

Code of Conduct

Members of the Wisconsin Sport Aikido Club (WSAC) are part of a community of martial artists, dedicated to self-improvement through the study and practice of traditional Japanese martial arts. Because of the intensely personal nature of character development, the relationships between students and their teachers must be governed by a set of shared rules and mutual understanding. The following rules make up the WSAC Code of Conduct:

General Etiquette:

1. Maintain good personal hygiene.

Good hygiene shows respect for others; helps to ensure everyone's personal health; and creates a positive, professional environment. It also helps to prevent injury to yourself and others.

- Keep yourself clean.
- Uniforms should be clean and neat.
- Keep your fingernails and toenails smooth and trimmed.

2. Always remove your shoes after entering the dojo.

Shoes may be worn in the entrance area near the door, but should never be worn on the training mat. Removing your shoes indoors is a Japanese custom and shows respect for the place in which you train.

3. Please remove dangerous jewelry before training.

Removing your jewelry helps to ensure safety for yourself and others. It prevents personal injury as well as damage to the mats. Silicone rings and smooth rings are fine to wear during class, but please remove loose fitting jewelry such as earrings, bracelets or necklaces.

4. Do your best to arrive on time for class.

Punctuality shows enthusiasm for learning, minimizes disruption, and sets a good example for other students. If you do arrive after class has already begun, please perform the "bowing in" ceremony on your own. Step onto the mat, stay close to the edge and bow according to the customs of the art which you are practicing. Then sit quietly and wait for the instructor to ask you to join the class.

5. Request permission before leaving the mat during class.

Your instructor should be aware of your location and should also be alerted if you're not feeling well and need to leave. Requesting permission before leaving helps to minimize class disruption and shows respect for the instructor as well as the other students.

6. Let your instructor know if you will be absent for an extended period of time.

Your instructors care about your health and well-being. Please let them know if you will be absent for any extended period of time or have injuries or other physical conditions that will prevent or require you to augment class exercises and activities.

7. Participate in dojo activities whenever possible.

A traditional dojo cannot thrive without the enthusiastic participation of its students. Your instructor is constantly giving time and energy to you in the form of instruction and guidance - this is your chance to give some energy back while expanding your involvement with those at the dojo outside of regular classes.

8. Respect the “dojo”, community and our neighbors.

The dojo is a place of learning and respect. Help to keep the space in which we learn clean by helping to set up and clear mats of any dirt or debris before class, as well as helping to take down and store mats after class. Deposit all trash in proper receptacles. Refrain from loud or boisterous conversations within the halls of our building or surrounding sidewalks to be respectful of residents and neighbors.

9. Visitors and Guests should remain in the dedicated practice space

Visitors and observers are welcome to attend any class and observe the student interaction and curriculum. However, all visitors and guests must remain in the dedicated practice space. As we share our space with other groups and individuals it is important to respect their privacy and remain in our dedicated practice area. Visitors must also remain in the designated area and are not allowed on the mat area or to participate without a signed waiver of liability.

During Class:

1. Always train safely.

We always strive to train in a manner that is safe and prevents injury. The best way to do that is to be cooperative and respectful to those around you. If you have a physical condition that limits your ability to perform certain techniques, please let the instructor know.

2. Do not "test" others' ability to perform the techniques

During class, we provide just enough resistance to allow our training partners to practice the technique. Class time is not fighting time, and learning occurs most efficiently in an atmosphere of mutual cooperation. We do not actively resist our partner's techniques unless advised to do so by an instructor.

3. Address instructors as "Sensei" in the dojo.

Even if you call the instructor by his/her name outside the dojo, you should always address him or her as "Sensei" while in the dojo environment. It shows that you appreciate their years of hard work and training; that you are open to learning; and prepares the way for you to receive respect from others as you advance.

4. Always say "Hai!" or "Yes"

"Hai!" is the Japanese word meaning "yes!" Responding with "Hai!" shows you are open and enthusiastic about learning. It is a more committed, more formal and more respectful response than just saying "okay" or "yeah." Those words are not appropriate in a dojo.

5. Always bow before stepping on or off of the mat.

It shows respect and reverence for the place in which you train; prepares your mind for concentrated practice; and helps divide the outside world from the training environment.

6. Do not disturb other students during class.

We are all striving to learn; each student has sacrificed his or her personal time and money to be here and needs to have concentration to practice the material provided by the instructor. Do not distract others by joking or talking unnecessarily.

7. Never teach other students unless you are told to do so by the instructor.

Martial arts techniques are very complex and as a student, you may not be aware of all aspects of a particular technique. Each student has committed to learning with a particular instructor and though you may have good intentions, your advice may not always be in line with the lesson material or welcome by your partner. It is up to the instructor to teach new material and to carefully judge when each student is ready to learn more. As a student it is your responsibility to understand the material being taught by working with your partner to practice and asking the instructor if you have questions.

8. Never handle other students' weapons or property without permission.

Weapons and equipment are deeply personal to each person and should be treated with respect and reverence as they belong to other people. Weapons can also be dangerous if not handled properly and there are subtle rules of etiquette of which you may not be aware.

General Class Information and Etiquette:

Class is open to any one of 14 years old or more. Your uniform or clothing should be clean and neat with no large graphics or slogans. If not in a martial arts uniform, long pants and a durable top/shirt are recommended.

Practice will be conducted on the mat. No shoes should be worn on the mat, and they should be removed before stepping on. When entering and leaving the mat it is customary to bow before stepping on the mat, and before stepping off.

Loose or protruding jewelry should not be worn on the mat or during practice.

The dojo should be kept neat and clean.

Start of Class:

When class is started by the leading instructor, the class will line up facing the instructor, with the highest ranking student to the left of the instructor and to right of other students. Students line up in order of rank, with the higher rank always to your right.

Students should be lined up approximately a minute prior to the start of class, awaiting the instructor. Should the instructor call for the class to line up you will hear the command:

- “Retsu ni Narabimasu” -form a line
- *note, other instructors or guests may be lined up to the right perpendicular to the line formed by the students

Once the line is formed and class ready to begin the instructor will speak the words:

- “kiotsuke”-attention

The entire class including the instructor will be facing forward at this time, toward the Kamiza or Shomen. This is often a focal point of the dojo, and may contain a photo of the founder or aikido.

- “Shomen ni rei” – bow to the shomen

The instructor will turn to the class

- “ni rei”- the class will bow to the instructor and say:
- “Onegaishimasu”-a formal greeting meaning to please practice at your best

The instructor may also at this point direct the class to bow to the guest instructors.

At the end of class this process will be repeated, with instead of Onegaishimasu being stated, the class will respond with

- “Arigatogouzaimasute”-or thank you

*Please note that bowing in Japanese culture, and the martial arts is not religious, it is a cultural sign of respect, gratitude, and acceptance, and should be done in sincerity and earnest, similar to a handshake with a relative or friend.