

Maldon Gymnastics Club

Health & Safety and Safeguarding Policy

Version 2 — 27th March 2025 · Reviewed: 24/10/2025, 09/01/2026 · Next revision: annually or when rules are amended

1. Health & Safety Policy

Maldon Gymnastics Club ('Maldon Gymnastics') holds a responsibility for the safety and welfare of gymnasts, coaches, volunteers, officials, visitors, and others.

1.1 Definitions of Documentation

- **Disciplines:** This term refers to all activities covered by Maldon Gymnastics, including Gymnastics, Pre-School Gymnastics, Tumbling, SEND classes, Home Education Classes, and any future disciplines.
- **Safe / Safety / Safe Environment:** A situation where all reasonably practicable steps have been taken, including risk assessments, to minimise hazards and protect all participants.
- **Senior Staff:** Level 2+ individuals supervising sessions who have been trained in safeguarding procedures.

1.2 Vision Statement

Maldon Gymnastics aims to:

- Promote all disciplines based on the principle of "access for all".
- Increase coach education, which benefits participants in a fun and engaging way.
- Build self-esteem and confidence for both coaches and participants.
- Encourage friendship, mutual trust, and respect through teamwork.
- Promote health, drive, focus, and participation for all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.

Core Values:

- Respect for all
- Determination and progression in a safe, constructive, and individually tailored manner
- Self-belief for coaches and performers
- Passion for gymnastics
- Teamwork
- Honesty and integrity

1.3 Mission Statement

"To provide a positive culture for health, social education, and physical activity for all participants, regardless of race, gender, culture, class, or physical limitations, ensuring everyone is treated equally and as an individual."

1.4 Our Gymnastics Body – Gym Club Solutions

Gym Club Solutions supports affiliated clubs, leisure providers, and schools to comply with Health & Safety regulations by:

- Continuously evaluating and updating safety information.
- Reviewing reported accidents and near-misses to improve safety protocols.
- Conducting annual reviews of all guidelines or earlier if regulations change.

1.5 Equality and Diversity Statement

Maldon Gymnastics is committed to equality, access, and opportunity for all, ensuring services are delivered:

- Without discrimination to any participant or associated person

- Regardless of cultural origin, ethnicity, disability, age, race, gender, colour, marital status, religion, sexual orientation, or nationality

1.6 Workplace Health & Safety Law

Source: HSE – Amateur Sports Clubs

Acknowledgement: Contains public sector information published by the Health and Safety Executive, licensed under the Open Government Licence.

Summary:

- Health and safety laws are designed to protect everyone without preventing sports activities.
- Employers/self-employed/volunteer organisations must do what is reasonably practicable to ensure safety.
- Volunteers managing premises have a duty to ensure premises, equipment, and substances are safe.

Key responsibilities:

- Consult employees on H&S matters (planning, procedures, training).
- Provide information on risks and how to manage them.
- Ensure hiring practices comply with H&S law.

Useful References:

- Village & Community Sports Legal Info
- Risk Assessment Guidance

1.7 Safety Responsibilities

- Our club's responsibility is to provide a space where children can improve their gymnastics skills in a safe and nurturing environment under the supervision of adults they can trust.
- The club should be a place where parents are confident to leave their children under the care of staff and volunteers.
- Suitable clothing only; no belts, buckles, or unsafe items. Jewellery must be removed or securely covered.
- Children under 5 must be accompanied to the toilet by an adult in open-access centres.
- Accurate registers are required for all sessions.
- Coaches must know fire exits and evacuation procedures.
- All coaches must hold recognised coaching qualifications and enhanced DBS checks.
- Extreme caution must be used during rotational moves; manual support must be given when safety is in doubt.
- Heavy or large equipment must be moved safely.
- New participants must be briefed on safety procedures.
- Compliance with Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 is mandatory.

1.8 Ratio Guidance

Standard Session Ratios:

- All assistants must be trained, supervised, and DBS-checked.

SEND & Additional Needs:

- Participants with severe SEND or medical needs must be supervised by their own parent/guardian, whether in a structured session or not.
- Ratios vary (1:1–1:8) depending on activity, risk, and staff experience for structured sessions.
- Ratio of 1:20 for non-structured sessions where parents/guardian directly supervise.
- Care plans and risk assessments must be shared on a need-to-know basis.

