

GILGANDRA FITNESS CENTRE - YOUTH ACCESS

Objective

To provide a range of safe and high-quality physical activity programs for youth aged between 14 -18.

Scope

To ensure that youth aged between 14 -18 are able to enjoy the many benefits of physical exercise in gym whilst providing guidance that seeks to eliminate exposure to an unsafe environment or practices.

Policy

Gilgandra Fitness Centre and programs managed by the centre (GFC) will provide appropriate care to children or young adolescents including:

- safe and well-maintained facilities and equipment
- qualified fitness professionals to conduct physical activity classes
- supervision in all areas of the centre
- protection against physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect from other centre members, participants and staff
- safe supervision for change rooms

Gilgandra Fitness Centre has a number of responsibilities under the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012. The check helps to reduce the likelihood that unsuitable people will be engaged to work in paid or unpaid roles with children or young adolescents. Under NSW Legislation, it is an offence for a person convicted of prohibited or registrable offences to apply for, remain in, or undertake paid or unpaid child-related employment. Staff employed, undertake responsibilities for Gilgandra Fitness Centre will undergo a series of background checks before they begin their employment.

Gilgandra Fitness Centre will comply with the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW).

Resistance training equipment is designed for adults. Because children's limbs and bodies are substantially shorter than those of adults, the lever systems of such equipment often do not suit children. In addition, machines are designed for adults, while offering some level of adjustment, simply do not offer the level of adjustment required to accommodate a child or an adolescent. Children and young adolescents should not use equipment that cannot be suitably adjusted for them, as this could lead to injury.

The use of free weights may also lead to injury in children and young adolescents through improper lifting techniques and lack of adult supervision. Close adult supervision by appropriately qualified staff is therefore essential when free weights are used by children and/or young adolescents. In offering physical activity classes for children and young adolescents using resistance weight training or electronic cardiovascular equipment should ensure that all equipment can accommodate the physiological and biomechanical differences between children, adolescents and adults.

Age of entry and centre membership

The ages at which children and young adolescents may enter or become members of GFC will depend on the type of classes or programs available. Classes or programs are divided into the following categories:

- non-weights-based group fitness classes and use of cardiovascular equipment
- weights-based group fitness classes
- unsupervised resistance training
- other structured or supervised programs

Non-weights-based group fitness classes and use of cardiovascular equipment

For the purposes of centre membership and the use of centre facilities and services as a centre member, the minimum age of entry to Gilgandra Fitness Centre is 14 years of age for participation in general adult non-weights-based group fitness exercise classes and use of cardiovascular equipment.

Weights-based group fitness classes

For the purposes of Gilgandra Fitness Centre membership and the use of centre facilities and services as a centre member, it is recommended that the minimum age of entry be 16 years of age for participation in unsupervised resistance training.

When a Gilgandra Fitness Centre staff member is placed in a position of one-on-one supervision, or supervises a group fitness class behind closed doors with children or young adolescents, that person is subject to all laws and requirements under the *Child Protection (Offenders Prohibition Orders) Act 2004 (NSW)* and the *Child Protection (Offenders Registration) Act 2000 (NSW)*.

Other structured or supervised programs

For participation in other structured or supervised physical activity programs by groups such as those of schools, sports teams or junior elite athlete training squads, or other special physical activity programs conducted by a centre and instructed by qualified centre staff or other outsourced qualified fitness professionals (see Role of the fitness professional), the minimum age of entry to a centre is 14, which will be clearly displayed at the entry.

Restrictions that apply to the minimum age of entry to a centre when a person wishes to participate in other structured or supervised physical activity programs may be influenced by such factors as:

- staff qualifications and availability
- the type and range of physical activity programs that can be offered (such as programs for sporting teams, junior athlete squads, school groups, water-based activities and swim classes)
- space and equipment availability

Membership contracts

Parents or guardians are required to sign membership contracts entered into by children or young adolescents under the age of 18 years.

Staff supervision ratio

Staff to child/adolescent ratios will depend on the type of classes or programs available at each centre. Staff supervision is categorised as either:

- Supervised or structured group fitness classes or
- Supervised or structured resistance training programs

Supervised or structured group fitness classes

For supervised or structured group fitness classes, including weights-based group fitness classes (including body weight, bands and free weight equipment) and circuit weight training classes (including hydraulic, pneumatic or appropriate pin-loaded equipment) the staff to child/adolescent ratio is required to be at least one centre staff member to 25 students.

Where supervised or structured group fitness classes are conducted for school-aged groups, a teacher from the school must also be present at all times during the class.

Supervised or structured resistance training programs

For supervised or structured resistance training programs, the staff to child/adolescent ratio will not exceed 1:8. Where supervised or structured resistance training is being supervised as part of a school group's activities, a teacher from the school must also be present at all times during the training program.

During supervised or structured physical activity programs for school-aged groups, the role of the fitness professional is to conduct safe exercise programs and the role of the teacher is to maintain general class discipline and control.

Insurance

In conducting physical activity programs for children or young adolescents, Gilgandra Fitness Centre must have an insurance package that proves coverage for this special population. Major considerations should be the level of the centre's public liability and professional indemnity insurance cover.

Children and young adolescents who attend a centre as part of a school-based organised activity are covered under the Supplementary Sporting Injuries Benefits Scheme (1984) on the proviso that there is a teacher present at all times during the physical activity session. This scheme covers accidents or injuries that occur during any official school sporting activity or Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation organised program. This cover includes transportation to and from the centre.

Role of the fitness professional

Fitness professionals who are responsible for conducting physical activity programs for children and young adolescents must:

- obtain the skills and qualifications necessary to lead children's physical activity programs (see below)
- hold current CPR and first aid qualifications
- have had a Working with Children Check

Relevant Legislation

Work Health & Safety Act 2011
Child Protection (Offenders Prohibition Orders) Act 2004 (NSW)
Child Protection (Offenders Registration) Act 2000 (NSW).

Associated Documents

NSW Fitness Industry Code of Practice

Responsible Officer:	Director Community Services		
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