

## **What having a Senior Black Belt means to me:**

Karate is defined as “a system of unarmed combat using hands and feet to deliver and block blows widely practised as a sport.” But to me it is so much more than that. It is a place of friendship, laughter, respect, dedication, and discipline, and it has become 1 of my main priorities. Every punch, every block and every kick is a feeling of relief that I have the privilege to come to the dojo with my second family and work alongside them, not just as a student but as an assistant instructor as well. Tuesday has become my favourite day of the week as I get to tutor each child and know that when they get their black belt someday, I helped them get closer to their dreams. It has also helped me recognise and appreciate the incredible work that all the instructors do. Giving up their spare time to teach all the little dragons like I once was, to their senior black belt just like I hope to achieve.

This black belt will be a symbol of my journey as well as the destination from a six-year-old at Little Dragons to a sixteen-year-old Senior black belt. Now that I am grading for my First Dan that journey has been made clear. In the beginning it was just a club of convenience and fun. But once I realised what everyone had been working towards, I realised how incredible it is that nobody in my family has made it this far. I wanted to push past my limits, both physical and mental and do what nobody else in my family had done.

There are things I have done recently that show I am determined, and that this achievement is well deserved. When I found out I was not doing push-ups in a triangle I started practising in my room. Most people waited two years after going from their junior black belt to their senior black belt, but I only waited one year. It is not just things that I have done recently that show determination. The fact that I have done karate for ten years and made it this far still amazes me and others around me that I am this dedicated to achieving my senior black belt.

Karate is more than just a physical activity to me; it has also become a way of life. Through countless hours of training, I have learned the importance of perseverance and respect. These values have shaped my character, helped with my self-confidence and resilience, and forever changed me.

In conclusion, the attainment of a karate black belt would hold a profound meaning for me. It serves as a testament to my commitment, discipline, and personal growth over the years. It is the embodiment of values such as perseverance and respect. Beyond the physical techniques, a black belt signifies the development of mental fortitude, leadership skills, and a sense of responsibility to others. It would be an honour to join the ranks of those who have achieved this milestone, and I cannot wait for the day when I can proudly wear my senior black belt.