



Code of Ethics and Conduct

Introduction

This Code of Ethics and Conduct applies to all members of the British Academy of Fencing (*hereinafter the 'Academy'*). Members are strongly advised to ensure that anyone assisting them also follows the code.

The purpose of the Code of Ethics (*hereinafter the 'Code'*) is to establish and maintain standards for Academy members and to inform and protect members of the public using their services.

The Academy acknowledges that a large part of this Code of Ethics has been derived from the code produced by the Industry Lead Body for Sport and Recreation. The Code published below will remain operational unless and until notice of any changes and amendments is given by the Academy.

Throughout the following Code the expression 'Coach' whether used in the singular or plural shall include all coaches/officials, assistants and other helpers whose activities are connected with the disciplines regulated by the Academy.

Ethical standards comprise such values as integrity, responsibility, competence and confidentiality.

Individuals who are members of the Academy are deemed to have assented to the Code and as such recognise and adhere to the principles and responsibilities embodied in it. The Code creates a framework within which members when engaged in sports coaching - in the fullest sense of the expression - should always work. The code has been written as a series of guidelines rather than a set of instructions.

However, violations of the Code may result in complaints being made to the Academy and, in which case the Academy may instruct its Disciplinary Sub-Committee to determine whether a conduct complained of has brought the Academy or the sport into disrepute or amounts to a violation of the Academy's Articles. The Disciplinary Sub-Committee will consider the Code's provisions when assessing the guilt of individuals against whom complaints have been made and/or the appropriate sanctions to apply.

Issues of responsibility

Teaching/Coaching is a deliberately undertaken responsibility, and Academy members are responsible for the observation of the principles embodied in the Code of Ethics.

The Code is applicable to any Member acting as a coach anywhere in the world.

Humanity

Members must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every human being and their ultimate right to self-determination. Specifically, members must treat everyone equally within the context of their activity, regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion, age, marital status, disability or political persuasion.

Relationships

Members will be concerned with the well-being, health and future of the individual fencers under their direction. Members shall acknowledge that the optimisation of performance must not be achieved at any cost. Members shall not knowingly put the well-being, health and future of the individuals under their direction at risk in pursuit of better performance.

A key element in a coach/pupil relationship is the development of independence. Fencers must be encouraged to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and performance in training, in competition, and in their social life.

Members are responsible for setting and monitoring the boundaries between a working relationship and friendship with their fencers. This is particularly important when the coach and fencer are of opposite sex and/or when the fencer is a young person (under the age of 18 years). Members must realise that certain situations or friendly actions could be misinterpreted, not only by the fencer, but also by outsiders motivated by jealousy, dislike or mistrust and could lead to allegations of sexual misconduct or impropriety.

The relationship between coach and fencer relies heavily on mutual trust and respect. In detail this means that the fencer shall be aware of the Member's qualifications and experience. The Member must ensure that the fencer is given the opportunity to fully understand the purpose and reasons for training and performance.

Commitment

Members should clarify in advance with fencers and/or employers the number of sessions, fees (if any) and method of payment. They should also explore with fencers and/or employers the anticipated outcome of coaching.

Members have a responsibility to declare to their employers/pupils any potentially conflicting coaching commitments/employment.

Members who become aware of a conflict between their obligation to their fencers and their obligation to the Academy or other organisation must make explicit the nature of conflict, and the loyalties and responsibilities involved, to all parties concerned.



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Co-operation

Members should communicate with medical and ancillary practitioners when necessary.

Coaches should co-operate with medical and ancillary practitioners in the management of an entrusted fencers' medical problems.

Advertising, Publicity and Marketing

Advertising by members in respect of qualifications and/or services shall be accurate and professionally restrained.

Members shall not display any affiliation with an organisation in a manner that falsely implies sponsorship or accreditation by that organisation.

Integrity

Members must refrain from public criticism of colleagues. Differences of opinion should be dealt with on a personal basis and more-serious disputes should be referred to the Committee of the Academy.

Members must not encourage fencers to violate the rules of their sport and should actively seek to discourage such action. Furthermore, members should encourage fencers to obey the spirit of such rules.

Members must not compromise others by advocating measures, by means of which someone could be deemed to gain an unfair advantage.

Above all, members must never advocate the use of drugs or banned performance enhancing substances.

Members must treat all participants and officials with due respect both in victory and defeat and should encourage their pupils to act in a similar manner.

Members should discourage inappropriate behaviour and accept responsibility for the conduct of those entrusted to their care.

Members must not bring the Academy into disrepute.

