

TAKA KARATE SCHOOL

Student Handbook



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1. Registration

Upon initial enrollment, or following a break in training of more than six (6) months, each student will be required to complete a registration form and to pay a \$10.00 registration fee.

Information pertaining to the student's Alberta Health Care Number and Emergency Contact is required in the event of injury to the student. As well, students are to provide information pertaining to any pertinent medical conditions (past and present).

2. Practice Schedule

Various levels of training are available, in the evenings, Monday to Friday - beginner, intermediate and adult. Sensei Kinjo will designate the schedule for each student dependent upon age, level of skill, etc.

Flexibility to attend classes outside of the normal schedule (to accommodate for other activities) is also an option and should be discussed with Sensei Kinjo.

Daytime classes (private and small groups) are also available and need to be arranged individually with Sensei Kinjo. A separate fee schedule exists for daytime training sessions.

3. Monthly Fees

Monthly fees are to be paid **at the beginning of each month** in accordance with the fee schedule published at the dojo. Family rates (to a maximum of five persons) are available where more than one member of the same family is registered.

Due to Sensei Kinjo's flexible training schedule, students are required to pay the **full monthly fee** regardless of whether or not they are able to attend all classes. Partial payments will not be accepted; nor will refunds be issued.

Classes are held twelve months of the year, with the exception of: statutory holidays, the week between Christmas and New Year's, and possibly a week or two during the summer.

4. Proper Conduct

Students are expected to display respect, at all times, while in the dojo. They are expected to concentrate and practice hard. Higher-level students are further required to help other students with the basics and katas. Disrupting class and distracting others will not be tolerated. Part of practicing karate is learning self-discipline and respect for others. Students are also expected to support the various karate functions (i.e. annual demonstration, etc.) and any requests for fundraising for these functions and/or functions of the Canadian Gohakukai Karate-do Association (our non-profit association).

5. Class/Practice Structure

a. Bowing

Before walking onto the dojo floor and when leaving the dojo floor at the end of class, the student, while standing, should bow to the shinden.

When classes start, all students will be required to kneel and pay respect by bowing to:

- the shinden
- Sensei Kinjo
- Branch School Sensei(s) if in attendance

When classes end, all students are once again required to kneel and pay respect by bowing to:

- the shinden
- Sensei Kinjo
- Branch School Sensei(s) if in attendance
- students for the next training class
- each other

b. Warm Up Exercises

Conducted at the beginning of each class to prepare the body for practice. Critical to warm up and stretch muscles prior to practice.

c. Basics

The basic punches, blocks, and kicks are practiced at the beginning of each class regardless of the level of the student or how long the student has been training. Continual practice of basics is crucial. Repetition is required in order that the various moves become automatic reactions and to enable students to perform them properly during katas, etc.

d. Katas

Two styles of karate are incorporated into the Gohakukai style taught at the Taka Karate School. Katas and basics from both styles are taught. Initially, students will concentrate on learning the Goju-ryu style of karate; Tomarite style is taught to more advanced students.

Katas (a combination of the various punches, blocks and kicks) are taught in sequence. Each student advances at his/her own pace **determined by Sensei Kinjo**.

- e. **Kumite (Sparring)**
Kumite is NOT the main focus of the Taka Karate School. If time allows towards the end of the class, the students may be invited to engage in kumite practice with higher level students and/or Sensei(s). Kumite is a way to practice applying the various techniques comprised in basics and kata.

6. **Terminology**

A terminology sheet is available at the dojo providing proper pronunciation and meaning of the Japanese phrases, etc. used during practice. Students are required to learn how to count in Japanese and the phrases for the beginning and end of class. They are encouraged to study and learn the Japanese terminology for the various punches, blocks, and kicks as well.

7. **Testing**

Upon commencing training, the student, as a beginner, acquires a white belt. Advancement to other belt levels is dependent upon the skill level attained, the effort of the student during practice, and the attitude of the student during class and towards others in the dojo.

