



THE COACHING AND SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN

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THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This guidance will help you understand what “best practice” is when coaching children in aikido. It also covers essential areas such as supervision/coaching ratios, collection of children and changing room guidance. The terms “coach” and “instructor” are deemed to mean the same thing. Throughout this document the Aikido Alliance UK is referred to as the “Alliance”.

UK-wide application: the Alliance applies the same safeguarding principles and standards across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Clubs must also follow the legislation, statutory guidance, reporting arrangements and criminal-record checking scheme that apply in the country where the activity takes place. Where legal terminology or procedures differ, the relevant home-country requirement takes precedence; the Alliance's safeguarding standard must not be reduced.

THE ALLIANCE CODE OF CONDUCT

This code applies to all those coaching, instructing and helping with aikido sessions for under 18s

Coaches, Assistants and Helpers will:

- At all times adhere to the Alliance's Child Safeguarding Policy and follow its supporting procedures and guidance
- Adhere to all other mandatory requirements, including coaching qualifications, insurance and the criminal-record and barred-list checks applicable to the role and home country
- Raise concerns about behaviour by instructors, volunteers, and others, which may be harmful to those in their care, without prejudice to their own position. This duty also relates to concerns about any child's behaviour that could harm or cause harm to themselves or others,
- Refer all concerns of a child safeguarding nature in line with the Alliance's Child Safeguarding procedures and related guidance.
- Consistently display high standards of behaviour and appearance.
- Never exert undue influence to obtain personal benefit or reward. In particular, coaches must not use their position to establish or pursue a sexual or improper relationship with a participant under 18 (including their close friends and relatives).
- Treat all information of a personal nature about individual aikidoka as confidential except in circumstances where to do so will allow the child to be placed at risk of harm or continue to be at risk of harm.
- Encourage all aikidoka to obey the spirit of the rules both on and off the mat.
- Continue to seek and maintain their own professional development in all areas in relation to coaching children.
- Co-operate fully with other specialists (e.g. other coaches, officials, doctors, and physiotherapists) in the best interests of the young aikidoka.
- Never encourage aikidoka, volunteers, officials or parents to violate the rules of the club or the martial art and report any violations appropriately.
- Observe the authority and the decision of officials and other instructors and only question those decisions in the appropriate manner.

Coaches/Instructors are expected to adhere to the UK Coaching Code of Practice. Instructors qualifying with the Aikido Alliance will be provided with this Code as part of their certification process

<https://www.ukcoaching.org/resources/topics/guides/code-of-practice-for-sports-coaches>

COACHING AND RELATIONSHIPS OF TRUST

As parents, coaches, officials, and volunteers working with young people, we must all help to promote responsible relationships within sport and prevent the manipulation and exploitation of young people.

Although young people aged 16 and 17 have reached the age of consent for sexual activity according to UK law, they could be vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation in certain situations. This includes sexual activity and manipulation by adults who hold a position of trust, responsibility, or authority in relation to them, and, as a result, have a considerable amount of power and influence on their lives.

Since 28 June 2022, legislation in England and Wales has expressly included certain sports coaches within the positions-of-trust offences protecting 16- and 17-year-olds.

The practice of aikido meets the definition of a “sport” for the purposes of this new law

The Aikido Alliance’s policies and procedures relating to safeguarding now reflect these changes in the law

Those in positions of authority in sport can have a positive influence on the welfare of a young person, by providing role models or someone to turn to if they have a concern. But it is important to have clear boundaries in place for the safety of both the young people and the staff, to ensure exploitation cannot take place. This document seeks to clarify the Aikido Alliance’s position on this important change in the law.

What is a position of trust?

Someone in a position of trust is a person in a position of authority or responsibility over another person. Those in positions of trust have a considerable amount of power and influence on a young person’s life. For example, a young person may be dependent on their coach, mentor or other adult for their aikido development, success, or position in a club.

What does the law say?

Sexual activity between an adult and a child under 16 is illegal and constitutes abuse. Furthermore, in defined circumstances, sexual activity between an adult in a position of trust and a young person aged 16 or 17 is also a criminal offence.

Following an NSPCC campaign in partnership with sport’s governing bodies, the law, which previously only applied to roles like teachers and social workers, has now been extended to include a wider range of roles where adults hold a position of influence or power.

The detailed statutory provisions differ across the four UK nations. In England and Wales, specified adults who coach, teach, train, supervise or instruct a 16- or 17-year-old in sport may commit a criminal offence by engaging in sexual activity with that young person where the statutory conditions are met. Clubs in Scotland and Northern Ireland must follow the corresponding law and safeguarding arrangements in force there.

Regardless of differences in statutory terminology, Alliance policy prohibits any coach, instructor, assistant, helper or other adult holding authority or influence from engaging in sexual or sexualised conduct with any participant under 18 for whom they have formal responsibility.

The updated law now defines a wider range of roles and settings where sexual activity between 16- and 17-year-olds and those in positions of trust, responsibility, or authority, constitutes a criminal offence. Examples of specific roles include:

- teacher
- coach

- trainer
- supervisor or instructor in sport

Other roles may also amount to positions of trust, depending on the authority, influence and formal responsibility attached to the role, including:

- Manager
- Tutor
- Assessor

The Aikido Alliance's safeguarding policies and procedures have previously included a governance clause forbidding any coach to engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18 (irrespective of the legal age of consent). The Aikido Alliance requires all its member organisations to uphold the principles enshrined in this new law:

- Abuse of positions of trust is unacceptable behaviour, which could result in prosecution. Breaches of these codes should be robustly addressed in line with the law.
- Club codes of conduct and linked disciplinary processes should be reviewed and amended to include wording that supports the maintenance of healthy and positive relationships between sports coaches and young people.
- The code of conduct must state clearly that any sexual relationship, sexual activity or sexualised conduct between an adult and a 16- or 17-year-old for whom they have formal responsibility, authority or influence is prohibited by the Alliance. Where the adult occupies a position of trust as defined by the applicable law, sexual activity is a criminal offence.
- Alliance policy applies whenever an adult has formal responsibility for, authority over or influence upon a young person, regardless of the regularity of contact. This policy standard may be wider than the statutory position-of-trust tests, which may differ between the four UK nations

The Aikido Alliance policy now reflects these changes in the law

Safeguarding and disciplinary procedures must include consideration of a referral to the relevant barring authority where the statutory referral conditions are met. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland this is the Disclosure and Barring Service; in Scotland it is Disclosure Scotland. A referral may still be required where a person resigns or otherwise leaves before the disciplinary process is completed.

