

EASTERN SHOTOKAN KARATE ASSOCIATION

SAFEGUARDING IN MARTIAL ARTS

SAFE PRACTICE POLICY

NAME OF CLUB:- Eastern Shotokan Karate Association

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 karate. To help reduce the risk of injury, specific attention should be paid to those muscle groups that will be used during later activity. Warm ups include a pulse raiser, dynamic stretching and maintenance stretching.

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 exercises.

2. Martial Arts involving throwing, grappling and strangling

Safe practice should include, but is not limited to:

- (a) Checking the dojo or matted area for suitability, particularly where mats have been joined.
- (b) Checking that there are no hard surfaces or sharp/hard objects around the dojo hall or matted area.
- (c) Having an experienced 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.

- Controlled light head contact towards the chin is allowed in free sparring.
- Hand pads must be always worn during free sparring.

- In classes/competition the age, height and weight of participants is carefully considered.
- Mixed gender sparring is permitted in classes (not competitions) but with control.
- All participants are supervised during karate classes and competition.
- Mats must be used for ground work and karate competitions.
- A qualified medical officer is present at all competitions to assess the nature of any injury and if head injuries occur, an ambulance is called immediately.
- Senior instructors have completed first aid training.