

Safeguarding Children Policy

Revised 24th February 2025

Revision 1.1

This policy outlines the systems and processes in which CMA Karate Association (the “Association”) will ensure the safeguarding of children, as requested by the English Karate Federation (the “EKF”).

The purpose of the policy

CMA Karate Association fully recognises the need to make optimal provision for the safeguarding and wellbeing of children and young persons, that participate in karate, either as a self-defence art or sport environment, and acknowledges its moral and legal responsibility to ensure that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All staff (paid or unpaid) working within our organisation have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate child protection officer
- All members comply with this policy and flag any concerns to the Safeguarding Team or the authorities as required

The Children’s Act 1989 defines a child as a person under the age of 18. The Association has accepted this definition within our policy.

Adopting best practice will help to safeguard those participants from potential abuse as well as protecting coaches and other adults in positions of responsibility from any potential allegation of abuse.

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with a judgement about the appropriate action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. It is a fact of life that some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. A coach, instructor, teacher, official or volunteer may have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where a young person needs protection. All cases of poor practice should be reported to following the guidelines in this document. When a child enters the club having experienced abuse outside the sporting environment, sport can play a crucial role in improving the child’s self-esteem. In such instances the club must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child receives the required support.

We will

- provide protection for the children and young people at risk who receive services from the Association and its clubs.
- provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt if they suspect a child and young person at risk may be experiencing or be at risk of harm.
- provide a policy that applies to all staff, including permanent, casual or volunteers regardless of their role, that work on behalf of the Association and vulnerable groups engaging with the Association.
- provide children and young persons with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of Association's clubs and instructors

We will seek to safeguard vulnerable groups by:

- Valuing them by hearing, listening and respecting them.
- recruiting staff and volunteers through a safer recruitment process, ensuring all necessary vetting checks are made.
- Sharing information about safeguarding and best practice.
- Sharing information about concerns with the appropriate agencies (statutory agencies and those affiliated with Karate), in a confidential manner.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, mentoring and training.
- ensure that all incidents of poor practice and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- allow all staff /volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.
- recognise and build on the legal and statutory definition of a child.
- provide a suitably experienced and qualified individual to act as their Child Protection Officer and continue to train them as per the EKF policy
- ensuring confidentiality will be upheld in line with the Data Protection Act 2018, the Human Rights Act 2000

The Association may host events which include an overnight stay, if this is planned, adequate paperwork will be produced to give to the parents/guardians and children involved information about the event. It may include:

- Purpose of the trip and objectives to be realised
- Name and contact number of the chief organiser
- Transport and venue details (venue details to include full address, postcode and telephone number)
- Estimated cost with an acknowledgement that these may vary up or down

Roles and responsibilities

All staff and volunteers should ensure that they read the safeguarding children policy and other policies of both the Association and the English Karate Federation (the "EKF"), and understand the standards required of them and their responsibilities to ensure the safety and

wellbeing of children and young persons They should take appropriate steps (including those set out in this policy and procedure) to ensure that suspicions and allegations of abuse are taken seriously and reported immediately and appropriately.

The Lead Child Protection Officer (LCPO) and the Lead Protection Officer (LPO), known collectively as the Safeguarding Team have been appointed to act on behalf of the association to support the staff and volunteers to deliver effective child safeguarding provision across the Association.

The Safeguarding Team will also be responsible for the correct handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of DBS certificate information.

The Association must comply with the law in determining who needs a check and encourages all people who have frequent and regular contact with young people and adults at risk to be DBS checked.

The Association requires all people who work in an unsupervised capacity with children on a regular basis i.e. once a week or more, or intensively (4 or more days in a 30 day period or overnight) to undertake an Enhanced DBS Check. This level of check may also be suitable for club volunteers.

The LCPO will provide an important mechanism for critically evaluating the information presented to them and, where necessary, challenging and/or reporting. The LCPO, will be responsible for the overall implementation of the appropriate child safeguarding measure, case management and safer recruitment across the Association. The LCPO is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of child safeguarding.

The Association is committed to reviewing and evaluating our policies, procedures and best practice guidelines on a regular basis. The policies alongside the learning and development programme will support raising awareness of safeguarding and those at risk within the Association.

