

Historisch Schermgilde Limburg



Code of Conduct & Safety Regulations Document

Version 4.0

Revision: 28/01/2026

General Provisions

This Code of Conduct & Safety Regulations Document is issued in both Dutch and English. The **Dutch version is the authentic and legally prevailing version**. In the event of any discrepancy or difference in interpretation between the Dutch and English texts, the Dutch version shall prevail.

This document applies to all members, instructors, volunteers, visitors, and other persons involved in activities organised by Historisch Schermgilde Limburg, unless explicitly stated otherwise.

The document enters into force on the date of adoption by the General Meeting and the Board, and supersedes all previous versions.

Appendices and addenda

The appendices to this document, including venue layouts and floor plans for training and event locations, are of a supplementary and operational nature. They serve to support and clarify the practical application of the rules and safety procedures set out in this document.

These appendices form part of the regulations, but may be added, amended, or removed by the Board without prior approval of the General Meeting, provided that such changes do not alter the core provisions, rights, or obligations established in this document.

The most current versions of appendices will be made available through the club's usual communication channels.

Disclaimer

Historical European Martial Arts (HEMA) involves the study and practice of historical combat systems using training weapons and protective equipment. Although safety protocols and protective gear can significantly reduce risk, **no equipment or supervision can completely eliminate the possibility of injury**. Incorrect technique, excessive force, or disregard for safety instructions can result in serious injury to oneself or others.

The club, its Board, instructors, and volunteers make every reasonable effort to ensure that training sessions and activities are conducted as safely as possible, including the establishment and enforcement of safety rules, the provision of appropriate instruction, and active supervision. These efforts constitute a **best-effort obligation**, not a guarantee of outcomes. Due to the inherent nature of the sport, serious injury can never be entirely excluded, even when all rules and guidelines are followed correctly.

The club and its Board shall **not** be liable for injuries sustained during activities, except in cases of demonstrable gross negligence or serious culpable misconduct.

Training activities, including technical drills, free exchanges, sparring, and physical conditioning, may lead to injuries such as **bruises, cuts, abrasions, joint injuries, fractures, concussions or other brain injuries, back or neck injuries, or long-term physical impairments**. Even when exercises are performed correctly and under proper control, the nature of fencing and contact-based martial arts carries an inherent risk.

Head and brain injuries can occur in HEMA, and no mask, helmet, or other protective system can completely prevent them. Possible symptoms include dizziness, headache, nausea, visual disturbances, confusion, or loss of consciousness. Training must be stopped immediately if any such symptoms occur, and an instructor must be informed without delay.

Contact training may only be resumed once all symptoms have fully subsided and medical clearance has been obtained. Ignoring or downplaying symptoms can result in more severe or permanent injury.

Responsible training requires control of movement and force, respect for training partners, regular inspection of equipment, and adherence to all club instructions regarding contact, intensity, and safety standards. Failure to do so endangers both the practitioner and others.

NO TRAINING METHOD OR PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT CAN PROVIDE COMPLETE PROTECTION AGAINST SERIOUS INJURY.

IF YOU WISH TO AVOID THESE RISKS, DO NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE PRACTICE OF HEMA.

Introduction

This document constitutes the official regulations on the code of conduct and safety of Historisch Schermgilde Limburg (HSGL). It sets out the code of conduct, safety guidelines, and equipment requirements that apply to all members, instructors, volunteers, guests, and visitors of the club.

The purpose of these regulations is to establish clear agreements regarding:

- How we treat and interact with one another;
- The preparation and execution of our sporting activities;
- The shared responsibility of maintaining a safe, respectful, and sportsmanlike environment.

Safety is a fundamental principle within our club. However, due to the nature of the sport we practise, Historical European Martial Arts (HEMA), it cannot be guaranteed that compliance with all rules and guidelines will provide complete protection against injury. Risks will always remain: situations in which protective equipment proves insufficient, unexpected circumstances arise, or human error plays a part.

For this reason, it is essential that every member read these regulations carefully and adheres strictly to the requirements. By doing so, each of us contributes to a safe and positive training environment in which this sport can be practised with care, discipline, and mutual respect.

Table of Contents

General Provisions	2
Disclaimer	3
Introduction	4
1. Conduct and Social Safety	7
1.1 Core principles	7
1.2 Rules during sporting activities	7
1.3 Confidentiality Committee	8
1.4 Examples of unacceptable behaviour	10
2. Training Sessions and Activities	14
2.1 Language use and comprehensible instruction	14
2.2 General duty of care	14
2.2 Training activities	14
2.3 Activity zones	15
3. Equipment	16
3.1 Responsibility and inspections	16
3.2 Protective equipment (“Full Gear”)	16
3.3 Protective equipment requirements	17
3.4 Weapons	17
3.5 Activity-specific equipment	18
4. Communication	20
4.1 General	20
4.2 Announcements during training	20
4.3 Slack	20
4.4 Email	20
4.5 Availability and response times	21
5. Incidents During Activities	22
5.1 Presence of first aiders	22
5.2 Reporting incidents	22
5.3 Life-threatening emergencies	22
5.4 Instructions during incidents	23
5.5 First aid supplies	23
5.6 Evacuation	23
5.7 General provisions	23
6. Complaints and Sensitive Issues	24
7. GDPR & Privacy	25

8. Minors	27
8.1 Minimum age and admission	27
8.2 Safety and communication.....	27
8.3 Equipment and physical safety.....	27
9. Selective Admissions Policy	28
9.1 Principles and purpose	28
9.2 Legal basis.....	28
9.3 Scope	29
9.4 Criteria for refusal or removal.....	29
9.5 Procedure	30
Appendices	31
Complaints Handling Procedure.....	31
Recommended order for purchasing equipment.....	34
Venue Layouts.....	35
Donderberg Venue (Roermond).....	35

1. Conduct and Social Safety

We want everyone to be able to practise our sport in a safe, respectful, and enjoyable environment. The following agreements therefore apply.

