

Karate & Dance Fed Ltd - 17150545

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Lesson Quality, Observation & Student Experience Policy

Kindness – Diversity - Friendship

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1. Policy Statement

Karate & Dance Federation Ltd (KDF) is committed to ensuring that students receive consistently high-quality teaching and a positive, inclusive and safe experience across KDF Karate and KDF Dance.

KDF recognises that lesson quality is broader than technical instruction alone. A high-quality lesson should be purposeful, well structured, engaging, appropriately challenging, inclusive, safe and delivered through strong professional relationships.

KDF will therefore use a combination of lesson observations, student voice, parent feedback, curriculum review, attendance information and staff development to understand the quality of provision and identify where improvement is required.

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

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish how KDF monitors, evaluates and improves lesson quality and student experience.

It explains the purpose of observations, the three themed observation cycles that take place each year, how feedback is provided, how student experience is measured and how improvement actions are identified and reviewed.

The policy is intended to support professional development and consistency rather than create a punitive inspection culture.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all routine KDF Karate and KDF Dance provision, including Early Years, SEND-inclusive and mainstream classes.

It applies to Lead Coaches, coaches, assistant coaches, junior coaches, volunteers and others contributing to the student learning experience.

Relevant findings may also inform administrative, safeguarding and premises improvements where these affect lesson quality.

4. The KDF Promise

The KDF Promise: Every Student, Every Session, Every Time is central to the organisation's expectations for lesson quality.

It means that quality should not depend on which coach is teaching, which day the student attends or whether the student is confident, quiet, SEND, Early Years or highly experienced.

Every student should receive purposeful teaching, appropriate support, safe supervision and meaningful opportunity to progress in every session.

5. The KDF Lesson Guarantee

The KDF Lesson Guarantee is KDF's commitment that every lesson should provide a consistent minimum standard of experience.

Every student should be welcomed positively, taught with clear purpose, appropriately challenged, supported according to need, kept safe, given meaningful feedback and leave the session having had the opportunity to progress.

The Lesson Guarantee does not mean every lesson must look identical. It means the essential quality of the experience should remain consistent.

6. What the Lesson Guarantee Requires

The Lesson Guarantee requires staff to ensure that learning is purposeful, teaching is understandable, students are engaged, behaviour is managed positively and adaptations are made where necessary.

It also requires students to be treated with dignity and to experience a learning environment that reflects KDF's values.

A lesson may still be successful even where plans need to change, provided the resulting experience remains safe, purposeful and inclusive.

7. Student Experience

KDF defines student experience as the combined effect of teaching, relationships, environment, safety, inclusion, communication, progression and emotional wellbeing.

A technically accurate lesson can still provide a poor student experience if students feel ignored, unsafe, excluded or confused.

Quality assurance should therefore consider how the session feels from the student's perspective as well as what the coach delivers.

8. Quality Assurance Principles

KDF quality assurance should be developmental, evidence-informed and proportionate.

Observations should identify strengths as well as improvement areas and should support professional dialogue rather than simply produce a judgement.

Staff should understand that observation is a normal part of quality improvement and not evidence that something has gone wrong.

9. Three Observation Cycles Per Year

KDF will normally conduct three formal themed observation cycles each year.

Each observation cycle will focus on a defined quality theme so that staff receive targeted feedback and the organisation can compare practice across departments.

The themes may vary according to strategic priorities, but the three-cycle structure should remain consistent unless organisational circumstances require change.

10. Observation Cycle One

The first observation cycle should normally focus on Teaching, Learning and Curriculum Delivery.

This may include lesson structure, clarity of explanation, modelling, technical accuracy, sequencing, challenge, pace, student engagement and evidence of progression.

The purpose is to establish whether curriculum intent is being translated into effective teaching.

11. Observation Cycle Two

The second observation cycle should normally focus on Inclusion, Differentiation and Student Support.

This may include SEND practice, Early Years adaptation, sensory regulation, behaviour support, reasonable adjustment, communication, task differentiation and the use of the Tiger Retreat or Leopard Retreat where relevant.

The purpose is to evaluate whether every student can access learning meaningfully.

12. Observation Cycle Three

The third observation cycle should normally focus on Student Experience, Relationships and KDF Standards.

