**River Valley Gymnastics (RVG) Safe Sport Policy**

As a member of NBGA (New Brunswick Gymnastics Association) RVG adopts their Safe Sport policies – a link to such document can be found at

[www.gym.nb.ca](http://www.gym.nb.ca)

A Safe Sport environment is a healthy, positive, and inclusive environment free of all forms of abuse, maltreatment, and other potential harm. It prioritizes the health and wellbeing of all participants, creating an athlete-centred culture where everyone can thrive and perform at their best. A Safe Sport environment supports equitable opportunity, prohibits discriminatory practices, and treats all individuals with dignity, respect, and fairness.

RVG and The New Brunswick Gymnastics Association (NBGA) believes that all participants of its programs, events, and activities, and those of its member clubs, have the right to engage in a Safe Sport environment at all times, and is committed to facilitating such an environment for all participants, including athletes, coaches, administrators, employees, judges, coach developers, and volunteers.

RVG and NBGA recognise their special responsibility as a primarily youth-serving organization to develop and implement standards and mechanisms to safeguard the children and youth involved in its programs; however, it is imperative to safeguard and support the welfare of all participants in order to achieve an optimal Safe Sport environment. RVG and NBGA embrace their responsibility to establish, promote, and maintain a sport culture that prioritizes the safety, rights, and welfare of each participant in ensuring a fulfilling gymnastics experience for everyone.

Taken directly from NBGA policy - Creating and fostering a Safe Sport environment requires a collective effort within our sport community and is paramount to the administration and delivery of all gymnastics programs by the NBGA and its member clubs. The NBGA will work collaboratively with Gymnastics Canada (GymCan), other provincial/territorial gymnastics federations, member clubs, and external organizations to administer, support, and advance Safe Sport policies, education, and advocacy initiatives. Further, the NBGA will work with GymCan and our provincial/territorial partners to create alignment around Safe Sport policy and delivery within the gymnastics community.

**Safe Sport Principles**

RVG will:

* Prioritize the current and future wellbeing of each participant above all else
* Act in the best interests of all participants involved in our programs, events, and activities
* Respect, value, and champion the rights of all individuals in the gymnastics community at all

times

* Engage in behaviours and practices that are ethical, developmentally-appropriate, and support

the physical, psychological, social, and emotional welfare of participants

* Actively encourage meaningful inclusion of individuals irrespective of their age, race, colour,

gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, language, religion, national or social origin, property, birth, physical or developmental abilities, athletic ability, or other status

* Strive to create joyful, positive, and growth-enhancing sport experiences

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**CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT**

The purpose of the Code of Ethics is to ensure a safe, positive, and inclusive gymnastics environment for participants by setting out the minimum expectations of acceptable behaviour for all individuals within the scope of the Safe Sport Policy. The Codes of Conduct have similarly been developed to both guide and define additional expectations of behaviour for defined roles in the gymnastics community.

In order to maintain the privilege of membership in RVG and NBGA and the right to engage in its programs, individuals shall act in accordance with this Code of Ethics and Conduct. Anyone who violates this Code may be subject to sanctions pursuant to the Complaints and Discipline Policy.

**Code of Ethics**

The Code of Ethics aims to guide behaviour that reflects the principles of Safe Sport, building an athlete- centred culture of trust where the current and future wellbeing of participants takes precedence over anyone’s success in the sport. It encompasses three main principles in guiding ethical behaviour: integrity, respect, and sportsmanship.

**Integrity**

Individuals employed by RVG have a responsibility to present themselves in a manner reflective of high moral, ethical, and professional standards; they shall:

1. Dress neatly and in the appropriate or required attire

2. Use inoffensive language

3. Act with honesty, integrity, and the decorum appropriate to the circumstances

4. Take ownership of and be accountable for their own behaviour, actions, and decisions

5. Exercise transparency in decision-making with all due regard for privacy and confidentiality

6. Disclose all actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest

7. Act within the boundaries and the authority of their role

8. Develop, utilize, and maintain knowledge and competencies relevant to their role

9. Be familiar with and comply with RVG bylaws, policies, procedures, rules, and other

relevant regulations

11. Abide by all municipal, provincial, territorial, federal, and international laws applicable to the

jurisdiction in which they are acting as representatives of RVG

12. Report to RVG any criminal charges, ongoing criminal investigations, convictions, or

existing bail conditions of which they are subject to

13. Refrain from and prevent the use of power, trust, or authority to encourage or coerce another person to engage in, view, or tolerate inappropriate, unethical, harmful, or illegal activities

14. Report immediately any conduct that is, or may be, in breach of the Safe Sport Policy and this Code in accordance with the Complaints and Discipline Policy

15. Cooperate fully with any investigation conducted by RVG or directed by the NBGA, Gymnastics Canada, and/or law enforcement authorities.

**Respect**

Individuals have a responsibility to respect and promote the rights, dignity, and worth of all members of RVG and other individuals; they shall:

1. Treat everyone fairly, considerately, and reasonably

2. Support and foster an inclusive sport environment for all participants

3. Ensure that all participants are provided active opportunities to be heard, and that their voices

are listened to and valued accordingly

4. Respect the property of others and not willfully cause damage thereto

5. Act to correct or prevent practices that are unjustly discriminatory

6. Respect the confidentiality appropriate to issues of a sensitive nature

7. Focus comments or criticism appropriately, avoid public criticism of individuals or RVG,

and follow appropriate lines of reporting to facilitate the effective resolution of problems

8. Refrain from any behaviour that constitutes abuse, maltreatment, or discrimination or that

otherwise contravenes the Safe Sport Policy and this Code

**Sportsmanship**

Individuals have a responsibility to promote and uphold the sport of gymnastics in a positive and constructive manner; they shall:

1. Demonstrate the spirit of sportsmanship, fair play, and ethical conduct

2. Adhere to the rules of the sport and to the spirit of those rules

3. Provide positive comments that motivate and encourage participants’ continued effort

4. Never ridicule a participant for a mistake or poor performance

5. Acknowledge the integrity of officials, respect their decisions, and accept their judgements

6. Show appreciation and respect to all participants, event organizers, parents, and spectators

7. Never attempt to intimidate, embarrass, or improperly influence any individual responsible for

judging or administering a competition

8. Refrain from any deliberate cheating intended to manipulate the outcome of a competition,

including offering or receiving bribes

9. Refrain from associating in the sport context with any person who is serving a sanction involving

a period of ineligibility as a result of a doping violation

**Codes of Conduct**

Certain roles within the gymnastics community have Codes of Conduct to which individuals must adhere at all times.