What can aikido coaches and others in positions of trust do?

As a person in a position of trust, aikido coaches have a responsibility to maintain a positive, healthy relationship with the young people under their authority.

Coaches should:

- Ensure that they read, understand, sign up to and comply with the code of conduct/behaviour issued by their club or Association.
- Maintain a relationship with all participants that is appropriate to their role and reflects positively on their club. Relationships between those in positions of trust and young people in sport should be supportive, positive and aimed at improving the young person's skills, and progress.
- not seek to or engage in sexual activity or sexualised communication or image sharing (including via social media) with 16- or 17-year-olds for whom they are responsible.

If a coach thinks that a young person's behaviour indicates that they are seeking to develop or engage in an inappropriate relationship, immediately bring this to the attention of your club Welfare Officer or Association

Safeguarding Officer. Coaches should not respond to the participant in any way that could be interpreted as encouraging the young person concerned. Written records should be kept of any concerns.

Dealing with a concern about a possible abuse of trust

If you suspect that an abuse of a position of trust has occurred, is occurring or may occur, you should:

- immediately report to your club Welfare Officer or Association Safeguarding Officer
- make a written record of your concerns and relevant details

if you are unable to contact the Welfare Officer or Association Safeguarding Officer, or if you think someone is at risk of immediate harm, you must report it to the police or children's social care.

If you think your concern has not been dealt with appropriately you can contact the following services whose duties include responding to concerns about potential breaches of positions of trust:

- England and Wales - consult with the Designated Officer whose details should be available through your local authority's Children's Social Care Department.
- Scotland - contact your local children's social work team. Their contact details can be found on the website for the local authority the child lives in.
- Northern Ireland - contact the relevant Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) Gateway Services team. In circumstances that are not an emergency, the HSCT gateway services team is the first point of contact for all new referrals to children's social services.

You can find additional information on who to contact when dealing with a concern on the NSPCC Sport website.
<https://sport.nspcc.org.uk>

Alternatively, you can seek advice from the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000.

COACHING GOOD PRACTICE

It is essential that all those involved with children in Aikido clubs in whatever capacity follow good practice at all times to minimise the risk of harm. This includes exhibiting exemplary behaviour, adherence to the Alliance's codes of conduct and following the guidance in this document.

ALLIANCE COACHES, ASSISTANTS AND HELPERS SHOULD:

NB All Aikido Alliance Instructors/Coaches, Assistants and Helpers must be over the age of 18. No person under 18 may hold formal responsibility for supervising children.

- Ensure they remain up to date in their qualifications and maintain necessary club/association membership and insurance requirements.
- Complete the level of criminal-record check and, where legally eligible, barred-list check required by Alliance recruitment policy before starting the role. The applicable scheme is DBS in England and Wales, Disclosure Scotland/PVG in Scotland, and AccessNI in Northern Ireland. The Alliance requires checks to be renewed every three years, or status to be monitored through an available update scheme; this is Alliance policy rather than a statutory expiry period.

- Be familiar with the Alliance's Safeguarding Policy and related procedures
- Ensure that parents and young aikidoka obtain appropriate information regarding training sessions and events.
- Not exceed the level of their competence and qualifications.
- Ensure that activities are appropriate for the age, maturity, experience and ability of the young aikidoka in their care.
- Promote honesty, fairness and teamwork.
- Follow the Alliance's guidance on coaching young people.
- Report any concerns in relation to young people (see guidance document on Responding to Concerns and Allegations)
- Recognise the expectations on children and young people to undertake other activities outside of aikido including the demands of school sports, school examinations and other club activities.

ALLIANCE COACHES, ASSISTANTS AND HELPERS SHOULD NOT:

- Take a child to their home or another secluded place where they would be alone with the child.
- Spend time alone with a child unless to fail to do so places the child at risk of harm i.e. if a child is left alone by a parent/carer's failure to collect them.
- Transport a child alone except in an emergency (when a child needs to go to hospital and it is not possible to gain the presence of another adult or alternative transport in any other way and to fail to do so would cause the child likely harm.)
- Leave the training venue before all children and young people have been collected by a designated adult (i.e. parent or carer) or are continuing to be supervised by appropriate club officers.

NEVER:

- engage in rough physical play or horse play or sexually provocative games.
- make sexually suggestive comments to a child even if done in "fun"
- allow a child to engage in inappropriate touching
- use inappropriate language to or in front of a child
- allow a child to use inappropriate language
- do things that are personal in nature for a child that they can do for themselves e.g. toileting.
- use such behaviour as to reduce a child to tears or to display significant distress
- share a hotel room with a child or invite a child home in the daytime or overnight.
- use inappropriate joint locks on children whose bones and joints have not yet fully developed.
- use pain compliance techniques on a child so as to cause them harm or suffering
- engage in sexual activity, sexualised communication or a sexual or intimate relationship with any aikidoka under 18 for whom they have formal responsibility. Sexual activity by an adult with a child under 16 is a criminal offence regardless of whether the adult occupies a position of trust. Sexual activity with a 16- or 17-year-old may also constitute a criminal offence where the adult occupies a legally defined position of trust. In all circumstances, such conduct is prohibited by Aikido Alliance policy.
- smoke or consume alcohol while working with children and young people. This includes instructing whilst smelling of tobacco or alcohol.
- allow allegations by a child to go unreported or not acted upon. (NB: all concerns and disclosures must also be reported to the Alliance's Lead Safeguarding Officer.)

