



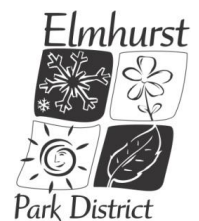
# Girls Gymnastics

## Competitive Team Handbook

2023-2024

**Mission Statement:**

*Elmhurst Gymnastics Center is dedicated to teaching age-appropriate gymnastics skills in a safe, fun environment. Our positive approach is geared towards instilling self-confidence and self-esteem along with an enjoyment of physical activity.*



# Welcome to the Girls Competitive Team!

The Elmhurst Park District would like to welcome your family to the Girls Competitive Team. With this handbook, we hope to give you more insight into how our program operates and answer many of your questions. First, and most importantly, our mission is to provide a fantastic gymnastics experience in a fun yet safe environment. We are here for the young athletes, many of whom have hopes and dreams of being the best they can be in life and in the sport of gymnastics. To make that dream come alive, the gymnast, parents/guardians, and coaches must function as a TEAM. After reading this manual, if you have any questions about the program, please ASK!

## Competitive Gymnastics – What Does It Mean?

We believe that gymnastics teaches life skills along with the greatest overall body conditioning your child could be involved in. Properly taught gymnastics teaches self-motivation, self-discipline, pride, dedication, determination, work ethic, time management, teamwork, team spirit, leadership, sportsmanship, respect for others, poise, and grace.

## Safety

Gymnastics, like any other sport, has its risks; therefore, the potential for injury exists. All parents/guardians must be fully aware of the risk involved in the sport of gymnastics. Speed, motion, height, flipping and the difficulty of the skill puts our athletes in life-threatening situations daily. At the Elmhurst Gymnastics Center, we are aware of the potential danger and will make every effort possible to achieve and maintain a safe environment. We believe in strength, flexibility, and proper progressions to keep our athletes in the proper condition to progress in skill development.

## Practices and Training

To understand and appreciate what goes into the development of a competitive gymnast, one must understand exactly what it is we are trying to achieve during training.

**There are four fundamental areas of development which need to be addressed during the training: (1) Discipline, (2) Strength, (3) Flexibility, (4) Skills.**

**(1) Discipline** – Discipline plays an integral role when training. Training requires discipline from both the coaches and athletes. The coach must constantly keep the athlete focused and train hard to allow them to continually improve their performance. The relationship and trust between the gymnast and the coach is vital to skill progression. **Gymnasts must also keep themselves disciplined by forcing themselves to train harder when they get discouraged and keep focused when they get excited. Without discipline, strength, flexibility, and skills do not come.**

**(2) Strength Development** – As with any sport, one objective of the training is to make the difficult look easy. This is accomplished when the athlete has the strength required to master the skills. In gymnastics, the philosophy is “the stronger, the better.” Strength training can also play a role in the reduction of injuries and builds a base on which the gymnasts build as they advance. Sit-ups, push-ups, pull-ups, running, etc. are used to achieve this goal. While it may appear that the gymnasts simply repeat these basic exercises throughout the course of the year, there are subtle variations in the performance of these exercises. Technique may be changed or improved, the number of repetitions changed, resistance altered, the range of motion increased, etc. Repetition and basics are also essential in all areas of gymnastics, not just strength conditioning.

**(3) Flexibility Development** – Flexibility development is also essential to the long-term success of the gymnast. Superior flexibility adds to the aesthetic appeal of the performance, allows the gymnast to achieve skills faster and easier, as well as aiding in reducing the frequency and seriousness of injuries.

