

Praetorian MMA Safeguarding Policy

Commitment to Safeguarding

Praetorian MMA is committed to ensuring a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for all members, particularly children, young people, and vulnerable adults. We recognise our duty of care and the importance of safeguarding as set out in UK legislation, including the Children Act 1989, the Children Act 2004, the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018).

This policy is guided by best practice recommendations from the **NSPCC** and the **Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU)**. It also aligns with the **BMABA National Safeguarding Policy**, which can be found at: [BMABA National Safeguarding Policy](#).

We are registered and licenced by **BMABA - British Martial Arts And Boxing Association**. BMABA provides **independent professional safeguarding oversight** for any student, parent, or stakeholder with concerns. BMABA's safeguarding unit can be contacted at safeguarding@bmaba.org.uk or via bmaba.org.uk/safeguarding. BMABA's lead safeguarding officers are **Cathie Hewlett** and **Aimee Little**, with deputy safeguarding officers **Giovanni Soffietto (CEO)** and **Kirsty Hawkins (Operations Director)**.

1. Safeguarding Principles

At **Praetorian MMA**, safeguarding is at the heart of our practice. We are committed to providing a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for all children, young people, and vulnerable adults, ensuring that their **welfare is paramount** in every aspect of our training and club activities.

1.1 The Welfare of the Child or Vulnerable Adult is Paramount

- Every child and vulnerable adult has a **right to feel safe, supported, and protected**.
- Their welfare must come **before the interests of any instructor, club, or organisation**.
- Safeguarding is **not just about responding to concerns but about creating a culture of safety** in martial arts.
- We adhere to the **Children Act 1989 & 2004**, ensuring that the needs of the child take priority in any safeguarding decision.

1.2 Every Child and Vulnerable Adult Has an Equal Right to Protection

- **No one should experience abuse or discrimination**, regardless of their age, gender, disability, race, religion, belief, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic

background.

- We are committed to **anti-discriminatory practices** and ensuring all members are treated with dignity and respect.
- Our club is inclusive, making appropriate **reasonable adjustments** to ensure individuals with disabilities or additional needs can participate safely.

1.3 Safeguarding is Everyone's Responsibility

- All staff, instructors, volunteers, parents, and club members must **play an active role** in safeguarding.
- Anyone who witnesses or suspects abuse **must report concerns immediately**.
- We will ensure that safeguarding responsibilities are understood by:
 - **Instructors** receiving regular safeguarding training.
 - **Students** being encouraged to speak up if they feel unsafe.
 - **Parents/guardians** being informed of our safeguarding policies and encouraged to communicate concerns.

1.4 Best Practice Must be Followed to Protect Children and Vulnerable Adults

- Our safeguarding practices adhere to **BMABA's guidance**, ensuring:
 - **Safe recruitment practices**, including enhanced DBS checks for all instructors and volunteers.
 - **Clear guidelines on physical contact**, ensuring that any necessary contact (e.g., demonstrating techniques) is appropriate and with prior consent.
 - **Proper supervision**, ensuring no child is left alone with a single adult in a one-on-one setting.
 - **Safeguarding risk assessments**, conducted to identify and reduce risks in training environments.
 - **Strict social media policies**, preventing inappropriate communication between instructors and students.

1.5 Concerns Must Be Reported Promptly and Handled Professionally

- Any safeguarding concern, no matter how small, **must be taken seriously** and reported to the **Club Safeguarding Officer (Kelly Sparks)** at safeguarding@praetorianmma.co.uk.
- If there is an **immediate danger** to a child, contact **emergency services (999)** immediately.
- All concerns will be:

- **Handled sensitively and confidentially**, ensuring that only relevant individuals are informed.
- **Reported to BMABA's safeguarding unit**, which provides independent oversight at safeguarding@bmaba.org.uk.
- **Escalated to statutory authorities** (such as the police or local authority) if required.

Our club follows the **BMABA safeguarding escalation policy**, ensuring that concerns are passed on to the correct authorities **without delay**.

By embedding these principles in our club's culture, we **prioritise the safety and well-being** of all our members. Every instructor, student, and parent has a role in **creating a safe martial arts environment**.

For more information on our safeguarding policies, or to **raise a concern**, contact **Kelly Sparks** at safeguarding@praetorianmma.co.uk, or reach out to BMABA at safeguarding@bmaba.org.uk.

2. Designated Safeguarding Officer

Our designated **Club Safeguarding Officer (CSO)** is **Kelly Sparks**, who is responsible for ensuring that all safeguarding concerns are handled promptly, effectively, and professionally. They are the first point of contact for any safeguarding issues within **Praetorian MMA** and are specifically in place to support students, parents, and instructors in dealing with any concerns related to the safety and well-being of children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

The **CSO is appropriately trained** in safeguarding and child protection, including undertaking relevant courses in:

- **Safeguarding Children in Sport** (NSPCC/CPSU certified).
- **Recognising and Responding to Abuse**, including physical, emotional, sexual abuse, and neglect.
- **Safer Recruitment Practices**, ensuring that all staff and volunteers undergo appropriate background checks (DBS).
- **Confidentiality and Data Protection**, ensuring sensitive information is handled correctly.
- **Managing Disclosures and Reporting Procedures** in line with BMABA, local authorities, and statutory guidance.

