

PARTNERSHIP FOR SUCCESS



leadership skills through the martial arts

Basic Program Handbook



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PARTNERSHIP FOR SUCCESS HANDBOOK

At Black Belt Leadership Academy our goal is to help your child become a successful Black Belt leader in all walks of life. 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 make safe and positive choices, we try to foster 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.

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. This Partnership for Success Handbook is 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.

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. If you want to speak to an instructor, but 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.

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 leadership training. Graduations, school visits, and special event days are also great ways your child can share.

The Partnership for Success Handbook and Members' Web Page.

Please read this handbook thoroughly. Information in the handbook is supplemented by monthly calendars and on-line announcements. Please check our webpage and friend us on Facebook. 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 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.
- Movement pattern explanations like the *Stance Set* and the *7 Count*.
- All the forms.
 - Still photos of the proper moves and stances with captions in the Gallery.
 - A video of each form with talk-throughs.
- Gear requirements for Intermediate, Advanced, and KANDO classes.
- Permission slips for guests at in-school events.

FACEBOOK

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

INSTAGRAM

Follow us on Instagram for up-to-the-minute photos and announcements.

EMAIL

Every Monday you will receive our e-Newsletter reminding you of upcoming events for the week and including links to important pages, home practice hints, and special announcements. Please let us know what email address to use to keep you informed.

You can always e-mail the academy either by clicking the "Contact Us" button on the web site or by using the address OFFICE@BLACKBELTLEADERSHIPACADEMY.COM.

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 the positive and fun educational experience in the classes at the Black Belt Leadership Academy. 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 or sports drinks.
- 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 participate or to cheer students on – especially during fitness drills, graduations, games, and tournaments. This will give you a chance to energetically support your students and others in a positive way.

Again, 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. Thank you.

Home Practice & Attendance

Home Practice Guidelines

Home practice is helpful in the basic 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** – Five to ten minutes is plenty. It is important not to practice longer than it is fun and interesting. Try to integrate stretching into other fun activities like reading or watching TV.
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 family.
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.”

Attendance & Scheduling

We encourage students to attend class twice a week. If you come in less it becomes hard for your child to retain the knowledge we have covered in the previous class. Your child can attend as many classes as he or she wants, but please watch for signs of 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 (due to illness or vacation or for whatever 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 our classes are divided by rank and age. 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.

Staying Motivated

Motivational Challenges

It is important to remember that almost everyone who earns a Black Belt has, at some point during their training, considered quitting. It is normal to have peaks of enthusiasm, as well as “plateaus.” This is especially true since martial arts training is a year round program whereas most activities are seasonal. We understand that parents may have trouble getting their child to class occasionally, or the student may have trouble switching focus from a previous activity to their martial arts training, but as long as they are usually excited to come to class it is nothing to be concerned about. Although this is a natural response to long term goals, we encourage you to notify us as soon as possible if your child expresses concern so that we can work with you to reinforce the value of commitment as well as re-excite your child’s desire for Black Belt Excellence.

We find that students may lose motivation simply because they think karate competes with other activities (playing with friends or a favorite TV show), or feel concerned about a particular technique with which they are having difficulty, or need a boost to their confidence when they approach a new class level or begin sparring or learn a new form. During periods of low motivation a private class or two often builds confidence and reinvigorates commitment. It is helpful to know that no one who has earned a Black Belt has ever regretted it, and that “A Black Belt is a white belt who never gave up!”

The Plateau

Each time that we practice our martial arts skills, as long as we are focused and try hard, we improve. Although the amount of improvement is very small during a single practice, over time there is a very big change. Usually we can see the improvement in our mental and physical skills week by week or month by month. But some times it seems as if we are not making any progress at all, even though we continue to work hard. During these times we have reached a *plateau*.