If you feel unsafe or harassed, raise this first with the person whose behaviour has caused the discomfort. If this proves not to be possible, we encourage you to approach an instructor or reach out to our Confidentiality Committee.

1.1 Core principles

Within the club, **no form of discrimination or unequal treatment is permitted**. This includes, but is not limited to, discrimination on the grounds of **age, religion, belief, political affiliation, race, sex, nationality, sexual orientation, sex characteristics, gender identity, gender expression, physical or mental disability, or chronic illness**, as prohibited under Article 1 of the Dutch Constitution and the Dutch Equal Treatment Act (Algemene Wet Gelijke Behandeling, Articles 1 and 2 AWGB).

This does not preclude the club from applying objectively justified and proportionate eligibility or participation requirements, such as a minimum age, where these are necessary due to safety considerations, health risks, or the nature of the sport.

Equally, **no form of (sexual) harassment, threats, assault, racism, or any other behaviour that undermines the dignity or safety of members will be tolerated**. Conduct that violates the physical or social integrity of others may also constitute a criminal offence under the Dutch Criminal Code (Wetboek van Strafrecht).

If such behaviour is identified, the Board may impose an immediate provisional suspension. Depending on the severity of the conduct and the outcomes of further investigation, this may lead to a temporary or permanent termination of membership. The Board expressly reserves the right, **with the consent of the reporting individual**, report the matter to the police or other competent authorities in cases involving suspected criminal conduct or a serious breach of physical or social safety within the club.

This consent may only be waived if the Board is under a legal obligation to report, or where there is an immediate and serious threat to the safety of persons requiring urgent action.

1.2 Rules during sporting activities

During training sessions and other sporting activities, all participants must at all times follow the instructions of the instructor or supervising lead present. Weapons must be handled with care and transported safely and discreetly outside the training area. Unsafe, threatening, or reckless behaviour with weapons is not permitted.

Discreet transport means that training weapons are carried outside the training area in a way that ensures they are not visible, cannot reasonably be perceived as weapons by third parties, and cannot be readily deployed as weapons without deliberate preparatory actions.

Every participant actively contributes to a safe training environment: remain aware of your surroundings, call out unsafe situations, and ensure you are familiar with the emergency exits and safety procedures. In the event of an accident, or any suspicion of one, training is halted immediately until the designated first aider (§5.1) has confirmed that the situation is safe.

At the beginning and end of every fencing activity, participants salute. During instruction, everyone listens attentively; questions are preferably asked after the instructions have been given and kept concise. Elaborate questions can be asked during breaks and after classes. Language must be appropriate and respectful. Feedback is given and received constructively.

Attitude during training should be alert and engaged. Do not loiter or walk aimlessly around the hall. Weapons must always be kept under control when not actively fencing. Equipment is handled with care, checked regularly for safety, and tidied away neatly after use.

The club expects participants to be humble in victory and dignified in defeat. More advanced fencers must remain open to correction. New or less experienced participants are supported with patience and without condescension. In this way, we jointly safeguard a sporting, safe, and inclusive atmosphere.

Treating one another with respect also means recognising that everyone may experience emotions and temperament. During more intense drills or sparring sessions, moments of frustration or enthusiasm may occur. Such emotions are not automatically an expression of disrespectful behaviour. What matters is that participants continue to understand one another, maintain mutual boundaries, and keep communicating to ensure the atmosphere remains pleasant and safe.

1.3 Confidentiality Committee

Historisch Schermgilde Limburg has a Confidentiality Committee with at least one Confidential Counsellor, who serves as an accessible and independent point of contact for anyone within the club (members, instructors, volunteers, and visitors) with questions, concerns, or reports relating to social safety or (potentially) inappropriate or boundary-crossing behaviour.

This may include, for example, situations involving bullying, discrimination, (sexual) harassment, aggression, unwanted conduct, or other forms of unsafe or unpleasant behaviour.

The Confidentiality Committee:

- Provides a listening ear and takes questions, signals, and experiences seriously;
- Informs individuals about possible next steps and available support options;
- Can offer advice on making a report, holding a conversation, or involving external support services;
- Conducts conversations in confidence as far as is reasonable and possible, noting that this role does not entail an absolute duty of confidentiality;
- Supports the Board in promoting a socially safe environment within the club, through monitoring, education, and contributing to preventative measures such as codes of conduct and group norms.

The Confidentiality Committee does not take disciplinary decisions and is not part of the disciplinary process. If a report leads to possible action by the Board or external authorities, this will take place in consultation and with transparency towards the reporting person, unless escalation is necessary due to serious or immediate safety risks.

The Confidentiality Committee handles reports and discussions with due care and confidentiality. Information shared with the Confidentiality Committee will, as a rule, not be disclosed to third parties without the explicit consent of the reporting individual.

