

Welcome to the Balcony Gymnastics Team program and the exciting world of competitive gymnastics. The following is a compilation of several rules, policies; philosophies and tips that you and your child need to know and understand. Please read this handbook carefully as it will answer most of the questions you may have regarding competitive our competitive gymnastics program at Balcony.

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Remove and fill out information on team agreement and return to Team Director [Michael Hamer] by the end of September or if received after September, as soon as reviewed by parents and gymnast.



Balcony Gymnastics Team
Policies and Philosophies

The following are the rules, policies and philosophies of the Balcony Gymnastics Team Program. Please read the following carefully to ensure that you and your child understand them completely.

Athlete Responsibilities

Gymnastics is inherently a competitive sport and we are a competitive gymnastics team. We measure our success and progress by how we portray ourselves and execute on the practice and competition floor. While winning is not so important, *trying to win* represents much of what we strive for. ***Trying to win means that you do your best to attend every scheduled practice and that you train hard while you are here. It also means that you respect all your coaches and all teammates, you overcome fear and you keep a positive attitude through every obstacle. Trying to win is an attitude that must be displayed by every Balcony team member.***

1. The way you act in the gym and at competitions is a reflection of your respect for yourself, your teammates and Balcony. Only the highest standard of behavior will be acceptable.
 - a) Balcony Gymnastics is a Christian organization. Any off-colored comments, foul language or inappropriate dress in the facility will not be tolerated. Each team member should show the utmost respect and support for your coaches, teammates, judges as well as other gymnasts.
 - b) Discouraging remarks (whether directed towards self, a coach or another gymnast), *formation of cliques (including parents)*, excluding others from activities, etc. are grounds for dismissal from practice and possibly from the team.
2. Carry out all assignments and conditioning to the fullest. Cheating on assignments and/or conditioning will not be tolerated.
3. Demonstrate the highest regard for our sport and your hard work by arriving to all workouts and competitions on time and conducting yourself with grace and courage during the workout or competition. Accept all constructive criticism and scores in a positive manner, since we know that we learn just as much from our mistakes as we learn from our successes.
4. Understand that the specific mission of Balcony is to develop happy, healthy and confident young people. One way in which we can help meet this demanding goal, is to place the gymnasts at the level where they can be *happy, safe and confident*. Mobility through the levels (moving up) can only be achieved when a high level of proficiency has been demonstrated at your current level, and the potential for a high level of proficiency in the next level is apparent. This means that a gymnast is never declared having moved to the next level until **ALL** of the requirements for that level have been achieved.
5. Never compare your progress, performances or level with other gymnasts. Each athlete is an individual and will achieve success at her own pace.

6. Place emphasis on individual success and improvements, not on what place you come in.
7. **Call the gym for all absences from scheduled workouts and speak to one of your coaches or Team Director. DO NOT leave a message at the front desk!**
8. Understand and uphold your responsibility to the Booster club and its fundraisers (raffles).
9. Keep the gym clean. Make sure that all tape and pre-wrap are thrown away and all ice packs are returned to the freezer. Making an undo mess with the chalk will result in athlete staying after practice to vacuum around bars.

Parental Responsibilities

1. A gymnast's parents are an instrumental contributor to her success and happiness. Tuition and meet fees must be paid on time and a commitment to transport your daughter to and from workouts, competitions and team functions must be made. In addition and equally important, parents must help instill the work ethic, values and nutritional knowledge into their child necessary to be successful.
2. Understand that we have a large team and face-to-face progress reports are not practical. In the absence of us contacting you, you can assume that everything is okay and your daughter is working hard and progressing satisfactorily. If something comes up about which we need to speak to you, be assured that we will do so promptly.
3. Please feel free to set up a meeting with any of your child's coaches if you have a question or concern. Your thoughts are important to us. If we cannot help you, we will try to explain why and will work hard to find another way to rectify the situation. **Meetings should be scheduled through your child's coach for either before or after workout hours. At no time will parents be allowed on the training floor during workout hours to address questions or concerns.**
4. When questions or concerns do arise, please understand that complaining to other parents **cannot** solve your problems. In addition, problems cannot be solved if we do not know about them. If you respect us enough to allow us to play a large roll in your child's life, please respect us enough to know that we have your child's best interest at heart. Meaning, that decisions that are made in regards to your child's training, level and group are made in what we as gymnastics professionals feel will best help your child to be happy, healthy and successful. Parents who consistently complain or show signs of disrespect for others, will be asked to remove themselves from the viewing area and possibly not be allowed to attend practices and/or possible removal of your child from the Balcony team program.
5. Understand that your child's skill and performance level determines the level that she is in. There are requirements set forth by USA Gymnastics for mobility through the levels. At no time will a gymnast be moved to the next level without meeting ALL of these requirements. If you are unsure of which requirements your child is missing for mobility into the next level, ask them, they are usually very aware.
6. Understand that all competitions, clinics and camps chosen by the Balcony team staff are mandatory events unless otherwise stated. Parents and gymnasts do not get to pick and choose which events to attend.
7. Parents may not distract or try to communicate with their gymnast once the workout has started. We ask them to focus all their energy on the workout and we want as few distractions as possible. Once the workout has

concluded they will come to see you. No exceptions will be made without prior approval from your child's coach.

