



Thames Valley Shotokan Karate

Child Protection Policy

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Introduction

Thames Valley Shotokan Karate (TVSK) has developed a Child Protection Policy for implementation throughout the association. All sporting organisations, which make provision for children and young people have a moral and legal responsibility to ensure that:

The welfare of the child is paramount;

- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection against abuse;
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately;
- All staff (paid/unpaid) working in sport have to report concerns to the appropriate officer.

The Children Act 1987 defines a child as a person under 18.

This Child Protection Policy has been accepted by TVSK and enacted by all TVSK member clubs.

TVSK is committed to working in partnership with all agencies to ensure that information and training opportunities are available to ensure best practice when working with children and young people.

Adopting best practice will help to safeguard those participants from potential abuse as well as protecting coaches and other adults in positions of responsibility from any potential allegation of abuse.

This document provides procedures and guidance to everyone in TVSK, whether working in a voluntary or professional capacity.

TVSK Child Protection Officer

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1.0 Policy statement

Karate as a sport and pastime has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in Karate from harm. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account.

TVSK will ensure the safety and protection of all children involved in our sport through adherence to the Child Protection guidelines adopted by TVSK. The policy will be implemented by all Club Instructors and Officials of TVSK.

Sport can and does have a very powerful and positive influence on people, especially young people. Not only can it provide opportunities for enjoyment and achievement; it helps to develop and enhance valuable qualities such as self-esteem, leadership and teamwork. We have to ensure that for these positive experiences to take place that sport is in the hands of those who have the welfare of young people uppermost in their mind and that we have proper procedures and practices to support, and empower them.

1.0 Policy aims

The aim of TVSK's Child Protection Policy is to promote good practice:

- Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of karate clubs and Instructors of the TVSK.
- Ensure that all incidents of poor practice or suspicions of poor practice and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- Allow all Instructors and Officials to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues
- The policy recognises and builds on the legal and statutory definition of a child.
- The distinction between ages of consent, civil and criminal liability are recognised but in the pursuit of good practice in the delivery and management of English Karate, a young person is recognised as being under the age 18 years [Children's Act, 1989].
- TVSK recognises that young people above the age of 18 are vulnerable to undue influence by adults in positions of responsibility.
- TVSK has appointed a suitably experienced and qualified individual to act as the Associations Child Protection Officer.
- Confidentiality will be upheld in line with the Data Protection Act 1984 and the Human Rights Act 2000.

2.0 Promoting good practice with young people

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. It is a fact of life that some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them.

A coach, instructor, teacher, official or volunteer may have regular contact with young people and have an important link in identifying cases where a young person needs protection.

All cases of poor practice and suspected case of abuse should be reported to TVSK and or relevant authorities following the guidelines in this document.

When a child enters the club having experienced abuse outside the sporting environment, sport can play a crucial role in improving the child's self-esteem. In such instances the club must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child receives the required support.

2.1 Good practice guidelines

All those involved in Karate should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to safeguard children and young people and protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate within Karate:

Good practice means:

- always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations, involving parents or carers, no secrets)
- treating all young people/disabled adults equally, and with respect and dignity.
- placing the welfare and safety of the child or young person above the development of performance or competition
- maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with students (e.g. it is not appropriate to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them)
- building balanced relationships based on mutual trust, which empowers children to share in the decision-making process;
- making sport fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play
- ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly.
- keeping up to date with the technical skills, qualifications and insurance in Karate
- ensuring your teaching practice reflects the high standards expected of Karate
- involving parents/carers wherever possible (e.g. for the responsibility of their children in the changing rooms). If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure parents/teachers/instructors/officials work in pairs
- being an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people
- ensuring that at tournaments or residential events, adults should not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms
- giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults - avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will

- securing parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- having up to date records of pupils, including contact numbers and information about medical conditions and lesson plans.
- keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- requesting written parental consent if club officials are required to transport young people in their cars

