

# SIGS TEAM HANDBOOK

## Women's Team - eXcel & eXtreme

### SIGS ATHLETES STAND OUT

The 2023-2024 team season was one for the books! Our Women's Team program achieved 35 State champion titles and over 100 individual podium finishes. We proudly claimed the State runner-up team title at Levels 4 and 6, with six of our eight teams in the top five. At the regional level, 13 athletes advanced to represent SIGS and Indiana, and five regional titles were earned. Additionally, SIGS once again had representation at the national level, claiming 3 top five honors.

Over the years, we have enjoyed many individual and team successes, which speaks not only to the expertise and dedication of our coaching staff but also to the continued commitment made by our athletes and parents. We have one of the state's largest and most successful programs; with that comes heightened expectations and an increasing influence in the gymnastics community. We want to ensure that we continue to grow positively in this respect.

As well as being known for the advanced level of skill exhibited, we hope our athletes are recognized for their positive approach to challenges, genuine enthusiasm for the sport, and pride in their accomplishments. We strive for our athletes to accept successes and failures with dignity and maturity and for our team, parents, and coaches to conduct themselves so that officials, other spectators, competitors, and organizations are glad to have SIGS Programs participating in their events!

# QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Brittany Alexander, President

[accounting@sigsgym.com](mailto:accounting@sigsgym.com)

Brittany A. is SIGS' owner, purchasing the club in 2020 after decades of involvement as an athlete and employee. Brittany A. handles all financial concerns regarding your SIGS monthly tuition and withdrawals.

Brittany Saxton, Women's Team Director

[womensteam@SIGSgym.com](mailto:womensteam@SIGSgym.com)

## GENERAL INQUIRIES –

E. [office@SIGSgym.com](mailto:office@SIGSgym.com)

P. 812-948-7447

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. SIGS Member Commitment
- II. Athlete Safety Commitment
- III. Athlete Code of Conduct
- IV. Financial Obligations
  - A. Monthly Payments
  - B. Additions Outside of Monthly Payments
  - C. Team Fundraisers
- V. About Practices
  - A. Attendance & Scheduling
  - B. Practice Attire
  - C. Practice Food & Drink Policy
  - D. Practice Viewing
- VI. Team Uniforms
- VII. Competition Season
  - A. Competition Schedule
  - B. Meet Rules & Etiquette
  - C. Meet Gifting/Snack Bag Policy
  - D. Performance Expectations
- VIII. Mobility
- IX. Private Lesson Policy
- X. Injury
- XI. Healthy Habits
- XII. Photography
- XIII. Communication
- XIV. 24-Hour Policy

# I. SIGS MEMBER COMMITMENT

The coach-athlete-parent triad is essential in developing any sport, and we value the relationship required by all three as a youth sport. Parents are members of the team and play essential roles in our athletes' lives. For your child to train and compete successfully on SIGS teams, we ask of the following commitments from you:

- **TIME & TRAVEL:** Our athletes must attend all practices and arrive on time. Most of our athletes are under driving age, meaning it is up to you to get them to and from gymnastics multiple days a week. Most competitions will be within two hours; however, some require weekday travel or more considerable distances.
- **FINANCIAL:** We try our best to inform you upfront about what to expect financially throughout the season. Tuition and P.A. payments are spread evenly across 12 months and cover almost all necessary expenses. Uniforms, choreography, and individual training accessories are separate expenses that may be required depending on team level and athlete needs.
- **TRUST & COMMUNICATION:** Our coaches are committed to doing what is best for your child and their growth in this sport. We ask that you entrust us with that responsibility and our developmental process. If you have any concerns about your child, you are welcome to communicate those with us. Please check your email regularly, as email serves as our best line of communication for team news, updates, and meet information.
- **HEALTHY HABITS:** Adequate sleep and proper nutrition are crucial for our athletes' performance and recovery. Please set a good example for your child and encourage healthy eating in and out of the gym. Keep a consistent sleep schedule, avoiding late nights and striving for seven to nine hours.
- **ENCOURAGEMENT:** One of the best things you can do as a part of this team is to encourage and support your child through her struggles and triumphs. Gymnastics is demanding; each athlete will face highs and lows throughout training and competition. Your reaction to those circumstances significantly affects your child's self-esteem and development.

## II. ATHLETE SAFETY COMMITMENT

SIGS is dedicated to a safe environment. Safety is our top priority for our athletes, families, and employees. In addition to employee background checks, reference checks, and social media monitoring, SIGS retains policies for our staff in the interest of safety for all.

