**Safeguarding in the Martial Arts: Safe Practice Of The International Kickboxing Academy Gloucester (IKA Gloucester).**

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.

1. **Martial Arts involving throwing, grappling and strangling**

Some examples are: Judo, Ju Jitsu and Aikido, kickboxing

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:

1. Checking the matted area for suitability, particularly where the mats have been joined.
2. Checking that there are no hard surfaces or sharp/hard objects around the matted area.
3. Having an experience instructor who will ensure that children are not taught to use locks, throws or strangles which will cause injury.
4. **Martial Arts involving strikes, punches and kicks**

Some examples are: Karate, Taekwondo, Thai Boxing and Kickboxing

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.

1. There are some key points to consider in this section, particularly around head contact for under 16s. **please see below for further examples given in our safe practice policy:**

* Students/candidates are only allowed to begin sparring once having achieved the grade of ‘White Belt’ and striving towards ‘yellow belt’.
* Head contact is allowed through the degree of light controlled semi- contact and light controlled continuous sparring.
* Full protective equipment must be worn for any sparring activity. Only protective equipment approved by the International Kickboxing Academy can be worn.
* A full IKA License is required for both training and competing in order to entertain any kickboxing class.
* Participants/athletes will be paired accordingly to height, age and grade in the event of partner work during sparring.
* Mixed gender sparring is allowed through light controlled sparring and under supervision of the instructor.
* All Martial art activities including sparring will be over looked and supervised by an experienced instructor.
* Sparring should include, but not limited to using matted flooring.
* In the event a head injury occurs, the instructor will assess the situation and will the follow the first aid procedure. All reports of any accident will be logged and recorded.
* Medical supervision will be considered based on the candidates PAR-Q FORM through all martial arts training.

1. 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 exercises.

On kickboxing classes, regulation uniform must be worn. The uniform should fit correctly, be clean and in a good state of repair. Jewelry must not be worn for any class; nails must be kept short. Food and chewing gum is not permitted.

Members must arrive prior to the commencement of the lesson. In the event that a member arrives late, they must seek the permission of the instructor to join the class. Permission is granted at the instructor’s discretion.

Any person using IKA Gloucester must never act in a manner that may be detrimental to the health, safety and comfort or physical condition of the other members or staff. All members should act responsibly at all times by avoiding using inappropriate language or offensive language.

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.