



## Birmingham Martial Arts Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures

**1. Commitment to Safeguarding** At Birmingham Martial Arts Centre we are committed to safeguarding children and young people under the age of eighteen. We expect everyone to share this commitment. We take all welfare concerns seriously and encourage children and young people to speak to us about any worries they may have. We will always act in the best interest of the child.

**2. Purpose and Scope of this Policy Statement** Birmingham Martial Arts Centre works with children and families as part of its activities. The purpose of this policy statement is:

- To protect children and young people who receive Birmingham Martial Art's services.
- To provide parents, staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.

This policy statement applies to anyone working on behalf of Birmingham Martial Arts.

**3. Legal framework** This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England, Northern Ireland and Wales.

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Data Protection Act 2018

### **4. Abuse and Neglect: Definition, Signs and Symptoms.**

#### **Definitions:**

**Child** In England, Northern Ireland and Wales a child is someone under the age of 18, whether living with their families, in state care, or living independently (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018). This generally applies in Scotland (with some exceptions applying to parts of the policy).

**Safeguarding** Safeguarding children is defined in “Working together to safeguard children” as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children’s health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Safeguarding vulnerable adults is defined in the “Care and support statutory guidance” issued under the Care Act 2014 as:

- Protecting the rights of adults to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.
- People and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect.
- People and organisations making sure that the children and adult’s wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, taking fully into account their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action.
- Recognising that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances and therefore potential risks to their safety or wellbeing may occur.

**Child Abuse** Child abuse is any action by another person – adult or child – that causes significant harm to a child. It can be physical, sexual or emotional, but can just as often be about a lack of love, care and attention. We know that neglect, whatever form it takes, can be just as damaging to a child as physical abuse. In addition to the above categories, there are other forms of harm or abuse that should involve the police and other organisations working together to protect children. These include:

- Bullying
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Hate crimes
- Abuse in domestic settings
- Honour based violence
- Forced marriage
- Human trafficking
- Exploitation by radicalisers who promote violence
- Membership of gangs inclined to use violence.

An abused child will often experience more than one type of abuse, as well as other difficulties in their lives. It often happens over a period of time, rather than being a one-off event. Everyone should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

**Poor practice** Sometimes, your concerns may relate to poor practice, where an adult or another young person's behaviour is inappropriate and may be causing distress to a child or young person.

In the application of this policy, poor practice includes any behaviour which contravenes the principles of this document or the relevant Birmingham Martial Arts Centre Code of Conduct or brings Martial Arts into disrepute, or which infringes an individual's rights. Where poor practice is serious or repeated this could also constitute abuse and should be reported immediately. Examples of poor practice towards students include:

- Use of excessive, physical or humiliating punishments;
- Failure to act when you witness possible abuse or bullying;
- Being unaware of, or breaching, any relevant policy such as the Code of Ethics and Conduct;
- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with young people away from others;
- Inviting or allowing young people into your home where they will be alone with you;
- Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative activity;
- Allowing young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged;
- Making sexually suggestive comments even in fun.
- Reducing a person to tears as a form of control;
- Allowing allegations made by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon;
- Doing things of a personal nature for young people that they can do for themselves;
- Sharing a bedroom with a young person you are not related to, even with parental permission.

If a young person needs assistance with personal care this level of support it should be made clear to their parent/s that this can only be carried out by a designated carer and not by the instructor as it compromises their role as trainer and places them and the child in a vulnerable position. These support arrangements should clearly be in place and agreed to by all parties prior to the activities commencing.

**Signs and Symptoms** Signs that a young person may be being abused may include the following:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent.
- The young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her.
- A young person or adult expresses concern about the welfare of another.
- Unexplained changes in behaviour (e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or

displaying sudden outbursts of temper).

- Inappropriate sexual awareness.
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour.
- Sudden or unusual distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
- Having difficulty in making friends.
- Being prevented from socialising with other young people.
- Displaying variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite or a sudden weight change.
- Becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt

It should be recognised that this list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of the indicators is not proof that abuse is actually taking place. For example, a family bereavement, which could cause some of the changes listed above.

Remember it is not the responsibility of Birmingham Martial Arts Centre to decide if child abuse is occurring but to act on any concerns by reporting them.

**5. Codes of Conduct and Ethics** The codes of conduct and ethics for all those involved at Birmingham Martial Arts Centre can be found as a separate guidance sheet. It is essential these are followed in so the highest possible standards of behaviour and conduct in Martial Arts activities are maintained. The principles must be adhered to at all times. All those involved at Birmingham Martial Arts Centre will show their understanding and commitment to the codes of conduct and ethics by signing a copy of the relevant guidance sheet.

