

# **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR INSTRUCTORS AND VOLUNTEERS**

## ***TOMIKI AIKIDO OF THE AMERICAS, INC.***

*Tomiki Aikido of the Americas, Inc. (the "TAA") is an organization dedicated to promoting Tomiki aikido in the United States and abroad. The TAA takes seriously its responsibility to provide a safe and non-discriminating, non-hostile environment for everyone who participates in our activities at every level. Every instructor and volunteer plays a role in fostering the emotional and physical development of individuals and families in our martial arts community.*

*Participation in the TAA's activities is subject to the observance of the TAA's rules and procedures. Any instructor or volunteer who violates this Code of Conduct is subject to discipline by the TAA Board of Directors (including, as applicable, expulsion from the organization).*

You agree as follows:

1. When participating in TAA-related activities, I will obey all laws and comply with the Safety Procedures attached to this Code of Conduct.
2. I have fully disclosed to the TAA Director of Safety, and will disclose in the future, the following:
  - a. Any criminal suspicion, charges, or convictions of a crime or offense involving abuse, violence, sexual misconduct, or any misconduct involving minors or juveniles;
  - b. Any investigation or court order involving domestic violence, child abuse, or similar matter; and
  - c. Any criminal charges or convictions for offenses involving controlled substances, driving while intoxicated, firearms, or dangerous weapons.
3. I acknowledge that the following activities are strictly prohibited:
  - a. Discrimination on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, race, color, or national or ethnic origin;
  - b. Verbal, physical or other harassment or bullying of any student, volunteer, instructor, or parent of any student (including, without limitation, any sexual/gender-based harassment or other unwelcome conduct);
  - c. Actual or threatened violence toward any individual or group (excluding such actions that are a legitimate part of aikido training and only to the extent reasonable, necessary and appropriate);
  - d. Failure to cooperate with the head instructor;
  - e. Abusive language towards any individual or group; and
  - f. Bringing into any TAA activity training space any unauthorized materials such as explosives, firearms, weapons or other similar items (excluding weapons that are used for self-defense aikido training).
4. I will take steps to prevent or report to the TAA ([safety@tomiki.org](mailto:safety@tomiki.org)) any violation of this Code of Conduct by other TAA instructors or volunteers.

I have read and I understand the TAA's Code of Conduct. I agree to abide by the rules described above and understand that I may be removed as a member of the TAA if I violate any of these rules.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Safety Procedures

The disturbing and traumatic rise of physical and sexual abuse of children has claimed the attention of our nation and society. There is a need to protect innocent parties, both the victims of abuse, and also volunteers and instructors from false allegations of abuse. The following policy and procedures reflects the commitment of the TAA to provide a safe environment for all children, youth, individuals with special needs, instructors and volunteers who participate in TAA-approved activities.

### 1 - Definitions

For the sake of clarity and direction, we provide the following legal definitions that will be used throughout this procedure.

- 1.1 **Instructor:** The TAA maintains standards for the certification of instructors. These standards are outlined in the “Dan Rank Promotion Packet” (amended and approved, May 7, 2018, and as may be further amended, restated, supplemented or otherwise modified from time to time) which is available on the TAA website ([www.tomiki.org](http://www.tomiki.org)).
- 1.2 **Volunteer:** According to the Department of Labor, a volunteer is anyone who A) performs hours of service for civic, charitable, or humanitarian reasons, without promise, expectation, or receipt of compensation for services rendered; although a volunteer can be paid expenses, reasonable benefits, or a nominal fee to perform such services; B) offers services freely and without pressure or coercion; and C) is not otherwise employed by the same entity to perform the same type of services as those for which the individual proposes to volunteer.

*Volunteers are chosen to assist instructors, and must be at least sixteen (16) years of age. Volunteers are required to comply with these policies.*

- 1.3 **Child:** Anyone under eighteen years of age. **Youth** is a subset of this group, generally used to refer to Children between the ages of 12 and 18 years of age.
- 1.4 **Individuals with Special Needs:** anyone who, because of his or her unique medical or developmental difficulties, has needs in addition to those of his or her peers.
- 1.5 **Abuse:** The federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) defines abuse and neglect as follows: Any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker, which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or exploitation, or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.

CAPTA further differentiates abuse into the following categories:

- *Physical Abuse:* Any non-accidental physical injury to a child.

- *Neglect*: the failure of a parent or other person with responsibility for the child to provide needed food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision such that the child's health, safety, and well-being are threatened with harm.
- *Sexual Abuse or Exploitation*: engaging a child under the age of consent in any sexual activities, whether the child is a willing participant or not.
- *Emotional Abuse*: Injury to the psychological capacity or emotional stability of the child as evidenced by an observable or substantial change in behavior, emotional response, or cognition.
- *Abandonment*: Any situation in which the parent's identity or whereabouts are unknown, the child has been left by the parent in circumstances in which the child suffers serious harm, or the parent has failed to maintain contact with the child or to provide reasonable support for a specified period of time.

