

# SAFEGUARDING IN MARTIAL ARTS

## SAFE PRACTICE POLICY

NAME OF CLUB: - Otley AIM Martial Arts

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

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.

- Light contact only, especially to the head. (Light contact means the technique is targeted but controlled so that whilst the opponent is touched the technique is not followed through). Expert advice from a neurosurgeon is that the use of helmets, mitts or foot pads does not eliminate the risk of brain injury from full contact strikes.
- No head contact is allowed for Under 16yr olds
- The academy does not enter competitions
- If a head injury occurs the following measures are undertaken
  - All sparring is halted
  - First aid is applied
  - If required, an entry is entered into the accident book

- All sparring (light semi and light contact) is always supervised by a qualified instructor
- Full sparing equipment is required during light contact sparring for all ages including head guards gum shields Shin protectors and boots.
- All sparring is semi light contact and supervised by more one or more instructors
- We take consideration of age weight experience and grade, and if students are uncomfortable, they do not have to spar.
- Avoiding excessive stretching and exercises such as press-ups on the knuckles or hitting heavy bags; the joints of children are still developing and can be damaged by these exercise

#### **4. Weapons**

Safe practice must include:

- No live blades (sharp or otherwise) in the training hall when children are present.
- Safe protocols for the use of training weapons by children.
- 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.