**Adults and Persons in Authority**

While everyone has a role to play in upholding a Safe Sport environment, adults and other individuals in positions of authority owe a special duty of care to athletes, minors, and other vulnerable persons. In addition to the Code of Ethics, adults and persons in authority have the responsibility to:

1. Recognize and be sensitive to the privilege, power, authority, and trust inherent to their roles

2. Ensure the gymnastics environment promotes the mental, emotional, and physical health and

safety of all participants

3. Take all reasonable measures to ensure participants are safeguarded from harm

4. Act in the best interests of all participants, prioritizing their current and future health and

wellbeing above all else

5. Establish and advocate for open and observable training, travel, and competition environments,

meetings, and medical treatments

6. Establish and maintain clear, appropriate, and consistent boundaries in all interactions

7. Refrain from behaving in a sexual manner or engaging in a sexual or intimate relationship with

any minor whatsoever or with any individual where a power imbalance may exist in the

relationship

8. Respond promptly and appropriately to participant concerns

9. Treat all allegations or suspicions of misconduct seriously and immediately report any concern

for the welfare of a participant to the NBGA and, if warranted, to the appropriate authorities

10. Complete and adhere to all required training related to athlete protection

11. Ensure all RVG programs, events, and activities are conducted in an environment free of

cannabis, prohibited or illegal substances, and alcohol:

a. Never report to an event or activity while under the influence of prescription or non

prescription medications, cannabis, or any other substance that may result in cognitive or physical impairment, nor consume, use, or possess said substances while in the presence of athletes or minors or while in a position of responsibility or authority

b. Never provide, promote, or condone the use of alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, or vaping products to athletes, minors, or vulnerable persons, nor provide, promote, or condone the use of drugs (other than properly prescribed medications) or illegal or prohibited substances or methods to any individual whatsoever

c. Avoid the use of tobacco or vaping products at events and activities, particularly in the presence of athletes or minors, and take reasonable steps to manage the responsible consumption of alcohol in appropriate social situations associated with events and activities

**Coaches**

The coach-athlete relationship is a privileged one that plays a critical role in the athlete’s development as a whole person. Coaches must understand and respect the inherent power imbalance that exists in this relationship and must be extremely careful not to abuse it, consciously or subconsciously. In addition to the Code of Ethics, coaches have the responsibility to:

1. Represent their education, credentials, experience, achievements, and eligibility accurately, and ensure they have all the training and certification required by the NBGA for the athletes they are coaching

2. Manage their certification by ensuring their NCCP (National Coaching Certification Program) profile is up-to-date, renewing training as necessary, and completing maintenance requirements through professional development

3. Prepare athletes systematically and progressively using developmentally-appropriate practices that support their physical, psychological, and emotional development

4. Select events and activities that are suitable for the age, ability, and experience of the athletes

5. Foster learning and encourage behavioural change through positive feedback, constructive

criticism, problem-solving, and other forms of positive discipline

6. Treat all athletes equally and refrain from any displays of favouritism

7. Accept and promote the athletes’ personal goals

8. Provide athletes and their parents with the information necessary to be involved in decisions

related to their athletic development and overall health and wellbeing, and encourage them to

share in the decision-making process

9. Refer athletes to other coaches and sport specialists as appropriate

10. Communicate and cooperate with sport medicine professionals in the diagnosis, treatment, and

management of athletes’ injuries and health-related concerns

11. Refrain from harmful coaching practices, methods, and techniques, including any form of abuse,

maltreatment, or discrimination

12. Ensure that training and competition sites are safe for all athletes and act quickly and

appropriately in the case of emergency

13. Work collaboratively with other teams and coaches at competitions to ensure fair use of time,

space, and equipment during warm-ups; assist other teams and coaches with equipment

preparations to facilitate the efficient running of competitions

14. Receive approval from an athlete’s personal coach before offering any advice or feedback to an

athlete that might otherwise be seen as an attempt to undermine their expertise or encroach on their relationship with the athlete; never actively or intentionally recruit athletes from other clubs

15. Support the coaching staff at training camps and provincial and national team events, respect their authority, and work collaboratively with them

16. Know and follow the appropriate channels for formal inquiries and protests at competitions; keep informal discussions with judges focused on the performance of their own athletes

17. Keep discussions with parents focused on the progress and performance of their own child, avoiding comparisons to and refraining from discussing other athletes; never engage in discussions, aside from congratulatory statements, with parents from another club about their child’s progress or performance, or that of any other athlete

18. When representing the NBGA as part of Team NB, adhere to any additional policies, responsibilities, and expectations as laid out in the Team Travel Handbook for Coaches

**Athletes**

In addition to the Code of Ethics, athletes, with the assistance of their parents where necessary, have the responsibility to:

1. Contribute to a safe and healthy gymnastics environment for all participants by demonstrating a positive attitude, respect for self and others, and a spirit of sportsmanship

2. Arrive at events on time, well-rested, well-nourished, and fully prepared to participate to the best of their abilities

3. Report in a timely fashion to their coach/RVG Executive Members of any medical problems or health-related concerns, including physician-prescribed medications, when such matters may limit their ability to train, travel, or compete

4. Adhere to the Anti-Doping Policy and uphold an athletic environment free of cannabis, alcohol, and drugs; specifically, athletes will:

a. Never consume, use, or possess any drugs (other than properly prescribed medications), alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, or vaping products while participating in events or activities, regardless of age

b. Never consume, use, or possess any illegal drugs or prohibited substances or methods

c. Never provide, promote, or condone the use of drugs (other than properly prescribed

medications), alcohol, cannabis, tobacco or vaping products, or any illegal or prohibited

substance or method to any individual whatsoever

5. When representing the NBGA as part of Team NB, adhere to any additional policies,

responsibilities, and expectations as laid out in the Team Travel Handbook for Athletes

**Parents**

In addition to the Code of Ethics, parents of athletes have the responsibility to:

1.Parents should come early before class or stay late after class to speak with their child’s coach. At no time should a parent come in to the training area. Parents can also schedule a mutually convenient time with a coach to discuss any issues privately.

2.Parents should never publicly question a judge’s scoring or coach’s decision. If you have a question or concern, use the appropriate protocols to address them. Parents are also not permitted to approach judges after a competition to ask about scores, nor should judges volunteer any information. Please ask your child’s coach, at an appropriate time, to clarify any judging concerns you may have.

3. Ensure their child is participating willingly in all activities and for their own enjoyment

4. Direct any questions about their child’s progress and performance to their personal coach;

never approach coaches from another club or judges to inquire about any athlete’s progress or

performance

5. Keep discussions with their child’s personal coach focused on the progress and performance of

their own child, avoiding comparisons to and refraining from discussing other athletes

6. Recognize that coaches, support personnel, staff, and judges act in good faith and in the best

interests of the athletes and of the sport as a whole

7. Ensure their child is aware of their responsibilities as athletes and adhering to the code of

conduct

8. When their child is representing RVG as part of Team NB, adhere to any additional policies,

responsibilities, and expectations as laid out in the Team Travel Handbook for Athletes and Parents

**RVG additional responsibilities**

In addition to the Code of Ethics, member clubs have the responsibility to:

1. Govern their club with integrity, transparency, and strong competency in operations

2. Have well-defined hiring practices and standards in place, including interviews, reference checks,

and other procedures that align with the NBGA Screening Policy

3. Manage their club and their programs with the best interests of their athletes, coaches, and other

members (such as other NBGA members) in mind

4. Emphasize fair play, stage-appropriate skill development, and provision of a safe, healthy, and

inclusive sport environment in all of their programs

5. Provide an open and observable training environment at all times

6. Ensure that the sport is conducted in an environment free of cannabis, illegal substances, and alcohol use

7. Encourage and support professional development for coaches, staff, and volunteers

8. Adhere to the NBGA’s governing documents

9. Ensure all participants are registered and in good standing, and that they are aware of the

expectations of conduct as members of the NBGA

10. Notify the NBGA of any serious complaint or major conduct infraction as per the Complaints and

Discipline Policy, and immediately advise the NBGA of any instance where a complaint has been

publicized in the media

11. Promptly and thoroughly investigate any possible or actual misconduct, impose appropriate

disciplinary or corrective measures when misconduct has been substantiated, and provide a copy of all decisions rendered to the NBGA

12. Ensure any visitors to an RVG facility have a criminal record check plus a signed Visitors Code of Conduct form. A visitor is a guest invited by RVG Executive Board/Head Coach to be involved in an activity with RVG athletes.

