

# Acrobatic Gymnastics

## Competitive Stream Handbook



*Building Better Humans*

**Olena Khomenko**  
ACRO Program Manager  
[acro@ndgc.org.au](mailto:acro@ndgc.org.au)

**Ben Barnard**  
Competitive Programs Manager  
[ben@ndgc.org.au](mailto:ben@ndgc.org.au)

**Penny Farac**  
Accounts Manager  
[penny@ndgc.org.au](mailto:penny@ndgc.org.au)

**Brenton Treacher**  
Managing Director  
[manager@ndgc.org.au](mailto:manager@ndgc.org.au)

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## 1. Introduction

Northern Districts Gymnastic Club (NDGC) would like to welcome you to the Acrobatic Gymnastics (ACR) Competitive Program for 2023. The information contained within this document, plus the package and agreement, have been developed to assist parents and gymnasts become familiar with the policies, procedures and requirements of the Competitive Program at NDGC.

The number one focus for our Competitive Program is to provide a safe and positive environment for our gymnasts, families and coaches, where we allow each gymnast to be the best they can be. Although gymnastics is predominantly an individual sport, we very much emphasise the importance of working as a team to ensure every gymnast builds each other up and supports each other unconditionally.

In the competitive stream your child may have opportunities, including the possibility of travelling and competing with other gymnasts, both nationally and internationally.

Once again, welcome to the NDGC competitive stream and remember that our doors are always open to new input and ideas. Together with your help, we can continue to strive towards “Building Better Humans.”

## 2. Child Safety and Wellbeing at NDGC

### 2.1. Statement of Commitment to being a Child Safe Organisation

At the Northern Districts Gymnastic Club, we are strongly committed to the safety, wellbeing, and empowerment of all children and young people accessing our programs and services. We support their rights and will act immediately to ensure an environment is maintained where all participants feel safe, respected, valued, and empowered.

NDGC values the contribution of children, young people, and families by fostering a culture of openness where they feel comfortable and encouraged to raise their concerns. We have a zero-tolerance approach to any form of child abuse.

We are committed to providing our employees with child safe training on an ongoing basis and we partner with parents and families to better protect children through holistic education to identify and respond to potential harm.

NDGC has adopted and implemented a tailored Child Safe Policy to complement Gymnastics Australia’s (GA) Child Safeguarding Policies, to ensure the highest standards are achieved in respect to the protection and safety of all participants.

In addition, NDGC has several supporting policies and codes of conduct that have been created specifically to further support our members. These documents are continually reviewed to ensure they are of the highest possible standard. They are accessible on our website and in the reception area of the Club.

## 2.2. Child Safety Officers (CSO) & Member Protection Information Officers (MPIO)

NDGC employs two Child Safety Officers who are available should you have any queries or concerns relating to the safety or wellbeing of children or young people at NDGC.



### **Ben Barnard**

*Child Safety Officer*

*Member Protection Information Officer*

*Competitive Programs Manager*

*P: 08 9240 6861 M: 0431 445 889 E: [ben@ndgc.org.au](mailto:ben@ndgc.org.au)*

Ben has been a part of NDGC since 2016 and as well as being the Competitive Programs Manager, he currently coaches the Women's Artistic Gymnastics (WAG) Level 6 to 10 athletes. Ben has been involved in Gymnastics for over 20 years, firstly as an athlete, and now as a Coach and Judge. In addition to his positions at NDGC, he is the WAG Technical Director for Gymnastics Western Australia and a Presenter and Assessor for Gymnastics Australia. Ben is also an Accredited Exercise Physiologist, graduating from the University of Notre Dame in 2011.



### **Nikki Colev**

*Child Safety Officer*

*Member Protection Information Officer*

*Senior Recreational Gymnastics Coach*

*P: 08 9240 6861 M: 0414 513 257 E: [nikki@ndgc.org.au](mailto:nikki@ndgc.org.au)*

Nikki joined the NDGC team in 2021 and has been involved in the gymnastics industry for over 30 years as a Coach, Judge, Administrator, Parent and Business Owner. Nikki is a Senior Coach in the Recreational Gymnastics Program, is a registered teacher having completed a Bachelor of Human Movement and is currently a MPIO for Ice Hockey Western Australia. Nikki was awarded the Australian Sports Medal for service to Gymnastics in 2000, and in 2019 she was the Team Manager for the Australian Gymnastics team at the 2019 World Gymnaestrada in Dornbirn, Austria.