Confidentiality

Coaches inevitably gather a great deal of personal information about fencers in the course of a working and/or training relationship. Members must not divulge confidential information to a third party without the express approval of the fencer (or the fencer's parent/guardian if the fencer is under the age of 18 years).

Confidentiality does not preclude the disclosure of information, to persons who can be judged to have a 'right to know', relating to the following:

- evaluation of the fencer within the sport for competitive selection purposes
- recommendations for professional purposes
- pursuit of disciplinary action

Abuse of Privilege

Coaches are privileged, on occasion, to have contact with fencers and to travel and reside with fencers in the course of coaching and competitive practice.

Consequently, members must not attempt, under any circumstances, to exert undue influence over fencers in order to obtain financial benefits or favours of any kind.

Personal Standards

Members must consistently display high personal standards and project a favourable image of themselves and the sport to all participants, the media and the general public.

Personal appearance is a matter of individual taste but members have an obligation to project an image of health, cleanliness and functional efficiency.

Members should never smoke when teaching/coaching.

Members should not drink alcohol immediately before or whilst teaching/coaching.

Safety

Members have a responsibility to ensure the safety of the fencers with whom they work as far as possible within the limits of their control.

All reasonable steps should be taken to establish a safe working environment. The work done and the manner in which it is done should be in keeping with regular and approved practice within the sport.

The activity being undertaken should be suitable for the age, experience and ability of the fencers.

Fencers should have been systematically prepared for the activity being undertaken and made aware of their personal responsibilities in terms of safety.

Members should make themselves aware of the contents of the Academy's Health and Safety Guidelines and other documents that may be of relevance.



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Issues of Competence

Members shall confine themselves to practise in those fields of sport in which they have been trained/educated or have demonstrated competence.

Training includes the accumulation of knowledge and skills through both formal coach education courses and by experience at a level of competence acceptable for independent teaching/coaching practice.

Members should be able to recognise and accept when to refer fencers to other agencies.

Members should regularly seek ways of increasing their professional development and self-awareness.

Members should be able to account for their actions to fencers, employers, Governing Bodies and colleagues

Members have a responsibility to themselves and their fencers to maintain their own effectiveness, resilience and abilities, and to know when their personal resources are so depleted as to make it necessary for them to seek help and/or withdraw from coaching whether temporarily or permanently.

Travel with Fencers below 18 years of age

When organising trips for fencers below the age of 18 years, members should follow the basic guidance given below:

1. Members must comply with the 'pupil/responsible adult' ratio laid down by the authority responsible for the young people. In the absence of a responsible authority then the ratio should not be greater than 12:1.
2. Written parental/guardian consent must be obtained, entrusting care/responsibility to the responsible adult(s) accompanying the group.
3. Where a group of fencers is of mixed gender and under the age of 18 years, they should be accompanied by at least one adult official of each gender.

Members should also make themselves aware of the Child Protection Policy of the Academy, those of other relevant bodies e.g. British Fencing Association and local procedures relating to working with children and vulnerable adults etc.

Employment of Others

Members should accept responsibility for all work carried out by them, or under their supervision or direction.

They should take all reasonable steps to ensure that persons working under their authority or in their employment are competent and qualified to carry out the tasks assigned to them.

Members should make themselves aware, by seeking appropriate professional advice etc, to their legal obligations when acting as an employer and should ensure that they have the appropriate insurance cover in place.

Criminal conviction

Any conviction of a Member by a court of law could reflect adversely on the Academy and the sport of fencing. Members must report any alleged criminal offence to the Secretary of the Academy at the earliest opportunity.

Disciplinary proceedings by an employer

Disciplinary proceedings by an employer leading to dismissal from employment connected with fencing coaching will normally be regarded as a breach of this Code. This applies even if the Member has been involved in related court proceedings, which have not resulted in conviction.

Violations of this Code

An alleged breach of this Code shall be grounds for making a complaint under the Disciplinary Code of the Academy. This is a formal expression of dissatisfaction with the actions of behaviour of clubs, bodies, organisations or individuals or with alleged unfair practice in connection with the sport and will be dealt with by the Disciplinary Sub-Committee of the Academy.

The procedure for making a complaint is to send details of the allegation, in writing, to the Secretary of the Academy.

The Disciplinary Sub-Committee will then investigate the matter, if deemed appropriate, following the guidelines contained with the Academy's Disciplinary Procedure.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Any individual or organisation wishing to make a complaint against a member within the context of these Codes of Ethics and Conduct should in the first instance contact the Secretary of the Academy.