

AP MARTIAL ARTS SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Protecting Children and Vulnerable Adults

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1. Introduction

The martial art of Taekwon-Do can and does have a very powerful and positive influence on people – especially young people and vulnerable adults. Not only can it provide opportunities for enjoyment and achievement, it can also develop valuable qualities such as self-esteem, leadership and teamwork.

These positive effects can only take place if Taekwon-Do is taught by those who place the welfare of all young people and vulnerable adults first and adopt practices that support, protect and empower them. Every adult has a legal and moral responsibility to protect young people and vulnerable adults in sport from abuse.

2. What is Safeguarding?

Any adult working in the provision of sport or physical activity for young people and vulnerable adults, in either a paid or voluntary capacity, has a duty of care to provide a safe and caring environment. It is vital that any coach, official or any other person assisting with young people and vulnerable adults' activities has the ability to provide patience, understanding and encouragement.

Young people and vulnerable adults have a right to protection from the potential threat of abuse. They must be protected from all forms of discrimination and abuse and treated equally, regardless of age, gender, race, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation or ability.

Agencies which utilise the services of employees either on a paid or voluntary basis must be aware of the dangers of abuse, the forms it can take and its recognition, and demonstrate good practice within their sessions.

3. What is Abuse?

Abuse is a form of maltreatment. A person may abuse or neglect a child or vulnerable adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which they have not or cannot consent.

The following categories of abuse are recognised:

Neglect

Where adults fail to meet a young person or vulnerable adult's basic needs – such as food, warmth or affection – or leave children unsupervised or without appropriate supervision. In a sporting context, neglect could include an instructor exposing participants to undue risk of injury or failing to ensure their basic safety.

Physical Abuse

Where adults or other young people physically hurt or injure young people and vulnerable adults, for example by hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, shaking, burning, biting, restraint or inappropriate sanctions. In sports situations, physical abuse might also occur when the nature and intensity of training exceeds the capacity of the growing body of the child.

Sexual Abuse

Girls and boys are abused when they are used by adults or other young people to meet the adult's own sexual needs. Coaching or activities involving physical contact may create situations where abuse could go unnoticed. The power of the instructor over participants, if misused, could also lead to situations in which abuse may occur.

Emotional Abuse

Persistent lack of love and affection; where a child or vulnerable adult may be constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted. Emotional abuse might occur in sport sessions if participants are subjected to constant criticism, bullying or unrealistic pressure to perform.

Bullying

Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, in which it is difficult for the target to defend themselves. It is important to recognise that abusers may be peers, not solely adults. APMA takes all forms of bullying – including cyber-bullying – seriously and will act on any reports.

Bullying can take the form of:

- Physical intimidation, hitting or pushing
- Verbal threats, name-calling or persistent teasing
- Exclusion from groups or activities
- Online / cyber-bullying via messages or social media

4. Indicators of Abuse

Some signs that a child or vulnerable adult may have been abused include, but are not limited to:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent or multiple explanations are given
- The child or vulnerable adult describes what appears to be an abusive act
- Someone else expressing concern about the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult
- Unexplained changes in behaviour – becoming withdrawn, very quiet, or having sudden bursts of temper
- Inappropriate sexual awareness or behaviour
- Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected
- An apparent difficulty in making friends, or being prevented from socialising
- Weight loss, changes in eating patterns, or an increasingly unkempt appearance
- Displaying frequent unexplained minor injuries

This list is not exhaustive. The presence of one or more indicators is not proof that abuse has occurred. It is not the responsibility of APMA staff to determine whether abuse has taken place; it is their responsibility to recognise concerns and report them promptly.

REPORT TO

Newcastle Children's Social Care: 0191 277 2500

Northumberland Safeguarding Team: 01670 536 400

North Tyneside: 0345 2000 109

5. Policy Statement

APMA acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice. The policy recognises that the welfare and interests of children and vulnerable adults are paramount in all circumstances.

