



Republic of Ireland Taekwon-Do Association (R.I.T.A.)

Parents Code of Ethics

Taekwon-Do and Young People

The R.I.T.A. is indebted to the instructors/assistants who give of their time in providing Taekwon-Do opportunities for children and young people. Taekwon-Do provides an excellent pathway for children and young people to learn new skills, become more confident and maximise their own potential. Through their participation, they can learn and develop life skills, have fun and enjoyment, make friends and experience life in a way that can enhance their personal growth throughout their lives.

People become involved in Taekwon-Do for young people for a variety of different reasons. They may come from a variety of sporting backgrounds and take on various roles within the school. Yet irrespective of their role or responsibility, they all share the common goal of providing Taekwon-Do opportunities for young people.

Instructors/assistants all have an important role to play in promoting good practice in Taekwon-Do. They should have, as their first priority, children's safety and enjoyment of Taekwon-Do.

The R.I.T.A. want Taekwon-Do to be safe, to be fun and to ensure that no matter what level of ability they have, that it takes place in the spirit of **'FAIR PLAY'**.

Fair play is the guiding principle of the Code of Ethics and Good Practice which is designed to provide guidance for those working with young people in all sports and martial arts. It outlines the type of issues that need to be discussed and addressed to provide the safest and most enjoyable environment not only for students but also the instructors/assistants involved.

Focusing on individual participants' needs encourages young people to achieve and demonstrate enjoyment, equality and fair play. Through this they will come to realise that standards of behaviour are equally as important as sports performance.

In taking this approach children are encouraged to:

- Do their best – put in their best effort.
- Improve and develop their skills.
- Make friends.
- Play by the rules.
- Appreciate/accept everyone in the group, regardless of ability, race, religion, gender etc.

Guide for Parents / Guardians

Parents / guardians play an important role in promoting children's happiness and success Taekwon-Do

Parental expectations and behaviour have a significant bearing on children's attitude and behaviour while participating.

Parents / guardians need to be aware of why children want to participate. Children want to learn new skills, make new friends, be part of a group, to win and be successful, experience challenges, excitement and action.

The R.I.T.A. schools teach Taekwon-Do as a sport but primarily as a martial art. As a martial art we strive to develop the students' physical skills (self-defence, fitness etc.) but also their moral values. Through the martial art, the student is taught to compare themselves to their past selves and to see their own improvements and personal development. There is also the competitive element to Taekwon-Do that students learn.

While winning is important, it must be remembered that winning at all costs does not meet the needs of students. Results are not necessarily a good indicator of instructor effectiveness or ability, the improvement level of students and their level of enjoyment is.

Support and encouragement from parents / guardians will contribute to children having:

- **A sense of personal achievement.**
- **An enjoyment of Taekwon-Do**
- **Improved physical fitness.**
- **Well developed moral values.**
- **Higher self-esteem.**
- **A greater level of skill.**
- **Improved social skills.**

Children in Taekwon-Do are entitled to:

- Be safe.
- Be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect.
- Participate in Taekwon-Do on an equal basis, appropriate to their ability and stage of development.
- Be happy, have fun and enjoy it.
- Make a complaint in an appropriate way and have it dealtwith through a proper and effective complaints procedure.
- Be afforded appropriate confidentiality.
- Be listened to and to be believed.

Children should also be encouraged to realise that they also have responsibilities to treat other children, umpires, fellow students, competitors, instructors and assistants with the same degree of fairness and respect.

In this regard children should undertake to:

- Give their best and perform to the best of your ability.
- Be polite at all times
- Be respectful at all times
- Always tell the truth.
- Always try your best
- Never give up
- Play fairly – by never behaving in an unsporting manner to gain an advantage.
- Play by the rules, as directed by the Instructors/assistants/umpires.
- Listen to their Instructors/assistants. If they are unsure ask questions but never be disrespectful.
- Never use foul or abusive language; it will not be tolerated in any form or for any reason
- Approach the Taekwon-Do School's Children's Officer with any questions or concerns they might have.

Instructors/assistants and parents should encourage children to speak out and support them in doing so.

Children should not:

- Cheat.
- Use abusive language, or argue with, the referee, officials, school mates or opponents.
- Use violence, use physical contact only when it is allowed within the rules.
- Bully.
- Tell lies about adults or other students.
- Spread rumours.
- Take banned substances to improve performance.
- Keep secrets about any person who may have caused them harm.

Responsibility to Report

Any person, who has concerns about a child's welfare or who suspects that a child is being abused, or is at risk of abuse, has a responsibility to report their concerns to the Health Board or Gardaí. Persons unsure about whether or not certain behaviours are abusive and therefore reportable are advised that they can seek advice from the duty social worker in their local health board area where they will receive appropriate advice. In cases of emergency where a child appears to be at immediate and serious risk and the duty social worker is not contactable, call the Gardaí. Under no circumstances should a child be left in a dangerous situation pending intervention by the Statutory Authorities. All R.I.T.A. schools should have clear procedures for responding to reports or concerns relating to the safety and welfare of children. Instructors\assistants, children and parents / guardians should be aware of how and to whom they report concerns within the club or organisation.

Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are often given to children for security, enabling parents to keep in touch and make sure they are safe. However such technology has also allowed an increase in direct personal contact with young people, in some cases used to cross personal boundaries and cause harm. Within R.I.T.A. Schools there is a need to encourage responsible and secure use of mobile phones.

In this respect Coaches are advised to:

- Use group texts for communication among athletes and teams and inform parents of this at the start of the season
- It is not appropriate to have constant communication for individual athletes
- Don't use the phone in certain locations; inappropriate use of your camera phone may cause upset or offence to another person, e.g. changing rooms

In addition parents should read the R.I.T.A. policy on Social Media.