

Safeguarding in the Martial Arts: Safe Practice

Martial Arts are activities where safe practice is essential to help prevent injury. Children are particularly vulnerable as they are still developing mentally and physically, so training methods need to be modified as described below. All risk assessment and safe practices are maintained to ensure the safety of all student, children and adults alike.

Please consider the following in designing your own safe practice policy:

1. Warm Ups

All activities should first include a thorough warm up which is appropriate for the activity taking place. To help reduce the risk of injury, specific attention should be paid to those muscle groups that will be used during later activity.

2. Kaisho Martial Arts involving throwing - Ju Jitsu

The risks include but are not limited to: falling on unsuitable surfaces; landing on the head; damage to the joints from locks; strangulation.

Kaisho Martial Arts Safe Practice ensures the following points are covered, but is not limited to:

- (a) Checking the matted area for suitability, particularly where the mats have been joined.
- (b) Checking that there are no hard surfaces or sharp/hard objects around the matted area.
- (c) Having an experience instructor who will ensure that children are not taught to use locks, throws or strangles which will cause injury. We do not teach children under the age of 11 locks or strangle holds.

3. Kaisho Martial Arts involving strikes, punches and kicks - Karate and Kickboxing

The risks include but are not limited to: concussion (brain injury) from heavy blows to the head; damage to internal organs and joints from heavy blows; injury from inappropriate stretching and other exercises.

- (a) There are some key points we must consider in this section, particularly around head contact for under 16s. :
 - We ensure that there is no sparring for students under the age of 6 years.
 - Only light contact is allowed to head and body during sparring sessions for children.
 - Equipment is provided for sparring including: Head Protection, Shin and Foot Pads, Gloves. All students when sparring must wear their own gum shields.
 - Weight and Heights of each student sparring is considered to ensure that it will be an even competition and no-one has an advantage or disadvantage.
 - All heights weights and abilities are assessed before sparring takes place,

irrespective of gender.

- An experienced instructor is present during all sparring sessions to ensure the safety of the students.
- All sparring takes place on a matted arena.
- All instructors are first aid trained. There is a medical kit available at all venues including cold compact. Should the time out show any signs of further injury and it's felt further assessment is needed, an ambulance will be called.

- (b) Avoiding excessive stretching and exercises such as press-ups on the knuckles or hitting heavy bags; the joints of children are still developing and can be damaged by these exercises.

Above all, safe practice means having a suitably qualified and experienced instructor who will ensure that children, junior and adult students are not exposed to the above risks and who can make a training session enjoyable whilst maintaining the discipline essential to learning a Martial Art.

