

A Handbook of Policies & Procedures for the Hamden Heronettes Artistic Swimming Club



Revised September 2023

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Please Note: HHC is an initialization for Hamden Heronettes Artistic Swimming Club and may be used in lieu of the full title throughout this document.

General Policies

Hamden Heronettes Artistic Swimming Club Expectations Agreement

1. The Hamden Heronettes Artistic Swimming Club is a competitive team. Skill assessments will be conducted by the coach(es) to determine swimming level and appropriate team competition level. Swimmers will be chosen to specific teams based on the swimmer's ability to successfully complete the skill assessment requirements for the appropriate level as determined by the coach.
2. There is NO POLICY that governs equal pool and coaching time for all athletes on the team. This is a coaching decision based on many factors. This is a competitive athletic program.
3. Swimmers are expected to attend ALL practices and meets. Extenuating circumstances that prohibit you from attending a practice will be reviewed by the coaching staff on an individual basis. A monthly practice schedule will be provided at the beginning of each month. A schedule for the competitive season will be provided as soon as meet dates are determined.
4. Personal communication between the swimmer's parent/guardian and the coach is the ONLY way to be excused from a practice. Messages from teammates will not be considered an excuse.
5. All Hamden Heronettes rules must be followed by all associated with HHC as outlined in the Bylaws and Handbook.
6. Any team member caught using illegal substances (alcohol or other controlled substances) will be dismissed from the team.
7. By signing this document, I acknowledge that I have read this Handbook in its entirety and agree to the HHC and SafeSport policies stated within.

I have read and will abide by the expectations listed above.

(Athlete Signature) (date)

I have read and will encourage my child to follow the expectations listed above.

(Parent/Guardian Signature) (date)

Swimmer Responsibilities

Be respectful. Be present. Be committed.

Heronettes must:

- Act in such a way as to represent the Hamden Heronettes well.
- Respect teammates, coaches, parents/guardians, chaperones, competitors, and officials.
- Support other Heronettes both in and out of the pool.
- Acknowledge competitors in a friendly way.
- Take direction from coaches and chaperones without debate. (Discuss problems later, in private.)
- Attend practice regularly. Attendance two weeks prior to competition is mandatory.
- Be on time and prepared to swim.
- Notify a coach as early as possible, but no less than one hour before practice, about an absence.
- Competitions are mandatory. Clear your calendars for meet dates at the beginning of the season.
- Set high personal standards to work hard at the pool and at home.
- Wear the team uniform (as directed by the coach) to, during, and from every competition and event.

Parent and Guardian Responsibilities

Support. Encourage. Participate.

Parents/guardians can promote their swimmer's involvement and success by:

- Making sure the swimmer attends practice regularly and on time. If transportation is a problem, arrange a car pool.
- Cheering the Heronettes at competitions. (Note: Family members are not allowed on the pool deck at any time during competitions.)
- Volunteering to help the Parents' Association. Each family is expected to provide at least one parent/guardian to serve on a standing committee.
 - Attending Parents' Association meetings and staying informed.
 - Supporting fund-raising activities.
 - Monitoring the care of the swimmer's suits, team apparel and equipment.
- Picking up their swimmer inside the building at scheduled dismissal time. All parents/guardians must be present during locker room time. Coaches' responsibility for swimmers ends at the end of practice. A parent/guardian must wait with the last swimmer if that swimmer's ride is late. NOTE: Swimmers should never be left at the pool without either a coach (at the beginning of practice) or parent/guardian to supervise.
- Paying registration fees, tuition, apparel/suits, and travel expenses promptly. Outstanding balances may result in the swimmer not being allowed to participate in practice or competitions.
 - Being sure the swimmer is properly equipped for practice and meets.
 - Notifying coaches of any health problems or changes during the season.
 - Supporting coaches by reinforcing the list of Swimmer's Responsibilities.

NOTE: Parents/guardians may be asked to leave the pool area during practice, at the discretion of the coaches.

Cell Phone/Recording Device Policy

At no time will a cell phone, camera or recording device of any kind be allowed in a locker or changing room whether at home or away. At no time are any type of photographs, video or audio recordings allowed to be taken in a locker or changing room whether home or away. If a swimmer is found using a cell phone, camera or recording device in a locker or changing room one of the following consequences will be administered at the discretion of the Head Coach and Team Manager and they will notify the Executive Board of their decision:

- A coach or a member of the Executive Board will call the swimmer's parent/guardian to discuss the issue
- The swimmer will not be allowed to bring their device to practice.
- The swimmer will be suspended from the team and all team activities, including but not limited to practices, meets and social events.

Swimmers are encouraged to inform a coach, adult or Executive Board member if they see another swimmer violating this rule. If the swimmer confides to a parent/guardian, that parent/guardian is encouraged to contact a coach or Executive Board member. All notifications will be kept in complete confidentiality.

Bullying Policy

HHC has a zero tolerance policy concerning bullying, which is defined by the State of CT Public Act No. 11-232 (please refer to this document for the complete definition of bullying). If a swimmer is found to be bullying another swimmer one of the following consequences will be administered at the discretion of the Head Coach and Team Manager and they will notify the Executive Board of their decision:

- A coach or a member of the Executive Board will call the swimmer's parent/guardian to discuss the issue
- The swimmer will be suspended from the team and all team activities, including but not limited to practices, meets and social events.

Swimmers are encouraged to inform a coach, adult or Executive Board member if they see a swimmer bullying another swimmer or if they themselves are being bullied. If the swimmer confides to a parent/guardian, that parent/guardian is encouraged to contact a coach or Executive Board member. All notifications will be kept in complete confidentiality.

Suspension and Expulsion Policy

HHC has strict practice participation, behavior, bullying, and cell phone/recording device policies. If a swimmer violates any of these policies or partakes in gross misconduct of any kind, the coaches and team manager have the right to suspend or expel a swimmer from the team at their discretion with approval from the Executive Board. If a swimmer is suspended or expelled from the team, the swimmer's tuition will not be refunded.

