

CODE OF ETHICS



Itatisiwin

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OKICHITAW STUDENT CREED (*Tapwe'Tamowin*)

- I will develop myself to the maximum of my potential in all ways...
- I will forget the mistakes of the past and press on to greater achievements...
- I will continually work at developing love, happiness and loyalty in my family...
- I will look for the good in all people and make them feel worthwhile...
- If I have nothing good to say about a person, I will say nothing...
- I will always be as enthusiastic about the success of others as I am about my own...
- I will maintain an attitude of open-mindedness...
- I will maintain respect for those in authority and demonstrate this at all times...
- I will remain highly goal-oriented throughout my life...

MEDICINE WHEEL TEACHINGS

(Muskeke Wasakapayes Kiskinahumakweina)



THE SEVEN GRANDFATHER TEACHINGS
(Omoshomi'maw Kewina)

LOVE

TO KNOW LOVE IS TO KNOW PEACE

RESPECT

TO HONOUR ALL CREATION IS TO HAVE RESPECT

BRAVERY

IS TO FACE AN ENEMY WITH INTEGRITY

HONESTY

IS TO BE BRAVE IN FACING ANY DIFFICULT SITUATION

HUMILITY

IS TO KNOW THAT YOU ARE A SACRED PART OF CREATION

WISDOM

TO CHERISH KNOWLEDGE IS TO KNOW WISDOM

TRUTH

IS TO KNOW ALL THESE THINGS

INTRODUCTION

There is an old native saying pertaining to that of becoming a Warrior of the Community, which says, “A boy must first learn to hunt before he learns the skill of warfare, and he must first know the teachings of the Old Ones before he practices these skills”.

The teachings of the “*Old Ones*” also refer to the *Seven Grandfather Teachings* which embraces good manners, courtesy, respect and consideration for others.

Ethics, on the other hand, is a fundamental set of acceptable behaviors which codifies the spirit of the martial arts and which martial artists can rely on to develop their mind and body, and to guide their everyday actions, behavior and judgment.

This Code of Ethics is an important part of the study of Okichitaw and sets the moral guidelines for practitioners. The principles outlined in this guide serve as the traditional, cultural and social standard by which practitioners are trained in Okichitaw. The foundation of these principles is the concept of non-violence, respect for oneself and others, loyalty to one’s family, friends, teachers, and community, and following the natural way being Warrior’s of Peace.

The adherence to a creed of ethics confirms our moral obligation to society and our fellow human beings. A practitioner of the martial arts is not only an athlete, well-versed in the art of combat, but also an upstanding citizen with strong moral and social virtues. Living by ethical principles is the true spirit and ultimate goal of all martial artists.

ETHICS IN OKICHITAW MARTIAL ARTS ***(Aniskes Kuma’kewin)***

Traditionally, the study of the martial arts consists of both the practice of technical skills and following a code of conduct, or ethics. The skills learned from any martial arts practice conditions our bodies, sharpen our reflexes and strengthen our courage. This activity must also be balanced by a structure of good moral character.

The philosophy of all martial arts is to achieve a harmonious set of values by living by a code of peace through a daily practice of self-discipline. The primary goal of learning the martial arts is to become a person of better understanding and who lives with a sincere appreciation of life.

Maintaining a good quality of life also requires that person is healthy both mentally and physically.

The martial arts cannot exist without the mental aspect, which is the foundation that physical advancement is built upon. The martial arts is much more than a workout, it is personal growth – physically, mentally and spiritually.

The aim of Okichitaw is the development of an indomitable heart by the participating martial artist. Not only should self-defense and battle skills be attained, but more importantly, the development of an individual's character.

The continuing practice of the martial arts cultivates a person's mind and body; not to use it as a means to vent ones anger, frustration or emotional problems, but help build a better community in which to grow one's family and friends.

Okichitaw practitioners should accept a philosophy of nonviolence - a physical confrontation should be avoided whenever possible. The use of force is only condoned in self-defense, self-preservation or in the defense of those who are weak. The true Warrior displays this courage in the use of their skills to satisfy the requirements of ethics, and in defense of others against unjust violence.

A true Martial Artist should adopt an attitude of self-control; they must be like a willow tree: able to bend and contort to the surroundings, but still strong and sturdy. It is through inner peace and confidence that a Martial Artist develops this mindset. As Uncle Vern says, "Patience builds Patience"...and therefore, patience is the key.

The mental and spiritual aspect of Okichitaw is not quickly seen when compared to physical improvements. Improvement of any physical ability is always gained from training, and will be immediately visible to the practitioner, while improvement of the mental and spiritual aspects will be recognized by those around them.

To exercise self-control one must practice and retain discipline in their daily lives.

The ability to defend yourself greatly improves your self-confidence. Self-confidence combined with effective judgment and integrity ensures an overall positive attitude.

Physical activities used in Okichitaw to enhance mental conditioning are helpful in developing a positive self-image. The physical aspect of training is a direct reflection of how much dedication and energy the person is putting into their internal growth. The harder you train your body the more you will grow spiritually.

In order to develop into a person of desired character, you should not distance yourself from your parents, family, friends, and teachers.

