

OKAIGAN KARATE INTERNATIONAL
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Thank you for joining Okaigan Karate International

Our goals are to teach you all of the aspects of Traditional Shotokan Karate so that you can enjoy a lifetime of physical and mental benefits from such training. The purpose of this welcome letter is to get you on the right track to Karate training!

Student Expectations:

People often have questions about the etiquette and formalities expected in the dojo. For your comfort and convenience, we are providing this basic guide to the etiquette and formalities observed here. If you have any additional questions, please direct them to one of our instructors or the director.

- Students are expected to wear shoes coming in from the parking lot to keep our mats germ free.
- Students are also expected to wear shoes when visiting our restrooms.
- Students are expected to remove their shoes and stow them properly in a cubby before entering the mats
- Students are expected to wear a clean and properly tied uniform /gi.
- Students are expected to maintain a calm demeanor in the lobby and in the dojo to avoid disrupting classes.
- Students are expected to bow before stepping on or off of the mats. (See note on bowing at end of letter)
- Students are expected to remove their belts before leaving to dojo as a matter of tradition.

Parents Expectations:

- Parents are NOT expected to stay while their children are in class, though they are certainly welcome to.
- Parents are expected to bring children no earlier than 15 minutes prior to their scheduled class.
- Parents are expected to pick children up no later than 5 minutes from the scheduled ending of classes.
- Parents are expected to supervise any children not participating in class at all times.
- Parents are expected to keep talking volume to an appropriate level in the viewing area.
- We ask that parents take loud and potentially disruptive children or phone calls outside.

Testing:

- We understand that many questions surround testing and ranking and we want to make it very clear that if you ever have a question or comment the best course of action is always to talk to an instructor! 9 out of 10 times We will provide a brief breakdown of how things work below.
- All rank is awarded at the discretion of the instructors and management.
- A full white uniform must be worn to testing.
- Students will be made aware of what material they are required to know for testing. Testing requirements are available in the dojo as well www.okaigan.com
- Students will be warned if they are not on the proper path to pass their test.

Exceptions:

In the event that a student does not pass his or her test, the situation will be explained to both the parent and student, and the student will be given a clear and concise set of goals to accomplish in order to pass.

It is stressed that this is NOT guaranteed and every student's martial arts journey will likely differ, just as every student differs.

A Note About Bowing

Many of our students and parents have questions about the act of bowing and its purpose in martial arts. Bowing in the dojo has no spiritual or religious connotations. The bow, in Asian culture, is a sign of greeting and respect. It is a gesture comparable to a handshake in many other cultures. Our students and instructors perform several specific bows at the beginning and end of classes that we will explain here.

Bowing when entering the mat: This bow is meant to force the student to pause, reflect and acknowledge that they are entering a special place. The mat is a place of learning, of struggle, of triumph, and of respect. Our instructors and their instructors have often said, "come to train, leave your problems off the mat".

Bowing to the wall of masters: These are the individuals who pioneered the techniques and training methods of our arts and have since passed away. This bow is meant to show respect to them for their efforts, and also to encourage a frame of mind that we must always remember where our arts came from.

Bowing to the instructor: This bow allows the students to show respect to their instructor and show thanks for passing on his or her knowledge. This moment also allows the instructor to show their appreciation and respect for the students.

Bowing to the most senior student in the class: This bow is to show thanks for the good example that the senior sets for the newer students in class. The act of recognizing the importance of this example also helps us to secure the type of leadership behavior we wish to see in our students.

The phrases spoken when bowing differ depending on the program but all mean basically the same thing. "Osu" is a Japanese term meaning "push." it is used in class and an expression of strength and enthusiasm as well as determination.

'The other phrase is either "Domo arrigato gozaimashita" in Japanese which means "thank you very much"