

ATLAS MARTIAL ARTS ACADEMY

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

Safeguarding Procedure & Guidance Booklet

MAIN SAFEGUARDING LEAD	Elaine Barrow
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Academy Owner	Dean Hardwick
Gym Manager / Additional Contact	Shelley Pearson
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IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT A CHILD, DO NOT IGNORE IT. REPORT IT.

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1. PURPOSE

Atlas Martial Arts Academy is committed to providing a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment in which children and young people can participate in martial arts and develop their skills with confidence.

The welfare and safety of every child who attends Atlas Martial Arts Academy is of paramount importance.

This procedure sets out the arrangements that must be followed by coaches, instructors, volunteers, staff and anyone working with children when a safeguarding concern is identified, a child makes a disclosure, an allegation is made against an adult, there is concern about a child's welfare, or an incident occurs that may place a child at risk of harm.

This procedure applies to all children and young people under the age of 18 who attend, train at, visit or participate in activities organised by Atlas Martial Arts Academy.

2. OUR SAFEGUARDING COMMITMENT

Atlas Martial Arts Academy will:

- Put the welfare and safety of children first.
- Take all safeguarding concerns seriously.
- Listen to children and take their views seriously.
- Provide a safe and supportive training environment.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries between adults and children.
- Ensure staff and coaches understand their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Recruit people who are suitable to work with children.
- Undertake appropriate DBS checks where required.
- Provide appropriate safeguarding training and guidance.
- Record and respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns.
- Work with parents, carers, children's services, police and other relevant agencies when necessary.
- Never allow concerns about a child's welfare to be ignored.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

3. SAFEGUARDING LEADS AND KEY CONTACTS

MAIN SAFEGUARDING LEAD

Elaine Barrow

Telephone: 07852 102566

Email: eab54@hotmail.co.uk

Elaine Barrow is the main point of contact for safeguarding concerns at Atlas Martial Arts Academy. Any coach, volunteer, staff member, parent, child or visitor who has a safeguarding concern should raise it with Elaine Barrow as soon as possible.

ACADEMY OWNER

Dean Hardwick

The Academy Owner provides senior oversight and support for safeguarding arrangements.

GYM MANAGER / ADDITIONAL SAFEGUARDING CONTACT

Shelley Pearson

Shelley Pearson is an additional safeguarding contact and can receive safeguarding concerns where the Main Safeguarding Lead is unavailable.

If a safeguarding concern involves the Main Safeguarding Lead, the concern must not be reported to that person. It should instead be raised with the Academy Owner or an appropriate external safeguarding authority. If a concern involves the Academy Owner, it should be referred to the appropriate external safeguarding authority.

4. WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING?

Safeguarding means protecting children from abuse, neglect and other forms of harm while promoting their welfare, health and development.

Safeguarding concerns may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, domestic abuse, bullying, online abuse, grooming, child sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, coercive or controlling behaviour, harmful sexual behaviour, discrimination, radicalisation or extremism, self-harm or other serious welfare concerns, and abuse of a child with a disability or additional vulnerability.

A safeguarding concern does not need to involve an obvious injury. Changes in behaviour, communication, appearance or attendance may also be significant.

5. RECOGNISING A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN

- Unexplained or repeated injuries.
- Fearfulness or unusual anxiety.
- Sudden changes in behaviour.
- Withdrawal from other children.
- Aggressive or disruptive behaviour.
- Reluctance to attend training.
- Significant changes in attendance.
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour or language.
- A child appearing unusually tired, hungry or unkempt.
- A child expressing fear of someone.
- A child making comments suggesting they are being harmed.
- A disclosure of abuse or neglect.
- Concerning behaviour by an adult towards a child.

These indicators do not automatically mean abuse has occurred. They should, however, be taken seriously and reported in accordance with this procedure.

6. IF A CHILD DISCLOSES SOMETHING TO YOU

A child may choose to speak to a coach or another trusted adult because they feel safe with them.

DO:

- Stay calm.
- Listen carefully.
- Allow the child to speak in their own words.
- Take the child seriously.
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing by speaking to you.
- Explain that you may need to share the information with someone who can help keep them safe.
- Report the concern to Elaine Barrow, Main Safeguarding Lead, as soon as possible.
- Make a factual written record.

DO NOT:

- Promise to keep the information secret.
- Investigate the allegation yourself.
- Ask leading questions.
- Interrogate the child.
- Ask the child to repeat their disclosure unnecessarily.

- Confront the alleged perpetrator.
- Make assumptions about what has happened.
- Give your personal opinion about the allegation.

LISTEN – REASSURE – RECORD – REPORT

7. RECORDING A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN

All safeguarding concerns must be recorded as soon as reasonably possible.

