



# ELITE ACRO PROGRAMME HANDBOOK

PROTOCOL & INFORMATION

FOR PARENTS & GYMNASTS

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VERSION 1 – MAY 2025

## INTRODUCTION:

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Welcome to the Evoke Gymnastics **Elite Acro Programme (EAP) Handbook** — your go-to guide for understanding the sport, structure, expectations, and exciting journey that lies ahead.

At Evoke Gymnastics, we believe in full transparency. This handbook is designed to give you complete clarity about what it means to be part of the EAP, so you can make an informed decision about whether this programme is the right fit for you and your gymnast.

We don't believe in unwritten rules. We operate with clear expectations and a high level of professionalism. We know we're not the right fit for everyone — and that's okay. What matters is shared commitment and alignment with our values.

This handbook will guide you through what to expect, how to prepare, and how we will work together to create an experience that is rewarding, challenging, and unforgettable.

Please refer to it regularly for answers to common questions and to stay aligned with the club's mission and ways of working.

We're excited to begin this journey with you — one filled with hard work, growth, and lifelong memories!

– **The Evoke Gymnastics Team**

## OUR VISION:

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To **EVOKE** a lifelong love of movement and well-being through high-quality gymnastics.

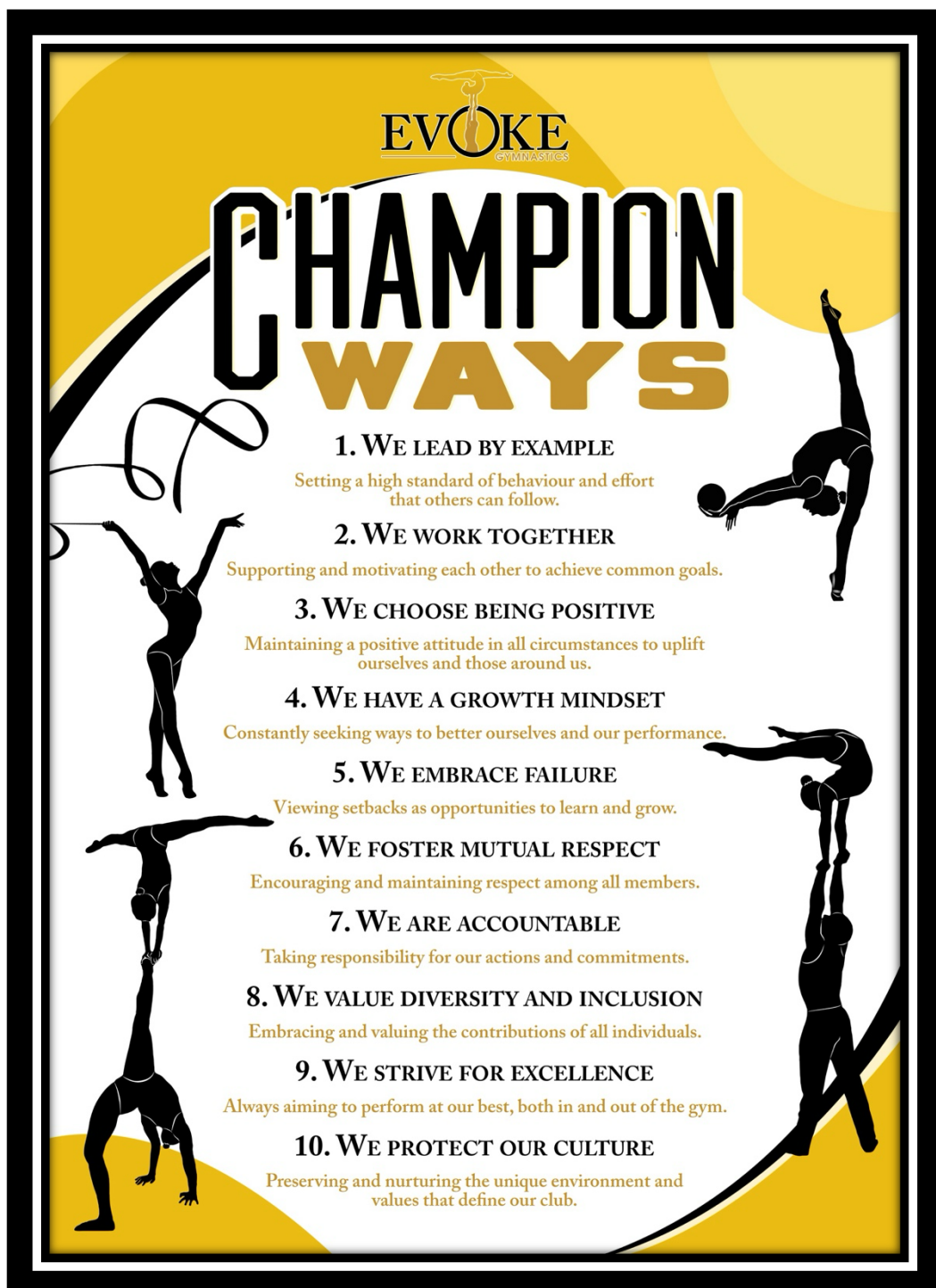
## OUR MISSION:

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To play a positive part in shaping the next generation through exceptional coaching and a nurturing environment.

## OUR CHAMPION WAYS:

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## 1. WHAT IS ELITE ACRO PROGRAMME?

