

AIKIDO OF MAINE



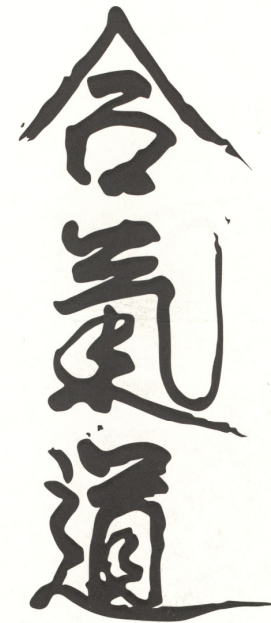
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AIKIDO OF MAINE

2010

THE AOM  
STUDENT HANDBOOK  
FOR CHILDREN



Teaching the martial art of peace to adults and children.

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*Written by Gary Small with the help and support of  
Skip & Paige Chapman from AIO.*

## 23) PARKING

Parking is available at the front of the dojo. In addition you can park on street. Please do not park in front of the bakery or block their trucks in anyway.

## 24) CAMERAS

For the safety of our students, AOM reserves the right to use surveillance cameras with in the school. Take photos and videos for the website and other promotion. If there is any problem with this please let us know.

## 24) GUIDELINES FOR OBSERVERS

Please keep talking to a minimum or whisper when classes are in session. Students should have the maximum opportunity to hear the instructor and to keep their focus on the mat. Also please do not talk to your child or the instructor during class unless there is an emergency.

## 25) READING RECOMENDATIONS

For students interested in reading more about Aikido , please see the suggested reading list below.

The Harmony of Nature- Saotome Sensei's

Principles of Aikido -Saotome Sensei's

Dynamic Aikido– Gozo Shioda Sensei

Total Aikido– Gozo Shioda Sensei

Dynamic Sphere -Westbrook and Ratti -Illustrated introduction.

Aikido- Kisshomaru Ueshiba

Way of the Peaceful Warrior -Dan Millman

*There are also great videos and more books coming out all the time.*

## 19) FACILITY AND DOJO ROUTINE

AOM is a traditional Aikido dojo with 2000sf of mat space, a lounge area, children's play room, a visitor observation area, shower bathrooms and changing rooms. A chief instructor's office. Our members, families and guests are encouraged to enjoy use of the facilities provided.

Keeping the dojo clean is an important part of training which teaches humility and creates a greater sense of community within the dojo. Children 5 and older may be asked to help clean before or after class. The cleanliness of the dojo, much like the cleanliness of our uniform, is a reflection of our attitude about training. It should not be viewed as a chore but done in the spirit of giving back to the art and the dojo.

## 20) ADVANCED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Leadership program: youth members of the dojo who have been training for a year or more that demonstrate a maturity and desire to help others are nominated to our Leadership Program. Eligible students will be contacted to discuss the details. These students will receive special classes each month and be involved as assistance in younger groups. They will receive a special belt and patch and have extra training opportunities and responsibilities.

## 21) BIRTHDAY PARTIES

Having a birthday party with twenty or more children running around your home can be quite stressful. We understand this and are offering a way to help. AOM offers fun-filled Aikido Birthday party packages to entertain your child and all of your child's friends ages 4-11.

## 22) WEATHER RELATED CANCELLATIONS

If the weather is questionable you can always check the dojo web site for class information. Some times power failures make this posting difficult and if there is a question you can assume we are following the Portland

## 1: WELCOME TO THE AIKIDO OF MAINE

### DEAR NEW STUDENT AND PARENTS/GUARDIANS

It is great that you have decided to become a member of the dojo and to begin your training. Aikido is a rewarding and exciting martial art. In addition to increasing your child's physical abilities and martial arts knowledge, AOM's goal is to assist parents in instilling in children the character traits of responsibility, respect, leadership, discipline, generosity, politeness, honesty, and loyalty. We appreciate your enrollment and your allowing us to be a support system to help you in raising a confident, disciplined and positive child.

