



The Gauntlet Fight Academy Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

The Gauntlet Fight Academy takes Child Protection seriously.

Our dedicated Child Protection Officer Georgina Polonski can be contacted at gpolonski@icloud.com.

The Gauntlet Fight Academy Child Protection Policy

Everyone who participates in activities at The Gauntlet Fight Academy is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. The Gauntlet Fight Academy has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for young people, coaches and assistant coaches provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

The Club is committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone in the sporting areas facilitated at the club 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 the appropriate authorities within the Club, in the first instance. The aim of this policy is to promote good practice, providing children and young people with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of The Gauntlet Fight Academy and to allow coaches and assistant coaches to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

This policy recognises that the welfare and interests of children are paramount in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that regardless of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, socio-economic background, all children have a positive and enjoyable experience of sport/martial arts at The Gauntlet Fight Academy in a safe and child centred environment and are protected from abuse whilst participating in The Gauntlet Fight Academy Kids classes or outside of the activity.

The Gauntlet Fight Academy will endeavour at all times to:

- Promote the welfare, health and full development of children and protect them from harms of all kinds
 - Recognise that children have rights as individuals and treat them with dignity and respect
 - Raise awareness about what children are entitled to be protected from
 - Plan coaching sessions so as to minimise opportunities for the children to suffer harm
 - Develop effective procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of abuse
- Implementation Member organisations are required to provide evidence of the following:
- Child protection arrangements including DBS (or PVG in Scotland) checks for all coaches, planning, organisation, control, monitoring, review and reporting;
 - Ensure, so far as reasonably practical, co-operation, co-ordination and exchange of information between parents and other parties involved in projects under its control;
 - Establish emergency and other procedures for incidents;

- Provide and display Child Protection Policy and such written instructions as are necessary to assist in the regulation of child protection practices and operations;
- Encourage and promote personal responsibility and effort on the part of all employees;
- Review this policy at 12 month intervals
- Ensure suitable child protection procedures are in place at all competitions including DBS or PVG checks for all officials working with children.

Following UKBJJA and other guidelines, will regularly monitor and evaluate the policy, practices and procedures on an on-going basis and will inform member/employees of their impact.

The Officer for Equity, Health and Safety and Child Protection is responsible for ensuring that Child Protection Policy is followed and for dealing with any actual or potential breaches.

What is child abuse?

A child is defined as anyone who is under the age of 18 years. It is generally accepted that there are four main forms of abuse. The following definitions are based on those from Working Together to Safeguard Children (Department of Health, Home Office, Department of Education and Employment 1999)

1. Physical Abuse. Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to, a child whom they are looking after. A person might do this because they enjoy or need the attention they get through having a sick child. Physical abuse, as well as being a result of an act of commission can also be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.

2. Emotional Abuse. Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making a child feel or believe that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

3. Sexual Abuse. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of, or consents to, what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative acts such as rape, oral sex or non-penetrative acts such as fondling. Sexual abuse may also include non-physical activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Boys and girls can be sexually abused by males and/or females, by adults and by other young people. This includes people from different walks of life.

4. Neglect. Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failure to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

In a children's martial arts class situation physical abuse may also occur due to:

- Overly hard (specific) sparring without mutual consent and technical justification.

- Demonstrating techniques too hard or repeatedly where the intention is to hurt or intimidate the person being practised on.
- Over training and inappropriate training which disregards the capacity of the player's immature and growing body. This also applies to over competing.
- Forcing (or "suggesting") that a child loses weight to make a weight category. This would include the use of sauna suits and bin bags to de-hydrate to lose weight. This is a very complex issue and beyond the scope of this document but as a rule of thumb a child should eat a healthy well balanced diet, train as appropriate to the capacity of their immature and growing body.
- Inappropriate levels of physical exercises as a punishment – The Gauntlet Fight Academy believes that making a child carry out exercise, as a punishment may not only constitute physical abuse in some circumstances but sends mixed messages. We want children and young people to train and exercise to have fun and stay healthy.

