



VALKYRIE WESTERN MARTIAL
ARTS ASSEMBLY

Instructor Code of Conduct

In this document, the term “instructor” refers to any person acting in an instructional capacity on behalf of Valkyrie Western Martial Arts Assembly (“Valkyrie WMAA”). The term “management” refers to the directors of Valkyrie Martial Arts Inc, Courtney Rice and Kaja Sadowski, or their duly appointed representatives. The term “student” applies to any non-instructor participating in any Valkyrie WMAA class, private lesson, workshop, or event.

All Valkyrie community members, including instructors and students, are expected to abide by the [Valkyrie Martial Arts Community Code of Conduct](#) (“Code of Conduct”) at all times. In addition, instructors are held to higher behavioural standards in recognition of their role as stewards of Valkyrie WMAA’s community and training culture. All instructors must abide by the guidelines laid out below.

Community Stewardship

Valkyrie’s community is very diverse, and includes students with a broad range of identities, fitness and experience levels, and training backgrounds. It is an instructor’s duty to make everyone feel welcome, and to introduce students to our own training culture by modeling and actively promoting its principles. These are best summarized as follows:

- Every student has the potential to grow into an excellent, adaptable fighter
- Every student’s growth must be shaped by their own body’s strengths and limitations
- Training at Valkyrie is a guided process of self-discovery: an instructor helps each student identify their own strengths, teaches them to self-assess and listen to their own body, and helps them build a capable body and effective fighting style that reflects who they are
- No student is more important than any other, and everyone receives the same level of attention and the same quality of instruction, regardless of their aptitude, ability to pay, ability to commit to training time, or their personal relationship(s) with their instructor(s)
- Failure is an integral and expected part of learning, and a sign that students are being sufficiently challenged; shame and fear of failure have no place here
- Students are responsible for themselves first (for their own safety and emotional well-being) and have the freedom to self-regulate as needed

- Students are responsible for their partners second, and enter into every training partnership with a commitment to advancing their partner’s learning as much as possible, while keeping them safe from harm

Safety is always our first priority, and instructors are responsible for making sure that the students under their care can challenge themselves effectively without unreasonable risk of physical or psychological injury. Feeling hurt (experiencing pain, discomfort, and emotional stress) is an integral part of training; being harmed (suffering physical or psychological injury) is not.

If an instructor fails to follow the **Code of Conduct** or to uphold our training principles, they will be offered a chance to remedy their behaviour, and may be temporarily relieved of some or all of their teaching duties. Serious breaches of trust — including bullying, ongoing unequal treatment of a student or group of students, sexual harassment or exploitive relationships (see “Interpersonal Relationships” below), breach of privacy (see “Privacy” below), gross negligence, and the deliberate infliction of harm of any kind — will be met with immediate removal from all teaching duties, and may also incur a ban from all Valkyrie WMAA activities. The perpetrator may also be subject to additional disciplinary action under the **Reporting and Disciplinary Process**.

Interpersonal Relationships

In a community made up of adults of similar age and interests, it is common for closer relationships (including friendships, romantic relationships, and sexual relationships) to develop. Instructors must be mindful at all times of the power imbalance inherent in any relationship between teacher and student, regardless of that relationship’s nature. This is particularly important in light of the fact that Valkyrie has made itself a haven for marginalized and vulnerable people, many of whom have previously been involved in unhealthy relationships (including abusive and exploitative relationships with previous martial arts instructors and training partners).

While intimate relationships between instructors and students are not prohibited, they are not encouraged and should be entered into with extreme caution, if at all. Your students are not your dating pool. Any instructor who shows a pattern of repeatedly pursuing intimate relationships with their students will be removed from their teaching role, and may be subject to further disciplinary action if it is decided that their actions constitute sexual harassment.

Any romantic or sexual relationship between an instructor and a student must be disclosed to Valkyrie management as soon as is feasible. Instructors are expected to treat their intimate partners no differently from other students during Valkyrie WMAA activities. An intimate relationship with an instructor does not entitle any student to course discounts, free classes, or other perks that are not available to other students, and any attempt by an instructor to coerce a student into an intimate relationship with offers of special treatment will be considered a serious breach of trust and dealt with accordingly.

Any instructor who mistreats a student or reduces their quality of training (or threatens to do so) in retaliation for that student's refusal to enter into an intimate relationship, or in response to a breakup, will be immediately removed from teaching duties and may be permanently banned from all Valkyrie WMAA activities. Instructors may be asked to remove themselves from any position of direct authority over their intimate partner (e.g. by moving to a different teaching night, or referring their partner to other instructors for private lessons) at any time.

Some students, especially new or vulnerable school members, may develop romantic/sexual interest or an unusually strong attachment to their instructor. While such crushes are normal and often harmless, instructors are under no obligation to build closer relationships with their students and are encouraged to politely rebuff any social overtures that do not interest them. If a student persists in pursuing more intimate contact or becomes aggressive or hostile after a refusal, the affected instructor should immediately inform Valkyrie management. Management will take over all communication with the problem student, and may remove them from the instructor's class, or remove them from Valkyrie WMAA altogether, depending on the severity of their misconduct.

If an instructor has concerns about the nature or trajectory of their relationship with a student, they should discuss it with management immediately.

Privacy

In the course of their duties, instructors may learn confidential personal information about students or other instructors. Examples of such information include: home address, phone number, name and contact information of an emergency contact, legal name, medical history, mental health history, history of traumatic experiences, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status.

Such information is not to be shared with any other person, under any circumstances, without the express permission of the person(s) whom that information concerns. Medical information may be shared with health and emergency care personnel in the event of an emergency, if it is required in order for an unconscious or otherwise incapacitated person to receive adequate medical care.

Contact information (e.g. phone number, home address, email address) may only be used for class, lesson, or event registration; or for authorized communication on behalf of Valkyrie WMAA.

Instructors are also frequently given access to proprietary information concerning Valkyrie WMAA's teaching methods and training process, including internal documents, in-person instructor training, and private discussions in staff-only social media channels. All such information is to be kept confidential, and is not to be shared with any person outside of the Valkyrie WMAA teaching team without the express permission of Randy Packer, Courtney Rice, or Kaja Sadowski.

Unauthorized sharing or misuse of confidential information is considered a serious breach of trust and shall be dealt with accordingly.

This document was last updated March 3, 2021.

Complaints and Discipline

Any complaint about an instructor's conduct will be handled in accordance with our **Reporting and Disciplinary Process**.