



Dronfield Gymnastics Academy

Social Media Policy

DGA

DRONFIELD GYMNASTICS ACADEMY

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

For gymnasts, parents/carers, coaches, staff and volunteers

Policy owner	Dronfield Gymnastics Academy
Applies to	Gymnasts, parents/carers, coaches, employees, volunteers, officials and management
Last reviewed	September 2026
Review frequency	Annually, or sooner following changes to relevant British Gymnastics guidance
Status	Club policy – for approval and issue

POLICY PRINCIPLE

The safety, welfare, dignity and privacy of gymnasts will always take priority. Online conduct connected with DGA should reflect the same safeguarding and professional standards expected in person.

This policy should be read alongside DGA safeguarding, photography/filming, codes of conduct, complaints, privacy and disciplinary procedures, and current applicable British Gymnastics requirements.

1. PURPOSE

Dronfield Gymnastics Academy (DGA) recognises that social media is an important and positive way of communicating, celebrating achievements and promoting gymnastics.

Social media can also create safeguarding, privacy, confidentiality and reputational risks, particularly where children and young people are involved. This policy sets the standards expected when social media or electronic communication is used in connection with DGA.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to official DGA accounts and personal accounts where DGA, gymnastics, its members or activities are discussed or identifiable. It covers social networking sites, messaging services, group chats, video-sharing platforms, forums, livestreaming, direct/private messages, comments, posts, stories, photographs, videos and reposted content.

Private accounts and disappearing messages are not exempt from this policy.

3. GENERAL STANDARDS

Everyone associated with DGA is expected to communicate online with the same standards of behaviour expected face-to-face. Social-media activity must not:

- bully, harass, threaten, intimidate or discriminate against another person;
- contain abusive, offensive, humiliating or inappropriate material;
- deliberately embarrass or undermine a gymnast, coach, parent, official, volunteer or member of staff;
- disclose confidential or private information;
- compromise the safety or welfare of a child or young person;
- make inappropriate comments about a gymnast's body, weight, appearance or physical development;
- make malicious, defamatory or knowingly false allegations;
- impersonate DGA or another individual;

- bring DGA or the sport of gymnastics into disrepute; or
- interfere with the fair handling of a safeguarding, welfare, disciplinary or complaints matter.

4. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

For this policy, a child or young person is anyone under 18. DGA wants gymnasts to enjoy the positive benefits of social media while remaining safe online.

Gymnasts will not be punished for raising a genuine safeguarding or welfare concern.

5. COACHES, STAFF, VOLUNTEERS AND OTHER ADULTS IN POSITIONS OF TRUST

Adults working with children at DGA have particular responsibilities because of their position of trust. Coaches, staff and volunteers must maintain clear professional boundaries online.

They must not use personal social-media accounts to establish or maintain inappropriate personal relationships with gymnasts under 18, and must not engage in one-to-one personal electronic or social-media communication with children. Private or disappearing messages must not be used to communicate individually with a child about DGA activities.

Communication about training, competitions, travel or other club activities should take place through DGA-approved communication channels and, where appropriate, involve the gymnast's parent/carer.

- request or encourage children to follow their personal social-media accounts;
- routinely follow or add children from DGA to personal accounts;
- exchange inappropriate private messages with gymnasts;
- use social media to discuss confidential information about a gymnast;
- post photographs or videos contrary to DGA consent arrangements;
- engage in online behaviour that could undermine their professional relationship or position of trust; or
- use personal online contact as a substitute for appropriate club communication channels.

If a gymnast contacts a member of staff privately about a safeguarding or welfare concern, the adult should respond only as necessary to safeguard the child and follow DGA safeguarding procedures, including informing the Welfare Officer as appropriate.

5.1 SOCIAL MEDIA CONNECTIONS WITH PARENTS/CARERS

DGA strongly advises coaches, staff and volunteers not to become social-media friends, followers or personal online contacts with the parents/carers of gymnasts they coach or work with, particularly through personal social-media accounts.

Although appropriate professional relationships with parents/carers are important, personal social-media connections can blur the distinction between professional and personal relationships and may result in professional boundaries being unintentionally breached.

Such connections may expose staff and parents/carers to information about each other's private lives that would not ordinarily form part of the professional coach-parent relationship. This can create difficulties concerning confidentiality, impartiality, perceptions of favouritism, complaints, selection decisions and professional boundaries.

