



# NORTHERN DISTRICTS GYMNASTIC CLUB

## CHILD SAFE COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY

**Policy title:** Child Safe Complaints Handling Policy

**Responsible Officer/Department:** Management

**Date of last review:** September 2022

**Date of next review:** July 2023

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## 1.0 Document History

<b>Document Reference:</b>	CS2
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### Document Location

This document is valid on the day it was printed and can be found on the NDGC website, in reception within the policies and procedures folder and in the back gym in the Child Safety Policies and Procedures folder.

### Revision History

Version	Author	Date	Approved By	Approval Date	Review Date
1	Child Safeguard	14/01/2022	Ben Barnard	14/01/2022	July 2022
2	Ben Barnard	15/06/2022	Ben Barnard	15/06/2022	July 2023
3	Ben Barnard	23/09/2022	Ben Barnard	23/09/2022	July 2023

## 2.0 Glossary of Terms and Definitions

### 2.1. Terms Used in this Policy

<b>Applicable Person</b>	<p>Refers to anyone involved in the sport of gymnastics in Australia including (but not limited to) the following people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persons appointed or elected to boards, committees, and sub-committees</li> <li>• Employees, contractors, and volunteers of GA</li> <li>• Members of the National Gymsport Commissions</li> <li>• Support Personnel appointed or selected to teams and squads (e.g., managers, chaperones, physiotherapists, psychologists, masseurs)</li> <li>• Coaches and assistant coaches</li> <li>• Participants</li> <li>• Judges and other officials involved in the regulation of gymnastics in Australia</li> <li>• Members</li> <li>• Personnel participating in events and activities, including camps and training sessions, held or sanctioned by GA</li> <li>• Any other person including spectators, parents/guardians; and the following organisations</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any Association Member and their members</li> <li>Any other organisations affiliated with GA.</li> </ul>
<b>Child</b>	A child is a person below the age of 18. <sup>1</sup>
<b>Gymnast</b>	A person who participates in gymnastics programs delivered by NDGC.
<b>Handling Organisation</b>	Refers to the organisation who is handling the allegation and/or complaint
<b>Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO)</b>	Refers to a person trained to be the first point of contact for an individual reporting a complaint under, or a breach of, this Policy. He or she provides impartial and confidential support to the person making the complaint.
<b>NDGC</b>	Northern Districts Gymnastic Club.
<b>Respondent</b>	Refers to the person who is the subject of a complaint.
<b>Staff</b>	Refers to all paid and unpaid employees, trainees and contractors of NDGC.
<b>WWC Check</b>	Working with Children Check.

## 2.2. Forms of Abuse

<b>Bullying</b>	<p>Bullying refers to the inappropriate use of power by one or more persons over another less powerful person or group and is generally an act that is repeated over time. Bullying can take many forms which are often interrelated and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Verbal (name calling, put downs, threats)</li> <li>Physical (hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting)</li> <li>Social (ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating)</li> <li>Psychological (spreading rumours, stalking, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions).</li> </ul>
<b>Child Abuse</b>	<p>Child abuse refers to acts or omissions (neglect) that result in, or have the likelihood to result in, harm to a child or young person. The four forms of Child Abuse are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sexual Abuse</li> <li>Emotional Abuse</li> <li>Neglect</li> <li>Physical Abuse.</li> </ul> <p>Exposure to family violence is now also considered a form of abuse.</p>
<b>Child Grooming</b>	<p>Child grooming is a form of sexual abuse. It refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child, to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child.</p>

<sup>1</sup> Children and Community Services Act 2004 (WA) s 3.

<b>Emotional Abuse</b>	Emotional abuse is often referred to as 'psychological abuse'. It refers to an adult's inappropriate verbal or symbolic acts towards a child or young person and/or a pattern of failure over time to provide a child or young person with adequate non-physical nurturing and emotional availability.
<b>Exposure to Family Violence</b>	Family violence refers to any form of abusive behaviour by a person towards another family member. The abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, economical, threatening or coercive type behaviour. It is also a form of abuse when a child or young person is exposed to, hears or witnesses any of the effects of the abusive behaviours.
<b>Physical Abuse</b>	Physical abuse refers to the use of deliberate physical force against a child that intentionally or unintentionally results, or has the likelihood of resulting, in harm.
<b>Neglect</b>	<p>Neglect refers to the failure to provide a child with conditions that are culturally accepted as being essential for their physical and emotional development and wellbeing. Neglectful behaviours are an act of omission, or by wilful choice. Forms of neglect can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical</li> <li>• Emotional</li> <li>• Educational</li> <li>• Medical</li> <li>• Nutritional</li> <li>• Environmental.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	<p>Sexual abuse refers to any act that exposes a child or young person to, or involves a child or young person in, sexual processes that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The child or young person does not fully comprehend</li> <li>2. The child or young person is unable to give informed consent to</li> <li>3. The child or young person is not developmentally prepared for</li> <li>4. Are contrary to acceptable community standards.</li> </ol>