General Principles:

- Ratios cannot exceed stated maximums.
- Coaches may reduce ratios for safety, behaviour, or facility constraints.
- Sessions must have up-to-date risk assessments.

1.9 Coaches Responsibilities

- Accurate registers must be maintained for all sessions.
- Coaches must know fire exits and evacuation procedures.
- All coaches must hold recognised coaching qualifications and enhanced DBS checks.
- Clothing must be suitable; no belts, buckles, metal badges, or jewellery. If jewellery cannot be removed, it must be securely taped or covered by a sweatband.
- Hair must be tied up.
- Safety is the number one priority in all sessions.
- All injuries (other than minor incidents) must be reported in writing.
- Extreme caution must be used when participants perform rotational moves; manual support must be provided if safety is in doubt.
- New participants must be briefed on safety procedures.
- Compliance with the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 is mandatory.

1.10 Parents / Guardians / Adults Responsibilities

- Parents/carers who remain during sessions should assist children to the toilet if needed.
- Avoid shouting out or interrupting the session.
- Address concerns calmly to the head session coach before or after class.
- Encourage children to use the toilet before class begins.
- Support good behaviour standards.
- Never force participation or punish poor performance.
- Support your child's involvement and enjoyment.
- Avoid threatening or abusive language or behaviour toward participants, coaches, or volunteers.

1.11 Lockdown Procedures

Maldon Gymnastics Club recognises the need to protect participants, staff, volunteers, and visitors during serious incidents.

1.11.1 Definition of Lockdown Scenarios

A lockdown may be required in situations such as:

- Intruder or unauthorised person in the building or nearby
- Violent or threatening individual on/near premises
- Serious safeguarding concern requiring containment
- Police or emergency services instruction
- Any incident where it is safer to remain secured indoors

1.11.2 Authority to Initiate Lockdown

Lockdown can be initiated by:

- Head Coach or Senior Coach on duty
- Club Welfare / Designated Safeguarding Officer
- Venue management
- Emergency services

All staff and volunteers must comply immediately.

1.11.3 Securing Participants and Staff

- Coaches remain with assigned groups.
- Participants are moved to secure areas away from doors/windows.
- Doors locked if safe; lights may be turned off; noise minimized.
- Registers taken if safe.
- Participants reassured using age-appropriate communication.
- No one leaves unless instructed by emergency services or senior staff.

1.11.4 Communication with Emergency Services

- Emergency services contacted immediately if not already present.
- Follow all instructions from Police or emergency services.
- Staff must not confront intruders or threats.

1.11.5 Communication with Parents and Guardians

- Parents informed when safe.
- Managed by Head Coach, Welfare Officer, or nominated senior staff.
- Parents must not attend until advised safe, unless instructed by emergency services.
- Communications must be factual, calm, and free of speculation.

1.11.6 Post-Incident Reporting and Review

- Full written incident report completed.
- Safeguarding concerns reported per Gym Club Solutions and Active Essex procedures.
- Referrals to local authority or police as required.
- Incident reviewed for lessons learned and improvements.
- Support/debriefing offered to staff involved.

1.12 First Aid and Medical Provision

Maldon Gymnastics Club ensures appropriate first aid arrangements for participants, staff, volunteers, and visitors.

First Aid Cover Requirements

- Adequate first aid available at all sessions/events.
- Provision determined by:
 - Activity type
 - Number/age of participants
 - Known medical conditions or additional needs
 - Session/event risk assessments
 - Arrangements reviewed regularly.

Qualified First Aider Availability

- At least one qualified first aider on site.
- Must hold current, recognised first aid qualification (e.g., Emergency First Aid at Work, Paediatric First Aid).
- Coaches/staff must know who the first aider is.

Location of First Aid Kits

- Fully stocked kits, clearly identifiable.

- Locations communicated to all staff.
- Checked regularly and restocked.
- Access must not be obstructed.

Recording and Reporting of Injuries

- All injuries/accidents/near-misses recorded (except minor incidents).
- Parents informed of child/vulnerable adult injuries promptly.
- Serious incidents escalated per safeguarding and RIDDOR procedures.