Health Policies

Medical Release Forms

- All competitive swimmers of the Hamden Heronettes Artistic Swimming Club will be required to have a signed physical form from their Health Care Provider.
- Forms must be submitted to the Team Manager by December 1st to cover the upcoming competitive season.
- They must be dated no earlier than 18 months from the start of the season.

Illness/Injuries

- Swimmers with fevers, flu-like symptoms, or any other contagious illness should refrain from practice. Notify the coach prior to practice.
- Swimmers with any minor illness or injury (headache, sprain, soreness, or muscle stress) are encouraged to attend practice to observe and to participate within their capacity.
- If an athlete has been seriously injured or absent due to any hospitalization or serious illness, permission to resume activities will be necessary in the form of a letter or email directly sent from all doctors that treated the swimmer (i.e. pediatrician, orthopedist, neurologist, etc.)
 - o The responsible parent or guardian must keep the head coach informed regarding plans to return to the activity.
 - o If the responsible parent/guardian have been unable to contact the head coach, they must contact the President of the Executive Board instead.
 - o This policy is to ensure that the coaching staff has the information they need regarding the physical and emotional situation of the swimmer and will be able to safely monitor the swimmer and recognize any recurring problems.
 - o No athlete will be allowed to reenter the pool area, locker rooms, or any other Heronettes function until these steps have been taken.
- The staff reserves the right to ask a parent/guardian to be present at practices as deemed necessary.
- Possible concussions at practice or other events: If a swimmer strikes their head/neck, is struck in the head/neck, or in any other way suspects a strike that could lead to a concussion, the coach will ask the swimmer to exit the pool and sit down. A coach (or other Heronettes adult as designated by the coach) will call the swimmer's parent/guardian, and if they are not available, the emergency contacts listed on the swimmer's form. The parent/guardian/emergency contact will be told what happened and will discuss with the coach and/or the swimmer what the swimmer's symptoms are. It is up to the parent/guardian/emergency contact to decide if the swimmer should return to practice or not. The swimmer has the option of resting for about 15 minutes, at which time the parent/guardian/emergency contact must make the decision regarding a return to practice. If the swimmer does not return to practice the swimmer must be picked up from the pool area as soon as possible. If the swimmer enters the locker room another swimmer or their parent/guardian should accompany them. Please note that coaches are not medical professionals and should not make a medical diagnosis.

Medications

- A swimmer who is taking prescription medication during the travel season will need to travel with their parent or guardian if there is not a chaperone willing to take responsibility for this swimmer. The parent or guardian of this swimmer will sign a release removing any responsibility from the chaperone related to the administration of the prescription medication.
- The coach reserves the right to ask a parent/guardian to be present at practices as deemed necessary.
- The coach reserves the right to exclude any swimmer from entrance to the pool, locker room, or any Heronettes event if it is deemed a matter of safety for all individuals involved.

Financial Obligations and Fundraising

Funding for the Hamden Heronettes is primarily provided by the parents/guardians, working through the Parents' Association. Most expenditures are coaching salaries and registration fees for competitions used from funds generated from tuition. *We are fortunate that the Hamden Parks and Recreation Department contributes pool time and a monetary allocation—many teams have to pay for pool time!*

Tuition*

Swimmers will be assessed a yearly tuition based on the number of routines assigned to the swimmer. A payment schedule is determined in advance by the Executive Board and tuition must be paid on time. If payment is not received according to schedule determined by the Executive Board, the swimmer will not be allowed to swim at practice or in competition.

*Tuition does not cover a swimmer's cost for equipment, costumes, and travel expenses to away meets.

Fundraising

A variety of individual, cooperative and club fundraising opportunities will be held during the season. Fundraisers can be used to defray any cost associated with the Heronettes such as fees, apparel, costumes, and/or travel.

There are three types of fundraisers:

- a. Individual fundraisers (such as Raise Right) - 100% of profits are assigned to the swimmer account.
- b. Cooperative fundraisers (such as items for purchase, i.e. coffee, chocolate, etc.) - Profits are divided with a set percentage going to the swimmer account and the remainder to the team, or with a set flat amount going to the club and the remainder going to the swimmer account. The first \$25 raised by each swimmer for Swim-a-Thon will go to the team.
- c. Club fundraisers (such as Coin-Drive) - 100% of profits will support the team, often to offset coaches' travel

Note: Once the competitive season ends, all unused funds will remain in the swimmer's account.

Other Expenses (Team Travel)

- Regardless of which team your swimmer is on, team members share all expenses of the coach(es) who participate in meets and events away from the club's home pool. These expenses, which may include a "coaches' room" and/or a "coaches' car" as well as meal expenses.
- Other associated costs necessary for competition are determined by which team your swimmer is on and are shared by team members. These include the minimum number of vehicles, hotel rooms, and chaperones needed to accommodate the team. Also included is the cost of any shared meals.
- Estimated costs sheets may be issued and, if issued, must be paid in full two weeks before an away meet. Revisions will be made following the meet and, based on the actual costs; revised cost sheets will reflect credits to the swimmer's account or additional money due.
- The cost of general travel associated with the team is outlined under General Travel Cost Guidelines below on pages 7-8.

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Travel Policies, Procedures, and Expectations

Overview

- It is required that swimmers attend all meets in which their routines will compete.
- When traveling as a team, all swimmers will dress in the same/identical attire, as directed by their coach.
- Volunteer chaperones must be available and willing to chaperone all travel, competition, and other events for their assigned group of swimmers for that particular meet or event.
- The entire team participates together in food arrangements, whether being assessed for purchased food or dining out. If dietary restrictions are anticipated to pose a problem, families should alert the coach and food organizer as soon as possible.
- All activities, meals, sightseeing, etc. will be done as a team.

