

SECTION 1 - CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1.1 Introduction

Everyone who participates in Seishin-Do Shukokai Karate (SSK) is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. The SSK have a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for children, coaches and volunteers provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

The SSK is committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone in sport accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse. This means to follow procedures to protect children and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

The aim of the policy is to promote good practice, providing children and young people with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of SSK and to allow staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues. **A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (Children's Act 1989)**

1.2 Policy Statement

The SSK fully accepts its legal (Children's Act) and moral obligation to provide a duty of care to protect all children' The SSK is committed to ensuring that:

- the welfare of the child is paramount
- all children, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be able to participate in Karate in a fun and safe environment
- all reasonable steps are taken to protect children from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings
- all suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- all SSK employees who work with children will be recruited with regard to their suitability for that responsibility, and will be provided with guidance and/or training in good practice and child protection procedures
- working in partnership with parents and children is essential for the protection of children

Child Protection Policies should be reviewed every 3 years or whenever there is a major change in the organisation or in relevant legislation

1.3 Legal and Procedural Framework

The practices and procedures within this policy are based on principles contained within UK and International legislation and Government guidance. (See Appendix 16)

- The Children Act 1989
- The Protection of Children Act 1999
- Working Together to Safeguard Children and Young People (1999)
- 'Caring for the young and vulnerable' Home Office guidance for preventing the abuse of trust (1999)
- Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Human Rights Act (1998)
- The Data Protection Act (1998)

SECTION 2 - PROMOTING GOOD PRACTICE

2.1 Introduction

To provide children with the best possible experience and opportunities in karate everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework such as The Coaches Code of Conduct and an equity policy (**See appendix 1 & 2**).

It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse. It is therefore NOT the responsibility of employees or participants in karate to make judgements about whether or not abuse is taking place. It is however their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and act if they have concerns about the welfare of the child, as explained in section 4.

This section will help you identify what is meant by good practice and poor practice.

2.2 Good Practice

All personnel should adhere to the following principles and action:

- always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets)
- make the experience of karate fun and enjoyable: promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying
- treat all children equally and with respect and dignity
- always put the welfare of the child first, before winning
- maintain a safe and appropriate distance with players (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them)
- avoid unnecessary physical contact with children. Where any form of manual/physical support is required it should be provided openly and with the consent of the child. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the child's consent has been given
- Involve parents/cares wherever possible, e.g. where children need to be supervised in changing rooms, encourage parents to take responsibility for their own child. If groups have to be supervised in changing rooms always ensure parents, coaches etc work in pairs

- request written parental consent if club officials are required to transport children in their cars
- gain written parental consent for any significant travel arrangements e.g. overnight stays
- ensure that if mixed teams are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff
- ensure that at away events adults should not enter a child's room or invite child to their rooms
- be an excellent role model, this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children
- always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- recognising the developmental needs and capacity of the child and do not risk sacrificing welfare in a desire for club or personal achievements. This means avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will
- secure written parental consent for the club to act in loco parentis, to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment if the need arises
- keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given

2.3 Poor Practice

The following are regarded as poor practice and should be avoided by all personnel:

- unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others
- taking children alone in a car on journeys, however short
- taking children to your home where they will be alone with you
- sharing a room with a child
- engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- allowing children to use inappropriate language unchallenged

- making sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- reducing a child to tears as a form of control
- allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- do things of a personal nature that the child can do for themselves

Where case arise where it is impractical/impossible to avoid certain situation e.g. transporting a child in your car, the tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the parent/care and the child involved. (See **Appendix 3 & 4**).

If during your care you accidentally hurt a child, the child seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions and/or if the child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incidents as soon as possible to another colleague and make a written note of it. Parents should also be informed of the incident.

2.4 Physical Contact in Sport

Many sports, by their nature, require a degree of physical contact between adults and children. Physical contact can be used appropriately to instruct, encourage, protect or comfort. The aims of guidelines relating to physical contact are to provide adults and children with appropriate types and contexts for touching.

