

DEFENCE LAB SWINDON

Child Protection Policy

Introduction

The staff at Defence Lab Swindon aim to provide the highest standard of martial arts training at all Levels. In the delivery of training to children and young people all our staff, whether permanent, part-time or volunteers must ensure that,

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from any abuse
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All staff paid/unpaid have a duty and responsibility to report concerns to the Safe Guarding Officer Paul Shears (Lead Instructor)

It must be stressed that academy staff/volunteers are not trained to deal with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred, irrespective of other professional work they may undertake.

POLICY STATEMENT

Defence Lab Swindon has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in martial arts training at the academy from harm. All children have the right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. Defence Lab Swindon will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in martial arts training through adherence of the Child Protection guidelines adopted by Defence Lab Swindon. A child is defined as a person under the age 18 (Children Act 1989).

POLICY AIMS

The aim of the Defence Lab Swindon Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice:

- Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of the academy.
- Allow all staff/Volunteers to make informed and confident response to specific child protection issues.

Promoting Good Practice

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about the appropriate action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. A coach, instructor, teacher, official or volunteer will have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document.

When a child enters the club activity having been subjected to child abuse outside the sporting environment, sports can play a crucial role in improving the child's self-esteem. In such instances the club activity organiser must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child receives the required support.

Good Practice Guidelines

All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote children's welfare and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made. The following are common sense examples of how to create appositive culture and climate.

Good Practice Means

- Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communications with no secrets).
- Treating all young people equally and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first, before winning or achieving goals.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with players (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision making process.
- Making martial arts fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- Ensuring that any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the academy instructor training programme. Care is needed, as the techniques involved in martial arts training by necessity involves touching/grabbing/pulling and pushing which may make it difficult to maintain hand positions when the young student is constantly moving. Young people and their parents should be consulted and their agreement gained at the recruitment phase.
- Maintaining technical skills to mitigate skill fade, advancing personal qualifications and ensuring insurance in martial arts covers that which you can reasonably be required to teach.
- Involving parents/careers wherever possible. For example, encouraging them to take responsibility for their children in the changing rooms. If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure parents, instructors/coaches or officials work in pairs.
- Ensuring that if mixed teams are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff. However, remember that same gender abuse can also occur.
- Ensuring that at tournaments or residential events, adults should not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms.
- Being an excellent role model- this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.

- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- Securing parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Ensure a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given, is entered into the Accident log. This will be required to support any subsequent insurance claim. Injuries sustained during training may be claimed outside the current period of insurance.
- Requesting written parental consent if club officials are required to transport young people in their cars. Refer to the Academy Lone Working Policy.

Practices to Be Avoided

The following should be avoided except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the academy or the child's parents. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a session.

- Avoid spending time alone with children away from others.
- Avoid taking or dropping off a child to an event or activity.

Practices Never to Be Sanctioned.

Academy staff should never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Share a room with a child.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
- Fail to act upon and record any allegations made by a child.
- Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.
- Invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

N.B. It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if the young person is disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the student involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a student is dependent on your support, talk with them about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any assistance with uniform/belts, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

Incidents that must be Reported/Recorded.

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to the appropriate officer and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child are informed:

- If you accidentally hurt a child in training.
- If the child seems distressed in any manner.
- If the child seems to be sexually aroused by your actions.
- If the child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

Use of Photographic/Filming Equipment

There is evidence that some people have used physical activity events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and disabled participants in vulnerable positions. All staff should be vigilant and any concerns should be reported to the academies child protection officer or available manager.

Videoing as a coaching aid; there is no intention to prevent academy coaches and instructors using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, performers and their parents/carers should be made aware that this is part of the coaching programme and their consent obtained, and such films should be stored safely.

Recruitment and Training of staff and volunteers.

Defence Lab Swindon recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. Pre-selection checks must include the following.

- All Staff/Volunteers will complete a DBS form this will give the academy information about an applicant's past and self disclosure about any criminal record.
- Consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the criminal records bureau.

- Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children. These references must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
- Evidence of identity (passport or driving licences with photo).

Interview and Induction

All employees/volunteers will be required to undergo an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All employees/volunteers should receive an induction during which:

- A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full (including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures).
- Their qualifications should be substantiated.
- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified.
- Child Protection procedures are explained and training needs are identified.
- They should sign up to the academies code of ethics and conduct and child protection policy.

Training

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to;

- Analyse their own practice against established good practice. And to ensure their practice is not likely to result in allegations being made.
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concern about suspected poor practice is possible abuse.
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child or young person.
- Work safely effectively with children
- Instructors and assistants will be required to attend a recognised 2 hour good practice and child protection awareness training workshop, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of a positive culture towards good practice and child protection.
- Non-coaching staff/volunteers will be required to complete recognised awareness training on child protection.