This duty of confidentiality is not absolute. Confidentiality may be breached only where:

- The reporting individual has given explicit consent to share (parts of) the information;
- The Confidentiality Committee or the Board is legally obliged to disclose the information;
- There is an immediate and serious risk to the safety of persons, making disclosure necessary to prevent harm.

Where confidentiality must be breached, the reporting individual will, where reasonably possible, be informed in advance of the nature and reason for this step, unless doing so would compromise safety.

The Confidentiality Committee can be reached at: <mailto:vertrouwenscommissie@hsgl.nl>

1.4 Examples of unacceptable behaviour

The list below contains **examples** of behaviour that is **not permitted** within the club, on or around training venues, during events, or in the club's digital communication channels.

This list is not exhaustive; conduct that is not explicitly mentioned but is contrary to social or physical safety, or to the dignity or integrity of others, also falls within this scope.

1) Discrimination, Hate, and Intimidation

- (In)direct discrimination or derogatory remarks about, for example, religion/belief, political affiliation, race/ethnicity, skin colour, nationality, (sexual) orientation, sex characteristics, gender identity/expression, disability, or chronic illness.
- Stigmatising comments about religious or political convictions.
- Exclusion, preference, or disadvantage on the basis of sex, gender identity, or gender expression.
- Insulting, contemptuous, or belittling remarks about someone's background, body, or health condition.
- Hate speech; displaying or distributing extremist symbols, propaganda, or recruitment materials (online or on site).
- Threats (verbal, written, or digital), swearing, shouting, deliberate humiliation, or aggressive body language.

2) (Sexual) Integrity

- (Sexual) harassment: suggestive/boundary-crossing "jokes", unwanted touching, or unwanted advances.
- Inappropriate remarks about body, appearance, clothing, or private life; sexually suggestive gestures, requests, or propositions.
- Deliberately seeking physical contact that is unrelated to the exercise context or to one's personal relationship with the other person.
- Persistent unwanted approaches (including digitally), stalking, forcing contact, or demanding attention.

3) Violence, Endangerment, and Threatening Behaviour

- Physical aggression (pushing/pulling, kicking, hitting), or "taking it out" on people or equipment.
- Threatening swinging, aiming, or thrusting with (training) weapons outside a safe context.
- Deliberately striking prohibited target areas (back of the head, spine, groin, feet/ankles), or striking/thrusting after "Halt/Break".
- Retaliation or "payback actions" during or after drills/sparring; provoking fights.

4) Abuse of Authority, Experience, or Position

- Condescendingly correcting or shaming newcomers or less experienced members.
- Deliberately exploiting physical advantage or technical superiority with the intent to cause others to feel unsafe, threatened, or subject to retaliation, rather than for legitimate sporting or educational purposes.
- Using "coaching" as a cover for humiliation, mockery, or abuse of authority.

5) Safety Rules and Equipment Use

- Training with defective or non-compliant equipment (e.g. damaged mask, worn gloves, non-approved weapons), or refusing a gear check.
- Using sharp weapons or other unauthorised items in training areas; using weapons outside fencing zones without supervision.
- Transporting weapons unsafely or leaving them unattended; tampering with equipment inspection; concealing defects; “modifying” weapons or protective equipment in an unsafe manner.
- Ignoring emergency procedures; blocking escape routes; moving/removing first-aid supplies without consultation.

6) Sparring and Training Discipline

- Sparring in a manner that fails to take sufficient account of a partner’s experience level, protective equipment, or physical limits, for example by consistently using excessive intensity or “going hard” with inexperienced partners.
- Failing to align or adjust intensity, objectives, or use of space where the situation clearly requires it, resulting in avoidable safety risks.
- Ignoring commands (“Halt”, “Break”, “Stop”) or continuing to fight/adding a “last hit” after a stop; continuing while someone indicates pain or injury.
- Throws in which a fencer’s feet both leave the ground (such as shoulder or hip throws) on a hard surface.
- Unnecessary “showboating”, provoking, or triumphing in a way that harms the atmosphere.
- Wandering, loitering, or chatting in fencing zones such that others are hindered or risks arise.

7) Substance Use

- Attending under the influence of alcohol or drugs; substance use that impairs reaction time or judgement.
- Administering/promoting substances to others without the instructor’s/Board’s consent.

For the purposes of this policy, *substances* are defined as:

- Hard and soft drugs;
- Party drugs;
- Performance-enhancing substances (such as anabolic steroids);
- Medication falling under the *Dutch Opium Act*;
- Any other substances that significantly impair consciousness, reaction time, or judgement in a manner that compromises safety, regardless of whether such substances are legally regulated.

The use of medication covered by the Dutch Opium Act is permitted only where:

- There is a medical necessity;
- This has been disclosed to the instructor, first aider, or responsible official;
- And its use does not compromise safety or cause disruption during the activity.

In emergency situations (e.g. an epileptic seizure), such medication may be administered by another person. It is the responsibility of the member concerned to inform instructors and/or first aiders of this risk accordingly.

8) Privacy and Data Protection

- Filming/photographing members without permission or publishing/distributing images without consent.
- Doxxing: sharing others' personal data (address, phone number, workplace) or medical information for malicious purposes.
- Secretly recording conversations or manipulating content with the intention of harming someone.