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Our **Elite Acro Programme (EAP)** is separate from our Recreational Gymnastics pathway. It focuses exclusively on acrobatic pair and group routines, preparing gymnasts to compete at Regional, National, and for some, international levels.

If your gymnast has been selected for the EAP — congratulations! You're beginning a rewarding journey that offers not only athletic progression but also personal growth, teamwork, and lifelong friendships.

At Evoke Gymnastics, our goal is to help every gymnast realise their full potential in an environment built on excellence, positivity, and supportive collaboration.

## 2. WHAT IS ACROBATIC GYMNASTICS?

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Acrobatic Gymnastics (*Acro*) is a spectacular and highly technical discipline that combines strength, flexibility, balance, coordination, and artistry. Gymnasts work in partnerships to perform complex routines choreographed to music, showcasing teamwork, trust, and precision.

### **A BRIEF HISTORY:**

While acrobatic movements date back to ancient Greece, modern-day *Acrobatic Gymnastics*—originally called *Sports Acrobatics*—was developed in the Soviet Union in the 1930s.

The discipline was introduced to the UK in the 1970s, when John Atkinson (British Gymnastics) returned from the 1st World Championships in Moscow (1974). At the time, the UK was represented only in tumbling, but John's enthusiasm for this exciting new branch of gymnastics led to the formation of the first British acrobatic pairs and groups in 1976.

Although the UK was nearly 40 years behind the Eastern Bloc countries at the time, British gymnasts began competing internationally soon after. It wasn't until the 8th World Championships in Belgium (1988) that the UK won its first overall World Championship medal — a bronze by Alison Cooper (Tout) and Emma Carlisle. Since then, the UK has become a strong force in the sport, producing numerous World and European medallists.

### **ACROBATIC PARTNERSHIPS:**

In Acro, gymnasts form partnerships where each gymnast has a specialised role:

- **Top** – Typically the smaller gymnast who performs flight, balance, and flexibility elements.
- **Base(s)** – One, two, or three gymnasts who provide the support for balances, lifts, throws and catches.

**There are five partnership categories:**

1. Women's Pair
2. Men's Pair
3. Mixed Pair
4. Women's Group (three gymnasts)
5. Men's Group (four gymnasts)

### TYPES OF ROUTINES:

1. **Balance Routine** – Showcasing strength, control, and precision, often featuring various handstands, held positions, and pyramids.
2. **Dynamic Routine** – Highlighting explosive elements such as somersaults, twists, throws, and catches.
3. **Combined Routine** – Merging both balance and dynamic elements into a seamless performance.

### SCORING AND EVALUATION:

Each routine is judged on the following criteria:

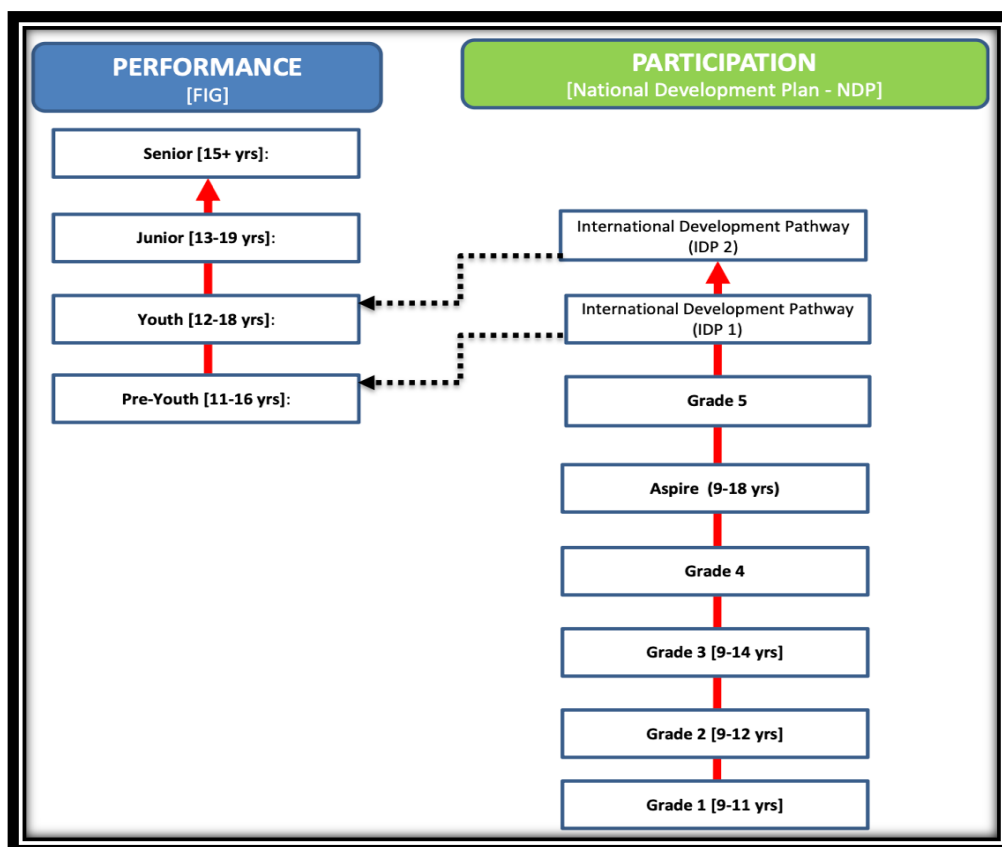
- **Technical Execution** – The accuracy, control, and quality of skill performance.
- **Artistry** – The creativity, musicality, choreography, and expression in the routine.
- **Difficulty Value** – The total difficulty rating of elements performed, based on predefined values from the code of points.

