



POLICY MANUAL

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1. PERIOD

- 1.1 This Policy Manual is dated July 2019 and replaces all previous guidelines/manuals, and will be in force until amended by the Management Committee of the Pinetown Gymnastics Club.
- 1.2 Should a staff member have signed a contract with the Club, this manual will be in addition to any other specific duties to which he/she has been allocated.

2. PURPOSE

- 2.1 A Policy Manual covers of all facets of the Club, providing information about and guidance to staff/coaches/gymnasts about operational procedures. For example:
- 2.1.1 **Standardization:** Written policies facilitate the following of specific steps to complete a task. This becomes the accepted and standard way of doing things, thereby reducing error.
 - 2.1.2 **Orientating New Staff/Coaches:** A manual is useful in providing new employees with the information necessary to perform their duties. Furthermore, employees can refer back to the manual for clarification of specific issues.
 - 2.1.3 **Disseminating the Club Philosophy:** Information is given about the goals and objectives of the Club.
 - 2.2.4 **Management Control:** A basis for how personnel should operate within the Club structure and give management the necessary control over personnel, to insure high standards are maintained.

3. MISSION STATEMENT/OBJECTIVES/VALUES OF PINETOWN GYMNASTICS CLUB

- 3.1 The mission of Pinetown Gymnastics Club is to:
- 3.1.1 Advance, promote and improve gymnastics in the Club
 - 3.1.2 Affiliate and co-operate with the Kwa-Zulu Natal Gymnastics Union (KZNGU)
 - 3.1.3 Select and train teams to represent the Club in displays and competitions
 - 3.1.4 Put in place programmes which will ensure the club membership is representative of the demographics of the country
 - 3.5 Align programmes with the Long Term Participant Development Programme and Safeguarding policy of the South African Gymnastics Federation (SAGF)
- 3.2. Major Programmes/Class Categories are as follows:
- 3.2.1 **Active Start/Developmental:** -Mom and Me
-Tumble Tots, Tumble Weeds and Jumping Jacks
 - 3.2.2 **FUNDamentals/Developmental** -Gym Cubs, Gym Stars
 - 3.2.3 **Learning to Train/Pre-team** -Levels 1 - 3
 - 3.2.4 **Training to Compete/Team Classes** - Levels 4 – 6
 - 3.2.5 **Training to Win/Elite Team** -Level 7 & up, High Performance

3.3 Values

in our efforts to be a world class organization for gymnasts, parents, coaches, technical officials and support staff :

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3.3.1 Safety First

A safe physical environment – the right equipment, first aid and safe buildings

A safe social environment – policies and practices that are inclusive, tolerant and welcoming for all gymnasts (including people with disabilities, from culturally diverse backgrounds , etc.)

3.3.2 Respect

We respect the rights, dignity and worth of all participants regardless of gender, ability, cultural background or religion

3.3.3 Good Conduct

We show respect to and acknowledge team mates, the opposition and officials (e.g. shake hands and wish other athletes “good luck”, thank your coach and the officials)

3.3.4 “Fair Play”

Fair competition & training without use of banned substances or risky techniques

Friendship – with team mates & competitors

Tolerance & respect – recognizing that everyone has different strengths and weaknesses

3.3.5 Commitment

Working equally hard for ourselves and our club

3.3.6 Team Work

We involve all in decisions, leadership, planning, and evaluations related to the club

4. STAFF /COACH ORGANISATION

4.1 The organisation of the Club is an addendum to this manual. In brief, it is as follows:

4.1.1 **Management Committee:** Elected at AGM by members (parent body)

4.1.2 **Manager:** Employed by the Management Committee and responsible for the day-to-day running of the Club, as well as any other duties the Committee may deem necessary

4.1.3 **Head Coaches:** Coaches who are responsible for the overall gymnastic programmes of all the categories/classes

4.1.5 **Section Leaders:** Coaches who are responsible for the programmes relating to a specific category of the overall programmes, i.e. Developmental, Levels, etc.

4.1.6 **Coaches:** Staff members who are assigned to specific classes/groups of gymnasts

5. DRESS/PERSONAL IMAGE

5.1 We would like all staff members to project a “professional” image – personnel appearance is a direct reflection of the employee and the Club. Although we do not always have the finance to provide a full set of “kit”, we ask that the following is adhered to:

5.1.1 *Always* wear a staff shirt

5.1.2 *All* other items worn must be of a sports nature, e.g.

