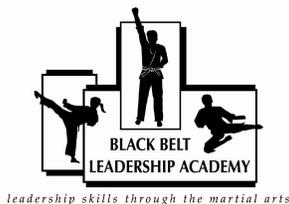


Little Ninja Program Handbook



leadership skills through the martial arts

Partnership for Success



Partnership for Success Handbook

At Black Belt Leadership Academy our goal is to help your child become successful in all walks of life. The LITTLE NINJAS curriculum teaches martial arts techniques at a pace appropriate to younger students in a way that is designed to maximize the potential of 4-5 year olds. Our program uses fun activities and positive reinforcement to help your child learn skills necessary for success at home, in school, and on the playground. One of the most important ways that we can foster the self-confidence, self-discipline, focus, respect, and positive attitude that will help your child to succeed is to help them develop a Habit of Success.

Habit of Success

Focused physical and mental effort in the martial arts academy earns praise and promotions, and shows results. Martial arts training builds physical strength and agility, and mental confidence, so that your child can set any goal or face any task with the expectation that he or she will succeed.

Life Skills

To help your child learn to make safe and positive choices, we try to reinforce the values you teach at home – responsibility, respect, courtesy, and control. Your knowledge of how we teach those values will help us support each other in supporting your child. You are urged to attend as many of your child's classes as possible so that you can support your child's efforts and see for yourself what they are learning and how they are taught both martial arts and life skills.

It is up to all of us to communicate often about your child's progress.

We need to communicate with each other frequently about your child's accomplishments and needs so that we can work together to help your child become the best that he or she can be. If you want to speak to an instructor, but scheduled class times are not convenient, please feel free to call for an appointment. At times the instructor may contact you to offer special encouragement or to schedule a private meeting to help your child face a new challenge.

This Partnership for Success Handbook is another part of that communication. It is our way of making certain that you understand what we are doing to train your child in the martial arts and to promote good safety habits and positive character development.

Share your child's activities as often as you can.

Our VIP Program allows your child to invite friends to share in and gain the benefits of Black Belt Leadership Academy Little Ninja training. Birthday parties, graduations, school visits, buddy days, and special event days are also great ways your child can share.

The Partnership for Success Handbook.

Please read this handbook thoroughly. From time to time we may hand out additional information for you to add. In this way you will stay up to date and be able to help your child review at home the most significant principles and attitudes that they learn at the academy.

ON LINE

www.blackbeltleadershipacademy.com

MEMBERS ONLY!

All registered students at the Black Belt Leadership Academy have access to the Members section of the academy's web site. Use the address above to get to the public part of the site. There you will find some photos, a description of our staff and our programs, the monthly calendar, a schedule of classes, announcements of special events, and testimonials from some of our families.

On the bottom right corner of the homepage, you will find the member log in dialogue box.

- Your log in name is *blackbelt* (all lower case letters).
- The password is *leader*.

In the members' section you will find:

- Announcements about martial arts events in the academy and surrounding areas.
- All the forms.
 - There are still photos of the proper moves and stances with captions in the Gallery.
 - There is also a video of each form without commentary.
- Gear requirements for Intermediate, Advanced, and KANDO classes.
- Permission slips for guests at in-school events.

FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM

Like us on Facebook and Instagram to keep up to date. We'll post photos, announcements, last minute updates (e.g., closings due to weather), and fun new for all.

EMAIL

You can e-mail the academy either by clicking the "Contact Us" button on the web site or by using the address office@blackbeltleadershipacademy.com.

We will send e-mail announcements according to student's age, belt rank, and program, so please make certain you let us know if your email address changes.

ACADEMY PROTOCOL

RESPECT AND COURTESY

At Black Belt Leadership Academy one of the fundamental character traits we reinforce is that of respect. We discuss respect in three areas: respect for ourselves, respect for others, and respect for our surroundings. The most important thing in reinforcing respect is consistency. At Black Belt Leadership Academy we make respect a part of our students' daily routine so that it becomes a habit. It is of utmost importance that everyone reinforces this respect so that our students can learn from example. It is important for our students to remember that respect is earned. In order to become respected, you must first show respect for yourself, others and your surroundings.