Legislation and Guidance

There is a considerable body of legislation, government guidance and standards, which are designed to ensure that children are protected from harm.

The Children Act 1989

This Act legislates for children in England & Wales. The intention of the Children Act 1989 is to ensure that the welfare and developmental needs of children are met, including their need to be protected from harm. Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 Part II of this Act relates to 'public bodies' responsibilities within child protection and is integral to child protection systems in the UK designed to prevent unsuitable people from working with children. It links to other laws including Protection of Children Act 1999 and The Police Act 1997 that together build a system that makes it a criminal offence if an employer does not take sufficient steps to check an employee working with children and/or knowingly gives someone a job who is inappropriate to work with children.

Protection of Children Act 1999 and The Police Act 1997 These Acts change the routes by which employers can check whether a potential or actual employee has criminal offences against children or whether there has been any reason for that person to be considered inappropriate to work with children. The Police Act 1997 contains the provision to set up the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) for England and Wales to improve access to criminal record checks for employment-related purposes. It is aimed at providing protection for children and other vulnerable people against those who might wish to do them harm. Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (NI Order) 1974 (UK wide) People who are involved in situations where they have prolonged or sustained access to children are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders legislation. Sexual Offenders Amendments Act 2000 This Act reduces the age at which, or certain circumstances in which, sexual acts are lawful. It introduces a new offence of abuse of trust, which covers ostensibly consensual behaviour within certain relationships of trust. It is an offence for a person aged 18 or over to engage in sexual intercourse or other Page 4 of 7 sexual activity with someone under that age where they are in a 'position of trust' in relation to the younger person. Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 This legislation introduced the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme to replace the former system of Disclosure for people working with vulnerable groups. It identifies categories of employment or contact (regulated work) where there is the expectation that a PVG check will be required and

also provides direction on responsibilities of employers. This also applies to those working with vulnerable groups such as children on a voluntary basis.

Protecting Children, Coaches, and Helpers

To reduce the potential situations for abuse of children and to help protect the coaches and helpers from false accusations of abuse, everyone should be aware of the following guidelines.

Coaches should ensure that a minimum of 2 adult staff are present at each class. This ensures that the main coach has someone to demonstrate techniques on (demonstrating on a child should be avoided) plus if dealing with a particular group someone else is still supervising the class.

There should also be no photography or filming of children for promotional purposes unless written consent is given by the parents of the affected children. **Parents should not be taking photographs during classes under any circumstances.**

As a general rule it is not sensible to:

- spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others;
- take children alone on a car journey, however short;
- take children to their home. Where occasions arise when the above is unavoidable, such instances should occur with the full knowledge and consent of the child's parent/guardian.

Coaches and Helpers should:

- Be registered with the Criminal Records Bureaux (or PVG scheme in Scotland)
- Always ensure that the parent/guardian collects the child. For the older child who may wish to travel to the club permission from the parent/guardian must be obtained.

Coaches and Helpers should not:

- Leave a child alone with a non-staff member
- Be alone with a child in the changing room.
- Treat a child for an injury alone and away from others.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language or behaviour unchallenged.
- Let allegations a child makes go unchallenged or unrecorded.

Bullying

It is important to recognise that in some cases of abuse, it may not always be an adult abusing a young person. It can occur that the abuser is a young person, for example in the case of bullying.

Bullying can be defined as deliberate hurtful behaviour that can take its form both physically and verbally against another person, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

Although anyone can be a target of bullying, the victim is usually shy, sensitive and perhaps anxious or insecure. Sometimes they are singled out for physical reasons, overweight, physically small, having a disability, or belonging to a different race, culture, or religious belief.

Bullies can be both male and female. Although bullying often takes place in schools, it does and can occur anywhere there is poor or inadequate supervision, on the way to/from school, at a sporting event, in the playground and in changing rooms. Bullies come from all walks of life; they bully for a variety of reasons and may even have been abused themselves. Typically bullies can have low self-esteem, be, aggressive, jealous and excitable. Crucially, they have learnt how to gain power over others.

Whilst The Gauntlet Fight Academy acknowledges bullying we feel that bullying is also a form of physical and/or emotional abuse and will not be afraid to call certain behaviour as just that – abuse.

There are many types of bullying including:

- Physical: hitting, kicking and theft.
- Verbal: name-calling, constant teasing, sarcasm, racist or homophobic taunts, threats and gestures.
- Emotional: tormenting, mobile text messaging, ridiculing, humiliating and ignoring
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments, use of camera phones to record images of players in changing rooms.
- Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist: racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Homophobic: because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality.

In a children's martial arts class situation, bullying may occur when:

- a parent/coach who pushes too hard.
- a coach who adopts a win-at-all-costs philosophy.
- a player who intimidates others.
- an official who places unfair pressure on a person. Coaches hold a position of power in the relationship with their athlete and must not abuse this position to bully children/vulnerable young adults in their care.

In a children's martial arts class situation bullying may occur when the coach is:

- overly zealous
- resorts to aggressive, physical or verbal behaviour
- torments, humiliates or ignores an athlete in their charge/care

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 have been listed above. It must be recognised that the above lists are 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 The Gauntlet Fight Academy staff to decide that child abuse is occurring - It IS their responsibility to act on any concerns.**

Recording allegations of suspicion of abuse

In all cases where an allegation of abuse is made, or someone has concerns about the wellbeing of a child, a record of the incident must be made, using the Child Protection Report form. Once completed it should be given to the club's Child Protection Officer/s who will record it in the Incident Record Book. The Child Protection Officer should then consult with the appropriate agencies (Child Protection section of Social Work or Police). They will decide if further action is required. Under no circumstance should a CPO interrogate a child or parent/carer of a child regarding a suspicion unless they are the ones making the allegation. In which case ensure the information is recorded is exactly what was said. If you need to ask questions make sure they are open and not leading e.g. "Can you tell me what happened next?" would be appropriate whereas "Did the person do this?" would not. It is also important to stress to anyone making a disclosure that you must pass the information on and can't keep it secret.

The Child Protect report contains:

Name of the child:

The age of the child:

The parent's name, home address and telephone number:

Nature of the concern:

- Is the person making the report expressing their own concerns or passing on those of someone else?
- What has prompted the concerns? Give dates and times of specific incidents. Any physical signs? Behavioural signs? Indirect signs?
- Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? If so record details.
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details.

Upon receipt of any concern, the Child Protection Officer should seek to consult with the relevant agencies. If it is a concern by a coach, team manager or helper as to the possible abuse of a child then they will report the concerns to the Child Protection Officer/s, on the Child Protection Report form.

The CPO will consult with Social Services and other agencies who will decide what further action should be taken given the information provided. Full documentation will be kept. All information will be treated as confidential and held securely by the Child Protection Officer/s.

Child Protection Officers

The Child Protection Officer/s for clubs should be responsible for:

- Introduction and implementation of the Child Protection Policy within the Club.
- Undertake any training that may be needed, keep up to date with any new guidelines that may be issued by the UKBJJA, NCF or Social Services.
- Ensure that all club coaches, helpers, officials complete a volunteer reference form and agreement to adhere to the club's Child Protection Policy and keep these up to date.

- Keep up to date records of all qualifications of coaches, helpers and officials.
- Receive and advise on reports from coaches, helpers, and any other club member.
- Ensure that parents, children and young people know the Child Protection Officer/s are available to discuss any concerns.
- Initiate action where appropriate. Once identified, concerns must be reported to the appropriate services, i.e. Social Services, Police.
- Keep confidential any matter or information referred to them.
- Keep and record all information.
- Ensure the Chairperson is kept informed where appropriate.