### 3.0 Introduction

NDGC is committed to ensuring that children and young people feel safe and respected. To achieve this, NDGC fosters an open culture that supports safe disclosure of risks of harm to children and young people.

NDGC takes all child safety complaints seriously and responds promptly and appropriately. NDGC strives to be as transparent as possible throughout the complaints process whilst respecting the privacy of all parties. NDGC will treat all personal information obtained throughout the complaints process in accordance with relevant law.

### 4.0 Emergency Contacts

<b>Police</b>	<b>000</b> (for emergencies only)
	<b>131 444</b> (for all non-emergency related matters)
<b>Child Protection and Family Support (WA)</b>	<b>1800 273 889</b> <a href="mailto:cpduty@communities.wa.gov.au">cpduty@communities.wa.gov.au</a>

### 5.0 Child Safe Contacts

#### Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO)

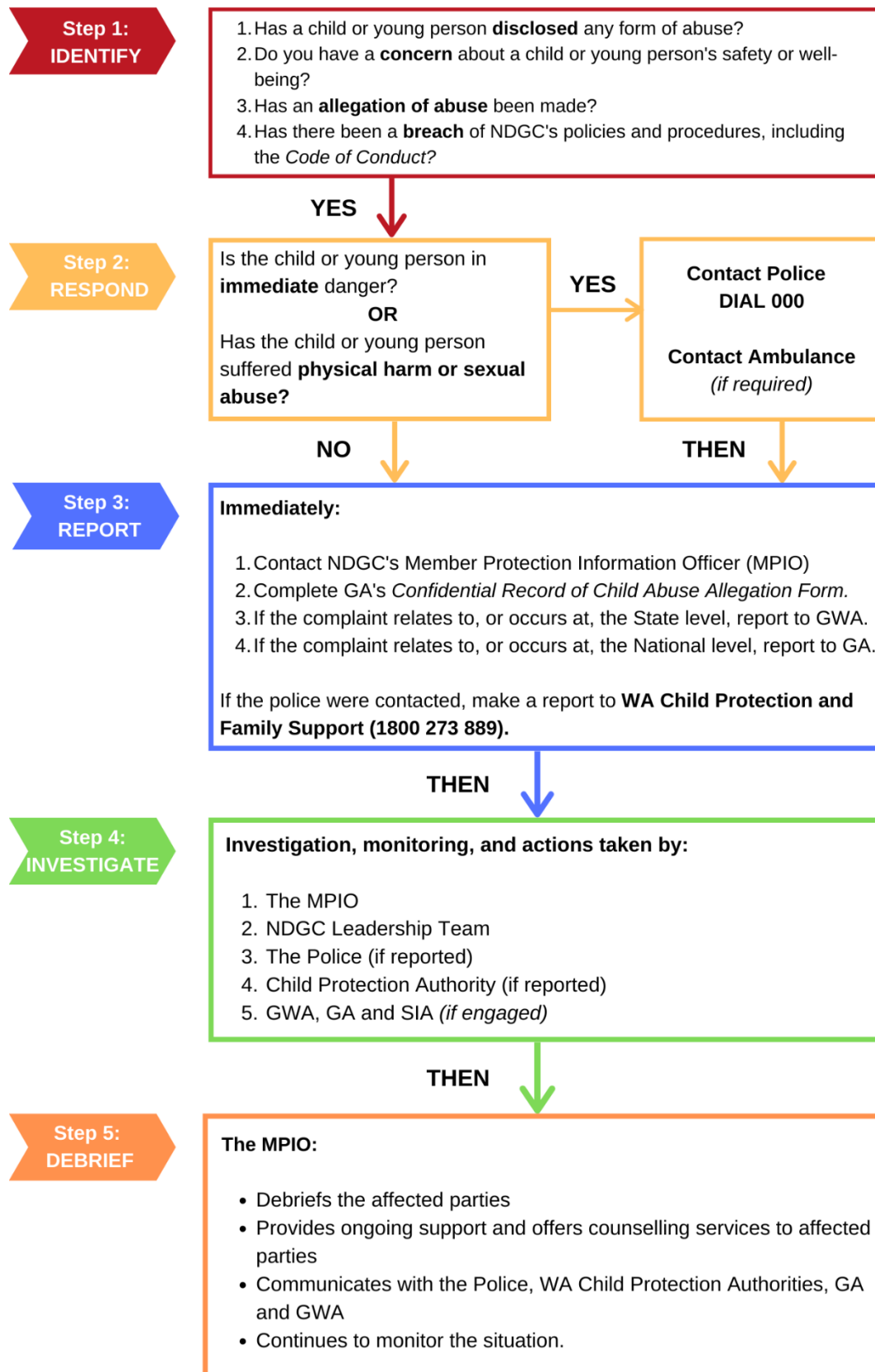
The MPIO is the first point of contact for persons who have member or child protection enquiries or complaints. The MPIO provides advice, information and guidance on how to make a complaint or raise a concern in accordance with complaints procedures and related policies.

