

Sleaford

Korean Martial Arts

Safe Practice Policy

Due to the nature of martial arts activities, there is a risk of injury to the practitioner as well as other students and spectators. This inherent element of risk is managed through this Safe Practice policy to help prevent injury. Martial arts is also a contact sport and therefore safe practice requires other considerations where students may get close to each other. This policy complements the club risk assessment.

1. Warm Ups

All activities should first include a thorough warm up, and head to toe stretching and gradual cardiovascular activity. To help reduce injury, specific attention should be paid to those muscle groups that will be used during later activity. The warm up will also need to be tailored to the individual, taking into account their fitness level and any injury or disability they may be carrying.

Where the students conduct “partner stretching” and close contact is required, they should be made to feel comfortable with who they are training/stretching with. Where possible, same sex groups, friends or family members should work together.

2. Martial Arts involving throwing, grappling and strangling

The risks include: falling on unsuitable surfaces; landing incorrectly and injuring the head or other body part; injury to the joints/limbs from locks; injury to the body from striking; strangulation.

Safe practice must include:

1. (a) Checking the matted area for suitability, particularly where the mats have been joined, and monitoring during the activity.
2. (b) Checking that there are no hard surfaces or sharp/hard objects around the matted area.
3. (c) Having an experienced instructor who will ensure that students are not taught to use locks, throws or strangles in a way that will injure their training partner.
4. (d) Making sure that students only practice those techniques that they are competent to conduct and providing instruction on new techniques.
5. (e) Making sure that partners are of similar size and stature to minimise injury and they are taught the risk of injury that can be caused through excessive speed or power through the technique.

6. (f) Where required, techniques are performed by children on adult instructors until they understand the injury that can be caused.

Techniques are a close contact activity where individuals may feel uncomfortable with the degree of contact. Therefore, safe practice must also include the following measures to prevent inappropriate contact.

1. (a) Partners practicing techniques should be made to feel comfortable with the person they are practicing with.
2. (b) Partners should be able to express a preference as to who they practice with. This may include partners of a similar sex or from the same family unit practicing with each other.
3. (c) Adult instructors demonstrating techniques on children must maintain appropriate distance when demonstrating or executing a technique. The club has a lot of parent / child relationships where an adult instructor can demonstrate a technique on their own child; where possible, this should be done.
4. (c) All students should be educated on appropriate levels of contact for specific techniques that may be construed as inappropriate, such as executing a hip throw. In these circumstances, students should maintain an appropriate distance with partners not comfortable being thrown and then execute a full throw on partners that are comfortable practicing with each other.

3. Martial Arts involving strikes, punches and kicks

The risks are: concussion (brain injury) from heavy blows to the head; damage to internal organs and joints from heavy blows; injury from excessive stretching and other exercises.

Safe practice must include:

1. (a) No contact only, noting that light contact remains a possible outcome due to the nature of the activity. (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 padded helmets, mitts, foot, groin, or mouth guards do not eliminate the risk of injury from full contact strikes.
2. (b) Consideration will also be given to the pairing up of partners for sparring, relating to sex, height, weight, age, experience, etc., to minimise the risk of injury.
3. (c) Avoiding excessive stretching and exercises such as press-ups on the knuckles or hitting heavy bags or pads; the joints of children are still developing and can be damaged by these exercises.
4. (d) Where wood breaking takes place, appropriate technique for the practitioner and width of wooden board will be selected to minimise the risk of injury.

4. Martial Arts involving weapons

Safe practice must include:

1. (a) The use of metal swords (sharp or otherwise) in the training hall will only be conducted under strict supervision.
2. (b) Safe protocols for the use of training weapons by children will be monitored carefully to minimise the risk of injury.
3. (c) Good supervision at all times by Instructors, to include making sure there is enough space around the participant.

5. Types of injury

Concussion

Common symptoms of concussion include headache, dizziness, nausea, balance problems, difficulties with concentration, and memory problems. Symptoms can last from several minutes to days, weeks, months, or even longer in some cases. Martial arts that emphasise striking and throwing are more likely to result in concussions. Any participant with symptoms of concussion should be removed from the activity and evaluated by a health professional. They should not be allowed to return to the activity until cleared by a qualified health care professional.

Head/Eyes/Ear/Nose

Striking and grappling can result in minor injuries such as cuts, bruises and lacerations. More serious injuries, such as fractures of the nose, face, or skull as well as significant injuries of the eyes mouth or teeth can result. These injuries may be minimised by selection of martial arts style, proper training and coaching, and use of protective equipment.

Neck

Minor injuries to the neck, such as bruising and abrasions, are most common. Martial arts include choking techniques that can result in loss of consciousness if performed excessively. It is important to understand the risks of different forms of martial arts and to learn them under appropriate supervision and exercise control and restraint.

Extremities

Injuries to the extremities include cuts, bruises, sprains, and strains. Fractures and joint dislocations are less common, but can occur, particularly in styles that use throws and joint locking techniques. Injuries can be minimised with proper supervision and the use of appropriate technique.

Skin

Cuts are fairly common injuries in martial arts. Athletes participating in contact sports, such as wrestling and martial arts, can be more prone to developing certain skin infections. These injuries should be evaluated and treated by an appropriate health care professional.

Activity away from the school

Students may attend events away from the school during the course of their martial art training. During these events, the student's parent/guardian is responsible for their child. The organisation hosting and running the event is responsible for the safe practice of the activity undertaken at the location and during the event. Sleaford Korean Martial Arts is not responsible for the safe practice of students outside the school.

Students are reminded of the need for the utmost etiquette and attitude at all times. This means when at school, clubs or at home. The practice of martial arts away from the school should be done as safely as it is at the school. This is the responsibility of the student and the parent/guardian.

Safe Practice Summary

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