



# AIKIDO COVID ACTION PLAN - RETURN TO THE DOJO

## Overview

Guidance to allow Aikido Association, Clubs and Members to slowly return to full aikido training. This document sets out an action plan to enable to fully reopen and return to training safely.

Although the following documentation is written specifically for BAB Members, the advice and Covid-19 training principles and requirements contained therein may be used and applied by any and all non-affiliated Aikido Associations in England.

For non-affiliated organisations any references to specific BAB membership/insurance requirements may be ignored.

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## Introduction

Aikido is a Japanese Martial Art whose origins can be traced back to the 12th Century. Aikido was created in the 1920's by Morihei Ueshiba. One interpretation of the name is "The Way of Harmony of Spirit". It is an art that does not seek to meet violence with violence yet maintains its martial origins. It is based on spherical movements by which an attacker's aggressive force is turned against itself. The main form of Aikido techniques are joint immobilisations and throws using the opponent's momentum. Practices with Bokken, Iaito, Hanbo, Jo, Bo, and Tanto serve to assist in the understanding of techniques and their development. Traditionally Aikido has been non-competitive, however several styles have developed which has introduced competitive and sport aspects.

Aikido is predominately taught by fully qualified but non-professional coaches in sports centres gyms, schools and church halls. Although there are a few full time professional coaches in dedicated facilities.

Aikido is a full contact martial art and therefore faces challenges in order to be practised in a safe manner during the Covid-19 pandemic.

This document sets out an action plan to enable member associations, clubs, to fully reopen and return to training safely.

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## About the BAB

The British Aikido Board (BAB) is the accredited NGB for the sport and martial art of Aikido in the UK. It is a not-for profit organisation which provides a governance structure for Aikido, that promotes and develops the Sport & Art while allowing associations, club and practitioners the space and freedom to practice the way they enjoy. Our corporate structure has 45 associations who are direct members each with their own clubs and members which number in excess of 6000 individual members across the four nations of the UK.

## Aikido and COVID-19

The impact of COVID-19 on aikido has been significant, with virtually all classes being forced to close and many of our community suffering physical and mental distress through isolation and lack of activity.

Some classes trained socially distanced in parks using weapons only and some trained socially distance indoors following the [BAB Socially Distanced Guidance](#) documents that was submitted to Sport England and the DCMS, the BAB was advised the document did not need approval as practise socially distanced.

## How is Aikido Practised

Aikido is a contact martial art normally practiced in pairs but can be many to one, hand to hand, hand to weapon or weapon to weapon. Wearing a Gi (uniform) of heavy duty cotton jacket and trousers with a belt denoting rank, many styles also wear a hakama.

A class is normally taught techniques practised on a matted area while supervised by the coach. In the sport form a short contest may be performed at the end of each class to try out what was taught during that class or to hone skills previously learned. These are normally one to one using hand to hand or hand to Tanto. Aikido is not a grappling art like Judo or Ju-Jitsu. It is similar to Karate although it consists of short sharp contact using grips and throws. In hand to hand if an opponent is held it is normally by the wrist with the opponent face down upon the floor, we very rarely would ever have close face to face proximity except in transition from one side to another and this would be normally achieved at a distanced greater than 1 meter for a time period of less than 3 seconds.



## Competition and larger scale events



### Competitions are normally held between:

- UK based university aikido clubs.
- National based competitions by the competitive styles of aikido namely Tomiki and Shodokan.
- Elite International competition.
- Sport Aikido, like Judo has a form of Randori competition. There are different competition events, some are performed as an individual and others are as part of a team.

### *Open Kata/ Embu:*

A pair of students perform a set kata from the syllabus or they develop their own kata and are judged against another pair of students.

### *Tanto Randori:*

One person attempts to perform techniques whilst the other person tries to score points by striking with a Tanto. Non-cooperative, the attacker tries to avoid being thrown by using movement and counter attacks.