8. Injured gymnasts and or gymnasts with minor illnesses are expected to participate in workouts and gym activities to the highest possible extent (**NO EXCEPTIONS**). It is often possible to work around injuries and/or minor illnesses to turn a difficult situation into something positive. Increased work on flexibility, strength, specific events and specific skills can be expected.
9. Parents are to try to the best of their ability to be a positive force in their child's gymnastic development. Try not to compare your child to another when it comes to training, improvements or level. Often times in gymnastics, athletes are competing against gymnasts that are older and more experienced, and to gauge your child's success compared to these other athletes is the wrong approach. Each child progresses at her own rate and this must be recognized and respected by parents.
10. Parents should have a clear definition of what winning is. Winning should be defined as your child's "personal best" *not* "being better than everyone else". Make only positive comments after competition and focus on your child's individual development, efforts and improvements, not what place she is awarded.
11. Make sure that you or your daughter calls the gym for all absences from scheduled workouts. When calling in absences, please leave a message with the team director (Michael) or on your child's coach's voice mail.
12. Understand that the Balcony coaching staff is very loyal to each and every team member and that they work very hard at making these children the best gymnast that they can. Because of the hard work and dedication of our staff, if a team gymnast leaves Balcony for whatever reason to attend another similar facility, there will be a 1 year (12 month) waiting period from the day the child dropped from Balcony, before the child can return. Please note that it is not guaranteed that your child will be allowed back in the competitive program once they have returned.
13. Understand that talking negatively to other parents about our program or coaches in our lobby/observation area **will not be tolerated!** If you are overheard talking negatively you will be warned **once**. If the problem persists, you will no longer be allowed in our lobby/observation area. If you have concerns that warrant conversation, please voice them with the team director, not the other parents in the gym. We not only expect your child to be a Balcony Person but their parent's as well. Make every attempt to "*Lift your and all other children up...*"

Balcony Gymnastics Team

Time and Financial Obligations

Competitive gymnastics is not only a commitment on the gymnast's part, but also a commitment on her parents. Your child's involvement in competitive gymnastics will cost you time, money and effort.

Below are some of the time and financial obligations that you will incur.

Tuition

- 1. The list of Tuition Fees for each level will be distributed each April/May with the team's summer workout schedule. **Tuition Fees and workout times are subject to change from year to year. Team Tuition must be paid in full and on time. Any unpaid balance that is over 15 days overdue WILL terminate your child's participation in any competitions, workouts or team activities.***
- 2. Team Parents are Required* to use the EFT or automatic debit for team tuition as Team is based on a Monthly Fee as opposed to recreational which is based on every four classes. Accounts will be drafted on the 1st of each month. * Special circumstances arise with EFT and will be dealt with on an individual basis. You must contact Michael to discuss any tuition concerns.*
- 3. Tuition is due each month **regardless of attendance. There is no make-up or discount for missed practices!***

Registration Fee

-\$125.00 per year for Level 4 – 10 gymnasts

-\$75.00 per year for Levels 2 and 3

- 1. The registration fee is non-refundable and is due each year September 1st.*
- 2. The registration fee **will cover** your gymnast's USA Gymnastics and/or AAU memberships. The National office requires these memberships every year for your athlete to compete at sanctioned events.*
- 3. The registration fee also covers one pre-season assessment including judges.*

Competition Expenses

- 1. Meet fees and fee deadlines will accompany your gymnast's meet schedule for the year. Compulsory schedules will be available in mid-summer and Optional schedules every fall. Meet fees must be paid in full by the deadline for your gymnast to be entered in the competition. **Be sure to pay close attention to your meet schedule so you do not miss a deadline.***
- 2. Coaches travel fees will be assessed for every competition and training camp. These fees are determined by adding all of the coaches' expenses (travel, car rental, per diem and mileage) and then dividing that figure by the number of gymnasts that participated in that particular competition or camp. These fees will be taken care of by the booster club after every competition for your involvement in their fundraisers (raffles).*

Booster Club Responsibilities

1. *Booster Club membership and involvement is a mandatory part of being a team member/parent. Meetings are held once a month and all team parents are encouraged to attend. **Further obligations are outlined in the Booster Club section of this handbook.***

Important Tuition and policy notes

1. *The decision to join the Balcony Gymnastics team program is a big one and reflects a commitment to the team for an entire year. Team members **do not** move on and off of the team based on illness, injury, vacations, conflicts, or the like. **You are either on the team or off team!***
2. *There will be no prorating of team fees for any reason. Team fees are based on 48 weeks per year. There are four weeks of the year that you are not paying for. Balcony will be closed for the following holidays and holiday weekends: One – two weeks in July, Christmas Break, Spring Break. ****There are times when it will be required that your child attend practices during these off weeks. These will be at no charge and will take the place of special events, and day after/before competition practices. These days are at the discretion of the Team Director and the team coaches. (See # 6)***
3. *Balcony **may** not offer team workout the first scheduled practice after a State Meet, Regional or National Championship, or major invitational for the levels involved in the competition. This is to give the gymnasts and coaches (who have been away from home for the entire weekend) a day off to rest and recharge.*
4. *Balcony **may** also cancel or reschedule team workouts for clinics, camps, workshops, in-house competitions, special events or team outings.*
5. *Each year you can expect extra practices on weeks when the gym is closed for all other activity. We offer this extra practice time at no charge.*
6. *Once a year (usually in the Summer), Balcony team gymnasts are encouraged to attend a gymnastics training camp. These camps are at the discretion of the Team Director and coaches as Balcony chooses these camps based on numerous factors most importantly, the quality of coaching and attending as a team. We have attended numerous camps over the years that have provided extensive learning and more importantly team bonding and fun! Camp information is usually out before the end of school.*
7. *Private lessons are available to all Balcony gymnasts. These lessons are suggested for extra work on problem areas including: flexibility, strength, skill development and extra work on routines. Feel free to discuss the possibility of privates with either your child's coach or Michael. The fees for private lessons are as follows:*

30 minutes = \$20

60 minutes = \$30 - \$40* (Recommended Time for Privates)

*Rate is dependant on coach.

***** All fees and tuition must be up to date for gymnasts to take private lessons*****

Scheduled privates must be cancelled 24 hrs prior to your time or you are still responsible for the fees.

Balcony Gymnastics Team
Balcony Gymnastics Booster Club

Information, Obligations and Statement of Purpose

*It is the philosophy of Balcony Gymnastics that every family involved with the team is required to be a member of the booster club. This is **mandatory** and goes into effect upon receipt of this handbook. The funds raised by the Balcony Boosters will be prioritized as follows (please review Booster Club Statement of Purpose):*

- 1. To cover **all** of the coaches' travel fees accumulated by the team. (Levels 2 – 10)*
- 2. Awards Banquets.*
- 3. **Team** Entry fees into Invitationals and State Championships.*
- 4. The purchase of new equipment.*
- 5. Apparel for team members and families.*

Each family's responsibilities are listed below:

Membership Fee: (Levels 2 – 10)

\$35.00 per year per gymnast is due on September 1st of every year. Make checks payable to Balcony Boosters and either given to the front desk.

