

ARLINGTON ISD GYMNASTICS

TEAM HANDBOOK

The purpose of this handbook is to provide explanation of the guidelines, rules, policies, and procedures for the Arlington ISD Gymnastics program.

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I. OBJECTIVES OF THE GYMNASTICS PROGRAM

- A. Receive an Education
- B. Establish an Excellence in Athletics
- C. Through the Athletic Experience, Become Better People.
- D. Develop a greater sense of accountability, responsibility, self-respect, self-esteem, and self-discipline.
- E. Have Fun

II. LETTERING POLICY

- A. You may only receive one letter jacket during high school.
 1. Minimum Varsity Competition Requirement
 2. State Qualifier with no more than 1 period of ineligibility in the year
 3. Otherwise, a minimum of two years Varsity competition
 4. Must maintain 10 of 12 six weeks of eligibility over the two years of Varsity competition
 5. Must compete in a minimum of 5 varsity competitions each year
 6. *Only exceptions will be determined by coaches based on injury or residential status*
- B. Lettering is determined by more than just competing. It is earned by contributing to the following (*to be determined by coaching staff*):
 1. Attitude – is willing to sacrifice individualism for the good of the team.
 2. Ability – contributes both in practice and during meets.
 3. Attendance – is dependable and commits to be at school, at practice, and at the meets.
 4. Competitiveness – Definition: to expect, prepare, practice, and compete to win. It is higher than participation. It is to empty yourself physically and mentally to achieve success.
 5. Overall – is the type of person that coaches, parents, faculty members, and members of the community are proud to have as a representative of our schools and community.

III. EXPECTATIONS OF THE GYMNASTS

- A. General: We have two general expectations of each gymnast – *Attendance and Attitude*. Attendance and attitude are choices you make. We expect you to make positive choices.
 1. Attendance – Come every day and on time.
 - a. All athletes are required to be on time, suited out and ready to participate for every scheduled practice.
 - b. If you attend school, you are expected to be at practice, unless you have prior approval from the coach.
 - c. All tutoring is to be done outside of practice time. No missing practice to attend tutoring, unless approved 48 hours in advance.

- d. If you cannot come to practice, your parent or guardian is expected to notify the coaches via e-mail, text, note, or telephone BEFORE practice. Do not send messages with other gymnasts. If possible, contact us prior to practice:
 - 1) Coach Kelly: akelly3@aisd.net
 - 2) Coach Reed: rreed3@aisd.net
- e. Injured athletes are expected to attend practice with limited participation. The workout will be structured around the injury and/or according to a doctor's recommendations and trainer's supervision.
- f. Athletes that participate in other sports or school related activities that will conflict with practice and/or competition must contact and clear the activity with the head coach at least two weeks in advance. *Note: Turn in a copy of your schedules for other sports by September of the Fall semester.*
- g. If a gymnast has an excessive number of unexcused absences, then they may be removed from the team.
- h. Absenteeism Consequences – if you do not come to practice, then there is a strong possibility that you will not be allowed to compete in the upcoming meet. Each situation will be reviewed individually. Overall attitude and number of occurrences will be considered as well as extenuating circumstances.
- i. The general consequences for those who have unexcused tardies and/or unexcused absences is:
 - 1) Unexcused Absence: 10 point grade deduction per occurrence each six weeks.
 - 2) Unexcused Tardy: Extra conditioning for each occurrence before that days practice is over. There will be a 10 point grade deduction for the six weeks after the first 3 tardies. A 5 point deduction on the six week grade will occur for every subsequent unexcused tardy after the 3rd one.
- j. For those gymnasts who are chronically tardy and/or chronically absent, they can expect harsher consequences such as:
 - 1) Failing grade for the class
 - 2) Removal from team
- k. There is no punishment for excused absences or excused tardies as long as the coaches have approved it prior to practice.
- l. In order for an absence to be considered excused, gymnasts must provide the coaches with a note from the doctor, school, or at the coaches discretion.
- m. Extra Practices – if coaches hold practices on non-school days, you are expected to attend subject to the attendance policy.
- n. Please note that all doctor appointments will need to be made around practices.