APMA aims to ensure that all children and vulnerable adults have a positive and enjoyable experience of Taekwon-Do in a safe environment, and are protected from abuse, regardless of age, gender, religion or beliefs, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or socio-economic background. APMA acknowledges that some children, including disabled children, young people or those from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse, and accepts the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

As part of this safeguarding policy, APMA will:

- Promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults
- Ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding
- Provide appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns
- Ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents or concerns of abuse, and that support is provided to individuals who raise or disclose concerns
- Maintain confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns, stored securely
- Prevent the employment of unsuitable individuals

6. Safer Recruitment

APMA is committed to safe recruitment practices to minimise the risk of appointing unsuitable individuals.

- All instructors must hold an up-to-date Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Enhanced Certificate before working with children or vulnerable adults
- APMA considers renewal every three years to be best practice. In exceptional circumstances renewal may be delayed; however certificates must be renewed within four years provided the instructor has remained in continuous service and no safeguarding concerns have arisen
- Suitable photographic identification (passport or driving licence) must be provided
- Instructors must hold a black belt within APMA
- References will be sought and verified for all new appointments

7. Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers

APMA coaches and volunteers have a great opportunity to be positive role models and help build participants' confidence. All instructors and volunteers are expected to:

Responsibilities

- Ensure the safety of all children by providing effective supervision and proper pre-planning of sessions
- Consider the wellbeing and safety of participants before the development of performance
- Treat all participants fairly, ensure they feel valued, and have no favourites
- Encourage participants to accept responsibility for their own behaviour
- Not allow bullying, aggressive behaviour, or inappropriate language
- Never exert undue influence over performers to obtain personal benefit or reward
- Not allow allegations of abuse or poor practice to go unchallenged or unrecorded
- Never use sanctions that humiliate or harm young people
- Report accidents or incidents of alleged abuse or poor practice to the designated person
- Administer minor first aid in the presence of others only
- Maintain confidentiality about sensitive information
- Develop an appropriate working relationship with participants, based on mutual trust and respect
- Refrain from smoking and consumption of alcohol during club activities or coaching sessions
- Not spend time alone with a child unless there are exceptional and documented circumstances
- Never transport a child alone or take a child to their home
- Not administer first aid involving the removal of children's clothing unless in the presence of another adult, except where a medical emergency requires immediate action (e.g. use of a defibrillator, treatment of severe injury).

Rights

Instructors and volunteers have the right to:

- Access ongoing training and information on safeguarding and working with young people
- Support in the reporting of suspected abuse or poor practice
- Access to professional support services

- Fair and equitable treatment by APMA
- Protection from abuse by children, other adult members and parents

Serious or persistent breaches of this code will result in disciplinary action and could lead to dismissal from APMA. Minor breaches should be resolved with education and correction.

8. First Aid

All coaches and volunteers should:

- Have access to appropriate first aid equipment at every session
- Hold relevant emergency contact details for all participants
- Be able to contact the emergency services

9. Minimal Touch Policy

A no-touch policy is impractical in certain situations. In martial arts, an instructor may need to use reasonable force to prevent a student from injuring themselves or others, committing an offence or damaging property. Instructors may also need to make physical contact to demonstrate or correct technique or use of equipment.

Such contact should be kept to a minimum and, in the case of demonstrations, should only involve willing participants. When physical guidance is required:

- Always explain what you are about to do and seek verbal agreement before making contact
- Avoid contact with intimate or sensitive areas of the body at all times
- Ensure contact is observed by another adult wherever possible

10. Children Changing Clothes

Where classes take place in gymnasiums, leisure centres or church halls, children will use the changing facilities under parental supervision where age-appropriate. When classes take place in a school, especially primary or first schools, children will often change together in the school hall.

- Instructors must change privately and never in the same space as children
 - Instructors should not stand close to or approach children whilst they are changing, unless to prevent bullying or an accident
 - If a child requires assistance (e.g. removing a garment), the instructor should first encourage the child to do this themselves, providing verbal cues only
 - Any necessary assistance must be provided in an open, visible area
 - Curtains or blinds should be closed if the hall faces onto public land
 - Older children (Year 5 and above) should be offered the option to change in a single-sex area
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11. Photography and Filming

AP MARTIAL ARTS recognises that photographs and video recordings can be a valuable way to celebrate achievements, record events such as gradings, and promote the club. At the same time, the club is committed to ensuring that the use of images does not place children or vulnerable adults at risk.

