

SAFEGUARDING IN MARTIAL ARTS

SAFE PRACTICE POLICY

FORZA KARATE CLUB

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)

Forza Karate Club considers that its student's welfare should always come first. Safeguarding and Child Protection are covered in a separate policy.

Karate is an oriental system of unarmed combat using the hands and feet to deliver and block blows to the body. A large part of our sessions will be delivered without any contact on one another. However on occasion, as the level and understanding of a student increases, there will be occasions where partner work takes place to aid development. We practice and deliver our sessions to teach students control in order to protect both themselves and their partners however there will always be a risk of injury whilst training.

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.

Karate involves strikes, punches and kicks

The risks when practicing karate include but are not limited to:

- Sprains and strains
- Bruising
- Broken bones
- Injury from inappropriate stretching and other exercises
- Injuries to the face with a risk of a nose bleed or broken nose
- Concussion from an uncontrolled or mistimed blow to the head

Karate involves sweeping, throwing and takedowns (advanced grades)

The risks when practicing karate include but are not limited to:

- Falling awkwardly
- Landing on the head
- Sprains and strains

Safe practice for sweeping, throwing and takedowns should include, but is not limited to:

- Using a matted area for any kind of training involving falling to the ground
- Checking the matted area for suitability, particularly where the mats have been joined.
- Checking that there are no hard surfaces or sharp/hard objects around the matted area.
- Having an experience instructor who will ensure that children are not taught incorrect or unsafe technique which will cause injury.

In order to provide a safe environment, Forza Karate Club will observe the following guidelines for the supervision of its students:

- Provide an adequate ratio of Instructors/Coaches
- Students will be made aware of any 'out of bound' areas
- A responsible adult will be placed near points of entry and exit to ensure no child leaves the premises unsupervised.
- Where a child is 12 years of age or under, it is the parents duty to bring and collect them from the hall.
- Site managers, and if necessary the police, will be informed of any suspicious characters loitering in the vicinity of our activities.

To promote good, safe practice Forza Karate Club instructors, coaches and volunteers will observe the following guidelines:

- Ensure that all Information, Instruction, training and supervision necessary to ensure health and safety will be provided.
- Minimise the risk of accidents.
- Ensure that at least one qualified first aider is present at all sessions.
- Deal with any accidents promptly and effectively.
- Record all accidents and record details of any treatment.
- Provide and maintain safe facilities and equipment.
- Regularly monitor equipment to ensure it is in good condition.
- Inspect equipment for signs of wear and tear that may hinder its safe use.
- Use equipment appropriately according to age and ability.
- Instructors and coaches will be aware of any/all medical or special needs within student groups.
- Place the well-being and safety of students above the development of performance.
- Ensure skills are taught in a safe, secure manner paying due regard to the physicality of Individual students.
- Always make sure students are fit to train.
- Try to match students for size, age and belt for sparring wherever possible.
- Give children opportunities to think about safe practice in relation to themselves and their peers.

- Take care with certain exercises, stretches and equipment. Always take into account age, grade and belt ability of students – one size does not fit all – differentiate activities accordingly.
- Consider the potential outcomes of any activities.

Safe Practice when sparring and in Kumite

Contact in Karate must be controlled as best as possible to avoid serious injury.

Forza Karate Club adapts strict rules for head contact for under 16 years of age.

- Head contact is not allowed in any practice for children under the age of 16 years. All students are reminded before each practice and drill that no touch to the face and neck are permitted.
- For students aged 16-17 years, if they are participating in competition training for point scoring, they are allowed a light skin touch, controlled without any follow through.
- Heights and weights are considered when sparring in any lesson. Students will always be appropriately matched up to similar height, weight and age.

All participants when sparring must strictly adhere to the following or taking part in Kumite competition:

- Wear hand mitts
- Gum shields compulsory
- Foot pads are compulsory for intermediate and advanced grade
- Children under the age of 16 contact to the face/head is not permitted
- Height, age, belt and gender of the participants are a consideration in competition
- Female participants are able to wear chest guards (compulsory 14 years plus)
- Male participants are able to wear a groin guard (compulsory 11 years plus)
- Body shields are compulsory for all squad members
- Sparring in training must be supervised and monitored
- Students must inform the coaches, referee or table officials if they feel they are unable to continue.
- Mats will always be laid for competition events or particular sparring sessions
- Any injury to the head the participant is advised to attend hospital
- All coaches / instructors are first aid trained and regularly updated every three years

Above all, safe practice means having a suitably qualified and experienced instructor who will ensure that children are not exposed to the any risks and who can make a training session enjoyable whilst maintaining the discipline essential to learning a Martial Art.