5.1.2.1 White or black shorts or other suitable colour/design

5.1.2.2 White or black tracksuit longs or other suitable colour/design

5.1.2.3 Club tracksuit (best of all!)

5.1.2.4 Sports or gym shoes

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5.2 Some “Do nots”

5.2.1 Do not wear jeans for coaching

5.2.2 Do not wear normal “street clothes” for coaching

5.2.3 Do not wear any clothing with “offensive” slogans (sexual, political or religious)

6. PUNCTUALITY

6.1 We expect all staff members to be punctual for any Club activity:

6.1.1 Arrive early to prepare for your class, e.g. check equipment is set up (10 minutes is good)

6.1.2 Start your class at the allotted time

6.1.3 End your class at the allotted time

7. COACHES’ RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 The following procedures must be adhered to:

7.1.1 Be in control of your class AT ALL TIMES! This includes toilet/water breaks and movement between apparatuses. If, for some reason, you have to leave the class (e.g. to attend to an injury), *specific* instructions must be given as to what the class must do in your absence. If at all possible, another coach must be called to supervise any activity.

7.1.2 Prepare your lesson beforehand (in conjunction with your Section Leader) and work to it.

7.1.3 Work to the master programme of the Gym – respect other classes who are dependent on your changes.

7.1.4 Be considerate of other groups – put equipment back in its correct place, remove special set-ups, etc.

7.1.5 Be close to your class/gymnast so that you can spot and communicate effectively. Instruct with enthusiasm – every class should think that they are your “favourite” group.

7.1.6 Maintain an “active” teaching posture. Sitting (or lying!!) down renders you unable to give emergency assistance. Also, the children may follow your lead!

7.1.7 Ensure that all notices are handed out on time and the necessary replies are follow-up.

7.1.8 Ensure that reports are completed and checked by your Section Leader and then handed out when due.

7.1.9 Ensure that attendance registers are completed for every class and handed in to your Section Leader at month-end.

7.1.10 Discipline: No corporal punishment is allowed. Any punishment that is deemed necessary, should be styled to suit the gymnast, e.g. 20 sit-ups for a novice, etc. Sitting out of the class for severe behavioural problems may be necessary, but bear in mind that if a gymnast is sitting out of the class he/she cannot learn anything.

7.1.11 Should a discipline/behavioural problem be recurring, consult your Section Leader/Manager.

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8. SECTION LEADERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

8.1 Apart from normal coaching duties (if any), the Section Leaders will see to the smooth running of all facets of their allotted section, in particular:

- 8.1.1 Set or assist with compiling the basic year programme (refer year calendar)
- 8.1.2 Set or assist with compiling the basic term programme
- 8.1.3 Control and advise with the compilation of lesson plans
- 8.1.4 Monitor attendance registers
- 8.1.5 Monitor progress reports
- 8.1.6 Monitor competition entries/ badge & award testing
- 8.1.7 Follow-up absenteeism
- 8.1.8 Follow-up resignations
- 8.1.9 Monitor coaches' progress
- 8.1.10 Handle parent liaison
- 8.1.11 Liaise with Head Coach and Manager

9. HEAD COACH'S RESPONSIBILITIES

9.1 Apart from normal coaching duties (if any), the Head Coach/s will be responsible for the development and smooth running of the boys' and girls' programmes. In particular:

- 9.1.1 Assist and monitor Section Leaders
- 9.1.2 Plan basic year programme
- 9.1.3 Keep abreast of latest developments and implement where possible
- 9.1.4 Handle parent liaison
- 9.1.5 Motivate for new equipment/training aids
- 9.1.6 Liaise with Manager and Management Committee

10. FIRST DAY PROCEDURE

10.1 A new gymnast's first day will usually be a whole new experience for the child - we need to be aware of this and act accordingly.