Please note: This is not an exhaustive list.

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE:

- Make aikido fun for all children and promote fair play.
- Always work in an open environment where you can be observed at all times when you are with a child – or children.
- Ensure that all forms of physical contact are provided openly. In Aikido, in order to teach or coach certain techniques effectively, it is sometimes necessary to make physical contact with the child. Parents and children should be made aware of this when they join the class. Their views should always be carefully considered and the child/children themselves should always be consulted and their agreement gained.
- All physical/manual support and instruction should be unambiguous and non-sexual i.e. would not normally be construed as sexual by a reasonable observer.
- Treat all children with respect at all times. Recognise children are individuals and treat them as such, always taking into account their physical development and their emotional well-being
- Maintain appropriate boundaries with children.
- All relationships with children should be based on mutual trust and respect, with adults recognising and never misusing the power inherent in their role.
- Empower children to be a part of decision making processes as far as possible within aikido.
- When taking children away for a course or event, ensure that there are sufficient suitable adults and consider, as part of the risk assessment, whether both male and female supervisors are needed. Follow the current NSPCC Sport guidance on away trips. <https://sport.nspcc.org.uk/resource-library/best-practice/away-day-trips/>
- If a child cries they generally do so because they are hurt or unhappy about something. A coach must assume the child is in distress and act appropriately.
- Obtain relevant medical information and, wherever practicable, parental consent for the provision of first aid. Necessary emergency first aid must not be delayed solely because prior written consent is unavailable.
- Allow all children to have breaks from training to use the toilets, for the appropriate taking of food and drink as required for their well-being.
- Keep a written record of injuries that occur along with treatment given and always inform the parents.
- If any of the following occur, immediately report the matter to a colleague and parent at the earliest opportunity and ensure the Welfare Officer is made aware as soon as possible so that they can take any required action:
 - If you accidentally hurt a child in Aikido
 - If a child in your class appears distressed or affected by physical contact or by your or another person's actions.
 - If a child misunderstands or misinterprets your actions

There is a report form on the Alliance web site which you can use to record and report such incidents

THE APPLICATION OF AIKIDO TECHNIQUES WHEN TEACHING CHILDREN

When applying locks, throws, other techniques or exercises on children and young people, care is to be taken to ensure that any such applications are used only in a way as would be considered reasonable and appropriate to the age, stature and ability of the child upon whom the application relates. **‘Against the joint’ techniques are to be avoided or modified and the application of ‘pain’ to achieve compliance is not to be used.**

Clubs should ensure that their Junior Syllabus is implemented with under 18s in order to moderate any exercise, technique or other application which may be inappropriate for the children and young people participating. A child’s physiology is different to that of an adult, and all coaches working with children should ensure that they have the necessary knowledge in order to deliver safe sessions.

Any participation by a junior member under 16 in an adult class must be discussed and agreed with the Welfare Officer, be covered by the club's risk assessment and be subject to appropriate risk-control measures.

COACHING RATIOS

It is important to ensure that, in planning and running aikido classes for children and young people, consideration is given to providing an appropriate staffing/supervision ratio of adults to participants.

Operational supervision and criminal-record-check eligibility are separate questions. In England and Wales, from 1 September 2026, regular teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children may be regulated activity even where the adult is supervised. Supervision by another checked adult must therefore not be used to exclude a regular assistant or helper from regulated activity. Clubs must assess the actual activities and frequency of each role under the Alliance Recruitment and DBS Guidance and the rules applicable in the relevant home country.

This will:

- minimise any risks to participants
- reassure parents/carers
- provide some protection for those responsible for providing, funding or commissioning the activity in the event of concerns or incidents arising.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

Due to the number of potential variables, it is not possible to recommend “one size fits all” guidance to cover all aikido sessions involving children and young people. There are, however, a number of key considerations that are recommended as good practice:

1. What makes an individual suitable to supervise children?

It is the responsibility of instructors to ensure the suitability of those running the activity.

This includes:

- being appropriately qualified for their role and the activity
- being subject to a safe recruitment process, including criminal records checks for eligible roles
- having insurance appropriate to their activity
- signing up to comply with a code of practice
- understanding their responsibility to safeguard children

2. What factors inform appropriate supervision levels?

- Whatever the recommended ratio of adults to participants is, a minimum of two adults should be present at every session. This ensures at least basic cover in the event of something impacting on the availability of one of the adults during the activity (e.g. in the event of one participant requiring the attention of an adult during the activity following an accident).
- In the planning of all activities, and regardless of any other assessments that may be required (for example of equipment or for Health and Safety purposes), a risk assessment should be undertaken which specifically informs decision-making about appropriate supervision levels. Key factors to assess include:
 - Ages of children
 - Additional supervision/support needs of some or all participants (for example due to disability or age)

- Competence/experience of participants for the specific activity
- Nature of activity (for example a seminar with lots of excited children doing a variety of activities might need higher supervision than just a normal class)
- Nature of the venue – is it private and exclusive to the group or open and accessible to the public; and what types of equipment children may have access to; what hazards are present.

Recommended minimum supervision ratios

Child's age	Number of adults	Number of children
5 – 8	2	12
9 – 12	2	16
13 - 17	2	20

You will see from the above table that a minimum of two adults should always be present. This ensures at least basic cover in the event of something impacting on the availability of one of the adults during the activity (e.g. in the event of a child requiring the attention of an adult during the activity following an accident).

