



# Evolutionary Martial Arts

## Partner Contact Policy

### Our Commitment

At Evolutionary Martial Arts (EMA), we prioritize a safe, respectful, and consensual training environment. All partner work, particularly grappling and ground-fighting, is grounded in mutual consent, professional boundaries, and the absolute priority of member comfort.

### 1. Principles of Engagement

- **Consent and Communication:** We operate a "Consent-First" culture. Practitioners must communicate openly with partners before, during, and after drills to ensure mutual comfort levels.
- **Body Contact:** We recognise that martial arts, especially grappling and especially back-to-back rounds, involves close-quarters body contact. This is always for the purpose of technical development and within the scope of our professional training syllabus. Any contact outside of this purpose is strictly prohibited. We recognise also that body contact can cause significant distress in individuals who are dealing with the effects of prior traumatic events, so it is essential that those members are included in all aspects of training, but are empowered to do so on their own terms.
- **Discomfort Protocols:** If at any point a practitioner feels uncomfortable with a specific drill, partner, or the nature of contact, they are always empowered to stop immediately. No drill is mandatory if it will cause distress or discomfort. We encourage members to signal this verbally or physically, and they are never required to provide a reason for doing so.

### 2. Partner Selection for Junior Members

In line with our approach to safeguarding, drills involving high levels of body contact for junior members need specific attention to safeguard both the child and the adult.

- **Primary Pairing:** Whenever possible, junior members will be paired with other juniors.
- **Secondary Pairing:** If no other juniors are available, junior members may be paired with an adult instructor (who is DBS-checked and safeguarding-trained).
- **Tertiary Pairing - Junior Choice:** In all scenarios, the junior member has the overriding right to choose their training partner to ensure they are comfortable.
- **Adult Autonomy:** To protect both parties, adult members are never forced to grapple with a junior member if they do not feel comfortable doing so. Adult members always have the right to decline pairing with a junior member without needing to provide a justification.

### 3. Mixed-Gender Training

- Our classes are inclusive and open to all. We foster an environment of professional respect and discipline.
- The Code of Conduct applies to all interaction. We encourage all members, regardless of gender, to communicate their boundaries regarding contact clearly. Instructors are always available to facilitate pairing or to step in if any individual has concerns regarding partner selection.

### 4. Professional Conduct



**Evolutionary Martial Arts**

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- All instructors and team members act as role models for respectful engagement.
- Any behaviour that violates the principles of consent or makes a partner feel unsafe will be treated as a serious breach of the EMA Code of Conduct and addressed through our **Concerns and Complaints Policy**.

## **5. Revision and Review:**

Our policies are subject to continual regular revision and review. If there is an error or omission in this policy, or you have a suggestion to make regarding it or any other aspect of our policies and procedures, please do not hesitate to contact any member of our team and we will look into it as a matter of priority.