**Board of Directors and Committee Members**

In addition to the Code of Ethics, members of the board and committees have the responsibility to:

1. Respect the needs and priorities of members as a whole and focus efforts on advancing and strengthening the current and future direction of the organization

2. Approach all board and committee issues with an open mind, critical thought, and the intent to make decisions that are strictly in the RVG’s best interests

3. Refrain from serving on the board or committees for their own personal advantage or for the advantage of any other individual, group, or constituency

4. Be independent and impartial, and remain uninfluenced by self-interest, outside pressure, expectation of reward, or fear of criticism

5. Be familiar with all RVG governance documents and keep informed about the organization’s activities, the provincial sport community, and general trends in the sectors in which they operate

6. Commit the time to attend meetings and be diligent in preparation for participation in discussions

7. Ensure RVG’s financial affairs are conducted in a responsible and transparent manner with due regard for all fiduciary responsibilities

8. Exercise the degree of care, diligence, and skill required in the performance of their duties pursuant to the laws under which RVG is incorporated

9. Respect the decisions of the majority and resign if unable to do so

10. Abide by RVG’s policies on confidentiality and conflict of interest

11. Respect and uphold the trust of those who elected or appointed them to the board or

Committee

**ABUSE, MALTREATMENT, AND DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

RVG considers abuse, maltreatment, and discrimination to be very serious offences and has zero tolerance for any such behaviour. It is the expectation of RVG that all members conduct will always reflect the highest standards, which means not engaging in, allowing, condoning, or ignoring any behaviour described within this policy. RVG recognises NBGA Policies and the Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport (UCCMS).

In general, an individual’s behaviour need not be deliberately or actually harmful for it to qualify as abuse, maltreatment, or discrimination; rather, it is determined by the objective behaviour itself, not whether harm is intended or results from the behaviour. It is enough if the individual knew or ought reasonably to have known that their behaviour would be inappropriate or unwelcome, or that it had the potential to cause harm to another individual. In addition, while these behaviours are often persistent, pervasive, or patterned in nature, a single serious instance of such behaviour may result in harm to an individual or group of people and thus, may constitute abuse, maltreatment, or discrimination.

**Abuse**

Behaviours that constitute abuse and maltreatment are typically categorized based on the nature of the relationship in which the behaviour occurs. Abuse tends to occur in a critical relationship in which an individual is dependent on someone in a position of authority for safety, trust, and fulfilment of needs. Examples of critical relationships in the sport environment include the relationship between coach and athlete or between athlete and support personnel. Types of abuse include:

• Physical Abuse: the exercise of physical force or behaviour that has the potential to cause physical harm or inflict physical injury; for example:

o Hitting, punching, shaking, pushing

o Squeezing, pinching, restraining

o Conditioning to the point of vomiting

o Overstretching or excessive repetition of a skill to the point of injury

o Disregarding medical advice or forcing a premature return to training following injury

• Emotional Abuse: the use of words or non-contact physical acts as a means to control, frighten, or isolate someone, or to take away their self-respect; for example:

o Shouting, intimidating, name-calling

o Belittling, humiliating, body-shaming

o Displaying threatening gestures

o Hitting or throwing objects in frustration

o Social isolation or denial of attention and support

• Sexual Abuse: any sexual interaction with a person of any age that is perpetrated against that person’s will, without consent, or in an aggressive, exploitative, coercive, manipulative, or threatening manner; for example:

o Voyeurism

o Sexual solicitation or reward for sexual favours

o Distribution of intimate images

o Sexual assault

o Any sexualized interaction with a minor by an adult

• Neglect: an act of omission in care and/or general deprivation of attention, where an individual fails to protect and nurture the health and welfare of the person(s) in their care; for example:

o Inadequate supervision

o Ignoring injury

o Denying adequate hydration or nutrition

o Abandonmentfollowingapoortrainingorcompetitiveresult o Failuretointervenewhenmadeawareofmisconduct

• Grooming: the process by which an individual builds the trust of a minor, and the adults and peers around them, through subtle behaviours that do not appear to be inappropriate, while gradually blurring or testing boundaries and normalizing inappropriate, abusive, or exploitative behaviour; for example:

o Creating opportunities to engage privately with a minor or their family outside of the sport context

o Engaging in private phone calls, social media, and text communications

o Giving special privileges, sending personalized gifts, or sharing personal photographs

o Providing massages or other purported therapeutic interventions with no specific

training or expertise

o Asking the minor to keep secrets, including discouraging them from telling others about

their relationship

**Maltreatment**

Maltreatment typically occurs in other types of relationships in sport where a dependency does not exist per se (e.g., relationships between athletes or between coaches). In these relationships, power imbalances may be present but tend not to be officially prescribed positions of authority or trust. Types of maltreatment in the sport environment include:

• Harassment: a course of vexatious comment or conduct directed toward an individual or group that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome, inappropriate, or otherwise offensive; for example:

o Written or verbal abuse, threats, or outbursts

o Condescending or patronizing behaviour intended to undermine self-esteem or diminish

performance

o Spreading malicious rumours or gossip about an individual or a group

o Socially excluding or isolating an individual from a group or team

o Pranks or practical jokes which may cause embarrassment, endanger a person’s safety,

or negatively affect performance

• Sexual Harassment: a course of vexatious comment or conduct directed toward an individual or group because of their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome, inappropriate, or otherwise offensive; for example:

o Bragging about sexual ability

o Unwanted physical contact including touching, petting, pinching, hugging, or kissing

o Sexually degrading words used to describe an individual

o Leering or other suggestive or obscene gestures

o Unwelcome inquiries into or comments about an individual’s sex life, gender identity, or

sexual orientation

• Racial Harassment: a course of vexatious comment or conduct directed toward an individual or group because of their race, colour, or national or ethnic origin that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome, inappropriate, or otherwise offensive; for example:

o Racial or ethnic slurs, nicknames, or name calling

o Mimicry

o Referring to an individual’s race or ethnicity in negative, vulgar, or derogatory terms o Sharing or displaying material that is discriminatory such as racist jokes or cartoons o Insulting behaviour or terminology that reinforces stereotypes or discounts abilities

because of racial or ethnic origin

• Bullying: physical, verbal, or psychological attacks or intimidations that may cause fear, distress, or potential harm to others.

• Hazing: an abusive and often humiliating form of initiation expected of an individual joining a group that degrades or intentionally and recklessly endangers the mental and physical health of the individual, regardless of their willingness to participate in the activity.

Maltreatment can take place through any form or means of communication, be it face-to-face verbal communication, written or visual means, online or via social media (cyber-harassment/cyber-bullying), or through a third party.

**Discrimination**

Discrimination is defined as an action or decision that results in differential or unfair treatment of an individual based on one or more prohibited grounds, which include race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, family status, disability, genetic characteristics, or any other prohibited grounds in accordance with applicable human rights legislation. A discriminatory practice is to deny access to goods, services, facilities, or accommodation customarily available to the general public, or to differentiate adversely in relation to any individual based on a prohibited ground of discrimination. Examples of conduct in the sport environment that may be considered discrimination include:

• Prohibiting the use of washrooms/change-rooms that align with an individual’s gender identity

• Failure to accommodate religious dress in policies and practices related to participant attire

• Restricting competition opportunities based on unnecessary citizenship or residency

requirements

• Refusal to make reasonable accommodations to allow individuals with disabilities to participate

• Inequitable funding opportunities for women/girls and men/boys without reasonable

justification

**Right to Report**

Any individual who believes they have experienced abuse, maltreatment, or discrimination in the sport environment has the right to file a formal complaint through the Complaints and Discipline Policy.

