

Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Sport for Young People Flares Gymnastics & Cheer



Produced by
Flares Gymnastics & Cheer
Killarney, Co Kerry
www.flaresgymnastics.com

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Introduction

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The safety and welfare of all gymnasts and cheerleaders is of fundamental importance. Flares Gymnastics & Cheer has prepared this booklet in accordance with national guidelines for the protection and welfare of children as outlined in *Children First*, issued by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, to maintain appropriate standards of sports practice.

Flares Gymnastics & Cheer recognises that every Coach, Parent/Guardian and Administrator has a role to play in promoting good practice at all levels of gymnastics and cheerleading.

This booklet outlines those fundamental roles.

Yours in sport



Daniel Farkas
COACH



Hayley Murphy
COACH

October 2017

Policy Statement

Flares Gymnastics & Cheer is fully committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of all of its members. The welfare of the young people in Flares Gymnastics & Cheer Club is its first priority and the club is committed to providing an environment which will allow participants to perform to the best of their ability, free from bullying and intimidation. Adults interacting with young people in sport should do so with integrity and respect for the child. Verbal, physical, emotional or sexual abuse of any kind is unacceptable within sport.

Sport for young people should be treated in an equitable and fair manner regardless of age, ability, sex, religion, social and ethnic background or political persuasion. Children with a disability should be involved in sports activities in an integrated way.

Flares Gymnastics & Cheer has a male and a female Children's Officer to assist in the safeguard of young people in sport. Details of Children's Officers are displayed on notice-boards in the gym.

Every individual in Flares Gymnastics & Cheer should at all times show respect and understanding for members' rights, safety and welfare and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of the club and the guidelines contained in Flares Gymnastics & Cheer's *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Sport for Young People*.

Code of Conduct for Young People

Flares Gymnastics & Cheer aims to provide the best possible environment for all young people involved in gymnastics and cheerleading.

PARTICIPANTS ARE ENTITLED TO:

- Be listened to
- Be believed
- Be safe and to feel safe
- Be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect
- Have a voice in the club / organisation
- Participate on an equal basis
- Be happy, have fun and enjoy sport
- Experience competition at a level at which they feel comfortable
- Make complaints and have them dealt with
- Get help against bullies
- Confidentiality

PARTICIPANTS SHOULD:

- Treat coaches/helpers with respect
- Respect team members
- Respect opponents
- Abide by the rules set down by the club when travelling to away events
- Talk to Children's Officer/Coach or Helpers if they have any problems

- Bring all necessary medication with them at all times
e.g. Inhaler

PARTICIPANTS WILL NOT:

- Use inappropriate language in the gym or at any event(s)
- Show disrespectful or unacceptable behaviour towards Instructors or Team Mates, ie, back talk, rolling of eyes
- Participate in pettiness, gossiping or cliques, which attempt to exclude or alienate certain members.
Bullying will not be tolerated in any form
- Drink, smoke or use any illegal substances or use violence or physical contact that is not allowed within the rules
- Shout or argue with coaches or team mates or individuals at organised events
- Harm team members or their property

Code of Conduct for Parents/Guardians

I will respect the procedures set down in the Flares Gymnastics & Cheer *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Sport for Young People*.

- I will respect my child's team-mates, leaders (e.g. Manager, Coaches, Officials, Judges), as well as all athletes, parents and coaches. I will encourage my child to treat other participants, coaches, parent helpers with respect
- I will give encouragement to my child and his/her team mates
- I will respect my child's leader(s) and support his/her efforts
- I will respect the officials and their authority during sessions and events
- I will never demonstrate threatening or abusive behaviour or use foul language in the Flares Gymnastics & Cheer environment
- I will make sure my child has appropriate medication (e.g. inhaler) with him/her at all times when attending training sessions or away events
- I will make my child/children aware that there are uneven surfaces in the gymnasium (e.g. mats on the floor) and to listen to the instruction of the coaches at all times

Code of Conduct for Coaches/Volunteers

I confirm that I have familiarised myself with the procedures in the *Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Sport for Young People* in Flares Gymnastics & Cheer.