This can be the hardest time for any martial artist to keep training. We can feel discouraged or frustrated, and sometimes we want to quit. All our effort seems wasted. But that is not true. While we are on a plateau, our skills are still developing, but in a different way. Our bodies and our minds are preparing for the next phase of learning. Learning martial arts is like climbing a mountain. Sometimes you are climbing up a steep slope. But sometimes you have to walk across a flat area to get to the next slope. You may not be getting higher when you walk, but you are still climbing the mountain and moving forward. And while you are walking you get an opportunity to look back and see how high you have climbed and a chance to get ready for what comes next.

Sharing Success

We offer many opportunities for your child to share his or her pride in being a Black Belt Leadership Academy student both in and out of the academy.

Buddy Days

Periodically we ask students to invite friends to take a special class with them. This allows students to share their sense of excitement and accomplishment in a fun way and to offer friends a chance to train with them. Buddy Days promote academy growth and allow you to help decide who is on the floor with your children.

Birthday Parties

We supply everything necessary, including invitations, a personalized ice cream cake, Karate table settings, set up, clean up, and 90 minutes of fun. See an instructor in the office to reserve a date.

VIP Program

Black Belt Leadership Academy students are encouraged to invite friends to watch classes at any time and sponsor them for a VIP membership, which includes a private introduction, free uniform, and free classes. Your child can share their training with friends, which encourages focus and at-home practice, and often increases excitement. We are happy to show our gratitude through incentives to families who bring in new students.

Graduations

At Black Belt Leadership Academy we are dedicated to promoting the habit of success. This is why we reward effort with stripes and hold Graduation Ceremonies. These are opportunities for your child to demonstrate pride in all they have learned. We urge you to make these ceremonies significant events in your student's life. Invite friends, relatives, teachers, and others who are important parts of your child's life outside of the karate school. This reinforces the value of perseverance in your student's life and marks the significance of their success. Feel free to bring guests to watch any class – and please introduce them to the instructors so that we are aware that someone special is watching your student.

School Programs

We will be happy to come to your child's school for both formal and informal activities. These include High Interest or Adventure Days, physical education classes, and safety workshops. If your child has a special day when she or he is the "star student," we would be delighted to attend a class as his or her "show and tell."

We are available for after school programs and visits to day care facilities as well. Please ask your child's teacher to contact us to schedule specific times and dates.

There are no fees for any in school activities.

Group Activities and Celebrations

Your child can invite her or his sports team, scout troop, or club to the academy to celebrate their work together. We'll help your child lead in the building of team spirit through martial arts games and activities. There are no fees for these activities.

Creative Competition

At the Academy

At Black Belt Leadership Academy we believe in the principle of Creative Competition – the attempt to do your best rather than defeat someone else. We emphasize goal setting to help students focus on achievement and “doing your best” as the cardinal rule of action. Our Leadership principles remind students that a leader needs to set a good example by always doing his or her best. In this way, everyone helps everyone else improve.

In class students are encouraged to always try to do better than they did last time – they are competing with themselves and setting their own standards. At times in class we will have students compete in terms of speed or volume or energy. You will notice after this that all students in the class get faster, louder, and more energetic. This use of “competition” creates a desire for achievement and develops a supportive atmosphere. Even our relay races are designed to foster fairness, sportsmanship, and mutual support rather than the search for victory. Achievement in these areas receives reinforcement – not necessarily being victorious.

Tournaments

Tournament competition is never required of a Black Belt Leadership Academy student. It is important always to remember that one becomes a champion by hard work in training and practice (just like one learns school work by studying and doing homework) – not just by competing or testing.

We will announce tournaments that we feel are appropriate for our students. It is strongly recommended that students attend a tournament as spectators before entering one. Students who wish to compete in tournaments will be supported with advice at special competition team classes. Instructors will provide students with information about how to participate before their first tournament.

Tournaments are learning experiences. They provide the opportunity to see different styles and approaches. More importantly, they provide the opportunity for students to learn what it is like to do your best in front of others, with the added sense of achievement that implies. We recognize tournament participation with competition team patches and stars.

Students should use their competitive experience as a way of furthering their progress toward excellence, enhancing their will to succeed, and celebrating the opportunity to do their best.