**(4) Skill Development** – Skill development falls into two distinct, but related categories: Basics and New Skills. Basics are like the ABCs of gymnastics. The gymnast uses these ABCs to compose their gymnastics sequences and routines. If any of these basic building blocks are missing or defective, the entire performance is weakened. **These basic skills, the building blocks of the sport, must be continually refined to permit the gymnast and his/her coaches to continually improve their performances. This is why we repeatedly review and drill the basics.**

## Our Competitive Program

Our girl's competitive program competes as a part of NGA (National Gymnastics Association). All routines and rules are based off the standards that NGA feels are a safe and progressive approach to competitive gymnastics. The goal of NGA is to provide a fun and safe environment for all levels of gymnasts. **It is important to the success of the program that all members and responsible parties sign the team agreement so that misunderstandings are minimized.**

**\*Our goal is to offer a positive competitive experience in a fun and rewarding environment for each gymnast. It will be the discretion of the coaching staff to determine whether a gymnast is ready to compete, what venue they will compete in, what level they will compete at and what events they will compete in.**

### Description of NGA Levels

*All NGA levels are optional based, meaning that all levels have a set of required elements followed by skills that can be interchanged as new skills are achieved. This helps keep gymnasts progressing and interested in gymnastics for a greater amount of time. There is no difference between number levels and color levels in NGA.*

\*At the Elmhurst Gymnastics Center, our 1N – 3N, Bronze and Silver gymnasts are taught the same routine to help aid in the mastery of entry level competitive skills, memorization of routines and build strong relationships between all teammates. The gymnasts will be able to substitute skills, at their coach's discretion, depending on their individual strengths. Our 4N – 10N, Gold, Platinum and Diamond gymnasts will have individual routines based on their skills and strengths – these will need to take place during private lessons.

### Team Placement and Mobility between Levels

Our coaches determine the level placement of all gymnasts on the team based on the following criteria:

- Work ethic & coaching ability
- Physical abilities: strength and flexibility
- Skill level
- Success at current level

The mission of Elmhurst Gymnastics Center is to develop healthy and confident gymnasts. One way in which we can help meet this demanding goal is to place the gymnasts at the level where they can be most successful. This means that the gymnast must be able to perform the skills and routines required at a certain level of comfort. These skills should never be beyond her ability. We will never ask or expect our athletes to perform skills or routines that they cannot perform **consistently and safely** in practice. It is possible for a gymnast to move up a level during a season, but this decision is at the discretion of the coaching staff.

## Competitive Program Policies

### Expectations of Gymnasts

The way you act in the gym reflects your respect for yourself, teammates, and the Elmhurst Park District. Only the highest standard of behavior will be acceptable. The following are expectations of ALL Team Members:

- 1) Attend all practices, competitions, and special events. Arrive on time, (5 minutes prior for practices, 15 minutes for competition) ready to practice and to stay the entire time. If you are unable to attend a practice or need to leave early, please have your parent/guardian e-mail **girlsteamgymnastics@epd.org**
- 2) Come to practice in proper practice attire (gymnastics leotard or workout shirt with tight fitting shorts, NO baggy clothing or jewelry is permitted). We understand that the gym can be chilly at times, please come prepared for that as well – loose fitting sweatshirts/hoodies are not allowed due to safety concerns and a gymnast will be told to remove such items. No chewing gum or food is allowed in the gym. Water bottles are allowed.
- 3) Please leave your cell phone/smart watch in your locker and limit usage to the times when you are on break or recording a new skill. We understand that technology plays a big part in our lives now, but staying focused

on our gymnastics in the gym will help keep you safe. Please note, our gym is a "TikTok Free Zone". Please refrain from doing TikTok dances during practices.