- Date and time.
- Name of the child.
- Name of the person raising the concern.
- What was seen, heard or disclosed.
- The child's words wherever possible.
- Any relevant observations.
- Action taken.
- Who the concern was reported to.
- Date and time of the report.
- Any further action required.

Records must be factual. Staff must distinguish between FACT (what was seen, heard or said) and OPINION (what the person believes may have happened). Opinions should not be presented as facts.

Safeguarding records must be stored securely and only shared with people who have a legitimate safeguarding reason to receive them.

8. IMMEDIATE DANGER

If a child is in immediate danger or requires urgent medical assistance:

CALL 999 IMMEDIATELY.

Do not wait for permission from the Academy's Safeguarding Lead where doing so could place the child at further risk.

Once the immediate danger has been addressed, the safeguarding concern must also be reported to Elaine Barrow and, where necessary, the appropriate children's safeguarding authority.

9. REFERRING A CONCERN TO CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Where there is reasonable concern that a child may be suffering, or may be at risk of suffering, significant harm, the matter should be referred to the relevant local authority children's social care service.

Staff should not delay a referral simply because they are uncertain whether the concern meets a particular threshold.

Atlas Martial Arts Academy will cooperate with children's social care, police and other safeguarding agencies where information is requested or where sharing information is necessary to safeguard a child.

10. INFORMATION SHARING

Information relating to safeguarding must be handled carefully. However, confidentiality must never be used as a reason to withhold information where sharing is necessary to protect a child.

- Share information only when there is a legitimate safeguarding reason.
- Share information with the appropriate person or agency.
- Record what information was shared and why.
- Avoid unnecessary disclosure of sensitive information.

11. ALLEGATIONS AGAINST COACHES, STAFF OR VOLUNTEERS

Any allegation or concern that an adult working or volunteering with children may have harmed a child, behaved in a way that may have harmed a child, possibly committed an offence against a child, or behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm must be taken seriously.

The person receiving the allegation must not attempt to investigate it themselves.

The concern must be reported immediately to the Main Safeguarding Lead, Elaine Barrow, unless the allegation concerns Elaine. Where required, the matter should be referred to the relevant Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), children's social care or police.

12. LOW-LEVEL CONCERNS

Atlas Martial Arts Academy will also take seriously behaviour that may not meet the threshold for a formal safeguarding allegation but falls below the standards expected of adults working with children.

- Inappropriate language.
- Unnecessary personal communication with a child.
- Favouritism.
- Unnecessary physical contact.
- Repeatedly seeking to spend time alone with a child.
- Inappropriate social-media contact.
- Boundary-crossing behaviour.

Low-level concerns should be recorded and reported to Elaine Barrow. Patterns of behaviour may become significant even when individual incidents appear minor.

13. PHYSICAL CONTACT IN MARTIAL ARTS

Physical contact is an inherent part of many martial arts disciplines, including Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, grappling, wrestling and other combat sports.

All physical contact must be appropriate to the activity, necessary for coaching or safety, proportionate, professional, appropriate to the child's age and development, and conducted in a way that protects the child's

dignity.

Coaches should explain techniques clearly and avoid unnecessary physical contact. Children should never be made to feel uncomfortable, embarrassed or pressured into physical contact.

14. ONE-TO-ONE COACHING

Where possible, coaches should avoid being alone with a child in an isolated area.

- It should take place in an observable environment wherever possible.
- Another responsible adult should be aware that the session is taking place.
- Professional boundaries must be maintained.
- Communication should remain appropriate and related to the child's training or welfare.

Private meetings with children should never be used to create secrecy or dependency.

15. CHANGING ROOMS AND TOILETS

Adults should respect children's privacy when using changing and toilet facilities. Coaches and volunteers should not enter changing areas unnecessarily.

Where an adult must enter an area for safeguarding, emergency or welfare reasons, they should announce themselves where possible, explain why they need to enter, maintain the child's dignity and privacy, and follow the Academy's safeguarding principles.

Children should never be photographed or filmed in changing areas or toilets.

16. PHOTOGRAPHY, VIDEO AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Atlas Martial Arts Academy recognises the benefits of photographs and video in promoting the Academy and celebrating children's achievements.

- Appropriate parental/carer consent must be obtained where required.
- Children should not be photographed in changing areas or toilets.
- Personal devices should not be used inappropriately to photograph children.
- Images must never be used in a way that compromises a child's safety or dignity.
- Staff should not establish inappropriate private social-media relationships with children.
- Coaches should use approved Academy communication channels wherever possible.

Any concern regarding photography, filming or online contact must be reported.

19. SAFER RECRUITMENT

Atlas Martial Arts Academy will take reasonable steps to ensure that adults working with children are suitable to do so.

This may include:

- Identity checks.
- Relevant DBS checks.
- Verification of qualifications.
- Safeguarding awareness.
- Appropriate induction.
- Ongoing supervision.