**Duty to Report**

Any individual who has witnessed or becomes aware of misconduct that contravenes this policy, or who has reasonable suspicion of misconduct, has the obligation to file a formal complaint and may be required to notify law enforcement. The person making the report does not need to determine whether a violation of any policies took place, nor should they attempt to investigate or evaluate the credibility or validity of an allegation; the responsibility lies in reporting the objective behaviour.

The duty to report extends beyond misconduct in the sport environment to include any disclosure of abuse from a minor or vulnerable adult as well as any reasonable grounds to believe that a minor or vulnerable adult needs protection. If a child or vulnerable adult has disclosed any incident of abuse to you, or if you have reason to believe that they are a victim of abuse, you must immediately report the incident or concerns to law enforcement and/or child welfare authorities. If the abuse is happening in the sport environment, you must also immediately inform the RVG President or Vice President.

Potential warning signs of abuse in minors can include:

* Recurrent unexplained injuries
* Alert behaviour – always expecting something bad to happen
* Often wears clothing that covers up their skin, even in warm weather
* Startles easily, shies away from touch, or shows other skittish behaviour
* Constantly seems fearful or anxious about doing something wrong
* Withdrawn from peers and adults
* Behaviour that fluctuates between extremes (e.g., extremely cooperative or extremely

demanding)

* Acting either inappropriately beyond their age (like an adult; taking care of other

children) or inappropriately younger than their age (like an infant; throwing tantrums)

* Acting out in an inappropriate sexual way with toys or objects
* New adult words for body parts and no obvious source
* Self-harm
* Not wanting to be alone with a particular person

**Confidentiality of Disclosure**

Any individual who receives a disclosure of abuse from a minor or vulnerable adult shall adhere to all disclosure and reporting responsibilities required by any government entity, law enforcement, or child protection agency while otherwise respecting the duty of confidentiality. The individual shall respond to the disclosure in a supportive, comforting, and non-judgemental manner but shall also explain their obligation to share the information with the parent, the organization, and/or law enforcement.

**ATHLETE PROTECTION POLICY**

For the purpose of this policy, any individual who holds a position of authority in relation to athletes shall be referred to as a Person in Authority. In addition to adhering to the Principles of Safe Sport and the Code of Ethics and Conduct, Persons in Authority have the responsibility to respect the following principles and guidelines in all interactions with athletes.

**Athlete Rights**

Athletes participating in RVG activities have the expectation and the right to:

• Participate in a safe, healthy, and inclusive environment

• Have qualified, experienced, and athlete-centred leadership that attends to their wellbeing and

developmental needs

• Participate in a transparent and clean sport environment that has fair officiating, clear rules, and

appropriate training and competition schedules

• Feel empowered, use their voice, and share in the leadership and decision-making of their sport

experience

• Have appropriate opportunities for proper preparation for competitions

• Receive information that is important to their wellbeing and be advised of all opportunities to

strive for success

• Access education related to the sport and their participation, welfare, and safety, as well as to

work or study throughout their active participation in gymnastics

• Be respected, treated with dignity, and safeguarded from abuse, maltreatment, and

discrimination

• Report misconduct without fear of reprisal

• Know, understand, protect, and advocate for their own rights

**Rule of Two**

The goal of the Rule of Two is to ensure that all interactions and communications with athletes in the sport environment are open, observable, and justifiable. It is designed to protect athletes, especially minor athletes, from potentially vulnerable situations by ensuring that, except in emergency situations, a coach is never alone or out of sight with an athlete.

While the Rule of Two is predominantly concerned with interactions between athletes and coaches, the principle applies to all interactions between athletes and Persons in Authority, whether in the gym or other spaces related to the gymnastics environment such as meeting rooms, offices, change rooms, hotel rooms, in vehicles, during medical treatments, and while traveling. RVG is committed to creating a safe environment for all individuals, and will make every effort to ensure its members are never placed in a situation that might compromise the Rule of Two.

**Electronic Communication**

Electronic communication between athletes and Persons in Authority should respect the following:

• The regular method of electronic communication should be group messages, group emails, or team pages, and should include the parents of any minor athletes

• One-to-one electronic communication through text messages or social media may not be used. If individual communication is necessary for travel then a group text must be between Person in Authority, parent and athlete.

• All communication must be professional in tone and non-personal in nature.

• If a phone call to an athlete is necessary, it is good practice to place the call in the presence of another adult or Person in Authority

• Electronic communication should take place only between the hours of 6:00am and 10:00pm unless extenuating circumstances justify otherwise.

• Communication that is personal in nature should be avoided; if such communication occurs, it must be recorded and available for review by another Person in Authority and/or by the athlete’s parent, regardless of who initiated the communication.

• Communication concerning drugs or alcohol use (unless regarding their prohibition) is not permitted; no sexually explicit language or imagery or sexually-oriented conversation may be communicated in any medium.

• One-to-one communication via hand-written or printed notes and letters should be avoided.

**Physical Contact**

Physical contact is a necessary and important component of working with and caring for children in the sport environment, whether it’s a coach spotting a new skill, a physiotherapist taping an injured ankle, or a team chaperone tying back a young gymnast’s hair in preparation for competition. As a standard of measure, physical contact between a Person in Authority and an athlete should be directly related to that individual’s job description.

For coaches, spotting, supporting, and shaping the athlete is an essential part of their role in that it helps the athlete to understand shapes, movement patterns, and complex skills, and also reduces the risk of injury due to a fall or error in performance. It is the position of the RVG and NBGA that such physical contact that is reasonably intended to coach, teach, or demonstrate a skill to an athlete, as well as safety actions such as spotting or catching an athlete, are acceptable and appropriate forms of touch in the sport of gymnastics. In most cases, spotting for guidance should be used only when needed to orientate or position the athlete so they can replicate the movements. Likewise, spotting for safety should be used only when needed, with the goal of designing and using safe progressions as often as you can.

**Guidelines for spotting and other appropriate boundaries for physical contact:**

• The ideal hand placement for spotting is on the side of the athlete’s hips and trunk.

• Avoid physical contact of sensitive areas of the body (i.e., genital area, buttocks, and breasts).

• If accidental, unintended touch occurs as a result of error in the performance of the athlete or

the coach’s spotting, apologize immediately. If this occurs more than two times, STOP and take stock of the problem. Ask yourself what changes you can make to ensure that accidental, unintended touch is less likely to happen. It is good practice to report the unintended contact to the athlete’s parent.

• Avoid placing yourself in awkward or compromising spotting positions (i.e., any position that may be thought of as unnecessary positioning by a reasonable observer).

• Assistance in stretching must exclude excessive force and inappropriate positioning; avoid standing or kneeling between an athlete’s legs and do not lie on an athlete. When possible, use partner exercises between athletes.

• It is good practice to, whenever possible, clarify where and why any physical contact will occur, making it clear that the coach is requesting rather than requiring physical contact.

• Educate parents on spotting and stretching guidelines.

• Non-threatening physical interactions such as high-fives, pats on the back, handshakes, and brief

hugs are acceptable; hugs lasting longer than five seconds, cuddling, horseplay, or other physical

contact initiated by the Person in Authority is not permitted.

• Some athletes may initiate hugging or other physical contact with a coach for reasons of

celebrating a new skill or crying after a poor performance; this physical contact should always be limited to circumstances where the coach believes it is in the best interest of the athlete and when it occurs in an open and observable environment.