9) Minors and Vulnerable Persons

- Breaching club guidelines relating to minors (e.g. leaving them unsupervised; ignoring communication with parents/guardians).
- Inappropriate one-to-one situations involving minors without appropriate supervision or transparency, including so-called "closed-door" training without a valid reason. This refers to one-to-one training with a minor in an isolated or non-transparent setting where training could reasonably have taken place with visibility, an open door, or appropriate supervision.
- Ignoring signals of unsafety, suspicions of abuse, or reporting obligations towards the Board/authorities.
- Inappropriate relationships/communication with minors; grooming; requesting/exchanging sexually explicit images.

10) Online and Club Communication

- Insulting or inflammatory messages on Slack, email, or social media in the name of, or under the banner of, the club.
- Deliberately spreading misinformation about safety rules or club policy.
- Continuing to undermine or disruptively debate decisions in channels not intended for that purpose, after the procedure has been explained.

11) Property, Facilities, and Third Parties

- Theft, damage, or vandalism of club or venue property.
- Unauthorised use of keys, access codes, or rooms; entering prohibited areas.
- Actions that jeopardise the relationship with the venue manager (e.g. smoking/prohibited substances indoors; ignoring venue rules).
- Commercial solicitation, sales, or promotion during club time without permission, meaning the active offering, advertising, or selling of products, services, or activities, or the recruitment of members or customers for profit during training sessions or other club activities, without prior permission from the Board or a person designated by the Board; informal conversations or personal recommendations without commercial intent are not covered by this rule.

12) Integrity, Compliance, and Governance

- Circumventing measures (false identity; seeking access despite a (temporary) ban).
- Retaliation against reporters, Confidential Counsellors, instructors, volunteers, or board members after an incident report.

- Refusing reasonable instructions from an instructor/Board member/safety official.
- Deliberately making false reports with the intent to damage the reputation of other parties.
- Deliberate sabotage of training equipment, classes, or other events held by the club.
- Malicious or deliberate damage to the good name and reputation of the club.

13) Incidents and First Aid

- Failing to report (near-)accidents or injuries immediately.
- Allowing exercises to continue after an incident while the designated first aider has not yet declared the situation safe.

2. Training Sessions and Activities

2.1 Language use and comprehensible instruction

Where a participant is not fully fluent in the primary language of instruction, they are entitled to receive the same instructions given to the group in a language they understand, namely **Dutch** or **English**.

Within reasonable limits, the instructor or supervising staff shall ensure that the participant understands the instructions necessary for the safe and correct execution of the exercise.

2.2 General duty of care

In addition to the specific prohibitions and guidelines listed, all fencers are expected to act with common sense, control, and proportionality.

Any actions, techniques, or use of equipment that create unnecessary risk, excessive force, or danger to an opponent are not permitted, even if such actions are not explicitly listed elsewhere in this document.

2.2 Training activities

Technical drills

The instructor determines which drills are conducted, what minimum protective equipment is required, and the training set-up to be used. The instructor's instructions must be followed at all times.

Sparring

When the situation demonstrably requires it, or when in doubt, partners must make clear agreements with one another regarding the following matters before sparring begins:

- the fact that they are sparring (never start without explicit agreement);
- the location within the fencing zone;
- the intensity (light / moderate / controlled);
- the permitted target areas (prohibited target areas remain prohibited at all times).

On commands such as **"BREAK"** or **"HALT"**, participants **must stop immediately**.

In addition, a fencer is always allowed to call **"BREAK"**, **"HALT"**, or an equivalent stop command themselves when they wish to interrupt or stop sparring for any reason (for example safety concerns, equipment issues, fatigue, confusion, or injury).

Sparring is intended to develop technique, control, and mutual trust; it is not intended to cause harm. **Prohibited target areas** include, but are not limited to: **the back of the head, the spine/back, the groin, and the feet and ankles**.

Throws in which a fencer's feet both leave the ground (such as shoulder or hip throws) are not permitted during free sparring on hard surfaces. Other controlled clinch, steering, and grappling techniques are permitted, provided they are performed safely.

Blossfechten (sparring with limited protection)

Blossfechten carries increased risk and is therefore permitted only when:

- The instructor considers the fencer competent enough; and
- Explicit permission has been given prior to starting the activity. When in doubt, both parties (instructor and fencer) are encouraged to confirm.

Minimum mandatory equipment: a helmet and neck protection.

Before starting, clear agreements must be made regarding intensity, target areas, and stop commands. Discipline and stopping immediately when danger arises are essential.

2.3 Activity zones

To ensure safe movement, clear escape routes, and good visibility within the hall, the training space is divided into fixed zones (see appendix). The instructor may adjust the layout to suit circumstances.

The following zones apply within the sports venue:

Equipment zone	A place for bags, protective equipment, and weapons when not in use. This zone may also be used as a resting area.
Fencing zone	The designated area in which the use of weapons is permitted. Sparring, technical drills, and all weapons use take place exclusively here.
Resting zone	An area for resting, observing, or informal discussion. No weapons work takes place here.

Note: An equipment zone may be used as a resting zone, but a resting zone is not a fencing zone and is not a place to practise with weapons.

3. Equipment

3.1 Responsibility and inspections

Members are responsible for maintaining their personal equipment properly and for checking it regularly. The Safety Committee carries out a minimum of two and a maximum of four safety inspections per year.

The frequency of these inspections depends on the condition of the equipment and compliance with any previous advice. If an inspection identifies no defects or risks, the relevant member is exempt from the next inspection cycle.

