



Gymnastics Canada 2026-2028

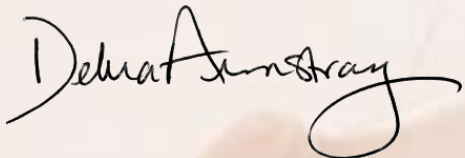
Safer & Stronger Safe Sport Strategy

June 2026

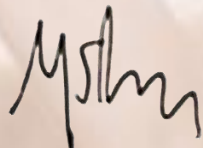
MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

The Board of Directors and Management of Gymnastics Canada are proud to announce the official unveiling of our Safer and Stronger strategy. The strategy is the culmination of years of critical review of the gymnastics environment in Canada.

We listened and learned from members of our community and experts in safe sport and are committed to delivering a gymnastics experience where the well-being of all stakeholders is our main priority.



Debra Armstrong
CEO



Michael Downey
Chair, Board of Director

OUR SAFE SPORT JOURNEY

From global reckoning to national renewal.



This strategy is not just a response to the past, *it is a vision for the future:*
a gymnastics system in Canada that is safer, stronger, and healthier.

A SAFER AND STRONGER FOUNDATION



FROM HERE,
WE SOAR

STRONGER

SAFER

SAFER & STRONGER - STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

- Developed over 10 months and socialized with multiple stakeholder groups
- Collaborative process with the Safety Steering Committee (with representation from athletes, clubs, and experts from outside the sport sector)
- Informed by the McLaren Report, Sport Environment Assessment Report, and the Culture of Excellence Project
- Strategy support from *the greater*

Safety Steering Committee

Alexandra Castonguay

Director at Gymnastics Quebec

Judi Fairholm

Expert in Safeguarding

Mark Mulatz

Retired corporate lawyer and legal counsel to various sport organizations

Kacey Neely, PhD

Director, Safe Sport, Gymnastics Canada

Alexandra Orlando, OLY

Former Olympian and current sports consultant

Michelle Pothier

Former club owner and current coach and judge

Kyle Shewfelt, OLY

Former Olympian and current club owner

SAFER & STRONGER - PHASED APPROACH

Safer and Stronger is a three-year strategy aligned with the WIN+ Strategic Plan. GymCan will be accountable for national implementation, working in partnership with the Operations Council and PTSOs to advance action across the country.

Alignment, coordination, and collaboration will drive momentum at all levels of the sport.

National Focus - GymCan

Primary focus is improving safety, culture, and well-being within our High-Performance Programs. Secondary focus is collaboration with, and support of Provinces and Territories as they begin to implement initiatives at the grassroots level.

High Performance will remain a priority, alongside the establishment of new initiatives to unlock additional capacity and enable a larger role in supporting provinces and territories. Initiatives at the provincial, territorial, club, and grassroots levels will be accelerated.

YEAR 1



YEAR 2



YEAR 3

Provincial & Territorial Focus - Ops Council / PTSOs

Elements of the strategy will be preliminarily implemented at the provincial, territorial, and local levels, with support from the Ops Council and PTSO leads. Scheduled touchpoints with GymCan and the newly developed Safe Sport Council will be established to provide guidance and ensure alignment across national and provincial/territorial priorities.

Provincial and territorial progress across the four pillars of *Safer and Stronger* will be reviewed to evaluate outcomes and inform the ongoing implementation of the strategy.

SAFER & STRONGER - VISION

Our vision is a gymnastics community where every participant is protected, supported, and empowered to thrive.

We envision a safer and stronger sport system built on a culture of trust, respect, and well-being.

Across the country at all levels is a community grounded in zero-tolerance for abuse, clear and compassionate reporting pathways, accessible education and resources, and a commitment to continuous learning.

We strive to lead with integrity and care, ensuring that performance is never prioritized over well-being and that safety is woven into every practice, decision, and interaction.

These commitments form the strong foundation from which our athletes, our community, and our sport, can truly soar.



SAFER & STRONGER - GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Our guiding principles serve as the foundation for Safer & Stronger, ensuring that every decision, priority, and action is rooted in shared values that provide clarity and direction.

We will **ACT** to build trust, ensure safety, and create a culture where every athlete and member of our community is valued, respected, and protected.

A

ACCOUNTABILITY

We promise to uphold the highest standards of **Accountability**, ensuring that every action we take reflects responsibility and integrity

C

CONSISTENCY

We commit to **Consistency**, encouraging all GymCan clubs and gyms to embed safe practices into daily operations, so they are lived every day, and engrained into the sport culture, not just spoken.

COMMUNICATION

Through open **Communication**, we will listen, inform, and engage with athletes, coaches, and the wider community

T

TRANSPARENCY

With unwavering **Transparency**, we will share our decisions, progress, and challenges openly, so trust is built and maintained

A well defined and actionable Safe Sport Strategy is essential for the future of Gymnastics in Canada.

