

Phoenix School of Martial Arts (SMA)

Safeguarding Children Policy

Published 1st October 2026

Phoenix SMA is a member of the Cobra Martial Arts Association and so adopts it's practices and policies.

Commitment to Safeguarding

Phoenix School of Martial Arts are committed to safeguarding children and young people, and we expect everyone who works in our school/club to share this commitment. We take all welfare concerns seriously and encourages children and young people to talk to us about anything that worries them. We will always act in the best interests of the child.

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Principles

Phoenix School of Martial Arts acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance such as Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and complies with best practice requirements.

The policy recognises that the welfare and interests of children are paramount in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that regardless of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, socio-economic background, all children:

- have a positive and enjoyable experience in a safe and child centered environment.
- are protected from abuse whilst participating in martial arts within Phoenix School of Martial Arts or outside.
- Phoenix School of Martial Arts acknowledges that some children, including disabled children and young people or those from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare. As part of our safeguarding policy Phoenix School of Martial Arts will:
- promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

- ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people
- ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support provided to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern.
- ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored
- ensure information is shared with relevant agencies when necessary for child protection purposes
- prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals
- ensure our workforce is aware of all relevant legislation affecting those in Positions of Trust
- ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation

The policy and procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone involved in Phoenix School of Martial Arts. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the organisation.

Relevant Legislation & Statutory Guidance

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime 2021
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Sexual Offences Act 2003 (To include Section 22A – the expansion of Positions of Trust to include sports coaches)
- Data Protection Act 2018

Definitions

In England, Northern Ireland and Wales a child is someone under the age of 18, whether living with their families, in state care, or living independently (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023).

This generally applies in Scotland but in some cases, for example for parts of the Scottish Child Protection Process it will be 16.

Types of Abuse and Neglect

All school/club staff and volunteers should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

Abuse:

A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or

technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. They may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children. (See Peer-on-Peer abuse later in this document)

Position Of Trust:

As of 28 June 2022, the law in England and Wales states that those in a position of trust in sports organisations, such as a coach, cannot legally have a sexual relationship with young people they look after, under 18 years old. The Sexual Offences Act 2003 is amended as follows.

A person (A) is in a position of trust in relation to another person (B) if he/she coaches, teaches, trains, supervises or instructs B, on a regular basis, in a sport or a religion, and he/she knows that they coach, teach, train, supervise or instruct B, on a regular basis, in that sport or religion.

Physical abuse:

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional abuse:

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.

These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse:

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse.

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue.

Peer-on-Peer /Child-on-Child Abuse:

Peer-on-peer sexual abuse is a form of harmful sexual behaviour where sexual abuse takes place between children of a similar age or stage of development.

Child-on-child sexual abuse is a form of HSB that takes place between children of any age or stage of development.

Peer on peer / Child-on-child abuse occurs when a young person is exploited, bullied and / or harmed by their peers who are the same or similar age; everyone directly involved in peer-on-peer abuse is under the age of 18.

Related issues

In addition to the above categories, there are other forms of harm or abuse that should involve the police and other organisations working together to protect children. These include:

Bullying:

Bullying falls under four main categories, psychological, verbal, physical and cyberbullying and its effects can have far-reaching consequences. Bullying can have an impact on anyone, children and adults in school or at work. It can seriously affect someone's physical and mental health. Sustained bullying can cause stress, emotional issues, social problems, physical disorders and in some serious cases, self-harm or even death.

Child Exploitation:

Child exploitation refers to the use of children for someone else's advantage, gratification or profit often resulting in unjust, cruel and harmful treatment of the child. These activities are to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, moral or social-emotional development. It covers situations of manipulation, misuse, abuse, victimisation, oppression, or ill-treatment.

Child Criminal Exploitation:

Child Criminal Exploitation occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur using technology.