Medical Conditions and Care Plans

- Parents/guardians must inform club of medical conditions/allergies before participation.
- Medical info shared with coaches on a need-to-know basis.
- Individual care plans implemented as required (e.g., asthma, epilepsy, diabetes, SEND).
- Emergency medication clearly labelled, accessible, and used per care plan and consent.
- Coaches must know participants requiring emergency support.

Emergency Response

- Emergency services contacted immediately in serious incidents.
- Responsible adult remains with injured person until help arrives.
- Safeguarding procedures followed if incident raises welfare concern.

1.13 Whistleblowing Policy

Maldon Gymnastics encourages an open and transparent culture to raise concerns safely.

Applies to Concerns About:

- Leadership/management decisions
- Staff, coach, or volunteer behaviour
- Safeguarding procedure non-compliance
- Health & safety compliance
- Any activity that may place participants at risk

Raising Concerns Internally

- Report to Club Welfare Officer (CWO).
- If CWO/Head Coach is involved, report to Gym Club Solutions Safeguarding Lead.
- Document in writing:
- Date/time
- Names involved
- Nature of concern
- Supporting evidence

Escalating Concerns Externally

- Gym Club Solutions Safeguarding Lead
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- Active Essex Safeguarding Team
- Police/NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline: 0800 028 0285 / help@nspcc.org.uk

Protection for Whistleblowers

- No retaliation for genuine concerns.
- Confidentiality maintained wherever possible.
- Anonymity may limit investigation capability.

Investigation Process

- All reports taken seriously, investigated promptly and thoroughly.
- Outcomes communicated to reporter where appropriate.
- Corrective actions implemented.

Key Principles

- Act early.
- Document clearly.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Escalate if unsure.

1.14 Online Safety

Digital environments present opportunities and risks. Online safety is part of the safeguarding framework.

Key Online Risks

- Inappropriate content
- Cyberbullying/harassment
- Grooming/exploitation
- Sharing personal data without consent
- Unauthorised recording/photography/video
- Unsafe/unregulated platforms

General Guidelines

- Maintain professional boundaries online.
- Under 18s must not be added as private friends on personal accounts.
- Communicate via official club channels with two adult administrators, including CWO.
- Avoid private messaging participants.

Online Classes & Digital Contact

- Use approved platforms.
- At least two adults (DBS-checked) present for under-18 classes.
- Schedule, supervise, and document sessions like in-person sessions.
- Obtain parental consent.
- Recordings only with explicit consent; stored securely.

Photography and Video Online

- Only take/store/share images/videos with written parental consent.
- If photos or videos of gymnasts are taken with own phone, share to designated person and delete.
- Never pair names with photos/videos on public platforms.

Reporting Online Concerns

- Report concerns (cyberbullying, inappropriate messaging) immediately to CWO.
- Serious concerns escalated to Gym Club Solutions, LADO, Active Essex, or police.

Key Principles

- Maintain professional boundaries.
- Digital communication mirrors in-person safeguarding standards.
- Consent and parental awareness mandatory.
- Record and review all online safeguarding incidents.

2.0 Safeguarding Guidance

Maldon Gymnastics Club recognises its duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults participating in our activities.

Our safeguarding framework is aligned with Active Essex Sport Safeguarding Policy Guide and Gym Club Solutions (GCS) Safeguarding Policy to ensure compliance and high standards.

This policy forms part of the club's overall Health & Safety & Safeguarding Policy and will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation, guidance, or best practice changes.

2.0.1 Purpose

To provide a clear and consistent approach to protecting children, young people, and vulnerable adults, ensuring every coach, volunteer, participant, and visitor operates within a safe and positive environment.

2.0.2 Principles

Maldon Gymnastics Club acknowledges:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All individuals, regardless of age, gender, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, or background, have the right to participate safely.
- Everyone shares responsibility for safeguarding and promoting welfare.
- All concerns or allegations are taken seriously and handled according to club, GCS, and statutory procedures.

2.0.3 Alignment with Gym Club Solutions (GCS)

Maldon Gymnastics operates under Gym Club Solutions (GCS), providing a national safeguarding framework.

Through this partnership we commit to:

- Implementing the GCS Safeguarding Policy as the primary reference document.
- Using GCS reporting forms and referral procedures for all welfare concerns.
- Ensuring Club Welfare Officers liaise with the GCS Child Protection Lead for notifiable incidents.
- Regularly reviewing practices based on accident analysis, updates, and policy amendments.
- Ensuring all coaches/volunteers comply with DBS requirements, safeguarding training, and behaviour standards.