Please note that the table above shows minimum standards and these may need to be adjusted. In all instances the class (both content and participants) should be risk assessed. For example, a whole class of beginners aged 7 learning to do breakfalls might be risk assessed as needing a higher level of supervision. In all instances the welfare of the children should be the priority, and every child must receive the protection to which they are legally entitled.

Although the Alliance encourages parents/carers to accompany children to activities, we do not recommend that Clubs include carers in supervision calculations, unless the carers/parents are acting in a formal volunteering or other capacity during the activity. In these circumstances, this should mean that those parents/carers meet all appropriate requirements in terms of:

- appropriate recruitment checks
- clarity about their role
- who has overall responsibility for the group
- what is acceptable practice

Key principles that are recommended as good practice:

- ensure that all those running the activity are suitable to do so i.e.
 - have been recruited in accordance with this policy
 - have insurance appropriate to their activity
 - be aware of relevant codes of practice
 - have appropriate qualification for the activity
 - have an understanding of their responsibility to safeguard children

Young people under 18 may be given informal opportunities to develop leadership skills, but they must not be appointed or described as an Instructor, Coach, Assistant or Helper, counted within the adult supervision ratio, or given formal responsibility for supervising other children. They must remain appropriately supervised by the responsible adults.

VULNERABLE CHILDREN

All children are vulnerable but through research we know some groups of children are more vulnerable than others

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Deaf and disabled are more likely to be vulnerable because they may:

- Have fewer outside contacts than other children
- Lack access to peers to discover what is acceptable behaviour.
- Receive intimate personal care, possibly from a number of carers, which may both increase the risk of exposure to abusive behaviour, and make it more difficult to set and maintain physical boundaries.
- Have an impaired capacity to resist or avoid abuse.
- Have communication difficulties which may make it difficult to tell others what is happening.
- Be inhibited about complaining because of a fear of losing involvement in the sport
- Be especially vulnerable to bullying and intimidation and be more vulnerable than other children to abuse by their peers.
- Be subject to the prejudices and/or misconceptions of others e.g. about their 'attractiveness' to potential abusers
- Have medical needs that are used to explain abuse.

CHILDREN WHO HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO ABUSE OR HARM

Sport can play an important part in developing a child's self-esteem and confidence including when the child has suffered abuse or harm. The importance of clubs being inclusive to all such children cannot be over emphasised. However a child entering, remaining in or returning to a club after such an incident can be a challenge to the WO, coaches and others.

It is therefore important that the Welfare Officer is given relevant information, to be shared in confidence and on a "need to know" basis, with other club officers as deemed appropriate (e.g. the coach). It is likely such information will come from parents/guardians/carers and professionals involved with the child. The Welfare Officer can also gain support and guidance from the Alliance Lead Safeguarding Officer.

Welfare Officers need to be aware of possible problems that may occur and how to act upon them. For example a child who has suffered abuse may appear fearful of adults, particularly to a person of the same sex as the abuser and consideration must be given to who is placed in a position of trust over the child within the Aikido club. A child who has suffered sexual abuse may exhibit sexualised behaviour or use overtly sexualised language and may be unable to differentiate between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour by adults towards them. This makes the child vulnerable to further abuse and advice must be sought from professional involved on how to deal such situations appropriately and sensitively.

This is not an exhaustive list of potential areas that need to be considered, and each situation must be considered individually.

CHILDREN FROM MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS

Children from minority ethnic groups are additionally vulnerable because they may be:

- Experiencing racism and racist attitudes.
- Afraid of further abuse if they challenge others.
- Subjected to myths, e.g. all people of a particular culture hit their children so that's OK
- Wanting to fit in and not make a fuss.
- Using or learning English as a second language.

CHILDREN WHO TAKE ON LEADERSHIP ROLES

Taking on a leadership role within Aikido is intended to be an enjoyable and positive experience. However, coaches and parents in Aikido may lose sight of the fact that an individual in a leadership role who is under 18 is still legally a child and they are themselves subject to this safeguarding policy.

CHILDREN AND ADULTS ON THE MAT TOGETHER

Within Aikido children and adults may at times be on the mat together. The basis of this decision may be to help develop children's skills by being on the mat with their more experienced elders or for operational reasons such as access to training facilities. Whatever the reason, the club coach will need to assess what is appropriate in terms of such activity e.g. a small child age 10 with a large adult male could put the child at considerable risk of harm physically but a mature child of 17 and an adult may not.

The coach must always be aware of the potential for abuse in any situation. Sport is known to be targeted by people who wish to harm children and should a concern be raised about an adult participant the coach or any concerned person must report it to the Welfare Officer. Additionally when adults and children are on the mat together the coach must pay particular attention to whether both parties are acting appropriately within the rules and requirements of the club. Any behaviour that may place a child at risk must be addressed immediately where necessary to protect the child and reported promptly to the Club Welfare Officer. The person reporting the concern should record what they observed or were told factually and must not investigate the matter or make assumptions about the individual's intentions.

Also be aware children can be a risk to other children and may also seek to harm another child participant by their actions on the mat.

When adults and children are on the mat together, the Instructor must be fully aware of, and clearly identify to the adults:

- those children present, and
- the limitations of applying locks and other techniques on Juniors

Parents and children must be informed that all Alliance Instructors, Coaches, Assistants and Helpers are adults aged 18 or over. They must also be informed that aikido involves appropriate physical contact and that children will have physical contact with adult coaches and may, where mixed training is permitted, train with adult participants. Although accidental contact with a sensitive area of the body can occur during training, every child and parent must be encouraged to report any contact that causes concern or discomfort. Any such concern must be recorded and reported promptly to the Club Welfare Officer without making assumptions about the circumstances or the

individual's intentions. Immediate steps must be taken where necessary to protect the child while the concern is considered under the Alliance's safeguarding procedures.