Our number one priority is the success of your child, and for this to become possible your children need to have a positive and fun educational experience in Little Ninja classes. We provide challenges on the karate floor that will help the students grow. They need to focus on the tasks at hand to complete the challenges, learn the curriculum, and develop habits of self-discipline and success, respect and courtesy, that will serve them both in Black Belt Leadership Academy as well as in the rest of their lives. When instructors and parents alike focus on the students, the students are reminded of the value and significance of their own efforts and try ever harder.

You are the most important role model in your child's life. For this reason it is important to show your child that what they are accomplishing in their martial arts training is important to you. It is even more important that you lead by example by following the guidelines below:

- **Remind your students to bow and say "Hello, sir; Hello Ma'am" when they enter the academy and "Goodbye, Sir; Goodbye, Ma'am" when they leave.**
- Help your students keep their uniforms neat and clean.
- Remind your students to put their belongings in the appropriate cubbies.
- Encourage your students to use the bathroom before class begins.
- Remind them to stretch and wait quietly for their class to begin.
- Do not bring any food or beverages into the academy other than water.
- Please minimize distractions during class caused by conversations unrelated to activities in the karate school (many soft conversations add up to a loud noise and prevent students from focusing on class).
- Please put cell phones on silent mode – and if you have to take a call please step outside.
- Provide quiet activities for younger siblings and encourage them to watch classes.

These guidelines are built around our idea of respect. We reinforce respect for our surroundings by keeping the academy clean and neat. We reinforce respect for ourselves by keeping our uniforms clean, and preparing for class properly, and we reinforce respect for others by limiting distractions during classes.

PARENTAL SIDE COACHING

Sometimes parents, with the goal of helping their children succeed as martial arts students, offer advice and corrections to students from spectator positions. While parental concern and support are most important in our students' growth and development, such side coaching is ultimately counter-productive.

There are several negative consequences to side coaching for your own and other children:

1. The students become confused about whom to turn to for authoritative advice on martial arts questions. They lose focus on the instructor and themselves. Other students are confused by multiple voices giving directions. The instructor's ability to guide the whole class can be compromised.
2. Students begin to perform to please their parents and do not learn to self-motivate.
3. Students do not learn to observe their surroundings and self-correct. At times it may seem like we are not correcting "errors" quickly. It is more important for students to have a positive experience, to learn by their own efforts, and to get one or two pieces of advice than it is for every detail to be corrected every time.

At times we will provide parents with the opportunity to join their children on the karate floor, to assist with equipment use, or to cheer students on. These activities will give you a chance to energetically support your Little Ninja and other students in a positive way.

As always, we thank you for your support and your desire to help your children. The rapid progress of students is greatly enhanced by parental support at home, and parental praise for student successes. Please continue these efforts, but let the instructors guide your children during their class times.

SHOWING RESPECT

THE BOW / SALUTE

One of the core character values we develop through activities in the Black Belt Leadership Academy is respect for self and others. One of the tools we use to develop respect is the **salute or bow**.

Bows (or salutes) at Black Belt Leadership Academy have nothing to do with subservience or relative importance, and everything to do with courtesy, respect, and gratitude. When we bow it is an acknowledgement of the value of and respect for teachers, fellow students, and the martial arts as a discipline. It is also our way of saying “Thank You!”

Students bow at various times:

1. When entering the academy, they bow and say “Hello Sir, Hello Ma’am,” and before exiting they bow and say “Good Bye Sir, Good Bye Ma’am.”
2. When students come on and off the karate floor they bow.
3. When instructors begin and end class, or when students begin working with a team or partner, they bow.
4. When students earn acknowledgement of success through stripes or graduations, they bow.

We at Black Belt Leadership Academy are very grateful for the opportunity to work with your most precious asset, your child, and on behalf of the Black Belt Leadership Academy family we bow to you and say “Thank You!”

ADDRESSING BLACK BELTS

To show respect for those who have distinguished themselves through perseverance and hard work, especially to those who provide leadership at the academy, and to remind ourselves that martial arts training is a valuable life skills program, we address Black Belts as *Sir* or *Ma’am* and call them Mr. or Ms. and their last names.