I also understand that I should:

- Be positive during sessions, praise and encourage effort as well as results
- Plan and prepare appropriately
- Encourage fair play, treat participants equally
- Recognize developmental needs
- Be qualified and up-to-date with knowledge and skill of sport and gymnastics for young people
- Involve parents where possible and inform parents when problems arise
- Keep record of attendance at training
- Keep a brief record of injury(s) and action taken
- Keep a brief record of problem/action/outcomes, if behavioural problems arise

I understand that I should not:

- Use any form of physical force on a child
- Engage in rough physical games, sexually provocative games, or allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind, and/or make sexually suggestive comments about, or to, a child

Class Arrival/Departure and Spectating

Class Arrival/Departure

It is the responsibility of the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) to ensure children are taken to and collected promptly from the classes to which they have been enrolled. Children should not be dropped off by more than five minutes before their class time as Flares Gymnastics & Cheer can accept no responsibility for children outside of the class times to which they have been enrolled. Flares Gymnastics & Cheer requests that Parent(s)/Guardian(s) escort their child/children to and from the facility.

Children should be collected at the end of the scheduled class time; Flares Gymnastics & Cheer can accept no responsibility for children outside of the class times to which they have been enrolled.

Spectating

Spectating is optional, however, if your child/children has difficulty focussing or following direction or if your child is in need of assistance to use the bathroom, Flares Gymnastics & Cheer require that Parent(s)/Guardian(s) stay for the duration of the class.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) who choose to remain as a spectator for the duration of the class are welcome to do so in a designated area providing they and/or any accompanying child/ren do not disrupt the class in which circumstance they will be requested to leave.

Use of electronic devices, ie: mobile phones/cameras/video etc, is **strictly forbidden** during gymnastics sessions.

Recruitment Policy

Flares Gymnastics & Cheer undertakes to take all reasonable steps to ensure that leaders are suitable and appropriately qualified whether remunerated or working voluntarily. The club undertakes to follow an application process which includes interview and reference.

Any individual who wishes to participate in coaching support work with young people must complete the Garda Vetting process and provide Flares Gymnastics & Cheer with the vetting disclosure documentation. Participants must take personal responsibility for the safety and health of themselves and others, to observe safe standards of behaviour and dress code and to familiarise themselves with the safety requirements of Flares Gymnastics & Cheer, its venues and its Code of Ethics. Coaching education will be provided by Flares Gymnastics & Cheer and additional coaching education in the form of courses and awards can be organised by Flares Gymnastics & Cheer at their discretion.

Policy on Overnight & Away Trips

Transport, Safety and Supervision Guidelines

In some circumstances, the transportation of members to organised events/outings may require an organised coach company with adequate supervision. It is however the general practice of Flares Gymnastics & Cheer that members make their own travel arrangements to events/outings for which their parent/s/guardian/s are responsible. In the event of the former, the following applies:

- Separate permission forms must be signed by parent/s/guardian/s and participants, containing emergency contact number(s)
- A meeting with parent/s/guardian/s and participants is useful to communicate travel times, competition details, other activities, gear requirements, special dietary needs and any other necessary details. This is where possible and practicable
- Rooming arrangements –Children should share rooms with those of similar age and same gender. Adults should knock before entering rooms. If possible place male and female rooms in separate sections/quarters
- Medical requirements to be provided to parent helpers/coaches if parent is unable to attend trip
- All group socialization should take place in communal areas (i.e. no boys in girl's rooms and vice versa)
- Alcoholic drink, smoking or other illegal substances are forbidden to all athletes. Leaders should act as role models in this respect
- There must be at least one adult of each gender with a mixed party; there should be an adequate adult:child ratio, and proper access to medical personnel
- 'Lights out' times should be observed and enforced

- Young athletes should be under reasonable supervision at all times and should never leave the venue or go unsupervised without prior permission
- It is important that arrangements are outlined and agreed with club officials in advance of actual event, and at a formal meeting at the commencement of the travel to include everyone

Please note Flares Gymnastics & Cheer can accept no responsibility for private transport arrangements provided by a coach/volunteer at the request of a parent/guardian for transportation of a member outside of organised events/outings, ie, after a training session.

It is advisable not to bring valuable items to away events and training sessions. Flares Gymnastics & Cheer will not be held liable or responsible for any lost/damaged/stolen items.

Anti-Bullying Policy

Bullying is defined as repeated aggression in verbal, psychological or physical form to include cyber bullying which is conducted by an individual or group against others intended to aggravate and intimidate.