Physical contact between adults and children should only be used when the aim is to:

- Develop sports skills or techniques
- Treat an injury
- Prevent an injury
- Meet the requirements of the particular sport

Physical contact should:

- Not involve touching genital areas, buttocks or breasts
- Meet the need of the child and not the need of the adult
- Be fully explained to the child and with the exception of an emergency, permission should be sought
- Not take place in secret or out of sight of others

Records of injuries should be fully recorded

SECTION 3 - DEFINING CHILD ABUSE

3.1 Introduction

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm, it commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a child regardless of their age, gender, race or ability.

There are four main types of abuse: **physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect**. The abuser may be a family member, someone the child encounters in residential care or in the community, including sports and leisure activities. Any individual may abuse or neglect a child directly, or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming the child.

Abuse in all of its forms can affect a child at any age. The effects can be so damaging that if not treated may follow the individual into adulthood

Children with disabilities may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse had occurred.

3.2 Types of Abuse

Physical Abuse: where adults physically hurt or injure a child e.g. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, and drowning. Giving children alcohol or inappropriate drugs would also constitute child abuse

This category of abuse can also include when a parent/carer reports non-existent symptoms or illness deliberately causes ill health in a child they are looking after.

In a sports situation, physical abuse may occur when the nature and intensity of training disregard the capacity of the child's immature and growing body

Emotional Abuse: the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child, likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve telling a child they are useless, worthless, unloved, and inadequate or valued in terms of only meeting the needs of another person. It may feature expectations of children that are not appropriate to their age or development. It may cause a child to be frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the young person frightened or withdrawn. Ill treatment of children, whatever form it takes, will always feature a degree of emotional abuse.

Emotional abuse in sport may occur when the child is constantly criticised, given negative feedback, expected to perform at levels that are above their capability. Other forms of emotional abuse could take the form of name calling and bullying.

Bullying may come from another young person or an adult. Bullying is defined as deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. There are three main types of bullying.

It may be physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, slapping), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, name calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text messages), emotional (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group), or sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments).

In sport bullying may arise when a parent or coach pushes the child too hard to succeed, or a rival athlete or official uses bullying behaviour. **(See Appendix 5)**

Neglect occurs when an adult fails to meet the child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, to an extent that is likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. For example, failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect from physical harm or danger, or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Refusal to give love, affection and attention can also be a form of neglect.

Neglect in sport could occur when a coach does not keep the child safe, or exposing them to undue cold/heat or unnecessary risk of injury.

Sexual Abuse occurs when adults (male and female) use children to meet their own sexual needs. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse and fondling. Showing children pornography or talking to them in a sexually explicit manner are also forms of sexual abuse.

In sport, activities which might involve physical contact with children could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. Also the power of the coach over young athletes, if misused, may lead to abusive situations developing.

3.3 Indicators of Abuse

Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. Most people are not experts in such recognition, but indications that a child is being abused may include one or more of the following:

- unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- an injury for which an explanation seems inconsistent
- the child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them
- another child or adult expresses concern about the welfare of a child
- unexplained changes in a child's behaviour, e.g. becoming very upset, quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper
- inappropriate sexual awareness
- engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- distrust of adult's, particularly those whom a close relationship would normally be expected
- difficulty in making friends
- being prevented from socialising with others
- displaying variations in eating patterns including over eating or loss of appetite
- losing weight for no apparent reason
- becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt

Signs of bullying include:

- behavioural changes such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down, reluctance to go to training or competitions
- an unexplained drop off in performance

- physical signs such as stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed wetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes, bingeing e.g. on food, alcohol or cigarettes
- a shortage of money or frequent loss of possessions

It must be recognised that the above list is not exhaustive, but also that the presence of one or more of the indications is not proof that abuse is taking place. It is **NOT** the responsibility of those working in SSK to decide that child abuse is occurring. It **IS** their responsibility to act on any concerns.

3.4 Use of Photographic/Filming Equipment at Sporting Events

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of children. All clubs should be vigilant and any concerns should be reported to the Club Child Protection Officer.

All parents and performers should be made aware when coaches use video equipment as a coaching aid. (See **Appendix 6 & 7**)

SECTION 4 - RESPONDING TO CONCERNS & ALLEGATIONS

4.1 Introduction

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in SSK in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities so that they can then make inquiries and take necessary action to protect the young person. This applies **BOTH** to allegations/suspicions of abuse occurring within SSK and to allegations/suspicions that abuse is taking place elsewhere. (See Appendix 8 & 9)

This section explains how to respond to allegations/suspicions.