A DBS check is only one part of safeguarding and does not replace appropriate supervision, training or professional judgement.

21. WHISTLEBLOWING

Anyone who has a genuine concern about safeguarding at Atlas Martial Arts Academy is encouraged to raise it.

A person should not be prevented from reporting a concern because they are worried about upsetting someone, the person involved is senior to them, they believe the concern may damage the Academy's reputation, or they are unsure whether the concern is serious enough.

If a person does not feel able to report the concern internally, they should contact the appropriate external safeguarding authority or police.

22. COMPLAINTS

Complaints relating to safeguarding will be treated seriously.

Where a complaint involves an allegation of abuse or risk of harm to a child, it must be dealt with under the safeguarding procedure rather than being treated solely as a normal customer complaint.

The Academy will cooperate with external agencies where appropriate.

23. CONFIDENTIALITY AND RECORD KEEPING

- Safeguarding records must be factual and accurate.
- Records must be dated.
- Records must be stored securely.
- Records must be accessible only to authorised people.
- Records must be retained in accordance with applicable legal and organisational requirements.

Safeguarding information must not be discussed casually with other parents, members or children.

24. SAFEGUARDING CONCERN REPORTING PROCESS

STEP 1 — CONCERN IDENTIFIED

A coach, volunteer, staff member, parent or child identifies a safeguarding concern.

STEP 2 — IMMEDIATE SAFETY

If the child is in immediate danger: CALL 999.

STEP 3 — LISTEN AND REASSURE

If the child has disclosed something, listen calmly and do not investigate.

STEP 4 — RECORD

Complete the safeguarding concern form as soon as possible.

STEP 5 — REPORT

Report the concern to Elaine Barrow – Main Safeguarding Lead. Telephone: 07852 102566. Email: eab54@hotmail.co.uk. If Elaine is unavailable, report to Shelley Pearson or Dean Hardwick.

STEP 6 — EXTERNAL REFERRAL

Where necessary, the concern will be referred to children's social care, the police, LADO or another appropriate safeguarding agency.

STEP 7 — FOLLOW UP

The Academy will ensure that appropriate safeguarding actions are followed through and recorded.

26. SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES FOR ALL COACHES

RECOGNISE — Take concerns seriously.

RESPOND — Listen calmly and appropriately.

RECORD — Write down the facts.

REPORT — Tell the appropriate safeguarding person.

REFER — Where necessary, involve children's services or the police.

REVIEW — Make sure appropriate safeguarding action has been taken.

27. EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Emergency Police / Ambulance / Fire: 999

Police non-emergency: 101

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000

Childline: 0800 1111

For safeguarding concerns requiring immediate intervention, contact the relevant local authority children's social care service or police.

Where a concern involves an adult working with children, the appropriate Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) should be contacted in accordance with local safeguarding arrangements.

28. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This procedure should be read alongside relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including:

- Children Act 1989.
- Children Act 2004.
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.
- Data Protection Act 2018.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.
- Current statutory information-sharing guidance.
- Relevant local safeguarding partnership procedures.
- Relevant DBS guidance and requirements.

29. REVIEW

This safeguarding procedure will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation or statutory guidance changes, there is a significant safeguarding incident, local safeguarding procedures change, the Academy's activities or structure change, or lessons are identified from an incident or concern.

Effective Date: 01 January 2026

Review Date: 01 January 2027

Academy Owner: Dean Hardwick

Main Safeguarding Lead: Elaine Barrow

Gym Manager / Additional Safeguarding Contact: Shelley Pearson

Signature: _____

Date: _____

25. SAFEGUARDING CONCERN FORM

Child's Name:

Date of Birth:

Date of Concern:

Time:

Name of Person Reporting:

Role:

Nature of concern:

What was seen/heard/disclosed?

Exact words used by the child, where possible:

Immediate action taken:

Who was the concern reported to?

Date/time reported:

External agency contacted, if applicable:

Date/time:

Reference number, if provided:

Signature:

Date:

QUICK SAFEGUARDING REFERENCE

MAIN SAFEGUARDING LEAD

Elaine Barrow

07852 102566

eab54@hotmail.co.uk

ADDITIONAL CONTACTS

Dean Hardwick – Academy Owner

Shelley Pearson – Gym Manager / Additional Safeguarding Contact

EMERGENCY

999 – If a child is in immediate danger or requires urgent emergency assistance.
Remember: Listen. Reassure. Record. Report.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE MASH CONTACT

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

For concerns about a child or young person who may be at risk of neglect, harm or abuse, contact Northamptonshire MASH.

Telephone

0300 126 7000

Email

MASH@nctrust.co.uk

Emergency

If a child is in immediate danger, call 999.

Out of hours

For urgent concerns outside normal hours, use 0300 126 7000.