The CSO is responsible for:

- Being the first point of contact for safeguarding concerns, providing advice and support as needed.
- Maintaining **clear and confidential safeguarding records** of any reported concerns.
- Ensuring **appropriate action is taken** in line with BMABA safeguarding procedures and statutory requirements.

- Reporting concerns to **BMABA's safeguarding unit** for independent oversight and guidance.
- Where necessary, escalating cases to **statutory services**, such as the local authority safeguarding board or the police.
- Ensuring all **instructors, volunteers, and staff** understand their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.
- Providing ongoing safeguarding training and updates to all relevant club members.

Any safeguarding concerns should be reported immediately to **Kelly Sparks** at safeguarding@praetorianmma.co.uk. If a child is in immediate danger, call **999** for emergency services.

In addition to the club's designated safeguarding officer, **BMABA provides independent safeguarding oversight** and can be contacted for additional support or escalation. BMABA's safeguarding unit can be reached at safeguarding@bmaba.org.uk or via bmaba.org.uk/safeguarding.

BMABA's lead safeguarding officers are:

- **Cathie Hewlett** – Lead Safeguarding Officer
- **Aimee Little** – Lead Safeguarding Officer

Deputy Safeguarding Officers:

- **Giovanni Soffietto (CEO)**
- **Kirsty Hawkins (Operations Director)**

The safeguarding team at BMABA is available to assist with concerns that cannot be resolved within the club or that require additional professional oversight.

At **Praetorian MMA**, we are committed to creating a safe and inclusive environment for all our members. If you have any safeguarding concerns or require advice, please do not hesitate to contact **Kelly Sparks** at safeguarding@praetorianmma.co.uk.

3. Safer Recruitment and Training

At **Praetorian MMA**, we are committed to ensuring that all instructors, volunteers, and staff working with children, young people, and vulnerable adults are appropriately vetted, trained, and supported. Our safer recruitment and training policies align with the [BMABA National Safeguarding Policy](#) and safeguarding best practices set out by leading authorities, including the **NSPCC** and **CPSU**.

3.1 Robust Vetting and Recruitment

To create a safe training environment, we follow a **safer recruitment process** that ensures only suitable and appropriately trained individuals work within our club.

- **Enhanced DBS Checks:** All instructors, coaches, and volunteers undergo a thorough **enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check** before they are

permitted to work with children or vulnerable adults. DBS checks are revalidated in accordance with national safeguarding guidelines.

- **Safeguarding Self-Declarations:** All staff and volunteers must complete a safeguarding self-declaration confirming that they have no criminal convictions or prior safeguarding concerns that would prohibit them from working with children.
- **Reference Checks:** At least two **professional references** are obtained for all instructors and volunteers before they begin their role. These references verify the individual's experience, suitability, and conduct in previous roles.
- **Right to Work and Identity Verification:** Instructors and volunteers must provide valid **photo ID and proof of address** to confirm their identity and legal right to work within the UK.
- **Trial Period and Supervision:** Newly recruited instructors and volunteers are subject to an **initial probation period**, during which they are closely supervised to ensure their suitability and adherence to safeguarding policies.

3.2 Safeguarding Training and Continuous Development

All staff and volunteers must undertake **regular safeguarding training** to ensure they can recognise, respond to, and report safeguarding concerns appropriately.

- **Mandatory Safeguarding Training:** All instructors must complete an approved **BMABA safeguarding training course** before working independently with students.
- **Refresher Training:** Safeguarding training is renewed **every three years** to ensure all instructors and volunteers remain up to date with best practices, legislative changes, and reporting procedures.
- **Specialist Safeguarding Training:** Key staff members, including the **Club Safeguarding Officer** (Kelly Sparks), receive additional training on **handling disclosures, safer recruitment, and managing safeguarding concerns**.
- **Prevent Duty Training:** As part of our wider commitment to safeguarding, all staff and volunteers are trained to recognise the signs of **radicalisation and extremism**, following the government's **Prevent Duty** framework.

3.3 Code of Conduct and Responsibilities

All instructors, volunteers, and staff members are required to follow a strict **Code of Conduct**, ensuring that they act professionally, ethically, and in the best interests of children and vulnerable adults at all times.

- **Professional Boundaries:** Instructors and staff must maintain **appropriate relationships** with students and parents, avoiding any behaviour that could be considered **inappropriate, exploitative, or abusive**.