Fund Raising: (Levels 2 – 10)

Each family is responsible for raising \$225.00* per year for each team member. This money will be raised through a raffle. The \$225.00 will be raised by either **selling or buying** a designated number of tickets. Each of the tickets will become part of a drawing for a prize to be determined (big screen TV, (or something similar) and many other prizes).

- *- Please keep in mind that with a little work and creativity, none of the required \$225.00 should have to come out of pocket.*

***Please note that over the years, we have made attempts to keep the cost requirements for team parents lower. This year, each and every one of you as either team parents or gymnast has a chance to decrease your competitive fees by over 50%. Also keep in mind that if a parent chooses not to be involved in the booster club, your child will not be allowed to compete or practice with our BALCONY TEAMS.*

Statement of Purpose for Booster Clubs Representing Competitive Teams of Balcony Gymnastics & Personal Fitness, Inc.

DBA: Balcony Gymnastics and Youth Sports

This document is put forth by Balcony in order to offer guidance, clarification and restrictions for Booster organizations supporting Competitive Programs of Balcony.

General Division of Financial Responsibility

Balcony is responsible for everyday training costs:

Balcony shall pay for any and all costs associated with regular, day-to-day, on-site training and the tuition is budgeted as such. Examples of day-to-day costs include coaches' compensation for day-to-day training, facility overhead, insurance, etc. The Company does not pay for any costs associated with camps or competitions, including entry fees, travel, and uniforms for athletes, coach's fees: including but not limited to; travel, hotel fee, session fees (not to exceed \$200/day).

The Boosters is responsible for competition, travel, camp & other costs:

All costs associated with traveling and competing the athletes as well as any camp or specialty-training costs shall be the responsibility of the parents, whether paid for individually (out of pocket) or whether paid for by a Booster club comprised of, organized by, and run by the parents.

General division of Coaching Decisions

100% of the coaching decisions fall into the hands of Balcony and the coaches. Booster's decisions are limited to Booster affairs, which are outlined below.

I. Booster Guidelines & Requirements

A. The Booster Club:

- 1. Shall be parent-organized and parent-operated*
- 2. Must establish and maintain by-laws consistent with this document*

B. Stated Purpose of the Booster Club:

- 1. To support and work to further the Team goals, those goals being solely determined by the Coaches and Balcony.***
 - a) The Boosters by-laws shall specifically state their ongoing support of the Team goals whether those goals stay the same or change.*
 - b) The Boosters by-laws shall specifically forbid any action or movement in conflict with the Team goals and shall provide sanctions for such actions or movement.*
- 2. To generate funds to pay for the following expense categories including but not limited to:***
 - a) Entry fees for competitions*
 - b) Coaches Travel, Room and Board*
 - c) Coaches Fees while attending competitions (\$50.00 per session per coach, maximum 4 session/day)**Note that most competitions, excluding State are only 1 – 2 sessions.*
 - d) Camp fees*

- e) *Travel to & from competitions or camps*
- f) *Boosters' administration expenses*
 - (1) *Bank fees*
 - (2) *Printing*
 - (3) *Postage*
 - (4) *Misc. office expense*
 - (5) *Other*
- g) *To provide Booster scholarships for deserving families.*
- h) *To establish and support financially a Scholarship program for a deserving graduating gymnast.*

3. To stimulate team spirit and team unity:

- a) *By hosting a yearly team banquet to honor the athletes and coaches*
- b) *By hosting other social events*

C. Fund Raising guidelines and restrictions

1) *Booster Funds may be procured from*

- a) *Dues*
- b) *Conventional fund raising efforts (i.e. Raffles, carwashes, etc.)*
- c) *Sponsorships*
- d) *Gifts*
- e) *Hosting on-site competitions*
 - (1) *Facility rent is zero. However, Balcony has significant costs whenever the facility is shut down or restricted for a competition or event and Balcony is to be reimbursed for all hard and soft costs related to such. Examples:*
 - (a) *Any employee wages and P/R taxes devoted to the competition including planning, marketing and Facility management/janitorial.*
 - (b) *Reimbursement for wear and tear on facility, apparatus, parking lot at the rate of 20% of the profit of the competition.*
 - (c) *Lost opportunity dollars' which results from shutting down various programs/functions. This amount will be determined by Balcony and will vary depending on which programs and/or functions must be shut down, the time of year.*

2. Restrictions

- a) *Fund raisers must be legal, ethical and consistent with Balcony's Philosophy*
- b) *Balcony arranges exclusive marketing relationships with various companies, which means it is honor bound to not market competing products or services in any way. The spirit of this arrangement of course extends to the Booster Club. The list of marketing exclusives changes from time to time and it is the Booster Club's responsibility to check with Balcony (Michael) on a regular basis to assure that no conflict arises from any planned marketing.*
- c) *All fund raising campaigns taking place on or off Balcony premises (on-site or off-site) must be authorized by the company.*

Balcony Gymnastics Team

Description and Procedures of Competitive Gymnastics

The following are brief descriptions of the Junior Olympic Levels:

Level 2 – (Approx. 5 - 6 Hrs. per week)

Level 2 is an introductory Team level that only competes in 2 “exhibition style” meets that are held “In-house”. In this level skill development begins along with continued strength and flexibility training that is crucial to early gymnastic development. This level is used as a stepping-stone into the Level 3 and 4 programs.

Level 3 – (Approx. 5 - 6 Hrs. per week)

Level 3 gymnasts train modified Level 4 routines to prepare them for the transition. Our Level 3 team competes in 2-3 “mock” meets (In-house) and quite possibly, 1-2 AAU qualifiers and State to prepare them for a full Level 4 season. Training consists of more difficult skill development, strength, conditioning and attention to detail as it pertains to shapes and positions. The gymnast must be at least 4 years old to be on the Level 3 team.