2. Attitude – Come every day with a positive attitude
 - a. Gymnast-Coach Relationship – both are working together to make each gymnast the best that he/she can be.
 - b. Be coachable. Always make eye contact and acknowledge your coaches with a positive attitude.
 - c. Be focused – on what you can do to contribute to personal goals as well as the success of the team.
 - d. Consequences – if you display an attitude detrimental to practice or to the team, you may be removed from that practice. If this occurs, it is considered an unexcused absence which will result in the lowering of your grade. Before returning to practice, the gymnast must meet with the coaches. Multiple infractions will result in a meeting with the coaches and your parents.
 - e. Removal from team – if this detrimental attitude persists, then you will be removed from the team.
 - f. In the Gym – We have two expectations of every athlete while in the gym – *Effort and Competitiveness*.
 - g. Effort – give your best effort every practice and competition.
 - 1) The goal is 100% effort on each skill, drill and routine performed. Only you decide how much effort you will give.
 - 2) A gymnast with less ability who gives 100% every practice is often more productive than a more talented gymnast who gives 100% only under ideal conditions.
 - 3) If you cannot give 100%, tell your coach. The coaches and your teammates expect you to give your best and nothing less. A lack of effort contributes directly to a lack of success. Do not let yourself and your team down.
 - 4) Effort is simply a habit. Take each drill and each skill one at a time and MAKE EFFORT A HABIT.
 - 5) Consequences – consequences essentially are at the coaches' discretion.
 - 6) Removal from team – if a lack of effort is an ongoing issue then the athlete may be removed from team.
 - h. Competitiveness – you are expected to compete every day.
 - 1) Gymnastics is a varsity competitive sport
 - 2) The expectation is that you will compete in every meet and every event that the coaches deem you are ready for.
 - 3) Consequences – same as for lack of effort.
 - i. On-Campus Expectations
 - 1) Academic Accountability – Eligibility will be checked once every three weeks.
 - i. Each gymnast is required to bring their progress reports/report cards for coaches to verify eligibility.
 - ii. You are accountable for all work that your teachers ask you to complete. If you don't understand the work, get extra help. Missing Assignments are unacceptable.

- iii. Consequences – We will follow the district's no pass/no play guidelines. Coaches have the discretion to use other strategies to ensure academic success.
 - 2) Responsibility – You are responsible for your actions at all times.
 - i. AISD gymnasts will be held to a higher standard.
 - ii. All district and campus rules are to be followed at all times.
 - iii. Use good judgment in the classroom and on school grounds, always keeping the team in mind.
 - 3) Expectations for Webb Elementary
 - i. Stay out of the building unless supervised by a coach
 - ii. Respect all faculty at all times
 - iii. Be a positive example to the elementary students
 - 4) Consequences – You will always have to accept teacher or school punishment, which could affect our team. Each situation will be reviewed on an individual basis, and the consequences will be determined by the coaching staff. The harshest consequence will be elimination from the team.
- j. Off-Campus Expectations – Your responsibility to the team does not end when you leave the school grounds.
- 1) There is always someone out there who looks up to you and it's your responsibility to represent your school, your community and the gymnastics team in a positive light.
 - 2) Be a Leader and Not a follower!
 - 3) Poor Choices – you are responsible for your actions, and your actions are a reflection on the team and the school. We expect you to make good choices and to remember at all times that you should be concerned not only with your reputation, but that of the team and the school.
 - 4) Do not be selfish. We consider the symptoms of selfishness to be chronic tardiness or absences, being deceitful, stealing, fighting, violation of dress/appearance code, class misconduct, and/or chronic complaining. The harshest consequence for selfish behavior is elimination from the team.
 - 5) If you are arrested for a misdemeanor, you may be suspended. This decision will be made by the head coach, principal, and athletic director.
 - 6) If you cause embarrassment to the athletic program, you may be suspended. This decision will be made by the coaches or the athletic coordinator.
 - 7) Remember, you have the support of your coaches and administration and you can always contact them if a situation occurs.
- k. Social media
- 1) We will follow district guidelines regarding social media (*see Student Code of Conduct*)
 - 2) Cyber bullying – for example, sending or posting electronic messages that are abusive, threatening, harassing, and/or damaging to another's reputation and/or team.
 - 3) Using e-mail or websites to encourage illegal behavior or threaten school safety.

- 4) Sexting – for example, sending or posting electronic messages and/or pictures that are obscene, sexually oriented, and/or potentially illegal.
- 5) Facebook/Twitter/YouTube, etc. – any information posted by you or any other individual regarding you on any social media site can be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including removal from the team.

IV. COMPETITION

A. Competition Levels

1. Girls – USAG Level 6 Compulsory routines and Level 8 Optional requirements
2. Boys – Compulsory routines created by THSGCA (modified USAG Level 7 routines) and USAG Level 9 Optional routines

B. The coaches will follow the policies established by the Texas High School Gymnastics Coaching Association (THSGCA) constitution.

1. Boys – Each team shall be limited to a maximum of six entries per event.
2. Girls – Each team shall be limited to a maximum of six entries per event.