2.0.4 Alignment with Active Essex Sport

The club aligns procedures with the Active Essex Sport Safeguarding Policy Guide, supporting safe practice across community sport in Essex.

- Follow Active Essex Safeguarding Standards for community sport.
- Participate in local and county safeguarding networks; maintain up-to-date staff training.
- Promote inclusion, integrity, and safety in all activities.
- Incorporate revisions to Active Essex Safeguarding Policy in the club's annual review.

2.0.5 Implementation and Responsibility

To meet these commitments, the club will:

- Maintain a Designated Welfare Officer Team, fully trained and DBS checked.
- Provide mandatory safeguarding training (minimum every 3 years) for all coaches, volunteers, and assistants.
- Ensure clear and confidential reporting pathways, including escalation to statutory agencies.

- Keep accurate and secure records of safeguarding incidents, actions, and outcomes, in accordance with data protection law.
- Review this section annually or sooner if guidance changes.

2.0.6 Reporting a Safeguarding Concern

Staff, volunteers, and members must know how to respond if a safeguarding concern arises:

- Child or adult discloses abuse.
- Allegation made against staff, volunteer, or young person.
- Concerns about welfare from outside the club or without specific disclosure.

Reporting Process

- Respond – Listen carefully, remain calm, do not promise confidentiality.
- Record – Write down what was said/observed as soon as possible, using the person's own words where appropriate.
- Report – Contact Club Welfare Officer (CWO) immediately.
- If CWO is involved, report to Head Coach or GCS Safeguarding Lead.
- Refer – CWO determines if escalation to local authority, police, Active Essex Sport, or GCS is required.
- Review – Reports logged securely and reviewed regularly for trends or improvements.

All welfare officers, coaches, and volunteers must be familiar with this process and trained to follow it according to GCS and Active Essex Sport requirements.

Summary Statement

Maldon Gymnastics Club adopts the standards and principles of Gym Club Solutions and Active Essex Sport, ensuring every participant, coach, and volunteer enjoys a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment, with welfare as the highest priority.

2.0.7 Data Protection / GDPR (Safeguarding Records)

Maldon Gymnastics Club protects personal data in accordance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Secure Storage

- Paper records in locked storage; electronic records password-protected.
- Safeguarding records kept separate from general membership records.

Access Control

- Access limited to:
- Club Welfare Officers
- Head Coach / Senior Management
- GCS Safeguarding Lead
- Statutory agencies (LADO, Children's Social Care, Police)
- Information shared only on a need-to-know basis.

Retention of Records

- Safeguarding records retained per statutory guidance and GCS recommendations.
- Normally retained until individual reaches 25 years, or longer if legally required.
- Records securely disposed of when no longer required.

Information Sharing

- Confidentiality respected; may be overridden to protect children/vulnerable adults.
- Sharing without consent only if lawful safeguarding reason exists.

- All information sharing must be proportionate, relevant, and recorded.

Individual Rights

- Individuals may request access to personal data per UK GDPR.
- Access may be restricted where it could place a person at risk or prejudice an investigation.

2.0.8 Managing Allegations Against Staff, Coaches, or Volunteers

Maldon Gymnastics recognises that allegations may occur and must be addressed promptly, fairly, and legally.

Scope of Allegations

Applies where a staff member, coach, volunteer, or official has:

- Harmed or may have harmed a child/vulnerable adult.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against a child/vulnerable adult.
- Behaved in a way posing risk of harm.
- Breached safeguarding, professional boundaries, or behaviour standards.

Immediate Actions

- Report immediately to Club Welfare Officer (CWO).
- If CWO involved, report to Head Coach or GCS Safeguarding Lead.
- Do not investigate personally; record details accurately.
- Do not promise confidentiality.

Safeguarding Measures

- Temporary suspension without prejudice.
- Alter duties or supervision arrangements.
- Restrict access to participants.

Referral to LADO

- CWO, with GCS, decides if referral to LADO is required.
- All LADO-threshold allegations referred within 1 working day.
- Follow all LADO instructions; no internal disciplinary action before LADO guidance.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- Share information only on a need-to-know basis.
- Maintain confidentiality as far as possible.
- Securely store records per data protection legislation.