## 2.3. Child Safe Policies and Procedures

Below, we provide access to our Child Safe Policies and Procedures. All these policies, plus the Gymnastics Australia Child Safeguarding Policies, can be found on our website ([www.ndgc.org.au](http://www.ndgc.org.au)) or in the Child Safe Policy and Procedures folder in reception.

**NDGC Child Safe Policy**

**NDGC Staff Code of Conduct**

**NDGC Child Safe Complaints Handling Policy**

**NDGC Child Safe Family Handbook**

**NDGC Drop off and Pick up Policy**

**GA Child Safeguarding Policy**

## 2.4. Child Safe Roles and Responsibilities of NDGC Staff

Extracted from [NDGC Child Safe Policy](#)

We believe that child safety is a shared responsibility amongst all staff members at NDGC.

All staff members have a responsibility to:

- Read, understand and comply with all NDGC and Gymnastics Australia policies, procedures, programs and guidelines.
- Actively promote the vision, values, principles and practices of NDGC.
- Ensure all allegations or suspicions of child abuse are recorded and acted upon by informing one of the NDGC's MPIO immediately.

We outline the Child Safe responsibilities for each position below.

### Staff: Applicable Positions

Gymnastics Coaches	Coaches in Training
Volunteers	Administrators

Their child safe responsibilities are to:

- Provide a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment that places the health, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people above all else
- Provide a fun and enjoyable environment for children and young people
- Report to management and document any conversations with children, young people or parents that involve a child safety concern
- Encourage children and young people to reach their full potential in the sport of gymnastics
- Provide children and young people with equal attention and opportunities (no favouritism)
- Ensure participation methods are matched appropriately to the age and capabilities of the children and young people who are involved in NDGC programs
- Interact with children and young people respectfully and appropriately
- Build positive relationships with children, young people and their parents/guardians
- Communicate with parents/guardians about a child or young person's progress
- Monitor children and young people for possible signs of child abuse
- Supervise children and young people effectively.

### Management: Applicable Positions

Gymsport Program Managers	MPIOs/CSO/s
Head Coaches	Program Coordinators

Their child safe responsibilities are to:

- Model appropriate workplace behaviours and monitor the workplace environment to ensure acceptable standards of conduct by all staff and stakeholders
- Receive and respond to concerns, allegations, or disclosures of abuse from staff,

children, young people and their families

- Raise staff awareness about obligations to protect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people
- Escalate child safety complaints to senior management and/or external authorities, as appropriate
- Communicate with parents/guardians about a child or young person’s progress
- Provide professional supervision and support to all staff members
- Openly discuss child safety at team meetings
- Ensure an initial risk assessment is completed prior to undertaking activities involving children and young people
- Communicate the Child Safe Policy and promote issues of Child Safety through NDGC’s website, social media platforms, apps and other resources.

**Leadership Team: Applicable Positions**

General Manager	Competitive Programs Manager
Recreational Program Manager	Administration/Accounts Manager and Registrar

Their child safe responsibilities are to:

- Model and foster a commitment to Child Safe practices
- Set accountabilities for child safety at all levels of NDGC
- Foster a culture where anyone can disclose their concerns about harm to children and young people
- Inform themselves on all aspects of child safety through training delivered by experts and staying up to date with child safety information
- Ensure all staff adhere to acceptable standards of conduct in terms of child safety
- Ensure all staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe
- Treat all complaints seriously, equitably and confidentially, and take immediate action to investigate and resolve allegations
- Escalate child safety complaints to external authorities, as appropriate
- Communicate the Child Safe Policy and promote issues of child safety through NDGC’s website, social media platforms, apps and other resources.