- 4) **Upon entering the gym, wait for your coach to start practice.** Stay off the equipment unless you have permission and supervision of a coach.
- 5) **Ask permission to leave the gym.** This applies to going to the restroom and to getting a drink. You should not visit the vending machines unless approved and monitored by a coach. The coaches are responsible for your whereabouts at all times. *\*The front desk is unable to give out change, so a gymnast purchasing a drink and/or snack will need to bring exact change.*
- 6) Do not push or touch the other gymnasts. Keep your hands to yourself. That includes horseplay and spotting other gymnasts.
- 7) Only concern yourself with things that YOU can control; YOUR ATTITUDE, YOUR EFFORT.... YOUR GYMNASTICS! Maintain a positive attitude when facing fears and frustrations. Gymnastics is a very demanding and difficult sport. All gymnasts suffer setbacks, frustration, fear, and defeat. Expect these things, learn from them, and you will overcome them.
- 8) Treat other gymnasts, coaches, and other staff within the facility with respect. Be kind to those younger than you, and do not hold yourself out as better than any of your teammates. Everyone has strengths and weaknesses. We are a team. **Any type of bullying of other gymnasts, coaches and/or other staff will not be tolerated and will result in removal from the competitive team program immediately.** All gymnasts will sign an Anti-Bullying Pledge agreeing to this.
- 9) If you are permitted to take a snack break during your practice, please bring a HEALTHY snack and drink. This is not the time for a full meal. Please also be sure to behave appropriately and be back in the gym ready to practice after your break.
- 10) When you are at an event, you are on that event and need to be working on the skills for your current level, for that specific event. Please do not be playing on other equipment at any time.
- 11) As you continue your journey with gymnastics, you will gain new skills. Please remember that you will get to practice those skills, but we need to master the skills at our level first. Please respect when your coach tells you that you are not yet ready to try a new skill.
- 12) If you are injured during practice, or have injured yourself outside of practice, please let your coach know.
- 13) Always wait inside the facility for your ride. If your ride is late, go to the front desk and ask to use the phone. **Gymnasts under 10 years old must be dropped off and picked up from the gym by a parent/guardian.**
- 14) Please remember that you can come to your coach with any issues or concerns. The open communication policy is not just for your parents/guardians, but for you, too!

## **Expectations of Parents/Guardians**

Parents play a huge role in the development of a successful gymnast. Your role is every bit as important as that of the gym, coaches, and the athlete.

- 1) **Attendance is very important if you wish for your gymnast to reach their maximum potential.** If your gymnast cannot attend practice, will be arriving late or needs to leave practice early, please email Coach Sarah at **[girlsteamgymnastics@epd.org](mailto:girlsteamgymnastics@epd.org)** as soon as possible.
- 2) Once committed to attending a meet, it is expected that your gymnast will attend. Often the final schedule for a meet is not published until two weeks prior to the meet. Please reserve the day or the weekend if two-three days are noted for the meet. Some of the large meets include Friday's. Upon agreeing to attend a three-day meet, please be prepared to take your child out of school if necessary. Friday meets are typically later in the afternoon but can be earlier. Once the details are finalized and released, we will pass the information on to you. If you decide to remove your gymnast from a meet after the final deadline, you will not receive a refund.

- 3) Parents/guardians are not permitted on the gym floor and must refrain from coaching or commenting during practices and competitions. If your child is not paying attention or messing around, we realize it is tempting. This is the job of the coaches. If your child is injured during competition, you are not permitted to come onto the floor. The coach and other medical professionals will assess and assist in helping your gymnast.
- 4) We feel that communication with the parents/guardians of our team members should be open and active. We will post in the BAND app and email all important team information and occasional updates, as time permits. If you need to reach a coach, you may call Coach Sarah at 630-993-8676 (office) or email **girlsteamgymnastics@epd.org**
- 5) Parents are expected and encouraged to always show proper respect for our sport and program. Disrespectful behavior and/or rude, belittling, or negative comments about coaches, parents, office staff or other gymnasts are always inappropriate and have no place in our program, and while we never want to punish a child for the actions of her parents/guardians, we will not tolerate parents/guardians, who by their words and actions, do not support the policies and values of our team program. We will remove a gymnast from the competitive program if a parent/guardian does not respect our program, policies, or staff.
- 6) If you have an issue or concern, please speak to your coach. Complaining to other parents cannot solve the issue, nor can we solve it, if we do not know about it. If you respect us enough to allow us to play a large role in your gymnasts' life, please respect us enough to know that we have your gymnasts best interest at heart.
- 7) Be encouraging and positive to your gymnast. Be careful of comparisons because each gymnast is an individual with different talents and capabilities.
- 8) Coaches determine the level placement of all gymnasts. Please refrain from making comments about what level you think your gymnast should be in. Level placement is determined by the skills set by NGA Gymnastics and the abilities of your gymnast.