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Intermediate and Age Group Teams

- Team members are allowed to travel with their family. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure swimmers are on time for all events. Families must arrive at the hotel and pool at pre-determined times ~~as directed by the team coach(es) so as to not miss any part of a meet~~. Should a parent/guardian not be able to accompany their swimmer, it is that parent's/guardian's responsibility (with assistance from the Team Parent) to make arrangements with another swimmer's family for transportation and chaperoning of their swimmer. If needed, there will always be a chaperone available to share a room with those swimmers whose family may not be able to attend the meet.
- The Travel Coordinator will notify the families of the swimmers of hotel information and room reservation deadlines, or will ask the Team Parent to distribute the information to the families.
- Swimmers MUST stay at the pre-determined hotel. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure reservations are made in time and appropriately for each meet or event.
- Team members are allowed to stay in hotel rooms with their family.
- If different families want to travel together, those families may make those decisions.

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Swimmer Behavior Guidelines for Meets

- Be polite, calm, quiet, cooperative and always prepared
- Observe curfews
- Be at the pool, breakfast area, car, etc. at the designated times fully prepared
- Treat the host pool/locker areas and hotel with respect, leaving them neat and clean
- Eat according to the schedule and the guidelines
- Cooperate with and be respectful of chaperones, coaches and officials
- Be respectful of other Heronettes and your competitors
- Bring and wear required uniforms and gear
- Stay with teammates in groups of at least two or three at all times
- Ask permission of chaperones, parent/guardian or coach before going anywhere
- For safety, keep interactions with strangers to a minimum
- Never invite anyone (other than teammates) to your hotel room
- Do not use phones, tablets, or computers at the meet venue or hotel without permission from a chaperone or coach.

General Travel Cost Guidelines

Fundraisers may be held during the year to help defray coaches' travel expenses, which otherwise are shared among teammates.

Cost of Lodging

- The ~~Travel Coordinator~~~~First Vice President~~ makes all hotel reservations for the team, weighing cost, convenience, and available amenities to make the best decision for everyone involved.
- Each swimmer is responsible for the cost of their room in addition to the cost of a portion of the coaches' room.
- Coaches share a coaches' room together; coaches do not share rooms with swimmers.

Cost of Transportation

- The cost of driving to the meet (gas, tolls, etc.) is the responsibility of the parent/guardian. If a parent/guardian transports additional swimmers, it is up to them to discuss transportation costs with other families.
- If traveling by air, train or bus, each swimmer is responsible for their own fare and an equal portion of the chaperones' (if applicable) and coaches' fares.
- Each swimmer is responsible for a portion of the cost of the coaches' car to the meet. The per mileage cost of the coaches' car is determined at the beginning of each season by the Executive Board based on the government standard.

Cost of Food

- At some events a "food organizer" might bring (or send) food in coolers "picnic-style" for lunch and snacks which are shared by swimmers, coaches, chaperones, and potentially other family members at the meet venue. In this case the cost of the food will be divided evenly among the swimmers and non-chaperone family members that eat the provided food. The cost will be assessed to the swimmer's account. **Please notify the food organizer of any food allergies two weeks prior to a competition.**
- Teams may decide to purchase a healthy lunch at the concession stand or send someone out for sandwiches, etc. instead of bringing all the food to the venue. In this case swimmers and other family members are responsible for paying for their own meals.
- If possible, breakfast is at the hotel, otherwise the team will decide whether the "food organizer" or the swimmer's parent/guardian will provide it.
- Meals not eaten at the venue may require additional funds for dining out or take out. In this case swimmers and families are responsible for paying for their own meals. NOTE: Coaches' meal expenses at restaurants are shared among swimmers.

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Cost of Supplies

- The Team Parent will provide make up, in consultation with the coach, for each swimmer. They will also provide hair gelling/knoxing supplies at away meets.
- There may be a separate assessment for these supplies, as requested by the Team Parent.

Volunteers at Away Meets

The Hamden Heronettes could not function as a competitive team without the help of parent/guardian volunteers. The coaches depend on help from families and are very appreciative of the time and effort expended. Although the swimmers may not consciously appreciate parent/guardian volunteers, they are the reason families step up to volunteer again and again. *Thank you in advance for volunteering!*

Overview of Volunteer Roles

Team Parent: Supplies hair gell/knox, hair preparation equipment, makeup, extra gear, costumes, headpieces, and Team Bag. Cares for suits and headpieces following the meet and restocks Team Bag. May also serve as a chaperone.

Chaperone: Maintains the team's schedule during the meet (while traveling, at the hotel, and at the venue.)

Monitors their time at the venue, assists with costume changes, hair and makeup. For younger swimmers this position may require accessing the athlete locker rooms, in which case the chaperone(s) should be the same gender as the athletes. Most facilities discourage or disallow adults in the athlete locker rooms.

Food Organizer: (If one is appointed for a particular team or meet): Shops in advance for food to bring and eat at the venue for the swimmers and coaches, and potentially other family members.

Except for the Team Parent, volunteer responsibilities must be shared among all parents/guardians during the competitive season. The Team Parent usually serves in the position for the entire competitive season, but does not need to travel to every meet or serve as a Chaperone for every meet.

NOTE: Parent/guardian volunteers (including Team Parent) are NOT permitted on the pool deck at a meet venue.

Specific Duties of Volunteer Positions

It is the policy of the Hamden Heronettes that all volunteers [over the age of 18](#) must take and pass the Safe Sport course online.

All Parents and Guardians

- Before your swimmer leaves for an away meet, please review the “Behavior Guidelines” and discuss their importance.
- Remind swimmers that their public behavior and attitude is seen by others as characteristic of the Hamden Heronettes; when they are wearing their team uniform, they represent the team.
- Notify the Chaperone of any special circumstances for your swimmer, especially medical and dietary needs.
- Update your emergency medical information if it has changed.
- Following the meet, help your swimmer launder, organize, and repack the Heronettes uniform and gear so it’s ready for the next meet.