A total score above **27.50** is considered an excellent result at most levels.

Acrobatic Gymnastics not only builds athletic ability but also instils trust, resilience, teamwork, and confidence—skills that benefit gymnasts both in and beyond the sport.

## 3. COMPETITION PATHWAYS

In the UK, Acrobatic Gymnastics follows two main training and competition pathways: the FIG (Performance) pathway and the NDP (Participation) pathway, as shown in the diagram below:



### **NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (NDP) – PARTICIPATION PATHWAY:**

The NDP Pathway is designed for gymnasts aged 9 (in the year of competition) and above who are working towards competition at Regional and National levels.

It includes a series of grades, each with specific skills, age ranges, and difficulty caps.

Gymnasts often begin with friendly Club Competitions to gain confidence and experience before entering formal qualifiers.

Those following the NDP Pathway will compete at the South West Regional Qualifier (SW Prelims), with successful gymnasts going on to represent the region at the NDP British Championships (NDP Finals).

### **FIG PATHWAY – PERFORMANCE PATHWAY:**

The FIG Pathway (Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique) is the high-performance track, designed for gymnasts training and competing at an elite level. It emphasises advanced skills, increased training intensity, and international competition experience.

Gymnasts in the FIG Pathway may compete in:

- National and International Friendly Competitions
- FIG British Championships
- European Championships
- World Championships
- Youth Olympics
- World Cups & World Games

### **AGE GROUPS AND ‘OUT-OF-AGE’:**

Partnerships are typically formed by coaches to fit the age categories set within both the NDP and FIG Pathways. However, in some cases, coaches may create ‘Out-of-Age’ partnerships with the future in mind - for example, pairing gymnasts aged 10 and 14, knowing they’ll qualify the following year for the 11–16 FIG category, Grade 4, or Aspire within NDP.

You may see competitions that include an ‘Out-of-Age’ category. These events are intended to keep gymnasts motivated by giving them a chance to compete while they await age eligibility. Although they provide valuable experience, Out-of-Age events are not officially recognised by FIG or British Gymnastics and do not lead to progression in those pathways.

### **TRANSITION BETWEEN PATHWAYS:**

Gymnasts may transition between the NDP and FIG Pathways depending on their progress, goals, partnerships, and coach recommendation.

All transitions are made with careful consideration of each gymnast’s long-term development and potential.

At Evoke, we proudly support and guide each gymnast along the pathway that best suits their development, goals, and long-term success.

## **4. SQUAD STRUCTURE AND PROGRESSION PATHWAY**

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At Evoke Gymnastics, we provide a clear and structured progression pathway for gymnasts as they develop within the discipline of Acrobatic Gymnastics.

Our squad system is thoughtfully designed to align with each gymnast's age, experience level, and competition readiness, ensuring they are supported and challenged at every stage of their journey.

SQUAD	FOCUS	AGE / LEVEL
Squad 1	Development	Age 5
Squad 2	Development	Age 6
Squad 3	Development	Ages 7–10
Squad 4	Competitive – Grades 1 & 2	9–12 years
Squad 5	Competitive – Grades 3 & 4	9–14 years
Squad 6	Competitive – Aspire, Grade 5, IDP 1 & IDP 2	9–18 years
Squad 7	Competitive – FIG: Pre-Youth, Youth, Junior & Senior	Advanced competition level (national and international focus)

#### UNDERSTANDING THE JOURNEY:

- **Development Squads (Squads 1–3)** - Focused on building strong foundations in acrobatic skills, flexibility, agility, and strength - all while keeping the emphasis on fun, learning, and personal growth.
- **Competitive Squads (Squads 4–7)** - Gymnasts progress into competition at Regional, National, and international levels, depending on their readiness and coach assessment.

Progression through the squad system is individualised, considering each gymnast's skill level, commitment, work ethic, and long-term potential.

## 5. COMMITMENT

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Acrobatic Gymnastics is a team sport - every gymnast's attendance, effort, and focus directly influence their partnership. We therefore expect a high level of commitment from all gymnasts and their families.

Each partnership is formed with clear short- and long-term goals in mind, ranging from Regional Championships to the British, European, and World Championships. These goals define the training cycle, and once committed, gymnasts are expected to complete the entire cycle.

Coaches assign a target competition that suits partnership's ability, experience, and readiness. While a few events may be optional, most competitions are critical to development and often form basis for selections to represent SW Region at National Finals or Great Britain at international events.

For that reason, full attendance at scheduled training sessions and target competitions is mandatory.



## 6. WHAT DOES YOUR GYMNAST NEED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAMME?

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To take part in the EAP, your gymnast will need more than just talent. While we identify potential through skill and ability, success in the programme also requires:

- **Good fitness foundations** – Strength, flexibility, power and endurance.
- **Mental resilience** – Ability to face challenges and setbacks positively.
- **Strong work ethic** – Focus, discipline, and determination at every session.
- **Team spirit** – Trust, empathy, and communication with partners and squad mates.
- **Respect for others** – Coaches, teammates, opponents, and officials.