**Photography and Video**

In addition to capturing moments of pride, celebration, and friendship at competitions and social events, photography and video may be used as a means of teaching and learning through technical analysis for performance improvement. Any photograph or video of an athlete must respect the following:

1.Photographs and video must be taken in public view and must observe generally accepted standards of decency.

2.If photographs or videos will be taken in the training setting for skill analysis, parents of minor athletes should be informed.

3.An Image Consent Form must be completed before any photograph or video of an athlete can be used on a public forum, whether for promotional, educational, or other purposes.

4.It is mandatory that only the RVG supplied devices are used for any photography/videos taken by RVG employees.

5.The use of recording devices of any kind in rooms where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy is strictly prohibited.

6.Photographs/videos that are taken of RVG athletes/members by RVG employees may be uploaded to RVG website/Facebook pages but NOT personal social media accounts.

7. Any photographs taken by AYR Motor employees or Town of Florenceville employees for their own websites must be approved by RVG Head Coach/Executive Board.

**Travel and Accommodations**

This policy is in regards to coaches and athletes.

* RVG does not allow any person that is employed by RVG to transport an RVG athlete to training or competitions.
* RVG coaches/other employees may travel together.
* For any travel to an out of Province competition that involves only one RVG coach and athlete and it is not feasible for another adult to be present, the pair must make arrangements to use public transportation to and from the event, as well as for any local travel required while at the event. The Rule of Two would be considered to be upheld in circumstances where an athlete and a Person in Authority are in an open and observable public space (e.g., bus, train, plane) or sharing transportation with other individuals (e.g., taxi, Uber, carpooling, shuttles, etc.).
* For overnight stays organized by the NBGA please refer to the NBGA Safe Sport Policy.

**Intimate Relationships**

\*The following is taken directly from NBGA Safe Sport Policy\*

The age of consent is the age at which a young person can legally consent to sexual activity. The age of consent in Canada is generally 16 years old, but the Criminal Code increases that age to 18 in the context of relationships in which there is a power imbalance. Therefore, a Person in Authority engaging in a sexual or intimate relationship with a minor athlete is not only prohibited under this policy, it is a criminal offence.

In accordance with the UCCMS, the NBGA prohibits sexual relations between an adult athlete and a Person in Authority on the basis that there can be no consent where there is a power imbalance. Furthermore, a power imbalance between an athlete and a coach is presumed to continue after the coach-athlete relationship terminates until the athlete reaches 25 years of age; therefore, an athlete cannot consent to a romantic relationship with a coach, even if they no longer work together, until the athlete has reached the age of 25.

An intimate relationship between consenting adults that was established before the sport relationship commenced will not contravene this policy despite the introduction of a power imbalance to the relationship. However, an individual should disclose to the club and/or the NBGA any sexual or intimate relationship with an athlete prior to taking on a role that would qualify them as a Person in Authority.

**SCREENING POLICY**

Screening is an ongoing multi-step process to assess the background, qualifications, and fit of candidates who occupy positions of trust or authority within the organization (i.e., positions related to finances, supervision, or contact with athletes), and to ensure the continued suitability of individuals fulfilling those roles. It is a critical component in providing a safe gymnastics environment for all participants, as well as being part of sound financial practices and good human resources management.

**RVG will screen the below to different degrees dependant on role within the club:**

* Individuals hired for employment at RVG (adults) - Criminal record check including vulnerable sector, background checks/references prior to employment, knowledge of all RVG Procedures and Policies. New employees evaluation every 3 months for the initial 12 months then every 6 months there after. For further information prior to hiring refer to NBGA Safe Sport Policy – screening policy.
* Individuals hired for employment (under 18 years of age) - references prior to employment and under supervision by a senior employee at all times.

\*\*All coaching employees to complete the below:

Application/Screening Disclosure Form

Sign Code of Ethics and Conduct

Respect in Sport

Safe Sport Training

NCCP Foundations courses – as per level of employment

Make Ethical Decisions Online Evaluation

Making Head Way

Discipline-specific NCCP training for coaches which matches the skill level of the participants – as per level of employment

Each Year to sign:

Screening Renewal Form

Code of Ethics

* Guest coaches, technical experts, and other presenters delivering courses, clinics, camps, or

workshops on behalf of the club – criminal record check including vulnerable sector and signing of RVG Visitors Code of Conduct

* Members of RVG Board of Directors – Criminal record check and vulnerable sector. Good standing with RVG for minimum of 12 months. Knowledge of all RVG Procedures and Policies.
* Volunteers for events organized by the club – always to be accompanied by Senior Coaching staff or Member of Board of Executives.

If RVG denies an application, or approves an application with conditions, a copy of the decision must be provided to the applicant as well as other relevant parties, such as the Hiring Committee or the Board of Directors of the member club and/or the NBGA. The waiting period before any individual can re-apply if their application was denied is 2 years.

All Criminal checks to be renewed every 3 years.

All screening information is confidential between applicant, RVG Head Coach and Board unless disclosure of the results is required by law, necessary for membership eligibility or for use in legal, quasi-legal, or disciplinary proceedings, or in the best interest of the public. Screening documents that shall be maintained include, but are not limited to:

• Police record checks

• Screening disclosure/renewal forms

• Record of any conditions attached to an individual’s position

• Record of any disciplinary or remedial action taken by the club, the NBGA, or other organization

RVG Board of Executives has the authority to:

• Dismiss or reassign the duties and responsibilities of an individual as a result of a negative performance review

• Dismiss, suspend with or without compensation, or reassign an individual as a result of a formal complaint, pending investigation, charge laid, or conviction for a relevant offence

• Dismiss, or suspend with or without compensation, an individual who does not cooperate in providing additional information about the nature and circumstances of a formal complaint, pending investigation, charge laid, or conviction for a relevant offence

• Dismiss or expel an individual for any gross misconduct as per the Complaints and Discipline Policy or for a serious criminal conviction, including:

o Any offence involving trafficking under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act

o Any sexual offence

o Any offence including violence/assault

o Any offence involving a minor or vulnerable person

o Any offence related to child pornography

o Any offence involving theft or fraud

**COMPLAINTS AND DISCIPLINE POLICY**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the mechanisms by which inappropriate behaviour in the gymnastics environment will be addressed and remedied. This includes any breaches of the Code of Ethics, other behaviour that violates the policies and practices encompassed within the Safe Sport Framework, as well as any conduct that does not comply with the by-laws or other policies, rules, and regulations of RVG or NBGA.

This policy applies to all individuals and to all matters that arise during the programs, events, and activities of RVG; it may also apply to outside incidents that adversely affect relationships within the organization or when such matters are detrimental to the image and reputation of RVG and the sport of gymnastics.

When circumstances warrant an immediate response to misconduct, disciplinary sanctions may be imposed to quickly address or remedy a situation, after which the formal complaint process may be initiated and further discipline or sanctions may be applied. In addition to being subject to disciplinary action pursuant to this policy, an employee of RVG who is a Respondent to a complaint may also be subject to consequences in accordance with their employment agreement up to and including termination of employment.

Any RVG incident or complaint that constitutes abuse or maltreatment will be immediately reported to the NBGA and possibly referred to the New Brunswick Safe Sport Dispute Resolution Program (NBSSDRP). RVG will also notify The Town of Florenceville of any formal complaints. RVG will also notify the NBGA if a complaint against one of their members is related to a major infraction as defined within this policy, and will disclose all records upon completion of the club’s internal complaints process. Upon review, the NBGA may take further action by initiating a formal complaint under the terms of their policy. The NBGA may act as the Complainant if the original Complainant is unwilling or unable to participate in the process.