Team Parent

A Team Parent volunteer is needed for each competitive team. This may be a shared position. Responsibilities include:

- Storing Competition Suits and headpieces during the competitive season and cleaning them after each use. Make Swimsuit Coordinator aware of any minor repairs that are needed. [A Suit Care Contract which includes directions for suit care will be given to each Team Parent. This must be read, signed and for](#)
- Returning all suits to the Swimsuit Coordinator at the end of the competitive season. Report any damaged or lost suits to the Swimsuit Coordinator.
- Working closely with Team Chaperones before and during each meet.
- Coordinating and maintaining supplies for the Team Bag. This includes maintaining the makeup and hair gelling/knoxing supplies. Records and alerts the Treasurer if a swimmer should be assessed for goggles, bathing caps, or nose plugs needed from the Team Bag at a meet.
- Implementing a phone tree/email list for team information and scheduling updates.
- Survey the swimmers and parents/guardians of the team in advance of the competition season on swimmer food options; allergies (and sensitivity), food restrictions, likes and dislikes, and what they are familiar with eating (see food options below in Food Organizer section for suggestions)
- Acting as a liaison between the team parents and coaches.

Chaperone

Chaperones must commit and devote their time to the swimmers through the meet. The chaperones are expected to stay at the meet venue with the swimmers. Responsibilities include:

- Confirm that the swimmers are always supervised and that they use the buddy system when leaving the larger group.
- Know where the swimmers are at all times.
- Have access to the swimmers' Emergency Medical Forms while traveling.
- Enforce the bedtime, wake-up time and breakfast times designated by the coach.
- Monitor healthy snacking, eating, and hydration.
- Ensure that swimmers behave according to the Behavior Guidelines
- Check that all swimmers are wearing the uniform specified by the coach.
- Attend to health problems that arise such as illness or minor injuries utilizing supplies from the Team Bag or the meet venue.
- Make sure the swimmers' costumes are hung up after each swim and stored in their proper garment bags along with the headpieces. ~~They are to follow the Suit Care protocol explained on the Suit Care Contract.~~
- Ensure swimmers are ready to "warm up" and swim in specified uniforms or costumes, and meet the coach on time in the correct location.
- Assist swimmers with costumes, hair preparation (gelling/knoxing), headpieces and makeup according to the coaches' timeline and instructions.
- Encourage swimmers to be organized and careful of their belongings and costumes.
- Enforce the de-gelling prohibition of most venues.
- Assist with video recording Heronettes routines.
- Remind swimmers to inventory their belongings before leaving the meet venue. Help them check Lost and Found, if needed.
- The Chaperone's responsibility is to the swimmers. If a swimmers' sibling is traveling as well, that sibling must be in the care of another adult for the duration of the travel and meet.

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Food Organizer

It is important that swimmers are well fed and hydrated when at a meet. Each team's designated food organizer oversees this for one- and two-day meets. Responsibilities:

- Coordinates the purchase of non-perishable items and food/beverages for the team cooler.
- Stocks the team cooler with healthy food, snacks and beverages for the swimmers. Adheres to a "no junk food/no soda" rule until the competitive events have concluded.
- Takes into account dietary restrictions, allergies and preferences of the swimmers.
- Reminds swimmers and volunteer adults to bring a refillable water bottle.
- Turns over receipts to the Treasurer within ten (10) days of returning.
- Provides food at the venue for swimmer. If other family members want to eat from the team cooler, they must inform the food organizer in advance and will be assessed a fee accordingly.
- Arranges take-out meals to be eaten at the hotel and determines the logistics of picking up food and eating together. Swimmers, coaches and chaperones should all be fed with the take-out food, and other family members may participate if they notified the food organizer in advance. The cost of the food will be divided equally among everyone who participates in the meal.
- Researches possible dining out options for the team when traveling for more than one day.

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The Hamden Heronettes own a couple of large coolers with wheels. Generally, the food items /cooler can be left unattended at the meet venue. Eating at the meet venue will be planned for individual swimmers according to their scheduled events and the coaches' timeline. If multiple HHC teams are at the same meet, they may share food from each other's cooler. Plans can be made in advance for healthy meals to be purchased at the venue's concession stand or for someone to bring take out to the venue instead of carrying everything in. Breakfast and dinners should be eaten together as a team whenever possible. Not all venues allow coolers to be brought into

the facility, and the food organizer should consult with the coaches regarding the venue rules and coach expectations for food during the meet.

Suggested Food Items for the Team Cooler

Milk and/or chocolate milk
 Water – only if no water filling stations are available at the venue
 Yogurts/yogurt tubes
 Fresh fruit
 Dried fruit
 Cheese/string cheese
 Cut up vegetables for dipping
 Salad and optional additions
 Hummus
 Deli meat, cut-up cooked chicken
 Whole grain bread, sandwich thins, flat bread
 Sandwich condiments/toppings
 Cereal bars/granola bars (lower sugar if possible)
 Peanut butter or nut-free butter and jelly (as allowed due to allergies)

If there are any swimmers with airborne or contact allergies, one cooler should be kept allergen-free, well-cleaned, and clearly labeled.

What is most important is that the swimmers eat healthy food they are already familiar with. A competition is not the place for an athlete to start a higher-fiber diet, or eat a new types of food. Discussing food options with the families on the team in advance of any purchases is key.

Note: If there is a meet that requires more than two days away the team attending can decide not to use a food organizer. Instead all the chaperones can coordinate with the coaches on a plan on how the team will eat.

Team Apparel, Equipment & Competition Swimsuits

Team Apparel and Equipment

Competitive swimmers are required to have Team Apparel as determined by the Head Coach. Team Apparel is the financial responsibility of the parents/guardians and is not included in the Fees. The design and style of the Team Apparel may change from year to year, depending on the availability from the manufacturers.