#### Child Safety Officer (CSO)

The CSO assists with the handling and management of child safety complaints. All staff, children, and families at NDGC should be aware of the name and contact details of the MPIO and CSO and know of their responsibility to report child safety complaints to them immediately.

Name	Role	Contact Details
<b>Ben Barnard</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child Safety Officer (CSO)</li> <li>Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO)</li> <li>Competitive Programs Manager</li> </ul>	<b>P:</b> 08 9240 6861 <b>M:</b> 0431 445 889 <b>E:</b> <a href="mailto:ben@ndgc.org.au">ben@ndgc.org.au</a>
<b>Nikki Colev</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO)</li> <li>Senior Recreational Gymnastics Coach</li> </ul>	<b>P:</b> 08 9240 6861 <b>M:</b> 0414 513 257 <b>E:</b> <a href="mailto:nikki@ndgc.org.au">nikki@ndgc.org.au</a>

## 6.0 Complaint's Handling Flowchart



## 7.0 Child Safe Complaints Process

**Note:** It is important to note that NDGC supports all affected parties, including staff, members, respondents, children, and their families throughout the entire complaints process.

### STEP 1: Identify

Identify whether:

1. A child or young person **has been, is being, or is at risk** of being abused or neglected by an adult or another child.
2. A **disclosure** of abuse has been made by a child or young person, or
3. A **concern** has been raised about a child or young person's safety or well-being, or
4. An **allegation** has been made against a person (staff, parent or guardian, a child or young person, other person) concerning behaviour towards a child or young person, or
5. There has been a **breach** of NDGC child safe policies, including *Codes of Conduct*.

**For further guidance, refer to:**

- The *Coaches Code of Conduct – Child Handling and Physical Contact Guidelines*.
- The *Child Safe Policy* at Section 11: Physical and Behavioural indicators of abuse.

### STEP 2: Respond

#### 1. Listen

- Allow the child or young person to use their own words when expressing their concerns. *Consider whether the child or young person's parent/guardian should be present.*
- Ensure the environment is safe, comfortable and respectful of the child or young person's right to privacy.
- Remain calm, patient and be supportive.
- Do not ask suggestive or leading questions.
- Do not interrogate the child or young person. You should avoid asking too many questions that may overwhelm them.
- If the abuse happened on-site, ask the child or young person if the person is still in the building and if they can describe the person. If the abuse happened at home, ask the child or young person to provide more detailed information.



## 2. Reassure

- Reassure the child or young person that:
  - They have done the right thing by voicing their concern
  - What has happened is not his/her fault and validate his/her feelings
  - You are taking their concern seriously
  - You believe them.

## 3. Respect

- Respect that it may take the child or young person time to disclose further information
- Explain what the next steps will be (ensure you use age-appropriate language).
- Avoid making promises that cannot be kept, for example, that you will not tell anyone what they have just told you.
- Ask the child or young person what kind of support they would like from you or from NDGC.
- Explain that you may need to tell someone else to keep them safe.