C. Only THSGCA members are allowed on the competition floor during any gymnastics competition.

D. It is the coaches' responsibility to determine how to best use each athlete to give the team the best chance for success and to develop depth based on how they perform during practice and in meets. The following criteria will be used to make these determinations:

1. Coachable – you accept all coaching comments, techniques, and drills without question.
2. Effort – you are expected to give 100% at all times.
3. Mental Toughness – you must possess a strong desire to overcome personal fears in order to perform high level skills safely. Your desire to learn a skill must be greater than any fear you have. The coach will not ask you to perform something that you are not ready for, nor will the coach ask you to attempt a skill without the proper progressions.
4. Contributions to Overall Team – high school gymnastics is a team oriented sport. The gymnast who motivates his/her teammates to do better, is always enthusiastic and ready, and will make a greater contribution than one who does not possess this quality.
5. Talent – If the above four characteristics are equal, then the gymnast who has the most talent and makes the most of every practice will be on the competitive team. However, talent will not enter into the evaluation until the first four criteria are looked at closely.

E. The opportunity to compete will be determined in tryouts, practices, and based on competition performance.

F. Concerns about competition:

1. Our main concern is to be as fair as possible and honest with you. If you do not feel that you are being treated fairly, talk to us.
2. There will be no meeting with any parent until the gymnast has first talked to the coaching staff.
3. If after meeting with the coaches you are still not satisfied, then a meeting with the parents, gymnast and coaches can be scheduled.
4. We are here for the same reasons you are:

- a. To see that you get an education and a diploma.
- b. To see that you mature and grow as a young adult.
- c. To see that we have the best gymnastics team possible.

V. PRACTICE & MEET DAY EXPECTATIONS/REQUIREMENTS

A. Boys Dress Code

1. Required to “dress up” on all meet days while in attendance at school:
 - a. Slacks or khakis, collared shirt, school color tie (optional), and dress shoes
 - b. No jeans and no sneakers of any kind
2. Must wear shorts and a T-shirt for practice
3. No boxers showing
4. No Cargo Pants
5. No Sagging
6. Hair will be kept out of the eyes and off of the shoulders. Hair cannot be below the ears.
7. The coach can remove practice and competition privileges if the hair is deemed inappropriate. *Safety is our number one priority!*
8. Ideal Haircut: High & Tight (clipper cut on sides)
9. No unnatural hair color
10. No earrings of any kind
11. No necklaces, rings, or any sort of piercings
12. No tongue pierced jewelry of any kind
13. No exposed tattoos. If gymnasts' tattoos are not covered then they will not practice, nor will they compete.
14. Shirts/Step-ins must be on at all times. No bare chests.
15. Shirts are to be tucked in at all times and warm-up pants are to be zipped at all times.
16. Be in appropriate team competition attire throughout the entire meet and awards ceremonies.

B. Girls Dress Code

1. Required to “dress up” on all meet days while in attendance at school:
 - a. Business casual & “Sunday best” are acceptable clothing for meet days
 - b. No denim jeans
 - c. Skirts are OK only if they meet dress code
2. Must wear leotard to practice (*Sofee type and microshorts are the only shorts allowed*)
3. No T-Shirts during workout!
4. Hair will be worn up and out of the eyes. Ponytails, buns, French braiding, etc. are all acceptable and preferred forms of wearing hair.
5. Hair for competition will be worn in a style designated by the coaches

6. No unnatural hair color. Highlights OK as long as there is no major contrast!
Example: Black hair and blonde highlights is unacceptable.
7. Girls can wear only one pair of small stud earrings in the lower lobe. No additional earrings may be worn.
8. No exposed bras
9. No necklaces, rings, or other type of jewelry
10. All belly rings must be removed due to safety issues (*no taping ... there will be consequences for breaking this rule!!!*)
11. No tongue pierced jewelry of any kind
12. No exposed tattoos. If gymnasts tattoos are not covered then they will not practice, nor will they compete.
13. Be in appropriate team competition attire throughout the entire meet and awards ceremonies.
14. Only tennis shoes may be worn to any competition.

C. Consequences of Dress Code violation

1. Any violation of the dress code during practice and or competition can result in a removal from practice and/or competition as deemed appropriate.
2. Repeat violators will receive extra conditioning, will be put on probation, will have a coach-parent meeting, and will possibly be removed from team if misconduct continues.
3. In addition, grades will be affected according to violations.