## 2 - TAA Guidelines

2.1 **Safety Committee:** The TAA will maintain a standing committee - appointed by the TAA Board of Directors - whose purpose shall be ensuring these guidelines are kept up-to-date and are available for all TAA-affiliated dojo. This committee shall be comprised of:

- **Director of Safety:** a TAA-certified instructor who serves on the TAA Board of Directors and who shall be responsible for the dissemination of these policies, as well as the coordination with local instructors to ensure they are aware of them.
- **At Least Two (2) Other Senior Aikidoka:** uninterested parties who have received training in handling safety-related situations and can assist in the tasks and decision-making of the Safety Committee.

2.2 **Open Communication:** The TAA will seek to provide open lines of communication with parents and an open-door policy allowing parents access to instructional space. Parents will be provided a copy of these procedures and a directory which includes contact information for the Director of Safety.

2.3 **General Reporting Policy:** Any paid staff, Instructor, Volunteer, student or parent who has concerns about the safety, welfare, or health of the Children participating in TAA activities should immediately notify the TAA at [safety@tomiki.org](mailto:safety@tomiki.org).

All reports will be acted upon by the Director of Safety and the TAA Board of Directors. They will communicate (if appropriate) with the authorities and maintain communication with parties involved.

2.4 **Reporting Guidelines:** Instructors and Volunteers should report any suspected abuse as detailed below:

- *The TAA:* Contact the Director of Safety who will then advise the TAA Board of Directors.
- *Authorities:* The Director of Safety will report any suspected criminal activity to the proper authority.

While the TAA will be reporting such activity to the proper authorities, Instructors and Volunteers may have an obligation to notify such activities to the local authorities -- state-by-state mandatory reporting information can be found here:

[www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov). You may not abdicate this reporting responsibility to any other person, including the TAA.

- *Legal Counsel:* The TAA Board of Directors will contact external legal counsel and their insurance carrier, as necessary.
- *Media:* The TAA Board of Directors will designate a spokesperson for the TAA. Only this designated spokesperson should speak to any media outlet. All Volunteers and Instructors shall refer all questions to the designated spokesperson.

### 3 - Requirements for Instructors

- 3.1 **Bi-annual Safety Compliance Workshops:** All Instructors should complete a Safety Compliance Workshop every two (2) years. These workshops may be conducted under the direction of the Director of Safety at announced times and locations, generally at TAA-approved events. Instructors may be exempted from this requirement if they have participated in an equivalent youth protection training program. Those exempted must provide proof of completion of the course.
- 3.2 **Background Checks:** TAA-certified instructors should submit to a routine criminal background check. These can be performed at the instructor's cost through online services such as Checkr; and the results provided to Director of Safety. These checks are not *required* but are *recommended*.
- 3.3 **Conformity to this Policy:** All Instructors and Volunteers must abide by these Safety Procedures. All Instructors and Volunteers are expected to be aware of methods for preventing, recognizing and reporting abuse. Any Instructor or Volunteer who does not strictly adhere to these policies will not be allowed to work with Children, Youth or Individuals with Special Needs in any TAA activities.
- 3.4 **Abuse by Instructors or Volunteers:** In case of proven abuse by a Volunteer or Instructor, the TAA Board of Directors shall immediately remove them from any TAA activities which involves Children, Youth or Individuals with Special Needs, and will thereafter be barred from further TAA activities with Children, Youth or Individuals with Special Needs.

## 4 - Child Safety Policy

- 4.1 **Instructional Spaces for Children:** All training with Children shall be conducted in spaces designated and set up to accommodate the Children in a safe environment. These spaces will vary dojo to dojo but should meet two criteria:

- *Security:* To protect children from external threat, spaces should be securable.
- *Accountability:* To protect children from potential internal threat, spaces must have high visibility.

Additionally, instructors should strive to maintain maximum transparency and accountability in all situations. Custodial parents/guardians must have free access to the training space and full knowledge of activities the Children will participate in.

- 4.2 **Informed Parental Consent:** No child should participate in training without parents providing informed consent. The standard TAA waiver is viewed as a record of this consent. All activities involving children should be open to custodial parent(s) at all times and non-custodial parent(s) with the consent of the custodial parent(s).
- 4.3 **Two-Deep Leadership:** For the purposes of accountability and protection of the children, it is *recommended* that all dojo have two (2) adults present whenever children are training. It is understood that this is not always possible, but the instructor takes upon himself/herself the responsibility for maintaining the utmost integrity and transparency with parents in these situations. An instructor should never be alone with a child who is not their own, even with parental consent.

## 5 - Adult Safety Policy

- 5.1 **Informed Consent:** Adults are free to practice aikido with their instructors and assume all risk, as long as they make informed consent. The standard TAA waiver is viewed as a record of this consent.
- 5.2 **Discrimination:** The TAA does not discriminate on any grounds articulated by the EEOC. Behaviors such as harassment are considered discriminatory, and as such are not tolerated by the TAA. Instructors should be familiar with the EEOC's guidance pertaining to these matters.
- 5.3 **Sexual Misconduct:** Non-consensual sexual behavior is *not* tolerated in the TAA. The EEOC treats this as a form of discrimination and abuse. It is expected that TAA instructors will conduct themselves with decorum and appropriateness with all students and peers.