

NLGA Handbook

2023- 2024 Edition

Our Mission Statement

At Northern Lights Gymnastics Academy, we believe the sport of gymnastics is beneficial for every child's physical and mental development and that all children have the right to achieve at their own level of excellence. Our program provides a safe and enjoyable atmosphere, which allows every child to experience personal success in the sport, beginning with simple motor skills, promoting spatial awareness, and hand-eye coordination eventually resulting in strong self-confidence and a positive self-image. Our gymnastic curriculum is designed to meet the needs of each child's ability, and each child is encouraged to set their own goals with the help of their coach; whether it is to accomplish a cartwheel or earn a spot on the competitive team.

Order of Importance in Gymnastics Training at NLGA

- #1 **SAFETY:** We consider the physical and mental safety of our athletes to be our primary focus.
- #2 **LIFE LESSONS & SPORTSMANSHIP:** Responsibility, respect, resilience, perspective, cooperation, problem solving, time management, teamwork, multi-tasking, consequences for poor choices or actions, dealing with disappointment, etc.
- #3 **GYMNASTICS SKILLS**

NLGA Coaching Philosophy

NLGA believes that our coaches' jobs are to safely instill a love of gymnastics and fitness while encouraging each child to be a positively contributing member of society. We expect our coaches to do their best to motivate each athlete to reach their individual potential, whether it be learning a basic cartwheel, earning the coveted Level 10 status, or being able to participate and contribute in a group activity setting. Our coaches are not here to force any child to do gymnastics, project our personally held religious or political beliefs onto any child, or intentionally put any child at risk of physical or emotional trauma. Our staff is advised to adhere to USA Gymnastics' Safe Sport policy

Information to Note.

Social Media, Email, Contact and Photo Release

- The vast majority of important information will be sent via email from the Parent Portal to the primary address listed on your NLGA registration account. Please note that if your child is not enrolled in classes or if you have “opted out” of NLGA emails, you will not receive the important emails sent through the Parent Portal. Sending email messages eliminates the challenges associated with lost notes and children not being present the day the notes are distributed. If you do not check the primary email address listed on your account, please change the primary email address to one that you or someone who you trust to relay the information does regularly monitor. Please understand that NLGA is not responsible for you not being informed due to not checking these messages.
- Please follow us on Facebook. Many of our updates will also be posted here.
- If your family has special circumstances or non-traditional living situations, please make sure we are aware of everyone who needs to be contacted. Add all relevant persons and their individual contact information to your Parent Portal account as that is where emails will be sent and phone numbers stored.
- Northern Lights Gymnastics Academy utilizes an “opt out” policy in regards to photography, videography, social media, website, customer portal, etc.. If you do not wish for your child’s image to be taken or published, we require that you submit the request in writing via email to office@northernlightsgymnastics.org or board@northernlightsgymnastics.org. If we do not receive express written forbiddance, we will assume permission is granted.

Health and Medication

- If your child claims to be injured or sick, the NLGA coaches and staff will not force or allow them to continue practice. The child will be removed from class for the day and it will be left up to the parent to decide whether the child is being truthful about their ailment and to take action towards the behavior outside of the gym; NLGA will not be liable for forcing a child to practice in poor health or against their will.
- NLGA’s staff members will not dispense medications of any kind to any gymnast. No medications should be kept in your child’s locker or with her personal items in the gym. Your child should take all necessary medications before arriving at the gym. Fast-acting inhalers for asthma is an exception.
- If your child has health conditions for which a doctor has been seen or has prescribed medications, please let us know so that we can be prepared in the event of an attack. The health and success of your gymnast is very important to us.

Safety Policies During “Extreme Situations”: Severe Weather, State of Emergency, and Facility Danger.

