

Academy of Historical Arts



Protection Policy for Vulnerable Adults and Children

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Contents

Chapters

1	Introduction	4
2	Protection Policy for Children	5
2.1	Restriction of Membership	5
2.2	Suitable Screening	5
2.3	Attendance at Clubs & Events	6
2.4	Supervision at Clubs & Events	7
2.5	General Notes	7
3	Protection Policy for Vulnerable Adults	8
3.1	Vulnerable Adult Members	8
3.2	Suitable Screening	9
3.3	Supervision at Clubs & Events	9
3.4	General Notes	9

1 Introduction

This policy is intended to provide a method by which the Academy of Historical Arts can ensure that any and all participants of any age, including children, may participate in activities with due supervision by properly trained and disclosed individuals.

Throughout this document the terms "Academy" and "AHA" may be used to refer to the Academy of Historical Arts.

For the purpose of this document, the term "adults" will mean individuals aged 17 years or older, as such individuals may at this age attend university in Scotland and be quite independent from their parents. The term "children" will therefore refer to individuals who are not yet 17 years old.

2 Protection Policy for Children

This chapter describes the policy for ensuring the safety and protection of children in clubs and at events run by the Academy of Historical Arts.

2.1 Restriction of Membership

Some clubs within the Academy of Historical Arts may restrict their membership to adults in order to comply with restrictions imposed upon them by the venue at which the club meets (for example when clubs meet in a university setting) or because the instructors or club leaders do not feel qualified enough or do not feel able to provide a suitable level of training, care and supervision for children. In such cases it is the responsible course of action to restrict membership to adults in order to avoid potential problems stemming from making clubs open to children when this is not the most suitable thing to do.

If a club's membership is not open to children then children should not be allowed to attend the club at any time, for any reason. The club's leaders will not necessarily have received suitable training for dealing with children and thus it would not be safe for the children to be present, nor would it be fair to the club's leaders to be presented with such an unfortunate situation.

2.2 Suitable Screening

If a club's membership is open to individuals under the age of 17 then the instructors and club leaders must have received appropriate training to be able to supervise the club's activities and the children who participate. Such training should be arranged by the administrative staff of the Academy or should be evidenced by showing the Academy's administrative staff a nationally recognised certificate from appropriate training.

Furthermore, the instructors and club leaders should be disclosed through the PVG scheme and the administrators of the Academy informed as to the suitability of the individuals in terms of working with children. It is an offence for any individual to undertake such a role if he or she has been barred from it; likewise it is an offence for an organisation to offer such a role to an individual who has been barred from it.

Finally, each club must have appropriate insurance to cover the participation of children in the club's activities.

2.3 Attendance at Clubs & Events

It is always recommended that if a child attends a club or event that the parent or guardian accompanies the child and takes responsibility for the child. This is always a safe option that clubs may choose to have as a rule. However, clubs with sufficiently trained and disclosed instructors or club leaders may allow children to attend without parental supervision; this is solely at the discretion of the instructors and club leaders.

Whilst any young person or child is present they should not at any time be alone in the company of any AHA member or guest who is not their parent or carer. No AHA member or guest should be put in a situation which may leave them alone with any young person or child present, or which would result in them engaging in physical contact with the young person or child (outside of the prescribed physical activities of martial arts if those are the activities at the club).

AHA members or guests should limit verbal contact with the young person or child to times when the parent or carer is present, and should ensure not to raise any topics which are violent in nature, sexually provocative or otherwise inappropriate, or could encourage behaviour inappropriate in young people or children. AHA members or guests should also ensure that any interactions between themselves which contain behaviour or topics which are of a violent nature, sexually provocative or suggestive, or are otherwise inappropriate, or could encourage behaviour inappropriate in young people or children do not take place in the presence of any young person or child.

It must be borne in mind however that if a club does teach martial arts then there will be discussions involving some level of violence and also some amount of physical contact, and this simply cannot be avoided. If parents or guardians are not happy with discussions of a violent nature or physical contact then participation in a martial arts club is most likely a bad idea.