Bullying will not be tolerated.

The Flares Gymnastics & Cheer Code of Conduct supports the rights and dignity of the individual as a preventative measure against such behaviour. Flares Gymnastics & Cheer will adopt the Irish Sports Council No-Blame Approach to bullying if appropriate which outlines a number of steps towards resolution:

- Step 1 – Interview with the victim/s
- Step 2 – Meet with all involved
- Step 3 – Explanation of the problem
- Step 4 – Share the responsibility
- Step 5 – Ask the group for input if appropriate
- Step 6 – Identification of problem and solution
- Step 7 – Meet again

Disciplinary Procedure

Disciplinary procedure adheres to principles of natural justice which include the right to:

- Be heard
- Know the allegations in the matter, why a sanction is being imposed, the manner in which the issues will be determined, and any other relevant information that will be taken into account
- Impartiality in both the investigation and the decision-making process

A member also has the right to an appeal hearing.

THE STAGES OF THE DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE ARE AS FOLLOWS:

STAGE 1: Verbal Warning

A member whose conduct falls below required standards or is deemed to be in breach of Flares Gymnastics & Cheer policies will be issued with a formal verbal warning by the head coach/disciplinary panel. The member will be advised of the precise nature of the complaint, the improvements required and the timescale for same. Failure to improve may result in further disciplinary action under the stage 2 of the procedures. A record of the warning will be kept on file.

STAGE 2: Written Warning

If the member fails to make necessary improvements or if the conduct is more serious, then a formal written warning will be issued by the head coach/disciplinary panel. As in stage 1, the formal written warning will specify the precise nature of the complaint, the improvements required, the timescale for same, plus any appropriate sanctions that may be imposed. A record of the warning will be kept on file.

STAGE 3: Final Written Warning

If there is still no evidence of improvement, or if the conduct is extremely serious, a final written warning will be issued by the head coach/disciplinary panel. It will specify the nature of the complaint, the improvements required, the timescale for the same and appropriate sanctions. The member will also be advised that failure to improve will lead to a disciplinary hearing.

STAGE 4: Disciplinary Hearing

If the requirements of Stage 3 are not met, the head coach will request the member to attend a disciplinary hearing. Sanctions may include suspension from or termination of membership with Flares Gymnastics & Cheer without refund. The hearing will be conducted by the Disciplinary Panel with coaches and the member's parent(s)/guardian(s) present.

The progressive stages of this disciplinary procedure may not apply to some offences for which the consequence may be termination of membership without notice. Examples include theft, fraud, falsification of documents, gross negligence, dereliction of duties, an

inability to act responsibly as a result of substance misuse, and bullying or harassment of other members. This list is not exhaustive.

Appeal Hearing

A member who wishes to appeal the outcome of a disciplinary hearing may do so within seven working days of the notification of the decision. The member will be invited to attend an appeal hearing which will normally be held within ten working days of the appeal being lodged. A record of the investigation and any related hearings will be kept on file in compliance with the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003.

Policy on Photography and Filming

Parent/s or guardian/s wishing to record an event or practice session should seek advice from the Sports Leader or Children's Officer prior to the event.

Professional bodies of photographers/film-makers and members of the press will be informed of the club's Code of Conduct in relation to child protection.

Anyone concerned about photography taking place at events or training sessions should address the club coach or Children's Officer/Designated Person.

Photos taken during the year may be used for promotional purposes in the media

Please NOTIFY CLUB OFFICIALS if you DO NOT WISH your child TO BE INCLUDED

Online/Social Media Guidelines

Gymnastics is a spectacular sport and gymnasts are passionate about their achievements and aspirations. In this digital age, open, honest communication in the digital environment by participation in blogs, wiki, online social networks (such as Facebook) or any other form of online publishing or discussion has become a form of modern expression. However, new responsibilities for athletes, parents and family have emerged with the profound changes in communication as these new forms have altered the way in which we talk to each other and even how we navigate with our fellow athletes, competitors, target audiences of new athletes and partner gyms and cheer organizations. In order to avoid any problems or misunderstandings, Flares Gymnastics & Cheer, as an identified 'brand' in the gymnastics world, has come up with guidelines to provide helpful and practical advice for you regarding online behaviour.