### Non-competitive large scale coaching and participant event are common in aikido these can be run by:

- BAB Member Clubs normally under 50 participants.
- BAB Member Associations between 15 to 150 participants.
- BAB as a NGB national participation event between 50 to 400 participants.
- BAB Coaching Course with a on the mat examination element normally under 15 participants\*\*
- BAB Coaching Course as a lecture only normally under 15 participants\*\*

- \*\* Added for clarity but should be considered the same as an standard Phase 0 class

## Phase Information Overview

The Board is working to a 5 Phase Strategy, set out below, based on the current understanding of the combat contact framework and the government step stages of the road and how they relate to this document can be found on the [BAB website here](#).

### Phase X – (no training)

- BAB monitoring on a daily basis, Government, Public Health England, Sport England (including the home nations), Sport & Recreation Alliance Guidelines, DCMS and those being developed by other contact sports.

### Phase 0 – (non-contact, socially distanced training)

### Phase 1 – (return to equipment training)

### Phase 2 – (return to contact training)

### Phase 3 – (return to competition and events)



## Phase 0 – (non-contact, socially distanced training)



- **Before each training session reference should be made to any local restrictions, the combat contact framework and the government step stages of the road map to ensure changes have not be made that would affect the training session.**
- Resumption of Training in compliance with Government safe distancing requirements which will allow non-contact activities such as, Stretching Exercises, Ukemi, Weapon Kata and solo training. Weapons are not shared and weapon to weapons is not permitted.
- **Guidelines for Associations, Clubs and Individual Members** on the requirements for the resumption of training within BAB Clubs. (See Appendix 1)
- **Risk Assessments** In addition to compliance with the BAB's own Risk Assessment Policy and practices an additional Risk Assessment needs to be undertaken to respond to the specific threat posed by the coronavirus. Any remedial action required is to be implemented before any return to training. (See Appendix 3 and 4)
- **Club Declaration Form**- Before the first training session clubs must also confirm their compliance, at all times, with Government and BAB Guidelines on health and hygiene and safe distancing, by completing and returning the Declaration Form to the BAB Secretary by email to [babsecretary@bab.org.uk](mailto:babsecretary@bab.org.uk). (See Appendix 7)
- **Members Opt-In Club Declaration Form**, - Whilst Associations and Clubs are required to take all reasonable steps to minimise the risk of infection from the COVID-19 virus, during training sessions, individual members must recognise that an inherent risk remains for the potential to contract or pass on the virus.  
In accordance with the practice being adopted throughout the sporting sector all individual members of the BAB are required to complete the Opt-In declaration Form which should be retained by the Association Registrar, when requested. (See Appendix 9)

## Phase 1 – (return to equipment training)

Before each training session reference should be made to any local restrictions, the combat contact framework and the government step stages of the road map to ensure changes have not be made that would affect the training session .



- Must comply with Phase 0 documentation and risk assessments
- Shared equipment is not normally used in aikido unless it is club owned weapons, when used in this way they must be suitably disinfected prior to use by another person.
- Aikido can resume contact training with weapons. They can train with others and do not have to maintain 2 meter social distance. This is solely for the use of training with weapons. During this phase there should be no direct personal contact or contact with clothing. It is recommended but not mandatory that masks and gloves should worn by aikidoka when using weapon to weapon. Hand to weapon is permitted as long as there is no direct personal contact or contact to clothing.
- Training which involves contact should take place within 'training bubbles', in accordance with the any local restriction for the club's region.
- Individuals may only be part of a single bubble at an individual club/gym/dojo. Individuals may not

be part of multiple bubbles at the same or at different venues

- Coaches or officials who operate socially distanced from bubbles and are not holding or distributing weapons can operate across bubbles or multiple venues.
- Where possible, socially distanced training should be maintained for all participants.

## Phase 2 - (return to contact training)

Building on the procedures implemented in Phase 1

- Before each training session reference should be made to any local restrictions, the combat contact framework and the government step stages of the road map to ensure changes have not be made that would affect the training session.
- Must comply with Phase 0 documentation and risk assessments
- Contact Aikido may resume, which includes physical contact between participants
- Weapon to Weapon, Hand to Weapon and Hand to Hand is permitted
- Training which involves contact should take place within 'training bubbles', in accordance with the local area restriction for the club's region.



## Phase 3 - (return to competition and events)

### Competition Aikido

Although we have international rules for Tanto Randori, and Embu these need to be modified for the COVID-19 situation.



