

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 which is appropriate for the activity taking place. To help reduce the risk of injury, specific attention should be paid to those muscle groups that will be used during later activity.

2. Prior to any throwing, grappling and strangling

The risks include but are not limited to: falling on unsuitable surfaces; landing on the head; damage to the joints from locks; strangulation.

Safe practice should include, but is not limited to:

- (a) Prior to commencing class instructors will inspect the matted area for suitability, particularly where the mats have been joined.
- (b) Instructors will ensure that there are no hard surfaces or sharp/hard objects around the matted area.
- (c) Instructors will be trained to ensure that children are not taught to use locks, throws or strangles which will cause injury.
- (d) Instructors are to ensure that all students are well versed in break falling to prevent risk of injury.

3. Strikes, punches and kicks when sparring

The risks include but are not limited to: 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.

Shinkyu has three levels of sparring based on student experience:

- non contact points sparring
- light continuous sparring
- randori (free self defence based sparring)

- (a) Gloves, mouth guards, groin guards (for males), chest guards (for females) and shin/instep protectors must be worn during sparring.
- (b) All safety equipment must be Shinkyu approved.
- (c) Light continuous is not to be undertaken by anyone under the age of 14 in competition.

- (d) Contact is permitted to the head/face area, but all techniques must be controlled and pulled back. Headgear is mandatory for any level of contact sparring.
- (e) Randori (free self defence based sparring) must be supervised by a third person to ensure safety.
- (f) In tournaments all divisions involving children under 12 shall be mixed gender.