## Other Policies and Procedures

- 1) Medical Emergency: In the unlikely event of a medical emergency, first aid will be administered, including requesting emergency medical technicians and an ambulance if needed. In the event of a head injury, an ambulance will be automatically requested. You will be contacted using your emergency contact information. Please make sure to always keep this information up to date.
- 2) Inclement Weather Procedures: In the event of inclement weather resulting in the closing of the Wagner Community Center, you will be contacted either via phone or e-mail. You can check our Elmhurst Gymnastics Center Facebook page as well. We also encourage you to download the "Rainout" app for your cell phone, which will alert you to any closures. Instructions can be found on the EPD website. If you have any questions as to whether there is practice, please check the BAND app.
- 3) Make-up for Missed Practices: There will be **no make-up practice(s)** for missed practices.
- 4) Team Information: We post team information on the BAND app in addition to emailing all team information.
- 5) Coach Contact: If you need to contact the coach, the best way is by email. Please remember, practices are very busy. If you need to speak with Coach Sarah, please do so **after** practice or email her to set up at a time at **girlsteamgymnastics@epd.org**.
- 6) Behavior: Gymnasts' behavior at both practices and competitions must be impeccable. Any behavior problems may result in the gymnast being sent home. Every effort will be made in addressing and correcting the behavior and sending a gymnast home will be the last resort. Our disciplinary actions can be found within this handbook.
- 7) Additional Gyms and/or Private Lessons: Being on the Elmhurst Gymnastics Center Competitive Team is a yearlong commitment. Please refrain from enrolling your gymnast in other gyms/gymnastics classes and private lessons, as every gym has a different approach to coaching and may teach/allow things at different times. This often causes many struggles for coaches. If a gymnast is enrolled in other gyms/gymnastics classes or receives private lessons at another gym, this may result in removal from the Elmhurst Gymnastics Center Competitive Program.

## Disciplinary Actions

The rules and policies which govern gymnasts, and their parents/guardians, have been outlined here and in other sections of the Handbook. If there is an ongoing pattern of disruption or are major rule infractions, it may become necessary to impose some disciplinary action to improve the situation. The procedures noted below are not intended to be all-inclusive. They are presented as an expression of our beliefs as to what disciplinary actions are necessary and appropriate for our gymnasts. We will treat all our gymnasts and parents/guardians as individuals and will seek the most effective disciplinary actions based on each unique set of circumstances.

### Disciplinary Process

1. Warning – Gymnast will be given a warning to stop the behavior and be able to continue with the activity she is supposed to be doing.
2. Conditioning – A gymnast will be given (x) amount of (conditioning activity) coordinating to the event they are on and then be able to return to their activity (This encourages focus and builds strength to complete the activities on that event)
3. Sit Out & Conversation – A gymnast will be asked to sit out for the remainder of that rotation and be able to continue with the next rotation activity. The coach will talk with the gymnast to address the behavior privately.
4. Sit Out for the Remainder of the Event & Conversation – A gymnast will be asked to sit out for the remainder of the event if her behavior does not improve with the above actions. The coach will talk with the gymnast again to address the behavior and discuss next steps if the behavior does not improve at the next event.
5. If the behavior continues after a change in event and steps 1 and 2 do not work, the coach will ask the gymnast to sit out and a call will be made to the contact on file. A meeting will be scheduled if this instance occurs more than once.
6. **A gymnast may not be able to participate in a competition due to poor attendance or poor behavior in the gym, as well as past meets.**

**Please note:** This process is quite common among competitive programs, and we will not communicate the first three items on the list. If we get to step four, the coach will send an email detailing the incident just to make you aware that these actions took place during practice. The development of the coach/gymnast relationship is paramount. These relationships are built on time shared. We cannot, and will not, run to the parents every time we have a problem. Ups and downs are part of growing. The downs include discipline problems, and we will attempt to solve them before coming to a parent/guardian for assistance.

## Financial Obligations

### Overview of Financial Policies

Team tuition is based on the school year. Holiday break weeks have already been factored into your tuition. There are no prorated fees due to missed practices. Upon registration for the team, you were able to choose your form and method of payment. If you have any questions or concerns regarding team registration fees, please direct them to the Wagner Community Center Registration Office Manager **Sue Kiel** at **630-993-8927**.