The Association has developed and will continue to develop its framework to ensure those engaging with the Association and individual clubs can carry out their responsibility for safeguarding vulnerable groups. The Association, in conjunction with and following the guidelines as set by the EKF, has clear and well publicised policies on the EKF Policies page on the EKF Website, which can be found by this link

<https://www.englishkaratefederation.com/ekf-policies>.

Additionally, the Association also follows the Safeguarding guidelines set out by Sport England and The Safeguarding Code in Martial Arts, which can be found by this link <https://www.safeguardingcode.com/index.php?redirect=0> and Sport England, which can be found by this link <https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/safeguarding>.

The Association requires that all those working or volunteering within our clubs have read and accepted both the Association and EKF's policies and practices. Those working or volunteering with vulnerable groups will be given additional training, where appropriate.

The LCPO, together with the LPO, will work collaboratively with all the clubs within the Association to ensure the implementation of the safeguarding framework and remain in compliance with the EKF.

The Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups

Position of Trust

Those who have responsibility for, and authority or influence over, vulnerable groups are in relationships of trust in relation to the vulnerable groups in their care.

A relationship of trust can be described as one in which one party has power and influence over the other by virtue of their work or the nature of the activity. It is vital for all those in such positions of responsibility to understand the power they may have over those in their care, and the responsibility they must exercise consequently.

This means that those in relationships of trust should not:

- Use their position to gain access to information relating to vulnerable groups for their own or others' advantage.
 - Such information should only be used or shared to meet the needs of vulnerable groups.
- Use their power to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine vulnerable groups.
- Use their status and standing to form or promote inappropriate relationships.
 - professional boundaries must be always maintained.

Use of Photographic Filming Equipment

There is no intention to stop people photographing their children, club mates, or photography and video being used as an educational tool, but this is in the context of appropriate safeguards being in place. This is only allowed when a child's guardian or parent has given us the permission to do so.

If there is evidence that people have used an event as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and disabled people in vulnerable positions, then concerns must be reported to the Association LCPO. Any parent who wishes to photograph their child must seek permission from the instructor or event organiser.

Poor Practice and Abuse

Poor Practice takes place whenever staff or volunteers fail to fulfil the highest standards of care and support in their working practice. Poor practice which is allowed to continue can cause harm and can become abuse. Poor Practice is unacceptable and will be treated seriously with appropriate action. An individual may not be aware that poor practice or abuse is taking place, as they may deem the behaviour as 'acceptable'.

The Association's safeguarding policy and procedures define poor practice as follows:

- when insufficient care is taken to avoid injuries (e.g. by excessive training or inappropriate training for the age, maturity, experience and ability of members)
- allowing abusive or concerning practices to go unreported (e.g. a coach who ridicules and criticises members who make a mistake during a practice or competition)
- allowing hazing practices (initiations ceremonies) to go unreported
- placing children or young people in potentially compromising and uncomfortable situations with adults (e.g. inappropriate use by a coach of social media with a young members)
- ignoring health and safety guidelines (e.g. allowing young members to set up equipment unsupervised by adults)
- failing to adhere to the club's codes of practice (e.g. no contact to the head or neck)
- giving continued and unnecessary preferential treatment to individuals
- not working in an open environment (e.g. not avoiding private or unobserved situations)
- not requesting written parental/guardian consent if club officials are required to transport young people in their cars.

NB: (Please note – this list is not exhaustive)

Defining Child Abuse

Abuse may be intentional or unintentional. Detailed below are examples of the 4 main categories of abuse:

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It can cover different aspects of parenting. Indicators include;

- Failure by parents or carers to meet the basic essential needs e.g. adequate food, clothes, warmth, hygiene and medical care.
- A child seen to be listless, apathetic and irresponsive with no apparent medical cause.
- Failure of a child to grow within normal expected pattern, with accompanying weight loss.
- Child thrives away from home environment.
- Child frequently absent from school.
- Child left with adults who are intoxicated or violent.
- Child abandoned or left alone for excessive periods.