If there is any doubt about the safety or suitability of any item of equipment, the member must seek advice from the Safety Committee before using it in training.

3.2 Protective equipment (“Full Gear”)

“**Full gear**” is defined as:

- Mask with back-of-head protection
- Throat protection
- Heavy gloves
- Fencing jacket
- Chest protector
- Elbow protection
- Forearm protection (not required for rapier)
- Groin protection (cup)
- Fencing trousers
- Knee protection
- Shin protection

Wearing full protection is not required for all activities. Section 3.5 sets out which levels of protection are used as guidance per activity type.

3.3 Protective equipment requirements

All HEMA-specific equipment is generally permitted; however, equipment intended for, for example, kendo, re-enactment, etc. is permitted only with approval from the Safety Committee. Metal protection is prohibited at all times.

Most protective equipment has a Newton rating which indicates the level of force up to which a weapon cannot penetrate the item. The following Newton ratings apply as the minimum ratings for equipment:

- **Fencing jacket:** 350 N
- **Fencing trousers:** 350 N
- **Mask with back-of-head protection:** 1600 N

For gloves, the following categories apply:

- **Light:** gloves without additional reinforcement
- **Medium:** gloves with plastic, Kevlar, or foam reinforcement in the cuff/knuckles
- **Heavy:** full plastic enclosure of the hand

3.4 Weapons

Nylon training weapons

- Equivalent to Red Dragon or Blackfencer models
- No structural weaknesses (cracks, breaks, severe warping)
- Fittings securely attached and in good condition
- Suitable for sparring and compatible with the protection level of both fencers

Steel training weapons

- Intended for HEMA activities
- Tip must be rounded or spatulated
- A rubber tip is optional for most weapons, but mandatory for rapier
- Weapons must have a degree of flexibility; overly stiff weapons are not permitted
- No part of the weapon may be sharp
- Weapon must be well maintained
- No heavy rust
- No structural weaknesses such as cracks or significant deformation
- No fittings so loose that they lose their safety function or could separate from the weapon
- No burrs/raised sharp edges

3.5 Activity-specific equipment

The required level of protection depends on several factors, including the fencer’s skill level, the intensity of the exercise, and how busy the sports venue is.

For every activity, fencers must agree expectations clearly with their partner in advance, and if in doubt must always consult an instructor.

During lessons, the instructor determines the minimum required level of protection. Outside lessons, the guidance below applies. Wearing more protection is always permitted.

Activity	Protection level	3rd person required*
Performing techniques without a partner	1	No
Performing techniques with a partner at light/no pressure	2	No
Performing techniques with a partner at heavy pressure	3	No
Sparring	4	Yes*
Blossfechten	2	No

Protection level	
1	None
2	Helmet with back-of-head protection + light gloves + throat protection + groin guard
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longsword: Level 2 + chest protector + fencing jacket + elbow protection + heavy gloves • Rapier: Level 2 + chest protector + fencing jacket + medium gloves • Sabre: Level 2 + chest protector + fencing jacket + elbow protection + medium gloves
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longsword: Level 3 longsword + forearm protection + leg protection + knee protection • Rapier: Level 3 rapier + elbow protection + leg protection + knee protection

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sabre: Level 3 sabre + forearm protection + leg protection + knee protection
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*A **third person** (“third man”) acts as a safety observer during sparring. Whether this is required depends on the experience of the participants, the intensity, and how busy the venue is. For beginning fencers, the presence of a third person is mandatory at higher intensity or in a crowded training space. If in doubt, the instructor decides.

4. Communication

4.1 General

The club uses several communication channels. Members are expected to use these channels in an appropriate, respectful, and purpose-driven manner. Communications issued by the Board, instructors, or committees are deemed to be current and binding.

4.2 Announcements during training

Important announcements and practical notices are, in principle, given at the end of the training session by the instructor or the supervising lead present. Where relevant, these announcements are subsequently repeated via the club's digital communication channels.

4.3 Slack

Most internal communication and member-to-member exchange takes place via Slack. Within Slack, various channels exist with a specific purpose. Members are requested to respect these purposes and to keep discussions within the appropriate channel. The main channels are:

- **#bulletin-board:** Official announcements from the club (e.g. training sessions, tournaments, class changes).
- **#armory:** Questions and information regarding weapons and protective equipment.
- **#evenementen:** Communication relating to events and activities.
- **#general:** General discussions about HEMA or club matters.
- **#tavern:** Informal conversations and social exchange.
- **#market-place:** Buying and selling HEMA-related equipment.

Members are expected to use appropriate language and to keep discussions constructive.

4.4 Email

For formal communication, the club uses dedicated email addresses, as follows:

info@hsgl.nl	General information and general correspondence.
financien@hsgl.nl	Queries and correspondence relating to membership fees and financial matters.
vertrouwenscommissie@hsgl.nl	Questions, concerns, and reports regarding social safety and complaints.
bestuur@hsgl.nl	Communication to and from the Board.
evenementen@hsgl.nl	Event organisation and information.

4.5 Availability and response times

The Board, instructors, and committees aim to respond to messages in a timely manner, but cannot guarantee immediate response times. For urgent matters during an activity, contact the instructor or responsible lead present.

5. Incidents During Activities

5.1 Presence of first aiders

One or more certified first aiders are present during training sessions and events. Their names are communicated via the club's communication channels (Slack and the public drive) and are also listed on the sheet in the club equipment locker, together with the first-aid bag or case.