Guidance for children and young people practicing together

- Karate Instructors need to understand the added responsibilities of teaching children and also basic principles of growth and development through childhood to adolescence. Exercises should be appropriate to age and build. Instructors should not simply treat children as small adults, with small adult bodies. The nature of the class must be tailored to consider these factors.
- In general, the younger the child, the shorter the attention span. One hour is generally considered sufficient training time for the average 12 year old or below. Pre-adolescent children have a metabolism that is not naturally suited to generating anaerobic power, and therefore they exercise better aerobically, that is, at a steadily maintained rate. However, they can soon become conditioned to tolerate exercise in the short explosive bursts that more suit Karate training.
- Children should not do assisted stretching - they generally don't need to, and there is a real risk of damage with an inconsiderate or over-enthusiastic partner.
- Children should be carefully matched for size and weight for sparing practice.
- Great care must be taken, especially where children train in the proximity of adults, to avoid collision injury.
- Children should not do certain conditioning exercises, especially those which are heavy load bearing, for example weight training or knuckle push-ups. Children should not do any heavy or impact work but should concentrate on the development of speed, mobility, skill and general fitness.

Practice never to be sanctioned

The following should never be sanctioned:

You should never;

- engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay;
- spend excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others; take children to your home where they will be alone with you.
- 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 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 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 Instructors or Officials to do things of a personal nature for children, e.g. if they are young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents. If a person is fully dependent on, 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/assisting to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to another colleague and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child are told:

- if you accidentally hurt a student
- if he/she seems distressed in any manner
- if a student appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- if a student misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

3.0 Guidelines for use of photographic filming equipment at TVSK and karate events

There is no intention to stop people photographing their children, club mates, or photography and video been used as an educational tool but this is in the context of appropriate safeguards being in place. There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and disabled sports people in vulnerable positions. It is advisable that all clubs be vigilant with any concerns to be reported to the TVSK Child Protection Officer. Any parent who wishes to photograph their child must seek permission from the Instructor or competition organiser. Official photographers must be registered with an event organiser and wear identification.

Videoing as a coaching aid: there is no intention to prevent club coaches and Instructors using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, performers and their parents/carers should be aware that this is part of the coaching program and care should be taken in the storing of such film.

The TVSK also follows closely the guidance issued by the Child Protection in Sport Unit advising that:

- Models or illustrations are used in promotional material
- Avoid using the first name and surname of individuals in a photograph
- If the student is named, we do not use their photograph
- If the photograph is used, we do not name the individual
- Seek parental permission to use an image of a young participant.

4.0 Recruitment and selecting staff and volunteers

The TVSK recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children.

It is essential that the same procedures are used consistently for all posts whether staff are paid or voluntary, full or part time.

Under the Protection of Children Act 1999, all individuals working on behalf, or otherwise representing, an organisation are treated as employees whether working in a paid or voluntary capacity.

New Staff

When undertaking recruitment, the TVSK will undertake the following:

- Ensure there is a job description and person specification for all roles
- All volunteers/staff involved in Karate will complete an application form. The application form will elect information about an applicants past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record.
- Consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Criminal Records Bureau and the appropriate check will be carried out - an enhanced disclosure.
- Advertising will reflect the aims of the TVSK, key responsibilities of the role and necessary experience and our open and positive stance on child protection and equality will be implicit.
- Evidence of identity (Passport or driving licence with Photo)

Existing Staff

All current TVSK Instructors have had a Criminal Records Bureau check and are all fully qualified Instructors.

5.0 Responding to suspicions or allegations

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in Karate, in a paid or unpaid capacity to take responsibility or to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. This is the role of the child protection agencies. However, there is a responsibility for all involved in Karate to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities. Advice and information is available from the local Social Services Department, the police or the NSPCC 24 hour Helpline 0800 800 5000.

The TVSK assures all Instructors/Officials that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation

- A criminal investigation
- A child protection investigation
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

5.1 Action if there are concerns

The following action should be taken if there are concerns:

Are you concerned about the behaviour of a parent or carer? If yes;

- Report your concerns to the TVSK Child Protection Officer. If this person is not available, the person being told of or discovering the abuse should contact social services or the police immediately. Social services and/or the police will advise on how best to involve parents/carers and deal with the situation.
- Record what has been said, or what has been seen. Include dates and times. Send a copy to social services within 48 hours and a copy to the TVSK.