Testing is conducted by Sensei Kinjo two times per year at the home dojo (late fall and late spring) and typically once a year for branch schools. Students being tested are required to complete a testing request form and pay a testing fee.

8. **Belts**

The succession of belts in the Gohakukai style of karate is as follows:

- white
- yellow
- orange
- green (with 1, 2 and 3 stripes)
- brown (with 1, 2 and 3 stripes)
- junior black
- black belt (1st to 10th dan/degree)

Students will normally proceed through the various belt and stripe levels in accordance with their skills, abilities, attitude, etc.

Upon attaining a new level, the student will be required to pay an additional fee for the belt and/or stripe in accordance with the belt fee schedule posted.

Students should **not** expect they will be advancing each time they test. In some instances, more time practicing is required to achieve the skills required to advance. As a student progresses, it becomes more difficult and requires more practice to attain the required skill level to advance further. Students are encouraged to be patient with themselves and not to be discouraged. Being patient is also a part of karate training.

9. Tournaments

Tournaments may be held periodically and are typically hosted by the branch schools. Students are able to compete in kata and/or kumite in accordance with age and belt levels. A registration fee will be charged to offset costs of holding the tournament (i.e. hall rental, awards, etc.). Awards are provided to 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners; participation certificates are provided to all students who attend.

The tournaments are held to give students the experience of competing and to get to know other students from the various branch schools. Competing is not the main focus of the Gohakukai style of karate. Students are valued equally for their abilities and efforts. Training in karate is very individual with students advancing at their own pace. What is most important is that students try their very best and show support to each other and the branch schools for these functions.

10. Demonstration

An 'annual' demonstration is held by the Taka Karate School (with branch schools also attending and participating). The demonstration is held at a local theatre (like the Yates Memorial Centre) in Lethbridge in May or early June. The purpose of the demonstration is to give students the opportunity to show family and friends what they are able to do in karate. It further gives them the experience of performing in front of people. Monies raised through advertising and ticket sales are used to offset the costs of holding the demonstration (rental of the Yates, etc.) in addition to generating donations given to various charities within the community.

a. Advertising

Students will be requested to solicit advertisements from local businesses for publication in the program printed for the demonstration.

b. Tickets

Students will be provided with tickets to sell to family and friends to attend the demonstration.

11. Fund Raising

The Canadian Gohakukai Karate-do Association (a non-profit association) was established in October 1988 and encompasses all students of the Taka Karate School and the branch schools. Students will be asked to participate in fund raising. Normally, only one or two fund raising events will be held per year; however, more fund raising may be required, dependent upon the needs of the Association. Money from the non-profit association is used to cover costs of various social events and any other special events approved by the Association (i.e. bringing our head Sensei and other Senseis, or key people, from Japan, etc.).

12. Annual Social Events

a. Summer BBQ

The non-profit association organizes and holds an annual BBQ for students and parents of the Taka Karate School and all branch schools. There may or may not be an outdoor karate practice after which students are free to spend the afternoon socializing, playing games (volleyball, frisbee, etc.) and eating.

b. Xmas Party

The non-profit association also organizes and holds an annual Xmas party for students and parents. Singing, games, food, (and Santa) are all part of this fun day spent together.

13. Purchase of Karate Gis

A supply of karate gis are available at the school for purchase by students. Sensei Kinjo will assist students with determining the size required (allowance for shrinkage should be made). Payment for gis is required at the time of purchase. Cheques are to be made payable to 'Taka Karate School'.

14. History

Karate-do ("the way of the empty hand") was developed by Okinawans centuries ago as a form of unarmed self-defense allowing Okinawans to perform incredible feats of strength and endurance in resisting invaders. It is a combination of martial art techniques from China and Okinawa.

15. Sensei Iken Tokashiki

The head of Gohakukai Karate in Okinawa is Sensei Tokashiki. At a very young age, Sensei Tokashiki practiced and learned the Tomarite style of karate from Sensei Nakasone. When he was older, he studied and mastered the Goju style of karate from Sensei Fukuchi. When both of these teachers passed away, Sensei Tokashiki, in memory of their greatness and to show honor and respect to both masters, combined the two styles thereby creating the Gohakukai style of karate.