## 2.5. Support Services and Resources available for children and families

 <p><b>kidshelpline</b> Anytime Any Reason</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Kids Helpline</u></b></p> <p>Free 24/7, confidential and private phone and online counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>1800 55 1800</b></p>
 <p><b>Lifeline</b> Saving Lives Crisis Support. Suicide Prevention.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Lifeline</u></b></p> <p>Provides all Australians access to crisis support and suicide prevention services.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>13 11 14</b></p>
 <p><b>ngala.</b> Raising happiness</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Ngala Parenting Line</u></b></p> <p>The Ngala Parenting Line is a free telephone support service for parents and caregivers of children aged 0 to 18 years who live in WA.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>08 9368 9368</b></p>
 <p><b>Bravehearts</b> Educate Empower Protect Our Kids</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Bravehearts</u></b></p> <p>Australia's leading child protection organisation working to make Australia the safest place in the world to raise a child. They provide support, education, and training.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>1800 272 830 (6.30am to 2.30pm AWST)</b></p>
 <p><b>headspace</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Headspace</u></b></p> <p>Headspace is the National Youth Mental Health Foundation providing early intervention mental health services to 12–25-year-olds. Headspace can help young people with mental health, physical health and work and study support.</p>

## Training Rules and Policies

### 1. Training Attire/Uniform

Athletes are required to wear appropriate clothing to training which does not limit their movement and participation. Athletes not wearing the appropriate attire may not be allowed to participate in that session. The preferred items are as follows:

- Leotard or crop top (no low cut necklines are permitted)
- Spandex shorts (No cargo shorts, zips or buckles)
- Long hair tied up and off the face
- No jewellery is to be worn. It is suggested that these items are left at home
- Any additional requirements such as strapping tape, grips etc
- **Shoes (and warm clothing in winter) must be worn when arriving and departing training.**

### 2. Punctuality

All gymnasts must be ready to begin training on time. Warm up is an essential component of the training session and it is recommended that the gymnasts arrive at least 5-10 minutes prior to the commence of their class to ensure they begin on time. If gymnasts arrive late, they must report to their coach before commencing the class. Gymnasts who arrive early must not play on the equipment. They should be waiting seated, or foam rolling/performing any rehabilitation.

### 3. Communication With Coaches

All coaches of Competitive Squads communicate using a phone app called 'Heja.' This app allows for quick and easy communication either to the squad as a whole, or via private messaging between coaches and parents. Each group is monitored by the Gymsport Program Manager and Child Safeguarding features are enabled to prevent coaches and athletes private messaging without a parent in the chat. Some coaches may provide you with their personal phone number as another alternative, however this is at the coach's discretion. If you have any issues contacting your child's coach, please feel free to contact the Program Manager.

### 4. Late Pickup

Gymnasts must be picked up on time. It is our duty of care as coaches to remain with athletes until they have been collected after training. If you are going to be late collecting your child one night, could you please inform the coach. Any regular occurrence may be subject to written warnings and financial penalties may apply. Further information regarding pick up can be located in the [Drop off and Pick up Policy](#) available on the NDGC website.

### 5. Illness & Injury

If your child is sick/ill and does not attend school, please do not send them to training. If your child is sick during the competition season, please communicate with your child's coach or the Program Manager on a plan of action to ensure they are sufficiently prepared for competition. If your child contracts an infectious disease, or an illness which is highly contagious (cold, flu,

COVID, chicken pox), please communicate with your child's coach so they can inform the remainder of the group.

Should your child sustain an injury during training, or outside of training, please ensure your child's coach is made aware of the injury. If your child sustains an injury resulting in modified training for a period of more than three to five sessions, we highly recommend you seek treatment from a Physiotherapist to allow your child to return to full training as soon as possible. Please speak with your child's coach or the Program Manager for a list of NDGC preferred providers who consult with many of our gymnasts.

## 6. Modified Training Hours

Every competitive squad and level have scheduled hours and tuition fees as outlined in the *Competitive Squad Information Pack*. NDGC believe these hours are the ideal amount to have our athletes ready for competitions. Any less, may not allow the athlete to reach their full potential and it could be a safety risk allowing athletes to compete who are not fully prepared. NDGC also allocates coaches and club resources based on the squad commitments made by families at the outset of the competitive season beginning in November.

We do understand that there may be reasons where athletes are required to train on modified hours. Approved reasons are as follows:

- Athletes in their final two years of senior school (Year 11 & Year 12)
- Athletes enrolled into tertiary studies (Tafe or University)
- Athletes working
- Athletes who are injured and have been requested to reduce their hours on medical advice from a Health Care Professional.