Level 4 – (Approx. 7 - 9 Hrs. per week)

This is the entry level for a full season of competitive gymnastics. Beginner level compulsory routines are performed on all four events. The gymnast must have reached her 6th birthday to be eligible to compete. The Level 4 season includes a State Championship held every December.

Level 5 – (Approx. 12 - 14 Hrs. per week)

This is the intermediate compulsory level of competitive gymnastics. Routines are more advanced and are progressions toward optional development. The gymnast must have reached her 7th birthday to compete. The Level 5 season includes a State Championship held every December.

Level 6 – (Approx. 12 - 14 Hrs. per week)

This is the most advanced compulsory level. The routines were designed with transition to Level 7 in mind. The gymnast must be at least 7 years old to compete. The Level 6 season also includes a State Championship held every December.

Level 7 – (Approx. 18-20 Hrs. per week)

This is a compulsory/optional level designed to let the gymnasts get a taste of optional gymnastics while still having compulsory requirements. This is the first level where optional music is used. The gymnast must be 7 years old to compete. The optional competition season starts in January and the State Championship is held in March.

Level 8 – (Approx. 18-20 Hrs. per week)

This is the first truly optional level. There are minimum requirements that must be met on each event. There are also difficulty restrictions. The gymnast must have successfully completed levels 4-7 and be at least 8 years old. If the gymnast qualifies, she can represent Florida at the Regional Championships held in April.

Level 9 – (Approx 18-20 Hrs. per week)

Similar to Level 8, only optional routines are performed, also with minimum requirements. Unlike Level 8 there are no difficulty restrictions. The level of competition is very high. The gymnast must be at least 8 years old to compete. If the gymnast qualifies, she can represent the Region at Eastern Nationals held in April.

Level 10 – (Approx. 18-20 Hrs. per week)

This is the highest Junior Olympic level. A high level of proficiency at Level 9 must be demonstrated for successful transition into Level 10. The gymnast must be at least 8 years old to compete. If the gymnast qualifies, she can represent the Region at the National Championships held in April/May.

The following are brief descriptions of the organizations that govern the events that the Balcony team athletes may compete at:

USA Gymnastics (USAG)

USA Gymnastics is the sole national governing body (NGB) for the sport of gymnastics in the United States. It gets this designation from the International Olympic Committee and the International Gymnastics Federation. USA Gymnastics sets the rules and policies that govern gymnastics in this country. Training and selecting the U.S. Gymnastics Teams for the Olympics and World Championships are just two of the many responsibilities of USA Gymnastics. You can find out more about USAG at www.usa-gymnastics.org. Competition at USAG sanctioned events is usually very tough and awards are only given to the top gymnasts in each age group.

Amateur Athletic Union (AAU)

*The AAU is one of USAG's constituent organizations. It is one of the largest, non-profit, volunteer, sports organizations in the United States. A multi-sport organization, the AAU is dedicated exclusively to the promotion and development of amateur sports and physical fitness programs. The AAU's motto is "**Sports For All, Forever**". You can find out more about the AAU at www.aausports.org. Competition at non-sanctioned AAU events is usually light to average. The gymnasts are put into divisions based on the highest All-Around score they have achieved at that level. Awards are given to the top gymnasts in each age group in each division.*

The following are brief descriptions of the different types of competitions:

Qualifying Meets

These competitions are hosted locally and are so named because the gymnast may only compete at the state championships if she achieves a certain score at the qualifier. The qualification scores are determined by the Florida state board and USA gymnastics (or AAU gymnastics) prior to the start of the competitive season. (USAG and AAU)

State Championships

This is the season ending competition for the compulsory level athletes (including Level 7) and the Regional Qualifier for optional gymnasts. Individual and team competitions are offered at the State Championships. (USAG and AAU)

Regional Championships

Regional Championships involve the best gymnasts from each state within the region. Region 8 is comprised of the following eight states: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, N. Carolina, S. Carolina and Tennessee. There are eight regions with the United States. At Level 8 the Regional board determines the qualification procedure to the regional championship. At Levels 9 and 10, qualification is by score. (USAG)

Eastern Championships

This is the Eastern Regions (5-8) of the United States best Level 9's. Approximately the top 14 athletes in each of the four determined age groups qualify at regional championships. (USAG)

Junior Olympic National Championships

National Championships are offered by USA Gymnastics to the top Level 10 gymnasts in the country. The gymnasts must place in the top 7 in their age group at regional competitions. The top 7 are considered the Regional team. The Region and Nation supply a full line of apparel for the gymnasts that qualify to Nationals. The top 4 athletes in each of the 7 age groups at National Championships comprise the Junior Olympic National Team. (USAG)

Invitational Competitions

These are meets hosted by individual clubs and they generally offer team as well as individual competition. These meets may be used for qualification to State Championships. Both compulsory and optional gymnasts will attend several invitationals per year. (USAG and AAU)

The following are brief descriptions of the different competition formats:

Gymnastics competitions for girls involve performances on four apparatuses called “events”. These events are vault, uneven bars, balance beam and floor exercise.

1. Traditional Format

Traditional format is the style of meet most likely to be used at qualifying meets and small invitationals.

- The competition will begin with a general stretch then a warm-up session. During this session gymnasts will receive 1 to 1 ½ minutes on each event to warm-up their routines. The gymnasts and coaches will rotate from event to event being timed to ensure that everyone gets the same amount of time on the equipment.

- Following the warm-up session, the gymnasts will assemble to prepare for march-in. Each athlete or team will usually be introduced as they march out onto the floor. The national anthem will usually follow.

- Following the march-in, the gymnasts will disperse to their first competitive event, present themselves to the judges and begin competition. Optional gymnasts will receive an additional 30 second warm-up before they compete.

- At this point the competition begins. The gymnasts are divided into four squads and will rotate from event to event in Olympic order (vault, bars, beam, floor) until they have competed on all four events.

2. Capitol Cup Format

Capitol Cup format is a more modern and efficient format that is used at many large invitationals, State, Regional and National Championships.

