

# Child Welfare Policy Statement

## *Malling MX Fencing Club*

### **General Statement:**

Malling MX Fencing Club is committed to ensuring that it provides a safe environment for children<sup>1</sup> to learn in, identifies children who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm and takes appropriate action to see that such children are kept safe, particularly whilst fencing at the club and at competitions. 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.

In pursuit of these aims, the club has adopted the British Fencing CPP and procedures. These can be found in full here: [http://britishfencing.com/uploads/files/673\\_amendedpolicy\\_23.5.06.pdf](http://britishfencing.com/uploads/files/673_amendedpolicy_23.5.06.pdf)  
Malling MX Fencing Club is a current member of the British Fencing Association. Coaches are required to also be members and be on the registered list of BFA Coaches, available on request from [headoffice@britishfencing.com](mailto:headoffice@britishfencing.com) or 0208 742 3032.

It is important to us that all members feel that their opinion is valued and feedback is welcomed. We do not want anyone to be hesitant about voicing their concerns and believe that the safety and happiness of the child is paramount.

**Do not fear that your child will be in any way discriminated against because you have raised a concern.**

### **Policy Aims:**

The aim of the Malling MX Fencing Club Child Welfare Policy is to promote good practise:

- Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of Malling MX Fencing Club
- Allow all staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues

### **Who to contact?**

Contact details for the club's current Welfare Officer will be displayed in the governance section of the website as well as regularly being included in information sent out to fencers and parents. The Welfare Officer will be elected at the AGM (typically held on the Wednesday of the October Half Term). They will be expected to submit to a satisfactory CRB clearance check and to attend, as a minimum, a 'Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport' workshop. In addition to ensuring that information about this policy is displayed frequently at club nights, they will be responsible for ensuring that all club officers are adhering to the relevant code of conduct.

Any concerns raised with the Coach, Committee or Welfare Officer will be taken seriously by them. If, for any reason, a fencer or parent feels uncomfortable discussing an issue with a coach, or contacting the club welfare officer, they can contact British Fencing<sup>2</sup> who will be able to immediately furnish them with the email address and phone number of the current BFA Welfare Officer who will be able to offer further advice and guidance, and take action where necessary.

All coaches are required to sign the British Fencing Coaches Code of Conduct (see Appendix 1). This will be formally done at the club's AGM and presented to the new committee. Parents should feel free to remind the coach of the code of conduct if they feel it is being neglected.

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<sup>1</sup>A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).

<sup>2</sup>[headoffice@britishfencing.com](mailto:headoffice@britishfencing.com) or 0208 742 3032

## **What should I do if I am concerned about the behaviour of students towards one another?**

The club has adopted the BFA Anti-Bullying Policy (see Appendix 2). The club aims to provide a safe, calm and friendly learning environment where positive behaviour and teamwork is promoted.

### **Coaches will:**

- Take the problem seriously
- Investigate any incidents
- Talk to the bullies and victims separately

### **Decide on appropriate action, such as:**

- Obtain an apology from the bully(ies) to the victim
- Inform parents of the bully(ies)
- Insist on the return of items 'borrowed' or stolen
- Insist bullies compensate the victim
- Hold club or class discussions about bullying
- Provide support for the coach of the victim

Concerns about bullying are most usefully first raised with the Coach in charge. If they fail to act, or fail to act successfully the Club President or Welfare Officer can be contacted (details available on Club website in Governance section or via website 'Comments' box). They will then investigate and if necessary, take further steps. These might include, for example, sitting in on a session; arranging for an additional or alternate coach to take the class, splitting the class into smaller groups or arranging for the coach to attend an informative course for development of their skills; arranging for an anti-bullying expert to come into the club to talk to conduct a workshop.

## **What should I do if I am concerned about the behaviour of a Committee member?**

Committee members are expected to act as good role models and ambassadors for the club. A description of their role is set out in the club constitution (which can be found in the governance section of the website or on request from the Club President or Hon. Club Secretary) and a code of conduct for all BFA members can be found on the BFA Website (Appendix 3). The President is a useful person to contact in this situation and their details can be found on the club website in the governance section or on request from BFA. If the issue involves the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult, the Welfare Officer should be contacted. Provision for a 'vote of no confidence' in a committee can be made by calling an EGM (see the Club Constitution).

