Karate & Dance Fed Ltd - 17150545

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KARATE & Dance FEDERATION

Aggressive, Volatile & Challenging Behaviour Policy

Kindness – Diversity - Friendship

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1. Policy Statement

Karate & Dance Federation Ltd (KDF) is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and respectful environment for students, staff, families, visitors and hirers. KDF recognises that some behaviour may become aggressive, volatile, highly dysregulated or otherwise challenging and that such behaviour must be managed calmly, proportionately and safely.

KDF will not treat all challenging behaviour as deliberate misconduct. Behaviour may be influenced by age, SEND, communication needs, sensory overload, anxiety, trauma, medical needs, frustration, environmental stress or difficulties with emotional regulation. Staff are expected to consider these factors while maintaining clear boundaries around safety.

At the same time, KDF will not tolerate behaviour that places another person at significant risk of physical or emotional harm. Support, inclusion and reasonable adjustment do not require staff or students to accept violence, serious threats, sustained intimidation or unsafe conduct.

KDF's approach is grounded in Kindness, Diversity, Friendship and the KDF Promise: Every Student, Every Session, Every Time.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish how KDF prevents, responds to and reviews aggressive, volatile and challenging behaviour.

It explains the difference between dysregulation and deliberate aggression, sets expectations for de-escalation, defines how the Tiger Retreat and Leopard Retreat may be used, addresses physical intervention and emergency response, and establishes when behaviour concerns require safeguarding, medical, police or membership action.

The policy should be read alongside KDF's Behaviour Management Policy, which governs ordinary positive behaviour support and restorative practice.

3. Scope

This policy applies to students, parents, guardians, visitors, spectators, staff, volunteers, hirers and any other person whose behaviour creates a safety or safeguarding concern within KDF activity.

It applies at KDF premises, external venues, performances, competitions, workshops, events, digital communications and any other setting in which KDF has a relevant duty of care.

4. Core Principles

KDF will prioritise prevention, early intervention and de-escalation wherever reasonably possible.

Responses should be based on the actual level of risk rather than how inconvenient, loud or emotionally difficult a situation feels to staff.

Staff should aim to reduce risk, maintain dignity, protect others and support the person to regain control.

5. Meaning of Challenging Behaviour

Challenging behaviour may include conduct that significantly disrupts an activity, prevents safe participation or requires additional staff intervention.

It may include persistent refusal, throwing low-risk objects, repeated disruption, shouting, leaving the activity area, damaging minor property, invading others' space or other behaviour that cannot be managed through ordinary redirection alone.

Challenging behaviour does not necessarily involve aggression or intent to harm.

6. Meaning of Aggressive Behaviour

Aggressive behaviour includes conduct that threatens or causes harm to another person or property.

It may include hitting, kicking, biting, punching, pushing, scratching, spitting, throwing objects at people, deliberate use of equipment as a weapon, threatening gestures or credible verbal threats.

Aggression may arise during dysregulation or may be deliberate. The immediate safety response should focus on risk before intent is considered.

7. Meaning of Volatile Behaviour

Volatile behaviour refers to rapid, unpredictable or escalating changes in emotional or behavioural presentation that create an increased risk of harm.

Examples may include sudden intense anger, abrupt escalation from calm to aggressive behaviour, repeated threatening outbursts or behaviour that changes so quickly that ordinary strategies are no longer effective.

Volatility should prompt staff to reduce demands, environmental stimulation and unnecessary confrontation.

8. Dysregulation

Dysregulation occurs when a person is temporarily unable to manage emotional or sensory responses effectively.

A dysregulated child may shout, cry, flee, refuse, push away adults or act impulsively without the behaviour necessarily being planned or malicious.

Staff should seek to restore safety and regulation before expecting reflection, apology or detailed discussion.

9. SEND and Additional Needs

SEND may influence emotional regulation, impulse control, sensory processing, communication and response to demands.

KDF will make reasonable adjustments where these are necessary and safe, including visual support, reduced language, alternative instructions, transition support, regulation breaks and reduced environmental stimulation.

SEND does not mean serious violence must be accepted without intervention, but it should influence how staff understand and respond to behaviour.

10. Trauma-Informed Practice

Some behaviour may reflect trauma, previous adverse experiences or fear.