- Just like the Traditional format the meet will begin with a general stretch period.

- Unlike Traditional format, Capitol Cup format utilizes two sets of equipment (1 Competition and 1 Warm-Up).

- The gymnasts are divided into 8 squads (4 in Flight A and 4 in Flight B). The meet begins with Flight A in the warm-up gym while Flight B continues their general stretch. As Flight A concludes their warm-up for their first event, both flights assemble for march-in. Once march-in is over, Flight A reports to the judges in the competition gym to compete while Flight B moves to the warm-up gym. At this point the two flights will alternate sides until all 8 squads have competed on all four events.

- Following both types of competition there will be brief delays while the meet officials compile and calculate the gymnast’s scores. After the delay the awards presentation will begin. Awards are given to the top gymnasts on each event and in the all-around for each age group.

- Following the awards ceremony the gymnasts are free to go home.

Balcony Gymnastics Team

Rules and Policies for Competition

Obligations of the gymnast:

1. *Arrive at the competition site at least 20 minutes prior to the start of general stretch.*
2. *Find your coach(as) as soon as you arrive.*
3. *Remain in the designated area for competitors for the entire competition. Obey all warm-up regulations and procedures.*
4. *Present yourself in proper attire including a Balcony warm-up leotard (if applicable), competitive leotard, warm-up suit, slip-ons and gym bag.*
5. *The gymnast should be well groomed. The gymnast's hair should be pulled back and sprayed. Only small "studs" in the ears are allowed as far as jewelry goes. The use of make-up should be limited and all fingernails and toenails should be free of colored nail polish.*
6. *The gymnast should and will accept the scores she receives with dignity and without comment or criticism. **Crying will not be tolerated and will be cause for the gymnast to be removed from the competition or awards ceremony.***
7. *The gymnast **should not** keep track of her event scores, all-around scores or placement during the meet. Coaches and parents will take care of this.*
8. *Be prepared to help the coach with springboards, mats, bar settings and music during the competition.*
9. *Be courteous, respectful and polite to all meet officials, hosts and hostesses, competitors and coaches.*
10. *Bring an extra copy of your Floor music and a back-up pair of grips to all competitions. (Optional Level Gymnasts)*
11. *Stay with the team until the competition is over and the coach has released you. Once a gymnast has entered the competition area there should be and will be no contact between the gymnast and her parents unless there is an emergency.*
12. *Stay for the entire awards ceremony in your warm-up attire unless released by the coach. Most competitions have a formal system for presenting awards. As a participating athlete you have an obligation to stay for all of the awards and to accept any given to you with courtesy and gratitude. Any signs of disrespect toward your placement, other gymnasts on award stand or sloppy attire and/or bad attitude will be grounds for dismissal from team. (That also means no gum chewing or candy in your mouth during awards)!*

Obligations of the Parents

It is the philosophy of Balcony Gymnastics that the coaches, the gymnasts and the gymnasts' parents are all part of the team. We encourage all of the parents to attend every competition. Having a strong cheering section does wonders for team motivation and is something to be proud of. With that in mind however, a few guidelines for parents are in order.

- 1. Make sure that your gymnast is on time (20 minutes prior to the start of general stretch), in the correct attire, with her hair properly done and without colored finger and toe nail polish (clear is acceptable).*
- 2. Once you have escorted your gymnast to the competitive area, wish her luck and direct her to her coach(as). At this point, please do not signal or talk to your daughter until the competition is concluded. We ask the gymnasts to focus all of their energy on their competition and we want as few distractions as possible.*
- 3. Cheer loudly and often, but do so in a courteous manner. Obnoxious screaming may be acceptable for other teams, but not for us.*
- 4. Promote Balcony Gymnastics in every way you feel is appropriate: T-shirts, polo shirts, sweat shirts, warm-up jackets, banners and cheers are all a nice touch.*
- 5. Never speak about another club, coach, gymnast or judge in a negative manner.*
- 6. Under no circumstances is a parent ever to approach a judge or meet official before, during or after an open workout or competition to comment on, complain about, or even ask about the format, the timing of the meet, a score or an awards ceremony.*
- 7. Parents should not approach the coaching staff during a warm-up session, competition or after the session (unless it is the last session of the day). The coaches are very busy, and any concerns about the competition or the performance of your child should be addressed the following week at the gym.*
- 8. In the case that you are unable to attend a competition with your child, please take care of the following details:*
 - a. Know the name and phone number of the facility in which the competition is being held.*
 - b. Communicate clearly with your child regarding transportation to and from the competition.*
 - c. Provide your child with an emergency number to use in case you cannot be reached.*
 - d. Arrange for her to communicate with you if the meet happens to run late.*
 - e. Send her with enough money to cover meals, snacks and phone calls.*
- 9. In case of an injury during warm-up or competition, please wait for your child's coach to give some indication that you should come on to the competition floor. In most cases, you will not be invited onto the floor because the injury will be relatively minor, and the coach and/or trainers will take care of it. In cases of more severe injuries where the gymnasts may be finished for the day, it would be appropriate for you to come see her after she has been moved from the competitive area for treatment.*

Obligations of the Parents for Out of Town Competitions

- 1. Before each out of town competition Balcony will send home travel and hotel information.*
- 2. It is the responsibility of each individual gymnast's family to make travel, lodging and rental car arrangements for all away competitions, clinics, camps and other team events unless otherwise stated by the team staff.*
- 3. When making hotel arrangements for out of town competitions, it is good practice to make reservations for all of the possible nights and cancel accordingly when you find out when your daughter is going to compete.*
- 4. Often times for out of town competitions it is difficult for one or both of the parents to attend. Please be aware that more often than not arrangements can be made with another family to help, so that every gymnast can attend every competition.*
- 5. When at an out of town competition, it is a good idea (whenever possible) to drive to the meet site the day before your daughter competes. This allows you to gauge the time necessary to get to the site and ensure an on time arrival.*