- **No One-on-One Contact:** Instructors should never be alone with a child or vulnerable adult in a private setting. Sessions should always take place in **open, visible areas** or with another responsible adult present.
- **Zero Tolerance for Abuse:** Any form of **physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, bullying, or discriminatory behaviour** will not be tolerated and will be dealt with in line with BMABA's safeguarding policies.
- **Duty to Report Concerns:** All staff and volunteers have a **legal and moral obligation** to report safeguarding concerns to the **Club Safeguarding Officer** (Kelly Sparks) at safeguarding@praetorianmma.co.uk, or directly to BMABA at safeguarding@bmaba.org.uk.

3.4 Escalation of Safeguarding Concerns

If an individual fails to meet our safeguarding and recruitment standards, or if safeguarding concerns arise regarding an instructor, volunteer, or staff member:

- Immediate action will be taken to **suspend the individual** pending investigation.
- All concerns will be reported to **BMABA's safeguarding unit** and, if necessary, to external statutory bodies such as the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or the police.
- If a DBS check returns concerning information, **the individual will not be permitted to work within the club** in any capacity involving children or vulnerable adults.

3.5 BMABA Safeguarding Oversight

In addition to our internal safeguarding measures, we recognise that BMABA provides independent oversight and governance. Any safeguarding concerns that cannot be appropriately managed within the club will be escalated to BMABA's safeguarding unit, who can be contacted at:

- Email: safeguarding@bmaba.org.uk
- Online: bmaba.org.uk/safeguarding

BMABA's lead safeguarding officers are:

- **Cathie Hewlett** – Lead Safeguarding Officer
- **Aimee Little** – Lead Safeguarding Officer

Deputy Safeguarding Officers:

- **Giovanni Soffietto (CEO)**
- **Kirsty Hawkins (Operations Director)**

Praetorian MMA remains fully committed to ensuring that all safeguarding procedures are followed to the highest standards, in line with BMABA's national safeguarding framework.

If you have any concerns or require additional guidance on safer recruitment or training, please contact **Kelly Sparks** at safeguarding@praetorianmma.co.uk.

4. Recognising Abuse and Poor Practice

At **Praetorian MMA**, we recognise the importance of identifying the **signs of abuse and poor practice** to ensure the safety and well-being of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults. Abuse can take many forms, and safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All instructors, volunteers, and staff must be vigilant in identifying **warning signs** and taking appropriate action.

4.1 Understanding Abuse

Abuse is the **maltreatment of a child or vulnerable person**, causing harm or placing them at serious risk of harm. It can occur **in person or online**, and perpetrators may be **adults or other children**.

It is essential to be aware of **signs of abuse**, which may include:

- **Physical Abuse:** The deliberate infliction of pain, injury, or suffering.
Examples: Unexplained bruises, burns, fractures, repeated injuries, aggressive or withdrawn behavior.
- **Emotional Abuse:** Persistent emotional ill-treatment that causes severe adverse effects on emotional development.
Examples: Excessive criticism, humiliation, threats, isolation, excessive expectations, extreme shyness.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities.
Examples: Inappropriate touching, suggestive remarks, exposure to sexual content, coercion, grooming.
- **Neglect:** The persistent failure to meet basic physical and psychological needs.
Examples: Lack of food, medical care, supervision, inappropriate clothing, malnourishment, hygiene neglect.

4.2 Identifying Poor Practice

Poor practice is **any behavior that compromises the safety, dignity, or welfare** of participants, even if it does not meet the threshold for abuse. Poor practice can indicate deeper safeguarding concerns and must be addressed immediately.

Examples of **poor practice in a martial arts setting** include:

- **Unnecessary physical contact:** Any physical interaction that is not required for instruction, such as excessive handling, hugging, or touching without consent.
- **One-on-one unsupervised sessions:** Instructors should not be alone with a student in a private setting unless absolutely necessary and with appropriate

safeguards in place.

- **Favoritism or exclusion:** Giving preferential treatment to certain students or isolating others unfairly.
- **Inappropriate language or behavior:** Using offensive, discriminatory, or suggestive language, making jokes of a sexual or inappropriate nature, or making students feel uncomfortable.
- **Failing to follow safety protocols:** Allowing students to train without proper supervision, failing to check equipment, or ignoring injury risks.
- **Breaching confidentiality:** Sharing personal information about students or their families without consent or a legitimate safeguarding reason.
- **Engaging with students inappropriately outside the club:** Including private messaging, social media contact, or meetings outside of training without parental knowledge and consent.

4.3 Grooming and Online Abuse

Grooming is when an individual builds a relationship with a child or vulnerable person with the intention of exploiting or abusing them. Grooming can occur **online or in person** and often involves manipulation and secrecy.

Warning signs of grooming include:

- Sudden secrecy about friendships or online activity.
- Being given **gifts, money, or special treatment**.
- Spending excessive time talking with an **older individual** (in person or online).
- Attempts to **isolate the child from family or friends**.