1) Only a small nominated number of people of the club are considered Official Spokesperson or representative for Flares Gymnastics & Cheer (refer to Head Coach for details). Therefore when writing or posting an opinion or statement regarding Flares Gymnastics & Cheer you must make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of the club.

2) You are personally and legally responsible for the content you publish on social media, blogs, message boards or any other form of user-generated media. Please remember that everything you publish will be visible to the world indefinitely regardless of whether you "delete" it (commonly referred to as a "Digital Footprint"). The club therefore strongly recommends that athletes and parents **ALWAYS EXERCISE THE UTMOST CAUTION** when participating in any form of social media or online communication.

3) Flares Gymnastics & Cheer reserves the right to ask athletes, parents, family members to delete, remove or make “private” any content published in a public forum meant to embarrass, threaten, harass, bully, degrade or make forcibly uncomfortable any team, coach, athlete, parent, group of individuals or any other special interest regardless of gym or affiliation.

4) All videos, photos, audio recordings that have been labelled “sensitive” or “private” such as new music, team practice, uniform designs or concepts and other “intellectual capital” will not be shared nor discussed in social media or via text messaging or electronic dissemination at any time. Any Athlete who shares or posts without permission any private or discretionary details about the gym will face possible removal from team/gym and will not be entitled to any refund or restitution of any kind.

5) In addition, it is not permitted to use the Scorchers/Flares Gymnastics & Cheer name/logo or any variation of the club’s name/logo in your email address or social media/message board username. If you already do so, it must be changed.

Remember that you represent Flares Gymnastics & Cheer even when not in the gym or competition venue. Be thoughtful of your behaviour when you have on a Club T-shirt, backpack, or bear any other club related item. Those same rules apply when you are online as a member of Flares Gymnastics & Cheer.

Practice Sessions and Competition for Cheerleaders

MISSING PRACTICE

Cheerleading is a team sport. This means that when your child misses a practice some part of the routine cannot be carried out fully. Please be mindful in planning holidays so that your child will not miss practice. We accept that this may cause some inconvenience but the consideration of the rest of the team is paramount in team sport.

COMPETITION ATTENDANCE

Cheerleading as a team sport requires commitment. As Scorchers functions as a squad, **each cheerleader plays a crucial role** in our cheers and routines. Attendance is therefore mandatory at practices and events. Not only is attendance necessary, but the club requires that all cheerleaders report on time to both practices and events. If a cheerleader is late or not at a practice or an event then the stunts, dances or cheers cannot be practiced/performed as they should and as such **safety** becomes a concern. The cheerleaders COUNT ON EACH OTHER to be at practices and games.

Therefore:

- All cheerleaders will be allowed up to 5 absences for missed COMPETITION practices or events during the regular season. More than 5 absences will result in removal or replacement from competition team at the discretion of the coach.

- Attendance will have an impact on those cheerleaders asking to be considered for the competition squad.
- Missing practices that have valid excuses can still lead to being removed from a routine, position or stunt, due to the impracticability of the situation.
- **Competing is a privilege, not a requirement.** The coaches will have the final say on whether or not the team will be competing.

Fundraising:

- All cheerleaders are required to participate in fundraising towards competition costs. In the interests of fair play, those who do not participate will not be eligible for fundraised goods e.g. track suits.

ATTENDANCE AT COMPETITION PRACTICES IS MANDATORY. IF YOUR CHEERLEADER IS SELECTED SHE MUST BE AT PRACTICE ON TIME. WE REALIZE THE HIGH DEGREE OF COMMITMENT THAT IS REQUIRED AND ASK THAT PARENTS/GUARDIANS CONSIDER THIS CAREFULLY BEFORE PUTTING THEIR CHILD FORWARD FOR COMPETITION SQUAD. IT IS A COMMITMENT BY BOTH THE CHEERLEADER AND THE PARENT/S/GUARDIAN/S.

Child Welfare and Protection Plan

Flares Gymnastics & Cheer accepts that organisations, which include young people among its members, are vulnerable to the occurrence of child abuse. Child welfare and the protection of young people are the concern of all adults at all times. Grounds for concern include a specific indication from a child, a statement from a person who witnessed abuse or an illness, injury or behaviour consistent with abuse.

A report may be made by any member in the club but should be passed on to the Children's Officer who may in turn have to pass the concern to the local Statutory Authorities.