Balcony Gymnastics Team

Balcony Gymnastics Training Content

Many things go into developing young gymnasts. In order to understand and appreciate these things, one must understand what we are trying to achieve during training. There are four fundamental areas of development that need to be addressed during training: 1) Flexibility, 2) Strength, 3) Skills and 4) Mental aspects

- 1) Flexibility development is crucial to the long-term success of the gymnast. Superior flexibility adds to the aesthetic appeal of performances, allows the athlete to master skills more easily and plays a major roll in preventing and reducing the seriousness of injuries.
 - Every training session at Balcony will include a Warm-Up and flexibility period. This will generally occur at the beginning of the workout.
- 2) Strength development – As with all sports one object is to make the difficult look easy. This is much easier to achieve if the athlete has the strength to master the skills. In most cases the stronger the athlete is the better the athlete is. This is certainly true in gymnastics! Like flexibility, strict strength training can greatly reduce the chance of injury.
 - Strength development in the early compulsory levels is utilized to create a base on which to build as the gymnast advances. General exercises such as sit-ups, push-ups, pull-ups, running, jumping and so on achieve this goal very well. As strength and technique improve, resistance, range of motion and repetitions will increase. The gymnasts will constantly be challenged to improve their strength and should never cheat on their conditioning assignments.
 - Strength development at the more advanced or optional levels are more complex and specialized. We utilize the following phases to maximize results:
 - a) *Build-up* – General conditioning (similar to above) which prepares the body for maximum strength development later in the cycle. This generally occurs over the summer when skill acquisition is at its peak.
 - b) *Max strength* – Intense conditioning designed to improve the strength and power of the athlete. This stage takes place from September – December. This conditioning should prepare the athlete for the rigors of the upcoming season.
 - c) *Maintenance* – This occurs during competitive season when routine performance is the priority. Over this stage the conditioning is minimized to the level where strength can be maintained.
- 3) Skill Development – Skill development falls into two distinct but related categories:
 - a) *Basics* – Basics or core skills are the building blocks of good, sound gymnastics. The gymnasts use these building blocks to construct their sequences and routines. If any of these building blocks is missing or defective, the entire performance is weakened. These core skills must be continually refined in order for the gymnast and her coaches to continually improve performance. This is why we continually review and drill the basics.
 - b) *Skill Acquisition* – After a good core of basics is achieved, advanced skills must be learned and perfected. These skills are the ones that create and fulfill difficulty and connection requirements. The higher the grade of difficulty in the skills the gymnast's talent and courage allow her to achieve, the higher the level she will eventually compete. Often times these skills cause some reluctance and fear in gymnasts. The athlete's ability to trust her basics and her coaches to overcome her fears will determine how successful she will be.

4) *Mental Aspects – The mental aspects of gymnastics are also very important. We try to build mental toughness and focus using situational training (competition simulation). The creation of stressful situations in the gym helps train the gymnasts for the same feelings they will experience during competition.*

Mobility Within Balcony Gymnastics Team Program

The specific mission of Balcony is to develop happy, healthy and confident young people. To help ensure this goal is achieved, each gymnast competes in the level in which she can perform the required skills and routines with a high level of proficiency and confidence. Mobility through the levels (moving up) takes place at the full discretion of the Team staff and Team Director including, following the requirements and guidelines set fourth by USA Gymnastics.

Minimum Requirements:

Levels 1 - 3

Mobility through levels 1 – 3 is achieved by successfully completing progressions set forth by the Team Directors based on USA Gymnastics guidelines. The progressions for each level cover the following six areas of basic gymnastic development: Vault, Uneven Bars, Balance Beam, Floor Exercise, Strength and Flexibility. There are 4 – 5 progressions for each of the above areas and all must be achieved before entry into the next level.

Level 4

Entry into Level 4 is based upon successful completion of the Level 3 progressions and a positive recommendation by the Level 1-3 Team Staff. The Level 4 team generally only accepts new athletes at the completion of a successful Level 3 season and at the discretion of the Level 3/4 coaches and Team Director.

Level 5

Athlete must have completed at least one full Level 4 competitive season with a high level of proficiency (e.g. season AA *average* at or above 34.00) and must be able to perform all of the skills necessary for the Level 5 routines.

Level 6

Athlete must have completed at least one full Level 5 competitive season with a high level of proficiency (e.g. season AA average of 34.00 or better) and must be able to perform all of the skills necessary for the Level 6 routines.

Level 7

Athlete must have completed at least one competition at Level 6 and all the Level 6 competitive skills with a high level of proficiency (e.g. season AA average of 34.00 or better) and must be able to perform the following skills with adequate form in order to compete at Level 7:

Vault

-Very strong Handspring vault

Bars

- Cast Handstand
- Clear Hip (70°)

- Giant Swings
- Flyaway dismount

Beam

- 180° split leap/jump
- 1/1 turn on one foot
- Back Handspring
- Non-flight series
- Salto dismount

Floor

- Layout
- FHS Front tuck or Bounder
- 180° split leap
- 1 ½ turn
- Mastery of all families of jumps and leaps (180°)

Level 8

Athlete must have competed in at least one competition as a Level 7 with a high level of proficiency (e.g. AA average of 35.00 or better) and must be able to perform the following skills with adequate form in order to compete at Level 8:

Vault

- Handspring 1/1
- 1/2 on, 1 ½
- Tsukahara (tucked or piked)

Bars

- Cast Handstand
- “B” with flight or 180° turn
- Giants
- Flyaway dismount

Beam

- 180° switch leg leap or straddle jump
- 1/1 turn on one foot
- Flight series including back handspring
- Round off, back salto dismount

Floor

- Layout 1/1
- Pass containing 2 different saltos
- “B” turn on one foot
- Mastery of all families of jumps and leaps (180°)

Level 9

Athlete must have competed in at least one competition as a Level 8 with a high level of proficiency (e.g. AA average of 35.00 or better) and must be able to perform the following skills with adequate form in order to compete at Level 9:

Vault

- Handspring 1 ½
- 1/2 on, 1 ½
- Tsukahara (tucked or piked)
- Yurchenko (tucked or piked)

