



## **Safety Rules and Dojo Rules**

### **Safety rules**

Instructors must ensure the health and safety of students by providing, as far as is reasonable, a safe practising environment. The following key areas are recommended:-

#### **Floor Surface**

An ideal training surface for all aspects of Aikido would have a safe covering, for example vinyl covered mats or foam mats covered by canvas. All mat surfaces must be clean and devoid of all sharp objects and be free from hazards such as holes or cracks. The mat surface should have sufficient grip to maintain stability yet allow twisting, and this grip should not be allowed to deteriorate through condensation. Adequate ventilation via windows, doors and fans will often alleviate this problem.

The mat's density should be sufficient for adult participants not to feel the floor surface underneath when falling, i.e. not too soft nor too hard not to cushion and dissipate the impact of a fall. Any blood spills should be wiped up using an appropriate cleanser - this is particularly important because of the danger of contamination through cuts and cracks in the feet.

#### **Lighting**

Lighting must be adequate for safe vision. Artificial lighting should be well positioned to avoid glare and direct shine. Curtains or blinds should be used to prevent glare from the sun.

#### **Heating**

An Instructor must use common sense regarding a suitable temperature in which to conduct a lesson. As a guide, this is comfortable room temperature (around 18 degrees C). It is important to have and to use an adequate heating system. If it is particularly cold the Instructor may encourage students to wear an extra layer of clothing for the warm-up.

#### **Ventilation**

Again the Instructor must use common sense. Fresh air is necessary for strenuous exercise, and there should be provision for opening of windows, doors, or operation of extractor fans. In hot conditions strenuous practice may have to be modified as students performance deteriorates because of the activity.



## **Surrounding Area**

Pillars, low beams, and radiators should be well padded to avoid impact injuries. Wall fixings such as fire extinguishers, pictures, clocks and notice boards should be properly and securely mounted. Unsecured objects, such as stacked chairs or items on shelves must be checked for stability - a class landing in unison can have the effect of a minor earthquake! Instructors must be aware of possible dangers caused by glass and keep a safe border area away from any non-toughened or unprotected windows and mirrors. It is also important to have a safety area if there are spectators, or if some class members are sitting.

## **Spatial Considerations**

There must be adequate space for the numbers attending and the nature of the lesson. If the room is too full, collision injuries could occur and it will also be more difficult for the Instructor to monitor the class and for students to clearly see the Instructor. Good discipline is important to maintain safe spacing of students.

## **Premises**

Instructors and their assistants should have knowledge of emergency procedures appropriate/or established in the premises they are practising in, including how to summon emergency assistance and escape routes/assembly points, where First Aid equipment is stored or if none make their own arrangements to make this equipment available. First Aid Manuals give guidance as to typical content of a First Aid kit which will include sterile dressings, triangular bandages, non allergenic plasters and disposable rubber gloves. Drugs / Tablets should not form a part of the kit.

## **Changing Facilities**

Instructors who own or privately rent facilities are responsible for providing clean, tidy and well stocked changing rooms and toilets, washing facilities and drinking water. If a club trains in a sports centre and facilities are not adequate, the Instructor should lobby the management for improvements.

## **Emergency Exits**

Fire escapes should be clearly marked and known and kept free from obstruction. A central assembly point should be known and detailed.

## **Equipment**

Any equipment used should be in safe working order and only used by appropriate groups. Members should be encouraged to use recommended protective equipment, for example, groin shields.



## **Practitioners**

Students who need glasses should wear 'sports-safe' type and not be allowed to practice without these or suitable contact lenses. No jewellery should be worn and nails should be short. Aikidoka should be clean with clean gi.

When students with special needs practise within a mixed class special attention and consideration must be given to their needs and safety.

*These safety Rules should be considered in conjunction with the Dojo Rules.*

{Acknowledgements: English Governing Body for Karate; Terry Bayliss

v1.14}

## **Dojo Rules**

### **Introduction**

The following 'rules' are not intended to replace existing practices of associations (particularly with respect to the forms of rei gi) which reflect the character of their practice. The aim is to establish an agreed common standard that ensures the safety of practitioners and an atmosphere of purposeful study reflecting the nature of Aikido as a modern budo, which has, as its core rationale, the personal growth and development of the individual, physically, socially, morally and spiritually and practical morality.

### **Rules of Conduct during practice**

- Aikido is a martial 'way' practising controlled forms of potentially dangerous techniques, therefore at all times students must give the strictest adherence to the directions of the supervising instructor, whose responsibility it is to ensure safe and meaningful practice.
- Students have a duty to protect the health and well-being of each other, both junior and senior. They should:
  - ◇ not execute techniques in a dangerous or reckless manner
  - ◇ seek to develop control in the practice of martial techniques to avoid being hurt or causing injury
  - ◇ never use superior skill or position within the dojo to gratuitously inflict pain or abuse others physically



- As Aikido has as its ethical basis the resolution of conflict through the development of harmony in the conduct of human affairs, it therefore requires all practitioners should accord each other respect and consideration at all times. Practitioners should :-
  - ◇ never use abusive language or conduct themselves in an offensive or aggressive manner
  - ◇ never act in any manner that discriminates or gives offence to any person on the grounds of race, sex, sexual orientation, religion or disability
  - ◇ never consume alcohol or take recreational drugs before or during a class. It is BAB policy that illegal drugs should never be taken. (See also BAB Constitution)

### **Responsibilities of the Practitioner**

Ethical standards depend on such values as integrity, responsibility and the understanding of the purpose of training. Practitioners in assenting to these rules accept their responsibility to fellow students, members, colleagues, their Association, the Board and to society.

In the same way that Coaches / Instructors are bound by responsibilities as set out on the National Coaching Foundation's Code of Ethics and Conduct there are similar responsibilities for the practitioner which are listed beneath:-

- Practitioners must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every human being and must promote the treatment of everyone equally as outlined at above in "Rules of conduct during practice"
- Practitioners must accept responsibility for their own behaviour and performance in training.
- Practitioners should co-operate and follow the instructions of their teacher.
- Students should undertake to discourage inappropriate behaviour or actions.
- Students must not compromise standards by advocating measures that are inappropriate, such as the use of drugs. Such usage should be actively discouraged.
- A student must display high personal standards and project a favourable image of the martial arts.
- Students should make themselves aware of their personal responsibilities in terms of the safety of themselves and other fellow practitioners.
- Students should be aware of the Safety Rules and Dojo Rules, be able to check the qualifications of their teachers, and be able to participate within the democratic processes of their club and association.



- Practitioners have a responsibility to themselves to maintain their own effectiveness, resilience and abilities, and to know when their personal resources are so depleted or an area of expertise is lacking as to make it necessary for them to seek help and/or withdraw from practising - whether temporarily or permanently.

### **Dojo Etiquette**

The British Aikido Board has within its affiliated membership organisations whose style and practice of Aikido reflects different traditions and interpretations of the founder of modern Aikido, O'Sensei Morihei Ueshiba's core of original teachings. As such, these traditions express reigi, or the etiquette of Aikido in different ways.

Practitioners should give account to the areas of formal conduct and respect for Aikido as suggested below, which also carry safety implications:-

- The dojo is a formal space for the practice of Aikido and is dedicated to the learning of *budo*, a martial 'way', in accordance with cultural and social traditions that have their origin in Japan. The maintenance of these traditions of behaviour give value and respect to the activity and its practitioners, and assist in developing personal ethical standards of behaviour and promote self-discipline. Practitioners are therefore required to observe the codes and forms of behaviour and their procedures as required by the dojo in which they practise.
- When entering or leaving a dojo, practitioners must conduct themselves in a respectful manner, performing such rituals, salutations, or bows (rei) as required by that dojo.
- Practitioners must treat the tatami, or mat area, on which they practise with respect in recognition of the safety it will afford them during the physical activity of Aikido. Therefore, salutations, as prescribed by the particular dojo must be observed before stepping onto the tatami and zori (footwear) left tidily at its edge.
- Practitioners should continue to conduct themselves in a respectful manner, performing such initial salutations or bows (rei) as required by that dojo at the start and end of classes and during the practice.
- When coming late to a class, practitioners should wait before entering the dojo until the instructor is not demonstrating so as not to distract their fellow practitioners; wait at the side of the tatami until they receive the acknowledgement of the instructor and permission to come onto the matted practice area; perform such salutations as required; when leaving early they must seek the permission of the instructor and again perform such salutations as required by that dojo.



- Although Aikido is an activity within which each participant is accorded equal respect there will always be junior or senior (sempai/kohai) in the experience of Aikido to another and it is part of the formal tradition of Aikido that this superior experience is respected at all times.
- During an Aikido class, formal salutations to a partner before and after practising with them is usual in all dojos and may be accompanied by a verbal acknowledgement in Japanese, such as “onegaishimasu”, or English - “Thank-you”.

## **Competition**

The element of competition exists in some styles of Aikido to test the quality of Aikido practice. This is generally done in one of two ways; either by two or more Aikidoka demonstrating their skills in a more or less predetermined manner, subjecting that demonstration to the judgement of their peers; or by a more direct one to one competition where the object above all else is to test and to demonstrate Aikido skills against more committed attacks.

The foregoing sections concerning Rules of Conduct and Dojo Etiquette should be exactly the same in competition, as in normal dojo practice. The competition arena should be regarded as the Dojo. All those involved in competition including both competitors, competition officials and spectators, should display the highest standards of conduct and behaviour. Particularly those who are “successful” as they will tend to become role models for others and the standards they portray are likely to be copied.

All competition officials should understand the rules of an individual competition and implement them fairly and without bias.

Acknowledgements: English Governing Body for Karate; Terry Bayliss, Paul Wildish, Mick Sheridan v1.16b

## **Changes to Dojo Rules earlier version v1.14**

New section on Responsibilities of the Practitioner added as new section.

Minor changes made to existing sections.

v1.16a & b - spelling and grammar corrections

Safety rules unchanged from v1.14