

Gōdō Martial Arts Trauma-Informed Coaching Policy

1. Policy Statement

Gōdō Martial Arts is committed to fostering an inclusive, safe, and supportive environment for all students, with a specific emphasis on recognising and responding appropriately to those who may have experienced trauma or Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). We believe that martial arts training can play a powerful role in promoting healing, confidence, and personal growth when delivered through a trauma-informed lens.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all instructors, assistant instructors, volunteers, safeguarding officers, and staff working under the Gōdō Martial Arts banner. It covers all training sessions, events, and interactions with students both in-person and online.

3. Our Commitment

We are committed to ensuring that our coaching practices are aligned with trauma-informed principles. These principles guide how we interact with students, structure our lessons, and maintain a safe and empowering environment. All lead instructors and Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs) must have completed the **BMABA Trauma-Informed Coaching Qualification**, and all assistant instructors must be briefed and supported to follow trauma-informed approaches.

4. Key Principles of Trauma-Informed Practice

Gōdō Martial Arts recognises the following core principles in delivering trauma-informed coaching:

- **Safety:** Creating a consistent, stable, and emotionally secure training space where students feel physically and psychologically safe.
- **Trust and Transparency:** Building honest and respectful relationships, being clear with expectations, and avoiding surprises or unpredictable discipline.
- **Empowerment and Choice:** Providing students with autonomy where possible – allowing them to say “no,” to take breaks, and to choose alternative ways to demonstrate progress.
- **Collaboration:** Encouraging cooperative learning, peer support, and team-based problem solving within the class structure.

- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Recognising and valuing each student's unique background, identity, and lived experience.
- **Resilience Building:** Reinforcing positive self-identity, effort over perfection, and a growth mindset.

5. Instructor Responsibilities

All coaching staff must:

- Complete training on trauma-informed practices – including the **BMABA Trauma-Informed Coaching Qualification** (mandatory for lead instructors and DSOs).
- Adopt language and behaviour that is respectful, non-judgmental, and avoids shaming or punitive approaches.
- Adapt lesson structures, drills, and expectations where appropriate to meet individual student needs without compromising dignity or inclusion.
- Remain alert to signs of distress or trauma triggers, and respond calmly and compassionately.
- Encourage reflection, mindfulness, and emotional regulation as part of the martial arts experience.
- Immediately report any safeguarding concerns in line with Gōdō Martial Arts's Safeguarding Policy and procedures.

6. Student Support and Adaptations

To support all students, Gōdō Martial Arts will:

- Allow students to opt out of specific activities that may be triggering or overwhelming, offering suitable alternatives where necessary.
- Offer extended progression timelines and modified grading formats to ensure fair assessment of effort and growth.
- Implement a private feedback channel for students or parents/carers to raise concerns or request adaptations.
- Monitor and review student wellbeing regularly as part of our wider safeguarding and inclusion duties.

7. Lead Instructor and Safeguarding Officer Requirements

All lead instructors and Designated Safeguarding Officers must:

- Hold a valid and current **BMABA Trauma-Informed Coaching Qualification**.
- Refresh their training at least every 3 years or as guided by BMABA policy updates.
- Model trauma-informed practices to other staff, students, and parents/carers.

- Support assistant instructors and volunteers to build trauma-awareness and apply best practices.

8. Confidentiality and Disclosures

All staff must handle disclosures of trauma or abuse sensitively and confidentially. Information will only be shared with the appropriate safeguarding leads or statutory services where there is a risk of harm, in accordance with Gōdō Martial Arts's Safeguarding Policy and the legal duties of care.

9. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the club's leadership team and safeguarding officer. Updates will be made in line with BMABA guidance and emerging best practices in trauma-informed education and martial arts instruction.

Signed:

David Hitchman

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