

# SAFEGUARDING IN MARTIAL ARTS

## SAFE PRACTICE POLICY

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)

### 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. Martial Arts involving throwing, grappling and strangling

*In LMA this refers to our Close Quarter Combat programme.*

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

Safe practice should include, 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.

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

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.

Strikes, punches and kicks will normally be done on pads. Students should not strike pads with their hands unless gloves are being worn. Students should always be reminded when striking pads to ensure the power of the technique is appropriate to the person holding the pad.

#### **Sparring**

There is to be no contact between students under the age of 16 unless they are wearing full sparring kit. Adults should spar in sparring kit unless the Instructor in

charge is highly confident in their abilities.

All sparring kit must be ordered through Leadership Martial Arts and be in a good condition. Leadership Martial Arts reserves the right to stop someone from taking part in sparring in any event, competition or grading if they are not happy with the quality of their kit.

Sparring should always be semi-contact, with enough contact to score the point. Any excessive contact should lead to an immediate warning. Repeated excessive contact should lead to their withdrawal from sparring for that session.

At competitions and gradings, students sparring should be put in similar size, weight and grades. Where this is not possible (e.g. for certain drills at Black Belt gradings) then students need to be reminded to spar for technique and not for power.

All instructors should hold a current first aid qualification, and there should be an appropriate number of instructors to students when sparring in class, gradings and competitions.

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

*In LMA this refers to Leadership weapons programme.*

Safe practice should include but is not limited to:

- (a) No live blades (sharp or otherwise) in the training hall when children are present
- (b) Safe protocols for the use of training weapons by children
- (c) Good supervision at all times by Instructors

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.