Equally important is **Parental support**. The EAP can be demanding - gymnasts will experience both high points and challenges. Your encouragement, understanding, and presence through both are crucial to their success and motivation.

### **INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS:**

If your gymnast is selected to compete internationally through the FIG Pathway, they must hold a **British Passport**. Gymnasts without one can still compete at the FIG British Championships but cannot represent Great Britain at international events.

If your gymnast does not currently have a British Passport, it is vital to notify us as soon as they are accepted into the EAP. Since the process of obtaining a passport can be lengthy and costly, we recommend starting early. If there are no plans to secure a British Passport, please let us know promptly so that we can arrange suitable partnerships accordingly.

### **PERSONAL INDEPENDENCE:**

Gymnasts in the EAP will likely travel for training camps and international competitions. It's important they develop the ability to manage themselves independently—this includes carrying their luggage, handling money, maintaining personal hygiene, and coping with day-to-day tasks while away from home. We'll support their growth in these areas, but a foundation of independence is essential.

## 7. WHAT ARE THE REWARDS FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE PROGRAMME?

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The EAP is designed to prepare gymnasts for high-level competition, including Regional, National, and international events - such as the European and World Championships - with the goal of achieving podium success.

Gymnasts in the programme travel across the UK and abroad to compete, gaining not only valuable experience but also the chance to represent their club and, potentially, Great Britain on the world stage.

Since Evoke was founded, our gymnasts have earned outstanding results and medals at major events including European and World Championships. With hard work, commitment, and the combined support of gymnasts, coaches, and parents, there is every reason to believe your child can achieve the same.

Beyond medals, the EAP fosters lifelong friendships - both within partnerships and with fellow gymnasts across the country and around the world. These relationships, forged through shared goals and experiences, often extend far beyond gymnastics.

While past success is something we're proud of, results can never be guaranteed. What we can promise is our full dedication to nurturing each gymnast's potential and helping them become the very best they can be.

Finally, the habits formed through this level of training - discipline, fitness, resilience, and teamwork - have lasting benefits that extend well beyond gymnastics and into all aspects of adult life.

## 8. COMPETITIONS

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Competitions are an exciting and essential part of the journey within the EAP at Evoke Gymnastics. They offer gymnasts the opportunity to showcase progress, build resilience, and create lasting team memories.

Gymnasts are entered into competitions based on their grade/level and readiness, as determined by the coaching team.

### **NDP PATHWAY COMPETITIONS:**

- **Friendly Club Competitions** - Low-pressure, supportive events designed to give gymnasts valuable performance experience.
- **Regional Qualifiers** - Required events to qualify for national competitions.
- **NDP British Championships** - National event where qualifying gymnasts represent the South West Region.

### **FIG PATHWAY COMPETITIONS:**

- **Friendly/Invitational Competitions** - Domestic or international events used for experience and performance preparation.
- **FIG British Championships** - Prestigious national competition for high-level gymnasts.
- **International Competitions** - Including the European Championships, World Championships, World Cups, Youth Olympics, and the World Games.

### **TRIAL COMPETITIONS (FIG PATHWAY ONLY):**

Trial competitions are organised by British Gymnastics to assist in selecting gymnasts to represent Great Britain at international events.

While trial results are important, selection is ultimately at the discretion of the National Coach and selection committee, in accordance with the current British Gymnastics selection policy, which may vary from cycle to cycle.

This means that winning a trial does not guarantee selection. The National Coach may choose a different partnership if they believe it has a stronger chance of achieving international success and securing medals for Great Britain.

### **COMPETITION ENTRIES:**

Competition entries are fully managed by our coaching team. Coaches are responsible for selecting partnerships based on readiness and long-term development. They handle all aspects of registration and administration, design individualised training blocks to ensure gymnasts are fully

prepared and oversee all logistics and support on competition day to ensure a smooth and focused experience for each gymnast.

### **INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES:**

Families will be notified well in advance of any upcoming competitions. This includes all key information such as:

- Competition dates
- Entry fees and payment deadlines
- Kit and uniform requirements

This gives families plenty of time to plan, prepare, and support their gymnast effectively.

Competitions are usually held on weekends. However, the final running order/schedule is typically released by the organisers only a couple of weeks before the event. Because of this, we kindly ask families to keep the entire competition weekend available, even if the gymnast may only be competing on one of the days. This helps avoid any last-minute scheduling issues.

### **COMPETITION RESULTS:**

Participation in the EAP does not guarantee competitive results. While we are proud of our strong track record, success ultimately depends on the effort and commitment each gymnast puts into their training, as well as the level of competition at any given time.

## **9. TABLES OF DIFFICULTY**

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In both the NDP and FIG Pathways, the difficulty of skills performed is carefully regulated to ensure the safe and progressive development of gymnasts. This is managed in two key ways:

1. **NDP Pathway** - Difficulty is controlled by specifying exactly which elements can be performed at each grade.
2. **FIG Pathway** - Each skill is assigned a difficulty value, and there are limits on both the individual element values and the total difficulty score for a routine. These limits vary by grade and partnership type (e.g. Women's Pair, Men's Group, Mixed Pair, etc.).

All recognised acrobatic elements are listed in the **FIG Tables of Difficulty** - a comprehensive document of around 140 pages that assigns a value to each skill or pyramid based on complexity.