The presence of children in a mixed class does not by itself make every adult participant eligible for a criminal-record check. Anyone who teaches, trains, instructs, cares for or supervises children must, however, have their role assessed under the Alliance Recruitment and DBS Guidance and the applicable home-country scheme.

DRESS CODE

Aikido is a dynamic and interactive activity and, as such, all clothing worn by junior aikidoka should be:

- fit for purpose (for the activity in question).
- compliant with safeguarding principles. (e.g. T shirts to be worn under gi tops, sports bras for growing girls)

During all training sessions:

- Training suits (gi or dogi) should be of the correct size. For example, trousers which are too long may be hazardous and cause trips or falls. Clothing which is too tight may restrict movement. Clothing which is too loose may fall open or fall down.
- Belts (obi) should also be of an appropriate length so as not to be hazardous to the wearer or other students.
- Training attire should cover vulnerable areas of the body such as knees and elbows.
- No jewellery (rings, earrings, bracelets, watches and studs) should be worn during training or competition sessions. Jewellery which cannot be removed for any reason should be covered with appropriate tape if it is considered a hazard to the child or to others on the mat (check for allergies and permission before taping).
- In the event of athlete's foot, verrucae or any other contagious foot problem, socks should be worn. Please be aware that socks may not allow as much grip with the floor – and so, where possible, neoprene or other 'grippy' activity socks should be used.
- Girls and female teenagers wearing dogi should also wear plain – preferably white – T-shirts underneath their jackets. Sports bras may also be appropriate for developing girls. Gi trousers must always be worn underneath hakama.

The instructor should not adjust the dress of any child unless not to do so would be hazardous to the child or other children taking part, or if it is necessary to protect the modesty of the child. Wherever possible the child should be guided to adjust their own dress, or their parents should assist if they are present. If, despite this, adjusting a child's dress is necessary (such as knotting a belt or securing trouser ties) then the instructor should do so to the side of the training area whilst also ensuring they remain in open view. Where possible, a female coach or helper should adjust the dress of a female child and vice-versa. An instructor should never take a child out of the area / out of sight to adjust clothing.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

All those running aikido sessions for children and young people should

1. have contact details of all children including emergency contact details for parents, carers or other designated/nominated persons to contact
2. have medical/health information for all children and ensure this information is available to relevant people
3. undertake regular risk assessments of both the training area and the aikido activities. For example, very young children and beginners may need a higher level of supervision; some activities may require more

space. Consider the need for a beginner to make a mistake without it endangering them or other participants.

4. ensure that all those involved in the junior sections are aware of the Alliance's safeguarding policy.
5. be aware of the Missing Child Policy and action to take
6. be aware of the late collection guidance and never leave a child alone should their parents/carers fail to collect them
7. ensure children follow guidelines on safe dress e.g. to remove jewellery that may injure self or others
8. be aware of medical conditions which may need risk assessments e.g. verrucae
9. consider the safe use of spectacles
10. carry out a verbal screening at the start of each session to check if any child may be ill or injured
11. have access to first aid provision. The nature of this will depend on the venue being used (e.g. Leisure Centres often require clubs to use their first aiders).
12. only deal with first aid matters where they are competent to do so.
13. be aware of emergency procedures and fire drills
14. consider if parents should be asked to stay for the duration of the session. This may be necessary in order to support certain children e.g. with medical requirements or behavioural issues

This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

COLLECTION OF CHILDREN

Making robust arrangements to monitor the collection of children at the end of the session can be very challenging.

All Alliance affiliated clubs have a duty of care to ensure that children are collected by the right people.

Arrangements should be clearly stated when children join the club so that parents are aware of their obligations as part of this.

There is no legal age at which a child can make their own way home.

Children under the age of 10 must be collected by a parent, carer or another person authorised by them. Exceptionally, an alternative arrangement may be agreed in advance with the club, provided that the parent or carer's instructions are recorded and the club considers the arrangement safe and appropriate.

With regard to children aged 10 and above, parents need to decide whether their child is ready for the responsibility of walking to and from training alone (or with other children).

If parents decide they will not be collecting their children, then written consent should be obtained to allow the club to let the child leave alone.

Parents may already have considered these issues when considering if their child can walk to school. However there may be other factors to consider for an aikido class (such as location and time of day).

The following areas should be considered.

PARENTS

Parents can specify if they are happy for their child to make their own way home.

PASSWORD

When a child joins the club you could ask the parent/carer if they wish to create a password which must be given by anyone wishing to collect their child.

MONITORS

You could use a class helper or instructor to monitor the exit to ensure that children don't slip out unnoticed. Clubs often have large numbers of children on the mat, and all of them will be leaving at the same time. Having someone 'on the door' is a useful way of controlling this.

CLASS REGISTER

Alliance affiliated clubs should have a register of children attending each class. This can be used to 'tick off' when a child is collected. Or the parent could be asked (by the exit Monitor) to sign when collecting their child.

AGE LIMITS

It is best practice that no person under the age of 16 years be the designated person collecting a child

All Alliance affiliated clubs have a "duty of care", which extends to an awareness on the part of the club that relevant junior members have been collected, in so far as is possible, at the conclusion of a session, i.e. a child member should not be left unsupervised if a parent is late.

Best practice is to make all child members and their parents aware that if they are not collected by a parent then they should make that known to the Welfare Officer, coach or other appropriate adult, and for the nominated individual to ensure that the child member is supervised appropriately until a parent arrives or the parent communicates alternative arrangements.

UNFIT TO COLLECT

If there is reason to believe that a person collecting a child is unable to care for them safely—for example, because of alcohol or drugs—the club should seek to contact another person authorised to collect the child and obtain advice from children's social care or the police where necessary. If the child appears to be at immediate risk of harm, call 999.