- 10.1.1 **Office Staff:** ENSURE that the parent has filled out and signed the application form for membership and indemnity *before* the child enters the gym.
- 10.1.2 **Office Staff/Section Leader:** Take the child to his/her coach, introduce them and make the child feel welcome.
- 10.1.3 **Class Coach:** Remember that the child is new and may not know what to expect of a gym class (this also applies when a gymnast moves to a different class). Be sure to mention all the safety aspects of the gym, i.e.
 - 10.1.3.1 Pit
 - 10.1.3.2 Trampoline/Mini-tramp
 - 10.1.3.3 Movement around the gym
 - 10.1.3.4 Landing technique
 - 10.1.3.5 Make sure the child knows where the toilets are.
 - 10.1.3.6 At the end of the class ask the child how he/she enjoyed it and say that you will see them the next week.
 - 10.1.3.7 Report to the Section Leader on the progress of the child so that any parental enquiries can be dealt with, as well as to confirm the suitability of the child to your class.

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11. STAFF/COACH TRAINING

11.1 We encourage all staff members to constantly improve their level of expertise and if possible, would like each staff member to attend at least one training course a year.

11.2 This will also ensure that all coaches/judges' licences remain valid.

12. ABSENTEEISM

12.1 We need to encourage good attendance, so if a (as a coach) a member of your class is absent for two or more classes for unknown reasons, you need to proceed as follows:

12.1.1 Enquire from your Section Leader whether or not he/she has any information. If not:

12.1.2 Arrange for you or the Section Leader to phone the parents to find out what the problem is.

12.2 If (as a coach) you cannot make your class, PLEASE go through the following steps:

12.2.1. Inform your Section Leader as soon as possible

12.2.2 Find a replacement coach you think could take the class

12.2.3 Discuss the replacement with the Section Leader (or your inability to find one!)

12.2.4 Ensure that your replacement has a lesson plan to work from and has the attendance register to hand (this is VITAL!)

12.2.5 Follow-up attendance, progress, etc. on your return

13. COMPETITION ENTRIES/BADGE/MEDAL AWARDS TESTING

13.1 Competition entries usually have time and financial restraints and therefore need to be dealt with in an efficient manner:

13.1.1 Hand out the preliminary notice as soon as it's available

13.1.2 Control the feedback from the gymnast/parent (remind if necessary!)

13.1.3 Hand your class's entries to the office

13.1.4 Monitor uniform requirements, follow-up notices, extra training

13.1.5 Ensure the gymnast knows the "When" and "Where"

13.2 Badge/Medal/Award testing is more "own pace". Follow the procedure below:

3.2.1 Liaise with the office once the test is complete

3.2.2 Obtain badges/medals/awards

3.2.3 Arrange presentation (taking note of absentees)

3.2.4 Hand completed test sheets/list to the office for invoicing (events)

14. SAFETY

14.1 Safety measures are as important to gymnastics as are the skills. When a new gymnastic skill is introduced/performed and it must be accompanied by appropriate safety measures. Prevention of accidents/Injuries has three aspects, namely: -

14.1.1 Is the environment prepared for the performance of the skill/exercise?

14.1.2 Is the gymnast prepared to be performing the skill/exercise?

14.1.3 Is the coach prepared to teach the skill?

These points are all dealt with during the courses which enable you to become a licensed coach, but are repeated here to remind you to always behave in a REASONABLE manner.

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15. USE OF THE PIT

15.1 We are fortunate to have a facility which includes a safety pit. However, this piece of equipment needs some special comment as to its uses and safety precautions.

15.1.1 **Purpose of the Pit:** The in-ground training pit, properly constructed and prudently used, is an asset to training as it facilitates the safe learning of new skills by reducing the risk of injury. The gymnast is able to concentrate on the mechanical aspects of the skill and to gain greater confidence in skill execution. The loose foam enables the gymnast to train for longer periods of time, because the physical stresses of repeated landings are significantly reduced.

15.1.2 **Dangers of the Pit:** Gymnasts must appreciate that training pits, regardless of size, type and quality are NOT a guarantee against serious injury! There are risks when using a pit even under the best of conditions. Although injuries can occur in an endless variety of circumstances, the more common unsafe situations include:

15.1.2.1 Landing head first into the pit (in an inverted position)

15.1.2.2 Landing on or near another person in the pit

15.1.2.3 Landing in foam that has not been adequately “fluffed” (foam which is too compressed and hard for landing)

15.1.2.4 Landing in a pit that is too small or not designed for that apparatus/skill

These types of unsafe situations can be avoided, for the most part, by ensuring direct supervision by a competent coach at all times during which the pit is being used.

