



PREPARATION GROUP

INFORMATION for PARENTS

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CONTENTS

CONTENTS	2
1.0 GENERAL	3
2.0 COMMITMENT	3
3.0 HOW ARE GYMNASTS SELECTED FOR THE PREPARATION GROUP?	3
4.0 HOW IS THE PREPARATION GROUP DIFFERENT FROM GENERAL GYMNASTICS?	3
5.0 WHAT DO THE GYMNASTS DO IN THE PREPARATION GROUP?	3
6.0 HOW ARE GYMNASTS SELECTED FOR THE SQUADS?	4
7.0 COMPETITIONS & DISPLAYS	5
8.0 WHEN AND WHY ARE GYMNASTS MOVED TO OTHER GROUPS?	5
9.0 SCHOOLWORK	6
10.0 PREPAREDNESS FOR TRAINING	6
11.0 FITNESS	6
12.0 WELFARE	7
13.0 ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY	7
14.0 COMMUNICATION	7
15.0 REPORTS	7
16.0 INJURIES	8
17.0 ATTITUDE, BEHAVIOUR & WORK ETHIC	8
18.0 BEHAVIOUR AT EVENTS	8
19.0 REMOVAL FROM THE GROUP	9
20.0 FEES	9
21.0 OTHER DOCUMENTS YOU SHOULD READ	9
22.0 FURTHER QUESTIONS?	10

1.0 GENERAL

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to inform parents of the structure, operation and purpose of the Preparation Group.
- 1.2 At Spelthorne Gymnastics we have several Gymnastics Programmes suitable for all ages and levels of ability, categorised as follows:
 - 1.2.1 **Pre-School** – leading to General or Mini's
 - 1.2.2 **Mini's** – leading to Advanced Mini's or Pre-Advanced
 - 1.2.3 **Advanced Mini's** – leading to Acro Squad 4, Tumbling Squad 3, Preparation Squad, or Pre-Advanced.
 - 1.2.4 **General Gymnastics** Groups – General, Intermediate, Pre-Advanced, Junior Advanced and Senior Advanced levels.
 - 1.2.5 **Preparation Squad** – leading to Advanced, Tumbling or Acro Squad 4
 - 1.2.6 **Squads** for Acrobatics and Tumbling

2.0 COMMITMENT

- 2.1 Consistent training is important for continuous improvement. If you are unable to commit to regular training, then it is probably better to participate in our General Gymnastics Programme where attendance is less demanding.

3.0 HOW ARE GYMNASTS SELECTED FOR THE PREPARATION GROUP?

- 3.1 Gymnasts are selected for the Preparation Groups by our coaches because they have shown ability when moving through the earlier classes.

4.0 HOW IS THE PREPARATION GROUP DIFFERENT FROM GENERAL GYMNASTICS?

- 4.1 The Preparation Group Programme is different from our General Gymnastics Programme because (a) the gymnasts train more frequently and (b) it aims to prepare and improve individual skills in more structured (disciplined) environment and at a faster rate.

5.0 WHAT DO THE GYMNASTS DO IN THE PREPARATION GROUP?

- 5.1 The Preparation Group continues to use the Spelthorne Gymnastics Badge Scheme as its foundation, so it parallels our General Gymnastics Programme, but allows faster development due to increased training time and more selective participants.

6.0 HOW ARE GYMNASTS SELECTED FOR THE SQUADS?

- 6.1 The Preparation Group is not a guaranteed pathway to the Squads because selection of gymnasts into Squads is taken from all of our programmes depending on the type, level, age, ability of the space available in the Squad.
- 6.2 Unfortunately, places (and the size of the squads) in the Acrobatics and Tumbling Squad programmes are limited due to available time, staff and space in the gym and therefore it is not always possible to accommodate everyone.
- 6.3 The Squads are always kept full but are also dynamic and constantly changing as partnerships change, gymnasts retire or leave. Therefore, spaces in the Squads are always becoming available and our coaches will try to fill them with the most suitable replacements as quickly as possible.
- 6.4 Movement from the Preparation Group into any of the squads is not guaranteed. It is possible that no suitable places in the squad arise for some gymnasts, and they remain in the Preparation or Advanced General Gymnastics Groups.
- 6.5 When places become available in the Acrobatic or Tumbling Squads our coaches will normally (but not always) initially look at the gymnasts in the Preparation Groups to fill those spaces because they should be more advanced than gymnasts in other groups.
- 6.6 However, there is no guarantee that every gymnast will eventually be placed into a Squad. Some gymnasts may be recommended to transfer into our General Gymnastics Programme if the coaches consider it is more suited to their development.
- 6.7 Acrobatic partnerships are formed by the coaches based upon a range of factors such as age (to fit within the NDP & FIG age categories), height difference between the partners, fitness, maturity, technical ability, strength, work ethic etc.
- 6.8 Tumbling selection into squads is based upon age, power, spacial awareness and other factors.
- 6.9 We also consider each gymnast's attendance record if considering them for places in the Acrobatic and Tumbling Squads, where attendance is critical. If a gymnast's attendance is poor, it is most likely that they will be moved to one of the General Classes.

