



### **Safeguarding in 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. (\*also includes Adults at Risk)

**Included in our safe practice policy, are:**

#### **1.Warm-Ups**

Every session begins with a structured and thorough warm-up tailored to the planned activities. Warm-ups focus on increasing heart rate, activating key muscle groups, and preparing joints for movement.

Special attention is given to muscles and areas that will be heavily used during training or sparring to help reduce the risk of strains, sprains, and other injuries. Dynamic stretches and movement drills are prioritised over static stretching at the start of sessions to enhance mobility, flexibility, and performance.

#### **2 Martial Arts involving throwing, grappling and strangling**

*Examples: Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, Judo, Submission Wrestling*

##### **Risks:**

- Falling on unsuitable surfaces
- Impact to the head
- Joint injuries from locks and submissions
- Strangulation

##### **Safe Practice Guidelines:**

- (a) Matted Area Checks: Ensure mats are secure, well-joined, and free from gaps that could cause trips or falls.
- (b) Surrounding Area Safety: Confirm there are no hard surfaces, sharp edges, or obstacles near the matted area.
- (c) Instructor Supervision: An experienced, qualified instructor must supervise all training. Techniques taught to children and beginners are carefully controlled, with locks, throws, and strangles adapted to prevent injury.
- (d) Progression and Control: Students progress gradually in skill, with emphasis on safe technique, control, and awareness of training partners.
- (e) Protective Equipment: Use of appropriate protective gear where applicable (e.g., mouth guards) is mandatory.

#### **3.Martial Arts involving strikes, punches and kicks**

**Age Considerations for Head Contact:**

For participants under 16 years old, head contact is strictly controlled and minimal. No full-force strikes to the head are permitted for under 16s. Light, controlled contact may only occur in supervised, advanced sessions with proper protective equipment.

**Degree of Head Contact Allowed:**

Head contact is limited to controlled, light contact only. Follow-through strikes to the head are not permitted for minors.

**Equipment Considerations:**

All sparring participants must wear appropriate, correctly fitting protective equipment, including: headguard, mouthguard, gloves, shin pads, groin protection (if applicable). If any required protective equipment is not worn, the student cannot participate.

Age, Height, and Weight Considerations:

Sparring and competition are matched based on age, weight, and skill level to reduce injury risk. Height may also be considered to ensure fair and safe matchups.

**Gender Considerations:**

Mixed-gender sparring or competition is permitted only where it is safe and appropriate, usually in older or more advanced groups, with careful supervision.

**Supervision:**

All sparring and competitive activities are conducted under direct supervision of qualified instructors. Instructors monitor intensity, technique, and safety at all times.

**Sparring Surface**

All sparring sessions are conducted on a well-maintained wooden floor. Instructors ensure the floor is clean, dry, and free from obstructions to minimise the risk of slips and falls. Participants are required to wear appropriate footwear or go barefoot, as instructed, to maintain grip and stability. Extra precautions, including controlled intensity and close supervision, are in place to ensure safety due to the harder surface compared with mats. Where necessary, additional padding or protective equipment may be used to reduce the impact of falls or collisions.

**Head Injuries:**

Immediate protocol includes:

- Stop activity and assess the student.
- Administer first aid if required.
- Refer to medical professionals for suspected concussions or serious injuries.
- Notify parents/guardians immediately.
- Complete incident reporting form

**Medical Supervision:**

Qualified instructors trained in first aid are present at all times during sparring and competitions. Access to emergency medical services is available if required.

**Avoiding Excessive Strain on Developing Joints**

Exercises that place excessive stress on joints, such as advanced stretches, knuckle push-ups, or heavy bag strikes, should be avoided for children. Children's joints and bones are still developing, and these activities can increase the risk of injury or long-term damage. Training for younger participants should focus on age-appropriate strength, conditioning, and technique, ensuring exercises are safe, controlled, and suitable for their stage of development.

#### **4. Martial Arts involving weapons**

##### **Safe Practice Guidelines:**

**No Live Blades:** Sharp or live blades are strictly prohibited in the training area, especially when children are present.

**Use of Training Weapons:** Only safe, age-appropriate training weapons (e.g., padded sticks, wooden replicas) may be used.

Instructors must ensure students are taught proper handling, control, and respect for the weapon at all times.

**Supervision:** Qualified instructors provide constant supervision during all weapon-based activities to prevent accidents and ensure correct technique.

##### **Safety Protocols:**

Clear rules and protocols are in place for weapon use, including:

- Designated areas for weapon training
- Controlled pace and intensity
- Mandatory protective equipment where necessary
- Strict enforcement of safety guidelines

**Objective:** To allow students to learn weapon-based martial arts safely, while minimising the risk of injury through proper equipment, instruction, and supervision.

Above all, safe practice means having a suitably qualified and experienced instructor who will ensure that children 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.