D. Team Mentality

1. All gymnasts will remain with the team, throughout the entire meet.
2. There will be no visiting with family or friends during the meet (*only exception will be with the coaches' permission*).
3. We will support other teammates and other teams when they are competing.
4. Never approach a judge to question or protest a score. This is improper etiquette and will result in any of the following:
 - a. 1st offense – 0.5 point team score deduction
 - b. 2nd offense – 3.0 point team score deduction
5. A gymnast may be removed from the meet for their first protest of a score.
6. It is the coaches' responsibility to put in an official inquiry of a score.

E. Competitions and Travel

1. All eligible gymnasts must ride with the coaches to the meet site per AISD policy.
2. All travel will leave and return to Webb Elementary. Make sure the gymnasts arrive to the gym on time to leave and have someone at Webb to pick them up when we arrive back.
3. All ineligible gymnasts may not travel with us to away meets; however, they will be required to attend home meets.

4. If a gymnast will be riding home with his/her parents from the meet, we must have written confirmation from the parent as per AISD policy.
5. All cell phones and other electronic devices are to be turned off during competitions. Cell phone policy for meets where overnight stay is required will be determined by the coaches.

F. Violations

1. Any gymnast that does not arrive to Webb on time for any competition is subject to disciplinary action, grade reduction, and/or removal from a meet or the team.
2. All gymnasts **MUST** be picked up from Webb within 10 minutes of arrival from an away competition. It has been a long day for all coaches and gymnasts, and coaches must return district vehicles. Any gymnast who is left longer than 10 minutes is subject to disciplinary action and a 1 meet suspension.

G. Sportsmanship

1. Have a winning attitude – take pride in the way in which you compete.
2. We can only control how well *we* perform.
3. Any crying, pouting, or any display of uncontrolled or child-like behavior can/will result in being removed from competition.
4. If you cannot control your emotions, then you must go to the restroom until you regain your composure.
5. We cannot control what scores we receive from the judge.
6. Never question a judge about scores, nor request that your coach inquire about the score. Ultimately, the coach will inquire on any score deemed inappropriate.
7. Have fun, make new friends, and enjoy the spirit of competition.
8. Never criticize; always encourage. Your teammates need you when they make a mistake. Always be there to pick up your teammates.

H. Preparation

1. Mentally prepare for competitions.
2. Visualize your routines before you compete. See yourself being successful.
3. Each gymnast must realize he/she is responsible to attain desired results. The way you practice will determine how you compete and in turn the results you get.
4. Spend practice time on the skills and routines necessary to give you the best chance to win.

VI. TRAINING FACILITIES

A. Cleanliness

1. This is your athletic home and you are responsible for keeping the facilities safe, orderly, and clean.
2. There may be a list of chores to be performed each day by all team members (*in particular when preparing to host a competition*).
3. No gum or food in the gym.

4. If this becomes a problem, your coach will work with you to correct the problem.
5. If someone refuses to help, then they may be removed from team.
6. If the coaches have to pick up after the team, then the team will receive disciplinary actions for each article found.

B. Safety

1. No gymnasts may practice without a coach present.
2. Check all equipment for proper settings before using. If there are any doubts about the setting or the safety of the equipment, then do not use it.
3. No one except gymnasts and coaches are permitted on the equipment and the meet areas.
4. Do not invite or allow anyone in these areas without permission from the coaching staff.
5. Never attempt to spot another gymnast on a skill without specific permission/instruction from the coach.
6. Absolutely no horseplay! The consequences could include, but are not limited to, extra conditioning, removal from practice, removal from competition, and/or removal from team.

VII. SUBSTANCE ABUSE

A. Code of Conduct

1. All athletes will abide by the school districts policies on substance abuse.
2. Abuse of drugs and alcohol is not a new problem. Before you think about using alcohol or drugs, think about the following:
 - a. The greatest killer of high school students is drunk drivers.
 - b. If you use alcohol or drugs to run away from a problem, not only do you not solve the problem, but you create a second problem.
 - c. The minute that you put alcohol in your body, you lose any chance of our coaches defending you. We only know a substance-free player and cannot testify for you once you use any mind-altering substance.
3. You must understand that you represent your family, school, our program, and your teammates. You risk hurting every one of these with the use of alcohol or drugs.
4. The use of alcohol and/or drugs is a very selfish act and is cause for elimination from the team. The world around you may tell you that drugs and alcohol are OK and acceptable. It takes an extraordinary person to abstain. We hope that we do not have ordinary, selfish people on this team.

B. Integrity

1. You are required to report any suspicion of substance abuse to the coach.
2. Everyone's safety depends on a completely drug free environment.