Online abuse is a growing concern, and **instructors should never engage in private online communication** with students. Any concerns regarding online interactions should be **reported immediately**.

4.4 The Impact of Abuse

Abuse has both **short-term and long-term effects** on a person's physical, emotional, and mental well-being. The impact of abuse may include:

- Low self-esteem, depression, or anxiety.
- Self-harm, eating disorders, or suicidal thoughts.
- Withdrawal from activities, sudden behavioral changes, or aggression.
- Difficulty trusting others or forming healthy relationships.

4.5 Responding to Suspected Abuse or Poor Practice

If you suspect a child, young person, or vulnerable adult is experiencing abuse or being subjected to poor practice, you must:

1. **Listen carefully:** Do not judge or interrupt. Allow the individual to share their concerns in their own words.
2. **Do not promise confidentiality:** Explain that you must report concerns to ensure their safety.
3. **Report immediately:** Inform the **Club Safeguarding Officer (Kelly Sparks)** at safeguarding@praetorianmma.co.uk.
4. **Record the concern:** Keep clear and factual records of what was said, including times, dates, and any observations.
5. **Escalate if necessary:** If there is immediate danger, contact the **police (999)** or **local safeguarding services**.

4.6 Escalation and Independent Safeguarding Oversight

BMABA provides independent safeguarding oversight and should be contacted if there are concerns about the handling of a safeguarding issue. The BMABA safeguarding team can be reached at:

- Email: safeguarding@bmaba.org.uk
- Online: bmaba.org.uk/safeguarding

BMABA's lead safeguarding officers are:

- **Cathie Hewlett** – Lead Safeguarding Officer
- **Aimee Little** – Lead Safeguarding Officer

Deputy Safeguarding Officers:

- **Giovanni Soffietto (CEO)**
- **Kirsty Hawkins (Operations Director)**

Safeguarding is a **shared responsibility**. By remaining vigilant, following best practices, and reporting concerns promptly, we can ensure a **safe and inclusive environment** at **Praetorian MMA**.

5. Responding to Concerns and Reporting Procedures

At **Praetorian MMA**, we take all safeguarding concerns seriously and follow a strict **reporting and response procedure** to ensure the safety and well-being of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults. Any concern, no matter how small, should be reported **immediately** to ensure that appropriate action is taken.

5.1 Recognising the Need to Report a Concern

Concerns may arise through direct disclosures, observations, or third-party reports. Safeguarding concerns can include:

- A child or vulnerable person directly discloses abuse or harm.
- Unexplained injuries, behavioral changes, or distress.
- Concerns about a parent, instructor, or another club member's behavior.
- Online safety concerns, grooming, or inappropriate contact.
- Incidents of bullying, harassment, or discrimination.

5.2 Immediate Steps to Take

If you become aware of a safeguarding concern, follow these steps:

1. **Listen carefully:** If a child or vulnerable person discloses abuse, **do not interrupt, judge, or make assumptions.** Allow them to speak freely and reassure them that they are being heard.
2. **Do not ask leading questions:** Avoid questions that suggest answers. Instead, use open-ended prompts like: *"Can you tell me what happened?"*
3. **Do not promise confidentiality:** It is essential to explain that you may need to share their concerns to ensure they receive the help they need. Say: *"I may need to tell someone who can help keep you safe."*
4. **Report the concern immediately** to the **Club Safeguarding Officer (Kelly Sparks)** at safeguarding@praetorianmma.co.uk.
5. **If the concern is urgent** or a child is at **immediate risk**, contact the **police (999)** or **local children's social care services** immediately.
6. **Record the details accurately:** Write down what was said using the child's own words, including **dates, times, and observations.** Avoid personal opinions—keep records factual.

5.3 Club Safeguarding Officer Responsibilities

Once a concern is reported, the **Club Safeguarding Officer (CSO) (Kelly Sparks)** will:

- Review the concern and take **appropriate action** in line with BMABA safeguarding policies.
- Decide whether to escalate the concern to **BMABA's safeguarding unit** for independent oversight.
- If necessary, refer the case to **local safeguarding authorities** or the **police**.
- Ensure a record of the report is securely kept in line with ****data protection and safeguarding laws****.

5.4 BMABA Safeguarding Oversight and Escalation

BMABA provides independent safeguarding oversight for any safeguarding concerns that arise within affiliated clubs. If a concern is reported within **Praetorian MMA**, but requires external review, it will be escalated to BMABA's safeguarding team.

- **BMABA's safeguarding unit can be contacted at:** safeguarding@bmaba.org.uk or bmaba.org.uk/safeguarding.