- If Beulah Public School is canceled due to severe weather, NLGA will not be open or attending shows; watch Facebook and your primary email for official updates.
 - If severe weather develops after school hours, NLGA will send notification by Facebook and your primary email address.
 - If we officially cancel classes, make-up classes will be held..
 - If notification is not posted or received, it is ultimately your decision whether or not to attend class.
 - If there is severe weather while your child is already in class:
 - Building administration will meet to quickly devise the best evacuation plan for the current situation, then all families will be contacted with specific instructions and timelines.
- A state-of-emergency will be handled as the situation dictates and information will be released as it becomes available.
- In the event of danger in the facility, such as a fire, we will evacuate to the main parking lot on the west side of the building.

Standards and Expectations Explanations

These standards and expectations for both athletes and parents are meant to reinforce our #2 goal of instilling important life lessons and sportsmanship qualities in each athlete and family that participates in our program: (Responsibility, respect, resilience, perspective, cooperation, teamwork, multi-tasking, consequences, dealing with disappointment, no one is perfect/everyone is different, etc). We do not teach with the “because I told you so” mindset; we believe the “why” is important.

Respect towards coaches means...

- o Following directions as given, without argument, complaining, negotiating, back-talk, rolling of eyes, or sassy remarks.
- o Being timely after a direction is given shows responsibility, initiative, drive, and commitment to becoming a better athlete. This is an important skill to have as a student and as a future employee.
- o Being polite and agreeable in the face of a disliked activity shows maturity, understanding of the complexity of the sport, and suggests that the child will be a positive, hard-working addition to the work-force someday. Rude or obstinate athletes will not be given the opportunity to sully the experience of the athletes who are willing to work, and will be asked to leave the gym for the remainder of the class.
- o Being humble and patient when challenged by a new skill, a level change, or any other unforeseen variable in the gym.
- o Even though an athlete may practice advanced skills at practice, he/she will not perform those skills until the coaches determine that she meets all of the NLGA standards and can perform the desired skill safely and successfully.
- o Some gymnasts may take years to move through levels while some athletes may move through multiple levels in one season; some gymnasts work extremely hard with little gain while some athletes may advance quickly with little effort. Though this doesn't seem fair, that is the unfortunate reality of physical sports.
- o Conducting oneself with discretion, consideration, and poise when in the NLGA facility or dealing with NLGA staff, particularly in front of children (your child, children in your child's class, or other bystanders).
- o If you have developmental concerns about your gymnast or want an update on his/her progress, please discuss this with the Head Coach directly; the coach will meet with you 1:1 in a private setting if desired. Because other parents and the Board of Directors do not coach your gymnast, all practice questions and concerns should be brought directly to your coaches first.
- o NLGA does not support verbal abuse, defamation of character, belittlement, or poor manners directed at ANYONE, NLGA affiliated or otherwise, and profanity is NEVER acceptable.
- o If you have a problem with a coach, please follow the appropriate chain of command to ensure the problem is resolved. The grievance procedure is located on the final page of this handbook. Please be aware that if you choose not to bring issues to the attention of the people involved, the problem cannot be fixed and you become an enabler of the problem. Please help us make NLGA a better place..
- o Please trust that the coaches will not force anyone to do anything they are not physically or mentally ready to do; often, a child is physically ready far before they are mentally prepared. If the coach decides he/she is not ready, understand that it is for your child's safety. Forcing a child to do a dangerous skill before they are ready can cause, at best, a bad experience that creates a mental block preventing him/her from trying it again and, at worst, a catastrophic injury that could physically prevent him/her from living a normal life.
- o Please contact your coach with questions before voicing concerns or negative feelings in front of your athlete. If it is insinuated to a child, or they overhear a conversation you have with someone else, that their coach is “not good enough,” he/she will not trust his/her coach and his/her gymnastics will suffer. Be mindful of the conversations that take place around your child or that your child has access to (your phone, email, etc).
- o Please be aware that all clubs and coaches are different, and so are all gymnasts and parents. There are often many different correct answers to the same question. If the coaching philosophies of NLGA and its staff are in strong contrast to your vision for your athlete and he/she agrees with you, please consider exploring other options that may suit you and your gymnast better, whether that is another gymnastics club or another sport. We ask that you respect our differences without negative talk, unless our practices are unsafe for your child. We may not be the right match for you, but that doesn't mean our coaches or philosophies are wrong.
- o Please be aware that our coaches may coach multiple NLGA levels and teams, have full-time jobs outside of the gym, may be raising their own families, may be competitive gymnasts with rigorous practice and meet schedules, or are college/high school students with homework and school activities. Please respect their private time.