DGA therefore recommends that communication between staff and parents/carers concerning gymnasts, training, competitions, selection, welfare or other club matters takes place through DGA-approved communication channels wherever possible, rather than personal social-media accounts or personal direct messaging.

Where a pre-existing friendship or family relationship exists, this does not automatically constitute a breach. The member of staff remains responsible for maintaining appropriate professional boundaries and ensuring that the relationship does not compromise – or reasonably appear to compromise – professional responsibilities, confidentiality, impartiality or safeguarding obligations.

Staff must not use personal relationships with parents/carers to discuss confidential information concerning other gymnasts, families, staff members or internal DGA matters.

6. PARENTS AND CARERS

Parents and carers play an important role in creating a positive environment around gymnastics. They should communicate respectfully, consider the privacy of other children, follow photography/filming restrictions, avoid unnecessarily identifying other children, and raise concerns through appropriate DGA procedures rather than public social-media disputes.

Parents should remember that photographs or videos taken at training or competitions may include children whose families have chosen not to consent to publication.

7. OFFICIAL DGA SOCIAL-MEDIA ACCOUNTS

Only individuals authorised by DGA management may post or communicate on behalf of Dronfield Gymnastics Academy. Official accounts may celebrate achievements, promote programmes/events, communicate appropriate club information and recognise coaches, volunteers and officials.

Administrators must ensure content is appropriate, accurate and consistent with DGA safeguarding responsibilities. Where reasonably practicable, more than one authorised adult should have administrative oversight. Official accounts must not be used for inappropriate private conversations with children.

8. PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEOS OF GYMNASTS

DGA will follow applicable safeguarding and photography requirements when photographing or filming gymnastics activities. For children under 18, appropriate parent/carer consent must be obtained before DGA publishes identifiable photographs or videos, subject to applicable governing-body or event arrangements. Where appropriate, the wishes of the child should also be respected.

Where consent has been withheld or withdrawn, DGA will take reasonable steps to ensure identifiable images of that child are not subsequently published by the club.

- show gymnasts in an appropriate and positive manner;
- be suitable for the purpose for which they are being published;
- not be sexualised, degrading or humiliating;

- not unnecessarily focus on intimate areas of the body; and
- not reveal unnecessary personal information.

9. NAMES AND PERSONAL INFORMATION

DGA will minimise personal information about children published online. Home addresses, personal telephone numbers, personal email addresses, school information, travel arrangements and other information that could unnecessarily identify or locate a child must not be published.

Competition results and achievements may be published where appropriate, taking account of applicable consent, governing-body and event arrangements.

10. TRAINING SESSIONS

Photography and filming during normal DGA training sessions is subject to DGA photography arrangements. Parents, gymnasts and visitors must follow instructions from coaches or staff. Photography or filming must never take place in changing rooms, toilets or other private areas. Suspected inappropriate photography or filming must be reported immediately.

11. COMPETITIONS AND EVENTS

Everyone associated with DGA must follow the photography, filming and social-media rules set by the organiser and British Gymnastics where applicable. Permission at one event should not be assumed to apply at another. Particular care should be taken when posting images containing competitors from other clubs.

12. LIVESTREAMING

Training sessions must not be livestreamed from DGA without prior authorisation from club management. Livestreaming at competitions or events must comply with organiser rules. Particular care is required because livestreamed material can be difficult to withdraw once broadcast or copied.

13. GROUP CHATS

Any DGA-approved group used to communicate with children must be managed appropriately and transparently. Where communication involves gymnasts under 18, DGA will use arrangements that maintain safeguarding boundaries and parental oversight where required.

Staff must not create unofficial private groups with children as a means of avoiding DGA communication procedures. Inappropriate content, bullying or exclusion within a gymnastics-related group chat should be reported.

14. SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

Social media should not be used to investigate safeguarding allegations or conduct campaigns against individuals involved in a complaint. Concerns about a child's welfare or safety should be reported promptly through DGA safeguarding procedures, including to the DGA Welfare Officer.

Where appropriate, concerns may also need referral to British Gymnastics and/or relevant statutory authorities. Nothing in this policy prevents or discourages a genuine safeguarding disclosure, reporting to appropriate authorities or seeking independent advice.

15. CYBERBULLYING AND ONLINE HARASSMENT

DGA has zero tolerance for bullying and harassment, including online behaviour connected with club activities. Reports will be taken seriously and dealt with under the appropriate safeguarding, disciplinary or complaints procedures.