Note: Training team and Watershow class swimmers must have a solid black swimsuit for the Watershow.

Swimmer's Required Equipment List

Swimmer equipment for practices:

- One-piece competitive style bathing suit (any color)
- Bathing cap (any color)
- Goggles (any color)
- Nose clips (at least 2 pairs) *
- Towel
- Water bottle
- Yoga mat/extra towel for floor work

Swimmer equipment for Meets and traveling to Meets:

- Team jacket *
- Team shirt, white *
- Black shorts
- Black leggings, full length, no cutouts/embellishments
- Team swimsuit *
- Team bathing cap *
- White bathing cap
- Team towel (optional) *
- Team backpack *
- Black flip flops
- Competitive bathing suit, solid black
- Nose clips, at least 2 pairs
- Hair brush and hair elastics
- Water bottle
- Extra towel (for gelling/knocking hair)
- Yoga mat/extra towel for floor work
- Team parka (optional)*

* These items are ordered through or organized for individual order by the Apparel Coordinator. If ordered through the Apparel Coordinator the apparel expenses are added to the swimmer's assessment. Please try to keep club gear looking clean and neat during the season, to avoid needing to purchase replacements mid-season. A team bag travels with each team and is maintained by the Team Parent, which includes makeup and hair preparation equipment. Each swimmer contributes financially to the team supplies.

Competition Suits

Competition suits are artistic costumes designed to reflect the character of the routine. These suits and coordinating headpieces are the financial responsibility of the parents/guardians and are not included in the tuition fees. All suits and headpiece designs are approved by the Head Coach.

Suits Purchased by HHC:

It is typical that each season HHC purchases made-to-order suits for the Age Group Team Swimmers through a custom suit maker and typically costs between \$150 and \$300. When HHC does purchase made-to-order suits, the first users of the suits rent those suits for that season and are charged 60% of the retail price. **Swimmers do not own these suits.** The Suit Coordinator will submit the rental cost information to the Treasurer. After the first season of use, the suits become part of the suit closet to be rented by HHC swimmers for routines in subsequent years. Subsequent swimmers who use these suits after the first season are charged a rental fee based on the original cost of the suit and the number of seasons it has been used. Swimmers will be charged the FULL cost for replacement of any lost or extremely damaged suit. (Normal wear and tear is to be expected.)

Suits Purchased by a Swimmer:

There are two options for suits for Intermediate Team Swimmers, which will be decided by the coaches and the Suit Coordinator to best fit the routine. One option is to purchase lower-cost suits (not made-to-order) suits each year. A lower-cost suit is purchased through a swim vendor and typically costs between \$50 and \$75 and becomes the property of the swimmer. The Suit Coordinator will submit the full cost of the suit to the Treasurer. Any Routine Suit purchased by an individual swimmer will be returned to them at the end of the competition season. At that time, the swimmer may decide to donate their suit to the Heronettes Suit Closet. The second option is to rent a suit from the Heronettes suit closet, usually for about the same amount as a new suit purchase, however the suit can be much more intricate, and is often an Age Group suit from a past season.

Suits Rented from the Heronettes' Suit Closet

Suits are typically rented from the suit closet by Intermediate and Age Group swimmers who perform small routines (i.e. solo and duets). However, there can be exceptions to this practice based on coaches' decisions and team composition on a year-to-year basis. When suits are rented from the suit closet, swimmers are charged a rental fee based on the original cost of the suit and the number of seasons it has been used. The Suit Coordinator will submit the rental cost information to the Treasurer. All rented Competition Suits must be returned to the Heronettes Suit Closet in good and useable condition at the end of the competitive swim season. Any suit not returned in good condition will be billed, at full replacement value based on the original cost of the suit and the number of seasons it has been used, to the swimmer.

The Heronettes Suit Closet:

- Donations: All athletes are invited to submit Competition Suits that they have purchased in full to the Heronettes Suit Closet. Suits will be accepted if they are in good, useable condition.
- When a suit is admitted to the closet, it is housed in favorable conditions, under the care of the Suit Coordinator, in order to maintain its good condition.
- Swimmers will be charged the FULL cost for replacement of any lost or extremely damaged suit. (Normal wear and tear is to be expected.)
- Headpieces are always the property of the Heronettes Suit Closet; they may not be retained by an individual swimmer. All Headpieces must be returned to the Suit Closet in good and useable condition at the end of the competitive swim season.

Types of Clinics, Meets, Competitions and Competitive Categories

Clinics

Clinics are specific sessions by "expert clinicians" designed to help swimmers learn new techniques and skills to improve their swimming. Clinics may be sponsored by the East Zone, the Heronettes, or USA Artistic Swimming. Travel and possible overnight stays will be needed for some clinics. Clinic attendance is not included in tuition fees; costs will be assessed at the time of the clinic and are paid by the swimmer's family.

Association, Regional, Zone and National Meets

Between January and June there are several competitive meets. The number of meets a swimmer will attend depends on the competitive category of the swimmer and how the swimmer places in qualifying meets earlier in the season.

Some meets are "Invitational" and are excellent practice meets with no pre-qualification to attend. Some meets are "qualifiers" intended to pare down the number of routines in the field. Later in the season teams and small routines may have to qualify to attend the next-level competitive meet.