7.0 COMPETITIONS & DISPLAYS

- 7.1 The Preparation Group participates in a number of events during the year.
- 7.2 Club Championships
 - 7.2.1 At the annual Club Championships. This is normally held in June and requires the gymnasts to compete across a range of activities to show their broad range of skills.
- 7.3 Tumbling Competitions
 - 7.3.1 The Preparation Group focusses on individual gymnastics skills and therefore we enter tumbling competitions with these gymnasts.
 - 7.3.2 These competitions start at Regional level following the National Development Plan set by British Gymnastics and can progress (through qualification) to National level with the opportunity to win British Championships Grades.
- 7.4 Displays
 - 7.4.1 We also encourage our Preparation Group to do displays where they can show off their skills in a more relaxed environment.
- 7.5 Acrobatics
 - 7.5.1 The gymnasts do not do any acrobatic (Partner) work unless they are selected for one of the Acrobatic Squads or there is some partner work involved in a display routine.

8.0 WHEN AND WHY ARE GYMNASTS MOVED TO OTHER GROUPS?

- 8.1 If, at any time, our coaches feel that a gymnast would be better placed in another group, they will speak to the parents and discuss the change. We only move gymnasts if, for whatever reason, we think it is beneficial for them.
- 8.2 The most frequent reasons for moving groups are:
 - 8.2.1 Struggling with the demands of the group
 - 8.2.2 Struggling with the skills being learned
 - 8.2.3 Pace of learning is too fast
 - 8.2.4 Missing too many sessions
 - 8.2.5 Gymnast showing signs of unhappiness in the group
- 8.3 It is important for parents to remember that it is not their aspirations that are important.

9.0 SCHOOLWORK

- 9.1 Academic education is important, and we do not expect this to suffer as a result of their training. We rarely have any problems with schoolwork. On the contrary, most of our gymnasts do very well at school and often improve when they move into a more demanding training environment.
- 9.2 There is a dedicated study room at the gym where schoolwork can be completed before or after training. We ask that gymnasts work under 'library' conditions in this room.
- 9.3 If you do find that schoolwork is suffering, then please talk to the coaches about it and they can discuss options.

10.0 PREPAREDNESS FOR TRAINING

- 10.1 Gymnastics training requires a high level of discipline, concentration and effort. It's therefore important that the gymnasts arrive at each training session in a good level of preparedness: mentally, physically and attired. Gymnasts must therefore:
 - 10.1.1 Arrive on time. This means ready to line-up and start warming up at the class start time. We recommend arriving 10 mins beforehand.
 - 10.1.2 Arrive in suitable training clothing – a leotard, lycra shorts, tight fitting top etc. Revealing clothing is not allowed. Clothing must be supportive.
 - 10.1.3 Arrive fresh and ready to train. Gymnasts should ensure they have had sufficient sleep the night before training.
 - 10.1.4 Long hair must be tied into a neat, tidy and a secure bun
 - 10.1.5 Gymnasts should notify their coaches of any injuries or reasons why they are not able to train fully – i.e., sickness, tiredness, injury etc.

11.0 FITNESS

- 11.1 Gymnasts need to be fit to be able to train safely and effectively.
- 11.2 We use the term 'fitness' to cover a number of attributes such as strength, flexibility and overall body condition.
 - 11.2.1 All gymnasts need to maintain a level of fitness that enables them to manoeuvre and control their bodies with ease.
 - 11.2.2 Health and fitness are also key aspects of safety.
 - 11.2.3 This means that gymnasts will need to maintain lifestyle habits that are as healthy and balanced as possible.

- 11.3 Parents will be advised if there are any issues arising concerning fitness.
- 11.4 Equally, if you have concerns or questions relating to health and fitness, please do not hesitate to contact our coaches or welfare officer.

12.0 WELFARE

- 12.1 The welfare of all gymnasts at Spelthorne Gymnastics is a priority. All gymnasts/parents are encouraged to speak to any of our welfare officers if they have any concerns.
- 12.2 In addition, our Welfare Manager tries to meet once or twice per year with gymnasts to discuss training and any questions or issues that they may have with regards to welfare.
- 12.3 If you have any welfare concerns, there is a 'welfare box' in the corridor opposite the girls' toilets.

