



## **Great Britain Karate Association**

### **CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY:**

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## **SAFE WORKING PRACTICES FOR THE PROTECTION OF STUDENTS AND INSTRUCTORS:**

Great Britain Karate Association seeks to provide a safe and supportive environment, which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for students in their care. This document clarifies what is expected in terms of professional behaviour; it gives clear advice about what constitutes illegal behaviour and what might be considered as misconduct. It also describes safe practice and which behaviours should be avoided.

If an instructor does not follow this code of conduct this may lead to disciplinary procedures.

There may be times when professional judgements are made in situations not covered by this document, or which directly contravene the guidance given. It is expected that in these circumstances Instructors will always advise their Chief Instructor of their justification for any such action already taken or proposed.

### **CORE PRINCIPLES:**

- The welfare of students is paramount.
- Instructors/volunteers are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
- Instructors should be seen to work in an open and transparent way.
- Instructors should discuss and/or take advice promptly from the Chief Instructor and/or Club Welfare Officer over any incident, which may give rise to concern; Records should be made of any such incident and of decisions made/further actions agreed.
- Instructors should apply the same professional standards in keeping with Great Britain Karate Association's Equality Policy.
- All Instructors/club welfare officers should know the name of their Safeguarding Lead, be familiar with child protection arrangements and understand their responsibilities to safeguard and protect students. Instructors should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

This guidance has been produced to help all Instructors establish the safest possible learning and working environments. The aims are to safeguard young people and vulnerable adults and reduce the risk of Instructors being falsely accused of improper or unprofessional conduct. This means that these guidelines apply to all adults working in the martial arts setting whatever their position, roles, or responsibilities.

## **1) Duty of Care.**

Instructors are accountable for the way in which they exercise authority; manage risk; use resources; and protect students from discrimination and avoidable harm.

All instructors, whether paid or voluntary, have a duty to keep young people and vulnerable adults safe and to protect them from physical and emotional harm. This duty is in part exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between Instructors/Volunteers and students and behaviour by Instructors that demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgement. There are legitimate high expectations about the nature of the professional involvement of Instructors/Volunteers in the lives of students. When individuals accept a role that involves working with young people and vulnerable adults, they need to understand and acknowledge the responsibilities and trust inherent in that role.

This means that Instructors/Volunteers should:

- Understand the responsibilities, which are part of their role, and be aware that sanctions will be applied if these provisions are breached.
- Always act, and be seen to act, in the student's best interests.
- Avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
- Take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour.

This means that Great Britain Karate Association should:

- Ensure that safeguarding procedures are in place and reviewed.
- Ensure that systems are in place for concerns to be raised.
- Ensure that adults are not placed in situations which render them particularly vulnerable.

## **2) Exercise of Professional Judgement.**

This guidance cannot provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for Instructors. It does highlight however, behaviour that is illegal, inappropriate or inadvisable. There will be occasions and circumstances in which Instructors have to make decisions or take action in the best interests of the students which could contravene this guidance or where no guidance exists. Individuals are expected to make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the students in their charge and in so doing, will be seen to be acting reasonably.

This means that where no specific guidance exists Instructors should:

- Discuss the circumstances that informed their action, or their proposed action, with the Chief Instructor. This will help to ensure that the safest practices are employed and reduce the risk of actions being misinterpreted.

- Always discuss any misunderstanding, accidents or threats with the Chief Instructor; always record discussions and actions taken with their justifications.

### **3) Power and Positions of Trust.**

All adults working with students in education settings are in positions of trust in relation to the young people and vulnerable adults in their care. A relationship between Instructors/Volunteers and a student cannot be a relationship between equals. There is potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable young people; Instructors/Volunteers have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification. Instructors/Volunteers should always maintain appropriate professionalism and wherever possible, they should avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others, and report and record any incident with this potential. Where a person aged 18 or over is in a position of trust with a child under 18, it is an offence for that person to engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of that child, or to cause or incite that child to engage in or watch sexual activity. Where a person aged 18 or over is in a position of trust established with a person who has only recently left the school, any attempt to engage in sexual activity with that person will be a cause for concern and will be treated as a breach of trust established in that prior relationship.

This means that Instructors/Volunteers should not:

- Use their position to gain access to information for their own advantage and/or a students' or family's detriment.
- Use their power to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine students.
- Use their status and standing to form or promote a relationship with a student, which is of a sexual nature; attempt to initiate a relationship with a recent ex-pupil, which is of a sexual nature.

### **4) Confidentiality.**

Instructors may have access to confidential information about students in order to undertake their everyday responsibilities. In some circumstances Instructors may be given additional highly sensitive or private information. They should never use confidential or personal information about a student or his family for their own, or others' advantage. Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the student. Confidential information about students should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need to know basis.