- "Away meets" require travel arrangements and chaperones and often require an overnight stay at the venue. The Heronettes typically attend meets in New Canaan CT, the Boston MA area, and the Binghamton, Albany and Buffalo areas of NY. Sometimes regular season meets are also held in Pennsylvania, New Jersey or New Hampshire.
- "Home Meets" are hosted by the Heronettes (typically one or two each season.) Hosting requires the help of many people. All families are required to participate by helping to run concessions, sell souvenirs, enter data into the computer, prepare food for our menu, assist adjudicators, etc. There are also "chaperones" identified to help the swimmers stay organized and be prepared for their events.
- The East Zone Intermediate and 12 & Under Age Group Championships and 13 & Over Age Group Routine Only Open is an open meet (you don't have to qualify) for Intermediate team routines, but Intermediate small routines must qualify to this meet. 12 & Under Age Group swimmers also have their East Zone Championships at this meet and all routines must qualify to participate, and will attend even if they are

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attending also attending Junior Olympics. This meet take place in early June, is held somewhere in the East Zone, and usually requires two or more days' attendance.

- The U.S. National Junior Olympic Championships (JOCs) is a national Age Group competition that takes place in late June/early July, concluding the regular competitive season. Only Age Group team, combo and small routines that have qualified by their excellent performance in a qualifying meet the Region A Championship will attend, per US Artistic Swimming (USAAS) rules. Junior Olympics is a multi-day event.
- Other National Championships: The Heronettes occasionally attend other national championships. These competitions are an opportunity that may be discussed for a swimmer or routine, and while participation is strongly encouraged, they are not obligatory events. The other US National Championships are the U.S. 12 and Under Age Group National Invitational, the U.S. Youth National Championships, the U.S. Junior National Championships, the U.S. Senior National Championships, and the U.S. Opens.

Zone, Region, and Association

These are geographic divisions, used to limit the number of clubs we compete against in the competitive tracks. As routines qualify and progress through the competition tracks, the number of competitor clubs increases.

Association: For the Heronettes, this is the Connecticut (CT) Association. Currently the only two clubs in the CT Association are the New Canaan Aquianas and the Hamden Heronettes.

Region: The CT Association is a part of Region A, which includes also includes the Adirondack Association, which includes one to three clubs, and is located in upstate New York.

Zone: Our zone is the East Zone, which has four Regions and currently consists of 29 clubs which compete in Age Group, Youth 13/15, Junior and Senior tracks. Including Masters and Collegiate clubs, there are a total of 38 clubs in the East Zone.

National: All of the clubs which are members of USA Artistic Swimming Synchro. There are four zones in the U.S., North, South, East and West, and hundreds of clubs.

Ages & Competitive Categories

"Synchro age" is the age the athlete will be by December 31st of the competitive season, so is determined by birth year only, not the date.

Athletes compete in the category of oldest athlete in the routine.

Competitive categories

- **Novice** = NOV; absolute beginner; local or regional competition level
- **Intermediate** = INT; still developing basic skills and learning to combine skills; zone competition level
- **Age Group** = AG; strong grasp of basic skills, developing advanced skills, Junior Olympic national competition level
- **Youth** = National Championship track; strong grasp of basic skills, moderate strength in advance skills; national and international competition level
- **Junior** = JR; strong grasp of basic skills, moderate to strong in advance skills; national and international competition level
- **Senior** = SR; strong grasp of advanced skills; international competition level

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Age categories within each competitive category

Note that for male athletes some of the age categories are different than for females, per World Aquatics (AQUA) decision based on average timing of physical development. The male athlete maximum age in an age category is listed after the / symbol. Minimum ages are the same for male and female.

- Novice age categories: 8 & Under, 9-10, 11-12, 13 & Over
- Intermediate age categories: 10 & Under, 11-12, 13-15, 16 & Over
- Age Group age categories: 12 & Under, Youth (13-15/16), 15-17 and 18-19 (special exception 16-19/20, see routine classifications below)
- Youth competitive category (Youth National Championship track): athletes 13 to 15/16 years old only
- Junior competitive category: (Junior National Championship track): athletes 15 to 19/20 years old only
- Senior competitive category: (Senior National Championship track): athletes 15 years old and older only

The age categories were developed by AQUA, the international body that governs aquatic sports. USA Artistic Swimming (USAAS) has a Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) plan that prioritizes training and skill development tailored to athlete ages. For this reason, it is best for an athlete's physical development and improvement in artistic swimming to be placed in routines within their true age category or a close one. This gives the athlete appropriate training for their physical and mental developmental level, as well as the opportunity to compare their performance to their age cohort peers.

In Novice, Intermediate and Age Group routines athletes may "swim up" to an older age category if they are on a routine with an athlete in that older age category. This is not allowed in the competition tracks for Youth, Junior and Senior National Championships (with certain routine exceptions).

Competition

Novice, Intermediate, 12 & Under Age Group and Youth Age Group athletes must compete in both figures and routine. They may have more than one routine, but not more than one of each choreography classification. The routine score is added to the average figure score of the athletes who swam in that routine to create the combined score, which is what is used to rank the routines for awards. Figure awards are individual and not combined with any other score.

15-17 Age Group, 18-19/20 Age Group, Junior and Senior athletes can compete in either free or tech routines. At this time awards at USAAS sanctioned competitions are given in each category separately. In the past the tech and free routines were combined for awards, in the same way figures and routines are combined for other competitive categories.

Figures

A figure is a described set of positions and transitions between positions. They are used to help athletes and coaches build basic skill and understanding of artistic swimming.

As athletes progress through competitive classes, the figures become more difficult. They become longer and have more advanced skills that build on the basic skills of the previous figures.

Figure competition is individual, with each athlete performing each figure once in front of a panel of judges. Athletes compete in figures competitions for each competitive category in which they have a routine (example: an athlete with an INT team routine and a 12 & Under AG solo, athlete would compete in both figure competitions too). If an athlete is competing in multiple age categories or competitive categories in one competition, they will receive their figure award only once and be listed as honorary in every other.

- Any NOV or INT figure competition: placement in true synchro age category, honorary placement in any other age category in which they have a routine.
- Both INT and any AG figure competitions: placement in AG figures, honorary placement in INT figures
- Two sets of AG figure competitions: placement in the younger age category; honorary placement in the older age category

Once athletes reach the 15-17 AG, 18-19/20 AG, JR or SR competitive category, they no longer have figure competitions. Instead they have Technical Routines, see below.