Bars

- Giants
- Cast Handstand
- “B” flight move (straddle back or overshoot)
- LA turn of 180° or more
- “B” from Group 3, 6 or 7
- “B” or “C” dismount

Beam

- 1/1 turn on one foot
- 180° leap series with combination bonus
- Back handspring series w/flight and connection
- Round off, layout 1/1dismount

Floor

- Layout 1 ½ twist or 2/1 twist
- Pass with 2 saltos (1 of them a “B” salto)
- 180° leap and jump series with combination bonus

Level 10

Athlete must have competed in at least one competition as a Level 9 with a high level of proficiency (e.g. AA average of 35.00 or better). To make the transition to Level 10 the athlete must be able to perform routines with enough connection and/or difficulty bonus to meet the following start value (SV) requirements:

Vault

-9.4 or better SV vault

Bars

-9.7 or better SV routine with all special requirements met

Beam

- 9.9 or better SV routine with all special requirements met

Floor

-9.9 or better SV routine with all special requirement met

Eligibility for Competition

- ❖ Gymnasts must be current on all gym training (assignments completed) and *booster obligations*.
- ❖ Missed practices can mean missed competitive opportunities.
- ❖ Gymnasts may not be sent to a competition if they have not mastered all the skills required for their level. Furthermore, Level 4 – 6 gymnasts will only be entered into AAU events until a certain level of proficiency is achieved (and maintained). This is for the sake of the gymnast. We want to build confidence in our gymnasts, and this is harder to achieve when the gymnast competes at a meet and does not place on any event.
- ❖ In most all cases, we register every gymnast for every competition. If an emergency arises and you find that you are unable to participate in the competition, please let your coach know in writing as soon as possible. Meet entry forms and fees are sent months in advance. It is sometimes possible to get a refund for gymnasts who cannot participate, but the chances get smaller as the meet gets nearer. This only pertains to gymnasts who have a documented emergency arise. No refunds will be given if a gymnast does not attend a meet because of losing a skill or a discipline problem.

Balcony Gymnastics Team
Competitive Uniform List

Mandatory

1. Competition Leotard with matching hair scrunchie (Levels 4 – 10)
2. Warm-up suit (jacket and pants) (Levels 4 – 10)
3. Tank style warm-up leotard (1) (Competition Leo for Levels 1-3)
4. Team Gym Bag (Levels 4 –10)

Optional

1. Balcony Gymnastics T-shirt and Sweatshirt
2. Slip-on shoes (to keep feet clean during competition)
3. Extra tank style warm-up leotards for training camps (Levels 7 – 10)

** All of these items are to be purchased through the Balcony Pro Shop and will be ordered at one time! (please see **note at bottom)

Cost for items

1. Levels 1 – 3: Approximately \$60.00, which includes tank style leo (with logo embroidery).
2. Levels 4 – 6: Approximately \$250.00, which includes competition leo, tank style leo (with embroidery), warm-up suit and gym bag.
3. Levels 7 – 10: Approximately \$275.00, which includes competition leo, tank style leo (with embroidery), warm-up suit and gym bag.

**Prices are approximate based on amount ordered, as there is usually a substantial discount for quantity ordering. This means that if your child's uniform is not ordered in a group it will cost considerably more!

Balcony Gymnastics Team

Nutritional Tips

In speaking with a nutritionist who works in conjunction with USA Gymnastics, several nutritional tips were suggested that could help our team athletes. As in any competitive sport, nutrition is a major contributor to gymnastics performance. Below are several tips on how we can try to make a difference. After all, we all want what is best, and good nutrition can greatly affect health, happiness and success levels in athletes.

- Read labels and teach your child to read labels at the store. Choose healthy, low-fat items. (A gymnast should have a very low-fat diet)
- Choose lean cuts of meat, fish and poultry that are grilled, broiled or baked.
- Limit servings of fried foods to 1-2 per week.
- Limit red meat to 2-3 servings per week.
- Choose baked or “WOW” chips instead of regular potato or nacho chips.
- Limit eggs to 2-3 per week.
- Avoid fatty meats like bacon, hot dogs, hamburgers, sausage, high fat luncheon meats and fish sticks.
- Choose turkey breast, low-fat ham or chicken breast luncheon meats over salami or bologna.
- Use skim, 1% or 2% milk.
- Choose grape or apple juice over orange juice. Grape and apple juice contain glucose, not fructose, which is more desirable for energy.
- Choose red pasta sauces over cream based, alfredo or garlic-butter sauces.
- Try fat free cheese, mayonnaise, salad dressings, sour cream and cream cheese.
- Try Promise Ultra Fat Free spread instead of butter or margarine.
- Try whole grain breads and cereals, plain bagels and English muffins instead of croissants, waffles or pancakes.
- Avoid high fat desserts such as ice cream, cookies, cakes, chocolates and brownies. Try small portions of non-fat frozen yogurt, sherbets, angel food cake, or vanilla wafers.
- Consider implementing a Vitamin C (with bioflavonoids) supplement into your child’s diet. Scientific studies show that taking Vitamin C with bioflavonoids can reduce the incidence of sports injuries and increase the rate of recovery from an injury. These can be found in any health food or vitamin store.
- ***Avoid fast food restaurants. If you must eat fast food, choose healthier menu items like grilled chicken, baked potatoes, salads, turkey breast subs, etc.***
- ***Eat healthy, low-fat snacks like apples, bananas, celery sticks, carrot sticks, fat-free pretzels, juices, etc.***

Please remember, these are only suggestions and will not work with every child and lifestyle. We strongly encourage however, that you follow the above suggestions whenever possible. Your growing student/athlete lives a rigorous lifestyle, proper nutrition is a must. Please help us instill these valuable principles into your child. We are confident that with a diet comprised of very low-fat, high-energy foods your young athlete will be happier, healthier and more successful.

