



COBRA MARTIAL ARTS ASSOCIATION

This policy refers to and is for the use of the members of the
Cobra Martial Arts Association
(CMAA)

Please telephone 07909 673894 to verify membership.

Safeguarding Policy

Policy statement (last reviewed 18.11.2025)

The CMAA has a duty of care to safeguard all involved in its activities and clubs from harm. All have a right to protection, and the needs of the disabled and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account.

This Policy will be reviewed at 3-year intervals. The review and modification dates will be posted at the end of this document'

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 in accordance with the Children Act 1989.

All Instructors either newly qualifying or joining the CMAA will be required to:

1. Be no less than 18 years of age and of grade no less than 1st Dan / Degree.
2. Go through an **Enhanced Disclosure every 2 years** to ensure they are of suitable character to be near the young and / or vulnerable Adults. Any person refusing this check will not be permitted to Instruct within the CMAA
3. Undergo Instructor Training via the CMAA programme OR produce evidence of training elsewhere.
4. Be fully insured against liability via the CMAA Group Policy or equivalent.
5. Keep their own Continued Professional Development (CPD) up to date by attending courses both within and outside of the CMAA.

The policy and its content are a standard subject covered in the CMAA Instructor Training Programme (MAIUK), which is open to all including Parents and Cadets (under 18's). All new Instructors joining the CMAA made aware of the policy and how to access it.

As well as the training the CMAA offers Instructors are advised to familiarise themselves with their own Local Authority Designated Officer for Safeguarding (LADO).

If any member has any comments regarding the content of this Policy please contact Andrew Morrell.

Safeguarding Officer

Each member club will nominate a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), this is usually the clubs most senior Instructor. The central DSL for the CMAA is Andrew Morrell who can be contacted directly on 07909 673894.

Local Authority Designated Officer

The Local Authority has a designated officer (LADO) to:

- Provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations
- Liaise with the police and other agencies
- Monitor the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible consistent with a thorough and fair process.

The role of the LADO is to coordinate all allegations and concerns made against a person who works with children. As such, all allegations and concerns must be reported to the LADO.

The LADO will advise, in discussion with the Senior Manager within the Organisation (SMO), on what action should be taken by the employer and whether the matter should be referred to Children's Social Care and the Police for a decision on whether to convene a strategy meeting or an initial evaluation meeting.

If you wish to make an allegation or you have a concern about a professional working with children, young or vulnerable people, a referral should be sent to the Local Authority Designated Officer.

Position of Trust

A position of trust is defined as a role that grants an individual authority over others and carries a legal and ethical obligation to exercise that authority appropriately.

As Instructors hold a certain amount of authority over students it is essential that they always act with integrity, honesty and conduct themselves in an ethical manner when supervising anyone under the age of 18.

Social Media

The minimum age for the use of most social media networks and websites is now 13 years.

Instructors and parents are advised to use this age as a guide and check what age children have entered in order to set up an account for their own safety.

Online Gaming

There is a growing concern regarding online games and the addictive effect they are having. The World Health Organisation have actually recognised video game addiction or 'gaming disorder' as an official illness despite opposition from bodies within the gaming industry.

Most games are age rated however they do attract younger players and they can become very addictive which in turn affects both the players physical health and mental health as mentioned above.

The following steps will help safeguard while playing online games.

- **Restrict the amount of time played.** A suggestion would be just a couple of days per week limited to just 1 or 2 hours a time for that given day. If a child is already into the habit of playing for several hours every day then they need to be weaned off as with any other 'addiction'.
- **Restriction suggestions.** Most consoles have parental controls which allow time to be restricted, Nintendo Switch for example allows this remotely via an app. Other methods would be turning the Wifi off at a given time or fitting a timer plug to the console / tv.
- **Banning certain games.** While banning games may be considered the best option, if a player is intent they will find a way. Therefore restricting the days/times is the best suggested method but do so gradually if the child already seems to be addicted.
- **In game messaging.** While the game allows players to communicate via text parents should closely monitor what messages are being sent/received so as to avoid inappropriate communication or potential cyber bullying and then deactivate the chat using the games settings if required.

- **Headsets.** Headsets allow players to verbally converse with each other without anyone around them being able to hear what is being said. Players can become quite 'heated' so prior to allowing the use of a headset parents are strongly advised to listen to what is being said over a given time without allowing their child to actually get involved on the conversations. This will allow for an informed judgment to be formed prior to allowing the use of a headset or denying it until the child is much older.
- **Appropriate ages.** While a child is playing ensure that the other players engaging in the same game are not adults (over 18yrs). Even better ensure they are under 16yrs. For adults playing the same applies in reverse, you should ensure your opponents are all over 16yrs so as to avoid potential allegations being lodged against you for online grooming which is another concern linked to online gaming in general. The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) have stated that they believe the game was putting children at risk of online grooming. That may sound dramatic but online grooming is a serious issue and not just in the UK.