- Before the competition reference should be made to any local restrictions, the combat contact framework and the government step stages of the road map to ensure changes have not be made that would affect the event.
- Must comply with Phase 0 documentation and risk assessments
- The event must be held in a local area with no restrictions and all participants and officials must also be from a local area with no restrictions.
- Embu Pairs must be from the same training bubble and should not mix with other team members. As they may be holding each other for longer than the recommended 3 seconds.
- In Tanto Randori each participant must use their own Tanto, physical contact between participants should be less than 3 seconds before the referee should call a break.
- Prior registration is required for all participants.
- All officials are recommended to wear gloves and

masks except for medical reasons.

- It is also recommended that Antigen test results are made available for all competition participants to the event organisers prior to being allowed to enter the competition.
- No participant must be allowed into the competition if they have been in another competition within one month. All other Phase 1 or 2 training can continue during this time.
- **Guidelines for Aikido Competitions.** (See Appendix 11)

## Non-competitive large coaching and participant events

Before the event reference should be made to any local restrictions, the combat contact framework and the government step stages of the road map to ensure changes have not been made that would affect the event.

- Must comply with Phase 0 documentation and risk assessments
- The event must be held in a local area with no restrictions and all participants and officials must also be from a local area with no restrictions.
- All officials are recommended to wear gloves and masks except for medical reasons.
- It is also recommended that Antigen test results are made available for all event participants to the event organisers prior to be allow to enter the completion.
- No participant must be allowed into the event if they have attended event within one month. All other Phase 1 or 2 training can continue during this time.
- **Guidelines for Large Events.** (See Appendix 12)



## Transmission Risk – Droplets

During full contact training droplet transmission is a higher risk area due to increased respiration and proximity of players to each other. But as Aikido is normally practised at arm's length and the duration of contact is normally less than 3 seconds before a technique is applied and released the risk is much reduced.

<p><b>Phase 0</b> Socially distance Aikido greater than 2 meters <b>Low Risk</b></p> <p><b>Phase 1</b> Aikido using equipment weapons based 1. Socially distanced solo weapon training greater than 2 meters for longer than 15 minutes. 2. Weapon to weapon training less than 1 meter non face to face less than 1 minute. 3. Weapon to weapon training less than 1 meter face to face less than 3 seconds. 4. Hand to weapon training less than 1 meter non face to face less than 3 seconds. <b>Low to Medium Risk</b></p> <p><b>Phase 2</b> Aikido weapons and hand to hand. Weapons 1. Weapon to weapon training less than 1 meter non face to face less than 1 minute. 2. Weapon to weapon training less than 1 meter face to face less than 3 seconds. 3. Hand to weapon training less than 1 meter non face to face less than 3 seconds. <b>Low to Medium Risk</b></p>	<p><b>Phase 2 Hand to Hand</b> 1. Hand to hand training gripping less than 1 meter face to face less than 3 seconds 2. Hand to hand training gripping less than 1 meter non face to face less than 3 seconds. <b>Medium Risk</b></p> <p><b>Phase 3</b> Aikido weapons and hand to hand. Weapons 1. Weapon to weapon training less than 1 meter non face to face less than 1 minute. 2. Weapon to weapon training less than 1 meter face to face less than 3 seconds. 3. Hand to weapon training less than 1 meter non face to face less than 3 seconds. <b>Low to Medium Risk</b></p> <p><b>Hand to Hand</b> 4. Hand to hand training gripping less than 1 meter face to face less than 3 seconds. 5. Hand to hand training gripping less than 1 meter non face to face less than 3 seconds. 5. Weapon to hand training less than 1 meter non face to face less than 3 seconds. <b>Medium Risk</b></p>
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## Transmission Risk - Fomites

Equipment use is high in Aikido– with the primary risk of fomite transmission through surfaces, clothing, mats and weapons. As well as general surfaces such as door handles and other facilities.

The mats provide a high risk of transmission. In normal conditions it is not common for training Gi to be worn outside of the club as this can bring bacterial and fungal infections into the training area and it is highly likely that fomite transmission would be elevated if training kit was worn travelling to the club.