In circumstances where the student's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously. There are some circumstances in which Instructors/Volunteers may be expected to share information about a student, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a duty to pass information on without delay, to the Safeguarding Lead. If Instructors/Volunteers are in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential he or she should seek guidance from the Chief Instructor.

Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to the Chief Instructor. Adults need to be aware that although it is important to listen to and support students, they must not promise confidentiality or request students to do the same under any circumstances. Additionally concerns and allegations about adults should be treated as confidential and passed to the safeguarding lead without delay.

This means that Instructors/Volunteers:

- Are expected to treat information they receive about students in a discreet and confidential manner.
- If they are in any doubt about sharing information that they hold, or which has been requested of them should seek advice from the Safeguarding Officer or Chief Instructor.
- Need to be cautious when passing information to others about a student.
- Need to know to whom any concerns or allegations should be reported.

## **5) Propriety and Behaviour.**

All Instructors have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of students. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their peers, students and the public in general. An individual's behaviour, either in or out of the Great Britain Karate Association workplace, should not compromise his/her position within the Great Britain Karate Association setting so it is important to exercise due care and attention when outside of the dojo environment. Membership of organisations whose goals are in conflict with the values and equality policies of Great Britain Karate Association is not acceptable.

This means that Instructors should not:

- Behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with students or act as a role model.
- Make inappropriate remarks to a student (including email, text messages, phone or letter etc).
- Discuss their own sexual relationships with or in the presence of students.
- Discuss a student's sexual relationships in inappropriate settings or contexts.
- Make (or encourage others to make) unprofessional personal comments in any form of communication (e-mail, conversations or social networking comments).

Instructors/Volunteers must:

Be aware that their behaviour in their personal lives may impact upon their work with students.

## **6) Dress and Appearance.**

Instructors should consider the manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role. We require students to be smart in their Gi's. Smart and professional appearance is expected at all times for Instructors.

## **7) Gifts.**

Instructors need to take care that they do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment. There are occasions when students or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to Instructors, for example at Christmas or as a thank-you, and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value. Any Instructor concerned about whether they or their colleagues may be at risk of giving or receiving a bribe (financial or otherwise) should contact the Chief Instructor. Instructors may not give personal gifts to students.

It is acceptable for Instructors to offer prizes of small value in certain tasks or competitions. This means that Instructors should:

- Ensure that gifts received or given in situations which may be misconstrued are declared.
- Ensure that gifts of significant value are declared; generally, only give gifts to an individual young person as part of an agreed reward system.
- Where giving gifts other than as above, ensure that these are of insignificant value and given to all students equally.

## **8) Infatuations.**

Instructors need to be aware that it is not uncommon for students to be strongly attracted to an instructor and/or develop an infatuation. Instructors should be aware that such circumstances always carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and for allegations to be made against them. An instructor who becomes aware that a student may be infatuated with themselves, or a colleague should discuss this at the earliest opportunity with the Chief Instructor or Safeguarding Officer so that appropriate action can be taken. In this way, steps can be taken to avoid hurt and distress for all concerned.

This means that Instructors should:

- Report to the Safeguarding Officer or Chief Instructor any indications (verbal, written or physical) that suggest a student may be infatuated with them.
- Be mindful if they are alone in a room with a student. Leave the door open if you have to.

## **9) Personal Living Space.**

If any student is invited into the home of an adult or other student, they must be:

- Be vigilant in maintaining their privacy and mindful of the need to avoid placing themselves in vulnerable situations.
- Be mindful of the need to maintain professional boundaries.

### **10) Communications with Students.** (including the use of technology)

Communication between students and adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This excludes social contact outside of the organisation.

Adults should not share any personal information with a student. They should not request, or respond to, any personal information from the student, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role. Adults should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.

### **11) Social Contact.**

Instructors should not establish a relationship with a student that could be misconstrued as grooming.

This means that Instructors should:

- Have no secret social contact with students.
- Consider the appropriateness of the social contact according to their role.
- Advise the Safeguarding Officer or Chief Instructor of any regular social contact they have with a student or parent which may give rise to concern.
- Report and record any situation, which they feel, might compromise Great Britain Karate Association or their own professional standing.

### **12) Social Networking Sites.**

Instructors should be aware that they leave themselves open to a charge of professional misconduct if images of Instructors in a compromising situation are made available on a public profile by anyone.

### **13) Physical Contact.**

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for instructors to have physical contact with students, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role. A 'no touch' approach is impractical for most instructors and may in some circumstances be inappropriate. When physical contact is made with students this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate. Instructors should use their professional judgement at all times about the appropriateness of any physical contact.



