



## What you need to know about Tip Tests, Promotion and Belt Graduations

New students of the Shire Martial Arts Big Dolphin program start off on a white belt. Students moving up from our 'Lil Dolphins' program start off on the last Lil Dolphin belt they earned which is classified as a Big Dolphin white belt.

After each completed class Big Dolphin students receive a black 'attendance tip' or stripe on their belts. When they accumulate a MINIMUM of 5 attendance tips, they must then pass a martial arts and fitness practical test once a month which are known as 'Tip Tests'. When each Tip Test is passed the student then receives a red 'Skill Tip'.

When a student passes all 3 Tip Tests for their current belt they then move up to the next stage of the program which is represented by a different coloured belt and the process is repeated.

Students are awarded their new belts at a belt graduation ceremony. At 'Belt Graduation' each graduating student must do a short martial arts demonstration. Most students also choose to do a board break at belt graduation.

As well as this, a demonstration could be a display of either kicking, basic movement drill, free sparring, self defence, one step sparring or Poomsei, in fact anything to do with martial arts! Each student may nominate what they would like to do. If unsure ask an instructor for suggestions.

Generally, belt graduation to the next coloured belt occurs every three months for each student. If unsure check the syllabus of your next belt. If still unsure check with an instructor.

Before attending Belt Graduation each student must obtain a 'Gup Promotion' form from the SMA website and fill it out before returning it before Belt Graduation day. Big Dolphins must also have their parents and teachers fill out the relevant sections as well.

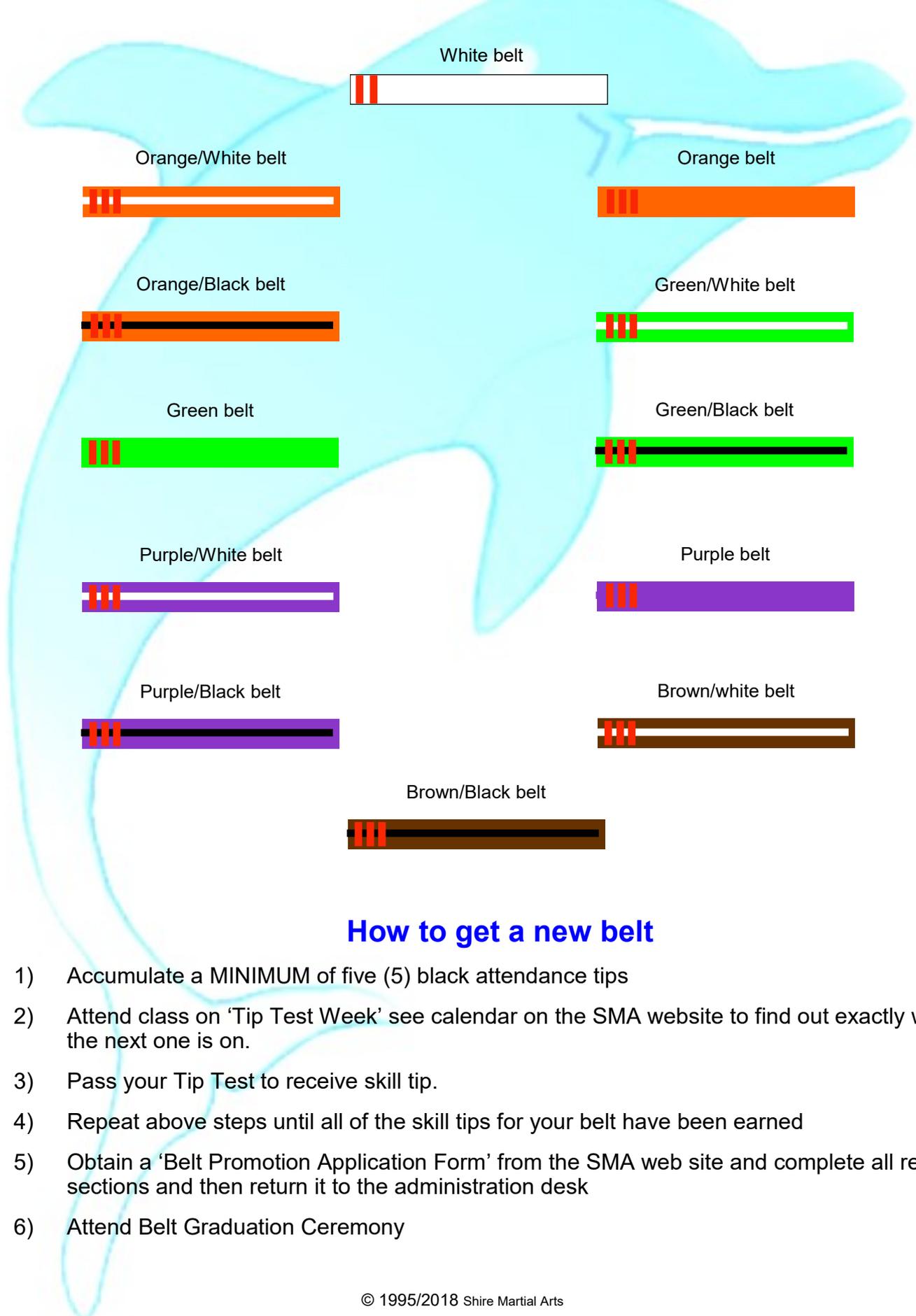
The first coloured belt in the Big Dolphin program is orange/white belt through to brown/black belt. See the diagram below that depicts all of the belts within the Big Dolphin program.