This risk must be balanced against the risk of droplet transmission in changing areas and depends largely on the amount of space in changing areas relative to the amount of students present.

Rigorous and documented cleaning procedures are key to the BAB strategy for managing fomite transmission, with mats, weapons and surfaces cleaned between sessions to minimise the risk of cross contamination between pods.

We support limited opening of changing areas for pods as this will not add to transmission risks that already exist within the training environment, but would significantly reduce fomite transmission risk.

## Transmission Risk - Population

Population management is at the heart of the BAB strategy for a return to sport. By limiting the contact between players we are able to control the potential spread of Coronavirus whilst still allowing full contact training. In sports where social distancing is impossible the Government recommends training in “small clusters” and allowed this from the beginning of June for elite athletes.

The BAB formulated the 15 member maximum class size with pods of 6 or less within the class that do not mix, with an allocation of 2 square meters per person and sufficient ventilation (see appendix 10), and has successfully piloted this scheme over the last 6 months with no known cases of Covid-19

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## Risk Mitigation – Training Classes & Pods



The central strategy to mitigating the transmission risk is to minimise the number of people that an aikidoka may come into close contact with. To enable a safe return, all BAB classes should group students into classes and pods. Class size should consist of up to 15 people or less. Pod of 6 or less within the class, size can be adjusted to suit relevant risk factors or local restrictions. Track and trace systems in place for clubs to alert any pod members of a potential infection risk.

Should a member of a pod report or display symptoms of Covid-19, or come into potential contact with Covid-19 (e.g. through a Test and Trace alert or family member or co-worker), the entire pod is withdrawn from training, required to self-isolate for 14 days (or until a negative test result) and report via Test and Trace.

Instructors who are required to have hands-on contact with students (e.g. when demonstrating techniques) should be considered part of that pod. Pods would not be able to train with anybody outside of the pod. Away from the mats social distance must be maintained at all times.

Clubs should ensure they have sufficient space for pods to train safely with a minimum space allowed of 2 Square Meters per player. Multiple pods may only train at the same time if there is sufficient mat space to allow them to do so. Clubs must put measures in place to prevent crossover contact between pods (e.g. in communal areas).

## Travel to Venues

Associations, clubs and members are required to travel alone where possible and are changed ready for training or an event to minimise the use of the venue facilities. If children are being brought to a venue they are to ensure only one family / household of the same support bubble are traveling together.

## Risk Assessment Monitoring

The BAB and Member Associations will monitor risk assessments created at club level and will spot check clubs on occasions. We will provide training if required to ensure continued compliance with the new systems.

*The BAB note that when this strategic document is approved the BAB will effectively manage the devolvement of the strategy in the first instance through the various Governance levels (Associations, Clubs & Individual Members). Following the sharing and embedding of the Strategic approach; the BAB will then develop an operational action and implementation plan to ensure an effective risk management, assessment, and implementation/review process at club level.*

## Guidance Associations & Clubs (See Appendix 1)

### Overview

- Ensure that all BAB membership and Venue requirements are up to date
- Carry out Standard Risk Assessment (Appendix 3)
- Carry out COVID-19 Risk Assessment (Appendix 4)
- Appoint a “COVID-19” Officer (Appendix 5) to monitor the Dojo to ensure Guidelines set out are adhered to including.
  - Maintaining current track and trace contact details of those attending each training session ( current mobile number) example form (Attachment 6)
  - Check that no one trains who is showing symptoms of coronavirus or has been in contact with someone suffering from the illness ( Clubs should purchase an infra-red thermometer) Log that it has been done the track and trace form (Attachment 6)
  - Ensure maintenance of current safe distancing requirements. At the present time this will require as minimum -
    - The allocation of 2 metres squared per person
    - A separate location being identified for the Instructor to teach from a static position.
    - Maximum of 15 people in one class and a maximum of 6 in a training pod within the class.
  - Ensure no sharing of weapons
  - Spectators/Parents access only to be permitted when safe distancing from tatami can be maintained and masks are worn.
- Instructors are to be aware that they will need to bear a responsibility for ensuring best practice.
- Ascertain whether particular venue(s) whilst possibly re-opening, are accepting outside lettings or those involving contact sports.
- Develop Advice to members on how they might safely access the Venue where training takes place.
- Ensure that all Guidelines are applied to Spectators/Parents.
- Complete and return the Club Declaration Form to the BAB Secretary by post or email. (Appendix 7)
- Ensure First Aiders have read the latest guidance (Appendix 8)
- Remember that the Government Guidance may vary between the 4 Nations.