Coaches use these guidelines to structure routines that comply with difficulty restrictions while also meeting other key criteria such as artistry, execution, and safety.

Copies of the current Tables are available on the FIG website and British Gymnastics website.

## **10. TARIFF SHEETS**

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A Tariff Sheet is an essential document used in competitions to inform judges of the specific elements a partnership plans to perform in their routine. It lists each skill in order, along with its difficulty value.

### **JUDGES USE THE TARIFF SHEET TO:**

- Identify which skills were planned
- Verify whether skills were completed as declared
- Determine the difficulty score for the routine

### **HOW IT WORKS:**

- A separate Tariff Sheet is required for each routine: *Balance*, *Dynamic*, and *Combined*
- Coaches prepare these sheets using specialist software, such as **Acro Companion**
- Sheets are submitted in advance of the competition, allowing judges to refer to them live during performances

If a skill is missed, performed incorrectly, or modified, deductions or difficulty adjustments may apply.

## **11. JUDGING IN ACROBATIC GYMNASTICS**

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Every routine in competition is evaluated by a panel of judges across three key areas:

1. **Technical Execution (E-score)** - Focuses on technique and form including body positions, holds, landings, and the precision of all movements.
2. **Artistry (A-Score)** - Assesses the overall presentation, including choreography, musicality, expression, and performance quality.
3. **Difficulty (D-Score)** - Reflects the total difficulty value of the elements performed, as declared on the Tariff Sheet.

Each panel scores out of **10.0**, and the combined total from all three areas makes up the final routine score.

At higher-level competitions, a total score of **27.50** or above is considered excellent.

### **COMMON DEDUCTIONS:**

- Falls or uncontrolled landings
- Bent arms, legs, or poor body posture
- Skills not held for the required duration
- Artistic presentation issues (e.g., lack of expression or poor musicality)
- Missed, altered, or incorrect skills compared to the Tariff Sheet

While judging is highly technical, the aim is to reward clean, confident performances that balance execution, artistry and difficulty.

## **12. HOW ARE PARTNERSHIPS FORMED?**

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Forming the right partnerships is essential to success in Acrobatic Gymnastics, and at Evoke, this process is handled thoughtfully by the coaching team, with each gymnast's safety, development, and long-term potential in mind.

### **FACTORS WE CONSIDER:**

- Age and Competition Category – Partnerships must fit within the required age groups for NDP or FIG pathways.
- Suitability for Roles – Gymnasts are matched as bases or tops to ensure safety and effectiveness in balances, lifts, throws and catches.
- Physical Attributes – Strength, flexibility, coordination, and body type must complement each other.
- Technical Ability – Similar skill levels help support balanced progression.
- Work Ethic and Attitude – A positive mindset, commitment, and ability to work well with others are key.
- Long-Term Vision – Partnerships are formed not just for the present, but with future goals and development in mind.

### **TRIAL AND LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIPS:**

Some partnerships begin on a trial basis to assess compatibility and potential. Others are created with a long-term outlook, even if they are temporarily “out of age” or face short-term challenges.

At Evoke, partnership decisions are never rushed. They are made with great care, always aiming to create combinations that will thrive both in training and in competition.

## **13. WHEN AND WHY ARE PARTNERSHIPS CHANGED?**

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One of the most commonly misunderstood aspects of Acrobatic Gymnastics is that progression is not always linear. Gymnasts may sometimes need to step back and form new partnerships, occasionally at a lower competitive level. This is not a setback — it’s a natural part of the sport’s structure, where performance is based on the partnership as a whole, not just individual talent.

Partnerships often change when a top transitions to a base, requiring them to learn a completely new skill set. Speak to any of our senior gymnasts and you’ll hear the same story — most have gone through several partnership changes and “step backs” before reaching their full potential. It’s a normal and expected part of the journey, so please don’t worry if it happens.

### **OTHER COMMON REASONS FOR CHANGING PARTNERSHIPS INCLUDE:**

- Gymnasts outgrowing each other physically
- A lack of cohesion or teamwork within the partnership
- One partner retiring or stepping away from the programme
- Decline in fitness, effort, or commitment

If a gymnast loses their partner, they remain in the programme while a suitable match is sought. During this time, training continues with a strong focus on individual development, allowing gymnasts to improve in preparation for their next partnership.

In some cases, finding a match within the club may not be possible. When this happens, we may advertise externally and explore opportunities to partner with gymnasts from other clubs in similar situations.

At Evoke, every partnership decision is made with care, always keeping the gymnast’s safety, progression, and long-term success in mind.

## 14. TRAINING PREPARATION

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High-Performance training demands discipline, focus, and consistent effort. To make the most of each session and ensure safety and progress, gymnasts are expected to arrive mentally prepared, physically ready, and appropriately dressed.

### TO SUPPORT THIS, GYMNASTS MUST:

- **Arrive on time** – Be ready to line up and begin warm-up at the scheduled start time. We recommend arriving at least 10 minutes early.
- **Wear suitable training attire** – A leotard, lycra shorts, or a fitted top is appropriate. Clothing must be supportive, secure, and non-revealing.
- **Be well-rested** – Sufficient sleep the night before is essential for focus, energy, and injury prevention.
- **Have hair neatly secured** – Long hair must be tied back in a tidy, secure bun to avoid distraction or safety issues.
- **Communicate with coaches** – Any injuries, illness, or reasons for modified training must be communicated before the session begins.
- **Remove all jewellery** – This includes earrings, bracelets, rings, and watches.
  - Newly pierced ears must be covered with protective tape and should be fully removed after the initial healing period (typically 6 weeks).
  - Medical or religious jewellery may be worn with coach approval but must be secured or covered to ensure safety. Coaches may ask for removal if it poses a risk.

