

# Safe Practice Policy

Loddon Martial Arts

## 1. Introduction

Han Guk Mu Sool is a traditional Korean martial art encompassing striking, kicking, joint manipulation, forms, breakfalling, and controlled weapons training. Safe practice is essential to prevent injury and promote a positive learning environment. Children and Adults at Risk require particular consideration due to their ongoing physical and psychological development.

This policy outlines the safe practice standards and expectations within Loddon Martial Arts to safeguard all participants.

## 2. Warm-Up Requirements

All classes must begin with a structured warm-up:

- Cardiovascular activation
- Mobility and joint rotations
- Dynamic stretching
- Movement-specific preparation (e.g., stance transitions, basic strikes, controlled footwork)

Warm-ups will be age-appropriate and tailored to the intensity and technical demands of the upcoming lesson. Students will never be asked to perform exercises beyond their physical capability.

## 3. Safe Practice for Throws, Joint Manipulation and Falling

Elements of Han Guk Mu Sool involve controlled joint locks, takedowns, sweep techniques, and roll/breakfall training.

**Risks include:**

- Injury from improper falling
- Joint strain or hyperextension
- Impact with hard surfaces

**Safe practice includes:**

- Use of suitable martial arts mats, checked before each class for gaps, unevenness, or hazards.
- Keeping the matted area free from equipment, bags, or sharp objects.
- Students learn rolls and breakfalls *before* any form of throw or takedown is introduced.
- Joint locks performed **slowly, with control, and with clear verbal communication**.
- No submissions, chokeholds, or locks applied at full pressure.
- Children and Adults at Risk are only taught locks or takedowns in a modified, safe manner appropriate to their stage of development.

## 4. Safe Practice for Strikes, Punches and Kicks

As Han Guk Mu Sool includes striking techniques, strict safeguards are in place, particularly around sparring.

### Risks include:

- Concussion or head injury
- Bruising or internal injury from heavy contact
- Overextension of joints through poor technique
- Injury from inappropriate conditioning exercises

### 4.1 Head Contact Policy

- **No head contact is permitted for students under 16.**  
(Following the Martial Arts Safeguarding Group recommendation.)
- For ages **16+**, only *controlled, light*, non-jarring contact to approved target areas is permitted during technical sparring.
  - No follow-through strikes
  - No spinning head kicks during free sparring unless both participants are advanced level and instructors approve

### 4.2 Sparring Safeguards

Age, experience, height and weight are all considered when pairing students.

Before sparring takes place:

- Both participants must wear appropriate safety equipment.
- The instructor must approve all pairings.
- Sparring is continuously supervised at close range by qualified instructors.

### 4.3 Required Protective Equipment

For students aged 16+ participating in sparring:

- Head guard (even though no head contact allowed for U16s, protection is used by older groups during controlled drills)
- Gum shield
- Gloves
- Shin and foot guards
- Groin guard (males)
- Chest protector (optional)

## 4.4 Training Surface

- Only suitable martial arts mats are used for sparring, padwork and partner drills.

## 4.5 Response to Head Injury or Suspected Concussion

If any head impact occurs (even accidental):

- Sparring stops immediately.
- The student is removed from training.
- A concussion assessment is conducted by a qualified first aider.
- Parents/guardians are informed immediately.
- Return-to-training follows a minimum rest period and “return to play” protocol.

## 4.6 Supervision

- Sparring is only conducted under the direct supervision of an instructor trained in safeguarding and first aid.
- Mixed-gender sparring is allowed only where safe pairings can be made; otherwise adjustments are made for height, weight, and experience.

## 4.7 Prohibited Practices

- Knuckle push-ups for children
- Excessive bag conditioning
- Overstretching or forced stretching
- Any exercise likely to damage developing joints

# 5. Safe Practice for Weapons Training

Han Guk Mu Sool includes the use of traditional training weapons. Safety is strictly controlled.

**Safe practice includes:**

- **No live blades** (sharp or otherwise) present when Children or Adults at Risk are in the training hall.

- Use of appropriate *training* weapons (foam, padded, wooden, or polypropylene depending on student age and level).
- Beginners and children only use light, non-hazardous versions of weapons.
- Weapons taught in a controlled environment with clear boundaries and spacing between students.
- Continuous supervision by qualified instructors.
- Weapons are only used as part of structured curriculum—not freely outside designated practice time.

## 6. Instructor Competence and Responsibilities

At Loddon Martial Arts:

- All instructors are suitably qualified and experienced in Han Guk Mu Sool.
- All instructors hold current safeguarding training and enhanced DBS checks.
- A qualified first aider is present at every session.
- Instructors ensure that all activities are age-appropriate, progressive, and conducted in a safe environment.
- Discipline is maintained to ensure safety, respect and focus.
- Students are encouraged to report discomfort, injury, or unsafe behaviour immediately.

## 7. Safe Training Environment

- The training hall is inspected before all sessions.
- Hazards (wet floors, loose equipment, obstructions) are removed before class begins.
- A first aid kit and emergency procedures are available and clearly communicated.
- Parents, carers and spectators are required to follow venue safety rules.

## 8. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if:

- There are changes to safeguarding guidance
- New activities or equipment are introduced
- A safety incident suggests procedural improvements