## Guidance for Individual Members (See Appendix 2)

### Overview

- Do not attend a Dojo if you are having any symptoms or have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid-19
- Recognise that individuals must also accept a level of responsibility towards others and themselves.
- Complete the Opt-In form, recognising the element of risk (Attachment 9)
- Only handle your own weapons, sanitising them before and after use.
- Use Hand Hygiene (Hand Sanitiser) or thoroughly wash hands on entering /leaving the Dojo
- Use of Changing Rooms to be avoided.
- Agree in advance to follow guidance provided
- Follow Government guidelines on the wearing of masks

Those Associations/Clubs responsible for their own venue, should also follow the Government's Guidelines on cleaning and safe distancing.

**Members are reminded that all those training are required to hold current BAB Member Registration, which includes insurance and Clubs must also hold current Venue Registration**



## Aikido Terminology

Japanese Name	Key Explanation
<b>Weapons</b>	
<b>Bokken</b>	Wooden Sword used for training, also known as Ken or Bokuto
<b>Iaito</b>	A modern metal practice sword, without a cutting edge. A Katana is a sword with a sharp edge and is not normally used in Aikido.
<b>Hanbo</b>	Wooden staff normally 36 inches (90 cm)
<b>Jo</b>	Wooden staff about 48 inches long (127.6 cm)
<b>Bo</b>	Wooden staff various length up to 72 inches (183 cm)
<b>Tanto</b>	A wooden, rubber or soft fabric training knife (without cutting edge)
<b>General</b>	
<b>Dojo</b>	Training hall for martial arts,
<b>Gi</b>	Heavy duty cotton jacket and Trousers
<b>Hakama</b>	Loose trousers with many pleats in the front, forming part of Japanese formal dress.
<b>Ukemi</b>	A set of breakfall and roll techniques used to safely fall and accept attacks
<b>Kata</b>	A sequence of aikido techniques, they can be hand to hand, hand to weapons or weapon to weapon
<b>Aikidoka</b>	A person that trains in Aikido.
<b>Tatami</b>	The matted area that is used for training aikido on.
<b>Randori</b>	Combative competition between two people either hand to hand( known as Toshu Randori) or hand to Tanto (Known as Tanto Randori)

Please note that it is the responsibility of Clubs and individual members to ensure that these are guideline and responsibilities read in conjunction with advice from the following agencies-

- Central Government – England [Contact Combat sport framework](#)
- Central Government – England and overarching guidance [www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)
- Welsh Government – [www.gov.wales](http://www.gov.wales)
- Scottish Government-[www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)
- Northern Ireland Government-[www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk)
- NHS Coronavirus Advice – [www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/)

It is also important to note that Associations and Clubs may need to issue further guidance to meet their individual environmental requirements, training regimes, venue requirements etc., but always in compliance with Government and BAB guidelines.





## **BAB COVID COMMITTEE**

Stephen Billett – BAB Lead Covid Officer

Piers Cooke – BAB Chairman

Ann Billett – BAB Vice Chair

Dr Kevin Broad – BAB Scientific Advisor

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## List of Appendices

Appendix 1 - Guidance for Associations and Clubs

Appendix 2 - Guidance for Members

Appendix 3 - Risk Assessment Proforma

Appendix 4 - Covid-19 Risk Assessment

Appendix 5 - Guidance for club Covid-19 Officer

Appendix 6 - Club Covid-19 Trace Form

Appendix 7 - Covid-19 Club Declaration Form

Appendix 8 - Guidance for Aikido First Aiders

Appendix 9 - Covid-19 Opt In Form

Appendix 10 – Air Extraction & Ventilation

Appendix 11 - Guidance for Aikido Competition

Appendix 12 - Guidance for Large Aikido Events

Appendix 13 - JAA International Tanto Randori Rules

Note: The JAA rules are for reference only.