15.1.3 Pit Safety Guidelines for Gymnasts:

15.1.3.1 Use the pit only under the direct supervision of a coach.

15.1.3.2 Do not land in a pit that is too small or not designed for that apparatus/skill.

15.1.3.3 Check to see if anyone else is in the pit before you enter or start your turn.

15.1.3.4 Always check to make sure that the foam has been adequately fluffed before use.

15.1.3.5 Enter the pit in an open-tucked position, landing on the middle back. NEVER land head first!

15.1.3.6 DO NOT land in an arched position!

15.1.3.7 Always use appropriate progressions and consult your coach before attempting a new skill.

15.1.3.8 No horseplay is allowed!

15.1.3.9 For tumbling and vaulting, consult your coach as to whether a spotter is required at the edge of the pit.

15.1.3.11 For back tumbling, it is important to have your steps properly measured.

15.1.3.12 Do not wear any jewelry, attachments on clothing, or items in your hair. These may become loose in the pit and cause an eye injury or puncture wounds.

15.1.4 Pit Safety Guidelines for Coaches:

15.1.4.1 Make sure that the pit is adequately fluffed before use. You should always be aware of the condition of the pit.

15.1.4.2. Always supervise the pit area.

15.1.4.3 Do not allow horseplay in or around the pit.

15.1.4.4 Make sure the gymnasts are physically and mentally prepared for new skills.

15.1.4.5 Do not allow gymnasts to work on skills above their ability level.

15.1.4.6 Ensure proper skill progression and the mastery thereof.

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15.1.4.7 Always make sure that there is no one in the pit before the next gymnast commences his/her turn.

15.1.4.8 Emphasize that the gymnasts should land in the open-tucked position on the middle back.

16. INJURIES

16.1 This is the part that we hope we don't ever have to refer to! However, in the event of an injury, every staff member/coach must be aware of the procedure to be followed:

16.1.1 Treat all injuries as serious until you have determined otherwise.

16.1.2 In the case of neck/back injury or unconsciousness, do not attempt to move the gymnast (unless in a life threatening situation), but call an ambulance/paramedic immediately.

16.1.3 Determine the seriousness injury visually.

16.1.4 If you are unsure of what First Aid procedure to follow, call a Section Leader or the Manager.

16.1.5 In the case of a serious injury, contact the parents of the gymnast immediately.

16.1.6 Complete an injury report form (available from the office) and hand it to your Section Leader.

16.2 You should also be aware of the following: -

16.2.1 First Aid kit is located in the office on the shelf directly in front of entrance door (additional supplies are available). The backboard is on the wall to the left of the door.

16.2.2 Emergency numbers are in the file next to the telephone.

16.2.3 Contact numbers may be found in the current membership files or from the computer.

17. EVACUATION OF THE GYM

17.1 Should we have a major "problem" in the gym i.e. fire, bomb scare, etc., it will be necessary to evacuate the gym while the relevant authorities deal with the situation.

17.2 The most senior coach on duty or the Manager will act as the Evacuation Officer.

17.3 Duties of the Evacuation Officer:

17.3.1 Sound the alarm - 3 long blasts on a whistle - can be found in the office on top of the alarm control box.

17.3.2 Ensure that the coaches have assembled all their gymnasts and have confirmed this against the current class register (which must be taken along) and are moving in an orderly manner out of the nearest Fire Escape.

17.3.3 Phone for help (Police, Protection Services, Fire Department).

17.3.4 If possible, direct some staff members to deal with the problem (e.g. man fire hoses until help arrives)

17.3.6 *Before* leaving the gym, check that EVERYONE has left - check toilets, office, upstairs area, gym area, not forgetting the pit!

17.3.7 Go to the assembly point (down the bank/road in the parking lot behind the Cricket Clubhouse) and confirm that all gymnasts are present and accounted for.

17.4 Duties of the Coach:

17.4.1 At the sound of the alarm, assemble your gymnasts together and take a head count – confirm against current class register.