We use the term *sensei*, which means both “teacher” and “the one who came before” to refer to Sensei Weinberg as a reminder that we pass our knowledge on to each other with joy and respect and that each of our students has the opportunity to share what they know with others as they gain expertise and wisdom.

Please reinforce your students understanding of the reason for this mode of address and the respect it shows for their effort by addressing black belts in the same way.

ATTENDANCE & HOME PRACTICE

Attendance & Scheduling

We encourage students to attend class twice a week. If they come in less it becomes hard for them to retain the knowledge we have covered in the previous class. If you come in much more than that initially, you run the risk of having your child burn out.

We recommend that you attend class on consistent days and times each week to make martial arts class a normal and comfortable part of your child's weekly routine. However, if your schedule varies, you are always welcome to attend any appropriate class. If you miss a class or two for any reason, please try to make them up by coming in an extra day for a week or two. This not only helps your child to keep up, but more importantly this will reinforce the value of commitment with your child.

At Black Belt Leadership Academy the Little Ninja program is designed to teach, reward, and provide a fun experience for 4 and 5 year olds. From time to time we will change our schedule to give as many students as possible the opportunity to work with other children at their own age and ability level.

Home Practice Guidelines

Home practice is helpful in the Little Ninja program, but it is not required. If you decide you would like to practice at home with your child, here are some guidelines.

1. **Be consistent** – Have specific practice goals, and do your best to stick with them (i.e. 5 minutes every other day or just before play time). Some students like to mark their practice success on a simple chart.
2. **Keep practice short** – Three to five minutes is plenty. It is important not to practice longer than it is fun and interesting.
3. **Reward effort** – Be encouraging. Our instructors practice “Relentless Positivity!” This simply means that we try to always be positive. “Excellent, now can you go even faster!” is better than “That was pretty slow!”
4. **Don't be too picky** – It is our job to focus on technique with our students. Your children don't want another teacher at home; they want to share and have fun with mom and dad.
5. **Make it fun** – **This is the single most important factor in long-term success.**

One way to work with your child is to have them teach you what they learned in class. This not only helps them learn by repeating, but also puts them in a leadership role which helps them learn how to be good leaders.

Another fun and exciting way to work with your child is to introduce training equipment such as kid smashers or x-ray paper at home. This not only adds variety, but also gives your home practice sessions the excitement of “real training.”

CHALLENGE AND REWARD THROUGH REPETITION AND PROGRESSION

At each belt level, students will practice the same set of life skills – focus, teamwork, control, balance, memory, discipline, fitness and coordination. However, during each eight-week rotation, they engage in different activities and learn different martial arts techniques to support their efforts and to challenge them to progress.

When children practice skills, they improve, but more importantly, they feel good about themselves. At Black Belt Leadership Academy we use “disguised repetition” so that Little Ninjas improve their skills, gain stamina, and learn the value of perseverance without becoming bored.

As students reach higher belt levels, they are asked to do more with the same skill set, reinforcing the value of the basics while recognizing their development and accomplishments. For example, a new student might be asked to do two kicks during a balance drill, or remember three moves during a memory activity. A more experienced student might have to execute several kicks or remember several moves. In this way, all students work on the same skills, while the higher belts are recognized for achievement and challenged to improve their own skills and be leadership examples for others.

Our Little Ninja curriculum is designed to develop a student’s habit of success and provide martial arts and life skill training, while making each student feel as if he or she has earned each belt and stripe.

STRIPING AND PROMOTION PROCEDURES

The first belt that your child will earn will be a white belt, which will usually be awarded at the end of their first regular class. Belt promotions for Little Ninjas occur approximately every 8 weeks. The order in which our belt ranks go is as follows:

White ⇨ Gold ⇨ Orange ⇨ Green ⇨ Purple ⇨ Blue ⇨ Red ⇨ Brown ⇨
White Stripe ⇨ Camouflage Belts ⇨ White

Each week Little Ninja classes will focus on a particular skill area. If students attend two classes that week and exhibit a positive attitude toward the activities, they will earn a “skill stripe.” The skills and related stripe colors are:

SKILL	Stripe color
Focus	Red
Teamwork	Blue
Control	Green
Balance	Yellow
Memory	Orange
Discipline	White
Fitness	Black
Coordination	Brown

“Striping” provides visual markers for the students indicating progress and helping them develop a “habit of success.”