For the Athlete:**Respect towards each other means...**

- Supporting all teammates, regardless of skill level, social status, parental involvement at NLGA, town lived in, school attended, etc. Each member of our gym deserves equal respect from each other gymnast and family. Everyone is to encourage and support each other in becoming great athletes. Any person who commits a bullying offense against a NLGA member at the facility, at school, at home, in public, or on social media, will be required to give a public apology to the victim.
- Never critique, compare, or criticize any gymnast's performance, including your own, anywhere in the NLGA facility or at meet locations.
- No quarreling, name-calling, or making crude remarks to anyone in our facility, at home, in public, or on social media. We strive for an enjoyable atmosphere at NLGA and intentionally disrupting that enjoyment for any other person is unacceptable. Any offending person will be required to give a public apology to the victim and possibly the entire Team, depending on the severity of the action.
- Never intentionally create a dangerous situation or cause injury to another NLGA member through action or inaction. Any attempt will result in severe disciplinary action, which may include the offending child's permanent removal from the club (NO REFUNDS for tuition, uniforms, or other payments will be given).

Respect towards the club and facility means...

- Parents and spectators are not allowed to enter the NLGA gymnastics area during or after practice unless invited to do so by the coach for a specific reason.
- Gymnasts are not allowed in the gymnastics area without their coach. While in the gym, they should respect the space and equipment.
- Do not intentionally damage the equipment, carpet, paint, etc.
- Do not leave water bottles, supports/braces, headbands, or used tape, pre-wrap, or icepacks in the gym. Throw them away, take them home, or put them in their designated space. The staff is not responsible for what happens to these items if the gymnasts do not take care of them.

Respect towards the process means...

- Understanding that the amount of practice days signed up for, attended, AND the level of participation your gymnast puts forth is directly proportional to the amount of months it will take for your gymnast to reach his/her goals. Even with a high level of participation and determination, a large portion of your child's advancement also depends on his/her natural athleticism, ability, and both mental and physical maturity. A certain amount of time in a level does not mean that a child should be ready to or has earned the right to move to the next level. Please note that, under the supervision of current Team coaching staff at NLGA, being able to "chuck" a skill does not mean that a child "has" that skill; if the staff deems the child's performance unsafe, they will make the child rework the skill into a safe and acceptable version.
- Understanding that each athlete is responsible for his/her own gymnastics. The coaches are here to give direction, guidance, and correction and to physically assist the athletes who are actively interested in learning. The coaches are not here to force children to be gymnasts. If your athlete chooses not to follow direction or complete their assignments, they are choosing to slow their advancement. The consequences of these choices are an important life lesson that children should learn at an early age, before they enter the "real world."

Requirements of gymnastics classes:

Please arrive 5 minutes prior to class so your athlete can be ready when called into class. Warm-up is an important part of gymnastics to assure that the child's body is properly warmed-up to prevent injury.

Please be on time to pick up your child, it is very stressful to children when they are not picked up on time.

Please do not leave young children unsupervised in the lobby before class. The coaches are busy getting ready for classes or coaching and cannot watch children in the lobby. We are not responsible for accidents that happen in this area. If there is an issue with your unsupervised child being in the lobby prior to class further disciplinary action will be taken.

Please bring a water bottle labeled with your child's name(in case it gets forgotten we know who to return it too). This cuts down on children having to stand in line at the water fountain.

Proper attire: Girls: leotards without skirts(skirts can get caught on the bars) are required. Athletic pants and shorts are allowed over their leotards. Boys: form fitting shirts and shorts or athletic pants. Please nothing with buttons or zippers as these can damage our mats and equipment.