Staff should avoid unnecessary shouting, crowding, public confrontation or threatening language that may intensify distress.

Trauma-informed practice does not remove boundaries; it requires boundaries to be implemented predictably, calmly and respectfully.

11. Early Warning Signs

Staff should become familiar with early indicators that a student may be moving toward dysregulation or aggression.

These may include withdrawal, pacing, repetitive behaviour, clenched fists, increased volume, refusal, rapid breathing, fixation on a perceived injustice, sensory distress or attempts to leave.

Recognising early signs allows staff to intervene before behaviour reaches crisis point.

12. Preventative Adjustments

Where triggers are known, staff should adjust the environment or task where reasonably practicable.

This may include reducing unnecessary waiting, providing transition warnings, adjusting noise levels, offering clear choices, changing group position or allowing short regulation breaks.

Preventative adjustment should be preferred to repeatedly allowing a known trigger to create crisis and then relying on consequences.

13. Staff Approach During Escalation

Staff should remain calm, use simple language and avoid arguing.

Instructions should be brief and focused on immediate safety rather than lengthy explanations.

Where possible, one adult should take the lead while others manage the wider group to avoid several adults speaking simultaneously.

14. Low-Arousal Practice

KDF may use low-arousal approaches where behaviour is escalating.

This includes reducing verbal demands, increasing physical space, lowering voice and pace, avoiding unnecessary eye contact or confrontation and allowing processing time.

The aim is to reduce emotional intensity and help the person regain control.

15. Controlled Choices

Offering limited, safe choices can reduce confrontation and support a sense of control.

For example, a student may be offered the choice to sit in a quieter area or use the Retreat, rather than being repeatedly ordered to comply immediately with the original task.

Choices must remain genuine and should not disguise threats.

16. Tiger Retreat and Leopard Retreat

The Tiger Retreat and Leopard Retreat may be used where a student requires a quieter, lower-stimulation environment to regulate.

They are not seclusion rooms, punishment areas or places in which a child may be locked or abandoned.

Access should remain supportive, supervised and focused on safe regulation and reintegration.

17. Voluntary Use of the Retreat

Students should be encouraged to recognise when they need regulation support and may ask to use the relevant Retreat.

Staff may also suggest use where early signs of escalation are observed.

A student should not be mocked or penalised for choosing to regulate before behaviour becomes unsafe.

18. Retreat Use During Aggression

Where behaviour has become actively aggressive, staff must first determine whether movement to the Retreat can occur safely.

The Retreat should not be used if attempting to move the student there would create a greater struggle or risk.

Where necessary, the surrounding area may instead be cleared while the student is given space to regulate.

19. Protecting the Wider Group

When aggressive behaviour occurs, staff must protect other students without unnecessarily involving them in the incident.

This may involve moving the class to another area, increasing distance or temporarily pausing the activity.

Students should not be expected to remain close to someone who is actively violent simply to preserve the normal lesson structure.

20. Removing Hazards

Where safe to do so, staff may remove equipment, furniture or objects that could be thrown or used to cause harm.

Staff should not place themselves at unnecessary risk attempting to retrieve an item from an actively aggressive person.

The priority is reducing access to hazards without escalating physical confrontation.

21. Verbal Aggression

Swearing, threats, discriminatory abuse or sustained verbal intimidation should be addressed proportionately.

Staff should avoid becoming drawn into verbal arguments and should focus on immediate safety and de-escalation.

Serious or repeated threatening language should be recorded and reviewed even where no physical assault occurs.

22. Threats of Violence

A credible threat to harm another person must be taken seriously.

Staff should consider specificity, immediacy, access to potential weapons, previous behaviour and emotional presentation.

Where a threat appears imminent or serious, police involvement may be required.

23. Weapons or Dangerous Items

Any suspected weapon or dangerous item creates a significant safety concern.

Staff should not physically attempt to seize a weapon if doing so would increase the risk of injury.

The area should be secured as far as possible, other people moved away and police contacted where appropriate.

24. Property Damage

Property damage should be managed according to the level of risk.

Minor damage arising during dysregulation may require later restorative repair, while deliberate or serious damage may require stronger consequences, parental involvement or police action.