Our staff adheres to strict policies and ongoing training regarding coach or instructor conduct and appropriate interactions with student-athletes. Athlete and employee protection depends on five main areas:

1. **ELIMINATION OF PRIVACY:** No athlete is to be alone with a coach in a private setting- this includes the gym, bathrooms, office, vehicle, hotel, or residence.
2. **BOUNDARIES OF PHYSICAL CONTACT:** Physical contact is acceptable when it is reasonably intended to coach, teach, or demonstrate a gymnastics skill or to prevent or lessen injury (spotting, catching, etc.)
3. **TRAVEL/TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES:** Communication and detailed itineraries are sent to parents. Athletes are never to share a room or be alone in a hotel room with a coach. Athletes and coaches are only permitted to travel together if there is more than one athlete or more than one coach present.
4. **LIMITATIONS ON ELECTRONIC, SOCIAL, & OUT-OF-PROGRAM INTERACTIONS:** Social media interactions between coaches and athletes are prohibited. Athletes should avoid texting coaches directly. Electronic messages must be direct to parents or include parents and be limited to club business.
5. **PARENTAL MONITORING:** Parents play an essential role in keeping children safe while participating in sports. At SIGS, we have an observant and vigilant parent community and support system, along with an open-concept practice area with unobstructed viewing.

SIGS has a zero-tolerance policy for misconduct from our staff. Each member of our SIGS Staff is committed to reporting unsafe or suspicious behaviors to keep our athletes and their families, our staff, and our sport safe. Our staff is Safe Sport Certified through the U.S. Center for Safe Sport and receives regular training and information about best practices for athlete safety.

### III. ATHLETE CODE OF CONDUCT

SIGS teammates are family. In 2019, SIGS established an athlete council. This athlete-led group created a list of standards and values that SIGS athletes abide by to represent themselves and SIGS.

1. SIGS athletes will respect everyone - coaches, peers, and themselves.
2. SIGS athletes will respect SIGS equipment and building.
3. SIGS athletes will be inclusive of everyone, regardless of race, beliefs, or gender orientation.
4. SIGS athletes will work to create a positive atmosphere and build each other up.
5. SIGS athletes will take responsibility for their words and actions.
6. SIGS athletes will display appropriate language and behavior.

### IV. FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

#### A. MONTHLY PAYMENTS

Team payments are deducted on the 1st of the month for the entire tuition amount, which includes practice tuition and Performance Associated Dues (P.A. Dues) as one single, automatic payment. Team families must have payment information on file for monthly drafts, either by credit card or checking account information. Refer to your athlete's team level for the total monthly amount on the Team Schedule. P.A. Dues cover all meet-related expenses, including entry fees, awards, share of team expenses, etc. P.A. Dues are calculated for the entire year and divided evenly into 12-month payments. Team contracts are binding for the whole of the season; refunds are not offered.

#### B. ADDITIONS OUTSIDE OF MONTHLY PAYMENTS

For team athletes at all or select levels, there are a few additional fees outside of monthly payments. Please refer to the item lines below for details on what, when, and how much to expect.

**UNIFORMS:** The Women's Team uniform package ranges from \$350-450 and is purchased every two years or sooner if an athlete sizes up. A deposit of 60% is due in August for purchase, and the final balance will be collected in October, each charged to your SIGS account. Uniforms are required for participation on all teams. Grips and other training accessories may be necessary and are the responsibility of the parent, see Section VI. TEAM UNIFORMS for more information.

**USAG MEMBERSHIP:** SIGS teams participate in USAG competitions, and all athletes must have an active USAG membership to be eligible for entry and competition. USAG memberships are purchased in July/August each year and must be completed by the parent directly through the USAG website. SIGS cannot complete this task for you; however, we will inform you when and how to do so. Membership fees are estimated at \$25 for first-time members and \$70 for returning members.

**TRAINING CAMPS (Level 7-10):** Select teams may participate in training camps as part of team membership. Training camps benefit our athletes and coaches to gain new training techniques from top clinicians in the U.S. and help connect our athletes with other regional gymnasts. Level 9 and 10 athletes will plan to attend a camp each year, and fees are included in P.A. Dues. Whether level 7 and 8 athletes attend depends on the chosen camp and the levels invited. Fees for training camps for Level 7 and 8 athletes are separate from monthly tuition/P.A. Dues, are due and charged to your SIGS account at the time of entry and include the entry fee and share of team expenses. Training camp entry commonly occurs in July with camp dates between August and November.