Our strategy is built upon four foundational pillars, to foster an open, healthy and safe culture across all pockets of gymnastics in Canada.

PROTECT & PREVENT

We commit to upholding practices, standards, and culture that prevent psychological and physical abuse, guided by a zero-tolerance policy and the belief that performance must never come at the cost of safety or well-being.

RESPOND & RESOLVE

We commit to identifying and communicating the pathway for reporting that is compassionate and trauma-informed. We will hold all parties engaged in the response and resolution process accountable.

ENGAGE & EDUCATE

We commit to creating educational opportunities, ensuring clear pathways to resources, and delivering ongoing training. We will openly share tools needed with all members of the gymnastics community.

LEARN & LEAD

We commit to an innovative, learning-focused approach to Safe Sport, setting the standard for best practice and keeping athletes at the heart of everything we do.

PROTECT & PREVENT

We commit to upholding practices, standards, and culture that prevent psychological and physical abuse, guided by a zero-tolerance policy and the belief that performance must never come at the cost of safety or well-being.

Our Why

To create safe spaces where harm has no place and we take proactive action to safeguard all individuals within the gymnastics community because everyone has the right to be safe, heard, and protected.

HOW WE'LL ACHIEVE OUR COMMITMENT

Develop a comprehensive inventory of current and future policies, including a defined policy review schedule, in alignment with and anchored to the Code of Ethics and Conduct Policy.

Implementation: Ensuring members of the Gymnastics Canada community are familiar with and acknowledge their commitment to uphold the Code of Ethics and Conduct Policy, and are aware of the responsibilities it entails. As additional policies are identified, created and prioritized, GymCan will develop a roadmap for the familiarization and adoption of these other policies throughout the Gymnastics Canada community.

Empower athletes, coaches, parents, judges, IST, leaders, support staff, and volunteers with the knowledge of what a safe and healthy training environment should look like and encourage members of the community to speak up if those standards are not met.

Implementation: Creating a communication framework that provides all members of the Gymnastics Canada community with direction and guidance for seeking support and how to engage the national governing body.

Publish refreshed and/or new guidance on roles and responsibilities to keep participants safe.

Implementation: Creating a socialization plan to inform members of the Gymnastics Canada community about new or updated roles and responsibilities, starting with the Recruitment, Selection and Screening Standardization policies.

PILLAR 1: PROTECT AND PREVENT – OPERATIONAL PLAN

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Create the Safe Sport Council with members of Ops Council and engage the Safety Steering Committee in a new way Develop and implement a Screening Policy at the National level Develop the Mental Health and Well-being Strategy Ensure full One Badge compliance across the National Team Program Deliver a Psychological Safety session to National Team Program Offer Mental Health First Aid to National Team and Comp 4 Coaches Continue supporting Headversity with National Team participants and NCCP Course registrants	Develop a National Screening Policy with support from the Provinces Develop an EDI Strategy, including refining the Inclusion Policy and trans-athlete section Implement the Mental Health and Well-being Strategy Pilot One Badge (or other complaint management platform) with a province and their clubs Continue supporting Headversity with National Team participants and NCCP Course registration	Support the Provinces with the Implementation of the National Screening Policy in parallel to launching One Badge (or other compliance management platform) country-wide at all levels of our sport Upskilling coaches and judges Support PTSOs with adopting Mental Health and Well-being Strategy and EDI Strategy

Bold items represent commitments to the SEA Report and COE Project

RESPOND & RESOLVE

We commit to identifying and communicating the pathway for reporting that is compassionate and trauma-informed. We will hold all parties engaged in the response and resolution process accountable.

Our Why

Every athlete, coach, judge, parent, IST, leader, support staff, and volunteer must know that their voices will be heard, their experiences validated, and that issues will be resolved with integrity. By addressing harm and conflict directly, we will restore trust.

HOW WE'LL ACHIEVE OUR COMMITMENT

Ensure reporting systems and processes are clear and fit for purpose.

Implementation: Developing visual materials that clearly outline the reporting and resolution pathway to ensure all members can identify where they are in the process, should they need to report. These materials will then be shared openly with provinces, and GymCan will encourage that they are posted in gyms and clubs across the country.

Establish accessible reporting channels for raising concerns.

Implementation: Developing and socializing multiple access points for reporting.

Clear identification of Gymnastics Canada's role in the complaint process.

Implementation: Ensuring that reporting instructions and the GymCan Safe Sport contact list are actively promoted on all relevant channels, including being available within our Safe Sport education resources.

Liaise with the third-party complaint management to identify any improvements to the current investigation process.

Implementation: Assessing how GymCan can better support the current investigation process, in collaboration with the third-party complain management organizations.