Staff should not prioritise protecting replaceable property over immediate personal safety.

25. Spitting, Biting and Bodily Fluid Risk

Spitting and biting may create both behavioural and infection-control concerns.

Staff should maintain distance where possible, use appropriate PPE when dealing with bodily fluids and follow KDF's Infection Prevention, Hygiene & Bodily Fluids Policy.

Any exposure injury should receive appropriate first aid and be recorded.

26. Physical Intervention

Physical intervention should only be used where it is reasonably necessary to prevent immediate harm to the person or others and where less restrictive measures are insufficient.

Any intervention must be proportionate to the risk and should use the minimum force for the shortest necessary period.

Physical intervention must never be used as punishment, to enforce ordinary compliance or because a staff member is angry.

27. Staff Competence and Physical Intervention

Staff should not use restraint techniques beyond their training and competence except where immediate action is necessary to prevent serious harm and there is no safer alternative.

Where KDF identifies recurring situations in which physical intervention may become foreseeable, additional training and individual risk planning should be considered.

Staff should avoid improvising complex holds.

28. Prohibited Physical Responses

KDF prohibits corporal punishment, striking, choking, pressure to the neck, deliberately inflicting pain, punitive restraint or any intervention intended to humiliate.

Staff must not use physical force simply to make a student sit, participate, apologise or comply with an ordinary instruction.

Any concern about inappropriate physical intervention must be reported through safeguarding procedures.

29. After Physical Intervention

After any significant physical intervention, the student should be checked for injury and given time to recover.

Staff involved should also consider whether they have sustained injury or require support.

The incident must be recorded and reviewed, and parents or guardians should normally be informed.

30. Medical Emergencies During Behaviour Incidents

Behaviour change may sometimes reflect a medical emergency rather than primarily a behavioural issue.

Sudden confusion, collapse, unusual aggression, altered consciousness, severe breathing difficulty, diabetic emergency or seizure-related behaviour must be considered medically.

Emergency services should be called where serious medical risk is suspected.

31. Safeguarding Concerns

Aggressive or challenging behaviour may indicate abuse, neglect, exploitation, bullying, trauma or other safeguarding harm.

Significant sudden change in behaviour should therefore be considered in context rather than treated solely as misconduct.

Where safeguarding indicators are present, the Safeguarding Lead must be informed.

32. Aggression Toward Staff

Staff are entitled to work without being assaulted, threatened or subjected to sustained abuse.

Where a student becomes aggressive toward staff, the response should remain calm and child-centred while protecting the staff member from further harm.

Repeated or serious assaults may require an individual behaviour plan, suspension or external-agency involvement.

33. Aggression by Parents, Guardians or Visitors

Aggressive behaviour by adults toward staff, students or other families will not be tolerated.

An adult who is shouting, threatening, intimidating, abusive or violent may be instructed to leave the premises immediately.

Where the person refuses to leave or poses an immediate risk, police should be contacted.

34. Restricting Adult Access

KDF may restrict or prohibit a parent, guardian, visitor or spectator from entering the premises where their behaviour creates repeated or significant risk.

Where possible, alternative arrangements should be made so that a child is not unnecessarily excluded because of the adult's behaviour.

Any restriction should be recorded and communicated clearly.

35. Domestic Abuse and Family Conflict

Aggressive behaviour involving family members may indicate domestic abuse or wider safeguarding concerns.

Staff should not attempt to mediate serious domestic disputes on KDF premises.

Where there is immediate danger, police should be contacted and safeguarding procedures followed.

36. Aggression Between Students

Where one student harms another, staff should first ensure immediate safety and provide first aid where necessary.

The students should normally be separated until sufficiently regulated.

Any later restorative work should only take place where it is safe and appropriate and should never pressure the harmed student into reconciliation.

37. Restorative Practice After Incidents

Once immediate risk has passed, restorative practice may help the student understand what happened and repair harm.

Discussion should focus on what happened, who was affected, what needs to change and what support may help prevent recurrence.

Restorative practice must not replace safeguarding or disciplinary action where the incident is serious.

38. Apologies

A forced apology should not be treated as proof that an incident is resolved.

Students should be supported to understand the impact of their behaviour and make meaningful repair when ready.