4.2 Responding to concerns/allegations

We may become aware of possible abuse in various ways. We may see it happening, we may suspect it happening because of signs such as those listed in section 3 of this document, it may be reported to us by someone else or directly by the young person affected.

In the last of these cases, it is particularly important to respond appropriately. If a young person says or indicates that they are being abused, you should:

- **stay calm** so as not to frighten the young person
- **reassure** the child that they are not to blame and that it was right to tell
- **listen** to the child, showing that you are taking them seriously
- **keep questions to a minimum** so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. The law is very strict and child abuse cases have been dismissed where it is felt that the child has been led or words and ideas have been suggested during questioning. Only ask questions to clarify
- **inform** the child that you have to inform other people about what they have told you. Tell the child this is to help stop the abuse continuing.
- **safety of the child** is paramount. If the child needs urgent medical attention call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern and ensure they are made aware that this is a child protection issue
- **record** all information
- **report** the incident to the club/welfare officer

In all cases if you are not sure what to do you can gain help from NSPCC 24 hour help line Tel No: 0800800500

4.3 Recording Information

To ensure that information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. In recording you should confine yourself to the facts and distinguish what is your personal knowledge and what others have told you. Do not include your own opinions.

Information should include the following:

- the child's name, age and date of birth
- the child's home address and telephone number
- whether or not the person making the report is expressing their concern or someone else's
- the nature of the allegation, including dates, times and any other relevant information
- a description of any visible bruising or injury, location, size etc. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes
- details of witnesses to the incidents
- the child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising/injuries occurred
- have the parents been contacted? If so what has been said?
- has anyone else been consulted? If so record details
- has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record detail

4.4 Reporting the Concern

All suspicions and allegations **MUST** be reported appropriately. It is recognised that strong emotions can be aroused particularly in cases where sexual abuse is suspected or where there is misplaced loyalty to a colleague. It is important to understand these feelings but not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

The SSK expects its members and staff to discuss any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child immediately with the person in charge and subsequently to check that appropriate action has been taken.

If the nominated child protection officer is not available you should take responsibility and seek advice from the NSPCC Helpline, the duty officer at your local social services department or the police. Telephone numbers can be found in your local directory.

A summary of reporting procedures is provided in **Appendix 10** . Where there is a complaint against an employee or volunteer, there may be three types of investigation.

- **Criminal** in which case the police are immediately involved

- **Child protection** in which case the social services (and possibly) the police will be involved
- **Disciplinary or misconduct** in which case SSK will be involved

As mentioned previously in this document the SSK are not child protection experts and it is not their responsibility to determine whether or not abuse has taken place. All suspicions and allegations must be shared with professional agencies that are responsible for child protection.

Social services have a legal responsibility under The Children Act 1989 to investigate all child protection referrals by talking to the child and family (where appropriate), gathering information from other people who know the child and making inquiries jointly with the police.

NB: If there is any doubt, you must report the incident: it may be just one of a series of other incidences which together cause concern

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by an employee or a volunteer should be reported to the SSK who will take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk. This will include the following:

- SSK will refer the matter to social services department
- the parent/carer of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department
- the chief executive of your organisation should be notified to decide who will deal with any media inquiries and implement any immediate disciplinary proceedings
- the child protection officer should also notify the relevant sport governing body
- if the club Child Protection Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation the report must be made to the appropriate manager who will refer the matter to social services

Allegations of abuse are sometimes made sometime after the event. Where such allegation is made, you should follow the same procedures and have the matter reported to social services. This is because other children in the sport or outside it may be at risk from the alleged abuser. **Anyone who has a previous conviction for offences related to abuse against children is automatically excluded from working with children.**

4.5 Whistle Blowing

It is important that the organisation has well known procedures for enabling staff and volunteers to share, in confidence with a designated person, concerns they may have about a colleague's behaviour

This may be behaviour linked to child abuse or behaviour that pushes boundaries beyond acceptable limits. If this is consistently ignored a culture may develop within an organisation whereby staff and young people are 'silenced'.

