

Grass Valley Aikikai Policies for Adults and Youth

Grass Valley Aikikai places great importance on creating and providing a safe environment for our adult and youth members. Everyone is to be treated with respect, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration. Grass Valley Aikikai advocates and expects exemplary behavior by all its participants.

To maintain such an environment, we have developed the policies below. Teachers and members who disregard this code will be subject to remedial actions. Corrective action may take various forms - from a verbal reprimand to removal from the program - depending on the specific nature and circumstances of the offense and the extent of the harm.

Note: In this document “adult” is defined as any person 18 years of age or older. “Youth” is defined as anyone 17 years of age or younger.

Inclusiveness

We believe that diversity greatly enriches the practice of Aikido. Its success as a martial art depends upon a foundation of a wide range of experiences and perspectives. We are committed to the inclusion and support of all members regardless of race, color, age, culture, ability, ethnicity, nationality, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, religious or political affiliation, veteran status, citizenship, or socioeconomic status.

Communication

Abusive statements dealing with race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, age, gender, sexual orientation or disability are not permitted. Sexist remarks, sexual references, or risqué jokes are prohibited. Name calling, belittling or degrading comments are prohibited. Profanity shall not be used in the presence of youth.

Teaching

Everyone is to be treated with respect, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration. When teaching be compassionate, polite, and professional.

- Do not engage in favoritism.
- No teacher or member shall use his or her position to exercise unreasonable or inappropriate power and authority.
- Do not develop inappropriately intimate relationships with adult or youth members.
- Do not accept or give expensive gifts.
- No teacher or member may exploit another person for financial or sexual purposes.

Discipline of Youth during Classes

Positive reinforcement rather than criticism or punishment is preferred. Examples of positive discipline include verbal praise, high fives, and rewards for good work/behavior. In the event that a youth does not respond to positive discipline, they are asked to leave the mat and sit in a chair until they can regain control and agree to behave appropriately. Serious behavior problems will be discussed with the parents and behavior modification strategies will be tailored to the youth's needs.

Corporal punishment, threats of corporal punishment, ridicule, humiliation, or discipline that frightens the child are prohibited.

Alcohol/Drugs

It is prohibited to be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while training. There is no smoking in the dojo.

Electronic Communication and Social Media

Photos of youth should not be posted online without the permission of the parent. Pictures on public internet sites should not include the names of individual youth. Youth names may be used on the dojo Face Book page with the permission of the parent.

Do not post photographs on social media without permission of the chief instructor. Do not air grievances or make disparaging comments about the dojo on social media. Bring concerns to the chief instructor. Social media should never be used for cyberbullying.

All adults are to maintain transparency in their communications with youth. It is the responsibility of the adult to maintain appropriate boundaries. All communications must be directed to parents, including voice messages, emails, text messages and social media. It is up to the youth's parents to forward necessary communications to their children. If the parents of older youth allow direct communication, parents must still be copied on any and all messages. Adults may not play online games with youth.

Contact Outside the Dojo

Adult members are encouraged to form friendships outside of the dojo. However, contact between adults and youth members outside of the dojo is prohibited unless it is a supervised dojo group activity or if the contact is initiated by the youth's parents.

The chief instructor and parents shall be notified of any activities away from the regular practice area, such as training in the park, off-site demonstrations, or dojo use outside of scheduled class time.

Transportation

Parents are asked to come into the dojo to pick up their kids. Pick-ups by people other than the parents must be authorized in advance by a parent. Grass Valley Aikikai assumes responsibility for the safety of youth while in the dojo and is not responsible for youth in the parking lot or elsewhere.

Transporting youth to events is an important concern. Parents will be informed in advance and must approve of the driver who will be driving their child. Parents will drop off and pick up their children at the dojo. Drivers will not go to the youth's home unless the parent gives specific permission. Youth should not be alone in a car with an adult driver unless the parent gives specific permission. Drivers must be 21 or older. Drivers must have a valid driver's license. Seatbelts must be used at all times and the number of passengers must not exceed the number of seat belts. Drivers should be advised of a designated route and should not deviate from it except in cases of emergencies or road detours.

In emergency situations, if a youth is not picked up, the teacher should take extraordinary care to protect all parties from the appearance of impropriety and from all risk of harm. All youth have emergency contact information on file in the dojo. Use a team approach to managing emergency situations.

Prevention of Abuse

Grass Valley Aikikai is committed to the protection of our youth from abuse both in the dojo and in the community at large. It is vital that we create a culture where youth sexual abuse is openly discussed, addressed, and prevented. True youth protection can be achieved only through the focused commitment of everyone.