PROMOTION PROCEDURES

Belt Levels

The first belt that your child will earn will be a white belt, which will usually be awarded at the end of the first class. Promotions at the Basic level occur every 8 weeks. As students reach more advanced levels, intervals will become longer. We award belt ranks as follows:

Basic level	→	Intermediate level	→	Advance Level	→	Black Belt
White		Purple		Red		1 st Degree
Gold		Blue		Red Stripe		2 nd Degree
Orange		Blue Stripe		Brown		and beyond!
Green				Brown Stripe		

Key Rating System

Our instructors use the Key Rating System to assess student readiness for promotion. The “Keys” are:

- **Attendance** – Regular attendance shows a student’s level of commitment and dedication. Infrequent or irregular attendance may affect your child’s readiness to advance to the next level.
- **Spirit and Energy** – Promotions are in part a reward for hard work and a positive attitude. We reinforce the behavior of students who put forth their best effort when we advance them to the next level.
- **Basic Knowledge** – Students must know and be able to execute a particular set of techniques at each level. Instructors monitor progress every time a student comes to class and provide advice for improvement.
- **Physical Fitness** – We expect physical ability (flexibility, motor skills, coordination, strength and endurance) to improve as students progress through our program. We do not compare students to each other or set specific requirements. Rather we challenge each student to improve before each graduation, and we encourage you to reinforce this at home.
- **School Protocol** – In order to properly teach character traits such as respect, courtesy, helpfulness and self-control, it is important that we have certain rules at the academy, and that they are followed consistently. Students must follow school rules and act with respect and courtesy here, at school, at home, and in the community.

Red Stripe Week

We encourage our students to do their best every day, but a more formal sense of testing occurs during “red stripe week” when students are required to demonstrate that they know the form, combinations, and self-defense techniques appropriate to their level. Earning a red stripe means that the student is ready to advance to the next belt.

Intent to Promote

Students ready graduate will get an Intent to Promote form. This form must be signed by parents and teachers indicating that the karate student is trying hard and being respectful. It is important that home and school remain primary and that their endeavors at the Black Belt Leadership Academy support positive behavior and attitude at home and school.

Advancement to the Black Belt Team

We are a Black Belt Leadership School. That means that our goal is to help every one of our students to achieve the rank of Black Belt. Black Belt is not the end of the road – it is the beginning of life as a Black Belt Leader.

The Basic Program provides students with the building blocks for advancement toward Black Belt. At the end of their Green Belt training, they will know the basic hand and foot techniques, be able to execute the form Origin, and know how to defend themselves if attacked. They will have tools for making safe and positive choices and for developing their character and leadership skills.

Membership in the Black Belt Team is by invitation only. At the end of the Basic program or during their first 8 weeks at Purple Belt, students who have shown that they have the desire to earn their Black Belts and the positive attitude necessary to commit to that goal, can be invited to join the Black Belt Team.

During their Black Belt Team training, students will learn more complex techniques and forms, enhance their self-defense capabilities, increase their coordination and fitness, and develop their leadership life skills.

Black Belt Team members receive the following:

- **New equipment**
Including a new uniform, patches, t-shirt, and Nunchaku
- **Longer classes**
A chance to extend class times to an hour through KANDO
- **KANDO Curriculum**
Designed to enhance martial artist proficiency, to develop a positive attitude and self-image, and provide training in new skills.
- **Advanced Leadership and Life Skills Curriculum**
Including development of respect, teamwork, self-discipline, and perseverance skills.
- **Weapons Training**
The program includes Nunchaku and *chanbara* (soft sword sparring)
- **Black Belt Leadership Sparring**
Training and practice in the safe application of techniques during point sparring
- **Demonstration Team**
The opportunity to do special training and to represent our academy in public demonstrations
- **Competition Team**
The opportunity to receive additional training focused on self-presentation and tournament participation
- **Discounts**
An additional 10% discount on all purchases (including required sparring gear) and significant price reductions for seminars and extra activities for the entire family
- **Guaranteed Tuition**
For the entire payment cycle – tuition will take students through their 1st Degree black Belt