**REGIONAL COMPETITION (Level 9-10 & XG-XD):** Select teams participate in post-season regional competitions as part of their meet selection. XP-XD and Level 9-10 athletes participate in Regionals, and associated fees are included in their P.A. Dues. XG members can participate in the regional competition following a qualification criterion; however, participation fees are outside of monthly tuition/P.A. Dues, due and charged to your SIGS account at time of entry and include entry fee and share of team expenses. Further information on cost and qualification procedures can be found under Section VII. COMPETITION SEASON.

**END-OF-YEAR BANQUET:** SIGS will host an End of Year Banquet to celebrate our teams' success and recognize our athletes in the presence of families and friends. Banquets for our eXcel and eXtreme programs occur in May separately. Admission tickets for athletes are covered by SIGS. Tickets for guests of the athlete are not included and are due and charged to your SIGS account at the time of RSVP. SIGS accounts must be in good standing, and team members must be active in May, completing the entirety of the team year to receive awards and attend the End of Year Banquet. Exceptions may be granted at the coach's and program director's discretion.

**CHOREOGRAPHY & MUSIC (Level 6-10, XG-XD):** Floor and beam choreography is necessary for Level 6-10 and XG-XD athletes, and an associated fee for choreography and music is outside of your monthly tuition/P.A. Dues. Athletes at these levels perform an individual routine instead of the same for every member. Choreography occurs between July and October outside of practice time, ranges from \$100-350 depending on level, and is paid directly to the choreographer at the time of service by the parent. Music may be purchased from gymnastics music websites or offered from SIGS inventory at no cost; music from websites ranges from \$50-75. Coaches will assist with the selection of music, choreographer, and set-up of services. Floor routines are typically kept for two seasons; however, they may be kept for three under the coach's and athlete's discretion. Beam routines are typically kept for more than two seasons with minor changes or requested with new floor choreography.

The coach will assist in music selection by providing options to athletes, and athletes are also encouraged to search for music on their own. Many music varieties are available on the web; the coach holds the right to deny the use of music if it does not fit within the allowable styles or tailor to the athlete's strengths. The coach must approve floor music prior to purchase to ensure suitability and proper length.

Levels 2-4 are part of the Compulsory Program, and routines/music are provided by our governing organization and taught during practice times. X.B. and X.S. athletes participate in team routines, and routines/music are provided by SIGS and taught during practice times.

## C. TEAM FUNDRAISERS

Fundraisers are offered throughout the season and are optional for your family. Fundraisers offset your athlete's tuition and are applied within two weeks of the fundraising close to your account. Our fundraisers are carefully chosen and offer participants a 30-40% commission. Please see the office if you would like to help with team fundraisers.

Fundraisers are parent-led, and we need volunteers to help with every event.

SIGS-hosted events also offer compensation toward P.A. Dues. SIGS hosts our annual SIGS Spectacular competition in December. Athletes and family members 14 years and older are requested to assist in roles to help run the event, including equipment set up/tear down, event timing, hospitality, admissions, etc. SIGS pays an hourly rate for assistance,



which is applied toward an athlete's P.A. Dues in January. Athletes may also request to assist with volunteer hours.

## V. ABOUT PRACTICES

### A. ATTENDANCE & SCHEDULING

Gymnastics is a year-round sport, meaning that regular attendance is essential for the gymnast's success and advancement. Placement onto one of our teams is highly selective. We are committing to you and the athlete to do our best to prepare your athlete for success. In return, we require that families and athletes do everything possible to set the athletes and themselves up for success.

We do not ban participation in other sports or activities, especially at a young age. We simply ask that our athletes and parents select sports that do not conflict with practice days/times, are aware of the impact of juggling multiple sports, and adjust expectations for each activity appropriately.

Strong attendance is required as a team member; poor attendance can result in an athlete's dismissal. Each practice is specifically planned to meet a multitude of training goals. Please inform the coach in advance, preferably at least two weeks prior, if your athlete will be absent.

### TARDINESS, EARLY DEPARTURE, & MAKEUPS

Arriving on time, if not early, fully prepared for practice is expected. If athletes arrive late, they miss out on the bulk of endurance, strength, and flexibility training. Arriving late to practice not only hinders an athlete's overall development but is disruptive to the team. We understand some athletes have late school dismissals; inform the coach if tardiness is unavoidable. Attendance for the entirety of the practice is expected. Early departure results in missed event training and conditioning. If necessary, please inform the coach of tardiness/early departure a week before the affected practice.

Makeup practices are not offered except in exceptional circumstances only during the competition season. Space in the gym is limited, team enrollment is high, and we value maintaining our coach-to-student ratio and attention to scheduled teams. The coach must arrange and approve special circumstance makeup practices and those are not guaranteed.