All aspects of the program are open to observation by parents at all times. Parents are encouraged to report any concerns to the chief instructor or to report suspicions of youth sexual abuse to law enforcement or Child Protective Services.

See Grass Valley Aikikai's document "Policy for Prevention of Youth Abuse" for additional information.

Touching

Physical contact with youth can be misconstrued and should occur only when it is completely nonsexual and otherwise appropriate. Some forms of touching are acceptable as long as they are respectful and appropriate, such as pats on the back, or "side hugs". Touching should be in response to the need of the youth, not the need of the adult. Touching should be with the youth's permission; resistance to touching must be respected. Touching should be in the open, not in private; touching should have a brief, limited duration. A youth's comfort level with touching is influenced by factors such as age, developmental stages, social and emotional well-being, life experiences, gender, etc., all of which change over time.

Neither adults nor youths are to be touched below the waist, above the knees, or on the breasts, except in a medical emergency. If there is accidental touch to breasts, buttocks or genital area, it should be acknowledged and there should be an apology. The teacher may, with the youth's explicit permission, put their hands on the youth's front hip bones to demonstrate correct position. Full frontal hugs are inappropriate. Intimate/romantic/sexual contact is prohibited.

Strategies for Youth

Youth need to know that no one has the right to force, trick, or coerce them into sexual situations, and that sexual offenders, not their victims, are responsible for their behavior.

Verbal, physical and cyberbullying are prohibited. Children and youth are asked to report any bullying attempts to the chief instructor or a trusted adult.

The "Three R's" of Youth Protection:

1. **Recognize** situations that place youth at risk of being molested, how youth molesters operate, and that anyone could be a molester.
2. **Resist** unwanted and inappropriate attention. Resistance will stop most attempts at molestation.
3. **Report** attempted or actual molestation to a parent or other trusted adult. This prevents further abuse and helps to protect other youth. Let the youth know he or she will not be blamed for what occurred. (3)

Privacy and Protection

Teachers, adult members, and youth members must respect each other's privacy, especially in situations such as changing clothes, or using the restroom. Teachers and adult members may enter youth changing and bathroom areas only to the extent that health and safety requires. The use of any device capable of recording or transmitting visual images in areas where privacy is expected is prohibited.

In addition to considerations of privacy, the goal is to prevent the isolation of one adult and one youth, a situation that elevates the risk for youth sexual abuse. However, teachers and adult members must also ensure that this does not result in a situation where unsupervised youth can sexually or physically abuse other youth. Our dressing rooms do not provide sound privacy and have curtains rather than doors for this reason. Youth may not play in the dressing rooms. Youth may not enter the dressing room of the opposite gender. Two youths should not be in the bathroom or dressing rooms alone together.

In order to protect adults from false accusations, one adult should not be alone with less than two youths in a closed in space. It is acceptable for boys and men, or girls and women, to be in their respective changing rooms at the same time if there are three people or more. The teacher should not be the only adult present during youth classes. A minimum of two adults is suggested. If there is no second adult, parents should be informed when they drop off their child. A parent may choose to serve as the second adult if they wish, or they may give permission for their child to attend with the supervision of just one adult.

In adult classes there must be at least two students in addition to the teacher. In the event there is only one student, the class shall be cancelled.

One-on-one private contact between adults and youth is prohibited. In situations requiring a personal conference, the meeting is to be conducted with the knowledge and in view of other adults and/or youth.

In rare emergency situations, when accommodation is necessary for the health and well-being of the youth, the teachers and adult members should take extraordinary care to protect all parties from the appearance of impropriety and from all risk of harm. Use a team approach to managing emergency situations.

References

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
<http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/pdf/PreventingChildSexualAbuse-a.pdf>
2. American Youth Soccer Organization
http://www.ayso.org/Assets/For+Families/Safe+Haven/Forms+%26+Docs/AYSO_Safe_Haven_Policies_CVPA.pdf
3. Boy Scouts of America
<http://www.scouting.org/Training/YouthProtection.aspx>
4. United Methodist Church
<http://www.flumc.org/chilyouthprotection>
5. National Catholic Services
<http://www.virtus.org/virtus/PastoralConduct.pdf>

Grass Valley Aikikai Policies for Adults and Youth

I have read and understood Grass Valley Aikikai's Policies for Adults and Youth and agree to follow these guidelines as a condition of membership for myself or my child. I agree to explain the policy to my child as is appropriate for their age level and understanding. I understand that failure to follow the policy guidelines may result in counseling or dismissal from the program.

Please sign and return to the chief instructor or the director of the Youth Program. Thank you.

Signature _____

Print name _____

Date _____