



Martial Arts Alliance

Safe Practice Policy

Martial Arts Alliance
(December 2024)

SAFEGUARDING IN MARTIAL ARTS

SAFE PRACTICE POLICY

Safe practice in Martial Arts is a set of guidelines for activities where safe practice is essential to help prevent injury. Children, young adults, and persons at risk are particularly vulnerable as they are developing mentally and physically, so training methods need to be modified as described below.

All chief instructors within Martial Arts Alliance are fully qualified, insured, enhanced DBS certified, and emergency first aid trained. We hold it to be true that the care and safeguarding of all members is paramount.

The following points are in addition to the Martial Arts Alliance 'Health & Safety Policy', which is available on request at: info@martialartsalliance.co.uk

Health Disclaimer

All participating students will be asked to complete an online enrolment form (including health disclaimer), prior to commencing training. This should be completed by a parent / guardian in the case of a child / vulnerable adult. Martial Arts Alliance, along with the club's chief instructor, will be emailed all completed enrolment forms as appropriate. Online enrolment forms should include, but not limited to, the following information:

- a) Any medication currently being used
- b) Any current or prior injuries / health problems
- c) Any special education requirements, which are relevant in the participant learning Martial Arts
- d) Name & phone number for emergency contact/ s

Warmups

Before students can start any apparatus work, or perform advanced blocks, kicks, and strikes with full speed, flexibility, and power, they must first warm up. It is the chief instructor's responsibility to make sure all students have warmed up safely and to a reasonable level, before attempting any main class activities. To help reduce the risk of injury, specific attention should be paid to those muscle groups that will be used during later activities.

A warmup should last between 10 to 15 minutes. Instructors can continue to build upon the warmup during the first 10 minutes of the main class activity, by adding more

aerobic-based exercises between each apparatus activity. Also, blocks, kicks, and strikes performed in the first 10 minutes of the main class activity should be either technically easier or performed at a slightly lighter level if the chief instructor still feels students need more warmup time.

Our warmup covers the following:

- Muscle groups
- Cardio
- Joints
- Light dynamic stretching

Purpose of the warmup

- Increase the temperature of the body
- Increase the heart rate to prepare the cardiovascular system for exercise
- Minimise the risk of injury by preparing the muscles and joints
- Enhance optimal performance later in the class

Please Note: Joint Care for Children

Excessive stretching (particularly isometrics), and hitting heavy bags for long periods of time, should be avoided in the warmup. The joints of children are still developing and can be damaged by these activities.

Apparatus Work

All apparatus work should be practiced with a suitable partner, and only after clear and safe guidance has first been given by the chief instructor. Guidance should include how to hold the apparatus safely, how to perform the technique correctly, and what level of contact is expected for effective impact, while showing good control and restraint.

All apparatus activities should be:

- performed on risk assessed and approved apparatus only
- Sponge covered for safe practice without the need for hand and feet protectors
- Monitored by the chief instructor so individual and group feedback can be offered
- Monitored by assistant instructors so individual feedback can be offered

Weapon Training

Contemporary and traditional weapon training is only performed in special seminar classes, and not as an official syllabus or grading-based activity. Weapon training is an extracurricular activity, designed to be fun and interactive, while at the same time

teaching students valuable weapon defence skills using syllabus-based blocks, kicks, and strikes.

Weapon training should take into consideration the following:

- Only rubber or sponge based 'practice' weapons are permitted
- No live weapons, even for demonstration purposes
- Safe protocols must be adhered to when using training weapons by children
- Good supervision at all times by chief instructors and assistants

Self-Defence

Self-defence, also known as 'close-quarter combat' or 'release from grab' is designed to teach students a range of ways to escape from being held by an opponent, when blocks, kicks, and strikes may be limited.

For added safety in self-defence practice, all students should:

- Not perform throws, takedowns, and sweeps unless specialised matting is available
- Not cause injury to the partner in any way
- Only practice techniques that have first been approved by the chief instructor
- Perform only those techniques demonstrated by the chief instructor
- Hold the neck or throat area and in such a way as to allow the partner to breathe fully
- Clearly understand and adhere to the 'tap-out rule', to allow students an immediate release if they don't feel comfortable with any given hold position
- Only perform counter attacks, following a release from grab, when they have reached a more advanced level
- Only perform counter attacks at half speed and with no contact

Sport Sparring (additional seminar activity)

Sport sparring is a touch-contact based activity, offering students, with at least 12 months of class experience (and a minimum age of 8), the opportunity to learn how all the blocks, kicks, and strikes work together in a simulated combat experience, while at the same time greatly improving overall health and fitness. Sport sparring is not suitable for those looking for semi or full contact, competitive, or competition-based sparring.

The following points must be considered when sport sparring:

1. All participating students must have full student insurance cover with Martial Arts Alliance and have read the club's rules and regulations.

2. The instructor must ensure that all students have warmed up appropriately to prevent damage to the muscles, ligaments, and joints. Extra attention should be taken when putting the muscles under stress while performing exercises such as high or excessive kicking.
3. All students must wear pre-approved personal protection equipment, which must include the following: headguard, hand protectors, feet protectors, shin guards, groin protector, and mouth guard for added safety and peace of mind.
4. Light, touch (or tag)-contact only during sparring, especially to the head. *Light, touch-contact means the technique is targeted but controlled so that whilst the opponent is touched the technique is not followed through.*
5. The chief instructor must take into consideration the appropriate partnering of students based on age, height, weight, gender, and current sparring ability.
6. Attention must be paid to the floor condition and surrounding area / obstacles to ensure the safety of all participants.
7. Junior and adult sparring students should ideally not mix, but if there is a need to do so because of low attendance or odd numbers in class, then adults must defend only, with no kicking or striking back.
8. No contact below the belt, to the back, neck or to the face. The face can still be a target, but no contact allowed.
9. Sparring must only take place under the supervision of a qualified Instructor.
10. Any injuries must be dealt with accordingly by a trained first aider and recorded.

Stretching

Stretching, apart from dynamic stretching (or leg rising), is best performed at the end of a class to prevent muscles, ligaments, and tendons from being over stretched or injured during the class, especially if more difficult techniques are still to be performed.

Stretching should always be tested, pre-approved, and taught by a qualified instructor. Stretches should be taught in steps or stages, starting with the easiest step that every student can perform safely. Every step, thereafter, should gradually increase in difficulty until the maximum or hardest level is reached/ performed. It is recommended no more than 5 stages. Students who cannot compete a stretch at any given level, should remain at that level, regardless of additional levels being offered by the instructor.

Stretches should be appropriate to the most used muscle groups from class activities, or to those muscle groups most recently used, if activities during class have been varied. The level or difficulty and/ or intensity of the stretch should also be appropriate to how warm the students are, the temperature of the room, their overall experience level, age, and grade.

Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed a year after development and then every three years, or in the following circumstances:

- Changes in legislation and/or government guidance.
- As required by the local safeguarding partnership, UK Sport and/or home country sports councils and Martial Arts Alliance.
- As a result of any other significant change or event.

This policy was last reviewed on **17-12-2024**

Reviewed By: **Master Phil Hatton (8th Dan)**

[this should be signed by the most senior person with responsibility for safeguarding in your organisation, for example the safeguarding lead on your board of trustees].