## MEET WEEK RULE

Athletes must attend all scheduled practices ONE FULL WEEK before the scheduled competition day. Failure to do so will result in the athlete being scratched from the competition with loss of entry fees. Our Meet Week Rule is in place to ensure the athlete is physically and mentally prepared for competition. Additionally, the absence of a member during Meet Week is a distraction for other team members and affects team morale.

Missing due to illness or a school event involving a student's grade is the only exception to this rule. The coach and parent will decide whether the athlete is healthy and prepared to compete safely.

## CANCELLED/MODIFIED PRACTICES

During the competition season, it is sometimes necessary to cancel or rearrange practices to accommodate the coaches' travel or session schedules of others. Changes to practices will be announced via email with the release of each meet schedule.

Practice days and times may change during holiday breaks, including winter and spring breaks. We attempt to allow some time off for our families during such holidays. Winter and spring breaks see a 25% reduction or one less practice per week. Certain levels cannot take time off during Spring Break as it surrounds State competition; see Section VII. COMPETITION SEASON. SIGS will announce holiday practice changes as early as possible, and we appreciate your patience and flexibility with changes.

## 48 WEEK SCHEDULING

It is SIGS policy that there are no makeups or credits for missed gym time. Practices missed due to holidays, competitions, severe weather, or family vacations are generally not made up. Team members do not pay for individual practices with tuition but for the year divided by 12 months. Team schedules and tuition fees are based on a 48-week schedule, not 52 weeks.

## SCHOOL CLOSINGS

School closings for holidays or severe weather conditions seldom mean that SIGS is closed. SIGS is NOT affiliated with any school system. If you are unsure whether your child's team is having practice in cases of severe weather, please check online at SIGSgym.com or on our Facebook/SIGSgym page. You can also check with your team coach directly. Please avoid calling the office as the phones are usually busy with calls for classes, and it is a courtesy for our Team Programs to defer to one of the other informational outlets available specifically for them.

## B. PRACTICE ATTIRE

Gymnasts' clothing should be form-fitting. All female gymnasts must wear a one-piece leotard for practice; spandex shorts are acceptable for practice over leotards. Please advise your child if they should wear a sports bra and/or briefs under their leotard. Two-piece leotards, t-shirts, or sports bras and shorts are not permitted. Hair must be tied up off the neck and face, and no jewelry except for stud earrings is allowed—no watches such as apple watches, fit bits, or the like.

## C. PRACTICE FOOD & DRINK POLICY

Athletes are welcome to bring a leak-proof water bottle to practice. Bottles that do not fully close are not permitted. It is encouraged at certain levels to provide a snack for your athlete in their gym bag. Snacks should be healthy and fueling in nature, mess-free, and easy to eat, see Section XI. HEALTHY HABITS for recommendations. Athletes may take a quick water/snack break while rotating events; breaks are not scheduled.

## D. PRACTICE VIEWING

Parents are welcome to view practices from the lobby area or balcony. This is a privilege that we are happy to provide so long as it does not become a distraction to our athletes or our staff.

We prefer you not to watch practices daily. Children often feel pressured by parental expectations, and practices can be negatively impacted. All children wish to please and athletes tend to do better when they can make mistakes without the presence of their parents. Alternatively, we encourage you to check in occasionally or simply ask them to tell you about their day on the car ride home. If you decide to watch practice, please have common courtesy. Do not instruct your child from the viewing area or on bathroom breaks.

Talking negatively, shouting, or disrespecting others in SIGS viewing areas is unacceptable—if you have a concern, please arrange an appointment. We strongly advise parents to avoid participating in gossip and ask that you go directly to the coach to address any concerns. At no time should a parent, sibling, or another person not employed or participating as an athlete walk out onto the gym floor. If you need to speak with the coach urgently or need your child, please visit the office, and they will assist you. We appreciate your support and help in maintaining a positive atmosphere at SIGS!

## VI. TEAM UNIFORMS

Team uniforms must be purchased for team athletes and are custom-made for SIGS. Sizing occurs at the end of July/beginning of August; athletes will try on sample sizes, or have measurements taken, and sizes will be collected from parents for additional items such as t-shirts. Uniforms are redesigned every two years\* and consist of a competitive team leotard, practice leotard, warm-up, and t-shirt. A team bag is also required for purchase but is kept for at least two uniform cycles or four years. Uniforms should not be sized up; they must be form-fitting to fit correctly for the current season. Uniform deposits for purchase and final payments are due in August & October.