Intent to Promote

When students are ready to move to the next belt level, they will get an Intent to Promote form. This form must be signed by parents and teachers indicating that the Little Ninja is trying hard and being respectful. It is important that students’ endeavors at the Black Belt Leadership Academy support positive behaviors and attitudes at home and at school.

Please encourage teachers to use the form to let us know about your child’s activities and attitudes in school. Encourage them, as well, to invite us to your child’s classroom. This gives our students a chance to share their success and pride with others and provides a boost to their self-confidence.

SAFETY TRAINING

At Black Belt Leadership Academy, we augment the development of successful life skills during our “Huddle Discussions,” which are portions of the class where we discuss specific topics. In Little Ninja classes behavioral and attitudinal lessons are woven directly into the activity program. Safety skills, however, require additional training.

Huddle Discussions are participatory and interactive. We will be telling stories, asking questions and role-playing to keep involvement high. This helps children “try on” positive behaviors and practice positive choices in a safe and friendly environment.

During “Safety Training” huddle discussions we will help your child develop tools they can use to avoid difficulties and handle problems so that they do not try to rely inappropriately on their martial arts skills. Safety is the first line of self-defense.

Huddle Discussion topics will include:

- First Aid – reminding Little Ninjas to get adult help to take care of injuries as soon as they happen.
- Health – focusing on cleanliness and good eating habits.
- Home Safety – including appropriate behavior around electricity, water, and animals.
- Fire Safety – during which Little Ninjas will learn what to do and where to go in case of fire as well as how to avoid burns.
- Traffic Safety – teaches appropriate behavior near, as well as in, cars.
- Stranger Awareness – which uses the “No, Go, Yell, Tell” method to help Little Ninjas know what to do if approached by a stranger and whom to turn to if they are lost.

At times we will involve parents in class or “assign” students homework; e.g. make a map with your parents showing how to get out of the house in case of fire. Even when there is no specific activity, we encourage you to discuss safety topics and practice safety skills with your child often. This will, of course, help them to remember the advice and allow them to more fully utilize these techniques in their lives.

ADVANCEMENT INTO THE BASIC PROGRAM

Students remain Little Ninjas until they turn 6 or earn their white belt, whichever comes first. At that time they will transfer into the Basic Program at White belt. They will then take class Basic with White through Green Belts.

The Basic Program is the continuation of Black Belt Leadership training. While your students will review some of the same techniques they learned as Little Ninjas, there will be many changes.

- ❑ The classes will be somewhat more formal. While we do play martial arts “games,” techniques are taught more directly.
- ❑ The curriculum will be more demanding. In-class activities will continue to lead to improved fitness and development of physical skills. Students will be taught additional techniques and learn to use them in combinations.
- ❑ Forms – choreographed sequences of movements designed to enhance balance, focus, strength, and self-motivation – will be longer and more complex. They will be taught in segments.
- ❑ The self-defense program will emphasize conflict avoidance while teaching students techniques to physically escape from various attacks.
- ❑ Striping will be less frequent. Basic students earn a black stripe every two weeks and a red strip during week 7 to indicate readiness for graduation.

Each class will continue to include a “Huddle Discussion,” the portion of the class during which we discuss life skill topics. At the basic level our topics are Safety, which is dedicated to promoting safe and positive choices and self-confidence, and Character Development, which is focused on reinforcing the values you teach at home. Huddle Discussions are participatory and interactive. We will be telling stories, asking questions and role-playing to keep involvement high. As the students gain wisdom, strength, and maturity, they will apply these scenarios to their own lives.

Most graduating Little Ninjas find the challenge of Basic classes exciting and welcome the opportunity to advance toward their Black Belts. Should your child express concern about training with the “big kids,” please let the instructor know so that we can help ensure a comfortable transition for your child.