### Tip Tests

- Tip Tests are done in a group format during 'Tip Test week' in class once a month. Remember, Shire Martial Arts instructors are happy and willing to help guide a student who may have some doubts, questions or concerns about an upcoming Tip Test. There is no such thing as a 'silly question'. More information about the syllabus can be found in the Big Dolphin section of the Shire Martial Arts website.
- Only one tip per student is given out per day regardless if it is a black Attendance Tip or a coloured Skill Tip.
- When all skill tips for a belt are earned, subsequent attendance tips received before the student's actual belt graduation ceremony do NOT accumulate or carry over onto the next belt.
- Please remember that each skill tip represents a competency in learning. However, *continual* practice and being present in class on a *regular* basis is the key to achieving and maintaining this.
- The Big Dolphins program is designed to prepare students to eventually graduate into the 'SMA Junior Black belt Program'. When the SMA instructors believe a Big Dolphin is old enough and ready to move into the 'SMA Junior Black belt Program' we will discuss this with the Big Dolphin's parents.
- The purpose of training at SMA is NOT about tip or belt accumulation, it is about the PRACTICE of martial arts. It will be very helpful if parents can understand this concept and then reinforce it to their kids.



## The Belts Of The Big Dolphins Program



### How to get a new belt

- 1) Accumulate a MINIMUM of five (5) black attendance tips
- 2) Attend class on 'Tip Test Week' see calendar on the SMA website to find out exactly when the next one is on.
- 3) Pass your Tip Test to receive skill tip.
- 4) Repeat above steps until all of the skill tips for your belt have been earned
- 5) Obtain a 'Belt Promotion Application Form' from the SMA web site and complete all relevant sections and then return it to the administration desk
- 6) Attend Belt Graduation Ceremony



## Belt Promotion Policy

Shire Martial Arts is a black belt *SCHOOL* – Everyone is training towards earning their black belt. This is the purpose of our classes and programs.

**How do you get a black belt?** The only people who can award the rank of Black belt are 4<sup>th</sup> Dan and higher registered and qualified Taekwondo Instructors.

Instructors promote students according to a ratio of 4 basic things, including:

- [Knowledge of technique](#) - This is obviously how well you know and can do the moves. Your skill competencies are assessed at each Tip Test.
- [Attitude to training and willingness to learn](#) – This is YOUR level of seriousness and commitment to be the best you can be during the short time you are dressed in your uniform and training in a class.
- [Class attendance](#) – Pilots must have air time before they get their licence so must martial arts students before they get their black belt. Class attendance is also critical in ensuring that each student develops the necessary 'muscle memory' that make each martial arts move a 'reflex action'.
- [Length of time for being in each rank](#) - A student must be on each 'gup' or belt for a certain minimum amount of time before they are eligible to be promoted up to the next one. This applies to colour belts and black belts alike.