5.2 Poor practice

If, the following considerations and consultations with TVSK, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; the TVSK Child Protection Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue.

Allegations should be reported to the TVSK Child Protection Officer in the first instance for the TVSK to guide action and to enable the TVSK to maintain central records and for monitoring purposes.

5.3 Suspected abuse

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either an Instructor or an Official should be reported to the TVSK Child Protection Officer, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.

The TVSK Child Protection Officer will refer the allegation to the social services department who may involve the police, or go directly to the police or social services out-of-hours duty service.

The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department. [In cases of suspected abuse within the family social services department/police must give advice on who should contact when].

5.4 Confidentiality

Every effort will 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 TVSK Child Protection Officer
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- The person making the allegation
- Social services/police
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child) *

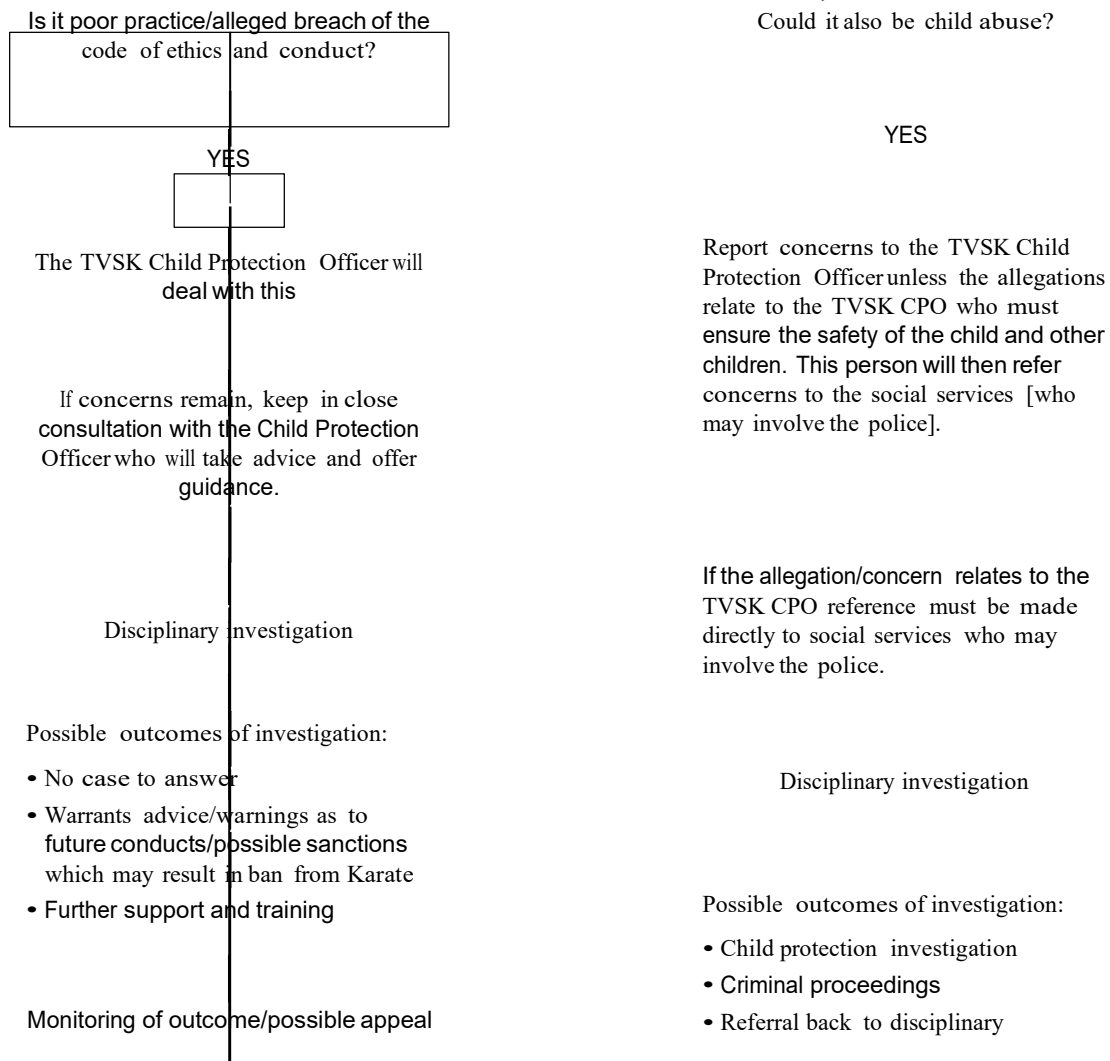
*seek social services advice on who should approach alleged abuser.