### Description of Fees:

**Team Fees-** This monthly fee covers your gymnast's practices, coach's wages for practices, as well as competitions, and gym/equipment usage.

**Athlete Fees** – NGA gymnasts must be enrolled as an NGA Member to compete in any competition. The fee for this is \$40/year.

**Competitive Attire** – Gymnasts are required to purchase a competition uniform which includes a competition leotard, team jacket and leggings. Backpacks will be provided for the 2023/2024 season. **Competition attire is not to be brought to/worn to practices.**

**Competition Fees** – Each meet requires an entry fee to be paid prior to the competition. Spectator fees vary.

## Meet Etiquette for Gymnasts & Parents/Guardians

1. **Be early. Arrive at the competition 15 minutes prior to the check-in time.** Gymnasts are to use the restroom before seeking and going over to their coach. Parents may not step onto the competition floor with their gymnast. If a parent/guardian needs to talk to the coach prior to the competition, please have your gymnast inform the coach and they will come to the spectator area.
2. Gymnasts are to always remain on the competition floor during the competition, with their team and coaches. Gymnasts are not to go and talk with their parents/guardians during the competition and parents are not to come onto the competition floor to talk to their gymnast. Gymnasts remain with their team and coach until the end of the awards ceremony.
3. For the competition, the gymnast must wear their team leotard. Hair must be pulled back, braids or a bun is best, not long ponytails. No jewelry or nail polish, these will result in a deduction, per NGA rules. Underwear/bra straps must not show, this will also result in a deduction, per NGA rules. Nude undergarments or the color of the leotard are highly recommended. Under NGA rules, gymnasts may not use/be on their cellphone at any time during the competition. Please encourage your gymnast to leave their cell phone in the car or with you for the entirety of the competition.
4. It is the gymnasts' responsibility to make sure that they have their backpack, grips, tape, and a water bottle at every meet.
5. Behavior of gymnasts, as well as parents/guardians/families, should always be one that they and their coaches will be proud of. Discussions regarding teammates, other teams, coaches, judges, etc. should all be done with respect. **Gossip and negative talk are unacceptable as it can affect the performance of other athletes. Gymnasts and/or parents/guardians/families can be asked to leave the competition for such behavior.**
6. Flash photography is **NOT** permitted at a gymnastics competition. This can cause distraction and/or injury to gymnasts.
7. **There is no place for crying, uncontrolled emotions and bad attitudes during gymnastics meets.**
8. Be courteous, respectful, and polite to all meet officials, hosts/hostesses, competitors, and coaches. Never contact a host club before, during, or after a competition. If you have a question or comment, please direct them to your coach. The host gym will provide coaches with any information you may need. Communication with meet directors/officials can only be done by a coach.
9. Gymnasts are expected to stay for the awards ceremony and accept their awards while wearing their team leotard and warm up leggings. Team jackets during awards are optional. As a participating athlete, you have an obligation to remain at the competition until the end of the award ceremony to accept any awards presented to you with courtesy and gratitude. Remember that you are not just representing yourself, you are acting as a representative of the Elmhurst Gymnastics Center. Awards ceremonies are not the place for pouting about scores and placements. Gymnasts, and parents/guardians/families, should be proud of themselves/their gymnast for their achievements and efforts during the competition.
10. Any comments or concerns about the competition, or other issues, that parents/guardians have, should be sent in an email to the coach and/or discussed at the next practice. A meet is not the time or place to discuss these matters.

## Parent/Guardian Obligations for Meets

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to make sure the gymnast is signed up for regular season NGA meets to qualify for the State Meet at the end of the season. Gymnasts are required to score **at least** a 32\* All Around to qualify/participate at state. Your gymnast is required to compete in at least 3 regular season meets to achieve this score. To advance further into competition, gymnasts must score a 33\* All Around at State to participate in Regionals and a 33.5\* at Regionals to continue to Nationals. \*Subject to change. Updates will be given if needed.