Child Sexual Exploitation:

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of sexual abuse of young people. It is not just something that affects teenage girls or specific groups and can happen in and out of school. It involves an individual or group coercing, manipulating and deceiving a child into sexual activity. Children as young as 8 have been sexually exploited.

Hate crimes:

Any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's race or perceived race; religion or perceived religion; sexual

orientation or perceived sexual orientation; disability or perceived disability and any crime motivated by hostility or prejudice against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender.

Abuse in domestic settings:

Much verbal, physical, emotional, and sexual abuse and neglect takes place in the home within the context of the intimate relationships between family members that take place within the home. Abuse between relationship partners is sometimes referred to as "partner abuse", "domestic violence", "relationship violence", or "family violence". Much child abuse and elder abuse takes place within the home as well.

Honour based violence:

Honour Based Abuse can take many forms, including child marriage, virginity testing, enforced abortion, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, as well as physical, sexual and economic abuse and coercive control.

Forced marriage:

A forced marriage is where one or both people do not or cannot consent to the marriage, and pressure, coercion or abuse is used to force them into marriage. The pressure put on people to marry against their will may be by physical/threat of physical harm to them or another. It can include the use of physical or sexual violence, use of emotional and/or psychological abuse and can include making someone feel like they are bringing 'shame' on their family if they do not agree to the marriage.

Note – Forced marriage should not be confused with an "arranged marriage" where both people agree and consent to marriage that may have been arranged within the couple's community of between their families.

Trafficking/ Modern Slavery:

Human Trafficking is defined as the arranging or facilitation of the travel of another person for the purposes of exploitation. 'Arranging' includes the facilitation, recruitment, transporting, transferring, harbouring or receiving of a child for the purpose of exploitation. It is irrelevant whether the child consents to the travel/movement. A child is trafficked if he/she is provided with the means to travel (ticket/taxi/money etc.) in order to carry out a criminal offence, i.e., to carry & sell drugs, to conceal weapons/stolen goods. A child cannot consent to being exploited & must not be judged as them freely making a choice.

Gang Violence/County Lines:

The term "Gang" does not have a precise definition. Section 34(5) Policing & Crime Act 2009, (amended by the Serious Crime Act 2015) states that someone/thing is 'gang related' if it occurs in the course of, or is otherwise related to, the activities of a group that:

- Consists of at least three people; and
- Has one or more characteristics that enable its members to be identified by others as a group.

- Many groups of people may share a community, friendship or common characteristics such as age, but an additional feature of a gang is that it carries out criminal activity.

'County Lines' is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line'. They are likely to exploit children and adults to move [and store] the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

Radicalisation

Religious or political indoctrination used to coerce individuals for purposes of promoting violence/civil unrest/racial disharmony.

Poor practice

Sometimes, your concerns may relate to poor practice, where an adult or another young person's behaviour is inappropriate and may be causing distress to a child or young person. In the application of this policy, poor practice includes any behaviour which contravenes the principles of this document or the relevant Phoenix School of Martial Arts Code of Conduct or brings Martial Arts into disrepute, or which infringes an individual's rights. Where poor practice is serious or repeated this could also constitute abuse and should be reported immediately. Examples of poor practice towards students, which should never be

Sanctioned include:

- use of excessive, physical or humiliating punishments/behaviour;
- failure to act when you witness possible abuse or bullying;
- being unaware of, or breaching, any relevant policy such as the Code of Ethics and Conduct or legislation such as that relating to those in Positions of Trust;
- spending excessive amounts of time alone with young people away from others;
- inviting or allowing young people into your home where they will be alone with you;
- engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative activity;
- allowing young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged;
- making sexually suggestive comments even in fun;
- reducing a person to tears as a form of control;
- travelling alone with a young person by offering lifts to and from sessions/ competitions;
- allowing allegations made by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon;
- doing things of a personal nature for young people that they can do for themselves; sharing a bedroom with a young person you are not related to, even with parental permission.