If it is not clear in advance who the designated first aider is for a given activity, then this will be confirmed before the training session begins.

5.2 Reporting incidents

In the event of an accident or injury, notify the designated first aider or the instructor **immediately**.

Depending on the severity of the incident, the following reporting procedures apply:

- **Code Yellow:** For minor injuries (such as bruises or sprains), the incident is reported to the instructor or first aider. Training can usually continue.
- **Code Orange:** For moderate injuries (such as a dislocation or a fall without loss of consciousness), call out clearly: **"First aid!"**. All activity in the **immediate area** is stopped at once. Activities may only resume with the approval of the first aider or instructor.
- **Code Red:** For serious injuries (such as severe bleeding or loss of consciousness), training is stopped immediately in full. No activity may continue until the situation has been declared safe and care has been completed.

Injuries are assessed using the following colour code:

Colour	Incident	Action
Yellow	Minor injury (bruise, sprain, scrape)	Activities may continue.
Orange	Moderate injury (dislocation, falling without loss of consciousness)	Activities in the immediate area stop. Local resumption may be possible.
Red	Serious injury (major bleeding, falling with loss of consciousness)	All activities stop immediately. No activities during the intervention.

5.3 Life-threatening emergencies

Code Red explicitly includes life-threatening medical emergencies, including but not limited to:

- sudden cardiac arrest or need for resuscitation;
- symptoms of a stroke;
- severe or arterial bleeding;
- any other acute condition posing an immediate risk to life.

In such cases, emergency services (112) must be contacted immediately. All activities are stopped in full.

Those present shall remain on site, insofar as reasonably possible and safe, and may only leave the location with approval from the emergency services or the designated first aider(s), for example in the context of evacuation, securing the area, or maintaining access routes.

5.4 Instructions during incidents

During an incident, the first aider's instructions must always be followed immediately. The first aider assesses the situation, issues instructions, and ensures safe access to the casualty.

Others present must keep a safe distance and provide assistance only when requested by the first aider or instructor.

5.5 First aid supplies

First aid supplies are kept in the club equipment locker and may only be used by the designated first aider(s), or by members acting under their supervision.

After each incident, it is checked whether any supplies were used so that they can be replenished without delay.

5.6 Evacuation

In the event of an emergency or evacuation, all members must know where the emergency exits are located (see the floor plans in the appendix).

The instructor is, in principle, the first point of contact and coordinates the evacuation, unless they decide otherwise. A designated responsible person checks that everyone has left the premises and reports this to the instructor or the emergency services.

5.7 General provisions

Every situation is unique; always act in accordance with the instructions of the first aider(s) present or the emergency services. Safety, calm, and clarity take priority at all times.

In life-threatening situations, instructions issued by the emergency services take precedence at all times over internal procedures.

6. Complaints and Sensitive Issues

Within the club, we strive to maintain an atmosphere of friendship, respect, and tolerance. Members are encouraged, in the first instance, to discuss any tensions or differences of opinion with one another openly and respectfully. In many cases, this is the quickest and most effective way to resolve issues.

If direct discussion is not possible or not sufficient, the following steps apply:

a. **Safety-related matters**

Where a report concerns (social or physical) safety, it should first be discussed with the instructor or a member of the Safety Committee. They will advise on appropriate next steps and, where necessary, take action.

b. **Matters relating to the general operation of the club**

For questions, concerns, or disputes regarding the organisation or day-to-day running of the club, members may approach a Board member or the Confidentiality Committee. They can think matters through with you, provide advice, and propose appropriate measures.

c. **Confidential or sensitive matters**

If none of the above channels is desirable or appropriate, you may always contact the Confidentiality Committee via vertrouwenscommissie@hsgl.nl.

The Confidentiality Committee handles reports and disputes carefully, confidentially, and independently. The complaints-handling procedure is included in the appendix to these regulations.

Although these structures are available, the guiding principle remains that disputes should preferably be resolved through direct and constructive discussion with the party concerned, with mutual respect and in the spirit of the club.

7. GDPR & Privacy

As a sports club, we place great value on your privacy. In accordance with the **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**, we would like to inform you about how we handle personal data, what your rights are, and what we expect from you.

What data do we collect?

We process only the data necessary for the proper operation of the club, such as:

- Name, address, telephone number, email address
 - Date of birth and sex
 - Membership type and sporting discipline
 - Medical information (where relevant, e.g. in the event of injuries or allergies)
 - Payment details (for membership fees and other contributions)
 - Photos and videos of club activities (with consent)
-

Why do we process this data?

We use personal data solely for:

- Membership administration and communication
 - Insurance purposes and registrations with sporting federations
 - Organising training sessions, competitions, and events
 - Invoicing and accounting
 - Promoting club activities (e.g. via the website or social media)
-

What are your rights?

As a member, you have the right to:

- **Access** your personal data
- **Request correction** of inaccurate data
- **Request deletion** of data that is no longer necessary
- **Object** to certain types of processing
- **Withdraw consent** for the use of photos/videos

You can exercise these rights by contacting us via info@hsgl.nl.

How do we protect your data?

We take appropriate technical and organisational measures to protect your data against loss, misuse, or unauthorised access. Only authorised persons within the club have access to your data.

What do we expect from you?

