



## Child Safety & Protection Policy

Xpressions Gymnastics Centre

### 1. Purpose and Commitment

Our centre is committed to providing a **safe, positive, and inclusive environment** where every child can learn, grow, and enjoy gymnastics. We uphold the principles of **child protection, wellbeing, dignity, and respect**, and we follow all relevant New Zealand legislation, including the **Children's Act 2014**, as well as industry guidelines from Gymnastics NZ.

We have **zero tolerance** for any form of abuse, neglect, bullying, discrimination, or unsafe behaviour.

### 2. Scope of This Policy

This policy applies to:

- All children aged **2 years and older** participating in classes, free-play, holiday programmes, events, and off-site activities.
- All **staff, coaches, volunteers, junior coaches, contractors, and student helpers**.
- All **parents, caregivers, and visitors** while on site or participating in centre activities.

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities

#### Management

- Ensures policies, procedures, and reporting systems are in place and reviewed annually.
- Provides staff training and ensures safe recruitment practices.
- Appoints a **Child Safety Officer**. (Wilna Britz / Tina MacLean)

## **Coaches & Staff**

- Maintain active supervision and follow safe coaching practices.
- Model respectful behaviour and uphold the Code of Conduct.
- Report any concerns or incidents immediately.

## **Volunteers & Junior Coaches**

- Work under the direction of senior staff.
- Follow all safety and child-protection procedures.

## **Parents & Caregivers**

- Follow centre rules and support a safe environment.
- Provide active supervision during parent-supervised sessions (e.g., free-play).
- Ensure timely drop-off and pick-up.

## **Children**

- Treat others with respect.
- Follow safety rules and speak up if they feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

## **4. Safe Environment & Facility Standards**

- Daily equipment and hazard checks.
- Clear rules for safe attire: **close-fitting clothing, bare feet, long hair tied back.**
- Controlled access to gym areas.
- Emergency procedures for fire, earthquake, lockdown, and medical events.
- First-aid kits and trained first-aiders available at all times.
- All incidents and near misses recorded and reviewed.

## **5. Supervision Requirements**

- Age-appropriate coach-to-child ratios for structured classes.
- For free-play sessions, parents must provide **active, hands-on supervision**, remain within arm's reach of younger children, and avoid distractions such as mobile phones.
- Children may only be released to authorised adults.
- Late pick-up procedures ensure children are never left unsupervised.

## 6. Safe Coaching Practices

- Skills taught using **progressions appropriate to age and ability**.
- Spotting used only when necessary for safety or skill development.
- Physical contact must be **explained, purposeful, and child-centred**.
- No high-risk skills taught without proper preparation and equipment.
- Behaviour management focuses on **positive reinforcement**, clear expectations, and calm redirection- never humiliation, fear, or physical punishment.

## 7. Child Protection & Safeguarding

### Definitions

- **Abuse** includes physical, emotional, sexual, and verbal harm.
- **Neglect** includes failure to meet a child's basic needs.
- **Grooming** includes behaviour intended to build trust for the purpose of exploitation.
- **Inappropriate behaviour** includes any conduct that breaches professional boundaries.

### Responding to Concerns

- All staff must report concerns immediately to the **Child Safety Officer**.
- Concerns may include unusual injuries, disclosures, behavioural changes, or staff/parent behaviour.
- Staff must listen calmly to disclosures, avoid leading questions, and reassure the child they did the right thing by speaking up.

### Reporting Pathways

- Concerns are documented and escalated to the Child Safety Officer for referral to **Oranga Tamariki** or **NZ Police** when required.
- Confidentiality is maintained, and information is shared only on a need-to-know basis.

## **8. Staff Recruitment, Screening & Training**

- All staff and volunteers working with children must complete **Police vetting**.
- Reference checks and interviews assess suitability for working with children.
- Induction includes training on child protection, safe coaching, emergency procedures, and behaviour management.
- Annual refreshers ensure ongoing awareness and compliance.

## **9. Code of Conduct**

### **Expected Behaviour**

- Treat all children with dignity and respect.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
- Use positive, encouraging language.
- Ensure interactions are observable and transparent.

### **Prohibited Behaviour**

- Being alone with a child in an isolated space.
- Rough physical play, inappropriate touching, or physical punishment.
- Swearing, yelling, or shaming.
- Taking photos or videos without consent.
- Communicating privately with children via social media or messaging.

## **10. Health, Wellbeing & Inclusion**

- Parents must inform staff of medical needs, allergies, or additional support requirements.
- Staff follow procedures for managing illness, injury, and medication (if applicable).
- We welcome children of all abilities and work with families to support inclusion.
- Cultural safety is upheld.
- Bullying is not tolerated; all incidents are addressed promptly.

## **11. Photography, Media & Privacy**

- Written consent is required for the centre to use images of children.
- Parents may take photos during events only if they avoid capturing other children without permission.
- Images are stored securely and used only for approved purposes.
- Personal information is collected, stored, and used in accordance with the **Privacy Act 2020**.

## **12. Transport & Off-Site Activities**

- Staff transporting children is discouraged unless pre-approved by management and parents.
- Risk assessments completed for all off-site events.
- Clear communication provided to parents regarding supervision, meeting points, and expectations.

## **13. Incident, Accident & Concern Reporting**

- All injuries, behavioural incidents, and near misses are documented.
- Parents are notified of injuries or concerns on the same day.
- Child-protection concerns are escalated immediately.
- Records are stored securely and reviewed regularly for safety improvements.

## **14. Policy Review**

- This policy is reviewed **annually** or sooner if legislation or best-practice guidelines change.
- Feedback from staff, parents, and children is welcomed and considered in updates.