Sample Meal Suggestions

Breakfast

8 oz. Glass of juice, 8 oz. Glass of skim milk, a bagel w/fat-free spread and a banana

Lunch

8 oz. Glass of juice, a turkey breast sandwich on whole wheat, fat-free pretzels and an apple

Dinner

1. A salad, a serving of grilled chicken or fish, a baked potato with fat-free spread and frozen yogurt for dessert
2. Vegetable soup, pasta with red sauce, whole wheat garlic bread (made with fat-free spread) and a serving of frozen grapes and bananas for dessert

Balcony Gymnastics Team

Miscellaneous Information

- Except in the case of an emergency, the Balcony team staff should not be called at home. Please leave all messages on the voice mail system at the gym or in the coach's message box. The coaches will check their boxes periodically and return your calls at their earliest convenience.
- Every Spring/Summer Balcony will have an awards banquet for the compulsory and optional team gymnasts. Each gymnast will be recognized for her accomplishments by her coaches. Please make every attempt to attend.
- When planning for family vacations, please try to schedule them for early in the summer or during a week that the gym is closed. This will allow for minimal time out of the gym.
- It is the gymnast's responsibility to help keep the gym clean. Tape, pre-wrap, ice, bottles and other garbage should always be thrown away after its use.

Injury/Emergency Procedure

Balcony has certain providers that we feel are best suited for our unique sport. Over the years, our gymnasts have had great success and a wonderful relationship with these excellent healthcare providers. Below are the names and phone numbers of our preferred providers*:

Dr. James Duke	=	352-867-0444
Dr. Michael Riley	=	352-867-0444
Ocala Orthopedic Group	=	352-351-3422
Mid-Florida Physical Therapy	=	352-629-4509

* These providers are merely a recommendation and by no means, a requirement. Because of our long-standing relationship we have found that the understanding of our sport, patient care and communication exceeds the normal standard of care.

In the event of a physical emergency involving one of our gymnasts, immediate first aid is administered. If the injury is deemed extreme (fractures, head injuries, etc.), one of two things will happen, depending on the severity:

1. You will be contacted immediately using the emergency contact information you have given Balcony (this would be a good time to update your information at the front desk) and informed of the injury, and we will follow your direction. In the event we are unable to make contact with a parent, one of the team physicians and the team director will be notified and the gymnast will be taken to the nearest facility.
2. EMS (911) will be notified (if injury is deemed emergent), along with the team physicians, the team director, and the gymnast will be transported to the nearest hospital via ambulance with either the director or her coach. During this time, attempts to contact the parent will continue.

College Bound Athletes

The Balcony team director will assist every college bound athlete in locating a college of their choice. We will establish contact with any college that you are interested in and assist you in earning a scholarship. Colleges seek out the best private club athletes in the state and in the country. This means that you should strive to compete well in all State, Regional and National Championships. One of your goals should be to qualify to compete in the highest possible championship that your level offers (L7 – State, L8 – Regional, L9 – Eastern National, L10 – National). Remember, at any given competition there may be a college recruiter sitting behind you, in front of you or even next to you!

It is important that you begin building your gymnastics video library during your freshman and sophomore years. During your junior year we will use this video, along with video taken in the gym of new skills or progressions; to make a tape that you can send to the schools that you are interested in attending.

Of course, the most important aspects of the possibility of a college scholarship is maintaining good grades and scoring well on both the ACT and the SAT. You should take these tests as a junior and then again as a senior. Even the best gymnast will fall short of their college goals if the grades and test scores are low.

BALCONY GYMNASTICS TEAM AGREEMENT

Both the parents (if applicable) and/or guardian including the gymnast should read the Balcony Gymnastics Team Handbook before signing this form.

I/We have thoroughly read and understand the Balcony Gymnastics Team Handbook. I/We have gone over the handbook with my/our child, and we support the philosophy of the Balcony team. We hereby agree to follow all of the rules, procedures and policies presented in the team handbook.

I/We understand that my/our child agrees to be actively involved in practices, competitions, clinics, camps and booster club fundraisers scheduled by the team unless excused by the coach or team director.

I/We understand that all team members are expected to act in a mature, responsible, uplifting and honorable manner at all times by following the rules below. Failure to adhere to any of these rules may result in dismissal from the team:

1. Gymnasts must observe good health practices including following healthy eating habits and getting sufficient sleep.
2. Every Balcony gymnast must maintain good grades. Any athlete whose grades fall below an acceptable level will have to meet with the team director to discuss options including, but not limited to, being suspended from workouts/competitions until grades improve.
3. Safety first. All safety rules governing USA Gymnastics will be adhered to during all gymnastic activities undertaken by Balcony gymnasts.
4. "Free Time" rules must be strictly obeyed. The first infraction will result in a warning, and the second will lead to an indefinite suspension of "Free Time" privileges.
5. Inappropriate dress, disruptive behavior, emotional outbursts, abusive or foul language and any other sort of misconduct are strictly prohibited and are ground for immediate dismissal from team.
6. Team members are expected to carry out all assignments and conditioning given to them immediately and to the best of their ability. Cheating and/or sitting around will not be tolerated.
7. Members of the Balcony team have a responsibility to set a good example for other gymnasts. Always strive to be courteous, respectful, helpful, *encouraging* and enthusiastic. In other words, be a **Balcony Person**.
8. Always call and speak to your coach or team director in absences from any scheduled workout. Frequent unexcused absences and tardiness are grounds for removal from the Balcony team.

I/We understand that if, at any time, we cannot be a *supportive* and *positive* force in and outside of the gym and in the life of our child we will relinquish our place on the team. **Negative talk to other parents outside of facility, in the lobby or seating area will not be tolerated.**

I/We understand that if I/we approach a judge or meet official before, during or after any competition to question, comment on, complain about or discuss a score or the judging of a meet we are making the decision to remove our child from the Balcony Gymnastics team.

I/We understand that as the parent(s) of a Balcony Gymnastics Team member, I/we have agreed to fulfill all of the time and financial obligations such as tuition, registration fees, meet fees, uniforms, Booster Club responsibilities and other obligations related to my/our child's participation.

Parent Signature _____

Date _____

Parent Signature _____

Date _____

Gymnast's Signature _____

Date _____

The front desk will make a copy of this Team Agreement for the gymnast and her family.