It can also be when a child is not looked after properly, including having no place to stay, or not enough food to eat, or clothes to keep them warm. It also includes if the child is not given medical care when they need it, including medication. For some disabled children, it could include if their carer took away the things they needed for everyday life - like their wheelchair or communication board. Or not helping a disabled child who needed help using the toilet. Neglect can be intentional or unintentional.

Physical Abuse indicators can include an explanation which is inconsistent with an injury, several different explanations provided for an injury, unexplained delay in seeking treatment or reluctance to give information or mention previous injuries;

- Bruising - children can have accidental bruising, but the repeated or multiple bruising on the head or on sites unlikely to be injured accidentally; bruising around the face or variation in colour possibly indicating injuries caused at different times must be considered as nonaccidental unless there is evidence or an adequate explanation provided.
- Fractures when the history provided is vague.
- Burns & Scalds.
- Bite Marks.

Physical abuse includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, being locked in a room, inappropriate physical sanctions or force-feeding, inappropriate methods of restraint, and unlawfully depriving a person of their liberty.

Sexual Abuse is when adults, of either sex, or other children, use children to meet their own sexual needs. It involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve contact including penetrative acts or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Recognition can be difficult, unless the child discloses and is believed. There may be no physical signs and indications are likely to be emotional/behavioural. Some behavioural indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

- Inappropriate sexualised conduct
- Sexually explicit behaviour, play or conversation, inappropriate to the child's age
- Continual and inappropriate or excessive masturbation
- Self-harm (including eating disorder), self-mutilation and suicide attempts
- Involvement in prostitution or indiscriminate choice of sexual partners
- An anxious unwillingness to remove clothes e.g. for sports events (but this may be related to cultural norms or physical difficulties)
- Physical indicators associated with this form of abuse include but are not limited to:
 - Pain or itching of genital area
 - Blood on underclothes
 - Pregnancy in a younger girl where the identity of the father is not disclosed
 - Physical symptoms such as injuries to the genital or anal area, bruising to buttocks, abdomen and thighs, sexually transmitted disease, presence of semen on vagina, anus, external genitalia or clothing

Sexual abuse includes rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or

witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts. In adults this would also include where the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

Additional symptoms include:

- Urinary tract infections or sexually transmitted disease.
- Signs of sexual activity having taken place e.g. a woman who lacks the capacity to consent to sexual intercourse becomes pregnant.
- Pain, soreness, itchiness.
- Person discloses fully or partially that sexual abuse is occurring or has occurred in the past.
- Person exhibits significant change in sexual behaviour or outlook.

Emotional Abuse may be difficult to recognise. It is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

It may involve making the child feel or believe that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying causing children to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

The indicators of emotional abuse are often also associated with other forms of abuse. The following may be indicators of emotional abuse:

- Abnormal attachment between a child and parent/carer e.g. anxious, indiscriminate or not attachment
- Indiscriminate attachment or failure to attach
- Aggressive behaviour towards others
- Scape-goated within the family
- Frozen watchfulness, particularly in pre-school children
- Low self- esteem and lack of confidence
- Withdrawn or seen as a "loner" – difficulty relating to others
- Developmental delays

Children with additional needs

The Association recognise that children with either a physical or mental disability are more prone to being abused than other children. Children with a disability are more likely to be abused because of the following:

- Vulnerabilities to bullying from other children and adults
- Likely to be more socially isolated and have less frequent contact than children without disabilities

- Dependency on others for assistance to carry out essential daily tasks
- The inability or a difficulty in expressing themselves and communicating that abuse has taken place
- Impaired capacity to resist and understand abuse

It is the responsibility of all to ensure that the duty of care to children is always upheld and in order to bring about the most inclusive environment for disabled children there are areas of good practice which will need to be taken into consideration. These include:

- Disabled access to dojos
- Adapting coaching practices to suit the needs of the child
- Improving ways of communication dependent upon the needs of the child
- Increased supervision at training and events
- Appropriate changing and toilet facilities for disabled children to be easily accessible

Children from minority backgrounds

Children from minority ethnic backgrounds are also more susceptible to being abused for the following reasons:

- Language difficulties may make it difficult for the child to tell somebody that they are being abused
- Children may be more socially isolated and have less contact with people from outside their community
- Stereotyping or prejudice may lead to situations where abuse is not detected or is misinterpreted
- Children may be more prone to being victims of discrimination and bullying

LGBTQ+ Children

As research from Barnardo's et al demonstrates, LGBTQ+ children and young people face the same risks as all children and young people, but they are at greater risk of some types of abuse. For example, they might experience homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying or hate crime. The Association adopts a zero-tolerance approach to this.

