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Taekwon-Do Association



Etiquette and Protocol

Etiquette plays a significant role for Taekwon-Do practitioners regardless of their rank and all students must adhere to some form of etiquette. In its most basic form Taekwon-Do etiquette is a prescribed set of standards for a person's conduct and attitude toward themselves and others. Etiquette in the Dojang ensures a positive, safe and comfortable environment that is conducive to learning.

A high degree of etiquette should be observed by students, both inside and outside Dojang. This should be applied by lower ranking students to senior students while training, by higher ranking students to elder students outside of the Dojang, and by all students when visiting another Dojang.

In all cases, emphasis should be placed on correct and proper salutation. It is a form of respect and courtesy in Western as well as Oriental societies. It is indeed poor taste for a black belt to slight a beginning white belt who might very well be the instructor's senior in both age and station. Students visiting other Dojangs, whether they are Taekwon-Do or other martial arts, must pay proper respect and observe the traits of modesty and courtesy at all times.

MEETING AND GREETING

Bowing

The junior student must always initiate the bow to their senior and utter the word "Taekwon". The junior student must remain in the bow position until the senior returns the bow. When meeting or greeting a person of equal rank, either person can initiate the bow, with eye contact. The bow can be performed at a 15 degree angle. The bow can be followed by a handshake.

When meeting or greeting a senior student, the junior student initiates the bow at a 30 degree angle without eye contact (looking at the chest). There should be a greater distance between both persons than students of equal rank. A hand shake is not necessary and is only initiated by the senior.

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When meeting or greeting an Instructor or Master, the junior initiates the bow at a 45 degree angle, eyes looking to the floor. There should be a pause at the end of the bow (longer pause for higher ranks). The distance should be greater than that of the senior / junior situation. A hand shake is not necessary and is only initiated by the senior.

Shaking hands

In Taekwon-Do, a handshake is always done using two hands. Right hand out to shake the hand and the left hand turned palm down under your right elbow. The two-hand greeting is a symbol of respect. In addition, by using two hands, this guarantees that the person you are greeting has your full attention. One of the many ways to show respect to people is by giving your full attention to them. Those who are worthy of respect, give respect. When shaking hands, junior students must wait until the senior extends his/her hand first. A junior must never be the first to extend the hand to the senior

Giving and Receiving

Two hands are always used when giving or accepting anything. This gesture of respect should be used at all times, even outside of the Dojang. This guarantees your full attention and ensures that you are being careful. When presenting awards, presentations should primarily be made starting with the least senior person and working your way to the most senior. If there is a special senior guest, they should be left until the last and then time must be made for them to speak right after their introduction. In all cases you must dress according to the “dress code” section of this manual.

When visiting

Never conduct surprise visits. Give plenty of notice and get permission before your intended visit. Try to avoid visiting early mornings or late nights, unless previously arranged. Always be mindful of the duration of your visit and never over stay your welcome.

When visitors are leaving, see them from the premises by accompanying them to the door or car. Await their departure before returning inside.

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ADDRESSING YOUR SENIORS

The Head Instructor should be addressed as "Sasung", "Sahyun", "Sabum" "Sir / Ma'am" or "Mr... or Mrs..." In addition, Black Belts should be addressed by last name only. These titles should be used at all times when addressing a senior. This includes "Yes or No" answers. Avoid using "Yeah or Ok" and *never* interrupt your senior while they are speaking. *Profanity of any kind is strictly forbidden.*

If a senior gives you permission to use their first name you may do so on a 1 to 1 basis and not when other Taekwon-Do students are around. This must be done in private. "Private" meaning when all present have the same privileges. Otherwise, juniors may be misled into thinking that this privilege is theirs as well.

Always stand or sit with good posture. Avoid leaning against the wall, slouching while sitting and crossing your arms or legs. Only sit when asked to and never be sitting if your senior is standing. Always walk behind or around your senior, never in front of them.

COURTESY TO JUNIOR RANKS

Lower ranking black belts should be addressed as "Mr. or Mrs." by higher-ranking black belts especially when speaking to beginners. This use of courtesy will demonstrate the importance of using last names and display courtesy on the part of the senior.