*\*SIGS is currently in the 2023-25 Uniform Cycle. Uniforms purchased for the 2024-25 Team Year will be used for ONE season. "Pre-loved" uniforms may be available for purchase at a discounted rate and are subject to availability.*

### GRIPS & TRAINING ACCESSORIES

Grips are used on the uneven bars for some but not all levels. Team coaches will inform athletes if grips are necessary. Grip needs are monitored by the coach and provided by SIGS. The fee for grips is separate from your monthly tuition/P.A. Dues and are estimated at \$55. Grips should be expected every year for Levels 4-7 and eXcel Platinum-Diamond athletes and up to three times per year for Levels 8-10. A grip that is ill-fitting and/or worn out presents a major safety risk to the athlete. It is recommended athletes have a back-up pair of grips ready for use in the event of grip failure. The parent is responsible for additional training accessories, including a grip bag, tiger paws, braces, athletic tape, etc.

## VII. COMPETITION SEASON

The competition season is one of the most exciting parts of the year as the gymnasts show off their hard work! As we proceed through pre-season training and begin the competition season, it is essential to keep in mind that we do not develop athletes to do competitions; we do competitions to develop athletes. Competitions serve as a reward and motivation for improvement—often increasing an athlete's focus and effort—while providing growth opportunities.

### A. COMPETITION SCHEDULE

We will announce a competition schedule by the end of August that includes the dates and locations of events. Changes may occur if a meet fills before registration. Parents

should reserve all weekends listed for their child's team. Teams will compete on one day of the weekend at a session time of two to four hours. Those exact days and times are not delivered to us until up to 10 days before the event. All meet schedules will be delivered via email and posted on the Meet Board at the end of the gym hallway. Please check the Meet Board first to answer any meet-related questions before contacting the office. Under no circumstances should a parent contact another organization for information before, during, or after a meeting.

Team members are REQUIRED to attend all competitions. Skipping meets due to anything besides illness, injury or family emergency will result in dismissal from the team or reconsideration of a team position next season. State and regional competitions may occur around common Spring Break holidays. Only schedule spring break vacations after first speaking to the team coach.

Each team competes in a different number of competitions with varying travel requirements. All Women's Teams participate in the SIGS Spectacular competition in December and the SIGS Super Team Challenge in April, both hosted at the gym. A brief description of additional meets is below for each team and may vary from year to year.

**LEVEL 2, EXCEL BRONZE & SILVER:** Level 2, XB & XS teams participate in three to four additional meets per season from January to March. Travel extends from Louisville to Indianapolis for regular season meets. The State competition in March can be held anywhere in Indiana.

**LEVEL 3 & 4:** Level 3 & 4 teams participate in five additional meets per season, January- March. Travel ranges from 1.5 to 3 hours for regular season meets. The State competition in March can be placed anywhere in Indiana.

**EXCEL GOLD-DIAMOND:** XG-XD teams participate in five to six additional meets per season from January to April. Travel ranges from 1.5 to 3 hours for regular season meets. The State competition in March can be held anywhere in Indiana. The regional competition at the end of April/beginning of May can be held in a state in Region 5 (Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, and Ohio).

**LEVEL 6-8:** Level 6-8 teams participate in five to six additional meets per season, January- March. Travel ranges from 1.5 to 5 hours for most regular season meets. Level 7 & 8 teams may participate in a "flight meet" every two years anywhere in the U.S. The State competition in March can be placed anywhere in Indiana. Levels 6-8 do not participate in Regionals.

**LEVEL 9 & 10:** Level 9 & 10 teams participate in six to seven additional meets per season, January-May. Travel ranges from 1.5 to 5 hours for most regular season meets. Level 9 & 10 teams will participate in a “flight meet” every two years anywhere in the U.S. The State competition in March can be placed anywhere in Indiana. The regional competition in April can be placed in a state in Region 5 (Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, & Ohio). Levels 9 & 10 can qualify for the National competition in May, held anywhere in the U.S.

## REGIONAL/NATIONAL COMPETITION

Select athletes can qualify for regional and/or national competitions. SIGS athletes will follow qualification requirements set forth by SIGS, which may be greater than those set by the region. A brief description of qualification requirements and participation options are below for each team.

**EXCEL GOLD:** XG athletes can qualify to the regional championships by scoring a 37.0 AA at the State competition. Participation is OPTIONAL for XG athletes. Parents and athletes must inform the team coach if they wish to attend two weeks prior to the State meet. Fees for participation at the regional competition will be available then. This is a “pay to go” meet; fees are not included in P.A. Dues. Fees will be charged to your SIGS account following qualification, which will include the entry fee and share of team expenses. XG does not participate in national competition.