Information will be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated and secure).

If you do not know who to turn to for advice or are worried about sharing your concerns with a senior colleague, you should contact the social services direct (or the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000, or Childline on 0800 1111).

5.5 What to do if there are concerns

Are you concerned about the behaviour of a member of staff or volunteer? Yes;



Information passed to the social service or the police must be as helpful as possible, hence the necessity for making a detailed record at the time of the disclosure/concern. Information should include the following:

- Name of child
- Details of child (age and date of birth, ethnic group, any relevant disability or special need)
- Home address and telephone number
- Is the person making the report expressing their own concerns or those of someone else
- The nature of the allegation (date, time, place, special factors and other relevant information)
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, fiction and hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or possible injuries (including behavioural and indirect signs)
- Witnesses to the incident(s)
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred
- Parental contact (what has been said)
- Has anybody else been consulted, if so record details
- If it is not the child making the report, has the child concerned been spoken to and if so what was said
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser (record details)

Allegations of previous abuse

Allegations of previous abuse may be made sometime after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is still currently working with children)

Where such an allegation is made, the Instructor should follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the Social Services or the police. This is because other children, either within or outside the sport, may be at risk from this person.

Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act 1999.

5.6 Defining child abuse

Child abuse is when an adult harms a child or young person. There are four main type of abuse:

Physical abuse

This includes being hit, kicked, shaken or punched, or given harmful drugs or alcohol.

Emotional abuse

This includes being called names all the time, being threatened or being shouted at or made to feel small.

Sexual abuse

This includes being touched in a way you don't like by an adult or young person, being forced to have sex, or being made to look at sexual pictures or videos. For some disabled children, it includes if a person helping them to use the toilet touched them more than was needed.

Neglect

Is when a child is not looked after properly, including having no place to stay, or not enough food to eat, or clothes to keep them warm. It also includes if the child is not given medical care when they need it, including medication. For some disabled children, it could include if their carer took away the things they needed for everyday life - like their wheelchair or communication board. Or not helping a disabled child who needed help using the toilet.

Bullying

Is also a form of abuse. Bullying includes hitting or threatening a child with violence, taking their things, calling them names or insulting them, making them do things they won't want to do, and deliberately humiliating or ignoring them.

Common Signs of Abuse

Every child is unique, so behavioural signs of abuse will vary from child to child. In addition, the impact of abuse is likely to be influenced by the child's age, the nature and extent of the abuse, and the help and support the child receives. However, there are some behaviours that are commonly seen in children and young people who have been abused.

- The child appears distrustful of a particular adult, or a parent or a coach with whom you would expect there to be a close relationship
- He or she has unexplained injuries such as bruising, bites or burns - particularly if these are on part of the body where you would not expect them
- If he or she has an injury which is not explained satisfactory or properly treated
- Deterioration in his or her physical appearance or a rapid weight gain or loss
- Pains, itching, bruising or bleeding in or near the genital area
- A change in the child's general behaviour. For example, they may become unusually quiet and withdrawn, or unexpectedly aggressive. Such changes can be sudden or gradual.
- If he or she refuses to remove clothing for normal activities or wants to keep covered up in warm weather
- If he or she shows inappropriate sexual awareness or behaviour for their age
- Some disabled children may not be able to communicate verbally about abuse they may be experiencing or have witnessed. It is therefore important to observe these children for signs other than "telling".

The above signs should be seen as a possible indication of abuse and not as a confirmation. Changes in a child's behaviour can be the result of a wide range of factors.

Visible signs such as bruising or other injuries cannot be taken as proof of abuse. For example some disabled children may show extreme changes in behaviour, or be more accident prone, as a result of their impairment.