- Provide accurate and up-to-date information when registering.
 - Notify us of changes in good time (e.g. a new address or telephone number).
 - Respect the privacy of other members as well (e.g. do not share photos without permission)
-

Questions or complaints?

Do you have questions about how we handle your data? If so, please contact the Board of the club. If you have serious concerns, you may also contact the Dutch Data Protection Authority (Autoriteit Persoonsgegevens) via <https://www.autoriteitpersoonsgegevens.nl/en>.

8. Minors

8.1 Minimum age and admission

Due to the nature of the sport and the associated safety risks, participation in the club's training sessions and activities is permitted for minors only from the **age of 16**. Participation is possible only if the following conditions are met:

- a. Written consent from a parent or legal guardian;
- b. Supervision during training activities by a parent/guardian, or by an adult supervisor appointed by the parent/guardian.

8.2 Safety and communication

The club ensures that parents/guardians receive clear information in advance regarding:

- the nature of the activities and training formats;
- the required equipment (mandatory and recommended);
- the safety rules and standards of conduct applicable within the club.

Injuries, incidents, or concerns relating to a minor will be communicated to the parent or guardian as soon as reasonably possible.

Instructors and/or the Confidentiality Counsellor serve as the primary points of contact for minors within the club. They may be approached with questions, concerns, signals, or reports.

Unacceptable behaviour towards minors is reported to the Board without delay and may, depending on the seriousness and nature of the situation, be referred to the police or other relevant authorities.

8.3 Equipment and physical safety

As a general rule, minor participants fence **only with nylon training weapons**. Only after a **positive evaluation by the instructors** and with **explicit written consent from a parent/guardian** may a minor be permitted to train with steel training weapons.

The club sets clear guidelines on mandatory and recommended protective equipment for junior members. Instructors actively guide minor participants in the correct and safe handling of equipment, gear, and training formats.

9. Selective Admissions Policy

9.1 Principles and purpose

Historisch Schermgilde Limburg strives to provide a safe, inclusive, and respectful sporting environment in which members and visitors can participate in Historical European Martial Arts (HEMA) without intimidation, threats, or boundary-crossing behaviour. The use of training weapons and physical interaction involves inherent safety risks; this requires mutual trust, care, and respect. The purpose of the selective admissions policy is therefore to:

- safeguard physical safety during training sessions and events;
- maintain a socially safe environment free from, amongst other things, (sexual) harassment, discrimination, and hate speech;
- preserve order, calm, and mutual trust within the club;
- protect the good name of the club and the wider HEMA community.

The **Dutch HEMA Federation** (HEMA-Bond Nederland) requires affiliated clubs to apply a selective admissions policy in order to guarantee a safe training environment. This policy is the local implementation of that requirement.

In the event that this policy conflicts with binding instructions from the federation, the club will follow the federation's framework.

9.2 Legal basis

In applying this policy, the club acts in accordance with Article 1 of the Dutch Constitution and the relevant provisions of the Dutch Equal Treatment Act (Algemene Wet Gelijke Behandeling, AWGB). This means no distinction is made on the grounds of age, religion, race, sex, sexual orientation, sex characteristics, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, ethnic or social origin, physical or mental disability, chronic illness, belief, or political affiliation, except where conduct, expressions, or memberships associated with extremist, anti-democratic, or violent ideologies demonstrably pose a risk to the safety, social integrity, or reputation of the club.

This admissions policy is aimed solely at safeguarding a safe, respectful, and ethical club environment. Admission or refusal therefore takes place only on the basis of conduct, statements, or concrete circumstances that demonstrably pose a risk to safety, the social or physical integrity of members, or the orderly running of the club. Personal characteristics or beliefs as such can never, in themselves, constitute grounds for refusal.

Under Dutch association law (Article 2:26 et seq. of the Dutch Civil Code), the club has the authority to determine independently who is admitted to its activities, provided that this authority is exercised carefully, reasonably, and in a non-discriminatory manner.

The club reserves the right to refuse entry to, or remove, individuals where, on the basis of reasonable and verifiable information, it is plausible that:

- their presence poses a safety risk to members, instructors, or others present;
- they demonstrably disrupt, or threaten to disrupt, order and calm within the club;

- their conduct is contrary to the club's values and standards;
- they may negatively affect the reputation of the club or the sport.

The preventive nature of this authority means refusal is also possible without prior incidents, provided that the risk assessment is based on objective, verifiable, or otherwise reasonably justifiable grounds.

In applying this policy, conduct occurring outside club activities or club hours may also be taken into account, insofar as it is demonstrably relevant to the safety, order, or reputation of the club.

9.3 Scope

This policy applies to all activities organised by or on behalf of the club (training, sparring, tournaments, gatherings, other activities) and at all locations used by the club (indoors and outdoors), for members and non-members alike (visitors, guests, spectators, suppliers, and guest instructors). Where venue rules or federation requirements conflict, the legally binding requirements take precedence.

9.4 Criteria for refusal or removal

Pursuant to the authority described in Section 9.2, the club may refuse admission to, or remove, individuals where there is specific conduct or concrete circumstances that are demonstrably incompatible with the safety, order, or values of the association.