Consistent preparedness supports both safety and performance, helping gymnasts make the most of every training opportunity.

## 15. FITNESS

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Fitness is a fundamental requirement for elite-level gymnastics. To train safely, progress effectively, and support their partners, gymnasts in the EAP must maintain a consistently high level of physical conditioning.

At Evoke, we use the term ‘fitness’ to encompass key attributes such as strength, flexibility, endurance, and overall body condition—all of which contribute to a gymnast’s ability to perform at an elite level.

- **Base gymnasts** - must be strong and powerful to perform dynamic throws, support complex balances, and absorb the impact of catches.
- **Top gymnasts** - need to be smaller in stature, but exceptionally strong, agile, and well-conditioned to hold demanding handstand shapes and safely perform flight elements.
- **All gymnasts** - must be able to control and move their bodies with precision, especially under the physical demands of competition routines.

In Acrobatic Gymnastics, weight ratio between partners plays a significant role. It directly influences the level of difficulty a partnership can safely achieve, which in turn affects their difficulty score—a key scoring component in senior-level competition where no upper limit is set.

## **HEALTH & SAFETY:**

A gymnast's overall health and fitness also have a direct impact on safety. Inadequate conditioning can compromise performance and increase injury risk—for the gymnast and their partner.

To remain competitive and safe, gymnasts must adopt and maintain healthy lifestyle habits, including balanced nutrition, adequate rest, and consistent physical conditioning outside of structured sessions. If any concerns around a gymnast's fitness arise, parents will be contacted by the coaching team. Likewise, if you have any questions or concerns regarding your child's health or fitness, please don't hesitate to reach out to our Welfare Officer.

Open communication and collaborative support help us keep each gymnast safe, healthy, and on track for success.

## **16. TRAINING SCHEDULE, ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY**

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A training schedule will be provided by the coaching team, tailored to your gymnast's squad and competitive level.

Full attendance is expected at all scheduled sessions, except in exceptional circumstances, such as illness or injury. If your gymnast is going to be late or unable to attend a session, please notify us in advance by emailing **info@evokegymnastics.com** or sending a message via the relevant Squad WhatsApp Group.

Gymnasts should aim to arrive at least **10 minutes** before their session begins to allow time to change and prepare, ensuring they are ready to line up and begin promptly.

Consistent attendance is vital to a gymnast's progress and to the success of their partnership. If attendance becomes irregular or insufficient, the coaching team may review the gymnast's place in the programme, and a less demanding training programme may be offered to better suit their current level of commitment.

## **17. SCHOOLWORK**

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Academic education is important, and we do not expect a gymnast's schoolwork to suffer as a result of their training. In fact, we rarely encounter issues in this area—many of our elite gymnasts thrive academically and often see improvement after joining the elite training environment, where discipline, focus, and time management are strongly reinforced.

If at any point you feel that schoolwork is being affected, please don't hesitate to speak with the coaches. We're happy to work with families to find a solution that supports both academic and athletic success.

## **18. HOLIDAYS**

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Your coach will provide guidance on the competition calendar for the year as soon as it becomes available. This often depends on when British Gymnastics publishes the national schedule and whether we receive invitations to international events.

To minimise disruption and maximise performance, coaches will also advise on the most appropriate times to take holidays, ideally during low-competition periods or immediately following major events.

### **TAKING HOLIDAYS OUTSIDE OF THESE RECOMMENDED WINDOWS CAN:**

- Be unfair to remaining partners
- Disrupt the training programme and competition preparation
- Lead to a decline in overall partnership performance

This is because the lead-up to a competition is a critical phase, designed around a carefully structured training plan based on the principles of periodisation. Each week builds upon the last, gradually enhancing fitness, technical stability, and performance readiness. Missing even one week during this period can significantly affect results.

### **TO ENSURE PEAK PERFORMANCE AND PARTNERSHIP COHESION, WE ASK PARENTS TO FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES:**

- **Domestic Competitions** - Please avoid taking holidays in the **8 weeks prior** to the event.
- **Major Competitions (National, European, or World Championships)** - Holidays should not be taken in the **12 weeks prior** to the event.

If you're unsure whether a planned holiday might impact training or competition, please speak with your child's coach before making any bookings. Your cooperation ensures fairness for all partnerships and gives every gymnast the best chance to succeed.

## **19. WELFARE**

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At Evoke Gymnastics, the welfare of every gymnast is our highest priority.

We are committed to providing a safe, positive, and supportive environment where gymnasts feel respected, heard, and cared for. Any concerns—whether big or small—can be raised confidentially and will be addressed with professionalism and sensitivity.

We have a dedicated Welfare Officer available to both gymnasts and their families. Contact details can be found on our website or accessed through Reception. All welfare matters are managed confidentially, with the best interests of the gymnast at the heart of every decision.

Our club fully implements safeguarding and child protection policies, and promotes a culture rooted in respect, inclusivity, and fairness. Gymnasts are always encouraged to speak openly with their coach or the Welfare Officer if they have concerns of any kind.