# Gymnast Health

## Injuries

In case of a minor injury during practice, we will administer first aid and will also communicate to you what happened during practice. If an injury is sustained during a competition, please wait for your coach to give some indication that you should come onto the competitive floor. In most cases you will not be invited onto the floor because the injury will be relatively minor, and the coach will take care of it. If the injury is categorized as an emergency medical injury, these steps will be followed:

### Care of an injury

Remember the acronym **R.I.C.E.D.**

**R = Rest** the injured body part

**I = Apply Ice** – 20 Minutes on, 20 minutes off – 3-4 times a day for 48 hours after injury

**C = Apply Compression**

**E = Elevate** the injured extremity above heart level

**D = Diagnosis**

***If a gymnast is injured and is unable to participate in practices, a medical note needs to be presented notifying coaches of the injury. Financial arrangements will be made regarding monthly payments. Upon return of the gymnast, a doctor's note, indicating that the gymnast is allowed to return to full practice, must be received prior to the gymnast's return.***

## Grips/Rip Guards

It is at the coaches' discretion when the gymnast should start wearing grips and what type of grips to purchase. Please talk to your gymnasts' coach for further information.

It is recommended that you keep "Rip Guards" on hand for your gymnast. These help your gymnast continue to work on bars if they have a bad rip. This product prevents rips from becoming infected, increasing in size, promotes healing and also prevents additional rips. These can be found online by search "Rip Guards by Wod and Done".

## Treatment of Rips

Gymnasts should expect to occasionally get rips on their hands from the bars from. Gymnasts are expected to still do bars when they have a rip. Here are some treatment methods that the gymnast can do at home to help heal and prevent rips.

1. Before going to bed the gymnast should put ointment on the rip (Neosporin, Preparation H), followed by a band aid and a wrap over the hand. They should keep this on while they sleep to keep the moisture in.
2. Hand lotion, vitamin E or Aloe Vera can also help heal a rip.
3. Trimming calluses with a pumice stone is recommended.
4. The gymnasts should not come to practice with band aids or tape on their rips.

## Nutrition

As in any competitive sport, nutrition is a major contributor to performance. Your growing athlete lives a rigorous lifestyle and proper nutrition is a must. Please help us instill these valuable principles into your child. If you send a snack with your gymnast to practice, please make sure that this is a healthy snack, not a meal. We are confident that with a proper diet, your young athlete will be happier, healthier, and more successful.

**We are glad you are a part of our Elmhurst Gymnastics family and part of our TEAM!**





## Competitive Gymnastics Team Agreement

I acknowledge and understand the following policies for the 2023-2024 Elmhurst Girls Competitive Gymnastics Team season:

- ✓ Gymnasts should not be enrolled in another gymnastics gym and/or seek private lessons from coaches other than the staff from Elmhurst Gymnastics Center.
- ✓ There are no makeup practices for missed practices. For the safety and success of the gymnasts, the gymnast must practice with their assigned group.
- ✓ Gymnasts are required to purchase all competition attire prior to the meet season.
- ✓ Gymnasts are required to attend a **MINIMUM** of 1 practice the week before a meet and **ALL** practices the week of a meet.
- ✓ Once a meet deadline has passed, we **cannot** accept any registrations or issue any refunds. In the event of an injury, we can request a refund from the meet director. However, it is up to the meet director's discretion if a refund is issued.
- ✓ NGA rules indicate that a meet should be scheduled to be completed by 10:00pm. Warm-ups should not be scheduled earlier than 8:00am, though check in may begin prior to 8:00am. Final meet schedules will be sent out a minimum of 2 weeks prior to the competition. You must commit to the entire weekend, Friday-Sunday, as we will not know your gymnast's session time until the schedule is released. We will post and email the schedules as soon as we receive them.
- ✓ Gymnasts must achieve the set all-around score during the regular season to compete in the State Meet. You may choose what meets you would like to attend, but gymnasts must compete. Gymnasts must achieve any further set all around scores to continue to Regionals and Nationals.
- ✓ Contact coaches directly for questions or concerns related to practices, individual progress, or meet information.
- ✓ I have thoroughly read and understand the Gymnastics Team Handbook. I have gone over the handbook with my/our child. We support the philosophy of the Elmhurst Gymnastics Center Competitive Team. We hereby agree to follow all rules, procedures and policies presented in the team handbook.

Gymnast Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_