

Bake Safety into the DNA of Your Gym

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Create a culture of safety within your gym.

There are absolutely gyms that have more lawsuits filed against them than others. There are also many gyms that have never had a suit filed against them. What is the difference?

The easiest lawsuit to avoid or defend against is for the accident, injury or assault that never happens.

Laying the Foundation

Gym Layout and Design

Employment Application

Mission Statement

Staff Handbook

Team Handbook

Gym Policies

Safety is a choice.

Gym Design and Keeping Kids Safe

SS: All Member Clubs must institute measures that allow parents of every student access to all practices either by open viewing policies or by closed-circuit broadcast that includes audio.

Safety and Marketing

What better marketing can there be than turning your gym parents into Raving Fans that spread the word about all the wonderful things that are happening in your gym?

Of course you have to actually be doing wonderful things and parents have to be able to see you doing them.

Closed Circuit Video

We do both open viewing and video. The video is for internal use only and it is used for the purposes of

employee review and for the protection of the athletes, students and staff in the event that a complaint is received. We have never actually had to use video review. But it is there if we ever need it.

Prevent One-on One Interactions

Can gym design can be used to help reduce the opportunities for inappropriate One-on-One contact.

Simply put, the fewer doors there are in a facility the fewer opportunities there will be for a staff member to be alone with a kid behind one.

Airport entry for bathrooms.

Open floor plan offices.

Employment Application

I understand and agree that all references and past employers may be contacted for a job reference. I also understand and agree that other individuals who have knowledge concerning my character and past job performance may be contacted for a reference even if I have not supplied their name on this application.

I give permission to ABC Gymnastics, Inc. or those acting as agents of ABC to conduct back ground checks, including criminal and police back ground checks, drug and alcohol screenings, credit checks, and social media searches both prior to my employment and during the course of my employment with ABC Gymnastics.

Photo Release

I understand and agree that I am not considered to be an employee of ABC Gymnastics until I complete the training process, the mandatory back ground check(s), Safe Sport Training and a reference check. Until that time I am considered to be "in-training", a period that typically lasts eight (8) weeks but can be shorter or longer depending on my unique experience and abilities.

References: Perhaps the weakest link in our efforts to keep the bad guys out are reference checks. I know gyms aren't checking references because when our coaches and get teaching or coaching jobs in other states we rarely get a call.

Foundation Documents are just words on paper.

They must be lived, modeled, enforced, and followed.

This starts with the owner, managers, program directors, and head coaches.

ABC Gymnastics: Our Mission

To take our students as far as their interest, effort and talent will allow in a safe and positive environment.

Staff Handbook

This tells all your employees “This is the way we do things here.”

Policies that support your mission.

Consistency in actions and response.

Policies that enhance safety.

Policies that conform to the requirements of Safe Sport.

Policies that are effective and efficient and unique to your gym and values.

Supervision

The most important safety aspect in all that we do. Supervision means actively paying attention to all activities that occur during your class or rotation.

General supervision happens when you keep an eye on a group of children. “OK guys, everyone kick up to a handstand.” Some activities require specific supervision. When the focus is or should be on one child that is specific supervision.

But, in all cases the coach or teacher must position themselves so that they can watch all the children that they are supposed to supervise.

Proper planning enables you to do a better job with your students while also helping to make the gym safer.

Record student’s progress as they advance through the curriculum.

Have a curriculum based on **USAG standards**. Those are the only standards that matter.

Plan the activity- make sure to have the equipment you need for stations, spotting, drills, etc.

Rotation planning.

Record keeping.

Teach Only What You Know: if you are not sure that you understand how to teach a skill- Don’t teach it!

Spotting: Safety first, last, only; if you are not sure that you understand how to spot a skill- Don’t spot it!

Safety- If you see or become aware of a situation that is unsafe, try to make it safe and alert the gym manager so it can be fixed.

Eliminate Verbal Abuse

We do not yell. It is so rare that it happens that virtually activity in the gym stops and everyone stares.

Study after study shows that positive coaching and teaching works.

Relate to the students in a warm and caring way but never as a peer. You are the teacher not a friend. The kids have enough friends, they need a coach.

Every student gets the same number of turns and the same opportunity to do well.

Never play favorites. Do your best with every student.

Don’t Blame the Dog

In animal training it is fundamental that when the animal does not perform to expectations, it is not the animal’s fault. It is always the trainer’s fault. The training was lacking, not the effort of the animal.

Never use conditioning as a punishment.

What should be the worst form of discipline possible in a gymnastics gym?

Two Adult Rule

At all times and under all circumstances there must be at least two adult employees of the present in the gym whenever a student is present in the gym. Adults are at least 18 years of age.

NBA- Never Be Alone

Private Lessons

Cameras, Phones and Videos: Staff members are not permitted to take pictures or video of the children without the prior knowledge and consent of the gym. Pictures used as part of a gym activity such as a camp project, birthday parties or for coaching purposes are fine.

Any photos or film taken for personal use or study are not permitted and are the property of Buckeye Gymnastics, Inc.

Social Media

If your profile and communications contain information, descriptions, photos, videos, or references that would bring into question your qualifications and character as someone who works closely with children, then your posting affects the reputation of the gym and as a result they have a negative impact on Buckeye Gymnastics and are covered by this policy. Even if the name "Buckeye Gymnastics" is not included in these postings, if a reasonable person could associate you with Buckeye Gymnastics then your communication falls within the terms of this policy.

Think carefully about your privacy settings and about allowing gym families into your on-line world.

Prohibited: Any one-on-one usage of social media, including "friending" and any one-on-one calling or texting of athletes.

Communicate with parents only.

If you are "friends" with minor children "un-friend" all of them now. This goes for all social media regardless of the terminology used.

If Buckeye receives information that reasonably causes us to suspect that you are communicating with students and athletes directly by voice, text or social media we will require your usernames and passwords. Failure to provide those will result in immediate termination and will trigger reporting to SafeSport

Cause for immediate termination...

1. Any violation of the SafeSport Prohibited Conduct rules.

2. Alcohol and Illegal Drug Use: Any use of drugs or alcohol on the premises, any use that affects your actions or performance in the gym, any use during any gym activity or function that includes students, any use

that adversely affects your reputation as an employee of Buckeye Gymnastics. *This means that you cannot talk about the "fun" of drinking and getting high or partying in front of the kids or customers.*

3. Disregard for Safety: Blatant failure to enforce established and common sense safety rules or claiming ignorance of the same.

4. Disregard for Our Mission: This includes any willful breach of our mission or principles as contained in our Staff Guidebook.

5. Disrespect: Gross or continuing failure to value the contributions made by Buckeye students, staff, or families; failure to be positive in coaching or interacting with others; or any harassment or discrimination.

6. Dishonesty: This means lying, stealing, or falsifying for yourself or others, or tolerating those that do.

7. Chronic Tardiness or Absenteeism: We count on you. The kids count on you. You have accepted a position with Buckeye knowing that you must be on time and that you must work your hours every week. Show up on time every time.

8. Disregard for Gym Security: This includes, but is not limited to, leaving doors unlocked, failure to set alarms, unauthorized use of the gym after hours, and breaching responsibilities of possessing a key.

9. Insubordination: Failure to follow directions given by a supervisor, program director, manager, or the owner or manifest disrespect displayed to the same.

10. Disregard for Gym Reputation: Posting items that could reflect negatively on Buckeye or otherwise embarrass the organization, including comments or other posts about drug or alcohol abuse, profanity, off-color or sexual humor, and other inappropriate conduct including ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or participating in any conduct that would not be acceptable within the walls of Buckeye Gymnastics.

USA Gymnastics Safe Sport Policy

(f/k/a Participant Welfare Policy)

The Safe Sport Policy, formerly known as the Participant Welfare Policy, is part of USA Gymnastics' safe sport initiatives and incorporates the authority and jurisdiction of the U.S. Center for Safe Sport. USA Gymnastics policies and procedures related to

misconduct are presently under review, and updates to this policy may be necessary in the near future. Available online at usagym.org/SafeSport, changes are effective immediately unless otherwise noted in the policy.