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17.4.2 Lead your gymnasts in a single file behind you, i.e. in an orderly manner (small ones holding hands in a chain), out of the nearest fire escape to the assembly point.

17.4.3 Once at the assembly point, sit your class down and then check your head count and report to Evacuation Officer.

18. RESIGNATIONS

18.1 Should a member of your class resign, the following steps are to be taken:

18.1.1 Ensure that the parent has informed the office in writing.

18.1.2 The Section Leader must follow up the reasons for the resignation.

18.2 If a staff member wishes to resign, as much notice as possible must please be given (unless governed by a contract) so that a suitable replacement can be found.

19. SAFEGURDING

19.1 Regardless of age, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, ability or disability, all children at Pinetown Gymnastics Club have the right to be protected and able to enjoy gymnastics in a safe environment.

Pinetown Gymnastics acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults participating in gymnastics and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities and complies with best practice and the requirements of the South African Gymnastics Federation (SAGF).

Pinetown Gymnastics subscribes to the SAGF Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and endorse and adopt the Policy Statement contained in that document. (available on www.sagf.co.za)

Pinetown Gymnastics will :-

- promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults;
- ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and adults;
- ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of harassment, abuse or poor practice and that support is provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern;
- ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored;
- prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable persons;
- ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation.

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Pinetown Gymnastics acknowledges that some children and adults can be particularly vulnerable to harassment, abuse or poor practice and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

This policy applies to everyone attending Pinetown Gymnastics whether in a paid or voluntary capacity. This includes club members, their parents/guardians or carers, clubs coaches, officials, helpers, medical personnel and service providers.

The SAGF Safeguarding policy and procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone involved in Pinetown Gymnastics . Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the organisation.

Pinetown Gymnastics shall appoint a competent person to be the club's safeguarding officer.

The club safeguarding officer shall be responsible for:

- promoting the safety and welfare of children and adults at the club;
- promoting the importance of safeguarding in the club;
- ensuring that children are listened to and are involved in decision making;
- ensuring that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding;
- responding to safeguarding and poor practice concerns;
- liaising with SAGF and local Statutory Authorities;
- working with other organisations as required;
- acting as the designated person for Safe Recruitment practice.

The policy will be reviewed a year after development and then every three years, or in the following circumstances:

- changes in legislation and/or any government guidance;
- as required by SAGF;
- as a result of any other significant change or event.

19.2 Good Practice

19.2.1 Ensure that gymnastics is fun, enjoyable and that fair play is promoted.

19.2.2 Treat all young people equally with respect and dignity.

19.2.3 The welfare of the child comes before winning.

19.2.4 Do not use bad language, smoke or drink while in charge of young people.

19.2.5 Encourage participation at all times.

19.2.6 Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback.

19.2.7 Ensure proper records are kept – attendance and injury

19.2.8 All physical contact should be appropriate and with the gymnast's permission.

19.3 Poor Practice

19.3.1 Spending time alone with young people away from others.

19.3.2 Taking young people to your home where if they will be alone with you.

19.3.3 Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games.

19.3.4 Sharing a room with a young person (e.g. on tour).

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- 19.3.5 Making sexually suggestive remarks to a young person.
- 19.3.6 Allowing inappropriate language to be used unchallenged.
- 19.3.7 Doing things of a personal nature for a young person that they should do for themselves.
- 19.3.8 Transporting young people in your car without parental permission.

19.4 Recruitment

19.4.1 Pinetown Gymnastics Club requires all staff to declare their suitability for working with young people via a Self-declaration Form, as well as Clearance from the Department of Justice in terms of the Sexual Offences Act.

20. MAIL/CORRESPONDENCE

20.1 Staff mail will be posted into your pigeonhole located above the office window in the gym. Please check this regularly.

21. KEY-HOLDERS

21.1 A list of key-holders (i.e. those people who are responsible for opening and closing the Gym) is in the Information File on the Information Table in the office.

21.2 The gym keys should always be under the direct control of each key-holder.

21.3 Four key-holders will have “codes” with our security company so that they are able to deal with after-hours callouts.