BMABA's lead safeguarding officers:

- **Cathie Hewlett** – Lead Safeguarding Officer
- **Aimee Little** – Lead Safeguarding Officer

Deputy Safeguarding Officers:

- **Giovanni Soffietto (CEO)**
- **Kirsty Hawkins (Operations Director)**

5.5 What Happens After a Report?

Once a report is made, the Club Safeguarding Officer or BMABA's safeguarding team will:

- Assess the level of risk and determine the appropriate course of action.
- Work with statutory agencies if the concern requires external intervention.
- Provide guidance and support to the individual raising the concern.
- Ensure all actions are recorded securely and handled professionally.

5.6 Confidentiality and Data Protection

All safeguarding reports will be treated with strict confidentiality. However, information may be shared with relevant safeguarding professionals where necessary to protect a child or vulnerable person. Our club follows **GDPR and data protection laws** to ensure all safeguarding records are securely managed.

5.7 Reporting Concerns About an Instructor, Volunteer, or Staff Member

If a safeguarding concern is raised about an instructor, volunteer, or staff member, the following steps will be taken:

- The individual may be **immediately suspended** from duties while an investigation takes place.
- The case will be referred to **BMABA's safeguarding unit** and, if necessary, to external safeguarding authorities.
- If a criminal offence is suspected, the **police** will be contacted.
- All investigations will be conducted **fairly, impartially, and professionally.**

5.8 Support for Victims and Those Raising Concerns

At **Praetorian MMA**, we provide **appropriate support and guidance** for those affected by safeguarding concerns, including:

- Referrals to **specialist support services** for victims of abuse.
- Ensuring individuals feel safe and protected throughout the reporting process.
- Providing **emotional and practical support** to whistleblowers and reporters.

5.9 Whistleblowing Policy

All individuals should feel safe to report safeguarding concerns **without fear of retaliation**. We operate a strict **whistleblowing policy** that ensures:

- All reports are treated **confidentially and professionally**.
- Individuals reporting concerns are **protected from victimization** or negative consequences.
- BMABA can be contacted directly if a reporter feels unsafe raising concerns internally.

If you have any concerns or safeguarding queries, please contact **Kelly Sparks** at safeguarding@praetorianmma.co.uk, or reach out to BMABA at safeguarding@bmaba.org.uk.

6. Codes of Conduct

To maintain a **safe, inclusive, and respectful** training environment, **Praetorian MMA** enforces strict codes of conduct for **instructors, parents, and students**. These guidelines ensure that all individuals involved in the club uphold the highest standards of **safety, respect, and professionalism**, in line with the [BMABA National Safeguarding Policy](#).

6.1 Instructors' Code of Conduct

Instructors are in a **position of trust** and must act as role models, demonstrating the highest levels of professionalism and safeguarding awareness.

- **Prioritise safety and wellbeing:** The health, safety, and wellbeing of students must always come before competition, performance, or progression.
- **Maintain appropriate professional boundaries:**
 - Never engage in **inappropriate relationships** with students.
 - Always **act professionally and avoid any behavior that could be misinterpreted**.
 - Never be alone with a student in a **private or one-on-one setting** unless absolutely necessary and with appropriate safeguards in place.
- **Ensure training methods are age-appropriate:**
 - Techniques must be suitable for a student's **age, ability, and experience level**.

- Harsh, inappropriate, or excessive physical training methods **must never be used**.
- **Use appropriate physical contact:**
 - Physical guidance should only be used when necessary for teaching techniques and should always be **explained and consented to**.
 - Touch should be **appropriate, necessary, and in full view of others**.
- **Respect student privacy:** Avoid any actions that could violate a student's **personal boundaries or dignity**.
- **Report all safeguarding concerns promptly:** Any safeguarding concerns, incidents, or inappropriate behaviors must be reported to the **Club Safeguarding Officer (Kelly Sparks)** at safeguarding@praetorianmma.co.uk.

6.2 Parents' and Guardians' Code of Conduct

Parents and guardians play a vital role in creating a **positive, safe, and respectful training environment** for all children. Their conduct should encourage good sportsmanship and mutual respect.

- **Encourage and support children positively:** Praise effort, discipline, and progress rather than just achievements.
- **Never use physical discipline:** Physical punishment, verbal abuse, or any form of aggressive behavior towards children or staff is strictly prohibited.
- **Respect club policies and safeguarding procedures:** Familiarise yourself with **Praetorian MMA's** safeguarding policy and procedures.
- **Be a positive role model:** Demonstrate respect for instructors, staff, and other parents.
- **Raise concerns appropriately:** Any concerns regarding conduct, safety, or safeguarding should be reported directly to the **Club Safeguarding Officer (Kelly Sparks)** at safeguarding@praetorianmma.co.uk.

6.3 Students' Code of Conduct

Students are expected to uphold the values of **respect, responsibility, and discipline** while training at **Praetorian MMA**.

- **Show respect to instructors, fellow students, and club staff:** Martial arts values include respect, humility, and self-discipline.
- **Follow training instructions carefully:** Always listen to your instructors and train safely.
- **Do not engage in bullying or harassment:** Any form of bullying, intimidation, or discrimination will not be tolerated.
- **Take responsibility for personal safety and conduct:** Act responsibly, wear appropriate training gear, and report any injuries immediately.