From time to time, APMA may take photographs or short video recordings during classes, gradings or other club activities. These images may be used for purposes such as:

- Recording achievements or club activities
- Sharing updates with members and families
- Promoting the club through the APMA website or social media pages

Parents, guardians and adult participants will be informed that photography may take place. Anyone who does not wish themselves or their child to appear in club photographs or videos should inform an instructor or the Designated Safeguarding Lead. APMA will respect such requests and make reasonable efforts to ensure that those individuals are not included in images used by the club.

Group Photographs

At events such as gradings or special occasions, a group photograph may be taken to mark the event. Participation in group photographs is voluntary. Any participant who does not wish to be included may simply step aside before the photograph is taken.

Parents and Spectators Taking Images

Parents and guardians are welcome to take photographs or short videos of their own children during gradings or special events. However, they should be mindful that other children may appear in the background. Images should not be shared publicly in a way that identifies other children without the permission of their parents or guardians.

Good Practice

To protect both participants and instructors:

- Instructors should avoid taking individual photographs of children unless a parent or guardian is present.
Images should focus on activities and achievements rather than individual children wherever possible.
Photographs should never be taken in changing areas or other private spaces.
Any concerns regarding photography or the use of images should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

12. Online Safety

APMA recognises that online communication presents additional safeguarding risks. The following principles apply to all staff, volunteers and instructors:

- Instructors should not communicate with children or young people via personal social media accounts
- Any group communications should use official APMA channels and be visible to other instructors or parents
- Concerns about online behaviour or contact must be reported to the designated safeguarding lead

13. Missing Child Procedure

MISSING CHILD PROCEDURE	
Step 1	Someone notices a child is missing from the session.
Step 2 – Immediate Danger?	If there is concern the child is in immediate danger (e.g. seen getting into a stranger's car), CALL THE POLICE (999) immediately and prepare a description: hair and eye colour, height and build, age, clothing.
Step 3 – Search	Conduct an immediate search of the appropriate area. Do not send other young people to search. Ensure adequate supervision of all remaining young people. Ask those searching to report back within a short time.
Step 4	Call parents / guardians immediately.
Step 5	If the child is not located within 20 minutes, extend the search and call the police if not already done.
Step 6	If the child is found, call off the search and inform all those involved.
Step 7	Log the incident and discuss at the next meeting. Complete an Incident Referral Report Form.

14. Reporting Concerns

Any concern about the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult must be reported promptly. Do not attempt to investigate concerns yourself.

In the event of a disclosure or concern:

- Listen carefully and do not interrupt
- Do not promise confidentiality
- Reassure the individual that they have done the right thing by telling you
- Record details accurately as soon as possible, using the Incident Report Form
- Report to the designated safeguarding lead without delay

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

Name: A Puspi

Email: antonioapmartialarts@gmail.com

EMERGENCY	In any situation where a child or adult is in immediate danger, call 999 immediately.
NSPCC Helpline	0808 800 5000 (free, 24/7)

Local Authority Contacts

Newcastle Initial Response Service	0191 277 2500
Emergency Duty Team (Newcastle)	0191 278 7878
Northumberland Safeguarding Team	016 70 536 400
North Tyneside (office hours)	0345 2000 109
North Tyneside (evenings/weekends)	0191 200 6800
Northumbria Police (non-emergency)	101 (Emergency: 999)

15. Safeguarding Incident Report Form

Safeguarding incident report forms are available via the instructor zone of the club website. This form should be used to record safeguarding concerns relating to children, young people and/or vulnerable adults. All the information must be treated as confidential and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead within one working day.

16. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if there are changes in legislation, guidance or organisational structure. The next scheduled review is March 2028.