Together, we aim to create an environment where all gymnasts can thrive—physically, emotionally, and socially.

## **20. INJURIES**

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Injuries are a natural part of sport and, unfortunately, can occur at any time. We expect gymnasts to take responsibility for communicating openly with their coach if they are injured or feeling unwell. If you are aware of an injury before training, please ensure your gymnast speaks to their coach prior to the session.

For gymnasts in the EAP, our goal is to support a safe and efficient return to full training. To achieve this, it's essential that any injury is diagnosed promptly by a specialist (ideally via GP referral), with a clear treatment plan provided. If physiotherapy is recommended, we ask that it be arranged without delay, as timely intervention plays a key role in recovery. We will adjust the gymnast's training in line with professional guidance.



In most cases, we can adapt training sessions to focus on alternative skills, conditioning, or choreography, allowing the gymnast to maintain fitness and continue developing during recovery.

Clear communication and prompt action help ensure a smooth return to performance.

## **21. ATTITUDE, BEHAVIOUR & WORK ETHIC**

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Gymnasts in the EAP are expected to maintain a high standard of behaviour, discipline, and work ethic at all times—both in and out of the gym.

### **THIS INCLUDES RESPECTFUL BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS:**

- Coaches and staff
- Acrobatic partners
- Fellow club members

Bullying, disrespect, or disruptive behaviour will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

Gymnasts are also expected to demonstrate a strong work ethic, showing consistent effort, focus, and a willingness to take feedback onboard.

We also ask parents and guardians to support the club's values. Inappropriate, critical, or inflammatory comments about Evoke Gymnastics, its members, staff, or officials on social media platforms are strictly prohibited. Such behaviour may lead to action in accordance with British Gymnastics' disciplinary procedures, including potential removal from the EAP programme.

If you have concerns or grievances, we strongly encourage you to speak directly with our Welfare Officer. For more details, please refer to our Social Networking Guidelines. Open and respectful communication ensures a positive environment for everyone.

## **22. BEHAVIOUR AT COMPETITIONS**

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Gymnasts representing Evoke Gymnastics are expected to uphold a high standard of behaviour and discipline during all competitions. This applies to their interactions with:

- Event organisers
- Coaches and staff
- Fellow competitors
- Acrobatic partners
- Team members and spectators

We kindly ask that parents and guardians limit direct communication with their gymnast during competitions, as this can be distracting and impact performance. Whether at home or abroad, experience has shown that gymnasts focus best when they are fully engaged with their coach and team.

If you are attending as a spectator, we encourage you to support from the background to allow gymnasts to stay connected with their coaches and follow team instructions. If urgent communication is needed, please go through the coach or designated support staff rather than approaching the gymnast directly.

This approach helps ensure a calm, focused, and professional environment for all gymnasts.

## **23. REMOVAL FROM THE PROGRAMME**

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While we are committed to supporting every gymnast's success within the EAP, there are circumstances where continued participation may not be appropriate.

### **A GYMNAST MAY BE REMOVED FROM THE ELITE PATHWAY IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING APPLY:**

- Attendance consistently falls below expectations, and a prior review meeting has not led to improvement.
- Holidays are taken outside of the periods advised by the coaching team, especially leading up to competitions.
- Behaviour—inside or outside the gym—is deemed inappropriate or disruptive, at the discretion of the coaching staff.
- Fees remain unpaid, despite reminders.
- The gymnast's fitness, discipline, or work ethic falls below required standards, impacting their progress or posing safety concerns.
- The gymnast exhibits unsafe behaviour, such as repeated failure to catch a partner or a disregard for the safety of others.

In the event that a gymnast is removed from the EAP, they will be offered a place in a more suitable programme within the club that better matches their current level and needs. Our aim is always to support each gymnast in a way that ensures their safety, enjoyment, and personal development.

## **24. COMMUNICATION**

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Effective communication between coaches, gymnasts, and parents is essential to the success of the EAP.

From the time gymnasts begin senior school (around age 11), we encourage them to take greater responsibility for their training by communicating directly with their coaches and passing relevant information to their parents. This approach supports the development of independence, accountability, and confidence.

### **IF PARENTS OR GUARDIANS HAVE QUESTIONS FOR THE ELITE COACHING TEAM, YOU'RE WELCOME TO:**

- Email: [info@evokegymnastics.com](mailto:info@evokegymnastics.com)
- Message via the relevant Squad WhatsApp Group

For any matters that require a more in-depth discussion, please contact us via email to request a face-to-face meeting with the appropriate coach.

Clear, timely, and respectful communication ensures the best possible support for each gymnast's journey.

## **25. PROGRESS REPORTS**

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We provide written progress reports for each gymnast approximately every six months. These reports are designed to give families a clear overview of their gymnast's development within the programme.

### **REPORTS WILL COVER:**

- Flexibility
- Strength & Fitness
- Individual Elements (e.g., tumbling, handstands)
- Balance
- Dynamic
- Dance & Choreography
- Attendance & Work Ethic
- Attitude & Sportsmanship

These reports offer valuable insights into each gymnast's progress, strengths, and areas for improvement, helping to guide both short-term goals and long-term development.

