



# **Team Handbook**

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## **Welcome**

The Mecklenburg County YMCA would like to welcome your family to our MYG Program!

Through this program handbook, we hope to give you more insight into how our gymnastics program & Competition Team operates and answer any of your questions. At the heart of our program is a commitment to providing a gymnastics experience that supports youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility. We are here for each young athlete, helping them to grow into confident, capable individuals. With the support of families, coaches, gymnasts, and YMCA staff, we can create a community that empowers each athlete to reach their full potential.

After reading the manual, if you have any questions about the program, please ask!

Megan Nunn

MYG Program Coordinator

[m.nunn@mecklenburgcountyyymca.org](mailto:m.nunn@mecklenburgcountyyymca.org)

**“Ability is what you’re capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. Attitude determines how well you do it.” – Lou Holtz**

## **Program Philosophy**

At the Mecklenburg County YMCA, our gymnastics program is grounded in the belief that gymnastics is more than a sport; it is a powerful tool for developing strong bodies, confident minds, and resilient hearts. It reflects our commitment to youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility.

Gymnastics builds physical strength, flexibility, coordination, and body awareness, while also fostering confidence and control in movement. Beyond physical, it teaches focus, discipline, perseverance, and the ability to grow through both success and setbacks, skills that serve our youth in every aspect of life.

Above all, our program fosters a team-oriented environment where every athlete is supported and reminded that *they can do hard things*. Together, we are not just building better gymnasts, we are developing confident, compassionate individuals.

## **Athlete Development**

Gymnastics is more than just flips and routines, so to help our gymnasts grow and succeed, we focus on four important areas during practice:

1. **Strength:** Strength is the foundation of every skill our gymnasts perform. It helps them move with control, reduce risk of injury, and “make the difficult look easy.”
2. **Flexibility:** Flexibility is crucial to gymnasts’ long-term success. It enhances performance, supports skill development, and helps reduce the risk of injury. Our gymnasts stretch with purpose, focusing not just on flexibility, but on balancing it with strength and control so they can move safely and confidently.
3. **Skills:** Skill development has two distinct but related categories: basic and new skills. Basic skills are the building blocks for gymnastics and must be strong and consistent to support more advanced movements. This is why gymnasts will be seen working on skills they’ve been doing for years.

4. **Discipline:** Just like the first three pieces, discipline plays an integral part in practicing. Our coaches are responsible for keeping athletes focused and training intentionally, so they see growth in their skills. Gymnasts must keep themselves disciplined, listen to coaches, and accept feedback. Discipline is the glue that binds strength, flexibility, and skills together.

## **Payment Policies & Fees**

Fees will be paid monthly during the 9-month period of our season. Payments will be drafted on the 4<sup>th</sup> of each month. If a payment is returned for any reason (ex. insufficient funds, declined card, a new card), a fee of \$25 will be charged. Payment secures a gymnast's spot in class for the full session, regardless of attendance. Program dues are non-refundable and cannot be credited or prorated for missed classes, including those due to illness, vacation, holidays, or weather. However, if you choose to withdraw from the program at any point during the season, future payments will be discontinued.

## **Financial Assistance**

Financial Assistance is available for *qualifying* families and individuals for both memberships and program fees.

If you have questions regarding financial assistance, please contact Hope Bain, CEO/Executive Director, via email [h.bain@mecklenburgcountyyymca.org](mailto:h.bain@mecklenburgcountyyymca.org) or phone 434-374-5858.

## **Program Policies, Procedures, & Expectations**

### **Athletes**

Our program is built on the core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. These values guide how we treat others, how we approach training, and how we represent our team. All participants are expected to demonstrate these values through their actions, attitudes, and interactions

1. **Listen actively** and follow directions from coaches to the best of your ability
2. **Arrive at the gym** on time, dressed in proper attire, hair pulled back, jewelry off, gum in trash and ready to go
3. **Speak kindly and respectfully** to everyone: negative talk, gossip, and talking back to coaches are not acceptable
4. **Support and encourage teammates** by celebrating their efforts and successes
5. **Care for** equipment and maintain a clean, safe gym environment
6. **Accept feedback with a positive attitude**, knowing it helps you grow as a gymnast
7. **Only concern yourself with things *you* can control:** *your* attitude, *your* effort, *your* gymnastics
8. **Always wait** inside the facility for your ride at the end of practice.

### **Parents/Guardians**

Parents and guardians play a vital role in the success and well-being of each gymnast. At the YMCA, we value the support, commitment, and partnership of our families. The following expectations are in place to ensure a positive and productive environment for all athletes:

1. **Maintain Open Communication:** We believe in clear, respectful communication between families and staff. If you ever have questions or concerns, we welcome them and are here to support you.
2. **Show Respect at All Times:** We expect parents to uphold the values of the YMCA by demonstrating respect for coaches, other gymnasts, and fellow parents. We do not accept abuse of any kind towards our participants, volunteers, coaches, or staff.
3. **Be Timely:** Please arrive promptly for both drop-off and pick-up. Consistent attendance and punctuality support your child's success and show respect for coaches' time. We know situations can arise, so

if you know you will be late or your child will be missing practice completely, please let the coaches know as soon as possible.

- 4. Know the Team Policies:** Take time to read and review the Team Handbook with your gymnast. Understanding the expectations, rules, and responsibilities is essential for a smooth and successful season.
- 5. Use Appropriate Communication Channels:** For questions or concerns, please contact the gymnastics coordinator via phone or email. Classes will have their own TeachReach group that will be used for reminders and any last-minute communication needs. Respecting professional boundaries helps protect both staff and families.