ACCESS TO THE CHILD

Clubs must follow the collection arrangements provided by the child's parent or carer and any court order or restriction formally brought to the club's attention. Where there is reason to believe that releasing the child would place them at immediate risk of harm, the club must keep the child appropriately supervised and contact the police or children's social care for urgent advice.

Where there are concerns about violent, threatening or aggressive behaviour by a parent or carer, the club must assess the risks and establish safe attendance and collection arrangements. Advice should be obtained from the Alliance Lead Safeguarding Officer and, where necessary, children's social care or the police. Any concern that a child may be at risk must be reported in accordance with the Alliance's Responding to Concerns procedure.

UNKNOWN COLLECTOR

Clubs must not release a child to an unknown or unauthorised person without permission from the child's parent or guardian. Wherever practicable, any change to collection arrangements should be notified in writing in advance. Where this is not practicable, verbal permission may be accepted provided that the club verifies the parent's or guardian's identity—preferably by calling them back on a telephone number already held by the club—records the authorisation, obtains the collector's name and any agreed password or identifying information, and checks this when the person arrives. If the authorisation cannot be verified or there is any safeguarding concern, the child must remain appropriately supervised while further checks are made.

LATE COLLECTION OR FAILURE TO COLLECT

On occasions parents may be delayed and unable to collect their child on time. The list of emergency numbers for the parents is to be used in such situations.

Parents should be asked to inform the appropriate club officer if they are delayed with a clear guidance on what the club will be required to do i.e. the parent must give consent if they wish another parent to transport their child home.

A child awaiting collection must not be left unsupervised. A young person may leave independently only where this forms part of the arrangements agreed with their parent or carer. Until a child is collected (to maintain the wellbeing of all concerned) two appropriate club officers or parents must remain with the child.

There may be some circumstances where a coach has no option but to remain alone with a child awaiting collection. If this happens then the coach should wait with the child in an open area and ring another adult to advise them of the situation. It is clearly better for the child to have a single appropriate adult waiting with them, than no adult at all.

Parents who persistently fail to collect a child member on time or have not arrived after a reasonable period of time and have given no prior notice or informed the club they are delayed, may be failing in their care of their child. The club should use the emergency numbers they have for the child to try to arrange for a nominated person to collect their child. If no one nominated is available, and the parent has still not contacted the club officers after a reasonable period of time the club should consult the police or Children's Social Care Team duty officer for advice on action to take.

When a parent/carers fails to collect a child on time the club should:

- Attempt to contact the parent/carers – from the information sheet completed on joining/renewing membership.
- Attempt to contact the emergency contact person nominated
- If there is no reply from the emergency contact, ask the child if there is another family member who may be contacted
- Wait with the child/children at the club with at least one other Official/coach/ teacher/volunteers or parents.
- If no one is reachable, contact the local police to enquire about the best course of action. Please be aware that the child may be anxious (e.g. that there may have been an accident) so contact with the police should be made discreetly.
- Remind parents/carers of the policy relating to late collection.
- The club coaches and officers should avoid:
 - Taking the child home or to another location.
 - Asking the child to wait in a vehicle or the club with them alone.
 - Sending the child home with another person without permission.

TOILET BREAKS

Children should normally use toilets independently. Where supervision or assistance is necessary because of age, disability or additional need, arrangements must be agreed with the parent/carer and recorded where appropriate. An adult must not accompany a child alone into a toilet unless an immediate safety need makes this unavoidable. Adults undertaking a formal supervisory role must be over 18, safely recruited and subject to the checks legally available and required for that role.

It therefore may be necessary, in larger groups of children, to encourage bigger groups to take a comfort break together

Where supervision of toilet visits is necessary, arrangements must respect each child's privacy, dignity, age, communication needs and any disability or additional needs. Supervision should normally take place from outside the toilet area, with more than one child going together where practicable.

CHANGING ROOMS

A major consideration is whether or not the facilities will be used exclusively by the Club. The advantage of this type of arrangement is that it removes any concerns arising from children mixing with adults when changing or showering.

However, many changing facilities are also used by other adults (e.g. at Leisure Centres). In these circumstances there is a need for additional steps to be taken to ensure adequate supervision of the children while changing. This will avoid risks associated with mixed-facility use and to prevent or reduce opportunities for unwanted contact between the young people and adults when changing or showering.

In many clubs children and adults come changed ready to undertake their training session. However, this policy is relevant to those clubs where changing rooms are used by club members under 18 years of age.

- Ensure that parents are made aware that changing facilities at venues may be shared by both club members and members of the general public.
- Ensure parents are made aware of the type of changing rooms i.e. separate areas for male and female, or changing 'villages'
- Ensure the expected behaviour of your child members in changing rooms is known to the child members and their parents.
- Ensure parents are aware that they should not be in a changing room while unrelated children are changing. Where a child needs assistance because of age, disability or additional need, an individual arrangement should be agreed with the child and parent/carer that protects privacy and dignity and avoids exposing other children.

Coaches should not change with (i.e. at the same time in the presence of) their junior members.

It is important for staff/volunteers to balance the need for adequate supervision with the need to ensure young children are afforded appropriate levels of privacy.

Where a venue has its own safeguarding and incident-reporting procedures, club staff and volunteers must familiarise themselves with them. The Alliance's safeguarding policy and procedures continue to apply in all venues.

OTHER ADULTS USING THE CHANGING ROOMS AT THE SAME TIME AS CHILDREN

Ideally groups of children and young people should have sole use of changing facilities.