Cyber-bullying

This occurs online through either social media, e-mail, text messaging or another associated electronic forum. This can include bullying and harassment.

These definitions are not exhaustive, an expanded set of definitions can be found in the EKF policies linked in this document.

Responding to Allegations of Abuse

Remember that: It is not the responsibility of staff or volunteers to decide if abuse has taken place, but it is their responsibility to act on any concerns in accordance with this procedure.

This is the role of the child protection agencies. However, there is a responsibility for all involved in Martial Arts to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities. Advice and information are available from the local Social Services Department, The Police or the NSPCC 24 hour Help line 0808 800 5000.

The Association assures all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation
- A child protection investigation
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation

The results of the Police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily. The Association will ensure that all staff and volunteers will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague or another is, or may be, abusing a child or young person.

Guidance for dealing with a disclosure

Recognising

Recognising abuse or harm is often not easy. You need to act when harm or abuse is suspected and not just when you are sure that harm has occurred. Suspects mean you do not have the proof of abuse. It does not mean you are jumping to conclusions; it simply means that there is a child safeguarding concern that must be reported and the LCPO can find out more information.

Responding

When harm or abuse is disclosed, your role is to report the basic facts you know of to the Safeguarding Team or statutory services. The disclosure may be sudden with a lot of information provided, or a statement may be made which hints at an abusive situation.

What to ask:

- Who...
- What...
- Where...
- Which...
- When...

- Tell me...
- Explain to me...
- Describe to me...

Refer/Report

Your concern needs to be appropriately shared with either the Safeguarding Lead or to Statutory Services, verbally and later in writing using the referral form.

If you are not sure at any stage if a report should be made, it is best to refer to the **reporting concerns procedure flowchart** <https://thecpsu.org.uk/media/zuxhz5v5/reporting-concerns-procedure-flowchart-2025.pdf> by the Child Protection in Sport Unit.

Record

Using our [Child Disclosure/Concern form](#) will ensure that you capture the necessary information. This must be completed on the day of the incident or certainly within 24 hours.

This document needs to be legible, clearly dated and signed and include detailed description of the incident; what exactly happened, when and where, how and who was involved, names of witnesses, and exactly what was said. It is crucial that when writing up you stick to the facts, using the individual's own words. Where possible always record the child or adult at risk's wishes.

Guidance for Dealing with Disclosures

- Children/Young Person ("CYP") at risk makes a disclosure
 - Do not panic – react calmly so as not to frighten the child
 - Acknowledge that what the child is doing is difficult, but that they are right to confide in you
 - Reassure the child that they are not to blame • Make sure that, from the outset, you can understand what the child is saying
 - Be honest straight away and tell the child you cannot make promises that you will not be able to keep
 - Do not promise that you keep the conversation secret. Explain that you will need to involve other people and that you will need to write things down
 - Listen to and believe the child; take them seriously
 - Do not allow your shock or distaste to show
 - Keep any questions to a minimum but do clarify any facts or words that you do not understand – do not speculate or make assumptions
 - Avoid closed questions (i.e. questions which invite yes or no answers)
 - Do not probe for more information than is offered
 - Encourage the child, to use its own words
 - Do not make negative comments about the alleged abuser
 - End the disclosure and ensure that the child is either being collected or is capable of going home alone
 - Do not approach the alleged abuser
 - Where the CYP is at immediate risk of harm keep them at the session until advised by Children's Services, Adults' Services or Safeguarding Team

- Contact LCPO or lead instructor
 - Refer to safeguarding contacts, if LCPO or lead instructor is unavailable
- Make a detailed and factual record including; quotes, dates, times, contact details
 - Complete a written or typed documentation within 24 hours.
 - Email this to the LCPO who will ensure this information is passed on if necessary.