Some participants may require assistance with personal care due to being very young or disabled. If a young person needs this level of support, it should be made clear to their parent/s that this can only be carried out by a designated carer and not by the instructor. Even if the instructor is trained in carrying out personal care tasks, this compromises their role as trainer and places them and the child in a vulnerable position. These support arrangements should clearly be in place and agreed to by all parties prior to the activities commencing.

Signs and Indicators of Abuse and Neglect

Indicators that a young person may be being abused/neglected may include the following:

- unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries;
- an injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent;
- the young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her;
- someone else (a young person or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another;
- unexplained changes in behaviour/presentation/appearance (e.g., becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper, unexplained missing episodes);
- inappropriate sexual awareness;
- engaging in sexually explicit behaviour;
- sudden or unusual distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected;
- having difficulty in making friends;
- being prevented from socialising with other young people;
- displaying variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite;
- or a sudden weight change;
- becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt.
- attending with unusual amounts/unexplained gifts/money

It should be recognised that this list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of the indicators is not proof that abuse is actually taking place. A good working relationship with parent/guardians will help to identify any other concerns that a young person may be experiencing. For example, a family bereavement which could cause some of the changes listed above.

What to do if you have a concern or someone raises concerns with you.

Whilst accepting this duty it is recognised Phoenix School of Martial Arts is not responsible for deciding if abuse has occurred. It does, however, have a duty to respond and report concerns.

All safeguarding concerns and poor practice occurrences, except if the issue concerns those individuals, must be reported to the DSL. This includes issues raised concerning the activities of instructors or volunteers or, where there are concerns outside of Phoenix School of Martial Arts (for example at home, school or in the wider community). Where there is an allegation against an instructor or volunteer who works with children. The DSL must report the matter to the Local Authority Designated Officer.

Instructors and volunteers must also report the following to the DSL and make a written record of what they have done, seen or heard:

- They have accidentally hurt a child;
- a child seems distressed in any manner;
- a child appears to be sexually aroused by their actions;
- a child misunderstands or misinterprets something they have said or done.

If you think a child is in immediate danger or requires medical attention, you should call the emergency services on 999. You can also ring the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000 to report immediate risks. This is an immediate responsibility and will take priority over informing the Designated Safeguard Lead or Deputy.