- abusive or threatening messages;
- deliberately humiliating posts;
- spreading malicious rumours;
- sharing embarrassing images or videos;
- creating accounts designed to mock another person;

- repeated unwanted contact;
- discriminatory abuse; and
- deliberately excluding or targeting an individual through online groups.

16. CONCERNS ABOUT COACHING OR CLUB DECISIONS

DGA recognises the right of gymnasts and parents to raise concerns and express opinions. Concerns regarding coaching decisions, squad/team selection, training, competitions, staff conduct or club operations should normally be raised through the appropriate DGA communication or complaints procedure rather than public disputes on social media.

This does not restrict anyone's right to make a safeguarding disclosure, report wrongdoing to an appropriate body or seek independent advice.

17. CONFIDENTIALITY

Staff, coaches and volunteers may have access to confidential information through their role. Confidential information must not be disclosed through social media. Safeguarding information should only be shared with appropriate people on a need-to-know basis.

- safeguarding cases;
- complaints or disciplinary proceedings;
- medical information;
- personal circumstances;
- contact details;
- internal staff matters; and
- information about children or families provided in confidence.

18. STAFF PERSONAL AND PUBLIC SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

DGA recognises that coaches, staff and volunteers are entitled to use social media in their personal lives and may choose to have public or open social-media accounts. DGA does not require staff to make their personal accounts private.

However, where an account is publicly accessible, staff should be aware that content may be viewed by gymnasts, parents/carers, colleagues and other members of the gymnastics community. Staff therefore remain responsible for maintaining appropriate professional boundaries and should consider how publicly available content could affect their professional role, position of trust, safeguarding responsibilities and the legitimate reputation of DGA.

Staff with public or open accounts should:

- avoid posting content that could reasonably undermine their professional position or suitability to work with children and young people;
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries even where a gymnast or parent/carer chooses to view or follow their public account;
- not encourage gymnasts under 18 to follow their personal accounts;
- not follow gymnasts under 18 from their personal accounts;
- not use comments, reactions, direct messages or other social-media features to establish personal one-to-one communication with gymnasts;
- not discuss individual gymnasts, selection decisions, complaints, safeguarding matters or confidential club matters through personal accounts;
- not independently post, upload or publish photographs, videos or other identifiable content featuring DGA members under 18 on their personal social-media accounts; and
- remember that privacy settings do not remove the need to maintain professional standards, as content can be copied, screenshotted or shared.

A gymnast viewing or following a staff member's genuinely public account will not, by itself, be regarded as misconduct by the member of staff. However, the staff member must not use that connection to develop a

personal online relationship with the gymnast and must continue to maintain the same professional boundaries that apply in the gym.

Where a platform allows followers to be removed or restricted, staff should consider doing so if a gymnast's interaction with a personal account begins to compromise professional boundaries.

Staff should also be mindful of interactions with gymnasts' parents/carers. As set out in Section 5, DGA strongly advises against staff establishing personal social-media connections with parents/carers of gymnasts they coach or work with where this could blur professional boundaries.

Nothing in this policy is intended to unnecessarily restrict a staff member's private life or lawful personal expression. DGA's concern is whether online conduct has a genuine and reasonable connection to safeguarding, professional boundaries, confidentiality, the individual's role at DGA or the legitimate interests and reputation of the Academy.

Where a member of staff is unsure whether an online interaction is appropriate, they should seek advice from the DGA Welfare Officer or management before engaging.

19. PERSONAL POSTING AND SHARING OF UNDER-18 MEMBERS BY STAFF

Coaches, staff and volunteers must not independently post, upload or publish photographs, videos or other identifiable content featuring DGA members under the age of 18 on their personal social-media accounts. This applies whether the personal account is public or private.

This includes content taken or created by the member of staff; supplied by a gymnast, parent/carer or another person; originally posted by a gymnast or parent/carer; content in which the member of staff has been tagged; and content obtained through a personal social-media account, group chat or other non-DGA source.

REPOSTING OFFICIAL DGA CONTENT

Staff may share or repost content that has already been published through an official Dronfield Gymnastics Academy social-media account, including official DGA posts, stories, photographs and videos featuring under-18 members. This is permitted because the original publication has been made through an authorised DGA channel and is subject to DGA safeguarding, photography and consent arrangements.

