

KNIGHTSBRIDGE FENCING CLUB — PHYSICAL CONTACT GUIDANCE

Adopted: 9 July 2026 Reviewed: annually Based on British Fencing's Physical Contact in Fencing guidance (2018)

Purpose

This guidance is for all coaches and volunteers. Some physical contact is a normal, necessary part of teaching fencing — correcting a stance, guiding a blade, or helping after a minor knock. This guidance sets out how to do that safely, respectfully, and in a way that protects both the fencer and the coach.

Core Principles

- Contact must always be for the fencer's benefit — to teach a technique, prevent an injury, or treat one — never for the adult's own comfort or convenience
- Explain what you're about to do and why, before you do it — e.g. "I'm going to adjust your arm position, is that OK?"
- Contact should be led by the fencer's comfort, not assumed — if anyone seems uncomfortable, stop immediately
- Be mindful that fencers come from many cultural and religious backgrounds, and not everyone is comfortable with physical contact, including well-intentioned contact
- These principles apply equally to any vulnerable adult member, in the same way as to a child, having regard to the individual's specific needs and level of understanding

Practical Rules

- Never help a member dress or put on protective equipment (mask, jacket, gloves) unless they ask for help and genuinely need it
- If a fencer is injured and needs to be moved or assisted, get another adult present first wherever possible, and provide any first aid in view of others, not in private
- For younger children, prefer a high-five or verbal praise over physical contact when celebrating a good move or result
- If you are unsure whether a type of contact is appropriate in a given moment, don't do it — ask a Welfare Officer afterwards instead

If Something Doesn't Feel Right

If a fencer, parent, or another coach raises a concern about physical contact — however small it seems — tell a Club Welfare Officer (Jean Lelion or Judit Homola). This guidance exists to protect everyone, including coaches acting in good faith.

Managing Challenging Behaviour and Restraint

Where a member — particularly a child — displays challenging behaviour (for example, refusing instructions, distress, or anger), coaches should respond calmly, avoid confrontation, and involve a Club Welfare Officer (Jean Lelion or Judit Homola) if the behaviour continues or affects the safety of the session. Our approach is supportive rather than punitive, focused on understanding and de-escalating the situation.

Knightsbridge Fencing Club does not use physical restraint as a routine method of managing behaviour. Physical restraint will only ever be used to prevent immediate injury to the person concerned or to

others (for example, stopping someone from running into danger), and only for as long as necessary to remove the immediate risk. Any such incident, however minor, must be reported to a Club Welfare Officer immediately afterwards and recorded in writing.

Knightsbridge Fencing Club