



UNITED STATES AIKIDO FEDERATION

CODE OF CONDUCT

Preserving Tradition, Inspiring Integrity, Ensuring Continuity

“I hope everyone will continue to focus on their practice in a sincere way, and that we all look to grow in our aikido techniques, our budo principals, and our kindness towards each other as human beings.”

– Y. Yamada

The United States Aikido Federation (USAF) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to spreading and sustaining Aikido as created and exemplified by its founder, Morihei Ueshiba (O Sensei). The USAF strives to uphold the principles of Aikido as developed by O Sensei and to promote goodwill and friendship among its members and with other Aikido organizations around the world. Guiding the advancement of Aikido in the U.S. in harmony with Aikido World Headquarters, Hombu Dojo, the USAF encourages positive practice and technical proficiency to ensure the continuation of traditional Aikido as transmitted by its founders who were direct students of O Sensei.

“Real budo is the protection of all beings with a spirit of reconciliation.”

– Morihei Ueshiba

Principles and Core Values

While the USAF does not have legal authority for the operation of any member dojo or the specific conduct of any individual member, all members are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the principles of Aikido and the values of the USAF.

Responsible conduct maintains the integrity of the USAF and upholds the core values that are critical to its philosophy. These values include:

Respect Integrity Responsibility Fairness Compassion

Expectations

This Code of Conduct is an effort to clarify the expectations for member responsibility and describe basic guidelines for member conduct. This Code of Conduct applies to all members but holds senior ranking members and instructors to the highest standards.

Members

All members are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects positively on the USAF and Aikido:

- Treat everyone with respect
- Be honest and trustworthy
- Accurately reflect credentials, camp and seminar attendance, lineage and legacy, etc.
- Take personal responsibility for your own behavior
- Assist fellow members in the practice and development of Aikido

Instructors and Senior Ranking Members

Instructors and senior ranking members are expected to uphold the principles and core values of the USAF. They should be aware of, and sensitive to, the power differential inherent in a teacher- student and sempai-kohai relationship. Additionally, instructors and senior ranking members should continuously improve their own training as well as support the learning process of their students and kohai by:

- Demonstrating respect for their teachers, predecessors and students
- Engaging in continuing education, including at least two seminars annually
- Carefully preparing for their teaching duties
- Accurately representing their competence, training and level of experience
- Evaluating students based on true merit
- Refraining from interference in other dojo's activities and operations
- Preventing exploitation of students for personal advantage

Avoid Any Form of Discrimination or Harassment

The USAF prohibits discrimination, exploitation, or harassment of anyone for any reason whether based on race, age, handicap, gender, sexual preference, religion, socio-economic status or national origin. No members should engage in any type of unwelcome conduct or harassment that a reasonable person would consider intimidating, hostile, or abusive. This includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or sexually related verbal or physical harassment which violates someone's dignity, or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading or humiliating environment in the dojo.

The USAF encourages dojos to accept students with disabilities if the students can safely train without endangering themselves or others. The dojo, in its sole discretion, will decide whether a student with a disability can safely train in Aikido.

Follow the Law

All members of the USAF must comply with local, state and federal laws that relate to the practice of Aikido and their participation in dojo and other USAF activities. The Board in its sole discretion may take any action deemed appropriate to ensure such compliance.

*“True victory is victory over oneself.”
– Morihei Ueshiba*

Grievance

This Code of Conduct describes how all USAF members should conduct themselves to reflect positively on the USAF and Aikido. All members and instructors are expected to behave ethically and must comply with this Code. The purpose of this grievance process is to protect the USAF and its members by disciplining any member who violates this Code of Conduct.

Ideally, grievances will be handled within dojos and without a formal arbitration process. In some cases, it may be necessary to file a formal complaint. If you feel that your grievance may be the result of poor communication or a misunderstanding between you and another person, you should attempt open discussion with the other person **before** you file any grievance. This policy outlines the process in the event a member believes that filing a formal grievance is necessary.

Whether acting on an individual grievance, or at its own election, the Board has sole discretion to take any action, including but not limited to reprimand, suspension, or termination of the membership of any individual member or dojo that violates this Code of Conduct or who has acted in a manner that is contrary to or abusive of the core values and philosophy of the USAF and its members.

Procedure

Any USAF member in good standing may report an alleged violation of this Code of Conduct by written notification to any member of the Grievance Committee, which will exclusively handle all grievance communications with utmost confidentiality until it reports to the full Board and the Board makes a determination. At a minimum, the Grievance Committee consists of the Board Chair, one (1) additional member of the Board, and one (1) member of the Technical Committee. The Board in its sole discretion may assign additional members of the Board or the Technical Committee or another USAF member, as well as outside professionals to act as advisors to the Grievance Committee.

All grievances will be handled confidentially to the greatest extent possible and in a manner that will protect the privacy interests of everyone involved. Any grievance may be discussed with other persons who may have information about the grievance, and it may be necessary to disclose information to persons with a legitimate need to know about the grievance. All parties to the grievance must maintain absolute confidentiality.

Any grievance must be brought by the alleged victim or, if on behalf of the alleged victim, only with the alleged victim's written consent. Any grievance must be brought within one (1) year from the date of the alleged violation. Grievances are submitted by completing the Grievance Form below and forwarding the completed form to any member of the Grievance Committee.

The Grievance Committee initiates an investigation when a Grievance Form is received. Within five (5) business days of receipt of the Grievance Form, the Grievance Committee will send acknowledgment of receipt of the Grievance Form to the complainant. Full

completion of the Grievance Form is required for consideration. Incomplete forms may be returned for correction. Be aware that alleging conclusions without explaining facts that support the conclusions may result in dismissal of the grievance.

If the Grievance Committee determines that an alleged violation does not constitute an actionable grievance, the Grievance Committee will immediately make its report to the full Board, and the Board will respond to the complainant. If a violation is suspected, the Grievance Committee will send a copy of the Grievance Form to the accused for written response within twenty (20) days. If the accused responds, the complainant will have ten (10) days from receipt of the written response to review and submit written rebuttal to the response.

The Grievance Committee will conduct its investigation of the grievance within thirty (30) days from the date rebuttal is received. If no rebuttal is received, the Grievance Committee will investigate within thirty (30) days from the date response is due from the accused and then report its findings to the full Board. The investigation may include interview of witnesses and review of supporting documents or other evidence. If additional time for investigation is necessary, the Grievance Committee will provide written notification to all parties.

As soon as practicable after receipt of the Grievance Committee report, the full Board will determine appropriate action, if any, to be taken. Actions may include, but are not limited to informal reprimand, formal reprimand, membership suspension, or membership termination. The complainant and the accused will receive a letter from the Board upon completion of the investigation and determination, if any, by the Board. If no violations were discovered, then the grievance will be closed and the complainant and the accused will receive a written explanation of the reasons for the Board's determination.

Please Note: All members of the USAF must comply with local, state and federal laws that relate to this Code of Conduct, the practice of Aikido and their participation in dojo and other USAF activities. The Board does not review alleged conduct that is the subject of any pending local, state or federal investigation or any pending civil or criminal lawsuit. The complainant should advise the Board of the existence and outcome of such investigation or litigation. The Board in its sole discretion may take any action deemed appropriate based on the outcome of any such investigation or litigation. The Board may also discipline any person who makes a grievance that is deemed vexatious, knowingly false, or in bad faith, or who otherwise abuses this procedure. In all these cases, disciplinary action may include but is not limited to informal reprimand, formal reprimand, membership suspension, or membership termination.

CONSENT

Active membership and participation in the USAF constitute your agreement to this Code of Conduct. Each member dojo is expected to post or otherwise make this Code of Conduct available to its members.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS

PLEASE READ BEFORE SENDING A GRIEVANCE

If you feel that your grievance may be the result of poor communication or a misunderstanding between you and another person, please open discussion with the other person and/or your instructor **before** you file any grievance.

Any grievance must be brought by the alleged victim or, if on behalf of the alleged victim, only with the alleged victim's written consent. The Board does not review alleged conduct that is the subject of any pending local, state or federal investigation or any pending civil or criminal lawsuit. In such case, please notify the Board of the existence and outcome of any such investigation or litigation. Any grievance must be brought within one (1) year from the date of the alleged violation or the resolution of any pending investigation or litigation. Grievances are submitted by completing the Grievance Form below and forwarding the completed form to any member of the Grievance Committee.

If you wish to file a grievance, please complete, sign, and date the Grievance Form, retain a copy for yourself, and email a scanned original of the Grievance Form to any member of the Grievance Committee.

Grievance Committee Members Effective 11/10/2019:

George Kennedy, Board Chair: kennedyshihan@gmail.com

Blue Spruell, Board Member: blue@outlawfirm.com

Peter Bernath, Technical Committee Member: bernath@bellsouth.net

Full completion of the Grievance Form is required for consideration. Incomplete forms may be returned for correction. Be aware that alleging conclusions without explaining facts that support the conclusions may result in dismissal of the grievance.

INSTRUCTIONS:

All submissions must be emailed. The following instructions will allow expedient processing.

Submission(s) cannot exceed 4 pages.

Notify us of any change in your email address or telephone number.

Make a copy of your complete grievance for your records before submission.

Please Note: The Grievance Committee will acknowledge receipt of the completed Grievance Form within five (5) business days. If a violation is suspected, the Grievance Committee will contact the accused who will have twenty (20) days to submit written response. If the accused responds, the complainant will have ten (10) days to submit written rebuttal to the response. The Grievance Committee will conduct its investigation and report to the Board within thirty (30) days of receipt of rebuttal or, if no response is received from the accused, within thirty (30) days from the date response is due from the accused. The

Board will make its determination as soon as practicable after receipt of the Grievance Committee report.



UNITED STATES AIKIDO FEDERATION
GRIEVANCE

**** CONFIDENTIAL ****

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT LEGIBLY. DO NOT ALTER THIS FORM.

PLEASE NOTE: If you are filing grievance on behalf of someone else you must attach a copy of such other person's signed, written consent.

YOUR NAME: (Mr./Mrs./Ms.) _____

YOUR DOJO: _____

If you are filing on behalf of someone else:

NAME OF COMPLAINANT: (Mr./Mrs./Ms.) _____

COMPLAINANT'S DOJO: _____

YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

YOUR PHONE NUMBER: _____

PLEASE PROVIDE NAME, EMAIL ADDRESS, AND PHONE NUMBER OF SOMEONE WE CAN CONTACT ONLY IF WE HAVE DIFFICULTY CONTACTING YOU.

NAME: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

NAME OF THE ACCUSED: (Mr./Mrs./Ms.) _____

EMAIL ADDRESS OF THE ACCUSED: _____

RELATIONSHIP TO ACCUSED: (instructor, classmate, etc.) _____

ONE-SENTENCE DESCRIPTION OF ALLEGED VIOLATION:

DATE AND TIME OF ALLEGED VIOLATION: _____

LOCATION OF ALLEGED VIOLATION: _____

WITNESSES TO ALLEGED VIOLATION (Names and Dojos):

Have you reported the alleged violation to any governmental authority? [YES / NO]

If yes, please provide the name and location of any such governmental authority?

If you are filing this grievance on behalf of someone else, have you attached a copy of that person's signed, written consent? [YES / NO]

CLEARLY DESCRIBE YOUR GRIEVANCE:

Please be as specific as possible (who, what, when, where, and why you are filing this grievance). If more space is needed, you may attach up to two (2) additional pages. Do not write on the back of any page.

“I affirm that I have read and understand the USAF Code of Conduct and instructions and the information I have provided here is true to the best of my knowledge.”

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

**RETURN THIS FORM BY EMAIL ONLY TO
ANY GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE MEMBER:**

Grievance Committee Members Effective 11/10/2019:

George Kennedy, Board Chair: kennedyshihan@gmail.com

Blue Spruell, Board Member: blue@outlawfirm.com

Peter Bernath, Technical Committee Member: bernath@bellsouth.net