How to respond to a concern

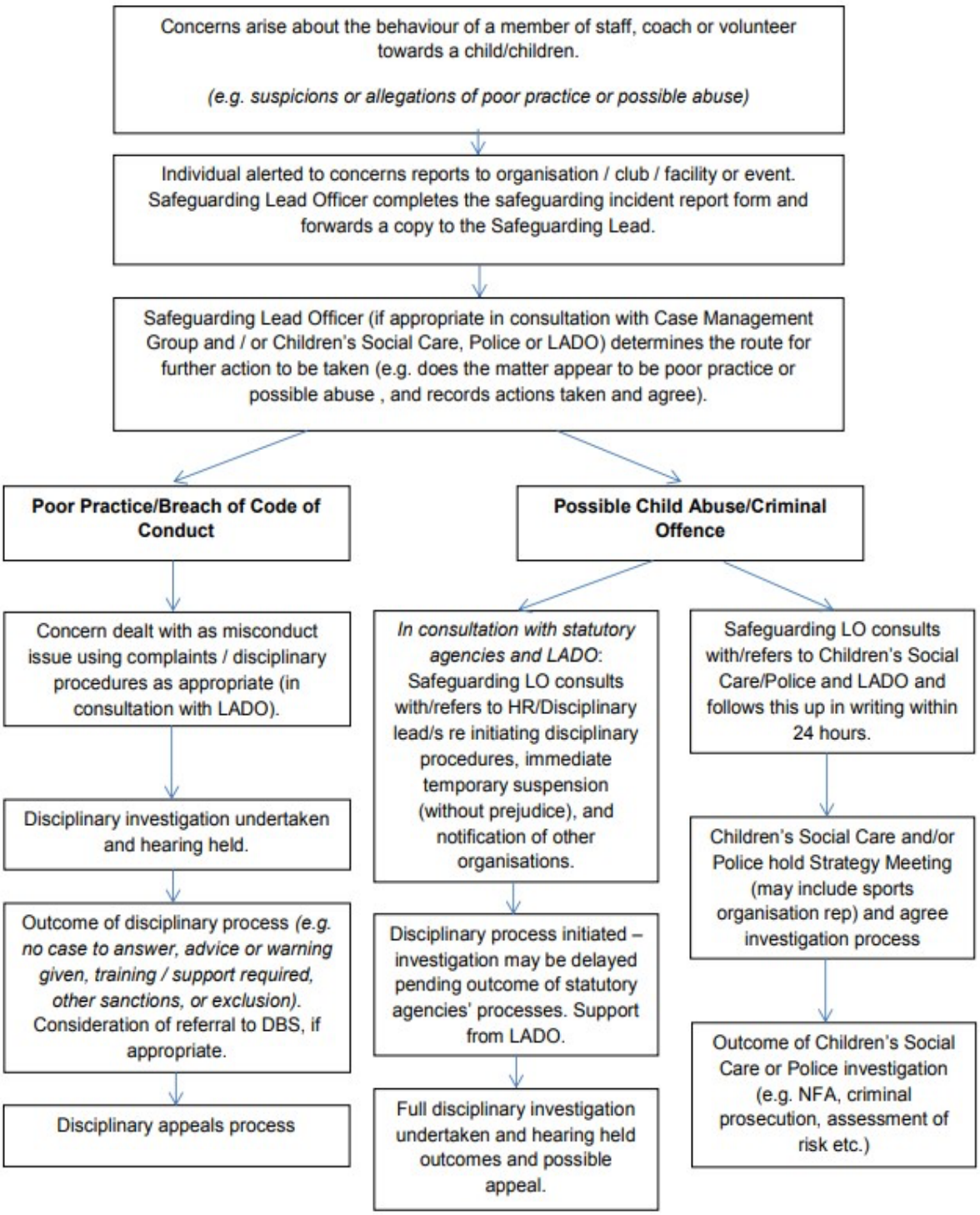
It is always difficult to hear about or witness harm or abuse experienced by a child or young person. The following points will be helpful for both you and the child should they choose to disclose abuse to you:

- Stay calm.
- Listen carefully to what is said and try not to interrupt.
- Find an appropriate point early on to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others – do not promise to keep secrets.
- Allow free flow of information and do not question other than to ensure the child is safe
- Ask questions for clarification of key detail only, such as the name and address of the person accused (if known) & the relationship to the child.
- Reassure them that they are not to blame, they are believed and have done the right thing in telling you. If the concern is serious explain that you will need to get support from other trained people to help keep the child safe. This must be shared even if the child doesn't want you to tell anyone else.
- Consider how to keep them safe immediately after their disclosure
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared. If they are adamant that they do not wish the information to be shared, explain that you will have to tell your Designated Safeguarding Lead and that it will be discussed further with them.
- Be aware of the possibility of forensic evidence if the disclosure relates to a recent incident of physical harm or injury and try to protect any supporting materials e.g., bedding or clothing.
- Where you are unable to contact your Designated Person, advice can be sought from statutory agencies or the NSPCC Helpline.
- All serious concerns must be referred to statutory agencies.
- Where the concern or allegation is about a member of staff or a volunteer, this must like all other concerns be reported to the DSL. The DSL if they consider the concern to be serious, for example potentially child abuse or a crime they must report the incident to the Local Authority Designated Officer or the Police.

When a safeguarding concern or poor practice has been identified concerning a specific child the parents/guardians/carers of that child should be notified (unless this is likely to place the child at further risk of serious harm). Where the DSL/Deputy has reported the incident to the statutory authorities, advice should be sought from them regarding this duty before notifying the parents/guardians/carers.