The Okichitaw Student Creed teaches humility, truthfulness, bravery, compassion, sincerity, loyalty and devotion to our families, friends, and community throughout our daily lives. As Martial Artists, we believe that the Okichitaw Student Creed serves as a constant reminder to perfect our character.

Looking at it from a modern perspective, ethics in Okichitaw can manifest itself through the following aspects:

The first is **Humility**. All who have had great accomplishments also display great humility. This is because, without humility, no one is capable of learning. The more humble a person is, the more willing they are to learn. This is needed to gain knowledge.

The second is **Courage**. Practicing courage by applying a sense of self-sacrifice by standing up for the truth, regardless of what the impact or outcome will be. This is needed to gain experience.

The third is **Integrity**. The integrity of a person must be defended at all costs so that as a martial artist, you can stand tall in any circumstance. A true martial artist has high moral character, and is never intimidated by power or weakened by desire. This is needed to gain peace.

The fourth is **Respect**. Respect those who are senior and those who we learn from. Without this basic element, the teacher cannot teach and the learner cannot learn. You should always honor your family, and give without the expectation of receiving. This is needed to become humble.

As a practitioner of Okichitaw, you should use ethics as a baseline to conduct your daily behavior and activities. We are all responsible to demonstrate proper conduct and behavior both in and out of the training lodge.

Be a living example by showing that we do not consider the martial art of Okichitaw separate from our daily life, but that we demonstrate the strength of Okichitaw which thus makes us good martial artists and teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To meet the social challenges of the decline of ethical values, we need additional education and training beyond the academics of regular teaching methods. Okichitaw has creative potential for teaching people to resolve conflict peacefully and create fine moral character.

In these difficult times, martial arts can be an intelligent and effective way to prepare people to deal with today's challenges. Martial arts provide a means through which we can creatively deal with conflict. The practice of the martial arts through Okichitaw can benefit people in a variety of ways.

Okichitaw is not only an excellent form of physical conditioning nor an exciting and challenging recreational way to enhance agility; it provides an ethical approach to conflict resolution.

With physical skills as a base, Okichitaw practitioners develop the confidence to use psychological and social self-defense skills which enable us to deal with fears and challenges of everyday life.

Okichitaw's training programs and innovative curriculum have been developed in the evolution of this indigenous art from self-defense and warfare tactics, to the greater mission of becoming warriors of peace which addresses the social challenges of our communities.

The goals of Okichitaw Martial Arts and its principles are as follows:

1. To promote and perpetuate the arts of Okichitaw, and to foster respect for its founders, history, culture, and philosophy;
2. To educate the public about the art of Okichitaw and the martial arts in general, based upon Martial Artists' lifestyle, behavior, personal experiences, and community service;
3. To serve as a living library of all of the various aspects of the martial arts, including physical & technical training, historical influences, and spiritual learning.
4. To maintain a high standard of clarity with respect to the dissemination of information concerning Okichitaw;
5. And to give recognition to instructors and students of Okichitaw.

CODE OF ETHICS FOR OKICHITAW INSTRUCTORS

Practicing Okichitaw is not without risk. Therefore, when an individual chooses to participate in Okichitaw training with an Instructor, both individuals need to be responsible. It is important to solidify principles for those who serve as Okichitaw Instructors:

A. INTENTION

Instructors should practice and serve in ways that cultivate and embrace identity, awareness, empathy, and wisdom.

B. SERVING INDIVIDUALS

Instructors shall respect and seek to preserve the identity and dignity of each person. Instructors shall make reasonable preparations to protect each participant's health and safety during practice.

C. COMPETENCE

Instructors shall assist with Okichitaw practices for which they are qualified for by personal experience and by training or education.

D. INTEGRITY

Instructors shall strive to be aware of how their own belief systems, values, needs, and any limitations that may affect their work. During practice participants may be vulnerable to suggestion, manipulation, and exploitation. Therefore Okichitaw Instructors pledge to protect participants and not allow anyone to use any vulnerability in such a way that could harm someone.

E. TOLERANCE

Okichitaw Instructors shall practice openness and respect towards people of other martial arts or those whose beliefs are in apparent contradiction to their own.

OKICHITAW PRACTITIONER'S CODE OF CONDUCT

1. I shall always maintain a desire to learn. Be eager to ask questions and appreciate the thrill of learning.
2. I will respect the skills I am learning, and the efforts it takes to bring them to me.
3. Be respectful to my Instructors and follow his/her instructions to the best of my ability.
4. Be loyal to the Instructor and the teaching methods. If I disagree with any procedure or technique, I will discuss it privately with the Instructor.
5. Practice what I learn and try to perfect my techniques to the best of my abilities.
6. I shall always set a good example for lower belts and be aware that they will try to mirror senior practitioners.
7. Help other practitioners to learn and succeed and recognize that we are all members of Okichitaw sharing common goals and interests.
8. Understand that my conduct inside and outside the training lodge reflects upon the art of Okichitaw and the Instructors.
9. I shall always act honorably; never be impolite. Try to live by the tenets that guide the any martial art: courtesy, integrity, self-control, patience and perseverance.
10. Any teaching aid must be treated with respect, whether they are real or simulated weapons such as a tomahawk, knife, gunstock or a stick, and any training equipment like striking equipment, or mats.