Further information regarding modified training can be found in the [Competitive Athlete Training Hours Policy](#).

## 7. Make Up Classes

There will be no make-up classes for any training sessions missed. This will also apply days beyond our control such as extreme weather conditions, hereby deemed by the Program Manager to cancel training. If you take holidays that are outside of the Competition and Holiday Schedule, your child will not be permitted to train with another group during their group's scheduled holidays.

## 8. Holidays

All Competitive Squads are allocated six weeks (including public holidays) of holidays per competitive year (November to November). Athletes generally have holidays over the Christmas break and may be allocated time during the year for post competition breaks or mid-season breaks. The holidays will be distributed by the Program Manager once the squads have been finalised. Please be mindful of the impact taking holidays outside of the allocated schedule may have on your child's partner or group.

## 9. School and Homework

NDGC fully supports and encourages academic excellence and under no circumstances do we wish a gymnast to neglect their responsibilities towards their schoolwork. We ask that the gymnast and their parents/guardian use their best judgment in deciding when homework should take priority over a day's training. A gymnast who has so much homework and cannot complete it before and/or after training should stay home. This will allow them to concentrate on their homework at home and be able to fully concentrate on gym once it is done. Please ensure you communicate this with your child's coach.

## 10. Home Training

To safeguard the relationship between the coach and gymnast, we ask that parents refrain from coaching their children. This means in the gym or out of the gym. Please do not have your child do any extra strength, conditioning or training at home, unless the coach has asked you to do so.

## 11. Viewing of Training

Parents/guardians and siblings may view training at any time from the designated viewing areas only. Parents and guardians are not permitted to view training from inside the training area due to the limited space, this includes standing inside the rear door of the gym. This entrance is for athletes and coaches only.

## 12. Group Movements and Levels

It is not unusual for your child to be asked to repeat a level or switch competitive streams. Every athlete progresses at their own rate and every decision by the coaches at NDGC is made in line with the Competitive Program Values, the athlete's best interest at heart and what is best for their competitive gymnastics career. Athletes may be invited to move to state levels or vice versa, due to the rate of their progression and other factors such as training behaviours.

Movements between groups may occur at any point throughout the year for several reasons which may include, loss of a coach, a position becoming available in the group above or rapid progression of the athlete.

The progression of the gymnast may also be based on their ability to perform as outlined by the policies and processes contained within the Competitive Stream Handbook and Agreement.

## 13. Acrobatic Program Overview

Due to the nature of Acrobatic Gymnastics and the rules and requirements of the sport, there can be a mixture of ages, abilities, and genders training together. At NDGC, we cater for all the divisions and levels, which are:

- Women's pair (2)
- Women's group (3)
- Men's pair (2)
- Men's group (4)
- Mixed pair (2)

### Northern Districts Gymnastic Club

5 Whipple Street, Balcatta, 6021

PO Box 797, Balcatta, 6914

P: (08) 9240 6861 E: [info@ndgc.org.au](mailto:info@ndgc.org.au) W: [www.ndgc.org.au](http://www.ndgc.org.au)

## 14. Grouping of Athletes

We group athletes into pairs or groups based on the following factors:

- Similar age to each other (ideally no greater than 5 years)
  - Athletes selected into the International Levels stream must adhere to the age group requirements stated in the Gymnastics Australia Acrobatic Levels Program Manual (5 years)
- Strengths that each individual will bring to the group (tumbling, flexibility, balance)
- Height of each individual (Athletes who are 'tops' are generally smaller in frame and height)
- Gymnastics background
- Teamwork and interpersonal skills

## 15. Physical Contact Between Athletes

Athletes are taught correct 'throw' and 'catch' positions by the coaches, and these are regularly reviewed to ensure athlete safety. Athletes are encouraged to provide feedback to their partner or their coach(es) if they feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

## 16. Coach Absences

There may be some occasions where we are required to combine competitive groups for training sessions due to unavoidable circumstances. This generally occurs if we are unable to find a suitable relief coach on short notice. We do not like to cancel classes on the same day they are scheduled, so the group size may be larger for that session due to the gymnasts combining with another similar group. We will communicate any alterations to training as soon as practical.