## **26. FEES, CHOREOGRAPHY & COMPETITION EXPENSES**

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### **TRAINING FEES:**

Training fees are paid monthly by direct debit and are averaged across the year to account for holiday breaks and varying numbers of sessions per month. This ensures a consistent monthly payment regardless of calendar fluctuations.

### **CHOREOGRAPHY COSTS:**

Choreography is not included in regular training fees. You will be asked to contribute toward the initial creation of a routine, which may include:

- Music selection and editing (unless provided by the gymnast/parent)
- Full routine composition by a choreographer

This process typically takes 1–2 days and may be scheduled during school holidays or quieter training periods.

Routines are then rehearsed and refined during regular training hours.

We may use internal staff or bring in a consultant choreographer, depending on the needs of the partnership. In some cases, costs may be reduced:

- If a routine is handed down from a previous partnership
- If one of the gymnasts has already paid for the routine with a different partner
- If gymnasts pre-learn the routine from video before in-person refinement

### **COMPETITION & CLOTHING COSTS:**

Families are responsible for covering all expenses related to competitions, including entry fees, travel, accommodation, and clothing.

We aim to keep all costs transparent and will provide advance notice wherever possible.

## 27. LEOTARDS AND CLOTHING

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Gymnasts are expected to wear the appropriate club kit when representing Evoke Gymnastics at competitions.

### **CLUB KIT INCLUDES:**

- Evoke T-shirt
- Evoke Tracksuit
- Evoke Training leotard (required for podium training and camps)
- Club Competition Leotard (required for Squads 4 & 5)
- Leotard of gymnast's or coach's choice (permitted for Squads 6 & 7)

For club-level events, all competition clothing costs are the responsibility of the gymnast and their family.

When selected to represent Great Britain, kit is typically provided only to Senior-level gymnasts. Gymnasts in other age categories are generally required to purchase their GB kit independently.

Most gymnasts will wear different leotards for each routine—Balance, Dynamic, and Combined. Leotard prices vary based on the manufacturer, materials used, and level of detailing. Once no longer needed, many leotards can be resold, helping to offset some of the initial cost.

Families will always be informed well in advance of any kit requirements for upcoming events.

## 28. FUNDRAISING

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Evoke Gymnastics is proud to be supported by a dedicated **Fundraising Group**, which helps to reduce the financial burden for gymnasts taking part in major competitions and events.

### **FUNDRAISING EXPECTATIONS:**

- All families with gymnasts in the EAP are expected to support the club's fundraising initiatives.
- Support may include:
  - Assisting at fundraising events
  - Participating in ongoing club initiatives
  - Promoting fundraising activities within the wider community

Fundraising not only helps provide valuable opportunities for our gymnasts but also builds team spirit and strengthens our club community. We truly appreciate the time, effort, and enthusiasm of every family who contributes.

## 29. OTHER DOCUMENTS YOU SHOULD READ

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In addition to this handbook, we encourage all families to familiarise themselves with the following key documents, which outline Evoke Gymnastics' core policies, expectations, and safeguarding procedures.

**KEY DOCUMENTS:**

- Code of Conduct for Gymnasts
- Code of Conduct for Parents/Carers
- Behaviour Policy
- Your Club Welfare Officer
- Safeguarding Policy & Procedures
- Health & Safety – Safe Participation Policy
- Health & Safety – Safe Trips Policy
- Social Networking Guidelines

**ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS:**

All documents are available on our website: [www.evokegymnastics.com](http://www.evokegymnastics.com)

If you have trouble accessing any of the documents, please contact the club directly — we're happy to help.

## **30. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)**

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**WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY CHILD CANNOT ATTEND TRAINING?**

If your child is going to be late or miss a training session, please let us know as soon as possible. You can notify us by:

- Sending a message in the relevant Squad WhatsApp Group
- Emailing [info@evokegymnastics.com](mailto:info@evokegymnastics.com)
- Calling us on 01793 847513

Keeping us informed helps our coaches plan effectively and ensure continued support for partnerships.

**CAN PARENTS WATCH TRAINING SESSIONS?**

For safeguarding and focus reasons, parents are generally not permitted to watch day-to-day training unless invited for a special event or open session.

**WHAT HAPPENS IF MY CHILD DECIDES THEY NO LONGER WANT TO COMPETE?**

If your child wishes to withdraw from competition, please arrange a conversation with their coach. We will support families in discussing suitable options, which may include moving to another non-competitive programme.

**HOW WILL I FIND OUT ABOUT UPCOMING COMPETITIONS AND EVENTS?**

Information will be shared through:

- WhatsApp Squad Groups
- Emails from [info@evokegymnastics.com](mailto:info@evokegymnastics.com)

- Notices from coaches at training

Please check communications regularly.

#### **WHO DO I CONTACT IF I HAVE A WELFARE CONCERN?**

All welfare concerns should be directed to our club Welfare Officer.

Details are available online at: [www.evokegymnastics.com](http://www.evokegymnastics.com)

## **31. FURTHER QUESTIONS?**

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We hope this handbook has provided you with a clear overview of the EAP and answered your key questions.

#### **IF YOU NEED ANY FURTHER INFORMATION OR SUPPORT, PLEASE DON'T HESITATE TO GET IN TOUCH:**

- **Email:** [info@evokegymnastics.com](mailto:info@evokegymnastics.com)
- **Phone:** 01793 847513

Thank you for being part of the Evoke Gymnastics journey — we're proud to have you with us and excited for all that lies ahead.