Self- Referral

The Association acknowledges that on occasions when staff and volunteers who identify their own poor practice or practice which could be questioned as to their integrity; they have a duty to self-refer themselves to their lead instructor or the LCPO.

By doing so they support the Association's objectives set out in this policy. For positive engagement with vulnerable groups, professional boundaries must always be maintained, to ensure these professional standards are upheld, it is important that staff and volunteers self-refer when vulnerable groups are forming an over familiar attachment with them, as discussed in Working Practice with the EKF.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Staff and volunteers should ensure that confidentiality protocols are followed, and information is shared appropriately. All staff and volunteers must understand that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies to safeguard children. All staff and volunteers must be clear with children and adults at risk that they cannot promise to keep secrets.

Case Management of Safeguarding Concerns

In accordance with the Association, the safeguarding of vulnerable groups and safer recruitment, the LCPO will act as the lead official in any investigation of an allegation of abuse of a child. The LCPO in their absence will pass this responsibility to LPO.

Concerns about poor practice

- Any suspicions or concerns relating to poor practice must be reported immediately to the LCPO or the or designated person.
- Information gathering will be completed by the LCPO who will consult with the LPO and Association Lead.
- Both the LCPO and LPO must be made aware of the outcome including the case management documentation which will be then stored in a secure location with access for Safeguarding Leads only.
- Discipline procedures may be initiated by the club if required.
- The Association's policy and procedures state that clubs need to send information to the Safeguarding Team or their local authority where repeated poor practice incidents occur.
 - For the avoidance of doubt, action needs to be taken where there are three incidents of poor practice by the same individual.

- This is whether these repeat incidents are for the same type of poor practice or for different forms of poor practice.
- This is to ensure the Association can support and prevent any oversights and to further ensure thresholds for poor practice cases are being managed locally.

Concerns about alleged abuse

- Any suspicion or concern that a child at risk has been abused or is at risk of abuse must be reported immediately to the LCPO.
- The LCPO will take necessary steps to ensure the safety of the child at risk in question and any other individuals who may be at risk.
- Staff and volunteers must not carry out their own investigations.
- The LCPO will assess the information disclosed and take appropriate action.
- The LCPO will, together with other senior staff where appropriate, assess whether the suspicions or concerns should be referred to the Local Authority and/or the police.
- Throughout the process clear records of decision making will be documented.
- The parents or carers of the alleged victim and/or perpetrator will be contacted as soon as possible and if applicable, following advice from statutory agencies.
- If the LCPO is the subject of an allegation, the report must be made to the LPO or Senior instructor.
- It is expected that any suspicion or concern arising outside the immediate sporting environment is reported immediately to the LCPO.

Management of allegations

Where there is a child safeguarding complaint against a member of staff or volunteer, three types of investigation can be opened:

- A criminal investigation led by the Police.
- An investigation led in a multi-agency approach by the Local Authority.
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation led by the Association which may also involve the EKF.

It is important to highlight that the results of the Police investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation.

Following the outcome of a case, the LCPO in consultation with other senior association members will support the club to assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled.

This action will be dependent on the outcome of any criminal investigation and due consideration will be taken with any decision made; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any criminal action by the Police. In such cases, the Association will reach a decision based upon all the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability; it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child or the adult at risk should remain of paramount importance throughout the decision-making process.

GDPR

The Safeguarding Team will, as part of their responsibilities, collect personal data and therefore data protection rules will apply. The Safeguarding Team therefore has a requirement to process, store and share data in accordance with DPA/GDPR. The Association and Safeguarding Team are mandated by law to share information with relevant authorities when a child or adult at risk is in danger of being abused or is currently being abused. The sharing of information under these circumstances is permitted under the UK Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulations 2018, our GDPR notice can be accessed via this [link](#).

The Safeguarding Team and Links



NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000

childline

Childline on 0800 1111

ONLINE, ON THE PHONE, ANYTIME
[childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk) | 0800 1111

Lead Child Protection Officer

Megan Ambrose

megan@cmakarate.co.uk

[07415262848](tel:07415262848)

Lead Protection Officer

Linda Bonavoglia

linda@cmakarate.co.uk

[07951645474](tel:07951645474)