## Other

- 1. Workout attire:** Gymnasts should wear form-fitting athletic clothing, such as a leotard (with or without fitted shorts) or compression-style athletic wear. Loose clothing can interfere with movement and the safety of gymnasts and coaches. Items like zippers, buttons, hoods, skirts, or tutus are not permitted. Hair must be tied back securely, and only small stud earrings may be worn. No other jewelry is allowed.
- 2. Attendance:** We encourage gymnasts to be at every practice. Please let the coaches know via TeamReach if your child will not be at practice or if they will be late.
- 3. Inclement Weather:** We follow the Mecklenburg County Public School's weather closure. Closings will be communicated via Team Reach.
- 4. Contact Information:** If there is a change in your contact information or email, please contact the YMCA as soon as possible.
- 5. Drop-off & Pick-up:** Street parking is available in front of the gymnastics building, with a designated drop-off spot right at the door. We ask that when you pick up your child, you come into the gymnastics building as your child's safety is our top priority.

## Disciplinary Actions

The policies in this handbook are intended to create a respectful, safe, and supportive environment for all gymnasts and their families. While we encourage growth through positive reinforcement and accountability, there may be times when disciplinary action is necessary.

These procedures are not exhaustive but reflect our commitment to fair, thoughtful, and consistent expectations. Each situation will be handled individually, with consideration for the gymnast, the class, and the overall program.

Our goal is always to work collaboratively with athletes and families toward positive outcomes and continue success both in and out of the gym.

*Examples of Disciplinary Actions:*

1. The gymnast may not be permitted to rotate with their group. They may have to stay and finish their work or repeat the entire assignment on a particular piece of equipment.
2. The gymnast may be asked to sit and watch.
3. The coach may request a meeting with the parent and/or guardian.

We value building trust and connection with each athlete. Minor behavioral concerns are a normal part of growth and will be handled gently and directly by the coach. If a situation continues or would benefit from parental support, we'll reach out to work together in the best interest of the gymnast.



# **Competition Team**

## **Team Philosophy**

Our competitive gymnastics team reflects the core values of the Mecklenburg County YMCA, youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility, while providing athletes with the opportunity to pursue higher levels of skill, discipline, and personal growth.

While competition is a natural part of the sport, we believe that character comes first. We encourage our athletes to pursue excellence with integrity, show respect for teammates and coaches, and practice good sportsmanship. In doing so, they are learning to handle setbacks with grace and victories with humility.

Together, we aim to nurture strong gymnasts and even stronger individuals.

## **Meet Schedule & Fees**

In addition to the team fees, there will be "Meet Fees." These fees will be based on the Competition Meets you make a commitment to attend. Upon commitment to a competition meet, a deposit of \$40 will be required to secure your gymnast's spot for that meet. The final payment for the meet will be due closer to the meet date. If at that time your gymnast is not participating, further payment will not be required. Deposits are non-refundable as they secure your spot at the time of commitment.

## **Meet Information**

Leading up to the competition, the gymnastics club that is hosting the competition will set the final meet schedule and will share with gyms that will be in attendance. Once we receive that information, we will relay all meet details to parents and/or guardians.

It is the responsibility of each individual gymnast's family to make reservations and pay for travel, hotel, and meal arrangements for all competitions.

\*Some larger meets may charge admission fees.

## **Level Placement**

Our coaches determine the placement of athletes on our team based on their skill level. Gymnasts will need to have all the skills for the next level to move up. The Mecklenburg YMCA aims to create healthy, confident gymnasts. One way we can do this is by placing gymnasts at the level where they can be most successful. This means that every gymnast must be able to perform the skills and routines required at a given level comfortably. Not every gymnast will change levels after each season.

## **Insight into Judges at a Competition**

Gymnastics is a very subjective sport, and all judges are different. Your gymnast's scores from meet to meet can vary greatly, even if the routine they perform is like a previous meet.

Every judge has different expectations and/or interpretations of the guidelines, so it is difficult to compare scores from meet to meet. The level of competition can also vary, so it is better to focus on your gymnast's performance and their own level of improvement.

## **Treatment of Hand Rips**

Gymnasts may get rips on their hands from time to time when practicing on bars. If, or when, rips occur, here are some treatment methods that can be used at home to help heal and prevent rips.

1. Before going to bed, put ointment on the rip (Neosporin), followed by a band aid. This will help lock moisture in while they sleep.
2. Hand lotion, vitamin E, or aloe vera can also help heal a rip.
3. Trimming/filing thick calluses is also recommended.

## **In Case of an Injury**

Most injuries are relatively minor, and the coach will take care of them. However, in the case of more serious injuries, the coaches will contact the parent and/or guardian to let you know the nature of the injury and course of action.

## **Care for an injury**

**R** = **R**est the injured body part

**I** = Apply **I**ce

**C** = Apply **C**ompression

**E** = **E**levate the injured extremity about heart level

Apply ice for 20 minutes at a time 3-4 times a day for 48 hours after the injury. Proper application of ice can reduce the amount of healing time for minor injuries.

Injuries outside of gymnastics practice should be shared with the coaches. Athletes are welcomed and encouraged to attend practice even if they are injured. We will want them to be a part of the team, so they can observe their teammates and listen to feedback given.