**Reporting Misconduct**

1. Any individual may report an infraction of any applicable policy or standard of conduct by filing a complaint to the RVG Board of Executive.

2. A complaint must be submitted via email to the NBGA Executive Director (by RVG) within 30 days of the alleged incident; any complaint filed outside this 30-day window must include a written request for a reporting extension, which will be reviewed by the NBGA Executive Director and approved at their discretion. NBGA may advise RVG that this is “an in-house club matter only”.

3. The NBGA or RVG may act as the Complainant and initiate the complaint process under the terms of this policy; in such cases, the organization filing the complaint will identify an individual to act as its representative.

4. If it is determined that the complaint should be handled by RVG, the Executive Director shall provide a copy of the complaint to the RVG President who shall appoint a Case Manager (this may be an RVG Board member or a separate individual).

5. The NBGA may manage a complaint if RVG is otherwise unable to manage the complaint for a valid and justifiable reason, such as a conflict-of-interest or a lack of capacity.

6. If the complaint involves conduct that may be of an illegal nature, RVG shall immediately report the allegation to the appropriate law enforcement and/or child welfare authorities; RVG and the NBGA will cooperate fully with, and take direction from, the relevant authority.

7. If the NBGA is handling a complaint against an individual who is involved with RVG, the club will be informed that the individual is a Respondent to a complaint, but in respect to confidentiality, no additional information will be shared until the completion of the discipline process except as required for the purposes of investigation, taking corrective action, or as otherwise required by law.

**Minors**

Complaints may be filed on behalf of, or brought against, a minor; in either case, the minor must have a parent or other adult act on their behalf during the process outlined below and all communication must be directed to that adult representative.

**Case Manager Responsibilities**

14. The Case Manager has the responsibility to:

a) Determine whether the complaint falls within the jurisdiction of this policy;

b) Determine whether the complaint is legitimate or frivolous;

c) Determine whether an investigation is necessary or desirable and appoint an

Discipline Chair/Panel;

d) Set and adhere to timelines to ensure a timely proceeding and resolution of the

complaint;

e) Keep RVG informed of the progress of the proceedings with all due regard

to confidentiality;

f) Relay any decisions to RVG upon completion of the process.

If the Case Manager determines that the complaint is frivolous or outside the jurisdiction of this policy, it will be dismissed immediately; this decision may not be appealed.

If the Case Manager determines that the complaint is valid and within the jurisdiction of policy, they shall propose the use of alternative dispute resolution techniques such as mediation or a negotiated settlement; if the dispute is not resolved, or if the parties refuse to attempt ADR (Alternative Dispute Resolution) the Case Manager shall determine the process by which the complaint will be handled and notify the Parties of next steps.

**Process #1 – Minor Infraction**

A minor infraction is a single instance of behaviour resulting in a breach of a policy or standard of conduct that generally does not have the potential to result in significant harm to others; the following examples can be used as a general guideline:

a) Disrespectful comment or conduct directed toward others

b) Unsportsmanlike conduct

c) A minor incident of violence (e.g., tripping, pushing, elbowing)

d) A minor breach of team rules

e) A minor violation of the Code of Ethics and Conduct

f) Non-compliance with the RVG’s by-laws, policies, rules, or regulations

g) Other conduct that is contrary to the values of RVG

\*The definition of a minor infraction excludes any instance of abuse or maltreatment as outlined in the Abuse, Maltreatment, and Discrimination Policy\*

* Upon determining that the complaint should be handled under Process #1, the Case Manager shall appoint a Discipline Chair (an individual appointed by case manager for minor minor complaints/infractions); the Discipline Chair shall either ask the Parties for written or oral submissions regarding the complaint or convene the Parties to a meeting, either in person or by way of video or teleconference, to ask questions about the complaint.
* Upon reviewing the matter, the Discipline Chair shall determine if an infraction occurred, and if so, if one or more of the following disciplinary sanctions should be imposed on the Respondent:

a) Formal warning

b) Verbal or written reprimand

c) Verbal or written apology to the affected parties

d) Service or other contribution to the RVG

e) Removal of certain privileges of membership

f) Suspension from certain teams, events, and/or activities for a designated period

g) Withholding of funding for a designated period

h) Any other sanction considered appropriate for the offence

* The Discipline Chair may also impose corrective action through educational training for the Respondent, either in addition to or in lieu of any disciplinary sanction.
* The Discipline Chair shall jointly inform the Case Manager and the Parties of the decision in writing, upon which any sanction shall take immediate effect; failure to comply with a sanction will result in an automatic suspension of membership until such time as compliance occurs.
* The Respondent may contest a sanction by submitting a Request for Reconsideration to the Discipline Chair within 5 days of receiving the decision, in which they must indicate why the sanction is inappropriate, provide all evidence to support their position, and suggest a sanction that would be appropriate.
* Should the Discipline Chair accept the Respondent’s suggestion, that new sanction will take effect immediately upon notifying the Case Manager and the Parties of their decision; should the Discipline Chair reject the Respondent’s suggestion, they shall inform the Case Manager and the Parties and the initial complaint will proceed to Process #2.
* While the Complainant may not contest or appeal an imposed sanction, they may contest a non- sanction by informing the Discipline Chair within 5 days of receiving the decision that they are not satisfied; the Discipline Chair shall inform the Case Manager and the Respondent and the initial complaint will proceed to Process #2.

**Process #2 – Major Infraction**

A major infraction is misconduct that results in, or has the potential to result in, harm to another individual, to the organization and its character, and/or to the reputation of the sport itself; it may be a single incident or a pattern of behaviour such as:

a) A prank or practical joke that endangers the safety or wellbeing of others

b) Conduct that intentionally interferes with a competition or with an athlete’s preparation

for competition

c) A major incident of violence (e.g., fighting, attacking, sucker punching)

d) A major breach of team rules

e) A major violation of the Code of Ethics and Conduct, including with regard to the use or

possession of alcohol, cannabis, and prohibited or illegal substances

f) Consistent disregard for RVG’s by-laws, policies, rules, or regulations

g) Conduct that intentionally damages the RVG’s image, credibility, or reputation

h) Vandalism of the RVG’s property or intentional mishandling of its finances

i) Any instance of discrimination

j) Repeated minor incidents

k) A criminal charge or conviction

l) Any other serious conduct that does not constitute abuse or maltreatment

\*The definition of a major infraction excludes any instance of abuse or maltreatment as outlined in the Abuse, Maltreatment, and Discrimination Policy\*.

* Upon determining that the complaint should be handled under Process #2, the Case Manager shall:

a) Appoint a Discipline Panel to hear the complaint which shall, at their discretion, consist

of either a single arbitrator or a panel of three persons;

b) Appoint one of the Discipline Panel members to serve as Chair, as necessary;

c) Decide, in cooperation with the Discipline Panel, the format by which the complaint will

be heard such as an oral hearing in person or by video or teleconference, a hearing based on a review of submitted documentary evidence, or some combination of these methods;

d) Coordinate all administrative aspects and provide assistance and logistical support to the Discipline Panel;

e) Provide any other service or support that may be necessary to ensure a fair and timely proceeding.