- **Speak up about concerns:** If you feel unsafe or have concerns about someone else's behavior, report it to an instructor or the **Club Safeguarding Officer**.

6.4 Breaches of the Code of Conduct

Praetorian MMA takes all breaches of conduct seriously. Any violation of these codes may result in:

- A formal warning or discussion with the individual(s) involved.
- Suspension from training sessions if necessary.
- Permanent exclusion from the club in severe cases.
- Referral to **BMABA's safeguarding unit** or external safeguarding authorities if required.

6.5 Reporting Conduct Concerns

Any breaches of the code of conduct, safeguarding concerns, or inappropriate behavior should be reported to:

- **Kelly Sparks** – Club Safeguarding Officer (safeguarding@praetorianmma.co.uk)
- **BMABA Safeguarding Unit** – (safeguarding@bmaba.org.uk)

6.6 Independent Safeguarding Oversight

If concerns cannot be resolved internally, BMABA provides **independent safeguarding oversight**. You can contact BMABA's safeguarding team at:

- Email: safeguarding@bmaba.org.uk
- Online: bmaba.org.uk/safeguarding

BMABA's lead safeguarding officers:

- **Cathie Hewlett** – Lead Safeguarding Officer
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Deputy Safeguarding Officers:

- **Giovanni Soffietto (CEO)**
- **Kirsty Hawkins (Operations Director)**

At **Praetorian MMA**, we are committed to fostering a **safe, respectful, and supportive training environment**. By following these codes of conduct, all members contribute to a club culture built on respect, discipline, and excellence.

7. Social Media and Online Safety

Praetorian MMA is committed to safeguarding children, young people, and vulnerable adults in both physical and digital environments. Online interactions, including social media and digital communication, pose unique risks, including **cyberbullying, grooming, inappropriate content, and data privacy breaches**. As part of our safeguarding framework, we ensure that all online activities and interactions comply with the [BMABA National Safeguarding Policy](#).

7.1 Social Media Guidelines for Instructors and Staff

To maintain appropriate professional boundaries, instructors, staff, and volunteers must adhere to strict online communication guidelines.

- **Instructors must not engage in private online communication with children:**
 - No direct messaging or private chats with under-18s on social media platforms (e.g., WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok).
 - No accepting friend requests or following students on personal accounts.
 - All digital communication should go through **official club channels**, such as a monitored club email or social media account.
- **Club social media accounts must be managed professionally:**
 - Only designated club officials should manage social media pages.
 - All content should be appropriate, respectful, and in line with safeguarding best practices.
 - Comments and interactions should be moderated to prevent bullying, harassment, or inappropriate behavior.
- **Instructors must not share personal contact details with students:**
 - Mobile phone numbers and personal email addresses should not be given to under-18s.
 - All communication should go through club-approved channels.

7.2 Photography and Video Consent

Praetorian MMA recognizes the importance of capturing positive moments in training and competition. However, to protect privacy and safety, we enforce strict guidelines on photos and videos.

- **Photos and videos must only be taken with prior parental or guardian consent:**
 - Parents and guardians must provide written consent before any child is filmed or photographed.
 - Students should be informed when media is being captured and given the option to opt out.
- **Images should be used responsibly:**
 - No photos or videos should contain identifying details (e.g., full names, school uniforms, location tags).

- Images should not be manipulated or edited in a way that could be misinterpreted or used inappropriately.
- **Parents must follow the same rules:**
 - Parents and spectators should not take or share images of children other than their own without permission.

7.3 Reporting Online Safeguarding Concerns

If there are concerns about online interactions, inappropriate content, or suspected cyberbullying, these must be reported immediately.

- **Cyberbullying:**
 - Any form of online bullying (e.g., harassment, name-calling, intimidation, exclusion) will not be tolerated.
 - Incidents should be reported to an instructor or the **Club Safeguarding Officer (Kelly Sparks)** at safeguarding@praetorianmma.co.uk.
- **Inappropriate messaging or grooming:**
 - If a student receives concerning messages from an instructor, coach, or another club member, this must be reported immediately.
 - Reports should be made to the **Club Safeguarding Officer** or **BMABA's safeguarding unit**.
- **Sharing of inappropriate images or content:**
 - Any sharing of indecent, inappropriate, or harmful images should be reported immediately.
 - Depending on severity, concerns will be escalated to BMABA, local safeguarding authorities, or the police.

7.4 Club Responsibilities for Online Safety

Praetorian MMA has a duty to protect students from online harm and to educate members on safe online practices.

- **Online safety training:**
 - Staff and volunteers will receive guidance on maintaining professional online conduct.
 - Students and parents will be given information on online safety risks and best practices.
- **Monitoring online behavior:**
 - The club will monitor its social media channels and digital communications for safeguarding concerns.
- **Zero-tolerance policy on online abuse:**

- o Any member found engaging in online abuse, bullying, or harassment will face disciplinary action.