When reposting official DGA content, staff must:

- repost or share the official DGA content rather than independently uploading the original photograph or video;
- not alter the content in a way that could compromise a gymnast's dignity, privacy or safeguarding;
- not add inappropriate, overly personal or potentially embarrassing comments;
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries; and
- remove the repost if requested by DGA management or the Welfare Officer for safeguarding, consent or privacy reasons.

CONTENT POSTED OR SHARED BY PARENTS/CARERS OR GYMNASTS

Staff must not repost or share photographs, videos, stories or other identifiable content featuring an under-18 DGA member simply because it has been posted by the child's parent/carer or by the gymnast themselves.

Being tagged or mentioned in a parent/carer's or gymnast's post does not give the member of staff permission to repost that content to their own account. Where a staff member is tagged in such content, they may leave the tag in place where appropriate, but they must not repost or actively redistribute the content if it identifies an under-18 DGA member.

PHOTOGRAPHY CONSENT

Parent/carer consent for DGA to photograph, film or publish images of a child relates to DGA's authorised use of that content. It does not provide individual members of staff with permission to independently publish photographs or videos of the child through their personal accounts.

In summary: staff may repost content published by an official DGA account. Staff must not independently post their own photographs or videos of under-18 DGA members or repost content involving them from parents, gymnasts or other personal accounts.

This distinction is intended to ensure that DGA maintains appropriate oversight of the publication of content involving children while still allowing staff to support and celebrate official DGA posts.

20. SOCIAL MEDIA CONTACT WITH UNDER-18 GYMNASTS FROM OTHER CLUBS

The professional and safeguarding responsibilities of DGA coaches, staff and volunteers are not limited solely to gymnasts who are members of Dronfield Gymnastics Academy.

Through competitions, squad training, regional or national programmes, training camps, courses, events and other gymnastics activities, DGA staff may come into contact with children and young people who are members of other gymnastics clubs.

Where a DGA coach, member of staff or volunteer knows an individual through gymnastics and that individual is under the age of 18, appropriate professional boundaries must be maintained regardless of which club the gymnast attends.

- Send or accept personal friend or follow requests from under-18 gymnasts from other clubs where the connection has arisen through gymnastics.
- Follow under-18 gymnasts from other clubs through their personal social-media accounts.
- Encourage an under-18 gymnast from another club to follow their personal account.
- Initiate or engage in private one-to-one social-media communication with an under-18 gymnast from another club.
- Use direct messages, disappearing messages or other private communication features to establish a personal relationship with them.
- Use competitions, camps, squad activities or other gymnastics events as an opportunity to establish personal online relationships with children from other clubs.

The fact that a member of staff does not directly coach the gymnast, is not employed by the gymnast's club or only occasionally comes into contact with them does not remove the need to maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

Where a DGA staff member has a public social-media account, an under-18 gymnast from another club may be able to view or follow that account without the staff member's involvement. This alone will not normally constitute a breach of this policy. However, the member of staff must not encourage or reciprocate the connection or use it to develop a personal online relationship with the gymnast.

Where communication with an under-18 gymnast from another club is legitimately required for a competition, squad, course, camp or other gymnastics activity, communication should take place through the appropriate official or authorised channels and include the relevant parent/carer, club, programme or responsible adult where appropriate.

PRE-EXISTING FAMILY OR PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

DGA recognises that there may be circumstances where a member of staff already knows a child independently of gymnastics, for example through a genuine family relationship or established family friendship.

Such circumstances will not automatically constitute a breach of this policy. However, staff remain responsible for maintaining appropriate safeguarding and professional boundaries in relation to their gymnastics role and should seek advice from the DGA Welfare Officer or management where there is any uncertainty or potential conflict.

A child's membership of another gymnastics club must never be regarded as removing or reducing the professional safeguarding boundaries expected of DGA staff when interacting with that child online.

21. FORMER GYMNASTS AND THEIR PARENTS/CARERS

The professional and safeguarding boundaries established while a gymnast is a member of DGA do not automatically end when the gymnast leaves the Academy. Staff, coaches and volunteers must not use a gymnast leaving DGA as an opportunity to establish a personal social-media relationship that would have been inappropriate while the gymnast remained a member.

FORMER GYMNASTS UNDER 18

Where a former DGA gymnast is still under the age of 18, staff must continue to maintain the same appropriate online safeguarding and professional boundaries that applied while the gymnast was a member of DGA.