21.4 Please lock the gym as if it were your own - we need to keep it safe and secure.

21.5 The lock-up procedure is in the Information File next on the Information Table.

22. PHONE POLICY

22.1 Outgoing Calls:

22.1.1 The office phone is for necessary gym-related calls only by coaches/staff.

22.1.2 If you need to make a call check with the Manager/Senior Coach first.

22.1.3 Please keep all calls brief and to the point - we budget for our phone account.

22.2 Incoming Calls:

22.2.1 We need to create a good impression at all times and often a phone call is the first or most frequent form of contact with the club so we need to make sure that the phone is answered properly.

22.2.2 DISCOURAGE gymnasts from answering the phone - if at all possible a coach/staff member should answer the phone in the following way: “Pinetown Gymnastics Club good morning/afternoon/evening ----- speaking. May I help you?”

22.2.3 Should a message need to be taken, message pads next to each phone must be used: All the details must be taken down and the message posted into the appropriate pigeonhole straightaway.

22.3 **Other Calls:** Cell phone usage should be limited to free time before, after or between classes – staff and gymnasts alike.

23. STAFF RETREAT

23.1 We hope that in time the meeting room facilities can be improved to such an extent that it can double as a staff lounge. Please make use of the facilities that are provided - we want you to be as comfortable as possible.

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24. GYMNAST DISCIPLINE POLICY

24.1 Pinetown Gymnastic Club gymnasts are role models and ambassadors for the club. Gymnastics requires significant discipline for our gymnasts to achieve success and we expect high standards of behavior at all times.

24.2 In the event a gymnast does not follow the standard of behavior set, our coaches follow this model:

24.2.1. Tell the gymnast of the behavior expected

24.2.2. Tell the gymnast when they have not followed the behavior expected and ask them to rectify the behavior.

24.2.3. Remove the child from training for them to consider their behavior.

24.2.4. Contact the parents of the gymnast to inform them that the child has been removed from training.

24.3 Coaches must inform parents whenever a child has been removed from training for disciplinary or injury reasons.

25. GYMNASTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

25.1 A Gymnast must:

25.1.1 Arrive at least 10 minutes before the scheduled training time to assist the coach in preparation for training.

25.1.2 Train in neat apparel at all times

25.1.3 Always obey and respect the instructions of their coach

25.1.4 Always treat other people in the gym with respect and courtesy

25.1.5 When competing and training, gymnasts must remember that they are role models for younger gymnasts, as well as representatives of Pinetown Gymnastics Club. Gymnasts must always adhere to the rules of competition.

25.1.6 Always attempt to train with 100% effort and seek to become the best gymnast they can be.

25.1.7 When possible make their coach aware of the fact they may be late or absent from training prior to the event

25.1.8 See their coach before they start training to explain the lateness of arrival if they arrive late for training.

26. PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

26.1 The parents of the gymnast must:

26.1.1 Support their child in meeting the above requirements.

26.1.2 Ensure attendance at training.

26.1.3 Arrange suitable transport to gymnastic events and training (that is, deliver gymnasts into the facility and pick them up from inside the facility).

26.1.4 Provide medical and paramedical support for your child through the recommended sports medicine facility.

26.1.5 Be willing to support and assist the activities of Pinetown Gymnastics Club.

27. SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR GYMNASTICS

27.1. **Assume Risk:** Participation in gymnastics activities involves motion, rotation and height in a unique environment and as such carries with it a reasonable assumption of risk.

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27.2. **Be Warned:** Traumatic injury, paralysis or even death can result from the improper conduct of the activity.

27.3. **Be Supervised:** Every gymnastic session should always be supervised by a competent professional. Never participate in gymnastics without proper supervision.

27.4. **Communicate Clearly:** The gymnast must establish a clear, accurate communicative link with his/her coach. Both must know exactly what, when, where, how and why a skill is to be performed and/or spotted.

27.5. **Be Prepared to Participate:** Dress appropriately, follow accepted warm-up practices, and be mentally prepared to engage in the activity.

27.6. **Check Equipment Carefully:** Before directly engaging in any gymnastics activity, make sure the equipment is adjusted and secured properly and that adequate matting appropriate to the activity is in the correct position.

27.7. **Do Not Tolerate Carelessness:** Gymnastics is an activity requiring active concentration. Horseplay or any other form of carelessness cannot be tolerated at any time for any reason.

