

MX Fencing Club

Sabre Fencing Club in Kent

mxfencing@gmail.com

**MX Fencing Safeguarding Policy Statement**

**MX Fencing Club** has a duty of care to safeguard all children and adults involved with the **MX Fencing Club** from harm. Everyone has a right to protection, and the needs of anyone with disabilities and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account.

**MX Fencing Club** will ensure the safety and protection of all involved in **MX Fencing Club**

through adherence to the British Fencing Safeguarding Policy adopted by **MX Fencing Club.** A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).

In pursuit of these aims, **MX Fencing** has adopted the [British Fencing Safeguarding Policy](https://www.britishfencing.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/BF-Safeguarding-Policy-October-2022-approved.pdf) as a guide in the creating of this policy.

In addition, this document draws on elements of the following policies from British Fencing:

* [Anti-bulling](https://www.britishfencing.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/BF-Anti-Bullying-Policy-v2.0-September-2022.pdf)
* [Physical contact](https://www.britishfencing.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/4_physical_contact.pdf)
* [Photography](https://www.britishfencing.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/8_photography_policy.pdf)
* [Responding to concerns](https://www.britishfencing.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/11_procedures_for_responding_to_concerns.pdf)
* [Whistleblowing](https://www.britishfencing.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/17_whistleblowing_procedure.pdf)
* [Information sharing](https://www.britishfencing.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/25_information_sharing.pdf)

**Policy aims**

**The aim of the MX Fencing Safeguarding Policy is to promote good practice:**

* Providing all involved with the club with appropriate safety and protection, and especially children and vulnerable adults whilst in the care of **MX Fencing Club**
* Allow all staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection safeguarding issues.
* Broadly, the policy aims to safeguard against the four abuse categories:
	+ Physical
	+ Sexual
	+ Emotional
	+ Neglect
* Key committee members are appropriately trained in the following areas:
	+ FGM (Female Genital Mutilation)
	+ Breast ironing (also known as breast flattening)
	+ Prevent duty (prevention of recruitment into terrorism)
	+ Forced marriage
	+ Cuckooing (infiltration of criminals into a vulnerable person’s home)

**Who to contact?**

Below is a list of contacts but it is not prescriptive. Speak to who you are comfortable speaking to, be that a coach, Club Welfare Officer or the Club Safeguarding Officer. Each are trained to ensure any concern is treated appropriately and in accordance with this policy. The Club Safeguarding Officer will be informed as part of that process.

To reach individuals, email MXFencing@gmail.com and address your subject line to the person you wish to contact. It will be forwarded to them without delay.

* **Club Safeguarding Officer:** Rob Shimmin
	+ His/her role is to create procedures that ensure the safeguarding of all our fencers and their coaches and to make it easy to report any concerns.
	+ The Club Safeguarding Officer is supported by Welfare Champions Hayley McAuley and Alice Lancaster.
	+ The Club Safeguarding Officer is elected at the AGM and has provided a satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Enhanced Certificate.
	+ He/she shall hold the minimum welfare and safeguarding certification as required by British Fencing to fulfil the role of Club Safeguarding Officer.
	+ He/she shall be committed to continuous training provided by British Fencing.
* **Club Welfare Champions:** Hayley McAuley and Alice Lancaster.
	+ Club Welfare Champions work with the Club Safeguarding Officer in the execution of his/her duties.
* **Coaches:** Rob Partridge, Charlie Gellett, Alice Lancaster
	+ All our coaches are required to hold current British Fencing safeguarding training
* **British Fencing:** If for any reason a fencer or parent feels uncomfortable discussing an issue with any of the above, they can contact British Fencing’s Lead Safeguarding Officer.
	+ The Lead Safeguarding Officer is Liz Behnke. 24h safeguarding number: 07526 003030, Non Emergency - 077177 40125. Email: Safeguarding@britishfencing.com

**Good practice guidelines**

All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

**Good practice means:**

* Always working in an open environment avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication.
* Treating all members equally with respect and dignity.
* Always putting the welfare of each young person first.
* Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with players (eg it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them).
* Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust and empowering members to share in decision making.
* Making sport fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
* Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the Coach Education Program. If it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the fencer is constantly moving, fencers should always be consulted and their agreement gained.
* Keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance.
* Involving parents/carers wherever possible. For example, encouraging them to take responsibility for their children in the changing rooms. If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure parents, teachers, coaches or officials work in pairs.
* Ensuring that if mixed teams are taken away for the day or night, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff. However, remember that same gender abuse can also occur.
* Ensuring that at tournaments or residential events, adults should not enter children’s rooms or invite children into their rooms.
* Being an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
* Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
* Recognizing 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 administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
* 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.