## 17. Feedback

NDGC welcomes feedback on its programs, staff and child safe practices to ensure we provide the best possible service to our members. If you have any feedback you would like to share, please contact the Manager Brenton Treacher: [manager@ndgc.org.au](mailto:manager@ndgc.org.au) or 9240 6861.

## Competition Rules and Policies

### 1. Competitions

It is compulsory for all eligible gymnasts to compete during the competition season at all scheduled competitions unless injured or ill. If your child is unable to participate in a scheduled competition, you must contact the Program Manager a minimum one month prior to the event.

### 2. Mixed Groups / Split Squads

If there is an occasion where the squad is split between competition sessions allowing one group to train while the other is at competition, training may be cancelled without make-up. Availability of coaches will be taken into consideration. Any changes to training times due to competition will be communicated by the child's coach.

### 3. Competition Uniform

Gymnasts are expected to purchase uniforms prior to attending competitions. It is compulsory to wear NDGC uniform to all competitions. Please speak with the Program Manager for further information regarding the required uniform.

- Tracksuits & Polo shirts can be purchased from NDGC Reception.
- For second-hand uniform, please join the Facebook group '[NDGC Second hand uniform community group](#)'
- **Leotards** are ordered by you. Coaches will suggest websites or professional leotard makers for you to choose from. All leotard designs must be approved by your coach prior to placing an order, and the leotard must be of the same design for your group/partner.

### 4. Choreography for Routines

The average cost to choreograph a routine is approximately \$150, depending on the choreographer. Please speak with the Program Manager for more details.

### 5. Injury/Illness Immediately Prior to Competition

Gymnasts competing are required to attend all training sessions scheduled the week prior to a competition. If training session/sessions are missed and it is determined by the coaches that this will impact their athlete's performance and safety, the gymnast may not be eligible to compete.

### 6. Athlete Withdrawal Prior to Competition

Coaches have full authority to withdraw a gymnast before or during any competition if they deem it necessary. The coaching staff will have the final say as to whether a gymnast competes in any competition regardless of any qualifying scores that may have been previously met.

### 7. Transport to Competition

Parents are responsible for their gymnast's transportation to and from the competition. Gymnasts should arrive 10 minutes prior to the scheduled registration time.

## 8. Volunteer Roster for Competitions

It is a Gymnastics WA (GWA) requirement that all clubs provide volunteers for roles such as scoring, announcer, music operator, equipment helper, sweeper, or video operator. When competitions are scheduled, we are given the requirements of which club is responsible for which role. NDGC will roster parents for these competitions based on which athletes will be competing. Please note that these volunteer roles require little knowledge of the sport, and you take instructions from the floor manager. Without our parent volunteers, competitions would not run.

## 9. Competition Etiquette

During competitions, parents are not permitted to enter the competition arena or approach a judge. Doing either of these can cause both your gymnast and our team to be disqualified. Once a gymnast enters the competition arena, they are the responsibility of the coaching staff. Parents are to refrain from contact during the competition, including hand gestures and talking, until after presentations when their coach has dismissed them.

Always speak kindly to other gymnasts, judges and teams to not offend others sitting nearby. Cheer for your team and encourage the gymnast but please do not coach your child during a competition.

Your child's coach will be available for a brief chat following the competition; should you require a longer conversation regarding your child's performance, please arrange a time to do this following the competition.

Please be aware that the scores your child receives at competitions are out of our control. There will be occasions where you or your child may be unhappy with a score but we are not able to change it. We encourage our coaches and gymnasts to focus on setting performance-based goals or skills specific goals as these are what gymnasts can control.

# Competitive Gymnast Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct is applicable to all children, young people and gymnasts accessing any program at Northern Districts Gymnastic Club.

Gymnasts should:	Gymnasts should not:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Be friendly to other gymnasts in your class.</li> <li>✓ Respect other gymnasts, coaches and NDGC staff.</li> <li>✓ Listen to each other.</li> <li>✓ Use good manners.</li> <li>✓ Respect the rights and differences of others.</li> <li>✓ Speak up if they are worried, concerned or feel unsafe.</li> <li>✓ Care for and respect the equipment.</li> <li>✓ Try their best at all times.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Bully each other.</li> <li>✗ Use bad words or actions that are disrespectful i.e., swearing.</li> <li>✗ Yell or shout at other gymnasts or coaches.</li> <li>✗ Physically hurt another child i.e., hitting, kicking, smacking, punching, biting.</li> <li>✗ Use inappropriate language.</li> <li>✗ Touch other people's belongings without their permission.</li> </ul>

## 1. Competitive Gymnast Code of Behaviour

In addition to Gymnastics Australia's General Code of Behaviour and Gymnastics WA's Code of Behaviour, Competitive Gymnasts at NDGC must adhere to the following code of behaviour when attending an event or competition as a competitor.

1. Be a role model and demonstrate mutual respect for everyone
  - a. Play with respect, integrity and fairness
  - b. Be modest in victory and gracious in defeat
  - c. If you win, do not rub it in
  - d. If you lose, do not make excuses
  - e. Control your temper
  - f. Do not use bad language or derogatory remarks.
2. Accept and respect the official's decision. Never argue with an official and if you disagree, speak to your coach in a professional manner.
3. Abuse in any form, towards anyone, is unacceptable.
4. Work equally hard for yourself and/or your teammates.
5. Respect your fellow participants and competitors
  - a. Treat your opponents and fellow participants the way you would like to be treated
6. Participate and abide by the rules for your own enjoyment and benefit, not just to please your parents or coaches.
7. Be honest with your coach(es) concerning illness and injury and your ability to train fully.
8. Be aware of the Anti-Doping rules and requirements pertaining to gymnastics.

# Parent/Guardian Code of Behaviour and Child Safe Responsibilities

## 1. Code of Behaviour

In addition to Gymnastics Australia's Code of Behaviour, Officials /Judges must meet the following requirements regarding their conduct during any activity/event/competition held, or sanctioned by Gymnastics Australia, a member association or an affiliated club.

1. Embrace the highest ideals of sportsmanship, ethical conduct and fair play.
2. Remember that children participate in sport for their enjoyment.
3. Remember that children learn best by example.
4. Encourage children to participate, not force them.
5. Focus on your child's efforts and performance rather than whether they win or lose.
6. Never ridicule or yell at a child for making a mistake or losing a competition.
7. Show appreciation for good performances by all participants.
8. Show appreciation and respect for volunteers, coaches, officials, and administrators.
9. Respect officials' decisions and teach children to do likewise.
10. Encourage children to participate according to the rules and to settle disagreements without resorting to hostility or violence.
11. Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from sporting activities.
12. Do not abuse or harass anyone associated with our sport.
13. Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every young person regardless of their gender, ability, cultural background or religion.
14. Be a positive role model.
15. Allow fellow parents the respect they deserve in the viewing or involvement in their child's participation.
16. If you require a meeting, please speak to the coach or Gymsport Program Manager to arrange a time. The conclusion of a competition is not a suitable time to communicate with your coach regarding scores. If you wish to discuss your child's competition results, please do so by arranging a meeting with the coach or Gymsport Program Manager.
17. Please refrain from gossiping to other parents either at the club or competition venue. If you have any questions or wish to discuss any matter and would like to schedule a meeting with the Coach, Program Manager, Competitive Programs Manager or Manager, please do so.

## 2. Child Safety Responsibilities

In addition to the parent's code of conduct, the below parental child safe specific responsibilities are outlined to ensure the safe participation of children at NDGC.

### Policies and Procedures

- Be aware of and comply with NDGC's child safe policies and procedures.
- Be aware of and comply with Gymnastics Australia's child safe policies and procedures.

### Communicating Child Safety information with your children

- Help your child understand NDGC's child safety policies (refer to Child-friendly Code of Conduct).
- Help your child understand their right to feel happy and safe, and to tell a trusted adult if they feel unsafe.
- Check in with your child about how they feel at NDGC and if they have any concerns.

### Communicating with NDGC about Child Safety

- Be actively involved with NDGC and engage with NDGC staff members, especially your child's coach.
- Understand that if you have a child safety concern you can speak to NDGC's Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO).
- Provide feedback to NDGC about its child safety policies, procedures and practices through NDGC's website, via email or phone.

### Drop off and Pick up

- If your child is 9 years old or younger, ensure that they are accompanied into the facility by a parent/guardian, immediate family member or family friend.
- Ensure your child arrives in the appropriate clothing, according to the weather conditions (including shoes).
- *Refer to the Drop off and Pick up Policy for further information.*