

Safeguarding

Thousands of children take part in martial arts, and its popularity is expanding at an incredible rate. Safeguarding and child protection is one area that is critical to get right. Here are 10 reasons why.

Good safeguarding and child protection practice...

1.... is part of your legal duty of care

'Working Together 2013' is government guidance that explains how safeguarding and child protection should work in England. It makes it clear that anyone delivering activities for children has a duty of care to those children, this includes having child protection policies and procedures in place.

2.... is best for children

Children have a right to participate in martial arts in a safe and fun environment, and adults who take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously help to create an environment that prioritises the interests and welfare of young competitors.

3.... helps make yours a 'fit for purpose' club or organisation

Organisations that fail to address safeguarding effectively are not 'fit for purpose'. They are open to criticism, reputational damage and potential legal action for negligence.

4.... will reduce the likelihood of safeguarding incidents occurring

Effective safeguarding practices act as a preventative measure and will help to reduce the likelihood of organisations having to deal with serious child protection concerns. For example, robust recruitment procedures will help to prevent people who could harm children from holding responsible positions within your organisation.

5.... promotes the growth of martial arts

Activities where children and parents feel safe and where adults demonstrate high standards of behaviour and respect are more likely to grow and retain their members.

6.... is best for martial arts instructors

Safeguarding is primarily about protecting children from harm, but it also benefits everyone else involved in martial arts especially those instructing children. Instructors need to be properly trained and informed about how to work with children in a safe and appropriate way.

7.... reassures parents

Parents want their children to participate in activities in a safe, fun environment and are increasingly well-informed about what safeguarding measures should be in place.

8.... helps you meet insurance requirements

Insurance companies are increasingly concerned with the extent to which organisations are meeting their safeguarding responsibilities. Organisations failing to do so may have problems in getting insurance cover in the first instance and/or being protected should a serious safeguarding incident arise.

9.... helps secure sponsorship and funding

Where organisations have failed to meet their safeguarding responsibilities, this has often had a huge impact on funding and sponsorship relationships. External funders and sponsors do not want their reputation linked to organisations that cannot demonstrate how they meet their duty of care to children.

10.... is simply the right thing to do

Failing to implement good standards of safeguarding and child protection is not an option for anyone delivering activities to children. If we are in the business of being responsible for other people's children, it is right that we take our duty of care to those children seriously.