## 4. Respond

- Where a child or young person is in immediate danger contact the Police **DIAL 000**.
- If the child or young person has experienced physical harm or injury, **DIAL 000** and request an Ambulance.
- Immediately report to the MPIO, CSO and/or your manager/direct report.
- Do not leave the child or young person alone.
- Consider whether you are required to inform the child's parent/guardian (*if it is safe to do so*).

**Example 1:** If a child safety complaint has been made against a staff member concerning their behaviour with a child, then you should inform the affected child's parent/ guardian.

**Example 2:** If a child safety complaint has been made concerning a parent/guardian's behaviour with their child at home, then you should not contact the parent/guardian until it is safe to do so.

- If a Respondent is 15 years or younger, they must have a parent/guardian present during any part of the complaint process and that parent/guardian must be notified of any complaints concerning their child. If the Respondent is 16-18 years, they may choose whether to have a support person present during any part of the complaint process (please note this depends on whether it is safe to involve the parent/guardian, see examples above).

## **Important Note:**

### **Responding to Adult-Initiated Complaints**

When responding to a parent/guardian who is initiating a child safety complaint on behalf of a child, NDGC should adopt the **LISTEN, REASSURE, RESPECT** and **RESPOND** process as previously explained.

If the affected child is not present at the time an adult-initiated complaint is made, NDGC should identify the following factors during the complaints process:

- Whether the child is aware that the complaint has been raised on their behalf
- The nature of any communication between the complainant and the affected child
- How involved the affected child would like to be in the complaints process
- When to contact the child
- How much information to provide the child about the future steps in the complaints process
- The extent of the parent/guardian's involvement in the complaints process.

## STEP 3: Report

### A. Make a report

<b>Police</b>	<p>A report <b>MUST</b> be made to police if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A child's safety, health or welfare is at risk.</li> <li>• The child is in immediate danger.</li> <li>• The complaint involves an allegation or disclosure of any criminal conduct.</li> </ul> <p>You should contact NDGC's MPIO for guidance prior to contacting the Police.</p>
<b>Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regardless of whether the police were contacted, immediately notify the MPIO and seek further guidance.</li> <li>• The MPIO will gather all relevant information and inform the <b>NDGC General Manager</b>, who will determine whether the complaint requires escalation to GWA and/or GA.</li> <li>• The MPIO and NDGC General Manager may contact the <b>GA National Child Safety Co-ordinator</b> for further guidance.</li> </ul>
<b>Child Protection Services</b>	<p>If you have reasonable grounds to suspect a child or young person (under 18 years of age) has been or is at risk of child abuse, immediately report to <b>Child Protection and Family Support (WA)</b>:</p> <p><b>P:</b> 1800 273 889  <b>E:</b> <a href="mailto:cpduty@communities.wa.gov.au">cpduty@communities.wa.gov.au</a></p>
<b>Gymnastics Western Australia (GWA)</b>	<p>If allegations relate to, or occur at, the State level, report to GWA by completing the <a href="#">Child Safe Report Form</a>.</p> <p><b>PLEASE NOTE:</b> All child safety complaints that involve an Applicable Person <b>MUST</b> be reported to GWA.</p>
<b>Gymnastics Australia (GA)</b>	<p>If allegations relate to, or occur at, the National level report to <b>GA Child Safety</b>:</p> <p><b>P:</b> 03 8698 9700  <b>E:</b> <a href="mailto:childsafety@gymnastics.org.au">childsafety@gymnastics.org.au</a></p>
<b>Sports Integrity Australia (SIA)</b>	<p>SIA is responsible for managing the independent assessment and referral of complaints relating to child protection. To report a child protection issue directly to SIA, complete the <a href="#">SIA Reporting Form</a>.</p>
<b>Parent/Guardian</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After the necessary reporting steps have been taken, you should contact the child or young person's parent/guardian if they are not on-site, and it is safe to do so.</li> <li>• Inform the child of the actions you have taken and what the next steps will be</li> <li>• Consider whether you are required to inform the child about any reports made to the Police and external authorities (<i>if it is appropriate to do so</i>)</li> <li>• Continue to provide support to the child and their family.</li> </ul>

## B. Record the Allegation

After the relevant reporting steps have been taken, you should record the complaint/allegation using GA's *Confidential Record of Child Abuse Allegation* form (refer to **Appendix A**).