**EXCEL PLATINUM & DIAMOND:** XP athletes can qualify to the regional championships by scoring a 36.0 AA at the State competition. XD athletes can qualify for the regional championships by scoring a 35.0 AA at the State competition. Participation is required and fees are included in P.A. Dues. XP & XD do not participate in the national competition.

**LEVEL 9 & 10:** Level 9 & 10 athletes can qualify for the regional championships by scoring a 34.0 AA at the State competition. Participation is required, and fees are included in P.A. Dues. Level 9 & 10 athletes have the opportunity to qualify for national competition by placing in the Top 7 at the regional competition or via “Allstar positions.” The team coach will inform parents and athletes of further details during the season.

## B. MEET RULES & ETIQUETTE

We ask that our parents and athletes follow the rules and guidelines below for proper meet etiquette and expectations.

1. **MEET WEEK:** Athletes must attend all scheduled practices for the entirety of the practice one full week before the meet. Failure to do so will result in a scratch from the competition. Special circumstances will be addressed independently.
2. **ARRIVAL TIME:** Please plan accordingly to allow ample time for travel, parking, proceeding through the admissions line for entry, locating the competition gym, bathroom visits, etc. We suggest arriving at the venue at least 30 minutes before the open stretch.
3. **REPORT TIME:** Athletes should report to the team coach on the floor 10 minutes before the open stretch. Athletes requiring taping should see the coach immediately. The team may gather in the bleachers if awaiting the coach's arrival, as he/she may be coming from a previous session.
4. **ATTIRE:** Athletes should be dressed in their competition leotard and team warm-up. Undergarments must be skin tone in color and fit underneath the leotard. Failure to meet undergarment rules will result in a deduction in the athlete's score on every event. Athletes may wear slides or sandals while on the competition floor.
5. **ADDITIONAL ITEMS:** Athletes should have all necessary items in their team bag, including grips, tiger paws, tape, extra hair supplies, etc. Please leave any oversized items, such as winter jackets and shoes, with parents. Gymnasts with individual routines should have a copy of their floor music in digital format on their personal phone or parent's phone.
6. **HAIR & ACCESSORIES:** Hair must be tied up off the neck and face; most athletes choose messy buns or space buns. Long braids are allowable at certain levels; see the coach for approval. Please be sure all hair is tightly secured and will remain up the entire meet. It distracts the athlete and coach if hair must be fixed during the competition. Keep hair accessories to small bows, ribbons, or scrunchies; no large, distracting hair accessories such as "cheer bows." Nail polish may be clear, nude, or French. Piercings are limited to studs in the ears only, with no hoops or piercings in other body parts. Remove any bracelets, anklets, or hair ties on the wrists.
7. **WATER & SNACKS:** Parents should provide their athlete with a water bottle before reporting to the floor. Water bottles must be leak-proof; cups with straws that do not fully close are not permitted. Parents should also provide a small snack

in the athlete's bag if needed for longer competitions or quick fueling. "Snack Bags" are not allowed at competitions, including awards.

8. **TEAM BUBBLE:** Once on the competition floor, athletes are in the "Team Bubble," committed and focused within the team. No texting/phone use is allowed on the floor or during awards by athletes. Contact with parents should resume only after athletes have been released from the floor unless the coach requests otherwise. Only the competing team members in the session are allowed on the competition floor.
9. **WARM-UP REQUIREMENTS:** Athletes must perform all skills and meet specific team warm-up requirements during an event's timed warm-up period. Failure to do so will result in a scratch. Warm-up requirements are for the safety and accountability of the athlete.
10. **ATHLETE BEHAVIOR:** We expect our athletes to support their teammates and other athletes on the competition floor. SIGS athletes should cheer for and encourage all athletes. Poor behavior will not be tolerated. It is ok to be disappointed about a performance, but not to the point of distraction or negative impact to the team. Athletes are taught to take a moment for themselves and then refocus attention to the next event or teammate. Failure to do so will result in a scratch from an event(s) or dismissal from the meet.
11. **AWARDS:** All athletes are required to attend awards as a team and remain until all awards have been given. Athletes should remain in uniform: team pants and a team jacket (zipped) or team shirt worn over the leotard. Allowable shoes include slides or sneakers that match the uniform, no boots or slippers. Athletes and parents should accept awards graciously and without disappointment; poor sportsmanship will not be tolerated. Parents are highly encouraged to take pictures and share them with SIGS coaches or social media outlets.
12. **PARENT/SPECTATOR BEHAVIOR:** We encourage strong support of SIGS teams and expect respect to be given to other teams as well. We encourage parents to make a SIGS cheering section and wear SIGS attire. Parents/spectators should not contact the coach via text or shouting during the meet. Parents are not permitted on the competition floor at any time and for NO reason should a parent approach a judge, another coach, or meet official. Cell phones should be placed in silent mode. Children should use headphones with tablet games.
13. **NO FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY:** For the safety of the participants, no flash photography is allowed at meets at any time. Please check your camera before open stretch.