* The hearing will be governed by the procedures that the Case Manager and Discipline Panel deem appropriate in the circumstances, provided that the Parties are given sufficient notice of the day, time, and place/medium of the hearing, and that copies of any written documents the Parties wish to have considered are provided to both Parties and the Discipline Panel in advance of the hearing.
* The Parties may engage a representative, advisor, or legal counsel at their own expense.
* The Discipline Panel may request that any other individual participate and give evidence at the hearing; the Discipline Panel may allow any oral evidence, document, or thing relevant to the complaint, may exclude such evidence that is unduly repetitious, and may place such weight on the evidence as it deems appropriate.
* The Respondent may waive a hearing if they acknowledge the facts of the incident, in which case the Discipline Panel will determine the appropriate sanction; the Discipline Panel may still hold a hearing for the purpose of determining the sanction.
* The hearing will proceed in any event, even if a Party chooses not to participate.
* If a decision may affect a third party to the extent that the third party would have recourse to a complaint or an appeal in their own right, the third party will become a Party to the current complaint and will be bound by the decision.
* In fulfilling its duties, the Discipline Panel may obtain independent advice or legal counsel.
* Upon hearing and/or reviewing the matter, the Discipline Panel shall determine, by a majority vote, whether an infraction occurred, and if so, the sanctions to be imposed; the Discipline Panel may apply the following disciplinary sanctions, singularly or in combination:

a) Verbal or written reprimand

b) Verbal or written apology to the affected parties

c) Service or other contribution to RVG, including reimbursement of the cost

of repairs for property damage

d) Removal of certain privileges of membership

e) Suspension from certain teams, events, and/or activities for a designated period

f) Withholding of funding for a designated period

g) Suspension of membership or expulsion from RVG

h) Any other sanction considered appropriate for the offence

* The Discipline Chair may also impose corrective action through educational training for the Respondent, either in addition to or in lieu of any disciplinary sanction.
* The Discipline Panel's decision and reasoning will be distributed in writing to all Parties, the Case Manager, and the NBGA within 14 days of the hearing’s conclusion; in extraordinary circumstances, the Discipline Panel may first issue a verbal or summary decision soon after the hearing’s conclusion, with the full written decision to be issued before the end of the 14-day period.
* Unless the Discipline Panel decides otherwise, any sanction shall take immediate effect notwithstanding an appeal; failure to comply with a sanction will result in an automatic suspension until such time as compliance occurs.
* The decision of the Discipline Panel may be appealed in accordance with the Appeal Policy.

**Process #3 – Incidents Involving Abuse or Maltreatment**

* If the Case Manager determines that the complaint involves abuse or maltreatment of any kind, it shall be directed to NBGA and they in turn will complete the complaint process with the NBSSDRP; the Case Manager shall use the examples as described in the Abuse, Maltreatment, and Discrimination Policy and the Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport to determine if the alleged behaviour constitutes abuse or maltreatment.
* If there is any doubt as to whether abuse or maltreatment has occurred, the Case Manager shall nonetheless refer the complaint to the NBGA; if the NBGA determines that the complaint does not amount to abuse or maltreatment, the Case Manager shall then determine if the complaint should be handled under Process #1 or #2.

**Suspension Pending a Hearing**

* RVG may determine that an alleged incident is of such seriousness as to warrant an immediate suspension of an individual’s membership privileges/employment pending completion of an investigation; this decision may NOT be appealed.
* If an employee is suspended pending an investigation RVG will immediately notify the NBGA.

**Criminal Charges and Convictions**

* If an individual that is employed by RVG/Member of Board of Directors has been charged with a criminal offence, they may be immediately suspended by RVG pending the resolution of the criminal charges; this decision may not be appealed.
* Regardless of the outcome of the criminal process, RVG may subsequently pursue disciplinary action in accordance with this policy.
* RVG may determine that a criminal conviction will result in immediate expulsion from the organization without the need for a disciplinary hearing; criminal convictions that may result in expulsion include, but are not necessarily limited to:

a) Any offence involving trafficking under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act

b) Any sexual offence

c) Any offence involving violence, including assault

d) Any offence involving a minor or vulnerable person

e) Any offence related to child pornography

f) Any offence involving fraud

g) Any offence that involves a loss of life, injury to third parties, or any significant breach of

trust

**Refusal to Participate in the Process**

If a Respondent refuses to participate in the complaints and discipline process, or attempts to circumvent the process by failing to respond to a complaint in a thorough or timely fashion (or at all), the process shall proceed nonetheless based on the information made available by the Complainant and any witnesses.

**Confidentiality**

The complaints process and discipline proceedings are confidential and involve only the necessary parties, which may include:

a) RVG

b) The NBGA, including the Executive Director, President, and Board of Directors

c) The Complainant and the Respondent, including any designated advisor or legal counsel

and any minor’s adult representative

d) The Case Manager, Discipline Chair, and Discipline Panel

e) The NBSSDRP

f) GymCan

g) Any independent advisors to the Case Manager, Discipline Chair, or Discipline Panel

h)The Town of Florenceville Executive employees

* Once a complaint is initiated and until a decision is released, none of the involved parties will disclose information related to the complaint or discipline process to any person outside of the proceedings; despite any duty of confidentiality, RVG or the NBGA may be legally obligated to contact a minor’s parent, relevant law enforcement officials, and/or child welfare authorities in certain situations.
* Any breach of this confidentiality requirement could result in further sanctions by the Discipline Chair or Discipline Panel, and may initiate a formal complaint subject to the proceedings of this policy.

**Disclosure and Enforcement of Sanctions**

* RVG shall maintain all records from the complaint process and disciplinary proceedings; decisions rendered and sanctions imposed may be disclosed as necessary to NBGA, as well as to GymCan and other provincial/territorial gymnastics organizations in accordance with the national reciprocity agreement.
* When a membership suspension or expulsion is imposed, that person is ineligible to serve any function within RVG or the NBGA or attend or participate in any events or activities.
* RVG shall disclose all disciplinary decisions from their own complaints management process to the NBGA, which may further disclose such records at its discretion or as required to ensure consistent enforcement across jurisdictions; the NBGA will recognize, respect, and enforce disciplinary sanctions imposed by member clubs, GymCan, or any other provincial/territorial gymnastics organization.

**Costs**

* The Parties shall be responsible for all costs associated with filing or responding to a complaint, including any travel and accommodations necessary to attend a hearing and any costs associated with legal or other type of representation.
* The NBGA shall be responsible for the costs associated with the administration of the complaints process, including any investigation, disciplinary hearing, and its own legal representation.

**Alternative Dispute Resolution(ADR)**

* At any point in this process, the dispute may move to ADR if all parties agree that such a course of action would be mutually beneficial.

**INVESTIGATIONS POLICY**

RVG’s Complaints and Discipline Policy is intended to facilitate the resolution of complaints in a manner that does not require engaging additional resources to uncover relevant facts and bring the issue to a close. It relies on the Complainant and Respondent to provide factual information, including witness statements and other relevant documentation, to substantiate or defend against a complaint, and permits the Executive Board, Discipline Chair or Discipline Panel to make a decision based on the information provided. However, RVG recognizes that there may be circumstances under which an investigation is necessary or desirable, such as when a Party to the complaint is unable to provide adequate or necessary information or when the situation leading to a complaint is complex.