When making a record, it is critical that you:

- Gather the child or young person's details and as much relevant information required to record the complaint objectively (including witness accounts).
- Ensure that all available information is recorded as soon after the incident as possible
- Ensure the *Confidential Record of Child Abuse Allegation* form is completed before the end of the staff member's shift.
- Consider whether the information should be obtained directly from the child, or whether the parent/guardian should be involved.
- Provide the completed *Confidential Record of Child Abuse Allegation* form to the MPIO.
- If required, the MPIO will make a report to the designated GWA and/or GA Child Safe Co-ordinator to store confidentially.
- Ensure that all records relating to the report are kept in a secure and confidential location, separate to the child's individual file.

## C. Conduct a Risk Assessment

When a child safety complaint is made, it is critical to assess the level of risk that may be posed to children and young people so that appropriate safety measures can be implemented.

1. Refer to the *Spectrum of Behaviours*<sup>2</sup> table and the *Child Abuse Risk Assessment Tool*<sup>3</sup> to determine the level of risk posed to children in relation to the complaint.
2. Determine whether the allegations are critical or non-critical.<sup>4</sup>
3. Determine what immediate and/or interim safety measures should be implemented.<sup>5</sup>
4. Ensure safety measures are effectively communicated to the affected parties.

For further guidance on the risk assessment process, refer to **Section 5 of NDGC's Risk Management Policy**.

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<sup>2</sup> Refer to NDGC's Risk Management Policy at Section 5.1.

<sup>3</sup> Refer to NDGC's Risk Management Policy at Section 5.2.

<sup>4</sup> Refer to NDGC's Risk Management Policy at Section 5.3.

<sup>5</sup> Refer to NDGC's Risk Management Policy at Section 5.4.

## STEP 4: Investigate

If a report has been made to the Police and/or Child Protection Authorities, NDGC should communicate with the relevant authority prior to initiating an internal investigation. This will ensure that the internal investigation does not compromise any criminal or child protection investigations.

The following steps will be adhered to during the investigation phase:

- If the police were contacted, NDGC will provide any assistance requested.
- The MPIO will monitor the situation.
- Internal investigatory and disciplinary proceedings will commence in accordance with NDGC's *Complaints Handling Policy* and the *GA Member Protection Policy*.

## STEP 5: Debrief

At the conclusion of the complaints process, the MPIO (*or other designated staff member*) is responsible for debriefing the affected parties in relation to the final outcome and reasons for the decision. The affected parties are outlined below.

### The Affected Child and their Parent/Guardian

- If appropriate, MPIO to follow up with the child/young person or their family and inform them of the outcomes and resolution (if appropriate).
- The MPIO should document all communications.
- If appropriate, MPIO to connect the child/ young person and/or their family with support services.

### The Subject of the Complaint

- MPIO to debrief with the subject of the complaint and inform them of the outcomes and resolution.
- MPIO to provide referrals to external agencies for additional and ongoing support such as counselling services if required.
- The MPIO should document all communications.

### NDGC Staff

- If appropriate, MPIO to debrief with affected staff member and offer counselling services if required.
- MPIO to debrief all staff members and provide relevant information (if appropriate)
- The MPIO should document all communications.

## External Authorities

The MPIO and/or NDGC General Manager may also be required to communicate with the following external bodies on an ongoing basis:

- WA Child Protection Authorities
- Gymnastics Australia
- Gymnastics Western Australia
- Sports Integrity Australia.

## 8.0 Additional Information

NDGC takes reports of child abuse and neglect very seriously. If you believe or suspect a child is at risk of significant harm or is suffering abuse, immediately report to the MPIO.

Senior Management is responsible for the direct reporting of allegations to the Police, and the relevant government agency, if the incident was not immediately reported at the time it occurred.

## 9.0 Referral and Support

If you have reasonable grounds to suspect a child or young person (under 18 years of age) has been or is at risk of child abuse, immediately report to **Child Protection and Family Support (WA)** and contact the **Central Intake Team** on **1800 273 889** or by email [cpduty@communities.wa.gov.au](mailto:cpduty@communities.wa.gov.au).

The **Ngala Parenting Line** offers free phone advice and support to parents and caregivers of children aged 0 – 18 years who live in WA, contact **1800 111 546**.

**Kids Helpline** provides support and advice for children and young people who are in need, contact **1800 55 1800**.

## 10.0 Record Keeping

NDGC keeps complete and accurate records of all incidents, responses and decision-making relevant to child safety and child wellbeing for a period of 40 years.