A victim of aggression should not be required to accept an apology or resume close interaction before they feel safe.

39. Positive Re-Entry

Where possible, students should be given a clear route back into ordinary provision following an incident.

Re-entry may involve a review conversation, agreed adjustments, a behaviour support plan or a gradual return.

KDF should avoid creating the expectation that one incident permanently defines the child.

40. Individual Risk and Behaviour Support Plans

Where aggressive, volatile or high-risk behaviour is recurring, KDF may establish an individual risk and behaviour support plan.

The plan should identify known triggers, early warning signs, successful de-escalation approaches, Retreat use, supervision requirements, likely risks and emergency actions.

Parents or guardians should normally contribute to the plan, and the student should be involved where appropriate.

41. Review of Triggers

Repeated incidents should prompt analysis of environmental, relational and curriculum factors.

Triggers may include noise, transitions, crowded spaces, waiting, peer conflict, difficult tasks, sensory demands, hunger, fatigue or particular communication styles.

Understanding triggers can significantly reduce future incidents.

42. Staffing and Supervision

Where a student requires substantial behaviour support, staffing arrangements should be considered carefully.

One staff member supporting a dysregulated student must not leave the rest of the group inadequately supervised.

Where safe ratios or supervision cannot be maintained, the session may need to pause, adapt or end.

43. Junior Coaches and Young Leaders

Junior coaches and young leaders should not be expected to manage aggressive or volatile behaviour independently.

They should move to safety, seek an adult and support the wider group only where this is appropriate.

They should not be used as physical intervention support or placed between an aggressive person and others.

44. Staff Safety and Withdrawal

Staff are not expected to place themselves in unnecessary danger.

Where physical proximity would increase risk, staff may withdraw to a safer distance while maintaining observation and preventing access to others as far as reasonably practicable.

Emergency services should be called where the risk exceeds what KDF staff can safely manage.

45. Police Involvement

Police involvement should be considered where there is serious violence, a credible threat involving significant harm, possession of a weapon, serious criminal damage, refusal by an aggressive adult to leave or another incident beyond KDF's safe management capacity.

The fact that the person involved is a child does not prevent police being contacted where immediate safety requires this.

Police involvement should remain proportionate and should not replace appropriate safeguarding consideration.

46. Emergency Services

Ambulance assistance should be requested where a person has sustained serious injury, experiences a medical emergency or cannot safely be assessed within KDF's first-aid arrangements.

Police and ambulance services may both be required during a serious behavioural crisis.

Staff must not delay emergency calls while waiting for senior management permission.

47. Recording Incidents

Significant incidents of aggression, volatility or serious challenging behaviour must be recorded factually.

The record should describe what happened before, during and after the incident, staff responses, injuries, physical intervention, witnesses, safeguarding action and communication with parents.

Staff should avoid inflammatory labels and should distinguish fact from opinion.

48. Recording Physical Intervention

Any significant physical intervention must be specifically documented.

The record should explain why intervention was necessary, what less restrictive approaches had been attempted or were impracticable, what contact occurred, how long it lasted and whether anyone was injured.

This information should support both safeguarding accountability and future risk planning.

49. Near Misses

Near misses should be recorded where serious harm was narrowly avoided.

Examples may include an object nearly striking another child, a student attempting to access a dangerous area or a situation where staff intervention prevented escalation.

Near misses can identify weaknesses before a serious injury occurs.

50. Parent and Guardian Communication

Parents or guardians should normally be informed after significant incidents.

Communication should be factual and should focus on behaviour, safety, support and next steps rather than blame.

KDF will not disclose confidential information about another student when explaining an incident.

51. Meetings Following Serious Incidents

A meeting may be arranged following serious or repeated incidents to review what happened and establish a safer plan.

This may involve senior staff, the parent or guardian, relevant coaches and the Safeguarding Lead where appropriate.

The aim should be to determine what support, restrictions or changes are reasonably required.

52. Temporary Adjustments

Following an incident, temporary adjustments may include reduced session length, increased supervision, altered group placement, additional regulation breaks or temporary avoidance of a particular activity.

Adjustments should be reviewed rather than allowed to continue indefinitely without consideration.

The purpose is safe participation rather than punishment.

