South Eastern School of Martial Arts SESMA

Safeguarding in Martial Arts: Safe Practice

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, 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.

2. Our Classes that involve strikes, punches and kicks

Karate, Taekwondo and Kickboxing

The risks are: 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.

Safe practice must include:

(a) Light contact only, especially to the head. (Light contact means the technique is targeted but controlled so that whilst the opponent is touched the technique is not followed through). Expert advice from a neurosurgeon is that the use of helmets, mitts or foot pads does not eliminate the risk of brain injury from full contact strikes.

(b) 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 exercise

3. Our Classes that involve weapons

Elite, Black Belt Only and Closed Classes

Safe practice must include:

(a) No live blades (sharp or otherwise) in the training hall when children are present

(b) Safe protocols for the use of training weapons by children

(c) Good supervision at all times by Instructors

Above all, safe practice means having a suitably qualified and experienced instructor who will ensure that children 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.