This may include (non-exhaustively) the following situations or behaviours:

- Persistent aggressive or intimidating behaviour, despite warnings (swearing, threats, physical intimidation).
- Repeated breaches of safety rules (unsafe sparring practices; exceeding agreed contact/force levels; use of defective or unauthorised equipment, such as steel outside the agreed context; ignoring stop commands).
- Serious or repeated breaches of club rules or instructions (refusing to follow directions; entering prohibited zones; tampering with inspections/equipment).
- (Sexual) harassment, boundary-crossing behaviour, stalking, or persistent unwanted approaches (including digitally; including doxxing/cyberbullying).
- Breaches of codes of conduct relating to minors (grooming, inappropriate communication/contact).
- Hateful, discriminatory, or extremist statements/symbols, propaganda, or recruitment that undermine social safety.
- Deliberate breaches of privacy (unwanted filming/photography, sharing images without consent).
- Attending under the influence of alcohol/drugs, or substance use that compromises (social/physical) safety.
- Deliberate endangerment (intentionally striking prohibited/vulnerable areas, physical violence with the intent to injure, ignoring medical signals).

- j. Retaliation against reporters, confidential contact persons, instructors, volunteers, or Board members following a report or measure.
- k. Circumventing measures (false identity; seeking access despite an existing venue/federation/club ban).
- l. Official warnings or bans issued by the federation, venue management, or government authorities.
- m. Credible reports or documentation relating to any of the above criteria, insofar as these are lawfully disclosed and verifiable.

9.5 Procedure

Assessment of potential risks is carried out by the Board, where appropriate in consultation with instructors and/or the Confidentiality Committee. Where circumstances allow, the person concerned will be given the opportunity to present their view (the right to be heard).

In cases of acute or immediate threat, the Board or the supervising lead present may impose an immediate and temporary refusal of entry on the spot, after which assessment and the right to be heard will follow as soon as possible.

Appendices

Complaints Handling Procedure

Confidentiality Committee email: vertrouwenscommissie@hsgl.nl

This document explains how the Confidentiality Committee of our club handles complaints. The aim is to provide you, as a member, with a clear and trustworthy process, so you know what to expect and so your complaint is taken seriously. We strive for a safe environment in which everyone feels heard.

⚠ Please note: This procedure is a guideline. Depending on the situation, steps may be adjusted. Personal (face-to-face) contact is preferred over email correspondence.

Step 1: Submitting a complaint (email, Slack, face-to-face)

- **Acknowledgement of complaint**
You will receive an email confirmation within 24 hours that your complaint has been received.
- **Registration**
Your complaint is recorded in an internal register with the date, time, your name (unless anonymous), and the nature of the complaint.
- **Internal notification**
The Confidentiality Counsellors are informed that a new complaint has been submitted.

Step 2: Initial assessment

- **Assessment of your complaint**
The confidential contact persons review your complaint and determine its seriousness and urgency.
- **Contacting you**
You will be contacted for additional information and an explanation of the next steps. This preferably takes place in a personal conversation, but may also take place via email.

Step 3: Investigation

- **Gathering information**
The Confidentiality Counsellors speak to those involved and gather relevant information.
- **Documentation**
Everything that is discussed and investigated is recorded carefully.

- **Analysis**
The situation is analysed thoroughly in order to form a clear picture.
 - **Internal discussion**
The Confidentiality Counsellors consult with one another and reach a shared view on the complaint.
-

Step 4: Solution proposal

- **Formulating a solution**
A proposal is drawn up to resolve your complaint.
 - **Discussion with you**
You will be informed of the proposal and can indicate whether you agree with it.
 - **Mediation (if required)**
If necessary, a mediation meeting is arranged between you and the party or parties involved, facilitated by a Confidentiality Counsellor.
-

Step 5: Implementing the resolution

- **Action plan**
A concrete plan is drawn up to implement the resolution.
 - **Monitoring**
The confidential contact persons follow up to ensure that all agreements are being upheld.
-

Step 6: Evaluation and follow-up

- **Review**
Together with you (and, where appropriate, others involved), it is evaluated whether the resolution has worked well.
 - **Feedback**
You will be asked for feedback on the process so that it can be improved.
 - **Follow-up**
If necessary, a further conversation will take place to check whether the matter has been resolved sustainably.
-

Step 7: Closure

- **Closing message**
You will receive a summary of the handling of the complaint and the outcome.
 - **Archiving**
All documents are stored securely for future reference
-

If you have any questions about this procedure, or if you would like to speak with a Confidentiality Counsellor in advance, you are always welcome to do so. We are here to help you!

Recommended order for purchasing equipment

To participate safely and fully in fencing lessons, it is necessary to have suitable personal protective equipment. The club understands, however, that it is not always possible to purchase every item at once. The list below therefore serves as a non-binding guideline for the recommended order of purchase.

This order is intended as a **practical guide** and not as a requirement. If you are unsure or have questions about safety, suitability, or prioritisation, you can always speak to an instructor or a member of the Safety Committee.

1. Groin protection (immediately during or after trial lessons)
2. Helmet with back-of-head protection; throat protection
3. Chest protector and light or heavy gloves
4. Fencing jacket and elbow protection (heavy gloves if not yet purchased)
5. Forearm protection
6. Fencing trousers and knee protection
7. Shin protection
8. Any additional reinforcing plates

⚠ Weapons (nylon or steel) may be purchased at any time.

However, if you choose steel weapons straight away, a higher level of protection may be required depending on the exercise. For safety reasons, the club advises switching to steel weapons only from step 4 onwards, once sufficient protective equipment is in place.

Venue Layouts

Donderberg Venue (Roermond)

