

# THE MIT TAE KWON DO CLUB

## ETIQUETTE

Following are some of the club customs and points of etiquette that students should observe. Though we do not call these imperatives rules, some of them, especially those near the top, should be considered mandatory. Higher belts especially should understand the rationale underlying these items.

- Students should line up from front to back and right to left in order of rank.
- Students who are late to class should bow in, do 50 push-ups, then stand at attention until the instructor recognizes them and gives permission to join the lineup.
- Students should not walk through a row, in front of others in their row, or between facing partners.
- Students should not touch the curtain at the back of the Exercise Room during training. Sharp objects, such as swords, may be immediately behind it. By touching the curtain students endanger themselves and the people and property behind the curtain.
- The third school rule requires students to use the word *Sir* or *Ma'am* when speaking to higher belts. When a higher belt must be named or specifically addressed, students should use *Mr.* or *Ms.* plus a last name. Students should *not* use *Sir* or *Ma'am* when speaking to equal or lower belts, and should address and refer to equal and lower belts by first name. Black belts, however, should refer to and address other black belts with *Mr.* or *Ms.*, regardless of relative rank.

The Korean words *sabumnim* and *kyosanim* are conferred as titles of honor on the Head Instructor and the Assistant Instructor of the club. Students should use these titles in place of the *Mr.* or *Ms.* form.

Students should use formal terms in the dojang at all times, outside the dojang when any party in the conversation is in uniform, and in written correspondence on club matters.

Though we translate *kyosanim* as *instructor*, the English word *instructor* is not reserved for the *Kyosanim* alone: *instructor* refers to the leader of the day's class, regardless of the leader's office or rank.

- Students should put on uniforms and belts shortly before training and remove them promptly after training. Uniforms should not be worn traveling to or from home, and should be worn only to practice Tae Kwon Do with the MIT Tae Kwon Do Club or affiliated clubs.
- The uniform comprises plain white pants, an open-front top (no V-neck), a belt, and a patch. Women may wear clothes of a solid color, preferably white, under the top. Men are strongly urged to wear groin protection under the uniform *at all times*. For reasons of both uniformity and safety, nothing else besides underclothes not visible, medical apparatus, and minimal hair restraints should be worn at class; in particular, students should not wear watches, earrings, or necklaces. Students may, however, wear articles of jewelry that should not be removed for medical reasons (e.g., a new earring) if the instructor of each class is notified; and articles that they strongly desire not to remove (e.g., a wedding ring, a religious icon), as long as such articles do not protrude, presenting a hazard to others, and are individually approved by the Head or Assistant Instructor.
- Students should wear shoes (sandals) in the hallways of the athletic facilities—this is an MIT rule. Shoes should be removed just before entering the dojang.

Version: 24 Feb 06

Available at <http://mittkd.org/etiquette.pdf>

- Students should bring only the following items into the indoor dojang: sparring gear, shoes, MIT athletic card, and personal medical items. Only bags issued by the club or approved by the Head or Assistant Instructor may be used to carry these items. Guidelines for the outdoor dojang are published separately.
- The *high belt* of a class is the highest-ranking student in the class, who stands at the front right corner of the lineup. The high belt's responsibilities are as follows:
  - to call the class to attention and lead them in bowing to the flags and the instructor at the beginning and end of class.
  - to lead the class by setting an example of hard work and proper, respectful conduct.
  - to help the instructor run class smoothly.
  - to be alert to injuries or problems before, during, and after class and to inform the instructor at the proper time, depending on the degree of seriousness.
  - to dismiss the class with the option of exercise at the end of class. To dismiss the class, the high belt calls out *hassan* (“dismissed”) and the class should respond *soo-go* (“thank you” in a military manner).
- Students should attend class at least twice a week, every week. Higher belts are recommended to attend three or more times a week.
 

If students are unable to attend class for more than two weeks, they should inform the Head or Assistant Instructor of the reason. Before each of their first two classes after such an absence, they should, as a matter of safety, inform the instructor of their recent absence. The instructor may require them to stand out of certain exercises. If students are absent for a month or more, they should also ask permission to rejoin classes from the Head or Assistant Instructor.
- Students should inform the instructor before class when they have a temporary condition such as an injury or illness that may significantly effect their performance in class. (Permanent conditions should be reported to the Head or Assistant Instructor so that this information is always available to instructors.)
- Higher belts should ensure that lower belts know the club rules, etiquette, and the requirements for their rank. Students are also responsible for learning these things themselves and should ask higher belts when they are in doubt.
- Students should avoid turning their backs toward either the flags or the instructor during training, except when adjusting their uniforms. For example, students should walk backwards when falling out to the back or sides of the dojang.
- When turning to adjust their uniforms or face new partners, students should turn clockwise. When adjusting their uniforms, students should bow to the front of the dojang, turn to the back and adjust, then turn to the front and bow again.
- If a student has a problem during class with another member of the club and finds it difficult to resolve the matter directly with the other member, the student is encouraged to seek the advice of a black belt. Confidentiality will be assured if requested.