**Practices to be avoided**

The following should be **avoided** except in emergencies. If a case arises where these situations are

unavoidable (eg the 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), it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the club or the child’s parents.

**Otherwise, avoid:**

* Spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.
* Taking or dropping off a child to an event.

**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 anyone to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
* Make sexually suggestive comments to a member, even in fun.
* Reduce anyone to tears as a form of control.
* Allow allegations made by a member 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.

**NB** 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 child 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 you should report this immediately to another colleague and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child are informed:**

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

**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 young and disabled sportspeople in vulnerable positions. All clubs should be vigilant and any concerns should to be reported to the Club Safeguarding Officer.

Video as a coaching aid: there is no intention to prevent club coaches and teachers using video

equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, performers and their parents/carers should be made aware that this is part of the coaching program and such films should be stored safely.

**Recruitment and training of staff and volunteers**

**MX Fencing Club** recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse members in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working within the club.

Those likely to be working directly with children are required to produce an Enhanced DBS Certificate. In addition, the Club Safeguarding Officer has a current Enhanced DBS Certificate, specific to MX Fencing.

**Interview and induction**

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

* Their qualifications should be substantiated.
* The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified.
* They should sign up to **MX Fencing Club’**s Code of Conduct.
* Child protection procedures are explained and training needs are identified.

**Training**

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

**MX Fencing Club requires:**

* Coaching staff to attend a recognised 3-hour good practice and child protection awareness training workshop, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of a positive culture towards good practice and child protection.
* Coaches and the Safeguarding Officer commit to ongoing training as guided by British Fencing.
* Relevant personnel (coaches) to undergo national first aid training (where necessary).
* Attendance of update training when necessary. Information about meeting training needs can be obtained from British Fencing.

**Responding to allegations or suspicions**

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in **MX Fencing Club**, in a paid or unpaid capacity, to

decide whether or not abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any

concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities.

**MX Fencing Club** will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who in

good faith reports his/her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a member.

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

* a criminal investigation
* a safeguarding investigation
* a disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the police and safeguarding investigation may well influence the disciplinary

investigation, but not necessarily.

**Action**

**1. Concerns about poor practice:**

* If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice, the Club Safeguarding Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue.
* If the allegation is about poor practice by the Club Safeguarding Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the Chairperson who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

**2. Concerns about suspected abuse:**

* Any suspicion that a child or adult has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the Club Safeguarding Officer, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the member in question and any other member of the club who may be at risk.
* The Club Safeguarding Officer will refer the allegation to the social services department local to the individual at risk. This may then involve the police, or go directly to the police if out-of-hours.
* In the case of a child being at risk,the parents or carers of a child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.
* The Club Safeguarding Officer should also notify the relevant **British Fencing Association** officer who in turn will inform the **British Fencing Association** Club Safeguarding Officer who will deal with any media enquiries.
* If the Club Safeguarding Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the Chairperson. If the Chairperson is unavailable, the **British Fencing Association** Safeguarding Officer should be contacted. They will refer the allegation to social services.

**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 Safeguarding Officer
* the parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused, unless the disclosure relates to the parents
* the person making the allegation, social services and the police
* the **British Fencing Association** Safeguarding Officer

Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.

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

**Internal enquiries and suspension**

* The **MX Fencing Club** Safeguarding 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 **MX Fencing Club** 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, particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the **MX Fencing Club** Disciplinary Committee must 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 the club member should remain of paramount importance throughout.

**Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse**

* Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, parents and members of staff may need. Use of helplines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process. The British Association for Counselling Directory is available from The British Association for Counselling, 1 Regent Place, Rugby CV21 2PJ, Tel: 01788 550899, Fax: 01788 562189, Email: bac@bacp.co.uk, Internet: www.bacp.co.uk
* Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.

**Allegations of previous abuse**

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (eg 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 club 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 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.

**Action if bullying is suspected**

If bullying is suspected, the same procedure should be followed as set out in 'Responding to suspicions or allegations' above.

**Action to help the victim and prevent bullying in sport:**

* Take all signs of bullying very seriously.
* Encourage all club members to speak and share their concerns. Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority.
* Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully(ies) separately.
* Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else. Ask open questions, not leading ones.
* Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when).
* Report any concerns to the Club Safeguarding Officer or the school (wherever the bullying is occurring).

**Action towards the bully(ies):**

* Talk with the bully(ies), explain the situation, and try to get the bully(ies) to understand the

consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim(s).

* Inform the bully(ies)’s parents.
* Insist on the return of 'borrowed' items and that the bully(ies) compensate the victim.
* Provide support for the victim's coach.
* Impose sanctions as necessary.
* Encourage and support the bully(ies) to change behaviour.
* Hold meetings with the families to report on progress.
* Inform all organisation members of action taken.
* Keep a written record of action taken.

**3. Concerns outside the immediate sporting environment (eg a parent or carer):**

* Report your concerns to the Club Safeguarding Officer, who should contact social services or the police as soon as possible.
* See 4. below for the information social services or the police will need.
* If the Club Safeguarding Officer is not available, the person being told of or discovering the abuse should contact social services or the police immediately.
* Social services and the Club Safeguarding Officer will decide how to involve the parents/carers.
* The Club Safeguarding Officer should also report the incident to British Fencing
* The governing body should ascertain whether or not the person/(s) involved in the incident play a role in **MX Fencing Club** and act accordingly.
* Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis only.
* See 4. below regarding information needed for social services.

**4. Information for social services or the police about suspected abuse:**

* To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following:
* The club member's name, age and date of birth.
* The club member's home address and telephone number.
* Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
* The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.
* Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
* A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
* Details of witnesses to the incidents.
* The club member’s account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
* Have the parents been contacted (in the case of a child)?
* If so, what has been said?
* Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details.
* If the club member was not the person who reported the incident, has the club member been spoken to? If so, what was said?
* Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.
* Where possible referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

If you are worried about sharing concerns about abuse with a senior colleague, you can contact social

services or the police direct, or the **NSPCC Child Protection** Helpline on **0808 800 5000**, or **Childline** on **0800 1111**.

**Parents and Chaperones for children.**

1. What follows are guidelines, not rules cast in stone. Exceptions may be made, but there must be careful consideration to ensure that the children remain safe.
2. These guidelines apply to MX Fencing organised trips. For BFA organised trips (or the BFA part of an organised trip), BFA rules and guidelines shall apply.
3. For what follows, "Parent" includes legal guardian or person who has been appointed by the parent to act as parent, as part of an arrangement that MX Fencing is not party to.
4. The existing MX Fencing Safeguarding policy still applies, particularly with respect to overnight accommodation.
5. In general, our preferred method is for children to be accompanied by parents, particularly for U14, with no exceptions for U12. We recognise that from the age of 14, there are times when it is appropriate and/or necessary for children to travel without parents.
6. Parents travelling with children will remain responsible for those children.
7. For trips with up to three children without parents, a single individual may act as coach and chaperone, while taking into account the gender of the coach and children.
8. For trips with more than three children without parents, a chaperone is required for every eight children of each gender or part thereof, coaches may not be chaperones for more than three children. For large trips, one individual should be trip manager (may be a coach).
9. All chaperones must have full DSB clearance. Their responsibility on a trip is to all the children without parents, not just their own offspring.
10. The chaperone(s) have a full set of personal details, contacts, medical information, and medical emergency authorisation for children without parents.
11. The parents of these children have full details of the chaperone's contacts and itinerary.
12. At the trip end, the chaperone(s) ensure there is a clear handover of children without parents to their parents or BFA trip officials as applicable.