Support for All Parties

- Support offered to:
 - Child/vulnerable adult
 - Person raising concern
 - Individual under allegation
- Treat all parties with respect and fairness.

Outcomes and Follow-Up

- Record and review outcomes.
- Implement any disciplinary or training actions.
- Refer to governing bodies or DBS as required.
- Review policies to identify learning or improvements.

2.1 Club Welfare Officers

- Essential role in safeguarding participants.
- Responsibilities:
- Respond to safeguarding, child protection, and poor practice concerns.
- Provide guidance for implementing safeguarding procedures.
- Assist club in being child-focused in its activities.

Appointed Welfare Officers:

- Lauren Andrews – bwg.welfare@gmail.com
- Martyn Coker – mac_coker@hotmail.com
- Both are enhanced DBS checked and trained in Safeguarding & Protecting Children and Time To Listen.
- Confidential queries handled with maximum confidentiality.

2.2 Coaches Should Always Ensure

- Welfare of participants is paramount.
- Understand laws protecting children's rights.
- Recognise all forms of abuse:
- Bullying/cyberbullying, emotional, physical, domestic, grooming, neglect, non-recent abuse, online, sexual, FGM.
- All suspicions or allegations must be reported to the welfare officer.
- Develop appropriate working relationships.
- Comply with Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults policy.
- Activities appropriate to age, ability, and experience.
- Never punish or belittle participants.
- Maintain high behaviour standards and encourage fair play.
- Ensure another adult is present during sessions.
- Regular safeguarding training (minimum every 3 years).
- DBS checks for all 16+ staff.
- Supervise participants throughout sessions.
- Avoid situations that could cause allegations.

Good Practice

- Never be alone with participants.
- Ensure sessions are fun and safe.
- Transport with two adults with DBS checks.
- Avoid unnecessary contact; explain support to participants.
- No intimate relationships with children or vulnerable adults.
- Avoid private/unobserved situations.
- Promote fairness and address bullying immediately.
- Keep documentation up to date.
- Use consent for photography/recording.
- Follow safeguarding procedures for all incidents.

Responding to Concerns

- Stay calm, reassure, and listen carefully.
- Keep questions brief; do not lead or probe.
- Record all details accurately, include date, session, names.
- Sign, date, and hand records to CWO.

- Explain that confidentiality cannot be promised.
- Call medical assistance if injury occurs.

2.3 Spotting and Manual Handling

- Support only when necessary; avoid over-handling.
- Be alert to performance errors or anxiety.
- Support must not inhibit performance.
- Avoid contact with sensitive areas.

2.4 Flexibility / Stretching Exercises

- Active stretching by coaches not encouraged.
- Support passive stretching; participants judge limits.
- Partner exercises allowed between participants with similar body characteristics.
- Avoid exercises placing coaches in “close proximity” unnecessarily.

2.5 Visual Media, Videos, Photos & Social Media

- Photography/videos require parental consent. This is recorded in our booking system and it's personal to each child.
- Attire must be appropriate.
- Verbal agreements not sufficient.

2.6 Adopted / Children in Care

- Exercise extra caution in photography/video to prevent identification.
- If no consent, blur/remove participants prior to publication.

2.7 Social Media & Coaches

- Coaches must not add participants or junior coaches (under 18) on personal social media.
- Club groups must have at least 2 admins + CWO.
- Avoid one-to-one meetings at private locations.
- Under-18 coaches should not add students; existing friends may be maintained with caution.
- Junior coaches require group communication with two adults present.

2.8 Bullying

- Bullying by children or adults not tolerated.
- Strategies to prevent bullying:
- Open environment and supervision.
- Encourage speaking out to staff/CWO.
- Take all allegations seriously.

2.9 Accessibility Policies

- Respectful, welcoming, accessible, inclusive environment.
- Remove barriers for participants with disabilities.
- Support persons permitted full access without additional fees.

2.10 Welfare Concerns & Gym Club Solutions

- Abuse/neglect concerns reported to GCS Child Protection Lead confidentially.
- Follow club, local authority, and police procedures.

- Ensures organisation awareness of multiple cases.

2.11 Any Other Concerns, Advice, and Feedback

- Email: hello@maldongym.co.uk

Other contacts:

- NSPCC Helpline – 0800 587 6696 / help@nspcc.org.uk