7.5 Escalating Online Safeguarding Concerns

If online safety concerns cannot be managed within the club, they should be escalated to **BMABA's safeguarding unit** for independent oversight.

- Email: safeguarding@bmaba.org.uk
- Online: bmaba.org.uk/safeguarding

BMABA's lead safeguarding officers:

- **Cathie Hewlett** – Lead Safeguarding Officer
- **Aimee Little** – Lead Safeguarding Officer

Deputy Safeguarding Officers:

- **Giovanni Soffietto (CEO)**
- **Kirsty Hawkins (Operations Director)**

7.6 Final Guidance on Online Safety

Praetorian MMA encourages parents, guardians, and students to follow online safety best practices:

- Enable **privacy settings** on social media accounts.
- Never share **personal information** online.
- If something makes you feel uncomfortable **report it immediately**.

At **Praetorian MMA**, safeguarding applies to both the physical and online environment. By following these social media and online safety guidelines, we can help create a **safe and respectful digital community**.

8. Managing Allegations Against Instructors or Volunteers

Praetorian MMA takes all allegations against instructors, volunteers, and staff extremely seriously. It is essential to act swiftly and appropriately to protect children, young people, and vulnerable adults, while also ensuring a fair and thorough investigation process. Our response to allegations follows the [BMABA National Safeguarding Policy](#) and statutory safeguarding laws.

8.1 Immediate Response to Allegations

If an allegation is made against an instructor, volunteer, or club official, the following actions must be taken immediately:

- **Suspend the individual immediately:**

- If there is a safeguarding risk, the individual must be suspended from all club activities while an investigation takes place.
- Suspension is a neutral act and does not imply guilt, but ensures the safety of all parties involved.
- **Ensure the safety of the child or vulnerable person:**
 - Provide appropriate support to the alleged victim and their family.
 - Ensure the individual making the report feels safe and supported.
- **Report the concern to BMABA's safeguarding unit:**
 - All allegations must be reported to safeguarding@bmaba.org.uk as soon as possible.
 - BMABA will provide independent safeguarding oversight and guidance.
- **Inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) if necessary:**
 - If the allegation relates to abuse or serious misconduct, the case must be referred to the LADO for independent investigation.
 - The LADO will determine the appropriate course of action, which may include police involvement.
- **Cooperate fully with statutory investigations:**
 - If police, social services, or other safeguarding authorities become involved, full cooperation is required.
 - Maintain confidentiality throughout the investigation.

8.2 Reporting Allegations

Allegations of abuse, misconduct, or inappropriate behavior can be reported by:

- Club members (students, parents, instructors, or volunteers).
- External parties (e.g., schools, social workers, or partner organizations).
- Anonymous reports (handled sensitively to ensure protection of all involved).

Reports should be made directly to the **Club Safeguarding Officer (Kelly Sparks)** at safeguarding@praetorianmma.co.uk.

8.3 Investigation Process

When an allegation is made, the following process will be followed:

1. Initial Review:

- The **Club Safeguarding Officer** will review the allegation and gather preliminary information.
- If there is an immediate risk to a child or vulnerable person, the matter will be escalated urgently.

2. Referral to BMABA Safeguarding Unit:

- All allegations must be reported to BMABA for independent oversight.

- BMABA will assess the severity of the allegation and advise on next steps.

3. Referral to Statutory Authorities:

- If the allegation involves potential criminal conduct or serious safeguarding concerns, the case will be referred to:
 - The **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**.
 - Children's Social Services.
 - The Police.
- Club officials must not investigate the allegation themselves but must cooperate with statutory agencies.

4. Internal Disciplinary Process (if applicable):

- If the allegation does not meet statutory intervention thresholds but still constitutes misconduct, the club may take internal disciplinary action.
- This could include formal warnings, safeguarding training, or removal from their role.

8.4 Support for Those Involved

Praetorian MMA is committed to ensuring that all parties involved in a safeguarding allegation receive the necessary support:

- **Support for the alleged victim:**
 - Ensuring safety and well-being.
 - Providing access to appropriate external support services.
- **Support for the accused individual:**
 - If an allegation is made, the accused person will be treated fairly and given an opportunity to respond.
 - They may be offered guidance on safeguarding best practices.

8.5 Whistleblowing Protection

Anyone reporting an allegation in good faith will be protected under **Praetorian MMA's** whistleblowing policy. No one should fear retaliation for reporting concerns, and reports will be handled with **strict confidentiality**.

8.6 Escalating Concerns to BMABA

If concerns about safeguarding allegations are not being handled appropriately within the club, they should be escalated to **BMABA's safeguarding unit**.