This may include welcome and handover, KDF Strong Start, staff tone, behaviour culture, student voice, values, feedback, recognition, safeguarding awareness, lesson ending and overall experience.

The purpose is to evaluate whether the KDF Promise and Lesson Guarantee are visible in practice.

13. Flexibility of Themes

Observation themes may be adjusted where KDF identifies a particular organisational priority.

For example, a cycle may focus on behaviour, curriculum implementation, Early Years, assessment, safeguarding practice or another area requiring closer review.

Any change should be communicated clearly to staff.

14. Observation Scheduling

Observations may be announced or unannounced depending on the purpose.

Where a themed cycle is planned, staff should normally be aware of the broad focus even if they do not know the exact observation date.

The intention is to observe normal practice rather than a specially staged lesson.

15. Frequency

Each relevant coach should normally be observed within the three annual cycles where practical.

Observation frequency may increase where a coach is new, developing, returning after a significant absence or where previous observations identified areas requiring support.

Additional observation should be developmental rather than automatically disciplinary.

16. Who May Observe

Observations may be undertaken by the CEO, Lead Coaches or another suitably experienced and authorised person.

The observer should understand KDF's curriculum, behaviour, safeguarding and inclusion expectations.

Where specialist practice is being reviewed, KDF may use an appropriate external or internal specialist.

17. Observation Evidence

Observers should focus on what is seen and heard during the lesson.

Evidence may include staff explanations, student responses, use of resources, behaviour management, differentiation, transitions, supervision, feedback and engagement.

Judgements should not be based on personal style preference where the teaching remains effective and safe.

18. No Single-Lesson Judgement

KDF recognises that one lesson provides only a snapshot of practice.

Observation findings should therefore be considered alongside wider evidence such as previous observations, student progress, feedback, attendance and curriculum implementation.

A single difficult session should not define a staff member's overall performance.

19. Observation of Lesson Structure

Observers should consider whether the lesson has a clear beginning, development and ending.

This may include the KDF Strong Start, warm-up, main teaching, application, workshop or development phase and warm-down.

The structure should support learning rather than operate as a rigid timetable.

20. KDF Strong Start

Where the KDF Strong Start applies, observations should consider whether it is purposeful, sufficiently independent and safe.

It should help students settle into learning while staff complete handover and registration responsibilities.

The Strong Start should not become unstructured waiting time.

21. Engagement

Observers should consider whether students are actively involved in learning.

Engagement may look different across age groups and SEND profiles, so judgement should not rely solely on silence or stillness.

Students may be highly engaged while moving, questioning, exploring or using adapted tasks.

22. Challenge

High-quality lessons should include appropriate challenge.

Observers should consider whether tasks are too easy, too difficult or well matched to student readiness.

Challenge should support progress without creating unnecessary frustration or unsafe practice.

23. Differentiation

Observation should consider whether the coach adapts teaching for different needs.

This may include task complexity, instructions, visual support, repetition, equipment, processing time or sensory regulation.

Differentiation should be visible as part of normal teaching rather than only when a student is struggling.

24. Early Years Quality

Early Years observations should consider whether sessions are developmentally appropriate and engaging.

This may include imaginative delivery, sensory warm-up and warm-down, short activity blocks, clear routines and appropriate use of Sensei Spots, Dancing Dodo or the Reward Station.

Early Years provision should not be judged against the same behavioural expectations as older classes.

25. SEND and Inclusive Practice

SEND observations should consider whether support enables participation rather than creating unnecessary separation.

The observer should look for communication adaptation, regulation support, sensory awareness, reasonable adjustment and high expectations.

Inclusion should be judged by meaningful access to learning, not simply physical presence in the room.

26. Behaviour Management

Observers should consider whether behaviour is managed calmly, consistently and proportionately.

Staff should use positive reinforcement, redirection, clear boundaries and restorative practice where appropriate.

Public humiliation, unnecessary shouting or punitive use of regulation spaces should be identified as concerns.

27. Sensory Regulation and Calm Spaces

Where the Tiger Retreat or Leopard Retreat is used, observers should consider whether it supports regulation and successful reintegration.

Retreat use should not become routine exclusion from learning.