Sensei Tokashiki is the President of the Okinawan Karate-do Gohakukai Association. He is a highly-recognized teacher of karate in the world and has a 10th dan (degree) black belt. His Association is comprised of a total of 25 schools throughout the world (Okinawa, Tokyo and mainland Japan, India, Australia, United States, and Canada). He has made several trips to Canada to visit the Canadian branch schools. He has been instrumental in establishing a student exchange program between Canada and Japan to help foster universal friendship through karate.

16. Sensei Yoshitaka Kinjo

Sensei Taka Kinjo was born in Okinawa, Japan. He received his karate training from Sensei Tokashiki in Okinawa and is presently a 10th dan (degree) black belt in the Gohakukai style of karate.

Sensei Kinjo has been training in karate since he was 16 years of age. Because of his great love for the art of karate and a desire to share this art with others, he started teaching in Lethbridge in 1973. He is President of the Canadian Gohakukai Karate-do Association. Under his instruction, several dedicated students have successfully attained a level allowing them to open their own branch school (there are currently several branch schools operating throughout Canada and the United States).

Sensei Kinjo has made numerous trips to Okinawa to attend worldwide karate demonstrations and to practice and continue training under Sensei Tokashiki. In 1995, Sensei and seven students went to China and visited the Shorin Temple (the root of martial arts) and held a demonstration in the temple. In 1997, Sensei Kinjo was invited to attend the worldwide karate championships in Okinawa and was asked to demonstrate kata by himself (a very great and special honor). Several students accompanied Sensei Kinjo and also participated in the tournament.

During the 2004 fall convocation (October 2004) at the University of Lethbridge, Sensei Kinjo received an honorary doctor of laws degree for his contribution to Lethbridge, his role in connecting people and communities in Japan and Canada, and his unique use of karate in helping individuals with disabilities (both physical and mental).

In September 2005, the Alberta Centennial Medal was awarded to Sensei Kinjo in recognition of his outstanding service to the people and province of Alberta.

On May 3, 2008, Sensei Kinjo was inducted into the Sports Hall of Fame, as a special award inductee. The Sports Hall of Fame recognized Sensei's contributions to the community and beyond (raising money for charities, improving the lives of people with debilitating illnesses, and establishing a student exchange program between Canada and Japan to foster international friendship and provide cross-cultural exposure).

The Okinawan Government presented Sensei Kinjo with a Distinguished Service Award in October 2011. This award recognized his outstanding service to Okinawan people and their descendents living abroad, his promotion of Okinawan culture in Canada, acting as a liaison between Okinawa and Canada, and his efforts in creating a friendship relationship between Okinawa and Canada.

The Governor General's Caring Canadian Award was conferred upon Sensei Kinjo in a ceremony in Ottawa, Ontario on April 17, 2012. This award recognized Sensei Kinjo's hosting of karate demonstrations for fundraising purposes; tailoring karate to accommodate individuals with various illnesses, depression, and mobility impairment; and helping hundreds of people, through patience and perseverance, to improve their physical health and mental well-being.

The Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs awarded The Foreign Minister's Commendation to Sensei Kinjo on October 28, 2013. The Consulate General of Japan presented the commendation in recognition of promoting and spreading karate within Canada, contributing to the relationship between Canada and Japan with a focus on Okinawa prefecture, receiving the Governor-General Caring Canadian Award, and increasing awareness of the martial art of karate.

For Sensei Kinjo, karate has become a part of himself and his everyday life. He is committed to his school and his students. He is especially proud to be able to use the art of karate (in a modified format) to help people suffering from diseases such as asthma, diabetes, fibromyalgia, depression, spinal bifida, paralysis, etc. Sensei Kinjo's goal is to continue to teach karate as an "art" in order that others may share in the many rewards (physical and mental) karate offers.