VIII. ATHLETIC SECURITY

A. Personal Items

1. It is the gymnasts' responsibility to store items of value in a safe place.

2. All valuables should be kept secured in a bag, where they are not visible.
3. There are lockers available, but locks are not provided.

B. Integrity

1. If you find something that does not belong to you, notify the coach so that the item can be returned to its rightful owner.
2. If you witness any selfish, suspicious, or malicious acts, such as stealing, you have a moral obligation to report it to the coach.
3. If someone is caught committing such acts, they may be removed from the team.

IX. EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS

A. Punctuality

1. Help your child attend every function on time.
2. Make sure to pick your athlete up promptly after practice and meets (*within 10 minutes of the end of practice or returning from a meet – failure to do so will result in the disciplinary action as stated above*).

B. Parental Role

1. Use positivity – be a cheerleader for your child.
2. Never criticize the practice or the performance of your athlete; leave that to the coaches.
3. Everyone has a different level of skill, athleticism, talent, and confidence and it is the coach's responsibility to determine how best to draw out these characteristics.
4. Let patience and caring be the practiced response.
5. We, the parents and coaches, are here for one purpose – the happiness and success of our student-athletes in both academics and athletics.
6. Communicate effectively and efficiently with the coaching staff.
7. Be involved and an active member of the Booster Club. The program's success is heavily tied to the level of participation from EVERY parent and the Booster Club.

C. Coaching

1. Let the coaches do the coaching.
2. Never approach a judge to question or protest a score. This is improper etiquette and may result in any of the following consequences:
 - a. Team Score deductions.
 - b. Removal from meet by the meet host/referee or coaching staff.
3. If a parent tries to coach their child, it causes conflict and turmoil in the relationships between the coach, the parent, and the athlete.
4. In severe cases, if a parent cannot refrain from interfering with the coaching process, then the parent may be asked to leave the facility.
5. Every athlete in the gym is someone's child and should be treated with respect. We will not tolerate any negative expressions towards or about any athlete, coach, or other meet officials.

D. Conferences

1. There will be no conferences held with a parent until the gymnast has first attempted to resolve the problem with the coach.
2. An exception to this rule would be if it were a matter of safety of the child.
3. The other exception to this rule would be a fear of talking to the coach one on one. If this is the case, a meeting will be scheduled with the coaches, gymnast(s), and parent(s).
4. In this case the athlete must put the problem in writing and present it to the coach 24 hours in advance of any meeting.
5. If you have any questions or concerns, please communicate with the coach rather than other parents and/or gymnasts.

E. Medical Disclosure

1. Please be forthright in disclosing any and all medical conditions that could endanger your athlete while practicing or competing in the sport of gymnastics.
2. Simple things such as the common cold or an ear infection will affect balance and a gymnast's ability to safely perform gymnastics skills.
3. If your athlete is on medication for ADD or ADHD, please make sure that he/she receives the medicine in a timely manner since focusing is the key to safety.
4. Make your coach aware of any conditions, so that the signs can be watched for in order to ensure the safety of the athlete.
5. If your athlete requires medical devices (inhaler, epi pen, insulin, etc.), please provide the trainer with the necessary devices as soon as possible and in the original labeled container.

X. FUNDRAISING REQUIREMENTS & FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Arlington Gymnastics Booster Club

1. There will be individual fundraising opportunities through the booster club to pay for our one (1) away trip in the spring.
2. In addition, there may be team/group fund raising activities such as car washes, golf tournaments, and gymnastics meets in which all members must participate.

B. Arlington Gymnastics Community Service – all team members will be expected to help with a minimum of one community service project per school year.

C. Financial Responsibilities

1. Girls will be responsible for paying for the following:
 - a. Choreography for beam and floor according to need.
 - b. Grips and wrist guards
 - c. Team t-shirt and individual school t-shirt
 - d. No leotard will be provided if gymnast does not wear briefs. If at any time briefs are not worn then the gymnast will buy the leotard. Leotards can be purchased if you know that you will not wear briefs.

- e. Any damage to AISD supplied/funded attire will be the financial responsibility of the parent/gymnast. All AISD attire that is provided by the program must be laundered (according to manufactures washing instructions).
2. Boys will be responsible for paying for the following:
 - a. Grips and wrist guards
 - b. Individual school t-shirt
 - c. No competition jerseys will be provided if gymnast does not wear proper briefs. If at any time briefs are not worn then the gymnast will buy the jersey. Jerseys can be purchased if you know that you will not wear briefs.
 - d. Any damage to AISD supplied/funded attire will be the financial responsibility of the parent/gymnast. All AISD attire that is provided by the program, must be laundered (according to manufactures washing instructions).