The space should remain safe, supervised and non-punitive.

28. Safeguarding

Safeguarding expectations apply during every observation.

Observers should consider supervision, professional boundaries, physical contact, use of devices, student handover and whether safeguarding practice remains embedded in ordinary delivery.

Any immediate safeguarding concern must be escalated regardless of the observation theme.

29. Student Relationships

Observers should consider the quality of relationships between staff and students.

Positive relationships should be warm, respectful and professional.

Staff should know students well enough to respond appropriately without creating favouritism, over-familiarity or poor boundaries.

30. Feedback to Students

High-quality teaching includes useful feedback.

Observers should consider whether students understand what they are doing well and what they need to improve.

Feedback should be specific, proportionate and encouraging.

31. Values in Practice

Observations should consider whether Kindness, Diversity and Friendship are visible within the lesson.

This may be reflected in staff language, peer support, inclusive practice, restorative responses and the Reward Station.

Values should influence culture rather than exist only as posters or slogans.

32. Reward Station

Where used, the Reward Station should recognise three students for meaningful demonstration of Kindness, Diversity and Friendship.

Observers should consider whether recognition is specific, fair and inclusive.

The same highly confident or technically advanced students should not automatically dominate recognition.

33. Student Voice

Student voice is an important part of quality assurance.

KDF may ask students what they enjoyed, what they learned, whether they felt supported and whether anything made participation difficult.

Student voice should be interpreted according to age and should inform rather than solely determine quality judgement.

34. Parent and Guardian Feedback

Parent and guardian feedback may contribute to understanding the wider student experience.

Feedback may highlight communication, confidence, attendance, progression or concerns not visible within a single lesson.

KDF should consider patterns rather than reacting disproportionately to isolated comments.

35. Student Progress

Observation should consider whether students are making progress during and over time.

Progress may be technical, physical, social, emotional or related to independence and regulation.

Observers should avoid judging progress solely through grading outcomes.

36. Attendance and Student Experience

Attendance may provide useful information about student experience.

Repeated unexplained absence, sudden drop-off or difficulty returning may indicate barriers within provision.

Attendance data should be considered alongside other evidence rather than treated as a simple quality score.

37. Observation Feedback

Staff should receive feedback following formal observations.

Feedback should identify strengths, areas for development and any agreed actions.

The tone should be constructive and professional.

38. Feedback Timing

Feedback should normally be provided promptly enough that it remains useful.

Where an immediate safeguarding or safety concern is identified, it should be addressed straight away rather than waiting for the formal feedback process.

Less urgent development points may be discussed through the normal observation review.

39. Strengths

Observation should identify and recognise effective practice.

This may include strong explanation, creative engagement, inclusive adaptation, calm behaviour management or excellent student relationships.

Sharing strengths helps build consistency across the organisation.

40. Areas for Development

Where improvement is required, the issue should be explained clearly and practically.

Staff should understand what needs to change and why.

Development actions may include coaching, modelling, mentoring, training, observation of another colleague or revised planning.

41. Development Plans

Where several areas require improvement, KDF may use a development plan.

This should set clear priorities, reasonable support and an appropriate review point.

A development plan should normally be developmental unless concerns are sufficiently serious to require formal capability or disciplinary action.

42. Re-Observation

Re-observation may be used to assess whether agreed improvements have been implemented.

The focus should remain on progress rather than catching the member of staff out.

Where improvement is evident, this should be recognised and recorded.

43. New Staff and Coaches

New staff may receive more frequent observation and support while becoming familiar with KDF expectations.

This may include observation during induction, probation or early delivery.

The aim is to establish consistency quickly and support confidence.

44. Junior Coaches and Young Leaders

Junior coaches may be observed as part of their development.

Feedback should be age-appropriate and recognise that they are learning leadership and coaching skills.

They should not be judged as though they hold the same responsibility as experienced adult coaches.

45. Observation Records

Formal observations should be recorded proportionately.

Records may include the theme, strengths, development points and agreed actions.

Observation records should be stored securely and accessed only by those who require them for quality assurance or staff development.

46. Quality Trends

KDF should review observation findings collectively to identify organisational patterns.

For example, several observations showing weak differentiation may indicate a need for staff-wide training rather than individual criticism.