- send or accept friend or follow requests for the purpose of establishing a personal social-media relationship with a former gymnast who is under 18;
- initiate or encourage private one-to-one social-media communication with them;

- use the fact that the gymnast has left DGA to move communication from professional or authorised channels to personal accounts; or
- establish an online relationship that could reasonably be considered inappropriate given the staff member's previous position of trust.

This applies whether the gymnast has stopped gymnastics completely or has moved to another gymnastics club, coach or programme.

FORMER GYMNASTS WHO REACH 18

A former gymnast reaching the age of 18 does not necessarily mean that all previous professional boundaries immediately cease to be relevant. Staff should consider the nature and duration of the previous coach-gymnast relationship, how recently the gymnast left DGA and whether a significant position of trust previously existed before establishing a personal social-media relationship.

Particular caution should be exercised where a gymnast has only recently left DGA or recently turned 18. Staff should seek advice from DGA management or the Welfare Officer if they are uncertain whether establishing such a connection would be appropriate.

PARENTS/CARERS OF FORMER GYMNASTS

DGA also advises staff not to immediately establish personal social-media friendships or connections with the parents/carers of gymnasts simply because their child has left the Academy. Professional relationships, confidential information and safeguarding responsibilities may continue to be relevant after membership has ended.

Staff should therefore consider whether establishing a personal online relationship with a former gymnast's parent/carer could:

- blur a recently established professional relationship;
- create difficulties concerning confidentiality;
- lead to discussion of current or former DGA gymnasts, families or staff;
- create actual or perceived conflicts of interest; or

- undermine appropriate professional boundaries.

Where a genuine friendship or relationship existed independently of DGA before the gymnast joined the Academy, this will not in itself constitute a breach of this policy, provided appropriate professional and safeguarding boundaries continue to be maintained.

CONTINUING CONFIDENTIALITY

A gymnast or family leaving DGA does not remove a staff member's responsibility to protect confidential information obtained through their role. Staff must not discuss or disclose confidential information about former gymnasts, their families, safeguarding matters, complaints, medical information or other internal DGA matters through social media.

Leaving DGA must never be treated as a way of circumventing safeguarding or professional-boundary requirements that would otherwise have applied.

22. REPORTING INAPPROPRIATE SOCIAL-MEDIA ACTIVITY

Concerns about inappropriate online behaviour connected with DGA should be reported to the DGA Welfare Officer or an appropriate member of club management. Evidence such as screenshots, usernames, dates and messages should be preserved where safe and appropriate.

Safeguarding concerns will be dealt with under DGA safeguarding procedures and, where required, referred to British Gymnastics and/or statutory agencies.

23. BREACHES OF THIS POLICY

A breach may result in proportionate action by DGA. Safeguarding concerns will always take priority over disciplinary considerations, and any action involving a child will take account of age, understanding, welfare and circumstances.

- advice or a formal reminder of expected standards;
- removal of inappropriate content where reasonably possible;

- restrictions relating to DGA communication channels;
- action under DGA disciplinary procedures;
- suspension from club activities while a serious matter is considered; and/or
- referral to British Gymnastics or appropriate statutory authorities.

24. RESPONSIBILITIES

DGA Management is responsible for appropriate arrangements for official social-media accounts and reviewing this policy. The DGA Welfare Officer provides safeguarding advice and receives concerns about online safety and inappropriate communication. Coaches, staff and volunteers must maintain professional boundaries. Parents/carers are asked to protect children's privacy and promote respectful online behaviour. Gymnasts are expected to use social media responsibly and tell a trusted adult about inappropriate online behaviour.

25. RELATIONSHIP WITH BRITISH GYMNASTICS POLICIES

This policy should be read alongside DGA safeguarding/child protection, photography and filming, codes of conduct, complaints, data protection/privacy and disciplinary procedures. DGA will have regard to current British Gymnastics safeguarding, social networking, photography and conduct policies and guidance.

Where a mandatory British Gymnastics requirement conflicts with this policy, the applicable British Gymnastics requirement will take precedence and this policy will be reviewed accordingly.

26. POLICY REVIEW

DGA will review this policy at least annually and whenever there is a significant change to British Gymnastics policy/guidance, relevant legislation, a safeguarding incident indicating improvement is required, or a significant change in the way DGA uses social media.

Approved by – Clare Hague

Position – Head Coach

Date approved – 10/09/2026

Next review date – As necessary

APPROVAL
