

APPENDIX 11 - SAFEGUARDING

WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY



To be read in conjunction with the GB Taekwondo Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures

INTRODUCTION

GB Taekwondo is committed to the highest standards of quality, openness, probity and accountability, including when dealing with safeguarding and child protection concerns. This policy allows employees and workers to reveal and raise concerns over misconduct or malpractice within GB Taekwondo enabling them to do so without fear of reprisal or victimisation even if it turns out the concerns were unfounded. It applies not only to employees but to contractors providing services and trainees on vocational and work experience schemes.

It is not designed to question financial or business decisions taken by STUK and should not be used to reconsider any matters which have already been addressed under 'Harassment, Bullying and Victimisation', 'Grievance', 'Disciplinary' or other procedures.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 is 'An Act to protect individuals who make certain disclosures of information in the public interest; to allow such individuals to bring action in respect of victimisation; and for connected purposes'. This is commonly referred to as 'blowing the whistle'. The law that protects whistle-blowers is for the public interest – so people are encouraged to speak out if they find malpractice in an organisation. Blowing the whistle is more formally known as 'making a disclosure in the public interest'. If workers bring information about a wrongdoing to the attention of their employers or a relevant organisation, they are protected in certain ways under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

This Act, which came into effect in 1999, gives legal protection to employees against being dismissed or penalised by their employers as a result of publicly disclosing certain serious concerns.

SCOPE OF POLICY

The policy is intended to cover concerns in the public interest and may at least initially be investigated separately but might then lead to the invocation of other procedures e.g. Disciplinary. The categories of the Act are wide and concerns could include:

- Financial malpractice or impropriety or fraud.
- Failure to comply with legal obligation or statutes.
- Dangers to Health and Safety or the environment.
- Criminal offences.
- Improper conduct or unethical behaviour.
- Concealing information about any of these matters.

SAFEGUARDS

Protection

Employees of GB Taekwondo who disclose concerns will be supported and protected provided the disclosure is made:

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- in good faith.
- with reasonable belief of the individual making the disclosure that it tends to show malpractice or impropriety and if they make the disclosure to the appropriate person (see below). It is important to note no protection from GB Taekwondo's disciplinary procedure is offered to those who choose not to use the procedure.

Abuse of the system

If it is discovered an individual has abused this policy and reporting process and has maliciously, in bad faith or without reasonable belief raised unfounded allegations, GB Taekwondo will treat this as a serious disciplinary matter.

If anyone tries to discourage an employee from coming forward with any concern GB Taekwondo will treat this as a serious disciplinary matter. This will also apply to anyone who expresses criticism or any negative responses and to anyone who harasses, bullies, isolates or victimises employees in any way after they came forward.

Confidentiality

GB Taekwondo will, as far as possible, respect confidentiality and treat disclosures in a confidential and sensitive manner. The identity of the individual making the allegation may be kept confidential so long as it does not hinder or frustrate any investigation. We would expect the individual who has raised the disclosure to co-operate fully with any investigation that involves other regulatory bodies such as the Police, Social Services, Health and Safety Executive etc.

Anonymous Allegations

GB Taekwondo encourages individuals to put their name to a disclosure made. Anonymous allegations are much less credible but may be considered at the discretion of GB Taekwondo.

In exercising this discretion, the factors to be taken into account will include:

- The seriousness of a concern.
- The credibility of a concern.
- The possibility of confirming an allegation from attributable sources.

PROCEDURE FOR MAKING A DISCLOSURE/RAISING A CONCERN

If you have a concern about a dangerous practice, fraud or other illegal or unethical conduct at work which relates to the safeguarding of children, raise it first with the Safeguarding Officer. This can be done verbally or in writing (using Appendix 4, contained with GB Taekwondo's Safeguarding Children Policy).

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If you have a concern that **isn't** related to the safeguarding of children, i.e. malpractice you should request a confidential meeting with the Chairman. Information recorded at the meeting must be passed as soon as possible to the appropriate designated Investigating Officer nominated by the Chairman.

- Complaints against the Chairman should be passed to the Operations Director who will nominate an appropriate Investigating Officer.
- The Chairman has the right to refer the complaint back to management if he feels that the management without any conflict of interest can more appropriately investigate the complaint.

If there is evidence of criminal activity the Investigating Officer should inform the Police. GB Taekwondo will ensure that any internal investigation does not hinder a formal Police investigation.

TIMESCALES

Investigations will be undertaken as quickly as possible. It is not possible to lay down timescales for such investigations due to the fact that matters may involve internal investigator and/or the Police.

The Investigating Officer will as soon as is practically possible send a written acknowledgement of the concern to the complainant and thereafter report back to them in writing (to their home address) the outcome of the investigation, and the proposed action, unless the matter is one of safeguarding (whereby appropriate action is taken that may include investigation by the police or other statutory agencies to conclude on).

INVESTIGATING PROCEDURE

For safeguarding concerns, the procedure as outlined in the GB Taekwondo Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures will be followed. For all other matters, the Investigating Officer should:

- Obtain full details and clarification of the concern.
- Inform the member of staff against whom the concern is made as soon as is practically possible. The member of staff will be informed of their right to be accompanied by a Trade Union or other representative at any future interview or hearing held under the provision of these procedures.
- Consider the involvement of the GB Taekwondo auditors and the Police at this stage and should consult with the Chairman.
- Fully investigate the allegations with the assistance, where appropriate, of other individuals/bodies, and consider Sports Resolutions for necessary resolve.
- Make a judgement about the concern and validity of the concern. This judgement should be detailed in a report containing the findings of the investigation and reasons for the judgement, and passed to the Chairman. The Chairman will decide what action to take. If the concern is shown to be justified, then they will invoke the disciplinary or other appropriate GB Taekwondo procedure.
- Keep the complainant informed of the progress of the investigation and, if appropriate, of the final outcome.
- If appropriate, pass a copy of the outcomes to the GB Taekwondo Auditors to enable a review of the procedures.

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If the complainant is not satisfied that their concern is being properly dealt with by the Investigating Officer they have a right to raise it in confidence with the Chairman or one of the designated persons noted above.

If the investigation finds the allegations unsubstantiated and all internal procedures have been exhausted, but the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, GB Taekwondo recognises the lawful rights of employees and ex-employees to make disclosures to prescribed persons (such as the Health and Safety Executive, the Audit Commission, or the utility regulators), or, where justified, elsewhere.

CONTACTS

GB Taekwondo Safeguarding Officers:

Mary Brownlow
Mobile: 07889 538 902
Email: safeguarding@gbtaekwondo.co.uk

Steve Green
Mobile: 07540 711788
Email: safeguarding@gbtaekwondo.co.uk

GB Taekwondo Operations Director:

Steve Flynn
Mobile: 07808 773 264
Email: steve.flynn@gbtaekwondo.co.uk

GB Taekwondo Chairman:

Jeremy Beard
Mobile: 07767 886 849
Email: jeremy.beard@gbtaekwondo.co.uk

Updated (sjs): 03/05/13, 11/06/15 & 23/09/15 re safeguard contacts