SSK is fully supportive of 'whistle blowing' for the sake of the child, and will provide support and protect those who 'whistle blow'. While it is difficult to express concerns about colleagues, it is important that these concerns are communicated to the designated. All staff and volunteers will be encouraged to talk to the designated if they become aware of anything that makes them feel uncomfortable.

4.6 Concerns outside the immediate Sporting Environment (e.g. a parent or carer)

- Report your concerns to the Club Child Protection Officer (**See Appendix 11**).
- If the Club Child Protection Officer is not available, the person being told or discovering the abuse should contact their local social services department or the police immediately
- Social Services and the Club Child Protection Officer will decide how to inform the parents/carers
- The Club Child Protection Officer should also report the incident to the SSK Governing Body. The Governing Body should ascertain whether or not the person/s involved in the incident play a role in the organisation and act accordingly
- Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis

4.7 Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

- The Club Child Protection Officer
- The parents of the child
- The person making the allegation
- Social Services/police
- The SSK Regional Development Manager and your Sport Governing Body Child Protection Officer
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child)

Seek Social Services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.

All information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws.

4.8 Internal Inquiries and Suspension

- The SSK will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries
- Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the SSK Disciplinary Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; especially where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such case the SSK Disciplinary Committee must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on the balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

4.9 Working with the Aftermath

After a suspicion or allegation about a child protection concern has been investigated, there is likely to be strong feelings amongst staff, parents and children and possibly among the wider community, which will need to be addressed.

There are likely to be issues of:

- Communication - if rumour or fact
- Guilt and blame - if suspicions had been around for some time
- Impact - on individuals, or the nature of what occurred and to whom
- Gaps in the organisation in terms of roles and post held

Careful thought will need to be given to the sharing of information and the provision of appropriate support.

SECTION 5 - RECRUITING & SELECTING

5.1 Introduction

It is important that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with children. This applies equally to paid staff and volunteers, both full and part time. To ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children the following steps should be taken when recruiting.

5.2 Controlling Access to Children

- All staff and volunteers should complete a self disclosure form. **(See Appendix 12)**
- All staff and volunteers should complete an application form. The application form will elicit information about the applicants past and a self disclosure about any criminal record **(See Appendix 13)**
- Consent should be obtained from the applicant to seek information from the Criminal Records Bureau **(See Appendix 14)**
- Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children should be obtained. These references **MUST** be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact **(See Appendix 13)**
- Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo)

5.3 Interview and Induction

All employees and volunteers will be required to undertake an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All employees and volunteers should receive formal or informal induction during which:

- Checks are carried out to ensure application forms are completed in full.
- Their qualifications should be substantiated
- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified
- They should sign up to the organization's Code of Ethics and Conduct
- Child Protection Procedures are explained and training needs identified e.g. basic child protection awareness

5.4 Training

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

- Analyse their own practice against what is deemed good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice and/or abuse
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child
- Work safely and effectively with children

SSK requires:

- **All** staff and volunteers who have access to children to undergo a CRB check
- All employees, volunteers, coaches, welfare officers and team managers to undertake relevant child protection training or undertake a form of home study, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of positive culture towards good practice and child protection
- All staff and volunteers to receive advisory information outlining good/bad practice and informing them what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person
- All coaches, trainee coaches and leaders should have an up to date first aid qualification and be fully insured.

SECTION 6 – IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING PROCEDURES

6.1 Introduction

If the SSK child protection policy and procedures are to be effective, they need to be integrated into current practice and implemented in a planned and staged way.

This will involve the:

- design and dissemination of information
- piloting of procedures
- execution of recruitment strategies for volunteers as well as employees
- identification of a National Child Protection Officer
- identification of Club Child Protection Officer's
- provision of training and review of existing training

6.2 Monitoring Strategy

It will be the responsibility of the Child Protection Officer/policy group to establish and implement the strategy. This might include monitoring:

- the number of leaflets distributed
- the number of allegations made and breakdown of 'no case', 'poor practice' and 'abuse' incidence
- the number of child protection officer's in place
- feedback from clubs on the implementation of the policy
- reports from the disciplinary and appeals panel
- the number of personnel trained in child protection awareness
- the number of enhanced CRB checks made