



Palmer Shotokan Karate Club

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Black Belt/1kyu students:

It is my strong belief that one of my primary responsibilities as Sensei of the Palmer Shotokan Karate Club is to create a strong and self-reliant foundation for this club that reaches beyond my individual participation. It is also my responsibility to train Shotokan students who will be active supporters of the regional and national organizations. We now have students who began with us and have reached 5th kyu, the halfway point to their Shodan. We also have students who are actively preparing for their Shodan tests in the near future.

In support of these goals, and recognition of these milestones, following is an outline of the expectations and requirements for senior ranking students within the Palmer Shotokan Karate Club. This outline will be incorporated into the new student handbook and will also be handed to each student upon attaining the rank of 3rd kyu.

My goals for this document are:

- 1) To clearly communicate my expectations and requirements, as well as those of the regional and national ISKF organizations, to senior students so they can make an informed commitment to the pursuit of their individual goals within the club;
- 2) To create a strong foundation of senior students within the club for its future growth and well-being;
- 3) To increase student retention through the advanced ranks and beyond by fostering the idea that karate training is for a lifetime and students should look beyond just attaining their black belt and then leaving to do something else. Only by maintaining the active support of the excellent martial artists we are developing can this club, the region, and indeed ISKF as a whole, continue to survive and grow.

If you feel that anything needs to be added or any specific point needs clarification, please contact me.

Sensei Becky

DAN / 1kyu Expectations/Requirements
Palmer Shotokan Karate Club
updated: 09/01/08

One of the primary responsibilities of Black Belt and 1kyu students (BB/1) is to act as role models within their dojo. They are Sempais to all lower ranking students, whether actively teaching or not. As such, their behavior should always reflect the dojo kun and set an example for the other students to follow. The following guidelines are meant as an outline to both clarify expectations and to augment the dojo kun. Remember, one can only seek perfection, one can never fully attain it.

Training/Attendance

- 1) BB/1 students are expected to routinely train more often than beginning students. **At a minimum**, BB/1 students should train at every regularly scheduled class available in the Palmer dojo, whenever possible. Absences due to illness or family commitments are understandable. Notifying Sensei of an upcoming absence is respectful, helpful in lesson planning and encouraged when possible. If you will miss more than two training sessions in a row, you should notify Sensei.
- 2) BB/1 students should routinely avail themselves of every special training opportunity presented. This includes attendance at, but is not limited to:
 - **Three scheduled testings** each calendar year, whether the BB/1 student is testing or not. Attendance at testing gives support to the lower ranking students; demonstrates desired commitment to lower ranking students, Sensei and other regional instructors; and provides the BB/1 student with an opportunity to learn by observation. BB/1 students should actively take notes during testing, not only to assist with their own training, but to assist Sensei with training the lower ranking belts.
 - **Two scheduled Master clinics** each year, normally held on the day following testing in April and August.
 - **Any specially scheduled trainings hosted by the PSKC.**
 - **Any other specially scheduled regional trainings**, as possible.
 - **Active participation in the annual spring regional tournament**, whether competing or assisting.
 - **Active participation in any special event or demonstration by the PSKC.**
 - **Regional summer camp**, as possible.
 - **Master Camp** in Philadelphia, at least once in your martial arts career.
- 3) BB/1 students actively training toward a Dan test are expected to seek **additional** training to the above, as recommended by Sensei, including but not limited to:
 - weekly self-training;
 - assisting with the Palmer beginning or intermediate classes;
 - attendance at scheduled classes outside the Palmer dojo, or with another Sensei at the Palmer dojo, at least once a month.
- 4) All students 4 kyu and above in the Anchorage and Palmer areas are **required** to attend at least one Saturday session per month, every month, to be eligible for their next test.

Students in the Alaska region have typically been required to attend three weekly training sessions and two Saturday sessions per month for one year prior to any Dan test. This averages 175 training sessions in one year. In contrast, the Palmer dojo's current schedule only provides 104 regularly scheduled training sessions per year, so the Palmer student is responsible for finding 71 additional training opportunities to be as prepared as students around the region. Sensei will assist you in devising an individual training program that works with your schedule and

family commitments. Balance between your training and your personal life is very important, especially during Dan preparation. If you cannot make a commitment to this much additional training in one year, your Dan preparation will simply take longer. However, just attending the twice-weekly regularly scheduled classes is not enough to prepare for a Dan test.

- 4) 1kyu students actively training toward a Shodan test are required to submit a short paper to Sensei at least four weeks prior to their Dan test discussing the following:

What is a Shodan, in your opinion?

- What characteristics and skills should they possess?
- What role and responsibilities should they have in the dojo and organization?
- How do you see yourself meeting these qualifications?
- What role do you see for yourself in the dojo and organization when you become a black belt?

- 5) All BB/1 students are encouraged to assist in teaching the lower ranking students. This can be done on a class-by-class basis as your schedule allows. However, it would be most helpful for any of the BB/1 students to make a commitment to regular participation as an assistant instructor with a view toward eventually teaching a class of their own on a continuing basis.

Etiquette/General

All students are expected to actively strive to follow the principles of the dojo kun. This is especially true of BB/1 students as role models. This includes, but is not limited to:

- 1) **Consistent use of proper etiquette.** This includes many areas, including but not limited to:
 - a. bowing to higher ranking karateka and to training partners;
 - b. addressing Sensei and others in class in a respectful manner;
 - c. demonstrating good control during class;
 - d. being properly dressed and equipped;
 - e. maintaining focus during bowing in and out, and during active drills in class;
 - f. leaving class only with permission and only for good reason (child safety, illness, prior commitment).
- 2) **Timeliness.**
 - a. being prompt and ready to train when class is scheduled to begin;
 - b. being prepared with hand-pads and water bottles in the dojo and ready for use;
 - c. paying fees and returning borrowed materials without reminders;
 - d. the timely completion of any "homework" assignments given by Sensei, such as watching videos, reading books, researching a specific topic, or being prepared to demonstrate a specific technique or drill in class.
- 3) **Conscientiously correct lower ranking students** in both conduct and technique. This includes monitoring horseplay, giggling in class, overly informal behavior, proper treatment of uniforms and safety. This also includes awareness of your status as a role model for lower ranking students to pattern - before, during and after training.
- 4) **Respectfully offer ideas**, reminders, and feedback to Sensei for the overall improvement of the dojo.
- 5) **Provide reliable back-up** should Sensei need someone to open the dojo, conduct warm-ups, or fill in as an instructor.
- 6) **Actively research** martial arts and health topics and constantly strive to improve your own knowledge and understanding of the art. BB/1kyu students should be willing to volunteer to share that knowledge with the rest of the dojo. In addition, the dojo maintains a decent library of martial arts materials. BB/1 students should make full use of it.
- 7) **Actively contribute** to the organization as a whole. ISKF is a completely volunteer organization. Think about your special skills, hobbies, business contacts or interests. How can you contribute locally, regionally and nationally?