Routine Types

Choreography classification

- **Solo** = one athlete in a routine; there are Girl/Female, Boy/Male, and Gender Inclusive categories
- **Duet** = two athletes in a routine; there are Girl/Female, Boy/Male, Mixed Duet (one competitor Girl/Female, one competitor Boy/Male) and Gender Inclusive categories
- **Trio** = three athletes in a routine, only in Novice and Intermediate competition
- **Team Routine** = four to eight athletes in a routine; reduction of points for every athlete less than eight
- **Combination/Combo** = four to ten athletes in a routine, one continuous routine, but has components with smaller numbers of athletes within the choreography, only in INT, 12 & U AG, Youth, JR and 16-19/20 AG competitions
- **Acrobatic/Acro** = four to ten athletes in a routine, has a focus on acrobatic components (lifts); only in 16-19/20 AG, JR and SR competitions

Free or Tech classification

- **Free Routine** = any routine that has no specific set of moves required within the routine
- **Technical (Tech) Routine** = any routine that has specific sets of moves (like figures) as a required part of the choreography; Tech routines must have all athletes performing the same move at the same time and facing the same direction, with the exception of deck work, lifts, and underwater propulsion. Tech routines may be solos, duets, or team routines.
- **Free Routine with Technical Elements** = a Free Routine with required Technical Elements that must be performed as if they were in a Tech Routine, Novice and Intermediate routines only

The full description of a routine might list just the age category and choreography classification, for instance in Intermediate and the two younger Age Group categories, because there is only one option. In the older Age Group, Junior and Senior age categories routines are mostly named with both the free/tech classification and the choreography classification, since most of the choreography classifications can be either free or tech. The order of the descriptors does not matter.

Examples: 11-12 INT Trio AG 16-17 Free Duet

Each type of routine has a time maximum, and often a time minimum as well. These times are based on the competitive category, age category, choreography classification and if it's free or tech. There is also a time maximum for the "walk out", which is the amount of time a routine is allowed to set up to perform, and a maximum amount of time for "deck work", which is any choreography done on land once the music starts and until all the athletes enter the water. Deck work is optional, and a routine may use their walk out time to set up the start of their routine in the water.

Routines may have a limited number of alternates listed, and in the case of an athlete not being able to compete, the alternate must step in and compete in their place. Solos may not have alternates. If and when which athlete is listed as a competitor, and which athlete is listed as an alternate, is at the discretion of the coaching staff.

Grade Levels

The Grade Level Program is designed to monitor the skill development of the athletes. The program offers an analytical approach to provide educational opportunities in areas where the athlete may need further training. As of 2018 USA Artistic Swimming offers 6 grade levels. Each level is targeted for a specific age and skill ability to compete at multiple competition levels.

General Information

- A swimmer may complete as many grades as they want or need per year.
- Athletes must pass a grade level before being able to be assessed in the next one.
- Grade level assessments are organized locally, usually by a club or association.
- An athlete can enter a grade level competition anywhere in the nation, as long as they register appropriately in advance and follow any requirements set out by the assessment host.
- The Grade Level Manual can be found on the USA Artistic Swimming website.
- An athlete may retake a level as many times as needed.
- Grade level certifications never expire.
 - All athletes must pass Levels 1 and 2 to participate at the National Junior Olympic Championships.
 - All athletes must pass Levels 1, 2 and 3 to participate at the 12&U National Invitational.
 - All athletes must pass Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4 to compete at the U.S. Youth National Championships
 - All athletes must pass Levels 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 to compete at the U.S. Junior National Championships
 - All athletes must pass Levels 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 to compete at the U.S. National Championships.
 - All athletes must pass Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4 to participate in Youth Age Group National Team Trials.
 - All athletes must pass Levels 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 to participate in Junior National Team Trials.
 - All athletes must pass Levels 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 to participate in Senior National Team Trials.

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SafeSport

Goal

Hamden Heronettes Club (HHC) Athlete Protection Policy is to follow the U.S. Center for SafeSport policy which is “committed to building a sport community where participants can work and learn together in an atmosphere free of emotional, physical, and sexual misconduct.”

SafeSport Training will be required of but not limited to all coaches, Executive Board members, chaperones, managers, C.I.T.s (coach in training), judges, volunteers, support staff, and adults traveling with the team. HHC may require SafeSport training of anyone interacting with the team at their discretion.

All of the SafeSport policies listed below shall apply to: All adults who are either partially or fully under the jurisdiction of HHC, including parents and guardians of swimmers; any adult authorized by HHC to have regular contact with or authority over our swimmers; and all adult staff and Executive Board members of HHC. (Collectively “Applicable Adult” for the purposes of these policies.)

1) One-on-One Interactions, including meetings and individual training sessions

- a) One-on-one interactions between a minor athlete and an Applicable Adult (who is not the minor’s legal guardian) at a facility partially or fully under our jurisdiction are permitted if they occur at an observable and interruptible distance by another adult.
- b) One-on-one interactions between minor athletes and an Applicable Adult (who is not the minor’s legal guardian) at a facility partially or fully under our jurisdiction are prohibited, except in the circumstances described in subpart 3d of this section and under emergency circumstances.
- c) Meetings between Applicable Adults and minor athletes at a facility partially or fully under our jurisdiction may only occur if another adult is present, except under emergency circumstances. Such meetings must occur where interactions can be easily observed and at an interruptible distance from another adult.
- d) If a one-on-one meeting takes place in an office at a facility partially or fully under our jurisdiction, the door to the office must remain unlocked and open. If available, it will occur in an office that has windows, with

the windows, blinds, and/or curtains remaining open during the meeting.