14. SUPPORT YOUR ATHLETE: Be their cheerleader! In a sport where they are told how perfect they are not, be their #1 supporter and shoulder to cry on. Athletes will experience failure; it is a part of learning; continue to encourage them and recognize their small successes along the way. The season is a marathon not a sprint!

### C. MEET GIFTING/SNACK BAG POLICY

We appreciate team members' support and attempts to wish them the best of luck in competitions; however, gifting must be within appropriate limits, and snack or "goodie" bags are not permitted.

Parents may provide their child with an appropriate, fueling snack in their gym bag for competitions, but no team-wide, large snack or goodie bags are allowed. Additionally, to limit messes and distractions from the awards ceremony, there shall be no snacks on the awards floor.

SIGS provides a gift for athletes before their state meet. Team member families are welcome, but not required, to give an additional gift for state or other competitions with respect to the following guidelines. We encourage families to be reserved in any gifting – positive, simple gifts like a "lucky charm" or pin, a gymnastics-themed bracelet, or a hair accessory, for example. Large "swag bags" or excessive goodie bags are not permitted. We wish for all gifting to focus on motivating and wishing our athletes the best of luck instead of material items.

### D. PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

Success is defined in many ways. Whether your athlete achieves a podium finish or a high score should not be the sole deciding factor for a successful performance. We strive to teach our athletes to be proud of every achievement, whether big or small and to recognize failures as learning opportunities.

We do not expect perfection from our athletes. However, we expect our athletes to strive to perform to the best of their ability and be adequately prepared for competition. With each practice, we are working to develop the physical skills and routines to compete and the mental skills this sport demands. Acknowledging their improvements regardless of the outcome, especially in confidence and kindness to themselves, has more value than and leads to great outcomes.

## SCRATCHING OF AN ATHLETE

Gymnastics is difficult, and there may be times when an athlete is not prepared for competition. Specific requirements are in place to ensure an athlete's readiness to perform skills and routines safely. It is important that athletes are ready physically, mentally, and emotionally. The coach reserves the right to scratch an athlete from an event(s) for her safety prior to or during the competition.

## VIII. MOBILITY

Mobility from one team level to another is addressed by multiple factors—mastery of skills, work ethic, performance, mentality, etc. All are considered when deciding whether an athlete is ready to advance to the next competitive team. These decisions are complex. We ask that you trust our program and coaches; we are professionals committed to doing what is best for your child and their development in this sport.

In SIGS programs, we do not solely focus on competitive levels with training regimens. Instead, we create regimens that support continuous development, meeting the athlete where she is physically and mentally ready. An athlete's competitive level will match her current abilities—fulfilling skill requirements on all four events—and her mentality to practice and compete such skills in a positive manner. It is common for an athlete to be more advanced in one event over another; therefore, the difficulty of skills trained will vary regardless of competitive level. The ability to compete such varying difficulty is restricted to USAG rules; certain levels or programs can allow for more variance than others.

Our Women's Team Program has three sub-programs (eXcite, eXcel, and eXtreme), each offering unique experiences and diverse requirements. SIGS attempts to place athletes initially where we believe they have the best long-term potential. Athletes can mobilize within and across programs. The decision to mobilize across programs is not short-term but for the interest of development over multiple years. Foundational skills, rate of progression, physical maturation, mental toughness, and age or time remaining for participation are significant factors we consider for optimal success and growth.

Much like our regimens, mobility evaluation is continuous, occurring year-long and not limited to the competitive season or post-season assessment. Coaches will offer end-of-season parent meetings in March/April to discuss each athlete's season and plans moving forward. Placements for the upcoming team season will be offered then, and parents must provide verbal acceptance/declination of placement by the end of April.

## IX. PRIVATE LESSON POLICY

Team athletes are only permitted to participate in private lessons if requested and approved by the team coach. Private lessons may not be used to advance new skills but rather issued to address an athlete's need which has proven difficult in the group setting. Our team coaches are experienced in instructing athletes with varying needs, and we strongly believe in the importance of an athlete's ability to face challenges in a group setting and over time. Obstacles or "setbacks" faced in sports are common and appropriate occurrences. Such obstacles aid in learning, helping to develop confidence, problem-solving skills, and resilience to face future challenges.