During the first several weeks you will have many questions and this handbook is a reference for you to answer many of those questions and to help you learn a bit about the martial art your child will be practicing in the dojo. If you have any questions please feel free to ask. I look forward to seeing you at the dojo.

sincerely,

*Gary*

Gary Small  
Chief Instructor

## 2: MISSION

- To promote the teaching of Aikido as passed down by the arts founder.
- To enhance our students and community through positive mental and physical development.
- To encourage students to train to their maximum potential.
- To provide a safe and supportive environment that allows for personal growth on and off the mat.

### 3. WHAT IS AIKIDO

Aikido has its origins in the centuries-old traditions of the Japanese martial arts. It is a form of *budo*, a way of life that seeks to polish the self through a blend of rigorous physical training and spiritual discipline. Aikido is a modern Japanese Budo (martial art). In Aikido martial training is a means of character development. **Ai Ki Do** translates as **Ai**- universal love, joining, unifying, **Ki** - life-force energy, **Do** - path or way. Literally, Budo is “The martial way of life”.



The term aikido was coined in 1942 by Morihei Ueshiba (1883-1969), who had spent many years practicing traditional martial arts, including the techniques of the sword, spear, and staff. Master Ueshiba became known as one of the most powerful warriors in Japan, but after a while he began to have doubts concerning the apparent rationale of the martial arts. The arts appeared to be directed solely toward the goal of fighting, regardless of the costs or consequences. It seemed a never-ending cycle of winning and losing, where the strongest today would be defeated tomorrow by someone even stronger.

To resolve his concerns regarding the martial arts and understand his world better, Master Ueshiba became immersed in the practice of Omoto Kyo, a Shinto based spiritual group focused on Kotodama and various spiritual and philosophical disciplines.

Eventually he came to believe that the true meaning of the martial arts was to protect. He concluded that every living creature has the inherent right to grow and develop without interference and that the mission of the martial arts was to safeguard this right and to forestall destructive conflicts. This spirit of protection extended even to an aggressor. The martial arts of the time were unsuitable for this. What was needed was a new martial art. The time came when Master Ueshiba was able to reconcile and synthesize his physical skills with his spiritual understanding.

Aikido offers a way to empower the human spirit by attuning us to the natural rhythms of the universe. Its movement is the movement of the universal energy forces. The motions of Aikido reflect the ebbs and flows, the curves, waves, and spirals found in nature.

### 17) KEEPING A HEALTHY DOJO.

To help keep your-self and others free of unnecessary germs, please use these guidelines to help decide if your child is well enough for class.

- Fever of 100 or higher , stay at home. Before returning to the dojo maintain a normal temp for 24 hours.
- Keep your self or child home if vomiting occurs more than once and is accompanied by a fever , rash or weakness.
- Diarrhea: any episode warrants a sick day.
- Flu: If you or your child have flu symptoms stay home till all symptoms subside.
- Strep throat: you or your child should stay home until you are well.
- Minor sniffles are not to be worried about.
- If you or your child are irritable, lethargic, or taking OTC medicine, you might wish to stay home until you are feeling better.

Keys to preventing illness are 1. washing your hands with soap and water thoroughly and often (before and after training), 2. Remind your child to use and discard tissue often, and avoid sharing food cups and utensils with others. We clean our mat with antimicrobial cleaners frequently .

A healthy dojo is a happy dojo. Thank you for your assistance in helping us fight germs.

### 18) GETTING INVOLVED

When you join a dojo you are joining a community of friends with the goal of learning the art of Aikido and to gain many of the benefits this training offers. To help the dojo best serve the community and each other as students, we ask that all students get involved in their dojo at some level. It may be through cleaning or promoting the dojo at local events. What ever the level of involvement, there is a place for you to volunteer your individual experience and knowledge. Please let us know how you would like to get involved.

## DOJO ETIQUETTE CONTINUED

15. During class, if the instructor is assisting a group in your vicinity, it is frequently considered appropriate to suspend your own training so that the instructor has adequate room to demonstrate. Always say thank you when receiving instruction.

16. Always call the instructor sensei as a sign of respect.

17. Families and siblings are welcome in the dojo and should do their best to keep the noise down during the class and specifically at the beginning and ending bows.

18. The changing room is for getting dressed and students must never ruff house or fool around in this room. They should change quickly both before and after class. This is an important safety and management requirement.

