



**Working together for a safe return to gymnastics**

## **Parent and Gymnast Guide to Return to Coach Contact**

**Guide for gymnasts and parents/carers  
of gymnasts returning to activity involving coach contact and  
manual support**

**08/03/2021**

**Version 1**

**The Covid-19 Parent and Gymnast Guide applies to anyone involved with regulated gymnastics activity whilst Government restrictions & regulations in response to the Covid-19 pandemic remain in place. This guide is in addition to any existing behavioural codes, standards of conduct or policy & regulations which should continue to be complied with.**

As an individual indoor sport, gymnastics activity has been able to resume (from the 10<sup>th</sup> August 2020) following the Welsh Government Return to Sport Guidance..

## Phase 1 Approval

**Phase One of the Welsh Gymnastics Coach Contact Framework has now been approved in line with Welsh Government.**

**Whilst the framework provides a clear four phased approach, it is essential that those delivering gymnastics ONLY permit coach contact activities in line with Phase One. The full framework has been released to show the transition to full coach contact over time. The Welsh Government Guidelines will advise Welsh Gymnastics of when it is safe and appropriate for movement into phase 2, 3 and 4.**

For gymnasts to continue to progress and to support the retention of participants within the sport, it is a requirement that contact coaching resumes in a safe and controlled manner. Manual support in the initial attempts of a skill or sequence development is critical to ensure the participant understands the requirements of the skill (or sequence) and can safely attempt it. Some skill development work requires close-proximity interaction between a coach and a gymnast and as such the content of this document outlines the additional controls required to reduce the risk of transmission or contraction of Coronavirus, to a point where these manual support activities can resume safely.

## What is Return to Coach Contact?

### Manual support:

Gymnastics skills are complex movements which often require the participant to manipulate and coordinate a variety of limbs at different times, at speed, whilst rotating around various axes. Adding to this complexity is the inherent risk that arises from gymnastics, performing skills at height and against gravity on or with apparatus. It is because of this complexity that safe development is at the heart of every gymnastics coach's process and forms a significant part of their coach education.

Manual support of these progressions is often required (depending on the complexity of the skill), especially when the participant is attempting them for the first time. The coach has a duty of care to ensure the participant understands the requirements of the progression/activity and can safely attempt it, therefore manual support in the initial attempts is critical.

Coach contact includes the following between coaches and gymnasts:

- The manual supporting of gymnasts (may be age dependent)
- Face-to-face contact
- Contact within 1 metre
- Being less than 2 metres away
- Prolonged contact for 3+ seconds throughout a session

**Gymnastics providers wishing to resume coach contact and manual support within the planned activities must:**

- Already meet the requirements as set out in the relevant government guidance and have been operational for a minimum of two weeks maintaining the appropriate controls.
- Follow all further transmission mitigating control measures required as stipulated within the **Welsh Gymnastics Coach Contact Framework Action Plan**.
- Educate staff and gymnasts in the required practices and controls as indicated within the **Welsh Gymnastics Coach Contact Framework Action Plan** and associated risk assessments completed by the club/provider. Appropriate records for NHS Test and Trace must be kept.
- Ensure all gymnasts (parents/guardians) and coaches/instructors who wish to **resume** coach contact and manual support activities understand the risks, their responsibilities and abide by all control measures as outlined within the **Welsh Gymnastics Coach Contact Framework Action Plan**.
- Prior to taking part in coach contact and manual support activities, gymnasts (and parents / guardians) and coaches/instructors must opt-in to agreement with the code of behaviour and other associated controls. Individuals can opt-out and stop manual support activities at any point.
- Ensure there are an appropriate number of hand sanitisation stations available throughout the venue in close proximity to the apparatus or activity station where manual support is planned to take place.
- Coaches / instructors will be using a phased return to manual support activities as shown in the table below - note that the club/gymnastic provider should already be operating as per guidance set out within the Step Forward Plan and therefore, gymnasts and coaches/instructors will already be working independently of each other with social distancing in place. This should be in place for a minimum of 2 weeks prior to the phased return to coach contact commences:

Phase Number	Approval status	Manual Support Allowed?	Detail
1	Active	Yes – but limited to 15 minutes per day	During this phased return to coach contact, each coach/instructor must limit the coach contact and manual support time to a maximum of 15 minutes per day, for one fixed group*. Under 18's only
2	Not yet active	Yes – but limited to 15 minutes per day	During this phased return to coach contact, each coach/instructor must limit the coach contact and manual support time to a maximum of 15 minutes per day, for one fixed group*.
3	Not yet active**	Yes – but limited to 15 minutes per day per group	Following this period, the coach/instructor may resume coach contact and manually support multiple groups for a maximum of 15 minutes per group.
4	Not yet active**	Yes	Following the first two phases, coach contact can resume for all pre-planned activity.