Please remember to pull hair back out of the child's face. Long hair can be in braids or ponytails. If the athlete's hair is in their face this poses safety issues and the child will not be allowed to participate in class that day.

Please have your child wait inside the building until you arrive to pick them up.

Parents are not allowed to be in the gym, with the exception of parent tot, during class time per our insurance policy.

NLGA will not be responsible for a child that leaves the building during class time. If this happens you will receive a phone call notifying you, but know that the staff will not be able to chase after your child.

We LOVE Questions - Please ask them!

If you are unsure of a policy, procedure, or anything pertaining to the gym or gymnastics, coach or administrator! If you don't know how something is supposed to work, please ask us so that we can teach you. If you are frustrated with something that is or is not happening, you hear something from your child or another family that is concerning or confusing, or you observe something that you don't feel comfortable with, please do not assume the worst – reach out to us! Contact us ASAP so that we can either address the situation immediately or explain what is going on in detail. Please do not wait until the season concludes or the next begins to make a complaint. We will not be angry with you for asking questions and we will NEVER “take it out” on your athlete. Let's make NLGA a drama-free zone!

NORTHERN LIGHTS GYMNASTICS ACADEMY POLICIES

The rules and policies, which govern the gymnasts and their parents, are outlined here. The list and the procedures noted below are not intended to be all-inclusive.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Northern Lights Gymnastics Academy Official Discipline Policy: Strike 3 Policy Little Dipper class and up

Strike One: Please don't do that. The coach nicely asks the athlete to refrain from doing the unwanted behavior. The coach will ask no more than 3 times if the behavior is not stopped they will get strike two.

Strike Two: Time Out: The athlete will be placed in a spot close to the class so they can be monitored. They will have to sit out for 5 minutes. Parents will be notified by email if this happens so we can discuss the situation.

Strike Three: Leave class for the day. This will be reserved for extreme cases.

We believe that kids need to learn the important life lesson that there are consequences attached to actions. We understand and expect that kids will be kids. Our number one job is to keep all kids safe. This is very difficult to do when children don't listen. We are trying to teach appropriate group behavior. We will treat all of our gymnasts and gym parents as individuals and will seek to impose the most effective disciplinary actions based on each unique set of circumstances.

Volunteer & Fundraising requirements

A \$75 check will be written out to NLGA and collected at the beginning of each session (separate from session fees). The check will be returned at the end of the specific session if the volunteer hours and fundraising requirements are fulfilled.

Volunteer Hours

Each family will be required to volunteer 1 hour per session. There will be many volunteer opportunities throughout the year. Some examples include, but not limited to: cleaning the gym, baking or cooking for fundraising events, helping organize fundraising items when delivered, spring show, pulling trailer with equipment, snow removal, or if you have a trade or something that can benefit the gym in any way. The volunteer hours will be communicated through Facebook, newsletters, and our customer portal with a sign up sent out through "sign up genius" when opportunities arise.

Fundraising Sales

There will be two fundraiser sales per session. The selling requirements will be included with the information given to your child. Volunteer hours do not count towards selling of fundraising products.

Please understand without the parent involvement and volunteers, our program would not be in existence. The fundraising money earned goes towards building insurance and purchasing new equipment. The gym is in need of a new floor and we will be saving funds until one can be purchased.

We thank you for all you do!

GRIEVANCE POLICY

Northern Lights Gymnastics Academy recognizes the right of each parent/guardian to express grievances and receive a fair, reasonable, and timely response to them. In the course of submitting a grievance:

1. The parent/guardian shall respectively submit the grievance in writing or via email (board@northernlightsgymnastics.org) to the President of the board.
2. If the response is not satisfactory and the parent/guardian requests further action: the grievance, in writing, will be brought to the entire Board of Directors. He/She will review and respond to the parent/guardian accordingly, or:
3. At the next regularly scheduled Board meeting, the Board Members will hear and discuss the grievance, with a minimum of three Board Members, and the parent/guardian. A written response from the Board of Directors is due in two weeks or less to the parent/guardian and the Director.