Beginners must learn to appreciate Taekwon-Do etiquette and not be put off by it. If beginners see etiquette and respect going only one way they may not accept it as it may seem unfair. True respect can only be earned; it cannot be forced upon the student.

It is the responsibility of the higher rank to make sure that the lower rank is comfortable and taken care of in any social situation. Junior ranks must not be degraded, talked down to or belittled in any situation. The senior's purpose is to guide the junior not destroy them.

IN THE DOJANG

When entering or leaving the Dojang, stand in the doorway, face the front, bow and say TAEKWON". This represents a mark or respect for the Dojang and the people in it. Instructors and students should not be in the Dojang unless they are in full uniform (i.e. jacket, pants and belt).

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When a senior Black Belt enters the Dojang, those who are not training in the scheduled class must come to attention stance, bow and await permission from their senior to resume their practice. At no time is their any chiding or cajoling in the Dojang. At no time should you lean against anything while you are in uniform. Arm should never be crossed nor on your hips.

When leaving your spot in line during training, you must take one step backwards, turn to your right 90 degrees and then proceed behind your line to the end and then either to the front or the back of class. The reason for this is that everyone in front of you and directly to your right side is your senior and you must walk behind them, never in front. If returning to line from the front of the Dojang you must go to the opposite side that you came from then enter your line from the side / front. When returning to your line from the back, you must await permission at the entranceway from the instructor or senior in class and proceed back in line the same way you left.

DRESS CODE

Training

You should never be out of full uniform in front of your seniors. To fix your belt or uniform you must turn 90 degree to the right of the front of the Dojang or from the Instructor. Your belt is your soul and should be respected accordingly. It should always be folded properly and never let it touch the floor or hang it around your neck. If you must eat or visit the restroom and have no time to change out of uniform, you must, at the very least, remove your belt.

The Dobok is your practice suit and should be treated with care. Launder your uniform on a regular basis and make sure it is free of wrinkles and stains of any kind. The ITF logo must always be on the left chest of the uniform and no other emblems or insignias are permitted. The uniform must be white. If your uniform's condition is poor, do not wait to be noticed. It is your responsibility to maintain a clean and neat appearance. Wash your uniform but not your belt.

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Formal occasions

When attending any official functions (i.e.: championship, testing, meeting, congress) a navy blue suit, white shirt and blue tie must be worn. White shoes are necessary only during championships when refereeing or judging. In the case of a dinner, banquet and meeting or greeting a senior Instructor visiting or returning from an out-of-town trip, a suit and tie is required but navy is not necessary.

On all “Official” occasions your ITF pin must be worn on your left lapel (black belt pin for black belts and Gup pin for colour belts). The Gup pin is acceptable at non-official events for Gup and Dan levels. No other pins are necessary. Your jacket and tie must remain on unless otherwise instructed by the most senior in attendance.

TABLE MANNERS

Seating arrangements

Always seat the most senior person or special guest to the head of the table and furthest from the door with their spouse beside them. Sit everyone else according to rank from highest to lowest on either side of the senior. The host of an event must be next to the senior regardless of their rank. At Taekwon-Do banquets or social outings your spouse may sit at your side regardless of their rank in Taekwon-Do. At official functions everyone takes his or her position according to their Taekwon-Do rank. Do not bring uninvited guests to a Taekwon-Do gathering.

Ordering meals

When ordering meals, place your orders in order of rank from the most senior down. Allow the senior to start eating before you start. Avoid conversing with a full mouth of food. Also, posture is important. Avoid slouching or sitting with your elbows on the table. Rather than reach across the table, ask the person next to you to pass to you whatever it is you need. If a toast is done, make sure your cup is lower than your seniors with both hands extended (like shaking hands). If a toast is made to you it is not necessary for you to make a speech. A simple thank you is enough. Do not leave the table without seeking permission from a senior instructor.

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During Conversation

Ensure that you use the correct and appropriate language. When speaking to others, do not talk in an abrupt, violent or aggressive manner. Always remain humble. When addressing others always remember to use their proper title. It is best to always try to be a good listener. Never interrupt another person's conversation and when giving an opinion, think carefully beforehand. It is impolite to point fingers at someone while talking and ever touch another person unnecessarily during the conversation.