Safeguarding Children Flowchart

1. **About the behaviour of the organisation's staff member or volunteer**
   (e.g. allegation about a coach or officer's behaviour towards a child)



Recording

Should a child make a disclosure a record in writing must be made as soon as possible, using their words as closely as possible and where relevant. Note the date, time, any names mentioned, names and addresses to whom the information was given and who else is aware of the allegation. Note or clearly describe any visible injury.

Take care to distinguish between fact, observation, allegation and opinion. It is important that the information you have is accurate.

Recording of any incident, including possible abuse or poor practice incidents, should also follow this procedure. In all situations, including those in which the cause of concern arises either from a disclosure of abuse or from suspicion of abuse, it is vitally important to record the details, regardless of whether they are shared with a statutory agency, as soon as possible.

The record should be clear and factual as it may be needed by child or adult protection agencies and may, in the future, be used as evidence in court. Records should be kept securely and shared only with those who need to know about the incident.

Throughout the process of any safeguarding cases, accurate records should be made and maintained.

Codes of Conduct and Ethics

The Codes of Conduct and ethics for all those involved with Phoenix School of Martial Arts are available upon request as a separate guidance sheets. It is essential these are followed in so the highest possible standards of behaviour and conduct in Martial Arts activities are maintained. The principles must be adhered to at all times so that Martial Arts can be enjoyed by all. All those involved with Phoenix School of Martial Arts will show their understanding and commitment to the Codes of Conduct and ethics by signing a copy of the relevant guidance sheet.

Safer Recruiting

Phoenix School of Martial Arts take all reasonable steps to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. Whilst there may be some reservations that volunteers could be put off by having to go through a recruitment process, it is important to ensure reasonable steps have been taken to identify unsuitable individuals.

Supervision, support and training

Once in membership Instructors and volunteers in Phoenix School of Martial Arts will be well informed, trained, supervised and supported to ensure that they effectively safeguard children and know how to respond to any concerns.

Phoenix School of Martial Arts will ensure that training and resources are available to encourage the development of Instructors and volunteers via Martial Arts Instructor UK.

There are currently no formal qualifications specifically for safeguarding and protecting children in martial arfts. However, training via external organizations & Martial Arts Instructor UK is available to

strengthen the skills and knowledge of the sporting children's workforce to safeguard children and young people. Training plays an important role in equipping staff and volunteers to do their job safely and effectively. Different safeguarding training is available depending on the person's role.

Whistleblowing

It's important that people within Phoenix School of Martial Arts have the confidence to come forward to speak or act if

they're unhappy with anything.

Whistleblowing occurs when a person raises a concern about dangerous or illegal activity, or any wrongdoing within their sports organisation. The NSPCC has a whistleblowing advice line to support professionals who have concerns about how child protection issues are being handled in their own or another organisation.

Complaints

In order to ensure we develop an open culture where children and staff feel able to express any concerns, we have a procedure for dealing with complaints from a child, worker, volunteer, parent or carer.

Links to other organisational procedures

- Equity Policy www.cmaa.co.uk/equal-opportunities
- Complaints and grievance procedures www.cmaa.co.uk/complaints
- Adults Safeguarding Policy Safeguarding | CMAA
- Safe Practice Policy Safeguarding | CMAA
- Codes of Conduct – Available by email

16. Useful Contacts

Phoenix School of Martial Arts Designated Safeguarding Lead

Name: Abigail King

Email: abigail68king@gmail.com

Telephone: +44 7742 951777

Local Club Welfare Officer

Name: Matthew Marshall

Email: info@phoenixsma.co.uk

Telephone: 07877754578

Emergency Services: 999

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000

NSPCC Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Policy approval and review

Approved by: MATTHEW MARSHALL

Position: COMPANY DIRECTOR/HEAD INSTRUCTOR

Effective date: 1st October 2026

Review date: 30th September 2029