- e) Individual training sessions between Applicable Adults and minor athletes are permitted if the training session is observable and interruptible by another adult. It is the responsibility of the Applicable Adult to obtain the written permission of the minor's legal guardian in advance of the individual training session if the individual training session is not observable and interruptible by another adult. Permission for individual training sessions must be obtained at least every six months. Parents, guardians, and other caretakers must be allowed to observe the training session.
 - f) When one-on-one interactions between Applicable Adults and minor athletes occur at a facility partially or fully under our jurisdiction, Applicable Adults will monitor these interactions. Monitoring includes: knowing that the one-on-one interaction is occurring, the approximate planned duration of the interaction, and randomly dropping in on the one-on-one.
 - g) Applicable Adults are prohibited from interacting one-on-one with unrelated minor athletes in settings outside of the program that are not observable and interruptible (including, but not limited to, one's home and individual transportation), unless parent/legal guardian consent is provided for each out-of-program contact. Nonetheless, such arrangements are strongly discouraged.
- 2) Massages and rubdowns/athletic training modalities:** No massages or rubdown/athletic training modalities may be performed between an Applicable Adult and a swimmer.
- 3) Locker rooms and changing areas**
- a) Non-exclusive facility: If our organization uses a facility not fully under our jurisdiction (for, e.g., training or competition or similar events) and the facility is used by multiple constituents, Applicable Adults are nonetheless required to adhere to the rules set forth herein.
 - b) Use of recording devices: Use of any device's (including a cell phone's) recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras and video cameras in locker rooms, changing areas, or similar spaces at a facility under our organization's jurisdiction is prohibited. Exceptions may be made for media and championship celebrations, provided that such exceptions are approved by the Covered Organization and two or more Applicable Adults are present.
 - c) Under no circumstances shall an unrelated Applicable Adult at a facility under our organization's jurisdiction intentionally expose his or her breasts, buttocks, groin, or genitals to a minor athlete.
 - d) One-on-one interactions: Except for athletes on the same team, at no time are unrelated Applicable Adults permitted to be alone with a minor athlete in a locker room or changing area when at a facility under our partial or full jurisdiction, except under emergency circumstances. If our organization is using a facility that only has a single locker room or changing area, we will designate separate times for use by Applicable Adults, if any.
 - e) Our organization regularly and randomly monitors the use of locker rooms and changing areas at facilities under our jurisdiction to ensure compliance with these policies. This will be done by two Applicable Adults or other teammates.
 - f) Applicable Adults make every effort to recognize when a minor athlete goes to the locker room or changing area during practice and competition and, if they do not return in a timely fashion, will check on the minor athlete's whereabouts.
- 4) Social media and electronic communications**
- a) All electronic communication originating from Applicable Adults to minor athletes must be professional in nature.
 - b) Absent emergency circumstances, if an Applicable Adult with authority over minor athletes needs to communicate directly with a minor athlete via electronic communications (including social media), another Applicable Adult or the minor's legal guardian will be copied. If a minor athlete communicates to the Applicable Adult (with authority over the minor athlete) privately first, said Applicable Adult should respond to the minor athlete with a copy to another Applicable Adult or the minor's legal guardian. When an Applicable Adult with authority over minor athletes communicates electronically to the entire team, said Applicable Adult will copy another adult. Minor athletes may "friend" the organization's official page.
 - c) Legal guardians may request in writing that their minor athlete not be contacted through any form of

electronic communication by the organization or by the Applicable Adults subject to this policy. The organization will abide by any such request that their minor athlete not be contacted via electronic communication, absent emergency circumstances.

- d) HHC monitors its social media pages and removes any posts that violate our policies and practices for appropriate behavior. HHC will inform the legal guardian of a minor athlete of any prohibited posts, as well as the head coach.
 - e) Prohibited electronic communications: Applicable Adults with authority over minor athletes are not permitted to maintain private social media connections with unrelated minor athletes and such Applicable Adults are not permitted to accept new personal page requests on social media platforms from amateur athletes who are minors, unless the Applicable Adult has a fan page, or the contact is deemed as celebrity contact vs. regular contact. Existing social media connections on personal pages with minor athletes should be discontinued.
- 5) Local travel:** Local travel consists of travel to training, practice, and competition that occurs locally and does not include coordinated overnight stay(s).
- a) Transportation: Applicable Adults who are not also acting as a legal guardian, shall not ride in a vehicle alone with an unrelated minor athlete, absent emergency circumstances, and must have at least two minor athletes or another adult at all times, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the minor athlete's parent/legal guardian in advance of each local travel.
 - b) We encourage parents/legal guardians to pick up their minor athlete first and drop off their minor athlete last in any shared or carpool travel arrangement.
- 6) Team travel:** Team travel is travel to a competition or other team activity that the organization plans and supervises.
- a) When only one Applicable Adult and one minor athlete travel to a competition, the minor athlete must have his/her legal guardian's written permission in advance and for each competition to travel alone with said Applicable Adult.
 - b) Applicable Adults shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with a minor athlete (unless the Applicable Adult is the legal guardian, sibling, or is otherwise related to the minor athlete). However, a parent/legal guardian may consent to such an arrangement in advance and in writing. Furthermore, a parent/legal guardian may consent in advance and in writing to the minor athlete sharing a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an adult athlete.
 - c) Meetings shall be conducted consistent with the organization's policy for one-on-one interactions (i.e., any such meeting shall be observable and interruptible).
 - d) Team travel policies must be signed and agreed to by all minor athletes, parents, and Applicable Adults traveling with the organization.

Other Policies

As per USA Artistic Swimming regulations all coaches need to submit to a background check. Any suspected criminal behavior must be immediately reported to the police.
Any inappropriate behavior must be reported to any Executive Board member.

These Policies were developed to protect all swimmers/athletes and Applicable Adults of the HHC. Compliance is mandatory for all involved in the HHC organization.