Alliance Instructors, Assistants and Helpers MUST NOT change with their junior students

Other points to consider:

- children and young people may opt to change at home before they arrive for the activity. Remember that many children and young people are very self-conscious and anxious about undressing in front of others. Always offer the option of changing at home.
- Supervision in the changing facility may be necessary when children are too young to be left alone or change themselves. Encourage children to arrive dressed in their kit.
- Most children of school age may be capable of changing their clothes
- If the group includes disabled children who require additional support and assistance with changing this should be undertaken by their parent or professional carer whenever possible.
- there are concerns about bullying, fighting or other troublesome behaviours taking place which need to be managed.

PARENTS AS SUPERVISORS

Parents are often present during aikido sessions. Where they are responsible only for their own child (or, by private arrangement, a relative's or friend's child), this is outside the club's staffing ratio. A parent may be counted as a supervisor only where the club has assigned them formal responsibility and they are over 18, have been safely recruited, have completed the checks legally available and required for the role, understand the code of conduct and safeguarding procedures, and are clear about who has overall responsibility for the group.

BEST PRACTICE PRINCIPLES

Clubs must adopt the following safeguards:

- Alliance Instructors, Coaches, Assistants and Helpers must not change in the presence of junior members. Where children's facilities are unavoidably shared with adult members of the public, the club must complete a risk assessment, inform parents and implement the safeguards recommended by NSPCC Sport.
- Changing arrangements must protect every child's privacy and dignity, taking account of age, sex, gender identity, disability and additional needs. No child should be required to change or undress in the presence of adults or in circumstances where they feel unsafe.
- Mobile phones and other image-recording devices must not be used in changing rooms.
- Children must not be pressured to change at the club. Where a child is uncomfortable using the changing facilities, they should be permitted to arrive and leave wearing suitable clothing wherever practicable.

Coaches should arrive changed or change before children begin using the facilities, so that they are ready when the session starts.

RESPONSIBILITIES DURING A CLUB SESSION

The issue of club responsibility during training sessions when a child uses the toilets or changing rooms has been raised on several occasions. The Alliance's view is that while a child is training she/he remains under the responsibility, under the duty of care, of the person who is teaching/coaching him/her at that time on behalf of the club. If a young aikidoka steps off the mat, the coach should be aware of this. If she/he fails to return in a reasonable time, or appears upset upon leaving/returning the coach should request a suitable club official to ensure that he/she is all right.

If you are at an away event then getting changed before and after the session could be seen as part of that session. This means that the Club is responsible for the safety and wellbeing of the children during that time. The club's responsibility begins when the child is accepted into the care of the club and continues until the child is collected or leaves in accordance with the arrangements agreed with their parent or carer.

If a complaint is received that an incident has occurred in the changing room the club must respond promptly, record and report the concern in accordance with the Alliance's safeguarding procedures, and must not attempt to conduct its own safeguarding investigation. If the incident involves a person not associated with the club, the facility manager should be made aware and consideration given as to whether the statutory agencies need informing.

RESPONSIBILITIES AFTER A SESSION IS COMPLETED

Alliance policy is that each affiliated club has a "duty of care" to child members, which extends to an awareness on the part of the club that their junior members have been collected, in so far as is possible, at the conclusion of a session, i.e. a child member should not be left unsupervised if a parent is late. This must be applied in accordance with the child's age, maturity and the attendance and collection arrangements agreed with their parent or carer. If a child cannot be accounted for, reasonable checks must include changing rooms and other areas the child may have entered, while respecting the privacy and safety of other facility users.

Best practice would be for a club to make all child members and their parents aware that if they are not collected by a parent then they should make that known to the Welfare Officer, coach or whoever a club deem to be appropriate, and for the nominated individual to ensure that the child member is supervised appropriately until a parent arrives or the parent communicates alternative arrangements.

MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

These guidelines aim to promote good practice and to encourage a proactive response to supporting children to manage their own behaviour. They suggest some strategies and sanctions which can be used and also identify unacceptable sanctions or interventions which must never be used by staff or volunteers.

These guidelines are based on the following principles:

- The welfare of the child is the paramount consideration.
- All those involved in activities (including children, coaches/volunteers and parents/carers) should be provided with clear guidelines about required standards of conduct, and the organisation/club's process for responding to behaviour that is deemed unacceptable.
- Children must never be subject to any form of treatment that is harmful, abusive, humiliating or degrading.
- Some children may exhibit challenging behaviour as a result of specific circumstances, e.g. a medical or psychological condition, and coaches may therefore require specific or additional guidance. These and any other specific needs the child may have should be discussed with parents/carers and the child in planning for

the activity, to ensure that an appropriate approach is agreed and, where necessary, additional support provided.

- Sport can make a significant contribution to improving the life experience and outcomes for all children and young people. Every child should be supported to participate and, only in exceptional circumstances where the safety of a child or of other children cannot be maintained, should a child be excluded from club activities.

PLANNING ACTIVITIES

When children are identified as having additional needs or behaviours that are likely to require additional supervision, specialist expertise or support, this should be discussed with parents/carers and where appropriate young people. The club should seek to work in partnership with parents/carers, and where necessary external agencies, to ensure that a child or young person can be supported to participate safely.

AGREEING ACCEPTABLE AND UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

Staff, volunteers, children, young people and parents/carers should be involved in developing an agreed statement of what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour (code of conduct) and the range of sanctions which may be applied in response to unacceptable behaviour.

Issues of behaviour and control should be discussed with staff, volunteers, parents and children in the context of rights and responsibilities. When children are asked to draw up a code of conduct that will govern their participation in club activities, they tend to arrive at very sensible “rules” with greater “buy-in” from other children when compared to those simply imposed by adults. If and when such a code is compiled, every member of the group can be asked to sign it, as can new members as they join.