Also, gup holders **must have regular attendance** before they can be promoted. Students who have missed a lot of classes will have to pass all of their tip tests as well as undergo some other extra testing before they will be considered for promotion.

The reason there are four criteria is because each individual has different strengths and weaknesses. For example, if one student is gifted athletically and only gives 50% effort during class or does not pay attention, it tends to make instructors feel that the student's 'attitude to training' needs more work. Then, if another student has poor coordination skills and struggles with doing or remembering the 'moves', yet is trying as best they can, instructors may feel in some cases that this determination to succeed makes a student ready for promotion.

Now this is an important point. Each belt (gup) is merely a level of competency. Your next belt is not a race or a reward and not receiving a skill tip at a Tip Test is not a 'punishment'. [Martial arts training is about the PRACTICE of martial arts.](#) Parents of junior students are encouraged to reinforce this point to them.

We have to earn our stripes no matter if we are colour belts or black belts. Otherwise what's the point in coming to class? If you don't earn your stripes you may as well stay at home in front of the TV and buy a black belt from the shop for around ten dollars.

Like anything in life if we concentrate and practice on something regularly, a level of achievement comes quickly. If you are busy doing other things such as being in a band, in nippers, playing soccer, working, dancing or whatever, you are achieving great goals and a level of achievement in *those* fields - which is good. None of us are super human, so it is only possible to achieve so much over a period of time.



## Belt Promotion Policy

If you are busy doing other things and not available to come to class, obviously it is going to take longer to reach the level of achievement that you are capable of reaching.

If something comes up in your life and a low attendance causes your Tip Tests to slow down, don't be dismayed and give up your practice. Use slow times as an opportunity to consolidate your knowledge as well as to build a strong foundation so you are able to move forward in they syllabus and ranks confidently.

As instructors, we are here to help you be the very best martial artist and person you can be. The higher we all go in our belts the harder it is going to be for our next belt promotion. That is the martial arts challenge - for everybody.

Most students will agree that IF they are not ready for a Tip Test or belt promotion then, it is better to wait until next time when it will be far less nerve wracking, more natural and easier. Just think what you would prefer – would you like to wear the next tip or belt because the instructors felt sorry for you. Or, would you like to wear it in the knowledge that you EARN it fair and square.

If you:

- ♦ Do not have enough class attendance at the moment.
- ♦ Just missed out on the last belt graduation and you must wait three more weeks for the next one.
- ♦ Need to work on some technique or terminology.
- ♦ Just need an attitude adjustment.

Then do yourself a favour by keep training and just doing what you have to do - and then your next Tip Test or belt promotion will be easy.

Don't worry about anybody else's journey or progress in martial arts because [your journey](#) is the only one that matters.

Finally, your [instructors can only guide you](#) and help you to the best of their ability, however the [concentration, determination and effort to succeed](#) must come from [you](#).

This is [your responsibility](#).

# How to tie a Taekwondo belt (*dee*)

1) First hold the flat part of the belt against your belly button so the LEFT side is the short side about 30 cm long for kids and around 45 cm for adults. The longer side is on the right...



2) ...Now neatly wrap the long side clockwise round the body 2 times. Stop when the 2nd wrap reaches your belly button and keep holding onto the end...



3) ...From here, push this end under the lower part of the coiled belt at your belly button and bring it back up and out over the top part, so it is wedged against your belly area and the coil. At this point, the short left end of the belt is pointing down and the long coiled right side should be pointing up...

4) ...Grab the left end with your left hand. Then, grab the right end with your right hand and cross it over the top of the left end. You'll see that this causes a loop. Bend the right end so it goes down around the left end and then pull it back up through the loop...



5) ...When it comes through the loop, grab this bent over right end with your left hand - and the original short left end with your right hand...



6) ...and pull tight so the knot closes in a similar fashion to a 'reef knot'...



7) ...When the belt is tied, ensure both ends are of the same length and that the belt is nice and even on your back so none of the other coils are visible.