PILLAR 2: RESPOND AND RESOLVE – OPERATIONAL PLAN

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Begin engaging in conversations about GymCan restorative work Create and share ITP/CSSP video Develop and publish infographics clearly outlining reporting and resolution pathways, including access points, and GymCan’s role in the process on our website Create the Professional Excellence Framework (with HPD) to help understand ‘grey zones’ within safe sport Build guidelines for infractions and violations into relevant policies	Continue to engage in conversation and take first steps in GymCan restorative work Improve complaint process and response clarity and alignment with provinces	Continue to engage in GymCan restorative work Improve complaint process and response clarity and alignment with provinces

ENGAGE & EDUCATE

We commit to creating educational opportunities, ensuring clear pathways to resources, and delivering ongoing training. We will openly share tools needed with all members of the gymnastics community.

Our Why

By engaging and educating athletes, coaches, parents, judges, IST, leaders, support staff, and volunteers, we build a culture where risks are recognized, safe practices are upheld, and well-being is supported.

HOW WE'LL ACHIEVE OUR COMMITMENT

Ensure open access to resources through active communication and transparency.

Implementation: Creating a centralized hub for educational and training resources accessible to all members of the Gymnastics Canada community, with mandatory training integrated into all sanctioned programs and camps.

Encourage participation in safety initiatives and campaigns to broaden reach and implementation of Safe Sport guidelines.

Implementation: Ensure the organizational structure supports Safe Sport practices and initiatives, beginning with National Team training. Hold GymCan leads accountable through the inclusion of Safe Sport criteria in performance reviews, and reinforce and recognize positive Safe Sport engagement.

Establish lines of communication between GymCan, PTSOs and Clubs regarding implementation progress and updates.

Implementation: Assessing how GymCan can better support the current investigation process, in collaboration with the third-party complain management organization.

Provide opportunities for community feedback through online forums, in-person engagement and scheduled time with GymCan Safe Sport staff.

Implementation: Creating communication channels to support community feedback and re-distributing relevant educational resources.

PILLAR 3: ENGAGE AND EDUCATE – OPERATIONAL PLAN

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Implement the Welcome Package and Onboarding Week Host Townhalls on a semi-annual basis Update the Safe Sport Resources webpage Complete an education gap-analysis with NT athletes and coaches through a survey Continue delivering ‘Living Well’ workshops during National Team training camps Continue Working With Parents in Sport (WWPIS) Continue working with experts to improve culture, communication, and leadership across NT disciplines	Review and refine the Welcome Package and Onboarding Week Host Townhalls on a semi-annual basis Review resource page on GymCan’s website Pilot an initiative connecting Olympians with grassroots athletes Integrate Judge Safe Sport education into FIG Brevet training Continue delivering ‘Living Well’ workshops during National Team training camps Continue WWPIS and develop plan to broaden reach	Integrate Safe Sport Training into NCCP Courses - Safe Sport training integration Run initiative connecting Olympians with grassroots athletes Integrate Judge Safe Sport education and training into National and Provincial level pathways

LEARN & LEAD

We commit to an innovative, learning-focused approach to Safe Sport, setting the standard for best practice across our sport, and keeping athletes and our participants at the heart of everything we do.

Our Why

To inspire progress through accountability, continuous growth, and leadership, grounded in leading by example and learning from every experience.

HOW WE'LL ACHIEVE OUR COMMITMENT

Acknowledge and address past harms through athlete-informed action.

Implementation: Releasing SEA (Sport Environment Assessment) Report noting progress and updates, including engaging in restorative work with the community.

Define and communicate the evolving culture of gymnastics in Canada to all GymCan members.

Implementation: Socializing and actively implementing the Culture of Excellence Action Plan within GymCan.

Implement monitoring and evaluation tools to track impact and guide strategy growth and evolution.

Implementation: Developing the 3-Year Safe Sport Strategy Implementation Plan, starting at the National Team and cascading to the provincial and club level.

Actively participate in national and sector-wide initiatives to advance Safe Sport across gymnastics and sport at large in Canada.

Implementation: Attending National Safe Sport events and continuing to foster relationships with Safe Sport leaders across Canada.

PILLAR 4: LEARN AND LEAD – OPERATIONAL PLAN

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Standardize debrief process to apply learnings across disciplines (camps, competitions) Present an annual Safe Sport Report based on available data at AGM Provide the final SEA Report update and summary (November 2026) Publish the COE Action Plan update Complete the Culture of Excellence – data collection through CAAT survey (2-year follow-up) Continue the quarterly meetings with the Gymnastics Federation Safeguarding Group Form a group with like-minded Safe Sport Leads at the National Sport Organizations level and meet quarterly	Present an annual Safe Sport Report based on available data at AGM Analyze data and share action plan for the Culture of Excellence project Continue semi-annual check-ins and reflections Continue the quarterly meetings with the Gymnastics Federation Safeguarding Group Continue engaging with the Safe Sport group at the National Sport Organization level and meet quarterly	Present an annual Safe Sport Report based on available data at the AGM Create a Community of Practice (cross-discipline) for athletes Incorporate learnings from Safe Sport Council into Safe Sport Report

**SAFER & STRONGER,
FROM HERE, WE SOAR!**