- All staff to attend the academy's own training programmes outlining good practice and informing them about what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person.
- Selected staff will undergo certificated emergency first aid training.
- All Staff/volunteers will attend training when necessary.

Responding to Allegations or Suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in Defence Lab Swindon, in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not a child abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting these to the appropriate Safe guarding officer.

Defence Lab Swindon will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports their concerns that a colleague is, or may be abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigations;

- A criminal investigation.
- A child protection investigation.
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence and inform the disciplinary investigation, but all available information will be used to reach a decision.

Action if there are concerns.

- Concerns about poor practice.
- If following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice the designated Academy Safe guarding officer will deal with it as a misconduct issues.
- If the allegations is about poor practice by the Academy management, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the Lead Instructor who will decide how to deal with allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

- Concerns about suspected abuse
- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff/volunteer should be reported to the academy Safe guarding officer, who will take steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.
- The academy Safe guarding officer will refer the allegation to the social services department who may involve the police.
- The parents/carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services.

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people.

- The Safe Guarding Officer
- The parents of the child who is alleged to have been abused.
- The person making the allegation.
- Social services/police.

Seek social services advice on who should approach abuser (or parents). Social services may be contacted at any time and their out of hours team are available outside normal office hours, all year round.

Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws, (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

Internal enquires and suspension

- Defence Lab Swindon will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services enquiries.
- Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the Lead Instructor will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff/ volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision, particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the manager must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should be paramount importance throughout.

Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse:

Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, parents and members of staff may need, Use of help lines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process.

Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.

Allegations of previous abuse.

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child

Abused as a child or by a member of staff who is currently working with children).

Where such an allegation is made, the academy staff should follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the social services or the police. This is because other children, either within or outside sport, may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 1999.

Action if bullying is suspected, the same procedure should be followed as set out in 'Responding to suspicions or allegations.

Action to help the victim and prevent bullying in the Academy.

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously.
- Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns (it is believed that 10% of children commit suicide as a result in bullying, so if anyone talks about or threatens suicide seek professional help immediately.) Help the victim speak out and tells the person in charge or someone of authority, create an open environment.
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe Speak with the victim and bully(ies) separately.
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else.
- Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when).
- Report any concerns to the Safe guarding officer.

Action towards the bully(ies)

- Talk to them explain the situation; try to get them to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology for the victim.
- Inform the bully's parents.
- Provide support for the victims coach
- Impose sanctions as necessary
- Hold meetings with families to report progress.
- Keep a written record of action taken.
- Most low level incidents will be dealt with by coaches/volunteers at the time of incident.
- However if the bullying is severe (e.g. serious assault), or if it persists despite efforts to deal with it. Incidents should be referred to the Child Protection Officer as in, responding to suspicious or allegations.

Disclosure – Allegation of Abuse.

In the event of you being informed of an allegation of abuse it is imperative that you exercise great care in the follow-up actions. Any error may prejudice any subsequent or possible legal actions by social services or police.

- Inform the student that you will have to inform the appropriate people of the alleged incident. There are serious legal implications associated with disclosure and at the moment a child raises an issue your duty is to advise them that you will need to refer it on: **Do Not Attempt to Investigate it yourself**
- Assure them it will be handled sensitively with due regard for confidentiality.
- Do not ask leading questions
- When writing notes, write what they say in their words and do not interpret their meaning into your words
- Do not interrogate as this may result in false information or distortion of the alleged incident. It is imperative that staff do not take on the role of counsellor or interrogator.

With the above points in mind and to ensure that this information is helpful and correct to pass over to the authorities.

- The Child's name, age, D.O.B.
- Address and phone number.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation, dates, times any special factors and other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- A description of any bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- Details of witnesses to the incident.
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Have the parents been contacted?
- If so what has been said?

- If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged as the abuser? Record details.
- Referral to social services or police should be contacted within 24hrs with full written reports. (The name who took the referral should also be recorded).

Legal Framework

Primary Legislation

Children's Act 1989

Protection of Children's Act 1999

Data Protection Act 1998

The Children Act (Every Child Matters) 2004

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Secondary Legislation

Sexual Offences Act 2003

Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000

Human Rights Act 1999

Race Relation Act 1976

Equalities Act 2006

Data Protection 1998

Further Guidance Working together to Safeguard Children 2013

The common Assessment Framework 2006

Data Barring Services