USEFUL STRATEGIES

In responding to challenging behaviour the response should always be proportionate, be imposed as soon as is practicable and be fully explained to the child and their parents/carers. In dealing with children who display negative or challenging behaviours, staff and volunteers might consider the following options:

- Time out - from the activity, group or individual work.
- Reparation - the act or process of making amends.
- Restitution - the act of giving something back.
- Behavioural reinforcement - rewards for good behaviour, consequences for negative behaviour.
- De-escalation of the situation - talking through with the child.
- Increased supervision by staff/volunteers.
- Use of individual “contracts” or agreements for their future or continued participation.
- Sanctions or consequences e.g. missing an outing.
- Seeking additional or specialist support where appropriate. Parental consent should normally be obtained before identifiable information is shared, unless seeking consent could increase the risk to the child or information needs to be shared without consent for safeguarding purposes.
- Temporary or permanent exclusion.

The following should **never** be permitted as a means of managing a child’s behaviour:

- Physical punishment or the threat of such.
- Refusal to speak to or interact with the child.
- Being deprived of food, water, access to changing facilities or toilets or other essential facilities.
- Verbal intimidation, ridicule or humiliation.

PHYSICAL INTERVENTION

The use of physical intervention should always be avoided unless it is absolutely necessary to prevent a child injuring themselves or others or causing serious damage to property.

Physical contact to prevent something happening should always be the result of conscious decision-making and not a reaction. Before physically intervening, the member of staff or volunteer should ask themselves, “Is this the only option in order to manage the situation and ensure safety?”

Where practicable and safe, de-escalation and other suitable strategies should be attempted before physical intervention. Where immediate action is necessary to prevent injury or serious damage to property, intervention must not be delayed solely in order to exhaust every alternative. Any intervention must be proportionate, use the minimum force necessary and continue for the shortest possible time.

The following must always be considered:

- Contact should be avoided with buttocks, genitals and breasts. Staff/volunteers should never behave in a way which could be interpreted as sexual.
- Any form of physical intervention should achieve an outcome that is in the best interests of the child whose behaviour is of immediate concern.
- Staff/ volunteers should consider the circumstances, the risks associated with employing physical intervention compared with the risks of not employing physical intervention.
- The scale and nature of physical intervention must always be proportionate to the behaviour of the young person and the nature of harm/ damage they might cause.
- All forms of physical intervention should employ only the minimum force needed to avert injury to a person or serious damage to property – applied for the shortest period of time.
- Staff/volunteers should never employ physical interventions which are deemed to present an unreasonable risk to children or staff/volunteers.
- Staff/volunteers shall never use physical intervention as a form of punishment.
- Physical intervention should NOT involve inflicting pain

Any physical intervention used should be recorded as soon as possible after the incident by the staff/volunteers involved using the Incident Report Form and passed to the Alliance Lead Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible.

It is clear from the accounts of children and young people that physical intervention provokes strong feelings. Children may be left physically or emotionally hurt. Even a child who hasn't directly been involved in the situation may be fearful that it will happen to them in future or have been upset by seeing what has happened to others.

A timely debrief for staff/volunteers, the child and parents should always take place following an incident where physical intervention has been used. This should include ensuring that the physical and emotional well-being of those involved has been addressed and ongoing support offered where necessary. Staff/volunteers, children and parents should be given an opportunity to talk about what happened in a calm and safe environment.

There should also be a discussion with the child and parents about the child's needs and continued safe participation in the group or activity.

MISSING CHILD: ACTION TO TAKE

You might wish to print out this page and ensure it is readily available at every training session.

If a child for whom the club has responsibility cannot be located, act immediately. This procedure applies during normal club sessions, courses, seminars and other events. The response must reflect the child's age, vulnerability, any additional needs, the circumstances and the level of risk.

- ✓ Nominate one responsible adult to coordinate the response and record decisions, actions and times.
- ✓ Maintain safe supervision of all other children. Do not involve children in the search.
- ✓ Establish where and when the child was last seen. Call the child's mobile telephone if they have one. If contact details are provided temporarily to members of the safeguarding team for this purpose, delete them securely after use.
- ✓ Allocate each available responsible adult a specific part of the immediate surrounding area to search, including toilets, changing areas, exits, venue grounds and any place where the child could be concealed or injured. Require everyone searching to report back within a short specified time appropriate to the size of the area.
- ✓ If the child cannot be found after the immediate search, contact the parent/carers and explain the steps being taken. If contacting the parent/carers could increase the risk to the child, contact the police immediately and follow their advice.
- ✓ Record the circumstances and prepare a detailed description, including the child's hair and eye colour, approximate height and build, clothing, relevant medical or communication needs and any known risks. Identify any recent photograph, including a photograph taken at the event, that may assist the police.
- ✓ Call 999 immediately where there is reason to believe the child is in immediate danger or at serious risk of harm. Otherwise, **if the immediate search is unsuccessful, report the child missing to the police - and always within 20 minutes of the child first being noticed missing**. Do not delay the police report because the search has not been completed.
- ✓ Follow police instructions, preserve relevant evidence such as messages or CCTV, and continue only those searches the police consider safe and appropriate.
- ✓ When the child is found, notify the parent/carers, police and everyone involved in the search; check the child's immediate welfare and arrange medical attention if needed.
- ✓ Report the incident to the Club Welfare Officer and Alliance Lead Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible, complete an incident record, review why the child went missing and consider whether safeguards must change.

CHANGE LOG

July 2022 V2	Amended to reflect the change in the law relating to positions of trust – added report form link for incidents – added reference to UK Coaching Code of Practice
May 2024	Policy review – small changes not affecting meaning. Missing Child action plan updated – key change: reporting to police amended from 30 minutes to 20 minutes
September 2026 V4	UK-wide application, vetting terminology and over-18 rule added; supervision, position-of-trust, toilet/changing-room and missing-child guidance updated in alignment with NSPCC Sport.