* In accordance with the Complaints and Discipline Policy, the Case Manager has the responsibility and discretion to determine whether an investigation into a complaint is necessary; RVG Board of Directors may also initiate an investigation when made aware of concerns but when no formal complaint has been reported.
* Upon determining that an investigation is necessary or desirable, the Case Manager or the RVG Board of Directors shall appoint an Investigator to review the complaint or as otherwise directed.
* The Investigator may be a representative of RVG Board of Directors or an independent third-party skilled in investigating; the Investigator should not have a conflict-of-interest and should have no connection to either Party involved in the complaint.
* All parties involved will adhere to all disclosure and reporting responsibilities required by any government entity, local police force, or child protection agency.
* If the complaint is related to workplace harassment, federal and/or provincial legislation may apply; the Investigator should review workplace safety legislation and/or consult independent experts to determine if this is the case.
* The investigation may take any form as decided by the Investigator, guided by any applicable legislation and in consultation with the Case Manager and RVG, where applicable; it may include:

a) Interview of the Complainant;

b) Interview of witnesses;

c) Developing a statement of facts (Complainant’s perspective), prepared by the

Investigator, acknowledged by the Complainant, and provided to the Respondent;

d) Interview of the Respondent;

e) Interview of additional witnesses; and

f) Developing a statement of facts (Respondent’s perspective), prepared by the

Investigator, acknowledged by the Respondent, and provided to the Complainant.

* Should the Investigator find that there are possible instances of offences under the Criminal Code, particularly related to criminal harassment (stalking), uttering threats, assault, sexual interference, or sexual exploitation, they shall advise the Complainant and RVG to refer the matter to police.
* Upon completion of their investigation, the Investigator shall prepare a report that will include a summary of evidence provided by the Parties and any witnesses (including both statements of facts), and a recommendation of whether, on a balance of probabilities, an incident occurred that could be considered misconduct or a breach of a governing document.
* The Case Manager shall determine next steps, according to the Complaints and Discipline Policy, and shall provide the report to the Discipline Chair or Discipline Panel as required; the Discipline Chair or Discipline Panel shall consider the report, in addition to submissions from the Parties, before rendering a decision.
* The Investigator will make every effort to preserve the confidentiality of the Complainant, Respondent, and any other party, however maintaining anonymity may be difficult and disclosure of information may be necessary for the purpose of investigation, taking corrective action, or as otherwise required by RVG policy.

**APPEAL POLICY**

* The purpose of this policy is to outline a fair and expedient process by which individuals may appeal a decision related to membership, conflict-of-interest, or discipline matters. It is open to any individual directly affected by a decision made by RVG, provided there are sufficient grounds for the appeal as outlined herein.
* A decision cannot be appealed simply because an individual disagrees or is unhappy with the outcome – there must be legitimate cause or basis for a decision to be reviewed. An appeal may only be heard if there are sufficient grounds for appeal, namely, RVG made a decision that it did not have the authority or jurisdiction to make, failed to follow the procedures set out in its own governing documents, made a decision that was patently unreasonable, or made a decision that was influenced by bias. Bias is defined as a lack of neutrality to such an extent that the decision-maker appears not to have considered other views.
* Importantly, this policy does not apply to decisions relating to: RVG’s operational structure and committee appointments; budget development or implementation; employment matters; the development and content of policies and regulations, including team selection and funding criteria; policies, procedures, or criteria established by entities other than RVG; decisions or discipline arising within the business of RVG; the rules of the sport; or doping infractions. Furthermore, decisions made under the terms of this policy are final and binding and may not be appealed.

**Filing an Appeal**

* Individuals who wish to appeal a decision have seven days from the date on which they received the decision to notify RVG of their intent to file an appeal; their notice of intent must be submitted, in writing, to the President of RVG and must include:

a) The date they were advised of the decision they wish to appeal;

b) A copy of the decision they wish to appeal, or a description of the decision if a written

document is not available;

c) The name and contact information of the Respondent and any Affected Parties, if

known;

d) Grounds for the appeal, including detailed reasoning and all evidence that supports those grounds;

e) The requested remedy or remedies; and

f) A $250 administrative fee (payable to NBGA upon request), which will be refunded if the appeal is upheld.

* Any appeal filed outside of the seven-day window must include a written request for a filing extension, which will be reviewed by the RVG Board of Directors and approved at their discretion.
* A parent or other adult representative may file an appeal on behalf of a minor; all communication must be directed to the adult representative and if an oral hearing is held, only the minor’s representative is required to attend.
* Upon receipt of a notice of intent to appeal, the President of RVG shall provide a copy to the board members and NBGA who shall appoint an Appeal Manager to fulfill the required responsibilities.

**Appeal Manager Responsibilities**

**\* NBGA Safe Sport Policy contains information for this category – it is not the responsibility of RVG\***

**Alternative Dispute Resolution**

* At any point in this process, the appeal may move to ADR if all Parties agree that such a course of action would be mutually beneficial.

**ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION POLICY**

RVG supports the principles of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) as a means for resolving disputes before issues escalate to formal complaints or appeals. The ADR techniques of negotiation, facilitation, and mediation are effective and often less adversarial ways to settle disputes. ADR may also avoid or minimize the uncertainty, costs, and other negative effects that can arise with lengthy disciplinary hearings, appeals processes, or litigation. In recognition that negotiated settlements are usually preferable to arbitrated outcomes, RVG encourages all individuals to communicate openly, collaborate, and use problem-solving and negotiation techniques to resolve their differences.

* Opportunities for ADR may be pursued at any point during the complaints or appeals process if all parties agree that such a course of action would be mutually beneficial.
* The ADR process is confidential and involves only the necessary parties; no information with respect to the ADR process or the underlying issue or complaint shall be disclosed to any person outside of the proceedings.
* Any breach of the confidentiality of this policy may be subject to the proceedings set forth in the Complaints and Discipline Policy.

**Definitions**

• Athlete – any individual who is registered with RVG in a recreational or competitive gymnastics class or program.

• Individual – any participant as defined below as well as anyone providing services to, or engaged in the activities of RVG, including but not limited to, consultants, support personnel, guest coaches, event organizers, parents, and spectators.

• Minor – any individual who is under the age of majority; in New Brunswick, the age of majority is 19 years old.

• NBGA – New Brunswick Gymnastics Association

• Parent – any legal guardian or other responsible adult caring for a minor on behalf of the parent.

• Participant – any individual who is registered with RVG and engaging in its programs and services, including athletes, coaches, administrators, employees, judges, visitors, coach developers, and volunteers.

• Programs, Events, Activities – may be used interchangeably to refer to all business and services of RVG including but not limited to: gymnastics classes, practices, training, and programming; camps, competitions, and associated travel; medical and sport- professional consultations, evaluations, and treatments that take place in the gymnastics environment; the work and office environment; meetings, coach education courses, and professional development; and social functions.

• Visitor – any individual who provides non-technical support to athletes or teams including but not limited to choreographers/dance instructors, mental performance coaches, nutritionists, physiotherapists, massage therapists, medical professionals, and other Integrated Support Team (IST) members, as well as team managers, chaperones, and other delegates. A visitor is invited by RVG Board of Executives/Head Coach to be involved in an activity with RVG athletes.

• “Case Manager” – an independent individual appointed by RVG Board of Executives to receive, administer, and direct complaints.

• “Complainant” – the individual(s) making a complaint, alleging an infraction of any applicable policy or standard of conduct; this includes any adult acting on behalf of a minor.

• “Days” – days including weekends and holidays.

• “Discipline Chair” – an individual appointed by the Case Manager to handle minor complaints or infractions.

• “Discipline Panel” – an individual or a group of 3 individuals appointed by the Case Manager to handle major complaints or infractions.

• “Party” or “Parties” – the group or groups involved with a particular complaint, i.e., the

Complainant and/or the Respondent

• “Respondent” – the individual(s) responding to a complaint, alleged to have committed an infraction of any applicable policy or standard of conduct; this includes any adult acting on behalf of a minor