Physical contact should never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If an instructor believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be made clear to the Chief Instructor or safeguarding lead. Physical contact, which occurs regularly with an individual student, is likely to raise questions unless the justification for this is part of a formally agreed plan (for example in relation to students with SEN or physical disabilities). Any such contact should be the subject of an agreed and open school policy and subject to review.

This means that Instructors should:

- Be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the student, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described.
- Never touch a student in a way which may be considered indecent.
- Always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny.
- Ensure they have a system in place for recording serious incidents and the means by which information about incidents and outcomes can be easily accessed by senior leadership.
- Provide Instructors/Volunteers, on a "need to know" basis, with relevant information about vulnerable students in their care.

#### **14) Students in Distress.**

There may be occasions when a distressed student needs comfort and reassurance. This may include age - appropriate physical contact. Instructors/Volunteers should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.

This means that Instructors/Volunteers should:

- Consider the way in which they offer comfort to a distressed student.
- Ensure this is done openly and in view of another Instructors/Volunteers.
- Record situations which may give rise to concern.

#### **15 Behaviour Management.**

All students have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. Instructors/Volunteers should not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a student. The use of humour can help to defuse a situation. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards students is not acceptable in any situation.

This means that Instructors/Volunteers should:

- Not use force as a form of punishment.
- Try to defuse situations before they escalate.

## **16) Sexual Contact with Students.**

Any sexual behaviour by an instructor with or towards a student is both inappropriate and illegal. Students are protected by the same laws as adults in relation to non-consensual sexual behaviour. They are additionally protected by specific legal provisions regardless of whether the child or young person consents or not. This includes the prohibition on adults in a position of trust (see Section 4).

The sexual activity referred to does not just involve physical contact including penetrative and non-penetrative acts. It may also include non-contact activities, such as causing children to engage in or watch sexual activity or the production of pornographic material.

There are occasions when adults embark on a course of behaviour known as 'grooming' where the sole purpose is to gain the trust of a child and manipulate that relationship so sexual abuse can take place. Instructors/Volunteers should be aware that conferring special attention and favour upon a child might be construed as being part of a 'grooming' process, which is an offence.

This means that Instructors/Volunteers should:

- Not pursue sexual relationships with children and young people either in or out of Great Britain Karate Association.
- Avoid any form of communication with a child or young person which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative i.e. verbal comments, letters, notes, electronic mail, phone calls, texts, physical contact.

## **17) Transporting Students.**

Instructors or volunteers may agree to transport children. Instructors/Volunteers should ensure that their behaviour is safe and that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. They should ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy and appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded.

This means that Instructors/Volunteers should:

- Plan and agree arrangements with all parties in advance, responding sensitively and flexibly to disagreements.
- Be aware that the safety and welfare of the child is their responsibility until this is safely passed over to a parent/carer.
- Ensure that their behaviour and all arrangements ensure vehicle, passenger and driver safety and take into account any specific needs that the child may have.

## **18) Intimate Care.**

All children have a right to safety, privacy and dignity when contact of an intimate nature is required (for example assisting with toileting or removing wet/soiled clothing). A care plan should be drawn up and agreed with parents for all children who require intimate care on a regular basis. Children should be encouraged to act as independently as possible and to undertake as much of their own personal care as is practicable.

When assistance is required, Instructors should ensure that another appropriate adult is in the vicinity and is aware of the task to be undertaken. Additional vulnerabilities that may arise from a physical disability should be considered with regard to individual teaching and care plans for each child. As with all arrangements for intimate care needs, agreements between the child, their parents and Great Britain Karate Association must be negotiated, agreed and recorded.

This means that Instructors should:

- Make other Instructors aware of the task being undertaken.
- Explain to the child what is happening.

Consult with colleagues where any variation from agreed procedure/care plan is necessary; record the justification for any variations to the agreed procedure/care plan and share this information with parents.

## **19) Complaints.**

Complaints can be made by anyone in the organisation to voice their concerns in good faith, without fear of repercussion. Please refer to the organisation's Complaints procedure. Please note that repeated false or malicious allegations may result in disciplinary action by the complainant.

## **20) Sharing Concerns and Recording Incidents.**

All Instructors should be aware of Great Britain Karate Association's safeguarding procedures, including procedures for dealing with allegations against instructors. In the event of an incident occurring, which may result in an action being misinterpreted and/or an allegation being made against an Instructor, the relevant information should be clearly and promptly recorded and reported to the safeguarding lead.

Instructors should feel able to discuss with their Chief Instructor or safeguarding lead any difficulties or problems that may affect their relationship with students so that appropriate support can be provided or action can be taken.

This means that Instructors:

- Should be familiar with Great Britain Karate Association's safeguarding procedures.
- Should take responsibility for recording any incident, and passing on that information where they have concerns about any matter pertaining to the welfare of an individual (see our Safeguarding Policy for further information).