

# WOLVES MARTIAL ARTS

## MARTIAL ARTS ETIQUETTE

It can be easy to be confused about the role of etiquette and respect in the martial arts, as it can seem so different to what we are used to.

Taekwondo is a traditional martial art, and traditional martial arts are hierarchical. This hierarchy is all about responsibility: Instructors have a responsibility to teach their students to their upmost ability and integrity. Students in turn have the responsibility of respecting their instruction. While students have control of their decisions on when to use their skills, it is the role of the instructor to instil in the student a sense of respect for these and a full understanding of their responsibilities as a martial artist.

It is the martial arts etiquette that helps Master Andrew maintain the fun safe and rewarding environment we know and love in Wolves Martial Arts.

### SOME IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- We always pay respect to any student who is graded higher than us. This is because the higher your grade, the more responsibility you have: students will always look up to the black belts and high grades as role models.
- We always listen respectfully to whoever is teaching us at the time.
- High grades, team leaders or instructors should never be dismissive or arrogant when teaching other students. Students are here to learn, and we are here to help them. Our duty is not just to our own training, but to every student who looks up to us.
- **Always** be responsible in using your skills. We never use our skills outside the club, unless we are seriously threatened.
- **Self control** takes practice; we must work on this all the time.
- Being honest, direct and respectful to others in class will ensure you get the maximum benefit from your martial arts training.

By being disciplined about respect within the club, students will learn to develop a respectful attitude to all people in our lives.

# **MARTIAL ARTS ETIQUETTE – continued**

## **HERE ARE SOME IMPORTANT FAQs ABOUT ETIQUETTE:**

### **Why do we bow before class?**

We always bow when entering and leaving the dojang (hall). This is not just a ritual. Each and every time we bow before class, we are acknowledging that we are going to learn and listen to the best of our ability and, upon leaving, that we are going to respect what we have been taught and never use it in a harmful way. Bowing at the threshold of the dojang also shows the student's appreciation of traditional taekwondo and acknowledges the boundary that separates the routine of our everyday life from the training atmosphere of the dojang.

### **Who can I approach to ask questions or get information?**

At Wolves, we have a very friendly and inviting atmosphere, which means that all of our students and black-belts are approachable. For general questions or training tips, your first point of call should be a team leader or your instructor (easily identified by their uniforms – see below). They've dedicated themselves to helping all of us learn and develop. If your question lies outside their expertise, they will approach the Senior Instructor, Head Instructor or Master Instructor on your behalf. It is considered poor form to approach an Instructor, Master or Taekwondo authority outside your club without first consulting with your own instructor. Master Andrew himself is quite open and approachable, so this is not an issue. However students have given offence in the past by walking up to an unknown master and approaching them directly without obtaining an introduction first.

### **Am I allowed to train another martial art outside of Wolves?**

The answer will always be yes. However, it is considered respectful to ask your Master or Instructor first. It is also important that your instructor is aware of any outside training that might affect your training within Wolves. Remember, every instructor has a different way of teaching – it is important to not question what your instructor teaches you just because another teaches it slightly differently.

### **If I'm not allowed to contradict a team leader or black belt, how can I ask questions about what I'm learning?**

In martial arts, we always show respect to those teaching us (sometimes even if we have other ideas!). We should never argue with or correct a student graded higher than us. This is showing respect to their grade and hard work, but it's also about maintaining club etiquette. If everyone was allowed to interrupt and contradict Master Andrew, no one would learn anything! However, we are definitely allowed to ask questions when we are learning. It's about waiting for the right time to ask. It is best to ask questions one on one, like before or after class. This keeps the classes running smoothly and also maintains respect. Instructors are happy to discuss any aspect of martial arts training, so long as the student is respectful in their approach.

### **What's the difference between all the instructors?**

There are only ever two roles in martial arts: you are either the Teacher or the Student. What your role is at any given time can change. For instance, if Master Jeon Tae Kim was present, Master Andrew would happily count himself in the role of a student at that point.

## MARTIAL ARTS ETIQUETTE – continued

### WE HAVE SEVERAL RANKS WITHIN THE CLUB, HERE IS A SIMPLE BREAKDOWN.

- **Students:** Everyone is a student of the martial arts, from the Master right down to the newest beginner. We are all here to learn.  
*Uniform:* White V-neck with white pants.
- **Black Belts:** Are students who have the experience of years of training. They might not be instructors, but they can still have something to teach us.  
*Uniform:* Black belts are allowed slight variations on the white uniform, such as a black V-neck.
- **Team Leaders:** Are high graded students with exceptional leadership skills. They undertake special training and volunteer to help out in class.  
*Uniform:* Black V-neck with black pants.
- **Trainee Instructors:** Sit between the role of a team leader and an instructor. They are undergoing a lot of hard work and training while in this role, so all students should be respectful while they are learning to become brilliant instructors.  
*Uniform:* White top with black criss-cross pattern with black pants.
- **Club Instructors:** Have undergone their instructor training and are teaching as fully qualified instructors. All students and instructors must show full respect to whichever instructor is in charge of the class at the time.  
*Uniform:* White top with black criss-cross pattern with black pants.
- **Senior Instructors:** Are instructors ranked 3rd Dan or above, who either have their own classes, their own club, or are considered to hold a senior role within their club.  
*Uniform:* Senior Instructors are allowed to wear any colour uniform except black.
- **Head Instructor:** Is an instructor who not only runs their own club, they are a 4th Dan or above.  
*Uniform:* Black top with white criss-cross pattern with black pants.
- **Head Student:** Is a student chosen by the Master for this role. If the Master is not present, they are to fill the role and authority of the Master in his (or her) absence.
- **Master Instructor:** A master must be minimum of 5th Dan or above. There can only ever be one Master Instructor in a school. If you are a head instructor no longer operating under your old master, then the title of master may be applicable.  
*Uniform:* Masters are the only members of the club entitled to wear black.

For more thoughts on etiquette and respect, have a look at the Wolves Martial Arts Code of Conduct, and feel free to question any instructor on anything you find interesting or don't understand.