Quality assurance should therefore inform strategic improvement as well as individual development.

47. Student Experience Trends

KDF should consider trends in student voice, parent feedback, attendance, complaints, compliments and retention.

A repeated theme across several sources may indicate a systemic issue requiring action.

No single data source should be treated as conclusive in isolation.

48. Curriculum Review

Observation findings should inform curriculum review where appropriate.

If staff repeatedly struggle to implement a particular curriculum requirement, KDF should consider whether the curriculum itself is clear, realistic and sufficiently supported.

Quality assurance should improve both teaching and curriculum design.

49. Safeguarding and Quality Interface

Poor lesson quality can sometimes create safeguarding risk through inadequate supervision, chaotic transitions, unsafe activity or weak professional boundaries.

Quality assurance should therefore treat safeguarding as integral rather than separate.

Any serious safeguarding concern identified during observation must follow KDF's safeguarding procedures.

50. Environment and Premises

Student experience is affected by the environment as well as teaching.

Observations may therefore consider space, equipment, noise, temperature, clutter, spectator behaviour and access to regulation areas where these materially affect the lesson.

Premises issues should be escalated through the appropriate health and safety route.

51. Consistency Across Karate and Dance

KDF Karate and KDF Dance may look different in content and teaching style, but both should meet the same broad quality expectations.

Students should experience safe, purposeful and inclusive teaching regardless of department.

The Lesson Guarantee applies equally across both.

52. Staff Development

Observation should inform continuing professional development.

Training priorities may emerge around SEND, Early Years, behaviour, curriculum, assessment, communication or safeguarding.

KDF should use quality assurance evidence to target development where it will have the greatest impact.

53. Kindness

The value of Kindness means students should experience patience, encouragement and respectful correction.

Observation should consider whether staff interactions help students feel safe to make mistakes and try again.

Kindness should also shape the way feedback is given to staff.

54. Diversity

The value of Diversity means lesson quality must include adaptation for different learners.

A lesson cannot be judged fully effective if only the most confident or able students can participate meaningfully.

Observers should look for evidence that difference is anticipated and supported.

55. Friendship

The value of Friendship means students should experience positive peer relationships and a sense of belonging.

Coaches should foster cooperation, support and inclusion rather than excessive competition or exclusion.

Student experience should reflect community as well as technical progression.

56. The KDF Promise in Quality Assurance

The KDF Promise: Every Student, Every Session, Every Time should be used as a central lens when evaluating lessons.

Observers should ask whether the student experience is strong enough for every learner present, not merely whether the majority appear successful.

Where some students are consistently left behind, the Promise has not been fully achieved.

57. The KDF Lesson Guarantee in Practice

The KDF Lesson Guarantee means that every lesson should contain a clear learning purpose, a positive welcome, appropriate challenge, safe supervision, meaningful adaptation, constructive feedback and a respectful ending.

Students should leave understanding that they have learned, practised, progressed or developed in some meaningful way.

The Guarantee is a quality commitment rather than a marketing phrase and should therefore be visible in daily practice.

58. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside KDF's Curriculum, Teaching & Learning Policy, Curriculum Differentiation, Adaptation & Inclusive Learning Policy, Assessment, Progression, Grading & Examination Policy, SEND & Inclusive Practice Policy, Early Years Policy, Sensory Regulation & Calm Spaces Policy, Behaviour Management Policy, Student Arrival, Collection, Handover & Supervision Policy, Student Attendance & Absence Policy, Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Staff Supervision, Appraisal & Performance Management Policy.

These policies should be applied together where lesson quality overlaps with curriculum, inclusion, safeguarding, behaviour, assessment, attendance or staff development.

59. Policy Review

This policy will normally be reviewed annually, but earlier review may take place following significant observation findings, curriculum redesign, safeguarding learning, repeated student-experience concerns or changes to KDF's quality assurance framework.

KDF will continue to use its three themed observation cycles each year to develop staff, strengthen consistency and ensure that quality is visible across both Karate and Dance.

Through the KDF Promise and KDF Lesson Guarantee, KDF will maintain a clear expectation that every student should experience purposeful, inclusive, safe and engaging teaching Every Student, Every Session, Every Time.