



Starkville Martial Arts Academy ***Dojo Etiquette***

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General Comment:

- The rules to which we adhere both inside and outside the dojo show how much we value our training. The dojo rules exist so that we can all work together with mutual respect in a safe and fun-filled environment. When you train, do everything with the focus, concentration, determination, motivation and desire that a Black Belt would show, regardless of your current rank. As you learn to develop the character of a Black Belt martial artist these rules will become simple and self-evident extensions of your normal behaviour. Always remember that safety and respect are our watchwords.
- Once you start training as a martial artist, everything you do will reflect back upon the Academy, its instructors, your classmates and the style of martial art you practice. Therefore, never forget: “*Spectemur Agendo*” which means “By our actions we are judged.”

Section 1 : Class Attendance:

- Never miss class. Have a strong desire to learn and be motivated to come to class so that you can learn and you can help your classmates learn with you. Training regularly with your classmates creates an esprit de corps that is built from teamwork, tolerance and understanding.
- If you are late due to unforeseen events, warm yourself up quietly at the side of the mat, then wait at the edge of class until the instructor allows you to join the practice. Do not disturb class. Make sure that you apologize for being late.
- There are two classes per week in each of our arts (Judo, Taekwondo, Ju Jitsu). There are also classes in competition Taekwondo and competition Judo.
- Private lessons are available to all Academy members. These lessons are free if you are a Advanced (Black Belt) Program Member.

Section 2 : Personal Hygiene:

- Your personal hygiene should be of the highest standard. Your appearance says a lot about your self-respect. Take pride in your appearance and set an example for others.
- Always make sure that your uniform is clean and tidy.
- Keep your finger and toe nails clean and trimmed. A nail scratch gets infected very easily.
- Keep your hair washed and tied back if necessary. Do not use metal hair fasteners.

- Smoking, excessive use of alcohol and the use of any drugs are strongly discouraged. All of these things will inhibit your progress and cause damage to your body. Learn to say NO.

Section 3 : Bowing:

- The bow is something that we do many times during our training and for many reasons. There are two parts to a bow: the external physical gesture and the internal reasons for bowing.
- When to bow: 1) Entering or leaving the dojo. Bow inside the door, not in the doorway. 2) Entering or leaving the practice area. 3) Before and after practicing with your partner. 4) At the beginning and end of class.
- Why do we bow? 1) A bow is a sign of respect. The lower rank respects the higher rank for their greater experience, the higher rank respects the lower rank for their desire to learn. The higher rank should never forget that they too were a lower rank once. There has to be respect and trust between partners in order for both players to learn and to grow. The bow is therefore a sign of both the trust and the respect. 2) A bow is a sign of humility and willingness to learn. No matter what rank you may reach, there is something for you to learn from everyone with whom you practice, all you need is an open mind. 3) A bow says that you will take care of your partner and show them proper consideration. When we bow to each other we recognize that our partner is not a rag doll to pound upon. 4) A bow may be used as a greeting, a sign of gratitude or as a sign of apology. 5) Finally, a bow is a mental pause, especially each time we enter the dojo to start class. We come to class to improve ourselves both mentally and physically. When you bow, clear all other thoughts from your mind and focus fully on your training.
- A bow should never be an empty gesture, it should always be performed with intent and meaning.

Section 4 : Class Behaviour:

- Do not eat a heavy meal before coming to class.
- Do not come to class intoxicated in any way.
- Do not chew gum in class, none of us wants to practice our CPR.
- Do not wear jewelry of any kind, it can injure you and your partner.
- Do not practice what you see others doing, but have not been taught yourself.
- Do not teach anything unless you are specifically told to do so.
- Never leave the practice area during class without the instructor's permission.
- Feel free to ask questions, they help us all to learn.
- Remember that the dojo is a place to learn, it is not a playground or a place for horseplay or joking about. Training should be fun, but we should never lose sight of why we come to class.
- Bring any injury to the attention of an instructor. If you sustain an injury before class, let the instructor know before you train, sometimes it is better to sit and train with your eyes, rather than aggravate an injury. If you get injured during class, let the instructor know immediately, but do not disturb the entire class. Remember that most injuries are caused by a lack of concentration.
- Be alert, stay focussed upon what you are doing and take care of your partner.
- Work as hard as you can in class, do everything as though you were a Black Belt.

- If you are not actively practicing, but watching a demonstration or receiving instruction always stand, kneel or sit properly. Keep good posture, it tones the muscles, maintains concentration and demonstrates respect.
- If you need to tidy your uniform you should turn your back to the class if you are training in a Korean system, but in Japanese systems it is O.K. to adjust your uniform while facing your partner.

Section 5 : Rank Structure:

- When you line up at the beginning and end of the class, do so quickly. You will discover that there are specific methods of doing so for each style we teach. Each method is designed to give credit to the students with the highest rank. Normally, the highest ranking student will call the class to attention and give the command to bow to sensei.
- When you practice with a partner, the highest rank should go first.
- The rank structure exists so that you can chart your own progress, moreover it gives your classmates an idea of how long you have been training and your depth of knowledge.
- You will also notice that students wear different ranks to different classes; this is because they are cross-training in more than one style. Always wear the correct rank for the art that you are practicing.
- There are four Japanese words that help to explain the rank structure a little more. Sempai is a senior student or instructor who has Giri, or the moral obligation to care for and guide any lower ranked student. The lower ranked student can be called Kohei and he or she has On, which is the moral obligation to repay the debt they have incurred from their Sempai. Obviously, we all carry varying amounts of On that we can never repay to our guides and teachers. The way in which we discharge this debt is to guide and care for those below us as we move up the ranks. Students and instructors who truly understand the Kohei-Sempai relationship and the On-Giri obligation demonstrate their understanding through a deep sense of loyalty to their classmates, their Sensei, their style and their dojo. Loyalty means defending your classmates and teachers in word and in deed. Loyalty is a two way street. Loyalty has no time for gossip and it does not say bad things about classmates, other martial arts, artists, regardless of where or what they practice. Loyalty is part of the teamwork we mentioned earlier.
- When we begin to train it is important to remember that we have acquired On from all the teachers, who, through the ages have passed their knowledge from generation to generation so that we can train today.

Section 6 : Behaviour toward Instructors:

- An instructor should be referred to as Sensei or by their appropriate title Mr....., Ms.....,etc.
- When the chief instructor enters the practice area to teach a class, the first student to notice the instructor's arrival should immediately call the class to attention and after a short pause, give the command to bow. The instructor will then indicate what will happen next.

Section 7 : Rank Promotions:

- You will be given opportunity to rank according to the ranking schedule for art that you are practicing.
- Time in grade can be anything from two months in the early ranks to a year or more at Black belt level
- If you have been coming to class regularly and learning the syllabus, you will be ready to rank on schedule.
- Do not see the rank as a test, but rather as a victory step toward your goal of Black Belt and beyond.
- Accordingly, your performance during a rank demonstration is an indication of how well your instructor has done his or her job.
- A rank promotion demonstration is your opportunity to shine.
- Rank promotion demonstrations may be closed or open events.

Section 8 : Looking after the Dojo:

- This is your dojo, take pride in it and care for it.
- Do not wait to be asked to do something, if you see that the floor needs cleaning, or waste bins need emptying, do it.
- Do not waste materials; we recycle paper, card, aluminum cans and plastic #1, #2 & #3
- Be willing to volunteer, there are always jobs that need doing in order to keep the dojo functioning.
- If part of the dojo is untidy, it is your responsibility, regardless of who made the mess. Do not complain about or criticize others...lead by example.
- Remember what we said at the beginning... People will judge us by what they see when they enter the dojo.