53. Suspension

Where behaviour creates a serious or repeated risk that cannot currently be managed safely, KDF may temporarily suspend attendance while further arrangements are considered.

Suspension may also be necessary following a single exceptionally serious event.

Where behaviour is associated with SEND or disability, KDF should consider reasonable adjustments and equality obligations as part of the decision.

54. Conditions for Return

Return following suspension may be subject to a behaviour support plan, risk assessment, meeting with the family or other reasonable safety arrangements.

Conditions should be clear and achievable.

KDF should avoid requiring unrealistic guarantees that a child will never become dysregulated again.

55. Ending Membership

KDF may terminate membership where behaviour presents an ongoing unacceptable risk and reasonable measures have not made safe participation possible.

A decision to end membership should take account of frequency, severity, impact on others, adjustments attempted, family engagement and KDF's realistic capacity to manage the risk.

Immediate termination may be considered after exceptionally serious conduct where continued participation would be unsafe.

56. SEND, Disability and Exclusion Decisions

Where behaviour may arise from disability or SEND, KDF must consider reasonable adjustments before relying on restrictive action where practicable.

This does not require KDF to accept uncontrolled serious violence or remove essential safety boundaries.

The question should be whether additional reasonable measures could enable safe participation, not whether the organisation must tolerate any level of risk.

57. Behaviour by Adult Students

Adult students remain responsible for their conduct while participating in KDF.

Where disability, mental-health need or another condition affects behaviour, reasonable adjustments should be considered while maintaining clear safety standards.

Serious violence, threats or harassment may result in immediate removal and police involvement where appropriate.

58. Online Aggression and Threats

Aggressive messages, online harassment, threatening emails or abusive social-media communication connected to KDF may be treated under this policy.

A threat does not need to be made face to face to create a safeguarding or safety concern.

Evidence should be preserved appropriately and serious threats referred to police where necessary.

59. Aggression at External Events

The same behavioural expectations apply during performances, gradings, competitions and other external activities.

Staff should consider venue-specific emergency arrangements and how to separate the person from others safely where behaviour escalates.

Where another organisation controls the venue, KDF should cooperate with its security or safeguarding personnel.

60. Hirers and External Organisations

Hirers remain responsible for managing behaviour within their own activities, but KDF may intervene where behaviour creates risk to its premises, staff or other users.

An aggressive hirer or participant may be required to leave and may have future access suspended.

Serious incidents may lead to termination of the hire arrangement.

61. Staff Behaviour During Incidents

Staff must not respond to aggression with aggression.

Shouting in anger, insulting the student, making threats, deliberately provoking behaviour or retaliatory physical contact is unacceptable.

Where a staff member feels they are losing emotional control, another adult should take over where possible.

62. Debrief for Staff

Serious incidents can be distressing for staff and should be debriefed appropriately.

The debrief should distinguish emotional support from factual incident investigation.

Staff should be able to discuss what worked, what was difficult and whether additional support or training is required.

63. Debrief for Students

Where appropriate, students affected by a serious incident may require reassurance and a simple explanation that staff acted to keep people safe.

Confidential information about the student whose behaviour escalated should not be disclosed.

Children who witnessed violence should have an opportunity to speak to a trusted adult if they are upset.

64. Injury to Another Student

Where another student is injured, first aid and medical support must take priority.

The parent or guardian of the injured child should be informed appropriately.

The fact that an injury occurred should not automatically determine disciplinary outcome without considering the full circumstances, but serious harm requires formal review.

65. Injury to Staff

Staff injuries should be recorded under KDF's Accident, Incident, Near-Miss & RIDDOR Policy.

Where necessary, staff should seek medical assessment and management support.

Repeated staff injury may indicate that the existing behaviour plan or staffing arrangement is insufficient.

66. RIDDOR and Health & Safety Reporting

Some incidents may also engage health and safety reporting requirements.

KDF will assess any potentially reportable event under the RIDDOR framework rather than assuming all assaults or injuries are automatically reportable.

Health and safety reporting does not replace safeguarding or behaviour review.

67. Safeguarding Referrals

Where aggression indicates possible abuse, exploitation, neglect, significant family difficulty or risk to others, KDF may make a safeguarding referral.

A child who causes harm may themselves require safeguarding support.