There may be times when you feel that narrowly focused instruction might help achieve a breakthrough, but those times are rare, and private lessons should not be the first action plan. Fears, for example, are more commonly worsened or stagnant when heightened attention is placed on the athlete's "problem" rather than approaching it as a normal training experience. The pressure of timelines, such as an upcoming meet, additionally does not aid in overcoming such obstacles and should not be a factor when creating an action plan.

## X. INJURY

If an athlete experiences an injury, they are expected to come to practice and participate in what they can. Continued participation is essential to maintain strength and flexibility and to rehabilitate the injury for a successful recovery. In many cases, the athlete can train some events fully while others modified to continue improving her skills and remain a part of the team atmosphere. The coach will revise workouts for an injured athlete to maximize training under her physical limitations. Practice times may be modified for the athlete; parents should speak with the team coach about options. Injured athletes are welcome, but not required, to attend and rotate on the floor with their team at competitions.

The athlete's parent should provide a medical practitioner note to SIGS and the team coach describing the injury, limitations, and treatment plan. Athletes in physical therapy programs should provide a copy of their therapy plan to the coach for use in practice. Injury can be difficult for an athlete, but with the right approach, an athlete can turn the setback into a positive by focusing on what she can do rather than what she cannot.

## XI. HEALTHY HABITS

An athlete's nutrition must not be overlooked as an aspect of their training. A well-balanced diet is required to meet the energy demands of gymnastics, especially at higher levels, and is a crucial contributing factor to performance. A gymnast's diet should have a mix of carbohydrates, proteins, and healthy fats for adequate fueling.

- Carbohydrates serve as the primary fuel source, and complex carbs such as whole grains (brown rice, quinoa, oats) release energy slowly helping to remain energized longer.
- Protein is essential for muscle repair and development and lean protein sources such as chicken, fish, and eggs are great additions to a gymnast's diet.
- Healthy fats such as avocado, nuts and seeds help to sustain energy levels for longer practices and contribute to overall well-being.
- Proper hydration is key for optimal performance. Staying hydrated BEFORE, during and after practice helps maintain muscle elasticity and enhances cognitive function.

Families should ensure their gymnast is eating AND properly fueling every meal, including early morning breakfast. Additionally, gymnasts should snack between meals and before practices. Gymnasts participating in longer training sessions should snack during practice.

Recommended snack choices include Greek yogurt parfait, vegetable sticks with hummus, fruits or fruit pouch, trail mix, or pretzels. Please note these are general requirements for proper nutrition. Each child is unique, and nutritional needs may vary.

## XII. PHOTOGRAPHY

SIGS offers high-quality, professional photos every season for team members. While we make exceptions for high school seniors to arrange for senior portraits to be taken at SIGS, we cannot allow parents, family, or family-hired photographers into the gym for safety and liability reasons without our permission. Seniors should contact the office to arrange senior portraits.

### XIII. COMMUNICATION

Our most effective line of communication with our team families is through email. Any team information and news, including practice schedules, changes, meet information, upcoming events, etc., will be communicated through email. Please be sure your email on file is up to date and check it frequently, especially during the competition season. Please also save all SIGS emails to your contacts and check your spam folder if you are missing information. We encourage you to enroll in text notifications on your account. Time- sensitive information, such as weather cancellations, due dates, etc., will be delivered via our SMS notification system.

We ask that you please be respectful of the coach's preference regarding communication. All coaches prefer different forms and times of communication and will inform you of those during "Welcome meetings" in June. We encourage athletes and parents to communicate any issues or concerns with our coaches and vice versa. Effective and efficient communication between coach, athlete, and parent is essential, helping to form trust, build confidence, and ensure everyone is aligned and working toward common goals.

### XIV. 24 HOUR POLICY

Sit on it, sleep on it, and then reevaluate the situation. The 24-Hour Policy states, "Concerns and situations will not be discussed until at least 24 hours after the incident, including practices and competitions and applicable to parents and coaches." Once 24 hours have passed, a parent or coach may communicate with the other party following the coach's preferred method of communication. We encourage meeting in person or speaking over the phone, avoiding text messages to discuss concerns.

This approach shall allow reflection and thoughtful consideration before communicating with the coach or parent. After an incident, emotions are high for all parties involved.

Adhering to this policy minimizes potential misunderstandings or miscommunications, fostering a supportive and harmonious atmosphere conducive to athlete development.