



## **CHILD PROTECTION**

### **Association & Club Guidelines**

Contained within this document are some practical ways in which you should help safeguard children and young people who take part in Martial Arts training within your Association:

- Coach Ratios
- Changing room awareness
- Dealing with injuries and Illness
- Collection of children by Parents/carers
- Discipline issues
- Physical contact issues
- Sexual Activity issues
- Participants in your Association or club with disabilities

#### **Coach ratios**

Coach/student ratios should always be based on the age of the children involved, the degree of risk the activity involves, and whether there are disability needs.

The lower the age of the participants, then greater is the need for supervision. When the activity is mixed gender, male and female coaches should be available. AMA will be able to give you specific guidance.



## **Changing room awareness**

- When children and young people use changing rooms, two members of the coaching staff should supervise them. Coaches/Adult staff should not change or shower at the same time using the same facilities. For mixed gender training, separate changing/shower facilities should be available for boys and girls.
- If a child feels uncomfortable changing or showering in public, no pressure should be placed on them to do so. Alternatively, they may be advised/encouraged to shower or change at home.
- Where children with disabilities use your club, ensure they and their carers are involved in deciding how they should be assisted. Ensure they are able to and consent to the assistance that is offered.

## **Dealing with Injuries and illness**

Your Association or club should provide guidelines and report forms for any injuries children sustain during activities. Where a coach or member of staff witness an injury the parents shall be told as soon as possible. If the child needs medical attention you must arrange this immediately and inform the parents/carers as soon as possible. Coaches must ensure they have up-to-date contact details at club venues, competitions or events and information about any student's relevant medical conditions.

## **Collection of children by parents/carers**

Your Association or club should develop and publicise policies about the collection of children and young people from club venues competitions or events. The policies shall be based on the age of the children, the location, time and type of training.

Coaches shall ensure permission has been obtained from parents/carers of children and young people for them to participate in any of the games, competitions, and training or practice sessions you run. You should provide a timetable of events and competitions regularly throughout the year. You should also notify parents/carers of any changes to this timetable in writing.



### **Late collection of children**

Late collection of children by parents presents clubs and coaching staff with a potentially difficult situation. Your Association/club should develop written guidelines for parents explaining the policy for dealing with late collection of children.

#### **Guidelines:**

- Make clear that it is not your Associations/club's responsibility to transport children home on behalf of parents who have been delayed.
- Include the coaches/adult staffs contact number and an instruction to parents/carers to phone if there is any likelihood of late collection.
- Ask parents to provide an alternative contact name or number, for coaches/adult staff if they are not available on their usual number.

Where there is an incident of late collection, coaches/adult staff:

#### **SHOULD:**

- Attempt to contact the child's parent or carer on their contact number.
- Use the alternative contact name/number if necessary.
- Wait with the child/young person at the sport location, with other staff or parents present if at all possible;
- Remind parents/carers of the policy relating to late collection.

#### **SHOULD NOT:**

- Take the child home or to any other location;
- Send the child home with another person without permission from a parent or carer.
- Ask the child to wait in a vehicle or sport location with you alone.



## **Discipline Issues**

Discipline used by Coaches, should only be with the clear intention of teaching or reinforcing appropriate behaviour. It shall not be used impulsively, to gain power, or to embarrass or humiliate a child/young person.

Discipline should be used only to:

- Develop and encourage a sense of responsibility for behaviour;
- Develop and encourage respect for others and their property;
- Reinforce rules or values of the sport;
- Reinforce and encourage positive behaviour or attitudes;
- Reinforce an awareness of health and safety aspects of the activity.

## **Physical contact Issues**

Martial Arts in all forms, like other sports, require a degree of physical contact between coaches and children or young people. Coaches and staff may need to use it to instruct, encourage, protect or comfort. Your Association/club should develop and publicise clear guidelines about physical contact, so that adults and children/young people understand what are the appropriate types of touching and their appropriate contexts.

Physical contact during sport should at all times be intended to meet the child's needs, **NOT** the adult's. The adult should only use physical contact if their aim is to:

- Develop skills or techniques within that Martial Arts discipline;
- To treat an injury received;
- To prevent an injury occurring;
- In order to meet the requirements of that Martial Art.



Unless the situation is an emergency, the Coach/adult staff should at all times prior to physical contact, explain the reason for the need for physical contact, and seek the child or individuals permission, enabling the child or individual the option of declining.

The contact should **not** involve touching genital areas, buttocks or breasts.

Physical contact should not take place in secret or out of sight of others.

All injuries should be fully recorded by the Coach/Adult staff.

### **Sexual activity Issues**

Within Martial Arts, as within other sports, sexual relationships will and do occur. All Associations and clubs should therefore, make themselves familiar of the law relating to sexual behaviour, develop and promote guidelines relating to sexual activity. The guidelines should address sexual activity both between children and young people and between adults and young people.

### **Sexual activity between children/young people involved in sport**

Should be prohibited during competitive events, in sports facilities or social activities organised by the Association/club. Inappropriate or criminal sexual behaviour committed by a young person may lead to disciplinary action in accordance with AMA discipline code

### **Sexual interactions between adults and young people (16yrs +)**

Raise serious issues given the power imbalance inherent in the relationship. Where a young person is of the age of consent (16yrs) the power or authority of the adult over that young person may influence their ability to genuinely consent to sexual activity. A coach /adult staff in such a position of authority may have significant power or influence over a young person's Martial Arts career.



Sexual activity between adults and young people (16+) involved in Martial Arts is prohibited when the adult is in a position of trust or authority (coach, trainer, official). Inappropriate or criminal sexual behaviour committed by an adult should lead to suspension and disciplinary action in accordance with AMA discipline code.

### **Sexual activity between adults and children under the age of 16**

This is a criminal act and immediate action must be taken to report it.

### **Participants in your Association or club with disabilities**

- Children or young people with disabilities shall have the same rights and opportunities as others involved in martial Arts, to have fun and be safe. Their particular vulnerability to abuse or neglect requires Associations/clubs to take additional steps to safeguard them.
- Information relating to club policies and procedures should be fully accessible to children and young people with communication difficulties.
- Associations or clubs, who are involved with children/young people with disabilities within Martial Arts, should seek specialist training or advice. For example, when staff, need to guide blind or partially sighted children, training will help ensure that they use the most appropriate methods. If training is not available, ask the child for advice or seek the advice of parents or carers.
- When transporting child with disabilities, the vehicles used should meet the needs of the children and be roadworthy. Appropriate and trained escorts should be in attendance in the vehicle.
- When children with disabilities are lifted or manually supported, the individual child should be treated with dignity and respect. Relevant health and safety guidelines must be followed to ensure the safety of the child and those assisting. It is recommended that those assisting receive appropriate training.