**Acting on Safeguarding Concerns** We all have a responsibility to make sure that concerns about children and vulnerable adults are passed to the appropriate support agency without delay. Anyone concerned about a child or vulnerable adult being at risk of being abused or neglected should not ignore their suspicions and should not assume that someone else will take action to protect that child or vulnerable adult. Whilst accepting this duty is recognised, Birmingham Martial Arts Centre is not responsible for deciding if abuse has occurred. We do however have a duty to respond and report concerns. Birmingham Martial Arts Centre will have an appropriately trained Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

It is always difficult to hear about or witness harm or abuse experienced by a child or young person. The following points will be helpful for both us and the child should they choose to disclose abuse to us:

- Stay calm.
- Listen carefully to what is said and try not to interrupt.
- Find an appropriate point early on to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others – do not promise to keep secrets.
- Allow them to continue at their own pace.

- Ask questions for clarification only and avoid asking questions that suggest an answer (leading questions).
- Reassure them that they are not to blame and have done the right thing in telling you.
- If the concern is serious explain that you will need to get support from other trained people to help keep the child safe. This must be shared even if the child doesn't want you to tell anyone else.
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared. If they are adamant that they do not wish the information to be shared, explain that you will have to tell your DSL and that it will be discussed further with them.
- Be aware of the possibility of forensic evidence if the disclosure relates to a recent incident of physical harm or injury and try to protect any supporting materials e.g. bedding or clothing.
- Contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Where you are unable to contact your DSL, advice can be sought from statutory agencies or the NSPCC Helpline.
- All serious concerns must be referred to statutory agencies.

All safeguarding concerns and poor practice occurrences, except if the issue concerns those individuals, must be reported to the DSL. This includes issues raised concerning the activities of instructors or volunteers or, where there are concerns outside of Birmingham Martial Arts Centre (for example at home, school or in the wider community).

Instructors and volunteers must also report the following to the DSL and make a written record of what they have done, seen or heard, when:

- they have accidentally hurt a child;
- a child seems distressed in any manner;
- a child appears to be sexually aroused by their actions;
- a child misunderstands or misinterprets something they have said or done.

Where there is an allegation against an instructor or volunteer who works with children at Birmingham Martial Arts Centre the DSL must report the matter to the Local Authority Designated Officer.

If you think a child is in immediate danger or requires medical attention, you should call the Emergency Services on 999. You can also ring the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000 to report immediate risks. This is an immediate responsibility and will take priority over informing the DSL.

**7. Recording** Should a child make a disclosure a record in writing must be made as soon as possible, using their words as closely as possible and where relevant, using the Birmingham Martial Arts Centre report form.

Note the date, time, any names mentioned, names and addresses to whom the information was given and who else is aware of the allegation. Note or clearly

describe any visible injury. Take care to distinguish between fact, observation, allegation, and opinion. It is important that the information you have is accurate. Recording of any incident, including possible abuse or poor practice incidents, should also follow this procedure. In all situations, including those in which the cause of concern arises either from a disclosure of abuse or from suspicion of abuse, it is vitally important to record the details, regardless of whether they are shared with a statutory agency, as soon as possible using the Incident Referral Form. The record should be clear and factual as it may be needed by child or adult protection agencies and may, in the future, be used as evidence in court. Records should be kept securely and shared only with those who need to know about the incident.

**8. Recruiting, Supervision and Support & Training** At Birmingham Martial Arts Centre we take all reasonable steps to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. Whilst there may be some reservations that volunteers could be put off by having to go through a recruitment process, it is important to ensure reasonable steps have been taken to identify unsuitable individuals. Please refer to our Safer Recruitment policy for more detail.

Once recruited, all staff and volunteers at Birmingham Martial Arts Centre will be informed, trained, supervised and supported to ensure that they effectively safeguard children and know how to respond to any concerns. Birmingham Martial Arts Centre will ensure that training and resources are available to encourage the development of staff and volunteers. This will include:

- An induction to the work and the school/club.
- A trial period in which to develop skills whilst supervised.
- Ongoing support and monitoring.

There are currently no formal qualifications specifically for safeguarding and protecting children in sport. However, training developed by sports and other organisations is available to strengthen the skills and knowledge of the sporting children's workforce to safeguard children and young people. Training plays an important role in equipping staff and volunteers to do their job safely and effectively. Different safeguarding training is available depending on the person's role within the organisation.

More information can be found on <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/training/>

**9. Whistleblowing** It is important that people within Birmingham Martial Arts Centre have the confidence to come forward to speak or act if they're unhappy with anything. Whistleblowing occurs when a person raises a concern about dangerous or illegal activity, or any wrongdoing within their sports organisation. The NSPCC has a whistleblowing advice line to support professionals who have concerns about how child protection issues are being handled in their own or another organisation.

**10. Complaints** In order to ensure we develop an open culture where children and staff feel able to express any concerns, we have a procedure for dealing with complaints from a child, worker, volunteer, parent or carer.

**11. Related policies and procedures** This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies and procedures, including:

- Code of conduct for children/young people
- Code of conduct for Instructors
- Code of conduct for parents/guardians
- Equal opportunities policy
- Online policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Photography and image sharing guidance
- Safer recruitment policy
- Complaints procedure
- Health and safety policy