## **What should I do if I think a Coach or Volunteer Coach is acting inappropriately?**

It is often confusing to know who it is appropriate to contact in this situation. Much of it depends on the degree of concern felt by the person who wishes to discuss the issue. Useful and informative guidance on this matter is contained in Appendix A of the BFA policy. See also Appendix 5.0 , 'whistle-blowing' [http://britishfencing.com/uploads/files/673\\_amendedpolicy\\_23.5.06.pdf](http://britishfencing.com/uploads/files/673_amendedpolicy_23.5.06.pdf).

Coaches will be happy to discuss any concerns you may have and are happy to be contacted by phone or email (usually available through the Club President). They will often also be free to chat 10-20 minutes before or after a session. Club coaches are expected to take any concerns or preferences seriously and will always try to work with the parent in the best interests of the child. The interests of the child, or children, should always be put before the interests of the coach. If in even the slightest doubt, consult the Club Welfare Officer.

### **Individual Lessons:**

Individual lessons with Club Coaches are available at several other locations. Although these lessons do not always take place at the club or on official club nights, coaches are still expected to follow British Fencing CPP and procedures and should also be able to show proof of separate insurance on request. Maitre Philip Shepherd-Foster, Meg Shepherd-Foster and Chris Schofield all work for Elite Sabre Coaching Limited. For further information about their individual lesson policy, see Appendix 4.0.

## **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 be reported to the Child Welfare 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

# Appendix 1.0 – taken from 'Welfare Pack' provided by British Fencing. Last updated 25.05.12.

## British Fencing Coaches Code of Conduct

This Code does not supersede the Person Code of Conduct but is in addition to it.

- All fencing coaches must ensure that every individual particularly all young/vulnerable people in their care are respected as individuals and treated equitably and with dignity at all times. They should ensure that all training complies with the current guidance issued by British Fencing and does not form any sort of abuse (emotional, physical, sexual, bullying, neglect etc.)
- All relationships should be based on respect, honesty and openness.
- All fencing coaches should recognise the personal development of young fencers takes priority even over the development of their performance.
- All fencing coaches should encourage young/vulnerable fencers to be responsible for their own behaviour and performance.
- All fencing coaches should have an ongoing commitment to their own training and work with others (i.e. referees, medical advisors, sports scientists, parents and other coaches) to ensure the safety and enjoyment of all fencers in order that they can develop both within fencing as well as outside.
- All fencing coaches should respect a fencer's need for confidentiality.
- All fencing coaches should work within their own competency and qualifications.
- All fencing coaches should strive to be positive role models, working within British Fencing guidance displaying high standards of personal behaviour.
- All fencing coaches have a responsibility to develop in partnership with all fencers particularly parents and young/vulnerable fencers clear expectations both on and off the piste and what the young/vulnerable fencer is entitled in return to expect of the coach.
- All fencing coaches should promote good behaviour within the rules of Fencing.

### British Fencing coaches should **never**:

- Invite a child to your home or secluded place when they will be alone with you.
- Share a bedroom with a child
- Neglect their responsibility for any child under their care at any time
- Bully a child either physically or verbally, nor reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games.
- Make sexually suggestive remarks to a young/vulnerable fencer – even in fun.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Allow the use of inappropriate language to go unchallenged
  - Do things of a personal nature for a fencer that they can do for themselves unless specifically requested to do so and then with the utmost discretion
- Vacate the venue until the supervision of the safe dispersal of all the fencers is complete (NB delegation of this duty may be allocated to another official)
- Spend excessive amounts of time with individual fencers away from others
- Abuse the coaches position of power or trust in any way

## **Appendix 20 – taken from 'Welfare Pack' provided by British Fencing. Last updated 25.05.12.**

### **AntiBullying Policy**

Bullying is not easy to define, can take many forms and is usually repeated over a period of time. The three main types of bullying are: physical (eg 'hard hitting' pushing) verbal ( eg racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling) and emotional ( eg isolating an individual from activities). They will all include:

- Deliberate hostility and aggression towards the victim
- A victim who is weaker than the bully or bullies
- An outcome which is always painful and distressing for the victim

Bullying behaviour may also include:

- Other forms of violence
- Deliberate 'hard hitting'
- Biased refereeing
- Sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing or theft
- Tormenting, ridiculing, humiliation
- Racial taunts, graffiti gestures
- Unwanted physical contact or abusive or offensive comment of a sexual nature

Emotional and verbal bullying is difficult to cope with or prove. It is of paramount importance that all clubs should adopt an antibullying policy to which all its members, coaches, players staffing volunteers and parents subscribe to and accept

## Appendix 3.0 – taken from 'Welfare Pack' provided by British Fencing. Last updated 25.05.12.

### BF Code of Conduct

For all Home Nations, Regions, Counties, Clubs, Members and Persons:-

- must ensure that (Fencing) the Sport is conducted in accordance with disciplined and sporting behaviour and acknowledge that it is not sufficient to rely solely upon the organisers to maintain those principles;
- shall co-operate in ensuring that the spirit of the (Rules of Fencing) Laws of the Sport are upheld and refrain from selecting players guilty of foul play;
- shall observe the (Rules of Fencing) Laws of the Sport at all times;
- shall accept and observe the authority and decisions of referees, organisers and all other fencing disciplinary bodies.
- shall not publish or cause to be published criticism of the manner in which a referee handled a fight;
- shall not publish or cause to be published criticism of the manner in which the Board or any other fencing disciplinary body handled or resolved any dispute or disciplinary matter resulting from a breach of the Bye-Laws, Regulations, or Laws of the Sport;
- shall not engage in any conduct or any activity on or off the piste that may impair public confidence in the honest and orderly conduct of a fight, competition, Championship or Series or in the integrity and good character of any Person;
- shall promote the reputation of the Sport and take all possible steps to prevent it from being brought into disrepute.
- shall not commit a Doping Offence as defined in the FIE/BFA doping regulations.
- shall not abuse, threaten or intimidate a referee, organiser or other official, whether on or off the field of play;
- shall not use crude or abusive language or gestures towards referees, organisers or other officials or spectators;
- shall not do anything which is likely to intimidate, offend, insult, humiliate or discriminate against any other Person at an event on the ground of their religion, race, colour or national or ethnic origin;
- shall not do anything which adversely affects the Sport of Fencing, the Board, any member or any commercial partner of the Sport;
- Each body within British Fencing is under an obligation to;
- Comply with and ensure that each of its members comply with this Code of Conduct; and
- Adopt procedures to monitor compliance with and impose sanctions for breaches of the Code of Conduct by Persons under its jurisdiction.

## Appendix 4.0 – Elite Sabre Coaching Limited Statement on policy. Last updated 25.05.12.

Elite Sabre Coaching Ltd Coaches aim to follow the best practise set out by the BFA. This includes CPP and procedures, anti-bullying and equality<sup>3</sup>. The company take these responsibilities seriously and any concerns or complaints raised will be dealt with without prejudice. Any employee found to be contravening the BFA Coaches Code of Conduct, or endangering the safety of themselves or others, would be subject to disciplinary procedures that may lead to dismissal.

Our company motto is 'Never Miss the Point' by which we mean, that fencing should be enjoyable, as well as being challenging and rewarding. It is important to us that students are healthy, fit and are able to achieve their goals. We work with Strength and Conditioning Coaches, as well as Sports Psychologists, on a regular basis and aim to provide students with the best experience of fencing possible as well as a wealth of opportunities that are available to all. We believe that all students have equal potential to excel.

All Elite Sabre Coaching Ltd Coaching Staff have been CRB cleared, are BFA Qualified, have attended a Safeguarding and Protecting Children course within the last 3 years and are first aid trained.

