

# Instructor Responsibilities

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Part of the goals for the guidelines is to create a uniform environment and shape the community to a high standard. By following RVPK guidelines, students may expect a similar experience regardless of what instructor they take. Additionally, instructors can be comfortable knowing that students attend classes regularly understand the RVPK expectations of them. Ideally, this would create less work for other instructors.

## Student Safety

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Our highest priority is ensuring that the student is training safely. While there is inherent risk in training, we can always mitigate this risk through proper instruction and precautions.

With any course that an instructor sets up, it should be designed to be class skill appropriate. Instructors should keep in mind how a student might fail on the lesson of the day or in the course. Use mats appropriately.

During a class (including breaks), instructors should position yourself where you can watch most of the students at all times. This will be useful for ensuring students are training safely and not breaking the rules.

## Rules Enforcement

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Rules are in place to facilitate student safety. All staff is responsible for ensuring that rules are being followed by our students. Instructors will have the most visibility as they are the primary person on the

floor at the time. When a rule is broken, instructors should talk to the student and make them aware of what rule they broke.

Try to avoid just telling a student not to do thing. Help them understand the rule they broke and why it's important not to break the rule. This should help avoid future breaking of the same rule by the same person.

If desired, include a simple punishment (such as an exercise). See *Student Discipline Guidelines* for more information.

There are varying degrees of enforcement. Here are a few examples, some of which might be more effective than the others depending on the students:

- Warning and understanding.
- Punishment (generally exercises).
- Asking the student if they knew what rule they broke.
- Discussing with the student as to why they shouldn't break the rule.

There are times which instructors can ignore certain rules. In doing so, the students should be made aware that their action is generally not allowed and that they are getting temporary override to the rules.

## Class Management

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Instructors need to properly manage their class in order to be an effective teacher. It can be hard to teach a class if half the students are scattered, not paying attention, talking to each other, or otherwise being disruptive. Instructors need to guide the class away from these behaviors.

To be effective, the instructor needs to present their authority. When talking, aim to be clear, concise, and audible.

## Class Design

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A well planned class design can provide a good experience to our students. Instructors should think about their class plans and designs prior to teaching. Many class plans can be interchanged depending on the class focus, which makes it easy to have fall back class plans as needed. It's better to over plan your class. Use the following to help design your classes.

- Pick a class focus (technique, flow, conditioning, strength, objective, etc...)

- Try to have your lessons be progressive. It's not always just one move after another. Moves taught can build into harder challenges or other techniques with similar movement.
- Design courses to supplement movement in your class. Use large courses for larger classes. Use challenging courses for increased skill levels. Change courses often. Instructors may use a simple course technique of going in the opposite direction of a pre-existing course.
- Match the warm-up/cool-downs to the lesson. It's okay to use the same warm-up/cool-downs generally used in a class. Try to add a few extra moves for the class focus.
- Utilize time management. Watch clock often and block out your lesson plans into time managed chunks. See the standard class structure below.
- Aim your breaks between lessons to be 2-3 minutes. If your breaks are long (5 minutes), you'll spend nearly 20 minutes of your class for free time (or open gym). Some students love free time whereas others may meander and not know what to do.
- Follow the RVPK Class Structure. It is designed to best provide a fun, progressive, and uniform experience. Basic RVPK Class Structure looks like the following:
  - 10 minute warm up
  - (3 to 4) 7 minute lessons with courses
  - (3 to 4) 2-3 minutes breaks in between lessons
  - 7-10 minute cooldown
  - 3-5 minute free time (max 7 min.) after cooldowns

Keep in mind some common challenges while teaching. If you run into these situations, reflect on how you can improve in the future. Consider the following concepts after a class and think about how to overcome them in the future.

- Class focus too hard or too easy.
- Courses too short/too long.
- Courses having a bottleneck where students have to wait.
- Not being audible enough.
- Uninterested students.