27.8. **Follow Proper Skill Progressions:** A safe learning environment includes a correct understanding of the skill being performed and following proper skill progressions. If in doubt, the gymnast must consult the coach.

27.9. **Master Basic Skills:** Safe learning practices demand mastering basic skills before progressing to new and/or more difficult levels.

27.10. **Attempt New or Difficult Skills:** The readiness and ability level of the gymnast, the nature of the task, and the competency of the spotter all must be taken into consideration when attempting a new or difficult skill.

27.11. **Land Properly:** Safe dismounts as well as unintentional falls require proper landing techniques. Avoid landing on the head or neck at all costs as serious injuries may result.

27.12. **Always Follow Through:** Once the gymnast commits to and goes for a skill, the skill must be followed through to completion. Be keenly aware that the prime consideration is the protection of the gymnast's head and spinal column.

28. HIV & AIDS

28.1 HIV/Aids in Gymnastics:

South Africa has a very high HIV/Aids infection rate, mainly due to unprotected sexual contact with a person who already has the virus. Although in gymnastics the risk of contracting HIV/Aids is relatively low, there is a potential risk for coaches and gymnasts when dealing with injuries.

Development initiatives may bring coaches into contact with people who have contracted the HIV/Aids virus due to the high incidence of the epidemic in disadvantaged communities. Because there is no cure for the HIV/Aids virus, coaches need to act in a responsible manner in reducing the risk of contracting or spreading it.

28.2 The 3 stages of HIV/Aids:

28.2.1 **First Stage:** There is a gradual decrease of the cells in one's body which help fight off everyday infections. This stage is undetected with normal observation.

28.2.2 **Second Stage:** The following symptoms might appear on a regular basis:

28.2.2.1 Abnormal or unexplained weight loss

28.2.2.2 Thrush

28.2.2.3 Swollen lymph nodes

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- 28.2.2.4 Herpes Zoster
- 28.2.2.5 Night sweats
- 28.2.2.6 Chronic fever
- 28.2.2.7 Unexplained chronic diarrhoea
- 28.2.2.8 Unexplained chronic upper respiratory infections
- 28.2.2.9 Loss of muscle
- 28.2.2.10 Loss of strength

28.2.3 **Third Stage:** Various diseases that attack the body, e.g. pneumonia, brain infections, etc. and patients are bed-ridden or hospitalized until death results.

28.3 Transmission of HIV through sport:

- 28.3.1 A person must have HIV in his body fluids, i.e. blood.
- 28.3.2 The bleeding wounds of the infected person come into contact with another gymnast/coach, who must also have an open/bleeding wound.
- 28.3.3 HIV must then be transferred between bleeding wounds for transmission to occur.
- 28.3.4 If the First Aider use gloves to treat an HIV infected person and there is fresh blood on the gloves and he/she then uses the *same* gloves to treat another gymnast who is bleeding, the virus can be transmitted

28.4 Procedure to be followed in the Gym to prevent the transmission of the HIV virus:

- 28.4.1 If one notices any bleeding or if a gymnast has open wounds: **FIRST** put on latex gloves, then stop the bleeding and/or put on the appropriate dressings. If necessary withdraw the gymnast from practice or competition.
- 28.4.2 Healing and open wounds should be covered with proper dressings.
- 28.4.3 Take care of any dermatitis, or allergic reactions, before practice or competition.
- 28.4.4 *Always* wear gloves when working with open wounds!
- 28.4.5 *Never* use the same set of gloves on more than one person!

28.5 Conclusion:

- 28.5.1 Coaches must be informed about the possible risk of HIV transmission in the sport and be prepared to take the necessary precautions in the event of injury.
- 28.5.2 The best method for coaches to prevent HIV transmission is through education and promoting awareness, especially when working with young adults.
- 28.5.3 Coaches are in a position to detect changes in their athletes sooner than outsiders.

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28.5.4 A person with the HIV/Aids virus must NOT be discriminated against! Should a gymnast inform a coach that he/she has the HIV/Aids virus, treat them in a calm and respectful manner. Continuing to exercise appropriately could in fact help the gymnast to manage his/her health.

28.5.5 If necessary, the coach should arrange for professional counseling for the gymnast, as well as for themselves.

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