## 16) UNIFORMS & PERSONAL

Your uniform is called a gi and your belt is called an obi . The care and cleanliness of your gi and how you wear it is a reflection of your attitude toward training ,your teacher and the dojo. A gi should be washed regularly and after each class during summer months. It should be folded after class and not just shoved into the gi bag.

Aikido requires close contact with our partners and is there for polite to keep your gi and your body free of sweaty odors. Gis should never be worn while eating messy food or while at play. A white tee shirt only can be worn under the uniform. When fixing a messy gi during class move to the edge of the mat and face away from the shomen while straightening. If you need help ask an assistant politely or have a parent help. It is the students responsibility to remember their gi. If a gi is forgotten never blame your parents get in the habit of knowing when you have Aikido and be prepared. Students must practice tying their belts and must know how for their first belt color change. Please mark your name on your gi. This can be done on the outside left sleeve or inside. Pay attention while leaving the dojo to have your gi and belt with you.

Please Keep fingernails and toe nails short and clean. Experience has showed us that long fingernails and toe nails cause injury. In Addition please keep long hair back and away from your face.

## 4. AOM TRAINING PROGRAMS

### AIKI PLAY AGES 3 - 4 YEAR OLD:

This is a great age to begin Aikido. The focus of the class is building body awareness, coordination & flexibility as well as drills that focus on following directions and attention skills. We play cooperative games and the children begin to learn Aikido movements and principles. We use promotion and reward systems to encourage these young students and to support the family and this is worked into the flow of each class.

### AIKI KIDS AGES 4 TO 7 YEARS OF AGE:

The focus of class incorporates all to the items in our Aiki Play group, however we dive deeper into conflict resolution, character development and the partner practice of aikido techniques, Class starts with a seated bow and end with sweating smiling faces. We utilize belt promotion system that recognizes and rewards respect, focus, awareness partnering and effort as the children develop their skills. There is belt and strip testing monthly.

### AIKIDO YOUTH CLASS 7-11 YEARS OF AGE:

The focus of this program is on the fundamental movement and skills and principles of Aikido, i.e. rolling, knee-walking, centering, blending and extending energy. Basic self-defense technique, stance, posture, and presence and creative solutions to conflict and Centering) are all highlighted. We also play with games that embody Aikido principles. In addition, students learn the basic techniques of Aikido and their Japanese names. Belt Testing with Colored belts and stripes etc. are awarded for progress with testing conducted monthly. The testing process is designed to enhance confidence and self-esteem and goal setting with the child and the family. Each child is given personal attention in this process.

### AIKIDO TEEN AGES 11 TO 15 YEARS OF AGE:

This class is structured much like an adult class. The focus is on Aikido principles and technical development. Aikido is practiced in this group at a very high level. Belt level testing is also part of the training for this group and is conducted at the discretion of the teacher. Fitness is built in to all parts of this class and we hope that it is a spring board to healthy lifestyle choices children make as they get older and reflect on when they become adults. All aspects of Aikido principal and philosophy are brought into the practice.



## 5) TESTING PROCESS

Testing is held approx every 4 to 5 weeks. All children meeting the minimum training requirements and exhibiting the characteristics of an up-standing citizen are eligible to test with parental approval.

Children in the Aiki-play and Aiki-kids groups (ages 3 to 7) need a minimum of 4 days to test. Children in our Aikido youth group (ages 7 to 11) need a minimum of 6 class to test. Children in our Aikido Teen group (ages 11 and up) need 8 classes or the individual requirements for their level.

Our main objective is to develop well rounded students, not only in the dojo but in society as well. Therefore, students who are respectful, doing satisfactory work, receiving acceptable grades, cooperating at home, and have attended the minimum amount of classes are eligible to test with parents permission.

Please see our website [www.aikidoofmaine.com](http://www.aikidoofmaine.com) calendar for the test dates, these dates will also be on our bulletin board and will be emailed at the beginning of the month.

All students who wish to test must submit a test forum with payment at least 3 days prior to the test date. Forms are in the dojo and also available as a down load on the youth page on our web site.

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## 6) STRIPE ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

We want our students to achieve their best at home, in school, in the dojo and in the community. We utilize an **Achievement Stripe Program** to support and encourage good habits. Just like our students receive stripes on their belts for doing well in the dojo, students can earn Achievement Stripes for doing well at home and at school. Even though this program is optional, all members and families can benefit from participating.

There are 3 report cards : Home report card, Book Club card, and Self-discipline report card. These are at the dojo and available for download on our website along with the details of this program. There are stripes awarded for each card filled out to your satisfaction and there are also stripes awarded for doing well with school work or home school activities. This is customizable to help support you as parents. School work is also part of this program.

5. Avoid sitting on the mat with your back to the picture of O-sensei. Also, do not lean against the walls or sit with your legs stretched out. (Either sit in seiza or cross-legged.)
6. Remove watches, rings and other jewelry before practice as they may catch your partner's hair, skin, or clothing and cause injury to oneself or one's partner.
7. Do not bring food, gum, or beverages onto the mat. It is also considered disrespectful in traditional dojo to bring open food or beverages into the dojo. If you need to eat while in the dojo please do this in the lounge or children's playroom out of view of the mat and please clean up. No Food should be left in our trash cans.
8. Please keep your fingernails (and especially one's toenails) clean and cut short to avoid injury.
9. Please keep talking during class to a minimum. What conversation there is should be restricted to one topic - Aikido. Never talk while the instructor is addressing the class.
10. If you are having trouble with a technique, do not shout across the room to the instructor for help. First, try to figure the technique out by watching others. Effective observation is a skill you should strive to develop as well as any other in your training. If you still have trouble, approach the instructor at a convenient moment and ask for help.
11. Carry out the directives of the instructor promptly . Do not keep the rest of the class waiting for you!
12. Do not engage in rough-housing or needless contests of strength during class.
13. Keep your training uniform clean, in good shape, and free of offensive odors. If you need a new gi please let the instructor know. You should not eat while in your gi.
14. It is usually considered polite to bow upon receiving assistance or correction from the instructor.

## 14) DOJO ITEMS FOR SALE

Although we do not have a formal store we do offer items for sale. We have swords and staffs along with uniforms and tee shirts. These items are viewable on our web site and in the dojo by request. If you want something we do not have ask as we may be able to get it for you. We will present dojo dollars or mdse coupons from time to time. Dojo dollars are for our 8yrs and up students are usable for special merchandise at 100% value or dojo mdse for up to 50% of the cost.

## 15) DOJO ETIQUETTE

Aikido is rich with Japanese culture. Our dojo practices certain elements of this culture to help us set the tone for a rich training experience and insure the safety. New members are not expected to know etiquette when entering the dojo and much of what you will learn is through trial and error.

Standards of etiquette may vary somewhat from dojo to dojo but the etiquette we practice is nearly universal. These matters of etiquette should be taken seriously and may require one to set aside one's own habits. When unsure of how to act during a situation look to your instructors or senior students and follow their example.

- 1 . When entering or leaving the dojo, it is proper to bow in the direction of O-sensei's picture, the kamiza, or the front of the dojo. You should also bow when entering or leaving the mat.
2. Remover your shoes before entering the dojo before the water cooler . They should be lined up neatly up facing the brick wall.
3. Be on time for class. If you do happen to arrive late, get dressed quickly sit quietly in seiza on the edge of the mat until the instructor grants permission to join practice.
4. If you should have to leave the mat or dojo for any reason during class, approach the instructor and ask permission.



## 7) MAKING TRAINING A PRIORITY

New Students are often faces with the obstacle of making their training a priority. Whether you are a member of our Aiki-Play, Aiki-kids, Aikido Children, Teen or Adult programs, Aikido is a way to improve your life and the life of your child. We know that exercise improves our physical and emotional health, challenges our minds, and helps us become well rounded people.

In addition to learning how to move more, often children must learn the lesson of commitment . You have committed to your child and that shows them your desire to have them experience the martial art of Aikido. With your support, we want to teach our members that with consistent effort, by coming to class even on days when the are hesitant they will be rewarded both physically, mentally and emotionally. Achieving goals builds self-esteem, increases confidence and teaches a work ethic that provides the building blocks for success as an adult. We encourage commit to two days a week for your child to make Aikido practice a priority. Keep these days as Aikido days.

From time to time we will contact you to answer any questions you my have and to encourage your child during the training process. To assist us, please let us know when you plan to be away from the dojo for a week or more. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at the dojo (207) 879-9207 or through our website [www.aikidoofmaine.com](http://www.aikidoofmaine.com).

## 8) WEBSITE

Visit our web site for a list of upcoming events and happening at the dojo including test dates, seminars, dojo community events, and downloadable forms such as testing forms, report cards and guest waivers. There are links to great resources and the function is for it to be a great point of reference. We will also list storm closings here.

We will continually to update the site and provide lots of great information. Visit often to keep up to date on dojo events!

## 9) REFERRAL AND REWARD PROGRAM

Recommendations from our students and families are our best source of new members. We like to encourage and reward these referrals, a strong and vibrant membership makes for an excellent experience for all!

For every one that you bring to the dojo who joins as a member, you will receive \$25 and after you bring in 5 you will receive 6 months as training credit. These rewards do shift from time to time and the above is our current offering.

## 10) DOJO

The term Dojo refers to a place to train in the martial arts. In 2001 we found our location and began the build out of our great space. We have some great photos in our lounge area that will give you a sense of what we have done to this space. We are a member dojo of Aikido Schools of Ueshiba an international association founded by Mitsugi Saotome sensei. Our black belt ranks come from the world head quarters in Japan through Saotome sensei. We do our best to continually improve the physical condition of the dojo.

## 11) OUR TEACHERS

AOMs chief instructor and director of children's programs / *Gary Small* has been practicing the martial arts since 1974 and teaching Aikido since 1989. He currently holds the rank of godan (5th degree black belt) In addition to teaching at AOM, Small sensei travels a great deal to further his training as a teacher and student of Aikido. He has also been invited to present workshops on how to teach Aikido to children. "I consider having a dojo and teaching to be a great honor and privilege, it is a constant learning experience and true pleasure to spend my time thinking about our practice and ways to make our dojo a better place. I am also very captivated by the power of Aikido has in peoples lives .

*Ania Small sensei* began Aikido since 1983 in Poland. She is a yondan (4th degree black belt) and is cofounder of Aikido of Maine. In addition to the management of the dojo and her teaching at the dojo she is a psychologist with a private practice in Freeport.

## 12) TERMS OF MEMBERSHIP

*Freeze in first term of membership:* A membership may be put on hold within the first 6 months or one year depending on the students enrolment option if the student sustains an injury inhibiting him/her from participating in Aikido. A doctors note must be provided and will be honored for 60 days. Doctors scripts will only be valid 60 days at a time. After 60 days the students membership will automatically unfreeze unless the dojo is provided with an additional script.

*Freeze during renewal term:* A membership may be frozen after the students first enrolment term of 6 months or a year for any reason with a minimum of 30 days notice, a return date should be given at this time and if you are able to return sooner this can be adjusted. There are no exceptions to the 30 day notice, so please be mindful and allow for ample time to process your request.

*Canceling a membership before end of agreement term:* A membership may be cancelled under two conditions: a doctors script indicating a complete incapacity to participate in Aikido due to physical or psychological illness/disability, or a move of residence more than 25 miles from the dojo. If the original residence is more than 25 miles an additional 15 miles from the dojo is required. Proof of move is acceptable with a copy of the students drivers license or voter registration card or copy of a bill for new service at the new residence. Sorry no exceptions.

\*All Membership fees are non refundable\*

\* A \$5 per month charge is required to keep your membership current. The accumulated service charge will be refunded via a merchandise gift certificate to be used on Aikido related merchandise that the dojo has available such as swords staffs tee shirts and uniforms.

\*To cancel a membership of any type 60 day notice is required.\*

## 13) DOJO EVENTS

As you enter the dojo on the right there is a bulletin board. A calendar of events lists upcoming tests, monthly focus, parent nights out etc. for the current month. In addition we post special notices, sign up lists, and other important flyers are posted on this board. We also email this information and post events on our website. Please make it a practice to check the board and stay up with dojo happenings