2.4 Supervision at Clubs & Events

If the parent or carer of any young person or child present at an AHA meeting believes their child or ward to be in a situation which places them at risk of physical, mental or sexual abuse it is their responsibility to intervene initially and remove the child or young person from the situation. It is then the responsibility of the parent or carer to inform the most appropriate senior figure present of the situation that they believe placed the child at risk. The senior figure will then either attempt to rectify the situation immediately if possible, or will raise the issue with the administrative staff of the Academy at the soonest possible occasion.

If any AHA member or guest believes that a child or young person is at risk of or suffering from physical, mental or sexual abuse it is their responsibility to inform the most appropriate senior figure present. The senior figure will then be responsible for informing CRBS (the Central Registered Body in Scotland) of the situation and also the local Police or Social Services if appropriate. These agencies will inform the individual as to whether a formal referral to Social Services is necessary, and what further actions should be taken. The parent or carer should only be informed on the advice of these agencies. Confidentiality in such issues is important, and all information should be kept on a need-to-know basis; however, the senior figure should inform the administrative staff of the Academy of the situation and what actions have been taken.

2.5 General Notes

These guidelines are here to assist AHA members in a complex issue. All AHA members should remember that when dealing with children or young people common sense should prevail in all actions.

An appropriate contact address for alerting the senior instructors of the AHA of any problems relating to children at AHA events is: info@historical-academy.co.uk

3 Protection Policy for Vulnerable Adults

This chapter describes the policy for ensuring the safety and protection of vulnerable adults in clubs and at events run by the Academy of Historical Arts.

3.1 Vulnerable Adult Members

Most clubs within the Academy of Historical Arts are likely to offer membership to adults; some clubs will be located at universities and may offer membership to individuals aged 17 years and older. It should be recognised that even though the group members are adults, there may still be some vulnerable individuals amongst the membership, and due attention must be paid to ensure that the Academy environment remains safe for such people.

Examples of vulnerable adults who might become members of an Academy club:

- adults with learning disorders — this could be as simple as a hearing or memory disorder, or it could be a more complicated disorder such as dyspraxia or some form of autism.
- adults with physical disabilities — some people might have physical disabilities such as suffering from asthma or suffering from old injuries, or even just a general lack of physical fitness and stamina.
- adults with language difficulties — people living in Britain do not all speak English as a native language; individuals for whom English is a second language may have difficulty understanding instructions or fitting in with a crowd.
- students living away from home — a common issue for clubs at universities is that often this is the first time students have lived away from home for any extended period of time, and this might leave individuals feeling lonely, threatened or otherwise vulnerable.

3.2 Suitable Screening

Instructors and club leaders should receive appropriate training to be able to supervise the club's activities and the members who participate. Such training should be arranged by the administrative staff of the Academy or should be evidenced by showing the Academy's administrative staff a nationally recognised certificate from appropriate training.

Furthermore, the instructors and club leaders should be disclosed through the PVG scheme and the administrators of the Academy informed as to the suitability of the individuals in terms of working with vulnerable adults. It is an offence for any individual to undertake such a role if he or she has been barred from it; likewise it is an offence for an organisation to offer such a role to an individual who has been barred from it.

Finally, each club must have appropriate insurance to cover the participation of adults in the club's activities.

3.3 Supervision at Clubs & Events

If any AHA member or guest believes that any member of the club is at risk of or suffering from physical, mental or sexual abuse it is their responsibility to inform the most appropriate senior figure present. The senior figure will then be responsible for informing CRBS (the Central Registered Body in Scotland) of the situation and also the local Police or Social Services if appropriate. These agencies will inform the individual as to whether a formal referral to Social Services is necessary, and what further actions should be taken. Confidentiality in such issues is important, and all information should be kept on a need-to-know basis; however, the senior figure should inform the administrative staff of the Academy of the situation and what actions have been taken.

3.4 General Notes

These guidelines are here to assist AHA members in a complex issue. All AHA members should remember that when dealing with vulnerable adults, or indeed any member, that common sense should prevail in all actions.

An appropriate contact address for alerting the senior instructors of the AHA of any problems relating to vulnerable adults at AHA events is: info@historical-academy.co.uk