



TAEKWONDO NEW STUDENT HANDBOOK

General Introduction:

Taekwondo is a martial art that originated in Korea. Its roots are deep in Korean history, but it evolved into its modern format in the years after World War II. The style is famous for kicking techniques, but includes many hand striking techniques as well.

Class are structured and scheduled by age groups and by experience level. Students periodically take tests and are promoted in rank. The ranks are signified by various colored belts. Promotion requirements are spelled out clearly on paper so that the students are able to learn and progress in an orderly fashion.

The art of Taekwondo can be thought of as a competitive sport, as a method for self-defense, an art form similar to dance, an aerobic exercise system, a means of developing concentration and self-discipline, a philosophy, and many other things. Taekwondo can be all of these things, depending on what the individual student is seeking. Since most youngsters don't really know exactly what they are looking for, we strive to instill the basics, expecting that as each student progresses; he or she will find areas in which to excel later on. For example, a child who is being bullied at school may at first just want to be able to defend himself, but after some time, he may find that just being able to execute a difficult technique and feeling the pride of his accomplishment is a greater reward.

Although Taekwondo, on the surface, is a physical activity, its ultimate purpose is to contribute to the development of the entire person. Good physical health helps maintain a clear mind, and the focus and concentration students develop in their Taekwondo training should carry over to their academic work. Learning to train hard together with other students teaches mutual respect, and the structure of the rank system teaches respect for seniors. The traditions and long history of Taekwondo give a dimension and depth that few other activities can offer.

Classes:

Our classes are scheduled according to age group and rank. The very youngest students we accept are ages 4 & 5, which we refer to on the schedule as “Junior Ninja Turtles”.

The next group is beginners, or White Belts, and this group is further divided into ages 6 to 9, and ages 9 and up. Both groups learn the same material, but the classes are run slightly differently to appeal to the different ages. Also, the older students are generally physically bigger, so for safety we do not recommend younger students mixing with the older ones. Some exceptions can be made by arrangement with the instructor.

The next group is Color Belts, again divided in the same way by age groups. Beginners are not permitted to attend these classes.

In addition to these basic classes we offer some special classes such as an advanced class for senior students, sparring classes, and some others. In general, students must continue to attend the basic classes in order to progress in rank; coming only to sparring class, for example, is not sufficient.

Rules:

Students must, of course, observe all the basic rules that apply to any class or group activity at the CYC, such as listening to the instructor, no horseplay or disrespect, and so on.

In addition, we observe a number of customary traditional rules of behavior in Taekwondo. Students bow to each other, and especially to seniors and instructors. They should bow before entering the training area. Students may not enter or leave the training area without specific permission from the instructor. If a student arrives late for class, the rule is to wait by the edge of the mat with his or her hand raised, until the instructor in charge acknowledges him or her and gives permission to join the class. Other traditional customs and courtesies are taught as part of the Taekwondo curriculum over the course of time.

Equipment:

Students wear a uniform, called a *Dobok*, during class. It is not a good idea to wear street clothes under the dobok. Students train in bare feet. We have a Taekwondo T-shirt available for an additional \$8. Students are not required to buy the T-shirt. However in hot weather most students prefer the T-shirt instead of the regular dobok jacket. *Only the official CYC Taekwondo T-shirt is acceptable* to wear during class.

In addition, if students want to participate in sparring sessions they must wear appropriate safety gear, which is available in the pro shop in Building One. Some equipment is available to borrow during class, but it is better if they have their own. In

particular, head protectors are not shared here for hygiene reasons, and mouth guards and groin protectors must be purchased individually.

We have some videotapes which are produced here at CYC to enable students to practice some material at home. These are, of course, not a substitute for attending classes, but can help some students with memorization of some of their promotion requirements.

Competition:

Competing in tournaments is not a requirement for advancement in Taekwondo. However, it can be a valuable experience for students, and we offer additional training for those who have the desire. There are several ways in which students can compete: Olympic Style Sparring is a full-contact sport. Competitors wear protective chest guards, and arm and shin guards, and headgear.

Point Sparring is controlled contact – in other words the competitors are not allowed to strike or kick with full force. Therefore less protective equipment is needed. Also this style utilizes more hand techniques than the Olympic style does.

Poom Sea is a method of training by memorizing a prescribed set of movements. Competitors are judged on their execution of the poomsea. This is a solo competition, somewhat like a gymnastics event.

These are always categorized by the age and rank of the participant, and in sparring, by gender and weight class.

Although there are several organizations that sanction tournaments, for the most part they are sponsored and produced by individual Taekwondo schools and are scheduled according to the priorities of the sponsoring school. There is no “season” or yearly schedule; if the CYC elects to participate in a given event, students are notified and given the opportunity to register well in advance.