### **Mixed Skill Level Classes:**

In mixed skill level classes, instructors will have students who may want to try things outside of their skill level. Attempt to ensure that only your higher level students are training the harder portions of the class and/or have plenty of safe guards in case of a fall. It is recommended that you provide the lower level course first then give a harder course to your higher level students later.

**Tip:** Create just a single course. Give higher level students extra challenges during that course.  
Example: Only so many steps on each block or beam; must do an extra move in the course, etc...

## Student Entertainment

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One of the biggest reasons younger students come to a parkour gym is to have fun. Students have different ideas on what is “fun” to them. Instructors should design a dynamic class that provides safe parkour instruction, engages and challenges students, and has varied concepts (technique, speed, endurance, strength, games, etc...). If the move is too hard, the student might get frustrated. If the class is too exhausting, students might feel like they can’t enjoy their free time. If the content is “too easy”, they might get bored. Find a balance.

Always give the student something to succeed at and develop a sense of accomplishment. This will surpass being entertained and focus on the student feeling good about their experience. If a student (or students) is struggling with a move, provide a better work-up that they may succeed at.

## Community Development

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Part of making the parkour experience successful is developing a strong community. One of the ways to accomplish this is by allowing our students to feel involved and welcome in our facility. Our interactions with our students should facilitate developing the community. Here are some aspects to focus on:

- Learning student’s names and addressing them by name during class. Sit down after class and review the class roster to help in the learning process. This will allow you to see what type of membership they have as well.
- Talking to and providing guidance to new students during their first class. Giving them extra attention, especially during breaks.
- Talking to your students during warm-ups, cooldowns, or breaks. It could be about parkour concepts and philosophy or about any student appropriate topic.
- Talking to the parents (if they are present). Provide feedback to the parent about their child’s involvement in class. Discuss their successes and how the student has a positive impact in class.
- Ask trusted students to demonstrate moves for class.
- Ask students to help you set-up. Or engage with a student if they ask to help an instructor set up.
- Engage the students and ask them questions about the moves they are learning during class.

Examples:

- Ask for feedback as to what move might be best in a certain circumstance.
- Ask what the biggest mistake a beginner student makes.
- Ask if anyone knows how to define parkour (or freerunning).

# Instructor Etiquette

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Instructors should generally follow certain etiquette while at the gym. Here is some basic concepts to help you be a parkour leader.

- Work together to create a fun & safe environment.
  - o Cooperate with other staff and your students to have fun together. Train your students to help be rule enforcers in the gym.
- Understand effect on the people around you.
  - o Consider your actions both as an instructor and as an authority figure. Does your method of discipline or rule enforcement have a positive impact?
- Maintain a positive attitude.
  - o Students and parents can tell when someone doesn't want to be at the gym. Instructors should strive to maintain a welcoming and friendly attitude.
- Aim to progress, not necessarily succeed.
  - o While we do want to give students a feeling of success, we should also demonstrate how to manage failure while learning. While doing so, instructors can show students that we want to continuously progress, and progress doesn't mean success every time.
- Conversation is beneficial, but don't let it get distracting.
  - o It can be easy to get involved with an awesome conversation with your students or coworkers. It's part of developing relationships and communities. Keep in mind that it can become distracting. Instructors should still keep themselves positioned to be attentive to the other students as well as approachable for others.
  - o Don't let students/coworkers monopolize time with conversation. Instructors should be available for all students, not just one or two who like to engage in conversation.
- Cultivate awareness. Keep eyes on the gym and look out for others with all actions. Consider tactical positioning to be able to watch for student safety as much as possible.
  - o As an example, if an instructor is engaged in conversation with a parent they should change their position so their back is not facing the gym.
- Provide leadership to those who might benefit from it. Instructors can be seen as leaders and role models. Behave in a way that can positively influence the students.
- Shut down bullying or degradation. RVPK is here to provide a safe and friendly environment. Unchecked bullying and degradation will lead towards losing your best students while cultivating a negative atmosphere.
- Try to utilize and promote empathy. This is a good tool to reach our students and develop a strong community. Try teaching students about the parkour concept "leave no trace," and the adapted "leave things better than they found it".