

## Preventing Abuse in Positions of Trust at Kickboxkarate Martial Arts

**Introduction** At Kickboxkarate Martial Arts, we recognize our responsibility to promote responsible relationships within sport and prevent the abuse and manipulation of young people. We understand that young people aged 16 and 17, although having reached the age of consent for sexual activity, can still be vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation in certain situations. Therefore, it is essential to establish clear boundaries and ensure the safety of both young people and staff to prevent any form of exploitation.

**What is a Position of Trust?** A position of trust refers to a role or position in which an individual holds authority or responsibility over another person. Those in positions of trust, such as coaches, mentors, or adults responsible for a young person's sporting development or success, exert a considerable amount of power and influence over their lives.

**Researching the Nature of the Problem in Sport** We are aware of high-profile cases, such as the Football Abuse Scandal and abuse in American elite gymnastics, which have shed light on the culture of abuse within positions of trust in sport. Numerous individuals in positions of trust within various sports have been convicted of child sexual abuse. By listening to those with lived experiences and learning from inquiries into abuse, we aim to strengthen our safeguarding practices and take proactive measures to prevent such incidents.

**Legal Considerations** In England and Wales, the law explicitly states that those in positions of trust within sports organizations, including coaches, cannot engage in a sexual relationship with young people aged 16-17 years old. This law is aimed at protecting young people from potential exploitation. We fully comply with this legal requirement and consider any breach of this law as an offense that will be addressed in line with the law.

**What Can Sports Organizations Do?** At Kickboxkarate Martial Arts, we take the prevention of abuse in positions of trust seriously. We have implemented the following measures:

**Code of Conduct:** Our organization has a comprehensive code of conduct that clearly defines the expected behavior and emphasizes that abuse of positions of trust is unacceptable and may result in prosecution. This code of conduct includes a definition of positions of trust and references the relevant laws pertaining to sexual relationships between adults and young people.

**Safeguarding Training:** All individuals working with young people in our organization undergo safeguarding training, which includes guidance on maintaining appropriate boundaries between adults and young people. This training aims to raise awareness about the issue of abuse of trust and equip staff with the knowledge and skills to prevent and respond to such situations.

**Safeguarding Policies and Procedures:** Our organization has robust safeguarding policies and procedures in place, which include a requirement for referral to the appropriate authorities, such as the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), when an individual engaged in regulated activity is deemed unsuitable to work with young people. These policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated to align with best practices and legal requirements.

**What Can Sports Coaches and Others in Positions of Trust Do?** Individuals in positions of trust at Kickboxkarate Martial Arts have a crucial role in preventing abuse. We expect all staff and volunteers to:

**Adhere to the Code of Conduct:** As someone in a position of trust, it is essential to read, understand, and comply with the code of conduct applicable to your role. Maintain a relationship with participants that is appropriate, supportive, and positive, promoting their skills and progress.

**Avoid Inappropriate Relationships:** It is strictly prohibited to engage in sexual activity, sexualized communication, or image sharing, including via social media, with 16- or 17-year-olds for whom you are responsible. If you suspect a young person is attempting to develop an inappropriate relationship with you, immediately report the situation to the designated welfare officer, safeguarding lead, or manager of the organization. Do not respond to the participant in any way that may encourage their behavior.

**Dealing with Concerns** If you suspect or witness an abuse of a position of trust within Kickboxkarate Martial Arts, it is crucial to take the following steps:

**Report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead:** Immediately report your concerns to the welfare officer or designated safeguarding lead within our organization. Make a written record of the incident, including relevant details.

**Contact the Appropriate Authorities:** If you are unable to reach the designated safeguarding lead or believe that someone is at immediate risk of harm, report the situation to the police or children's social care.

**Further Support:** If you believe your concern has not been adequately addressed within the organization or if there is no designated safeguarding officer available, you can seek advice from the NSPCC helpline or refer to the appropriate local authorities.

**Conclusion** At Kickboxkarate Martial Arts, we are committed to preventing abuse in positions of trust and providing a safe and supportive environment for all young people involved in our programs. By adhering to our policies, codes of conduct, and safeguarding procedures, we aim to protect the welfare and well-being of our participants, ensuring they can enjoy their martial arts journey without fear of exploitation or harm.

**Kickboxkarate Martial Arts**

Safeguarding Lead & Deputy: Kelly Teasdale

Contact: [safeguarding@kickboxkarate.com](mailto:safeguarding@kickboxkarate.com)