### Parents should expect:

- coaches to check the area where the lesson will occur for hazards, and to take steps to mitigate them, before the lesson begins
- coaches to treat all students equally, without prejudice or discrimination
- coaches to give all students equal time and attention<sup>4</sup>
- coaches to be encouraging and positive in their feedback
- coaches to avoid making comparisons between students that are disparaging
- school, leisure centre or club procedures to be followed in addition to BFA best practise guidance
- a first aid kit to be present
- the coach to be in Elite Sabre Coaching/MX/National Academy uniform
- kit to be safety checked on a regular basis<sup>5</sup>
- to be invited, and encouraged, to sit in on lessons and/or observe from a balcony
- to be informed of any accident, incident or injury concern that has occurred, or been observed, during a lesson
- to be asked for written consent before photos are taken and for these photos to be used responsibly
- for information or photos to be removed immediately on request
- to provide medical details, permission to act in case of emergency and an emergency contact number before sessions as well as permission for the lesson to occur
- to be able to request a lesson with any coach<sup>6</sup>
- to provide the student with feedback as well as setting regular realistic aims and goals

### Coaches would appreciate:

- parents sitting in on lessons, or at least occasional visits/observations during lessons
- parents arriving to pick up their child 10 minutes before the end of the lesson
- parents informing coaches of any niggles, injuries or concerns before the lesson occurs
- students being members of the British Fencing Association

The company work at a BFA registered club and the club welfare officer can still be contacted about any concerns that involve MX Club Fencers (Dacey@talk21.com 01622 20137056 Monktons Avenue, Maidstone. ME14 2QF). Alternatively, concerns can be raised with the one of the directors of the company ([www.elitesabrecoaching.co.uk](http://www.elitesabrecoaching.co.uk)) or with British Fencing [headoffice@britishfencing.com](mailto:headoffice@britishfencing.com) / 0208 742 3032. If the lesson takes place during school time, the school Child Protection Officer should be contacted.

[elitesabrecoaching@gmail.com](mailto:elitesabrecoaching@gmail.com)

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<sup>3</sup> <http://britishfencing.com/governance/welfare/>

<sup>4</sup> Relative to time of lesson booked.

<sup>5</sup> Minimum of once every half term.

<sup>6</sup> Different coaches are available at different times/places on different nights. It may not be possible for your child to have a lesson with that coach unless they attend a different session/time. Priority will usually be given to regular bookings.

## Appendix 5.0 – taken from 'Welfare Pack' provided by British Fencing. Last updated 25.05.12.

### Whistle-blowing

Everyone at some point in their own or their child's sporting life has concerns about things they observe within their sport. These may vary from simple bad manners to the outright dangerous and everything in between.

Often these concerns are relatively minor and can be easily resolved.

If you have any concerns with regard to the behaviour of any adult towards a young person whilst connected with fencing (wherever it might be), it is important that you share your concerns with British Fencing's Child Protection Officer. The earlier you express your concern the more likely it is that it can be resolved quickly and without potentially further harm to any young person.

Doing nothing about it may seem the easiest thing to do, but what concerns YOU may also be the concern of others: it won't go away and the situation could get worse.

All information received or discussed will be treated in confidence and only be shared with those individuals within the British Fencing Association or club(s) who will be able to manage and resolve the situation. On occasion it may be necessary to seek advice from or inform the statutory agencies e.g. Social Services or the Police.

All concerns will be taken seriously and be managed according to British Fencing's Child Protection Policies and Procedures.

British Fencing is primarily concerned with the well being and safety of all members and participants in our sport, and will support anyone who in good faith, and where he/she has reasonable grounds for doing so, reports his/her concern that an adult is, or may be, abusing a child in any way, including bullying.

British Fencing will not discriminate against, victimize nor be judgmental of any official, volunteer or fencer who comes forward with genuine concerns.

Should you wish to put in writing your concerns, please address this to:

Child Protection Officer/Chair Disciplinary Committee  
British Fencing  
1 Baron's Court  
33 Rothschild Road  
London W4 5HT

Or email [ismaycowen@aol.com](mailto:ismaycowen@aol.com).

Please ensure that all correspondence is marked "Private & Confidential" "Addressee only"

If you would rather speak in person or by telephone, please initially email the above address with your contact number.

Everyone suffers when malpractice occurs in an organization. It is important that those who act wrongly are dealt with appropriately. Help BF to stamp out bad practice and help maintain BF's good standards and reputation.