TVSK has a responsibility to act on any concerns.

A child or young person may also try to tell a person directly about abuse. It is very important to listen carefully and respond sensibly.

5.7 Responding to the child

- Do not panic - react calmly so as not to frighten the child
- Acknowledge that what the child is doing is difficult, but that they are right to confide in you
- Reassure the child that they are not to blame
- Make sure that, from the outset, you can understand what the child is saying
- Be honest straight away and tell the child you cannot make promises that you will not be able to keep
- Do not promise that you keep the conversation secret. Explain that you will need to involve other people and that you will need to write things down
- Listen to and believe the child; take them seriously
- Do not allow your shock or distaste to show
- Keep any questions to a minimum, but do clarify any facts or words that you do not understand - do not speculate or make assumptions
- Avoid closed questions (i.e. questions which invite yes or no answers)
- Do not probe for more information than is offered
- Encourage the child, to use its own words
- Do not make negative comments about the alleged abuser
- End the disclosure and ensure that the child is either being collected or is capable of going home alone
- Do not approach the alleged abuser

False allegations of abuse do occur, but they are rare. You should always take immediate action if a child says or indicates that he or she is being abused, or you have reason to suspect that this is the case. This may involve dealing with the child, his parent or carer, colleagues at your club/organisation, teachers, external agencies or the media.

Children who are being abused will only tell people they trust and with whom they feel safe. As a coach you will often share a close relationship with students and may therefore be the sort of person in whom a child might place their trust. Children want abuse to stop. By listening and taking what a child is telling you seriously, you will already be helping to protect them.

Timing and Location

It is understandable that the child may want to see you alone, away from others. The child may therefore approach you at the end of a session when everyone is going home, or may arrive deliberately early at a time when they think you will not be busy. However, a disclosure is not just a quick chat, it will take time and usually has further consequences. Bear in mind that you may also need to attend to other students/children, check equipment or set up an activity - you cannot simply leave a session unattended.. Therefore, try to arrange to speak to the child at an appropriate time,

Location is very important. Although it is important to respect the child's need for privacy, you also need to protect yourself against potential allegation. So not listen to the child's disclosure in a completely private place - try to ensure that other members of staff are present or at least nearby.

All records should:

- Be written as soon as possible, signed and dated
- Clearly distinguished between fact, observation, allegation and opinion
- Note the name, date, the event, a record of what was said, and any action taken in cases of suspected abuse
- Be held separately from main records
- Be exempt from open access

5.8 Internal enquiries and suspension

The TVSK Child Protection Officer 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 TVSK Disciplinary Committee (to be convened upon receipt of allegation and chaired by the Child Protection Officer) 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; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the TVSK Disciplinary Committee will reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. **The welfare of children shall always remain paramount.**

5.9 Action if bullying is suspected



The same procedure should be followed as set out in the section relating to responding to suspicions or allegations, if bullying is suspected. All settings in which children are provided with services or are living away from home should have rigorously enforced anti-bullying strategies in place.

Remember: In all Child Protection issues

- Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis only.
- Ensure the TVSK Child Protection Officer follows up with social services.

Appendices

Appendix 1

	<h1 style="margin: 0;">Thames Valley Shotokan Karate</h1>	
CONCERN/ALLEGATION RECORD FORM		
<p>Please complete the following if you have received a concern or have received an allegation that relates to behaviour/actions towards a child or young person.</p>		
Your Name _____		
Date _____ Your Position _____		
Name of Child or Young Person _____		
Address _____		
Postcode _____		
Date of Birth _____ Ethnic Origin _____		
Any Relevant Disability or Special Needs _____		
Actions Taken on Receipt of Allegation/Concern		
Date of Receipt of Allegation/Concern _____		
Action/Response:		
External Agencies Contacted		
Social Services	Location: Name/Contact No. Advice Received:	Date: Time:
Police	Location: Name/Contact No. Advice Received:	Date: Time:
Local Authority	Location: Name/Contact No. Advice Received:	Date: Time:
C.P.S.I.	Location: Name/Contact No. Advice Received:	Date: Time: