

## **Karate Grades**

The coloured belt grading system used at the Kanku Karate Club is based on similar systems found in other Japanese martial arts. Karate ranking is based on technical competence and character development. It measures one's improvement, provides valuable feedback and helps to motivate the student towards reaching their goals.

Belt ranking in our dojo uses a system with 10 levels, or Kyu. 10th Kyu (white belt) is the lowest and 1st Kyu (brown belt with two white stripes) is the highest. After the Kyu grades are the Dan, or black belt grades. Shodan (1st Dan) black belt is the lowest and 10th Dan black belt is the highest. Attaining Shodan will take a minimum of 3 years consistent training. Shodan is not considered an end, but a new beginning in karate training.

When you start to train you are classed as a novice. You may take the first grading after two months of training, with the Instructor's permission. In certain circumstances a double grade can be awarded if a student shows a higher standard. This decision is taken by the grading examiner on the day. All kyu grades are taken every three months. When a student attains the, 1st kyu, they have a 12 months training period before their black belt grading and this is only with the Instructor's written permission. The cost of all courses and gradings are extra.

Students are not judged in comparison to one another, but are judged against a minimum standard necessary to earn each specific rank. Sensei will take into consideration the age, individual progress and improvement of each student. Some specific technical areas of importance include: (1) the ability to move correctly and smoothly from one stance to another, (2) weight distribution in stances, (3) breathing in correspondence with body movements, (4) coordination, (5) physical endurance, (6) proficiency in kata and knowledge of application of kata, (7) ability to focus, (8) use of hip, (9) proper usage of the different striking surfaces of the hands, arms, feet and legs, (10) knowledge of effective target areas. It is important to remember that these requirements are only part of the test - regular class time, attitude, spirit and attendance are also taken into consideration.