

Out East Fencing Club

Health & Safety Policy

Document status: Club policy

Approved by: Board of Directors

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1. Purpose

1.1. Out East Fencing Club (the **Club**) is committed to providing a safe environment for everyone participating in its activities.

1.2. The Club recognises that fencing is a physical sport involving weapons and protective equipment and that appropriate arrangements are therefore required to identify and manage health and safety risks.

1.3. This policy establishes the Club's overall approach to health and safety and the responsibilities of people involved in delivering and participating in Club activities.

1.4. Detailed safety controls will be established through the Club's risk assessments, procedures, venue arrangements and applicable British Fencing rules and guidance.

2. Scope

2.1. This policy applies to all Club activities, including:

- regular fencing sessions;
- beginner courses;
- youth sessions;
- taster sessions;
- private lessons;

- competitions and events organised by the Club;
- use, storage and transportation of Club equipment; and
- other activities undertaken on behalf of or under the supervision of the Club.

2.2. The policy applies to:

- members;
- participants;
- children and young people;
- parents and guardians;
- Directors;
- coaches and instructors;
- employees;
- volunteers;
- contractors; and
- visitors.

3. Legal and Governing-Body Requirements

3.1. The Club will seek to comply with applicable health and safety legislation and regulations.

3.2. The Club will also operate in accordance with applicable British Fencing rules, requirements and relevant safety guidance.

3.3. Where the Club operates within a venue controlled by another organisation, the Club will cooperate with the venue operator's reasonable health and safety requirements.

3.4. Where responsibilities are shared with a venue operator or other organisation, the Club will seek to establish clearly who is responsible for relevant safety arrangements.

3.5. Nothing in this policy replaces specific legal, venue or governing-body requirements that apply to a particular activity.

4. Responsibilities of the Club

4.1. The Club is responsible for establishing appropriate arrangements for managing health and safety.

4.2. The Board of Directors has overall responsibility for ensuring that:

- this policy is maintained;
- appropriate risk assessments are undertaken;
- appropriate procedures are in place;
- suitable people are appointed to relevant safety responsibilities;
- significant health and safety concerns are addressed; and
- the effectiveness of the Club's arrangements is reviewed.

4.3. The Board may delegate day-to-day responsibilities to appropriately competent coaches, volunteers or other people, while retaining appropriate oversight.

5. Coaches and Instructors

5.1. Coaches and instructors have responsibility for the safety of participants within the activities they supervise.

5.2. Coaches should:

- follow applicable British Fencing rules and guidance;
- follow relevant Club risk assessments and procedures;
- use appropriate equipment and protective measures;
- provide appropriate instruction before participants undertake activities;
- supervise participants appropriately;
- take reasonable steps to prevent unsafe behaviour;
- respond appropriately to accidents and injuries;
- report hazards, incidents and equipment concerns; and
- stop or modify an activity where they reasonably believe that continuing would create an unacceptable safety risk.

5.3. Coaches should not knowingly permit participants to undertake activities for which they are not appropriately prepared or equipped.

6. Participants and Members

6.1. Participants are responsible for taking reasonable care of their own safety and the safety of others.

6.2. Participants must:

- follow reasonable instructions from coaches and authorised Club representatives;
- use equipment appropriately;
- wear required protective equipment;
- report damaged or unsafe equipment;
- report hazards and accidents;
- behave in accordance with the Code of Conduct; and
- avoid deliberately or recklessly creating risks to other people.

6.3. Participants should not undertake fencing activity while aware of a condition or circumstance that makes participation unsafe for them unless appropriate arrangements have been agreed.

7. Children and Young People

7.1. The Club recognises that additional considerations apply to activities involving children and young people.

7.2. Youth activities shall be delivered in accordance with:

- this policy;
- the Club's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy;
- relevant risk assessments;
- applicable British Fencing requirements; and
- appropriate venue arrangements.

7.3. Coaches and volunteers working with young people should receive appropriate information, training and supervision for their roles.

7.4. The Club will consider age, ability and experience when determining appropriate activities and supervision.

7.5. Health and safety concerns involving a child should also be considered in the context of the Club's safeguarding arrangements.

8. Fencing Equipment

8.1. The Club recognises that fencing equipment can present risks if it is damaged, unsuitable or used incorrectly.

8.2. The Club will establish appropriate arrangements for:

- inspection;
- maintenance;
- repair;
- storage;
- transportation; and
- withdrawal from use of defective equipment.

8.3. Equipment provided by the Club should be suitable for its intended use and maintained in a condition appropriate to that use.

8.4. Participants should not use equipment that they reasonably believe to be damaged or unsafe.

8.5. Where equipment is loaned to or used by participants, the Club may provide appropriate instructions regarding its safe use.

8.6. Detailed equipment requirements shall be determined by applicable British Fencing rules and guidance, manufacturer instructions and the Club's risk assessments.

9. Protective Equipment

9.1. Participants must use the protective equipment required for the activity they are undertaking.

9.2. Coaches and session leaders should ensure that participants understand the relevant protective equipment requirements before participating.

9.3. Protective equipment should be inspected appropriately and withdrawn from use where it is no longer suitable.

9.4. Where participants provide their own protective equipment, they remain responsible for ensuring that it is appropriate and maintained, subject to any checks required by the Club or British Fencing.

10. Venue Safety

10.1. The Club will take reasonable steps to ensure that venues used for Club activities are suitable for the intended activity.

10.2. Consideration should be given to matters including:

- floor condition;
- available space;
- lighting;
- ventilation;
- access and egress;
- emergency exits;
- fire arrangements;
- electrical equipment;
- trip hazards;
- spectator areas;
- changing facilities;
- accessibility; and
- first-aid arrangements.

10.3. Venue-specific risks should be addressed through appropriate risk assessments.

10.4. Where a venue operator is responsible for particular safety arrangements, the Club should understand those arrangements and cooperate with the operator.

11. Warm-Up and Physical Activity

11.1. Coaches should consider the physical demands of the activity and provide appropriate preparation and instruction.

11.2. Participants should be encouraged to communicate relevant physical limitations or concerns where this would allow appropriate arrangements to be made.

11.3. Coaches should take reasonable steps to avoid inappropriate physical demands or activities that are inconsistent with the participant's level of experience.

11.4. The Club does not require participants to disclose private medical information beyond what is reasonably necessary to manage a relevant safety concern.

12. First Aid

12.1. The Club will maintain appropriate arrangements for responding to injuries and illness during Club activities.

12.2. The level of first-aid provision should be proportionate to:

- the nature of the activity;
- the number and age of participants;
- the venue;
- the foreseeable risks; and
- applicable legal or venue requirements.

12.3. The Club will seek to ensure that relevant session leaders know:

- where first-aid equipment is located;
- how to access emergency assistance;
- how to contact the relevant venue representative; and
- what arrangements apply for recording accidents and injuries.

12.4. Where appropriate, coaches and volunteers should receive suitable first-aid training.

13. Emergencies

13.1. The Club will maintain appropriate arrangements for responding to foreseeable emergencies.

13.2. Depending on the circumstances, this may include:

- serious injury;
- sudden illness;
- fire;
- evacuation;
- dangerous equipment failure;
- loss of a child or young person;

- violence or serious misconduct; or
- another significant threat to safety.

13.3. Where an emergency requires immediate intervention, the Club will prioritise the safety of participants and contact the emergency services where appropriate.

13.4. Club procedures should not delay contacting emergency services where immediate assistance is required.

13.5. Venue-specific emergency procedures should be followed where applicable.

14. Accident, Incident and Near-Miss Reporting

14.1. Accidents, injuries, dangerous occurrences and significant near misses should be reported to the appropriate Club representative.

14.2. The Club will maintain an Incident / Accident Reporting Procedure setting out:

- what should be reported;
- who should be informed;
- how reports are recorded;
- when further investigation is required; and
- how corrective action is considered.

14.3. Significant incidents should be reviewed to determine whether existing risk controls remain appropriate.

14.4. Where an incident may also constitute a safeguarding concern, the safeguarding procedure shall be followed.

15. Risk Assessment

15.1. The Club will identify and assess significant health and safety risks associated with its activities.

15.2. Risk assessments should consider:

- the activity;
- the people exposed to the risk;

- the likelihood and potential severity of harm;
- existing controls;
- additional controls that may be required; and
- who is responsible for implementing those controls.

15.3. Risk assessments should be proportionate to the activity and reviewed when circumstances change.

15.4. The Club will maintain a Risk Assessment Procedure and appropriate risk assessment records.

15.5. Particular consideration should be given to activities involving children, beginners, inexperienced participants or people who may require additional support.

16. Equipment Owned by Third Parties

16.1. The Club may use equipment owned by Directors, members, coaches, venues or other third parties.

16.2. Third-party equipment used in Club activities should be suitable for its intended use and subject to appropriate checks.

16.3. The Club's Founder Assets Licence and Equipment Loan Agreement applies to equipment covered by that agreement.

16.4. The existence of an equipment ownership arrangement does not remove the Club's responsibility to manage reasonably foreseeable risks associated with equipment used in its activities.

17. Contractors and External Providers

17.1. Where external providers are engaged to deliver services or activities on behalf of the Club, the Club should consider relevant health and safety responsibilities as part of the engagement.

17.2. Contractors and external providers should comply with applicable legal, venue and Club requirements.

17.3. Where responsibility for a safety matter rests with an external provider, this should be reasonably clear to the Club and, where relevant, participants.

18. Personal Responsibility and Unsafe Conduct

18.1. The Club recognises that participation in fencing involves an inherent level of physical risk.

18.2. Participants are expected to follow safety instructions and use equipment appropriately.

18.3. The Club may restrict or stop participation where a person:

- deliberately ignores safety instructions;
- uses equipment dangerously;
- behaves recklessly;
- is unable to participate safely; or
- otherwise creates an unacceptable risk to themselves or others.

18.4. Persistent or deliberate unsafe conduct may also be dealt with under the Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure.

19. Accessibility and Reasonable Adjustments

19.1. The Club will consider reasonable adjustments that allow people with disabilities or other relevant needs to participate safely.

19.2. Safety requirements should not be used as a justification for excluding someone without first considering whether a reasonable adjustment or alternative arrangement is possible.

19.3. At the same time, an adjustment does not need to be implemented where it would create an unacceptable safety risk that cannot reasonably be controlled.

19.4. Decisions concerning adjustments should be made sensitively and, where appropriate, in consultation with the participant.

20. Smoking, Alcohol and Drugs

20.1. Participants must not participate in fencing activities there is a risk to safety due to impairment by alcohol or recreational drugs.

20.2. The Club may restrict participation where it reasonably believes that a person's impairment creates a safety risk.

20.3. The Club's approach to alcohol at social events or venues will take account of the nature of the event, venue rules and the presence of children and young people.

21. Health Information

21.1. The Club will not seek unnecessary medical or health information from participants.

21.2. Where health information is voluntarily provided because it is relevant to safe participation, it shall be handled appropriately and in accordance with the Club's Data Protection Policy.

21.3. Participants should be encouraged to inform an appropriate Club representative where a temporary or ongoing circumstance materially affects their ability to participate safely.

22. Training and Competence

22.1. People undertaking safety-related responsibilities on behalf of the Club should have appropriate knowledge, training or experience for their role.

22.2. The Club will seek to ensure that coaches and relevant volunteers are aware of:

- applicable safety procedures;
- relevant risk assessments;
- emergency arrangements;
- incident reporting requirements; and
- their responsibilities under this policy.

22.3. The level of training should be proportionate to the person's responsibilities.

23. Monitoring and Review

23.1. The Board shall monitor the effectiveness of the Club's health and safety arrangements.

23.2. This may include reviewing:

- accidents and incidents;
- near misses;
- reported hazards;
- risk assessments;
- equipment issues;
- venue concerns; and
- feedback from participants and coaches.

23.3. Where a significant safety issue is identified, the Club should take reasonable corrective action.

23.4. The Club may suspend an activity where it reasonably considers that the risks cannot currently be controlled to an acceptable level.

24. Records

24.1. The Club shall maintain appropriate health and safety records.

24.2. These may include:

- risk assessments;
- incident and accident reports;
- equipment records;
- relevant training records;
- inspection or maintenance records; and
- significant correspondence concerning safety.

24.3. Records shall be stored securely and handled in accordance with the Club's Data Protection Policy.

25. Review of this Policy

25.1. This policy shall be reviewed at least annually and sooner where appropriate.

25.2. The Board shall review the policy following:

- a significant accident or incident;
- a material change to Club activities;
- introduction of a new activity or significant equipment;
- changes to venue arrangements;
- relevant changes in legislation; or
- relevant changes to British Fencing requirements or guidance.

25.3. The Club should use lessons from incidents, risk assessments and participant feedback to improve its health and safety arrangements.

26. Related Documents

This policy should be read alongside:

- Risk Assessment Procedure;
- Incident / Accident Reporting Procedure;
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy;
- Welfare Policy & Procedure;
- Code of Conduct;
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy;
- Data Protection Policy;
- Founder Assets Licence and Equipment Loan Agreement; and
- applicable British Fencing rules and guidance.

27. Approval

This Health & Safety Policy was approved by the Board of Directors of Out East Fencing Club on:

Date: 12/08/2026

Chair / Director: Pel Houlihan

Next review date: 12/08/2027