Buckeye Gymnastics Staff Agreement:

I have read, understood, and agree to uphold and be bound by the USA Gymnastics Safe Sport Policy. Initial each of the following specific policies to indicate that you will follow the Safe Sport Policies in all instances and at all times.

1. No One-on-One interactions ____
2. No Social Media and/or Electronic Communications with minor athletes/Students. ____
3. No Gift Giving to students/athletes ____
4. Icing and Taping must be done in public areas. ____
5. No transporting gymnasts. Emergency exceptions- Never Be Alone, Waiver ____
6. No Physical contact during stretching. ____
7. All photos must be taken in public view and observe commonly accepted standards of decency. ____

The Team Handbook does not specifically present safety policies. But any safety policies found in the staff handbook having to do with contact with athletes are mirrored in this Handbook.

Staff Handbook: Buckeye coaches are not permitted to transport gymnasts or any minor child.

Team Handbook: Buckeye coaches are not permitted to transport your child except in very narrow and specific circumstances. Never allow your young athlete to be transported by her coach unless it has been approved by Buckeye Gymnastics

NBA and Two Adult Rule

Buckeye coaches are specifically prohibited to be alone with your child.

Competitions:

Coaches do not transport gymnasts.

Coaches do not chaperone at hotels, restaurants, or site seeing. Coaches take charge of athletes once they step onto the competition floor.

Parents are responsible for their child before competition starts and again when the competition is over.

If your child asks to stop she will always be allowed to stop. Even if the coach thinks she is safe to continue she is still allowed to stop.

We never train a child if she is injured. But, we have to know that she is injured. In case of an injury you should always consult a doctor if you have any concerns. When possible we will train around an injury

If your athlete is under a doctor's care and s/he limits her training you must present a note from that doctor indicating that it is safe for your child to return along with any conditions.

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Buckeye Gymnastics Team Agreement:

Team parents; I have read, understood, and agree to uphold and be bound by the Team policies of ABC Gymnastics. Initial each of the following specific policies to indicate that you have read, understood and agree to follow the following team rules and policies:

1. I have been provided with a link and all needed information to access the USA Gymnastics Safe Sport Policies and that I have been encouraged to read them. ____
2. I agree that I am responsible for transporting my gymnast to and from all competitions, and chaperoning at all team functions including competitions. ____
3. I will alert the team coaches if my child is injured or not feeling well or taking any medications that might cause her to experience any physical symptoms that could interfere with her gymnastics. ____
4. I understand that tuition is due by the 5th of the month by auto-payment unless I have provided payment by other means prior to the 5th and that tuition is due whether my gymnast has been ill, injured, on vacation or absent for any other reason. ____

Gym Policies – Our Way of Doing Business

Make sure that you have a policy that prohibits children and adults in the gym unless they are in class or with a teacher or coach.

Communicate this policy.

Empower and require your staff to escort the unattended and clueless out of your gym.

You have all this cool equipment in your gym; take the time to inspect it, maintain it, and keep records of what you do.

We all know that children can get hurt doing gymnastics. Knowing this we have to assume that some children in our gymnastics programs will get hurt from time to time. It stands to reason that some of those injuries may be serious enough to require first aid.

We must prepare ourselves and our staff to provide necessary first aid in a professional, reasonable, and responsible way.

IMPORTANT: PLEASE NOTE

Salary increases are only available to those teachers and coaches who have completed through USA Gymnastics:

U101 Safety & Risk Management*

U100 Fundamentals of Gymnastics Instruction**

U102 First Aid*

* Gym pays 50% at time of test then 50% after 60 days of employment with Buckeye,

** Gym pays for your time in completing on-line courses.

We always make the call.

If a child lands on his or her head or neck, we call the squad. Any suspected broken bones or any type of serious injury we call the squad.

Every time.

We always contact the parents of course and we are willing to do what they ask us to do except when a child lands on the neck or head. Then we insist. And we call the squad.

If anyone on staff receives information about sexual abuse, we call the police.

Every time. This has actually never happened, but gym policy is to make the call.

If the person suspected of the abuse or if the child abused is a USAG Member we also notify the Center.

But we will make the call every time.