

NAKMAS child safety strategy sets example for other organisations

Submitted by: NAKMAS

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Child safety must be the main priority for any organisation or club which comes into contact with children, says the National Association of Karate and Martial Art Schools (NAKMAS).

NAKMAS' child safety drive has been so robust that it extends beyond the safety of children during their involvement with NAKMAS accredited martial arts schools, providing advice to children on how to deal with problems such as bullying.

Joe Ellis, chair of NAKMAS, says:

"We have identified issues that affect young people in particular. Bullying and abuse is unfortunately in existence in the UK, but the new anti-bullying and abuse initiatives we have implemented not only demonstrate good governance, they provide children at NAKMAS accredited martial arts schools an avenue outside school and their homes, to ask and seek advice, which so many children want and need.

"Child safety and the safety of vulnerable adults must be the top priority for any sports organisation. It is even more important than the sporting aspect NAKMAS member clubs teach.

"The initiatives that NAKMAS has devoted a lot of time to, including the Stay Safe magazine and the Safe Kids campaign, put children's safety at the centre of NAKMAS' on-going plans."

NAKMAS is calling upon other UK sports governing bodies to look at setting up similar anti-bullying initiatives which are proving highly successful for NAKMAS and its members.

Stay Safe, which is published twice a year, provides advice, updates and case studies relating to welfare issues within martial arts coaching. The magazine is one of many measures employed by NAKMAS aimed at making martial arts coaching safer.

NAKMAS has an active NSPCC approved Welfare Policy, as well as a UK-wide anti-bullying initiative, NAKMAS Safe Kids Campaign, which aims to help children who are encountering problems. It also has Registered Body status via the CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) and Disclosure Scotland to check against the criminal records register.

Joe Ellis adds: "We want the NAKMAS model of child safety, which is always evolving and developing, to be used as a guide for other organisations to follow, not only within martial arts, not only in relation to sports governing bodies, but all organisations whose members work with and coach children and vulnerable adults.

"Children that train within the martial arts attach themselves to coaches and instructors. They look up to them as trustworthy people who are always on hand, and also as friends. That's the kind of environment all sports coaching should operate in."

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Notes to editors:

The National Association of Karate and Martial Art Schools (NAKMAS) is a non-funded national governing body and is a member of CCPR (the Central Council of Physical Recreation). With its Head Office based in Kent, NAKMAS governs all forms of traditional and modern martial arts and has over 73,000 members within the UK.

NAKMAS is an approved insurance provider via Zurich and holds a National and International Quality Standard Certificate via the BSI (British Standards Institute). NAKMAS has also been accredited to the Equality Standard: A Framework for Sport.

NAKMAS accredited persons and a thought provoking video can be seen at the NAKMAS Safe Kids website at www.nakmas-safe-kids.org.uk

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