KDF should avoid framing every serious incident solely as misconduct where there are indicators of wider harm.

68. Confidentiality

Information about behaviour incidents should be shared only with those who need it for safety, safeguarding, support or management purposes.

Parents are not entitled to another child's medical, SEND or safeguarding information simply because their own child was involved in an incident.

Staff should avoid gossip or speculative discussion after high-profile incidents.

69. Equality and Non-Discrimination

Behaviour management must not be influenced by stereotypes linked to race, disability, sex, religion or another protected characteristic.

Staff should consider whether unconscious bias affects which students are perceived as aggressive or threatening.

Comparable behaviour should be assessed according to actual risk and context.

70. Use of Rewards After Incidents

A student who has experienced a difficult or aggressive episode is not automatically excluded from future positive recognition.

Where they later demonstrate Kindness, Diversity or Friendship, they may still be recognised through the Reward Station.

Positive reinforcement should support recovery and growth rather than reinforce a permanent negative label.

71. Restorative Reintegration

Where appropriate, restorative work should support a student to return to positive participation after an incident.

The focus should be on understanding impact, making repair and identifying more successful strategies for the future.

Reintegration should not publicly shame the student or require them to recount the incident to the whole class.

72. Training

Staff working directly with students should receive behaviour-management and de-escalation training proportionate to their role.

Training should include SEND-aware approaches, low-arousal practice, recognition of escalation, staff safety and when emergency services are required.

Where physical intervention becomes a foreseeable part of risk management, KDF should consider more specific competence requirements.

73. Monitoring and Review

KDF will monitor significant behaviour incidents for patterns and trends.

Review should consider whether incidents cluster around particular classes, activities, transitions, environmental conditions or staffing arrangements.

The purpose of monitoring is organisational learning and prevention rather than simply identifying individuals with the highest number of incidents.

74. Kindness

The value of Kindness requires staff to remain respectful even when behaviour is difficult.

It also requires KDF to protect students and staff from aggression and to ensure that victims of harmful behaviour are supported.

Kindness should never be confused with ignoring unsafe conduct.

75. Diversity

The value of Diversity means recognising that regulation, communication and behaviour can look different for different people.

KDF will make reasonable adjustments where needed while maintaining essential safety boundaries.

Individualised support should be viewed as part of inclusive practice rather than unfair advantage.

76. Friendship

The value of Friendship means creating an environment in which conflict can be repaired safely and students learn how their actions affect others.

Friendship must not be used to pressure a victim into immediate reconciliation or forgiveness.

Healthy relationships depend on safety, accountability and respect.

77. The KDF Promise

This policy supports the KDF Promise: Every Student, Every Session, Every Time.

Every student should receive support that seeks to prevent escalation, protect dignity and preserve inclusion wherever safely possible.

The Promise also requires KDF to protect every other student and member of staff from significant harm, meaning there will be times when stronger boundaries, suspension or external intervention are necessary.

78. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside KDF's Behaviour Management Policy, Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, Safeguarding Adults Policy, Safeguarding Roles, Reporting & Responding to Concerns Policy, Student, Parent, Guardian & Visitor Code of Conduct, SEND Policy, Early Years Policy, Disability & Reasonable Adjustments Policy, Medical Needs, Medication & Individual Healthcare Support Policy, First Aid & Emergency Medical Response Policy, Accident, Incident, Near-Miss & RIDDOR Policy, Staff Code of Conduct & Professional Standards, Lone Working & Personal Safety Policy, Site Security, Keyless Entry, Access Control & Lockdown Policy and Emergency, Critical Incident & Business Continuity Policy.

These policies should be applied together where aggression overlaps with safeguarding, SEND, health, staff safety, premises security or emergency response.

79. Policy Review

This policy will normally be reviewed annually, but an earlier review will take place following a serious assault, significant physical intervention, police involvement, serious injury, safeguarding referral, repeated aggressive incidents or evidence that existing behaviour controls are ineffective.

KDF will use incident review, staff feedback, family communication and individual behaviour planning to strengthen prevention and reduce the likelihood of recurrence.

KDF will continue to respond to aggressive, volatile and challenging behaviour through calm leadership, proportionate boundaries, restorative practice, reasonable adjustment and decisive protective action where safety requires it.