Allegations against Sports Leaders

Flares Gymnastics & Cheer has agreed procedures to be followed in cases of alleged child abuse against Sports Leaders: a reporting procedure and a procedure for dealing with the Sports Leader.

If appropriate, the matter will be reported via the Children's Officer to the local health board/social services if there are reasonable grounds for concern.

The safety of the child making the allegation and any other children who may be at risk will be considered in line with confidentiality.

The Leader will be treated with respect and fairness.

Mobile Phones and Valuables in Training and Away

Flares Gymnastics & Cheer does not encourage the use of mobile phones during class. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) wishing to make contact with their children during sessions can also do so through the coaches.

It is advisable not to bring valuable items to training sessions or away events. Flares Gymnastics & Cheer will not be held liable or responsible for any lost/damaged/stolen items.

Emergency Safety Plan

Flares Gymnastics & Cheer has in place an **Emergency Action Plan** in the event of emergency. The club conducts and records appropriate drills in accordance with safety regulations and in compliance with existing procedures in the premises utilised by the club. An Emergency Action Plan is displayed during coaching sessions

- Sounding Alarm
- Evacuation to designated Assembly Points including special provisions for persons requiring assistance
- Staff responsibilities
- Documentation including access to Emergency Contact Numbers (as below) and Registers

CONTACT NUMBERS

**Emergency (Ambulance/Fire/Garda Siochana)
112/999**

Flares Emergency Officer

Daniel Farkas 087-0531527

Flares Deputy Emergency Officer

Hayley Murphy 086-3958327

Registration, Cancellations and Refunds

Registration

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are required to complete requisite documentation for registration of their child/ren in Flares Gymnastics & Cheer and to read and acknowledge by signature their acceptance of the Club's Code of Ethics & Good Practice for Sport for Young People. It is the responsibility of the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) to notify club officials in writing of any changes in personal details which may affect the safety of their child/ren, ie, emergency contact numbers.

Cancelled Classes

On occasion, Flares Gymnastics & Cheer may have to cancel a class/classes for reasons beyond their control, ie: staff sickness. In these circumstances, a refund will not be issued but a make-up class will be re-scheduled. However, in the event Flares Gymnastics & Cheer are forced to cancel a gymnastics/cheerleading class/classes because of circumstances beyond their control, ie, venue closures due to adverse weather conditions, no refund will be issued.

Refunds

Children allocated a place in Flares Gymnastics & Cheer are required to pay fees per term in advance. No refund will be made if, for whatever reason/s, parent/s/guardian/s decide to remove child/ren from the club during the term.

Demerit System for Cheerleaders

Flares Gymnastics & Cheer has introduced a Demerit System into its **SCORCHERS CHEERLEADER TRAINING PROGRAMME** to aid consistency. The following is a list of conduct unbecoming for a cheerleader and the penalty assessed for each violation. Demerits will be distributed accordingly for **any** behaviour that the coaches find unacceptable. Penalties may be added/removed throughout the year as necessary. All merits/demerits will be recorded and dated in a notebook. Demerits do not re-start at the end of the year.

CONDUCT AND APPEARANCE

DEMERITS ISSUED

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Improperly caring for club tracksuit | 2 (will be taken off athlete if reoccurs) |
| • Unsportsmanlike conduct | 2 |
| • Inappropriate material posted on social media | 5 (or removal depending on content) |
| • Fighting with a team member | 10 (possibility of removal from team/club) |

In the event that two or more cheerleaders have a dispute that interrupts the productivity and cohesiveness of the team and the problem cannot be resolved, both team members may be removed from the squad.

PRACTICE AND PARTICIPATION

- Failure to participate fully at a game/
practice/or other cheer event without
notifying coach **4**
- Misbehaving at events/competitions **10** (possible
removal from
team/club)
- Not cooperating with coaches/captains/squad **4**

CONSEQUENCES OF DEMERITS (to be done at the end of practice)

1 DEMERIT WARNING!
2-6 DEMERITS 10 Toe touches (executed correctly)
6-9 DEMERITS 10 Toe touches, 10 other jumps (" ")
10+ DEMERITS Parents Contacted
15+ DEMERITS Probation Letter & meeting with parents.
20 DEMERITS Removal from competition team