13.0 ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY

- 13.1 Your gymnast will be expected to attend all training sessions other than in exceptional circumstances such as illness. If your gymnast is going to be late or miss a session, please email the coaches on.
 - 13.1.1 Preparation Group - info@spelthornegymnastics.com
- 13.2 Your gymnast should aim to arrive at the gym at least **10 minutes** before the start time to allow them to get changed etc.
- 13.3 If, in the opinion of the coaches, there is too much absence from training then participation in the Group may be, after discussion with parents, reviewed and you will be given the opportunity to take part in the General Gymnastics Programme which is a less demanding programme.

14.0 COMMUNICATION

- 14.1 When the gymnasts start their first year of senior school (age 11) we expect them to be able to manage themselves and communicate directly with the coaches and pass information back to their parents.
- 14.2 If you would like to ask a question from any of the Preparation Group coaching team, you can email them using the addresses above.

15.0 REPORTS

- 15.1 Every six months you will receive a written report showing your gymnasts progress with comments from the coaches with regards to their performance, effort, attitude, attendance, sportsmanship etc.

16.0 INJURIES

- 16.1 Injuries are part of sport and can happen at any time. We expect the gymnasts to be able to communicate with the coaches if they are injured or unwell. If you are aware that your gymnast is injured, then please ensure they speak to the coach before training starts.
- 16.2 When an injury occurs to a gymnast our aim is to return the gymnast to full training as quickly and safely as possible. It is therefore important that the parent obtains a specialist (GP/Physiotherapist referred) diagnosis of the injury immediately and a recommended treatment process. If this involves physiotherapy, this must be carried out without delay, and we leave this to the parents to arrange. We will adapt the training programme to adopt the specialist's recommendations.
- 16.3 For most of the injuries that we encounter the training programme can be adapted so that the gymnast learns other skills and maintains a level of fitness.

17.0 ATTITUDE, BEHAVIOUR & WORK ETHIC

- 17.1 Your gymnast will be expected to maintain a high standard of behaviour and discipline at all times. This includes behaviour towards staff, coaches and other members of the Group and all other members of the Club.
- 17.2 Bullying and/or disrespecting other members of the Club will not be tolerated.
- 17.3 Your gymnast will also be expected to maintain a high work rate/ethic.
- 17.4 You should not use social media platforms to comment, criticise or verbally abuse Spelthorne Gymnastics, its members, staff or officials in an inappropriate, inflammatory or unacceptable manner, and understand that this will result in the club following British Gymnastics guidance and may be subject to disciplinary actions such as removal from the Group. If you have any grievances or concerns, then please speak directly to a member of our welfare team. Please also refer to our Social Media Policy.

18.0 BEHAVIOUR AT EVENTS

- 18.1 Your gymnast will be expected to maintain a high standard of behaviour and discipline at events and may be required to sign the relevant Travel Code of Conduct. This includes behaviour towards organisers, staff, coaches, other competitors and other members of the acrobatic partnership.
- 18.2 Communicating with your gymnast during events, be it at home or abroad, is most likely to distract them from the task in hand. We would therefore ask

that you restrict communication. If you are attending an event as a spectator then, in our experience, it is better that you remain in the background and simply spectate so that the gymnast can follow the coach's instructions and not be drawn away from the team. If you feel you must communicate with your gymnast, then please try to do this through the coach or support staff.

19.0 REMOVAL FROM THE GROUP

- 19.1 Your gymnast may be removed from the Group if:
 - 19.1.1 Attendance falls below the coach's expectation, and we have held a meeting to review this with you, but it has not improved.
 - 19.1.2 The Gymnast's conduct either in or outside the gym is not conducive to remaining in the programme – at the coach's discretion.
 - 19.1.3 The gymnasts/parent falls behind with payment of fees.
 - 19.1.4 The gymnast's level of fitness, discipline or work rate falls below that required by the coaches or jeopardises the safe performance of elements.
 - 19.1.5 The gymnast shows a behaviour or training trait that we consider to be dangerous to either themselves or their partners.
- 19.2 In the event a gymnast leaves the Group they will be offered a place on another programme which is more suitable for them.

20.0 FEES

- 20.1 Training fees are payable monthly by direct debit and are averaged to cover all the training sessions for the year. So, you pay the same amount every month even though the number of training sessions in the month may vary when there are holiday breaks etc.

21.0 OTHER DOCUMENTS YOU SHOULD READ

- 21.1 The other **important documents** you should also be familiar with are available here:
 - 21.1.1 [Club Policies - Spelthorne Gymnastics](#)
 - 21.1.2 [Codes of Conduct - Spelthorne Gymnastics](#)
- 21.2 If you need a copy of any of these documents, you will find them on our website or you can request a copy by emailing us on info@spelthornegymnastics.com

22.0 FURTHER QUESTIONS?

- 22.1 If you have further questions relating to this document, you can email us on info@spelthornegymnastics.com quoting the reference 'Elite Acro Protocol for Parents' and we will respond as soon as we can. We will also make sure any answers are, if necessary, communicated to everyone.

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