Films, Videos, and Publications Classification Act 1993; the Customs and Excise Act 1996; the Harmful Digital Communications Act 2015; and those listed in Schedule 2 of the Children's Act 2014.
Staff member(s) and volunteers	Any person brought into the organisation to provide services which includes paid staff members, managers, administration staff, coaches, contractors, volunteers, and committee members.
Vulnerability	Children or young people who are at significant risk of harm to their wellbeing now, and into the future because of the environment in which they are being raised, and in some cases, due to their own complex needs.
Wellbeing	Wellbeing represents the whole person - their physical health, development and safety, their psychological and emotional development and behaviour, and their cognitive development and educational achievement. Wellbeing also includes the welfare of that person.
Whistleblowing	Where a staff member or volunteer makes a protected disclosure (sometimes called 'whistleblowing') when they report serious wrongdoing in the workplace that they reasonably believe is true or likely to be true.
Young person (or people)	Individuals of or over the age of 14 years but under 18 years.

**MOTION:** This policy was reviewed and adopted by the Hutt Valley Gymnastics Club Committee on 9th of December 2024. It is scheduled to be reviewed biannually.