Further advice relating to this can be seen online at

<https://safeguardinghub.co.uk/fortnite-battle-royale-safe-or-dangerous/>

Section 1a – Defining Abuse of a Child

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.

The abuser may be a family member, or they may be someone the child encounters in residential care or in the community, including during sports and leisure activities. An individual may abuse or neglect a child directly, or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming a child.

There are five main types of child abuse:

- **Physical abuse:** where adults physically hurt or injury children, including by hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating or drowning. This category of abuse can also include when a parent or carer reports non-existent symptoms of illness or deliberately causes ill health in a child they are looking after. Examples of physical abuse in sport may be when a child is forced into training and competition that exceeds the capacity of his or her immature and growing body, or where the child is given drugs to enhance performance or delay puberty
- **Sexual abuse:** when adults (male or female) use the child to meet their own sexual needs including talking to them in an explicit nature and showing them illicit photographs.
- **Psychological 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 communicating to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in terms of meeting the needs of another person. It may feature expectations of children that are not appropriate to their age or development. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the child very nervous and withdrawn. Ill-treatment of children, whatever form it takes, will always feature a degree of emotional abuse. Examples of emotional abuse in sport include subjecting children

to constant criticism, name-calling and sarcasm or bullying. Putting the under pressure to perform to unrealistic high standards is also a form of emotional abuse.

- **Neglect:** this is when adults fail to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, to an extent that is likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health and development. For example, failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. Examples of neglect in sport could include not ensuring children are safe, exposing them to undue cold or heat or exposing them to unnecessary risk of injury, during sparring for example.
- **Bullying:** *(This has been removed by many groups and included into the four listed above. We have left it in to draw specific attention to it which in turn highlights the four listed above).* Bullying is racism and other types of discrimination are forms of child abuse, even though those responsible are often young people themselves. It is important to recognise the impact and extent of bullying and discrimination in the lives of young people. CMAA and all of our Instructors, at whatever the level, have a duty of care to safeguard children and others who may be particularly vulnerable.

Define Bullying

Bullying can be psychological, verbal or physical in nature. It involves an imbalance of power in which the powerful attack the powerless, and occurs over time rather than being a single act. Examples of bullying behaviour include:

- Being called names, insulted or verbally abused
- Being deliberately embarrassed and humiliated by other children
- Being made to feel different or like an outsider
- Being lied about
- Being physically assaulted or threatened with violence
- Being ignored

Bullying by adults is less common, but the most common forms are:

- Deliberately embarrassing or humiliating a child
- Treating them unfairly
- Verbally abusing them
- Ignoring them or not speaking to them at all

Action if Bullying is suspected

The CMAA President operates a "Penalty Points" system, which awards points for breaking club rules. Bullying is one of these rules. Students achieving a total of 6 points are suspended for a given period. Repeat offenders are usually expelled from the club.

If bullying is suspected you may simply expel the student responsible if you wish to do so, but you should also consider the following points:

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously
- Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak to the victim and the bully separately
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to keep it to yourself

If you decide to expel the bully from your club after the allegation has been proven then please advise the CMAA President who will then inform other CMAA clubs within the area. But firstly you should consider doing the following:

- Talk with the bully and explain the situation. Get them to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Ask them to apologise to the victim
- Inform the bullies parents
- Encourage and support the bully to change behaviour

Section 1a – Defining Abuse of Vulnerable Adults

There are ten forms of abuse against adults, they are:

- Discriminatory
- Psychological
- Financial or material
- Organisational
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Physical
- Sexual
- Domestic
- Modern slavery
- Self-neglect

Section 2 – Promoting Good Practice

Abuse can arouse strong emotions in those directly involved or having to face or deal with the situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about the appropriate action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment.

Some individuals will actually enter into a group involved with children and vulnerable adults in order to carry out abuse. With this in mind all new Instructors qualifying or joining the CMAA under go an Enhanced Disclosure through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). This check will go towards showing the good character of all of our Instructors. The CMAA is a Registered Body with the DBS for that reason. Any person objecting to, or refusing to, undergo an Enhanced Disclosure will not be permitted to Instruct in any capacity within the CMAA and in certain cases maybe reported to the authorities. Checks are then repeated every 2 years.

It should be noted that it is a criminal offence for any person who has a previous conviction for offences related to abuse to work with children or vulnerable people. This is reinforced by the details of the Children's Barred List (CBL) and the Adults Barred List (ABL). Any information disclosed as a result of the DBS check which poses a threat to either children or vulnerable adults will be reported to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA).

When a child or adult enters one of your club(s) having been subjected to abuse outside, and you are made aware of this, it is important that you work closely with appropriate local agencies. Sport can play a crucial part in improving an abused person's self esteem.

Good Practice Guidelines

All "Personnel" should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. Both Adults and Children have a responsibility to treat each other with respect, dignity, sensitivity and fairness regardless of age, gender, religion, disability, sexual orientation / background or culture.

The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

- Always work in an open environment, avoid private or unobserved situations and encourage open communication with no secrets
- Treat all young people the same, this includes the disabled should any of you teach them
- Put the welfare of the person first above all else, such as competition and achieving set goals such as activities involved in grading
- Maintain an appropriate distance with as least physical contact as possible especially when the person is moving through a technique. Avoid physically "guiding" them
- Build a balanced relationship with your Instructor Team and involve them in the decision-making process within your club. Remember a Cadet Leader is a child and therefore thinks like one.
- Make your classes fun and promote fair play at all times
- If your club has changing facilities encourage parents to remain whilst their child gets ready for the class. Failing this always enter accompanied, never alone especially if there is only one child present
- Be an excellent role model, your students will do as you do
- Keep an accident book in your club to record any injury and the treatment given. In the event of an accidents the parent should sign the book
- If you are to transport children in your car get the consent of the parent, preferably written. Ideally get the parent to go as well, especially if you are going to be away for a day or so.
- Any disciplinary measures / sanctions that you use must be non-aggressive and must not be humiliating.

Practices to be avoided

The following should be **avoided** except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the club or the child's parents. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a session:

- Avoid spending time alone with children away from others.
- Avoid taking or dropping off a child to an event or activity.

Practices never to be sanctioned

The following should **never** be sanctioned. You should never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Share a room with a child
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged

- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- Reduce a person to tears as a form of control
- Fail to act upon and record any allegations made by a child or adult
- Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults, that they can do for themselves
- Invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

N.B. It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the players involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a person to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

Incidents that must be reported / recorded

If any of the following occur please report them to the club DSL/Senior Most Instructor or the CMAA President as well as the parents

- If you accidentally hurt a child
- If he / she seems overly distressed
- If a student misunderstands or misinterprets something you have said or done that could lead to an allegation

Use of photographic / filming equipment during training

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and disabled sportspeople in vulnerable positions. All clubs should be vigilant and any concerns should be reported to the Safeguarding Officer. It is advised that all clubs gain written consent from every member (parent/guardian for under 18s) relating to the use of photographs/video footage when they first join the club paying particular emphasis on them being displayed on any form of social media.

There is no intention to prevent Instructors using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, students and their parents/guardians should be made aware that this is part of the coaching programme and their consent obtained, as mentioned above, any such films should be stored safely.

Responding to allegations or suspicions and the action to be taken

It is not the responsibility of our selves as Instructors of any person within the CMAA to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any concerns relating to abuse and also discrimination and offensive or violent behaviour as these are unacceptable through contact with the appropriate authorities.

The CMAA will full support and protect all of our members who in good faith report any concerns that another member has or may be abusing a child.

When a complaint is reported, there are three types of investigation:

- Criminal - carried out by the local Police
- Safeguarding - carried out by the local Authority
- Disciplinary - carried out by the CMAA

If the concern is clearly about poor practice only then the CMAA will deal with it as an “internal” issue in a fair and open-minded manner. All accusations will of course be open to appeal as per the chart below.

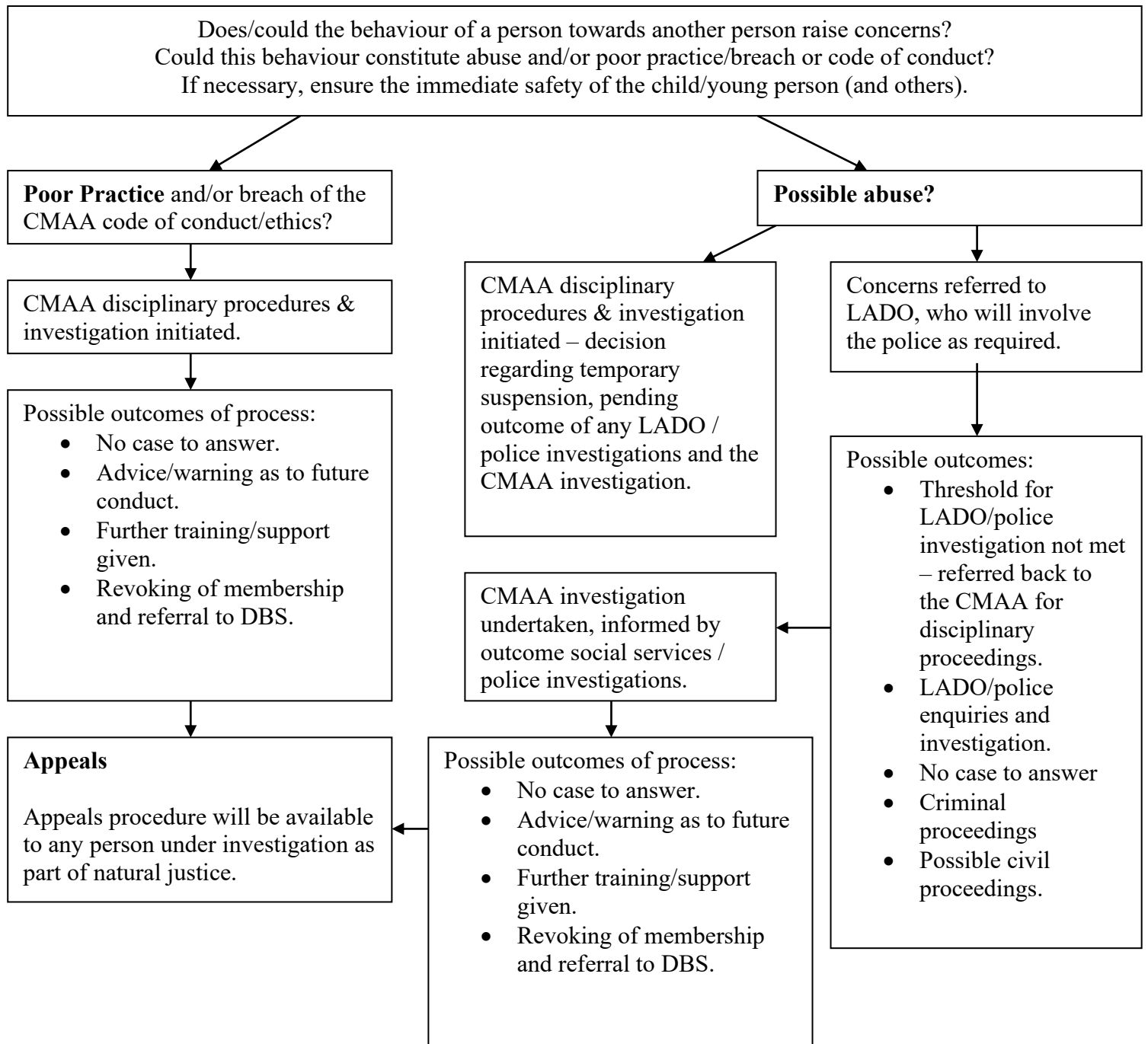
If the concern is about suspected abuse, then it should be reported to the Clubs DSL/Senior Instructor who will then report to the CMAA President.

If the concern is in relation to the Clubs Senior Instructor, it should be reported directly to the LADO and also the CMAA President.

The following information will be required:

- The alleged abused name, age and date of birth
- The alleged abused home address and telephone number
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns of those of someone else
- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times and any other relevant information
- Make a clear distinction between fact, opinion or hearsay
- A description of any physical injury or bruising, also any signs such as changes in behaviour
- Details of any witnesses
- The alleged abused own account of events, if it can be given
- Whether or not the parents are aware and what has been said
- Has anyone else been consulted, if so record the details
- If the child was not the person who reported the incident have he or she been informed and if so what was said?
- Who is the alleged abuser?

The following chart demonstrates the general guidelines on how to respond to any concerns relating to CMAA members / Instructors / volunteers or any other person who may come into contact with CMAA members.



If you are worried about sharing concerns about any alleged abuse within the CMAA you can contact Social Services, Your Local Area Safeguarding Unit or the Police direct. Or the NSPCC Child Protection help line on 0808 800 5000 or Child line on 0800 1111

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 Senior Instructor
- The CMAA President
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- LADO

- The Police
- The alleged abuser

The alleged abuser **SHOULD NOT** be approached without firstly seeking the advice of the LADO.

Any evidence or information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people in line with data protection laws which state that information should be accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure.

Allegations or previous abuse

Allegations may be made some time after the event e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child by an Instructor or member who is still active within CMAA.

Where such an allegation is made, the club should follow the procedure as detailed above. This is important as other children, both in and outside of your club, may be at risk or even be being abused by this person.

POLICY WRITTEN BY:

Andrew Morrell

President & Founder of the CMAA.

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