



Dronfield Gymnastics Academy

Whistleblowing Policy

DGA

DRONFIELD GYMNASTICS ACADEMY

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

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

Dronfield Gymnastics Academy • Safeguarding, integrity and speaking up

Version: 1.0

Effective: October 2026

Policy owner: DGA Management

Review: October 2027 (or sooner if guidance changes)

1. PURPOSE AND COMMITMENT

Dronfield Gymnastics Academy (DGA) is committed to a safe, open and accountable environment in which gymnasts, parents/carers, coaches, employees, volunteers and other members of the club community can raise genuine concerns without fear of retaliation.

DGA will take concerns seriously, respond proportionately, and prioritise the safety and welfare of children and adults at risk. This policy should be read alongside DGA safeguarding, complaints, disciplinary and other relevant policies, and applicable British Gymnastics rules and regulations.

2. WHO THIS POLICY COVERS

This policy applies to all DGA employees, coaches, contractors, volunteers, officials and management. Gymnasts, parents/carers and visitors are also encouraged to report concerns through the routes below. Statutory whistleblowing protection applies only to individuals and disclosures meeting the relevant legal tests; this club policy offers a wider commitment to listening and non-retaliation.

3. WHAT CONCERNS SHOULD BE RAISED

Examples include suspected abuse, neglect, grooming or safeguarding failures; unsafe coaching practices or avoidable health and safety risks; deliberate breaches of legal duties or safeguarding requirements; criminal

conduct, fraud or financial irregularities; serious misconduct or abuse of authority; discrimination or harassment; and attempts to conceal wrongdoing.

A personal employment grievance, such as an individual disagreement about hours or pay, will normally be handled under the grievance procedure unless it also raises a public-interest wrongdoing concern. DGA will help direct reports to the appropriate process rather than reject them because of the label used.

4. HOW TO REPORT A CONCERN

If a child or another person is in immediate danger, call 999 and/or contact the relevant statutory safeguarding service. Do not delay emergency action while following internal procedures.

DGA encourages concerns to be raised internally in the first instance. Reports may be made verbally or in writing to the Club Welfare Officer, Head Coach or DGA Management. If a concern involves one of these people, it should be raised with another uninvolved senior person or Welfare Officer. DGA will not require anyone to report to a person implicated in the concern. Where internal reporting is unsafe, inappropriate, ineffective or has not resulted in suitable action, a person may raise the concern directly with the relevant external body. This internal-first approach does not restrict safeguarding referrals, statutory reporting duties or legal rights to make protected disclosures.

Where possible, explain what happened, when and where, who was involved, any witnesses, whether anyone is currently at risk, and any relevant documents. Report what you know; do not investigate, confront those involved, or circulate allegations yourself. A concern need not be proved before it is raised.

5. ESCALATION AND EXTERNAL REFERRALS

DGA will assess concerns raised internally and, where necessary or required by the applicable rules, refer them promptly to British Gymnastics Welfare & Safe Sport, the police, local authority safeguarding services or another appropriate authority. DGA will not delay a required safeguarding referral while conducting its own investigation. The Club Welfare Officer or an uninvolved senior manager will ordinarily coordinate external referrals and record the action taken. British Gymnastics Welfare & Safe Sport can be contacted at welfareandsafesport@british-gymnastics.org; its current reporting procedures and regulations must be followed.

If DGA fails to act appropriately, there is a conflict of interest, the concern cannot safely be raised internally, or the law or safeguarding requirements call for a direct referral, individuals may contact British Gymnastics or an appropriate statutory authority themselves. No one is required to obtain DGA permission before making a lawful

external report. Workers may also seek independent advice or make a qualifying protected disclosure to an appropriate prescribed person under UK law.

6. DGA RESPONSE AND INVESTIGATION

DGA will acknowledge a report where contact details are provided, ordinarily within five working days, assess immediate safety and safeguarding risks promptly, and determine the appropriate internal action and any necessary or mandatory referral to British Gymnastics, the police, local authority safeguarding services or another relevant authority.

An impartial person, with no conflict of interest, will be appointed to assess or investigate where appropriate. Information and evidence will be handled fairly; anyone subject to allegations will have an appropriate opportunity to respond, subject to safeguarding and external-agency requirements. DGA will keep the reporting person updated where possible, but may not be able to share confidential details, personnel outcomes or ongoing investigations.

DGA aims to provide an initial progress update within 20 working days, where practicable. Complex matters may take longer; statutory or British Gymnastics procedures take priority over these indicative timeframes. Actions may include protective measures, coaching or procedural changes, disciplinary action or referral to outside agencies.

7. CONFIDENTIALITY, ANONYMOUS REPORTS AND RECORDS

Reports will be handled sensitively and information shared only with people who need it to assess, protect or investigate, or where law or safeguarding duties require disclosure. Absolute confidentiality cannot be promised. Anonymous reports will be considered, although anonymity may limit follow-up or investigation.

Records will be factual, dated, stored securely with restricted access, and retained in accordance with DGA data protection and safeguarding requirements. Do not use personal devices or public social media to distribute confidential case information.

8. PROTECTION FROM RETALIATION AND MALICIOUS ALLEGATIONS

DGA prohibits victimisation, intimidation, threats, dismissal, adverse treatment or other retaliation because a person raises a genuine concern or assists an investigation. Any suspected retaliation should be reported promptly and may itself lead to disciplinary action.

Workers who make qualifying protected disclosures have statutory rights under the Employment Rights Act 1996 (as amended), including protection from detriment and, for employees, dismissal for making a protected disclosure. Protection depends on the legal conditions, including reasonable belief, public interest and an appropriate disclosure route. A concern raised in good faith that proves mistaken will not itself lead to disciplinary action. Deliberately fabricated allegations may be dealt with under relevant procedures.

9. RESPONSIBILITIES AND REVIEW

All adults involved with DGA must act promptly on safeguarding concerns, cooperate with proportionate enquiries and maintain appropriate confidentiality. Managers and Welfare Officers must manage conflicts of interest, keep appropriate records, arrange timely referrals where required and ensure that no one is penalised for speaking up. DGA will communicate this policy to staff and volunteers, make it accessible to members and review it at least annually and following significant changes in law, British Gymnastics requirements or learning from incidents.

10. REFERENCE GUIDANCE

British Gymnastics: Safeguarding; Safe & Fair Sport policies and procedures; Safeguarding and Disciplinary Regulations (effective 5 October 2026).

UK Government: Whistleblowing guidance for workers and employers; Employment Rights Act 1996 and Public Interest Disclosure protections.

This is a DGA club policy informed by published guidance, not an official British Gymnastics policy document.