MERITS

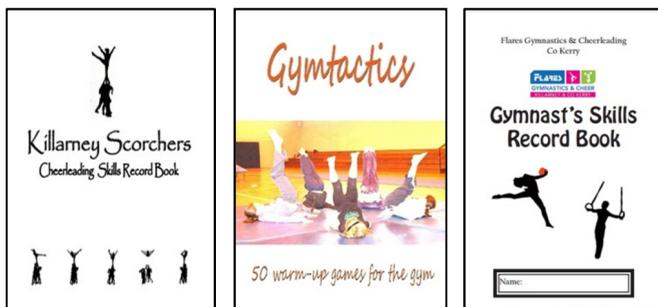
Where an individual reaches 10 demerits, he/she may counteract the demerits by earning MERITS. **Only 5 merits can be earned per year.** *ONE MERIT can be earned by any one of the following:*

- ✓ attending a non-required practice session to help another squad/coaches
- ✓ poster-making for ALL of your squad OR for beginner cheerleaders
- ✓ volunteer to assist with a home sporting event
- ✓ make extra signs to be used by the squad when cheering at events
- ✓ work with a cheer coach helping out

Award System & Publications

Flares Gymnastics & Cheer is primarily a recreational gymnastics club. It has however developed a series of reward and award systems, including the Olga Korbut Outstanding Gymnast Trophy, as a means of motivation and encouragement towards excellence in this sport. The club has also produced *Gymtactics*, *50 Warm-Up Games for the Gym* available at www.lulu.com as a fund-raising initiative for new equipment.

Flares Gymnastics & Cheer has developed a Skills Record Book for gymnastics and cheerleading which serves as a means of monitoring progress in the sports for athlete, coach and parent/guardian.



Data Protection Policy

By registering with Flares Gymnastics & Cheer I understand that the personal data on the registration form will be used by the club for the contractual purpose of registering and maintaining annual registration with the club. I understand that without supplying requisite personal data it is not possible to register with the club. I understand personal data will be used for administrative purposes, ie, competition entry, injury reports, contacting parent/guardian. I consent to the sharing of medical data as given in the registration for the purpose of safe participation in gymnastics and/or cheerleading and administering of medical assistance if required. I understand that I can resign the applicant's membership in writing to the club and personal data will be erased.

Privacy Notice Re: General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018

In accordance with the EU GDPR May 2018, the information above provides specifics about the use and storage of personal information. We only use personal information for the reasons above. We keep and use your personal information for as long as you have a relationship with us. We hold it after this only where are required to for complaints handling or for as long as is needed under any other regulation.

Acknowledgment of Risks and Disclaimer

The sports of gymnastics and cheerleading carry an element of risk which may result in bodily injury to the participant. Gymnastics also requires the coach to perform some manual spotting which involves direct physical contact designed to assist the participant in the safe execution of skills.

Coaches are not responsible for athletes before and after class; you should therefore ensure your child is dropped off and collected on time.

Flares Gymnastics & Cheer will not be held responsible for lost or stolen property.

Activities

- It is understood that gymnastics, cheerleading and dance can be hazardous and that injuries can result from these activities
- It is understood that the use of Flares Gymnastics & Cheer facilities and equipment, if not used in accordance with the instructions of the coach, may be hazardous and lead to injury
- It is understood that whilst in the gymnasium with a coach no spectating party is permitted on the gymnastic equipment
- It is understood that no athlete is allowed inside the gymnasium without a Flares Gymnastics & Cheer head coach

Declarations

It is acknowledged that athletes attending any of Flares Gymnastics & Cheer activities:

- Are physically fit and able to withstand the exertion of participation in gymnastics and cheerleading activities
- Have notified head coach of any past injuries which may affect the athlete's participation in gymnastics and cheerleading activities
- Have acknowledged that by following any of our physical activities or any of our videos, in any form, carries an element of risk of injury
- Understand that Flares Gymnastics & Cheer and its venues cannot accept responsibility for any injuries incurred in the normal and certified practice of gymnastics and cheerleading instruction

Disclaimer of Liability

Flares Gymnastics & Cheer is not liable under the above conditions, that is, in the proper use of facility and equipment, except in respect of personal injury (or death) caused by negligence of Flares Gymnastics & Cheer.

It is understood and agreed that this disclaimer of liability is applied each time an athlete participates in any of Flares Gymnastics & Cheer activities.