

Safeguarding in Martial Arts: Safe Practice

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).

The following points are in addition to the BTC Health & Safety Policy, which can be found at <http://www.tkdouncil.com/downloads/>

1. General Health / Injuries

All participants will be asked to complete a pre-exercise questionnaire. This should be completed by a parent / guardian in the case of children / vulnerable adult. The relevant instructors will be notified as appropriate. Safe practice should include, but is 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 contacts.

2. Warmups

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.

3. Joint Care for Children

Excessive stretching and exercises such as press-ups on the knuckles, hitting heavy bags or breaking boards are to be avoided; the joints of children are still developing and can be damaged by these exercises.

4. Throws, Grappling and Strangling

Performing throws, takedowns & sweeps are involved in the syllabus for MPowered Martial Arts, but only for black belts and under supervision; this may also include workshops and specific training sessions.

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 take into consideration:

- (a) Checking any 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 / training area.
- (c) An experienced instructor, who will ensure that children are not taught to use locks, throws or strangles which will cause injury.

5. Strikes, Punches and Kicks

There is sparring during the classes within the MPowered Martial Arts syllabus.

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. The following points should be taken into consideration:

- a) Light contact only during sparring, 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. The use of helmets, hand or foot pads **DOES NOT** eliminate the risk of brain injury from full contact strikes. Special attention should be made in the supervision of children and vulnerable adults whilst sparring, ensuring contact levels are controlled.
- b) Only approved sparring equipment may be worn during sparring.
- c) When sparring the instructor must take into consideration the appropriate partners ages, height / weight, gender and sparring skill levels.
- d) Attention must be paid to the floor condition and surrounding area / obstacles to ensure the safety of all participants.
- e) Sparring may only take place under the supervision of a fully qualified instructor.
- f) Any injuries must be dealt with accordingly by a trained first aider and recorded.

6. Weapons

We do not hold any weapons classes within the MPowered Martial Arts syllabus, but would follow these practices as an example if we did or hold specific training sessions or workshops.

Safe practice should take into consideration:

- (a) No live blades (sharp or otherwise) in the training hall when children are Present.
- (b) Safe protocols for the use of training weapons by children.
- (c) Good supervision at all times by Instructors.

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

All our instructors within MPowered Martial Arts are qualified, insured, DBS & first aid recognised.

Within all locations, throughout our group of clubs under the MPowered Martial Arts banner, care and safeguarding is essential. The duty of care and instruction is constantly monitored and adhered to by all our instructing / staff team.