- Email: safeguarding@bmaba.org.uk
- Online: bmaba.org.uk/safeguarding

BMABA's lead safeguarding officers:

- **Cathie Hewlett** – Lead Safeguarding Officer
- **Aimee Little** – Lead Safeguarding Officer

Deputy Safeguarding Officers:

- **Giovanni Soffietto (CEO)**
- **Kirsty Hawkins (Operations Director)**

8.7 Commitment to Safeguarding

Praetorian MMA is committed to ensuring that all allegations are dealt with professionally, fairly, and in line with safeguarding best practices. The protection of children and vulnerable people is our highest priority, and we will take immediate action to address any concerns.

9. Safeguarding and Inclusion

Praetorian MMA is committed to ensuring that martial arts training is accessible, inclusive, and safe for all participants, regardless of their background, ability, or individual needs. We fully support the principles of **equality, diversity, and inclusion**, ensuring that all members feel valued, respected, and supported in a safe training environment. This commitment aligns with the [BMABA National Safeguarding Policy](#).

9.1 Ensuring Inclusivity

Praetorian MMA actively promotes an inclusive environment, ensuring that:

- **All students, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, or background, have equal opportunities to participate.**
- **Instructors and staff receive inclusion training** to accommodate different learning needs and abilities.
- **Reasonable adjustments** are made to support students with disabilities or additional needs.
- **A zero-tolerance approach** is taken to discrimination, harassment, or bullying in any form.
- **Cultural and religious considerations** are respected, including dress codes and participation needs.

9.2 Preventing Discrimination and Bullying

Praetorian MMA has a strict **zero-tolerance policy** for discrimination and bullying. Every student, instructor, and member has the right to train in a respectful and supportive environment.

Discrimination includes:

- Excluding or treating someone unfairly based on **race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, or socioeconomic background**.
- Using **derogatory language** or making offensive jokes.
- Refusing to make adjustments to support participation.

Bullying includes:

- **Verbal abuse:** Name-calling, threats, or intimidation.
- **Physical bullying:** Pushing, hitting, or deliberately harming another student.
- **Social bullying:** Excluding someone from training or group activities.
- **Cyberbullying:** Harassment or intimidation through online communication.

Any form of discrimination or bullying must be reported immediately to the **Club Safeguarding Officer (Kelly Sparks)** at safeguarding@praetorianmma.co.uk.

9.3 Reasonable Adjustments for Participation

Praetorian MMA recognises that some students may require **additional support** to fully engage in martial arts training. We are committed to making **reasonable adjustments** to ensure fair access to training for individuals with disabilities, medical conditions, or special educational needs (SEN).

- **Adapting training techniques:** Modifying drills or movements to accommodate physical limitations.
- **Providing accessible facilities:** Ensuring access for wheelchair users and individuals with mobility impairments.
- **Using clear communication methods:** Adjusting instruction for students with hearing or learning difficulties.
- **Offering flexible participation:** Allowing breaks, alternative training methods, or individual coaching when required.
- **Creating a supportive environment:** Encouraging positive reinforcement and understanding among all students.

Students or parents who require adjustments should discuss their needs with the **Club Safeguarding Officer** or an instructor to ensure appropriate support is provided.

9.4 Reporting and Addressing Inclusion Concerns

Praetorian MMA encourages anyone who experiences or witnesses discrimination, bullying, or exclusion to report it immediately. All reports will be taken seriously and addressed confidentially.

- Concerns should be reported to **Kelly Sparks** at safeguarding@praetorianmma.co.uk.
- If the issue cannot be resolved internally, it should be escalated to **BMABA's safeguarding unit**.

9.5 Escalating Concerns to BMABA

If inclusion or safeguarding concerns are not appropriately handled within the club, they should be escalated to **BMABA's safeguarding unit**.

- Email: safeguarding@bmaba.org.uk
- Online: bmaba.org.uk/safeguarding

BMABA's lead safeguarding officers:

- **Cathie Hewlett** – Lead Safeguarding Officer
- **Aimee Little** – Lead Safeguarding Officer

Deputy Safeguarding Officers:

- **Giovanni Soffietto (CEO)**
- **Kirsty Hawkins (Operations Director)**

9.6 Commitment to Inclusion and Safeguarding

Praetorian MMA believes that martial arts should be accessible to everyone. We will continue to develop and uphold inclusive policies that ensure a **safe, fair, and welcoming** environment for all.

By committing to safeguarding and inclusion, we create a positive training culture that respects the rights and dignity of every individual.

10. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if there are changes in legislation or safeguarding best practices. The **last review date** was 04/05/2025.

For any safeguarding queries or concerns, please contact **Kelly Sparks** at safeguarding@praetorianmma.co.uk, or BMABA's safeguarding unit at safeguarding@bmaba.org.uk.

Signed:

Martyn Styler

Lead Instructor, Praetorian MMA

Model Policy by BMABA, Exclusively for Registered Members.

Check all Active Members from bmaba.org.uk/verify