*\*groups sizes cannot exceed current local and national guidance and British Gymnastics Coach: Gymnast ratios*

*\*\*unless following the Team Sport Framework. The Team Sport Framework provides a separate action plan and control measures for identified team sport activities and disciplines, where a club or gymnastics provider is delivering under the Team Sport and Return to Coach Contact Frameworks, both action plans must be adhered to. Where the Team Sport Framework states no contact is permitted between coaches and gymnasts this is still true unless the Return to Contact Coaching Framework has been implemented and control measures adopted.*

It is the responsibility of the club/gymnastics provider and coach/instructor to review the programme, understand the increased risk, and ensure manual support activities are kept to a minimum.

Please note, that due to the nature of Return to Coach Contact activities, there is a higher risk of a Covid-19 outbreak within the gymnastics venue as they are operating outside of a Covid-secure environment.

## **Before resuming coach contact**

Before returning to coach contact and manual support activities, you will need to have been contacted to outline the steps required to resume close-proximity activities. Steps will include:

- Completing the opt-in agreement to resume coach contact and manual supporting activities and understand the risks involved. You can stop taking part at any time, please notify a coach/instructor or the Covid-19 Officer or representative.
- **Gymnasts and coaches/instructors** have been training independently **in the recognised gymnastics environment** for a minimum of 2 weeks.
- Self-screening for symptoms prior to travelling to the training venue for every session. This must be done within 2 hours of your session starting. Do not go to training if you feel unwell or you or a member of your household are displaying any Coronavirus symptoms.
- Agreeing to the British Gymnastics Covid-19 Coach Contact Code of Behaviour (this is in addition to any existing codes or standards of behaviour you have agreed to). If this is not followed, you may be removed from the session for the safety of others.
- Ensure contact details are up to date for NHS Test and Trace purposes.
- Comply with government guidance outside of the training environment by maintaining social distancing in public settings and adhering to the relevant current guidance within households or social interactions, and self-isolation periods following travel abroad.
- Being made aware of the increase in transmission risk associated with the return to manual support activities. Gymnasts and coaches/instructors must be made aware that they are opting into any activities related to the return to coach contact work and that they can withdraw at any time.

## **During sessions**

- All gymnasts and coaches/instructors to be educated on the importance of staying with their groups and **ONLY** performing planned manual support activities.
- No contact is permitted between gymnasts and gymnasts unless following the **Welsh Gymnastics Team Sport Framework** in identified disciplines/activities. Gymnasts are not permitted to support each other.
- Activities that can be conducted without close-proximity work will still be done with social distancing in place (for example warm-ups, conditioning, individual skill work, cool downs). Similarly, social distancing must still be maintained in communal areas of your training venue.

- Throughout all coach contact and manual support activities, activities and phases, coaches/instructors must wear a face covering in line with government guidance.
- Hand hygiene must be maintained with gymnasts and coaches /instructors being expected to wash or sanitise their hands regularly before and after working in close proximity on manual support activities, as well as throughout the session and venue.

## **After sessions**

- All items of clothing and leotards/unitards for the gymnast and coach/instructor must be washed after every session attended.
- If you develop any of the symptoms of Covid-19 or receives a positive Coronavirus test result, inform the club/gymnastics provider as soon as possible.

Please note, the approval of the **Welsh Gymnastics Coach Contact Framework** does not allow for social distancing to be fully removed from the gymnastics environment. The controls in place are specific to the planned coach contact and manual support activity.

Where these activities are not being performed social distancing must be adhered to (for example, during warm-ups, conditioning, and individual skill work). Coaches/ instructors are still required to maintain social distancing with no permitted contact between coaches/instructors and gymnasts except for the planned manual support activities.

## **Reporting concerns**

If you are concerned about any matters regarding Covid-19 at your child's gymnastics facility, in the first instance contact the Covid-19 Officer or representative or the Welfare Officer or Safeguarding Officer. Should you need further assistance or information please contact the Local Authority representative.

To report safeguarding concerns, in the first instance contact your Welfare or Safeguarding Officer. Further information regarding the safeguarding and protection of children can be found on the [British Gymnastics Website](#).