NDGC ensures that all records are:

- Maintained appropriately in a clear, logical and secure manner
- Dealt with in accordance with the relevant law or policy such as the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*

- Preserved in a suitable physical and/or digital environment that ensures records are not subject to degradation, loss, alteration, corruption or deletion
- All documents are retained for minimum 7 years, except for child safety related records which are stored for minimum of 40 years.
- Secure from unauthorised access
- Stored securely in a locked filing cabinet (physical records)
- Stored in a password-protected file (digital records)
- Available for individuals who have a right to access records which contain their personal information.

## 11.0 Relevant Policies and Documents

This *Policy* should be read in conjunction with the following:

NDGC Policies and Procedures	Gymnastics WA and Gymnastics Australia Policies and Procedures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NDGC Child Safe Policy</li> <li>• Coaches Code of Conduct</li> <li>• NDGC Risk Management Procedure</li> <li>• NDGC Complaints Handling Policy</li> </ul> <p><i>The policies can be located at:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NDGC's website – Policies and Procedures</li> <li>• NDGC's website – Staff Portal</li> <li>• NDGC On-site at Reception - Policies Folder</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Safeguarding Policy – GA</li> <li>• Member Protection Policy – GA</li> <li>• Gymsport Technical Regulations – GWA and GA</li> </ul> <p><i>The policies listed above (and more), can be located at:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gymnastics WA website</li> <li>• Gymnastics Australia website</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX A - CONFIDENTIAL RECORD OF CHILD ABUSE ALLEGATION FORM (GA)

Before completing this form, please ensure that all requirements as outlined in this *Policy* have been followed and advice has been sought from the police and/or the relevant child protection agency where appropriate.

This record and any notes must be kept in a confidential place and provided to the relevant authorities (police and government) should they require them.

SECTION A		
Complainant's Name		Date Allegation Received:
Complainant's Contact Details	Phone:	Email address:
Complainant's role at the organisation		
State/Territory the Complainant resides in		
Handling Organisation <i>i.e., the gymnastic club</i>		
Child's Details	Name:	Age:
Child's address		
Does the child identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Aboriginal <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Can the child be classified as a Vulnerable Person?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, child with a disability <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, other, please specify..... ..... .....	



Please categorise the incident <i>(for definitions refer to Section 11 of this Policy)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Emotional or psychological abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Neglect <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Grooming <input type="checkbox"/> Physical abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Exposure to Family violence <input type="checkbox"/> Breach of Child Safe Policy/Code of Conduct. <input type="checkbox"/> Other inappropriate behaviour. Please detail..... .....
Name of person complained about (Respondent)	
Respondent's role in the Handling Organisation	<input type="checkbox"/> Athlete/gymnast <input type="checkbox"/> Coach/Assistant Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Employee (paid) <input type="checkbox"/> Administrator <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer <input type="checkbox"/> Official/Judge <input type="checkbox"/> Parent <input type="checkbox"/> Spectator <input type="checkbox"/> Support personnel <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) .....
Date of incident	
Time of incident	
Location of incident	
Witnesses (if more than 3 witnesses, attach additional details to this form)	Name (1): Contact details:  Name (2): Contact details:  Name (3): Contact details:

<p>Details of complaint / reason for suspecting abuse</p> <p><i>Use as much detail here as necessary including what was said, (where possible, noting the exact words used by the person making the allegation); what you observed (e.g. injury, disclosure) and any other details relevant to the incident.</i></p>	
<p>Interim immediate action (if any) taken to ensure child's safety and/or to support needs of person complained about</p>	
<p>Police contacted</p>	<p>Who:</p> <p>When:</p> <p>Advice provided:</p> <p>Case reference number (if known):</p>
<p>Government / Child Protection agency contacted?</p>	<p>Who:</p> <p>When:</p> <p>Advice provided:</p> <p>Case reference number (if known):</p>
<p>Management and/or MPIO contacted</p>	<p>Who:</p> <p>When:</p>

GA contacted (if applicable)	Who:  When:
Completed by	Name:  Position:  Signature:  Date:
Signed by	Complainant (if not a child) name:
<b>SECTION B</b>	
OUTCOME: Police and/or government agency investigation (if any)	Date: Finding:
OUTCOME: Internal investigation (if any)	Date: Finding:
Action/Discipline taken (if any)	
Completed by	Name:  Position:  Signature:  Date:
Signed by	Complainant (if not a child) name: