

## **Hillsborough High School Rowing Club 2023-2024 Participation Policy**

The mission of Hillsborough High School Rowing Club (“HHSRC”), which shall include all programs operated by HHSRC, is to facilitate an inclusive and nationally competitive rowing team for student-athletes of Hillsborough High School and Home-Schooled or Virtual School student-athletes residing in Hillsborough County.

In order to accomplish our mission, HHSRC strives to maintain a healthy and viable athletic program in which all student-athletes feel safe and welcome, and can be proud of the school and rowing program they represent. Our goal is to ensure that all student-athletes are provided unparalleled opportunities to grow as students and athletes in a supportive environment conducive to such development. In order to meet those goals, student-athletes and parents are expected to abide by the Hillsborough County Public Schools Student Code of Conduct and the HHSRC Participation Policy. Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) is interpreted as suspension from practices/regattas/team travel and other team activities deemed appropriate due to the nature of the conduct violation. In-School Suspension (ISS) is interpreted as suspension from rowing (water) activities, but student-athletes may participate in other activities at practices/regattas/team travel (e.g. land training, helping load trailer, and helping with boat recovery/launch).

### **Teamwork Policy**

Rowing requires teamwork, coordination, endurance, and strength. In short, each student-athlete is expected to:

- Insofar as participation demands personal physical exertion and team cooperation, student-athletes will be expected to give their best efforts and attitudes, especially when that seems difficult.
- Follow directions given by coaches and parent volunteers.
- Be aware that they are using expensive boats and equipment and will handle all equipment with great care. When on water and docking in and out, only the coxswain and coach’s voices should be heard.
- Club equipment will only be used with direct supervision and approval of the coaching staff.
- Wash and clean boats, oars, and equipment and replace all equipment in the proper place after each rowing session.
- Advise the coaches immediately if the equipment is damaged or has any loose parts to avoid damage or accidents.
- Absent approval by the coachings staff, student-athletes must assist in set-up and breakdown before and after a regatta.
- The coach will make the final determination regarding the setting of boats and regatta participation.

Student-Athlete initials: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent initials: \_\_\_\_\_

- Remember that they are guests of Tampa River Center Boathouse, must maintain HHSRC's bay in a clean and orderly fashion, and will not use other school or club boats, oars, or equipment, unless specifically instructed to do so by the coach.
- Advise the coaches immediately if injured or ill.
- Follow the HHSRC dress code: student-athletes must wear appropriate rowing attire at all times. NO underwear/items that look like underwear, sports bras, or bathing suits/items that look like bathing suits are allowed at any time. Student-athlete shorts must be 3-inch inseam minimum.
- Arrive dressed for practice, ready to row. Changing clothing is not permitted in the Boathouse restrooms.

### **Proficiency/Safety Policy**

Rowing, as a watersport, has inherent dangers that impact an individual student-athlete, his or her team members, or others. Since rowing boats involve more than one individual, the individual student-athlete's ability to safely and competently perform rowing requirements and attention to safety will place themselves and others at risk for injury.

HHSRC's coaching staff are aware that mistakes can and do happen; therefore, this policy addresses systemic/continuous issues that pose material harm to the individual, other student-athletes, equipment, or boats. To protect the safety of the individual student-athlete and/or his or her team members, the coaching staff can, at their discretion, withhold regatta privileges or expel the student-athlete from the team. **Each student-athlete must know how to swim prior to the initiation of training and are required to watch this safety video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rx5SUe\\_RdgQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rx5SUe_RdgQ). A student-athlete will not be permitted to participate until his or her parent completes HHSRC's certification confirming that the student-athlete can swim.** Additional issues that may lead to withholding regatta privileges or expulsion from the team include but are not limited to:

- Deficiencies in rowing that impact the safety of the boat.
- Aggressive behavior towards coaches or teammates
- Failure to follow direction from either the coxswain or coaches whether in the boat or on land
- The use of any drug, alcohol, or other substance that affects the ability of the student-athlete to make decisions, perform rowing requirements, and avoid risks.
- Irresponsible behavior that places the student-athlete, his or her team members, or or others at risk.

### **Attendance Policy**

Rowing is a sport that strictly adheres to the 10,000 hour rule - the theory that 10,000 hours of deliberate practice can lead to expertise in a given domain. It takes hundreds of hours, both on the water and on land, to become proficient enough to safely and effectively succeed in rowing. Through continuous and repetitive training, HHSRC's student-athletes develop precision and strength required to excel on the water. However, rowing is a team sport where student-athletes must work together to safely perform required techniques which are necessary to win. If an student-athlete cannot attend practice, he or she cannot practice and safely perform rowing techniques and are likely to either (a) injure themselves or others, (b) have their performance negatively impact themselves and others in their boat, (c) cause

Student-Athlete initials: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent initials: \_\_\_\_\_

unnecessary stress for themselves, others in their boat and their team, or, (d) result in a negative outcome for the boat. To ensure the success of the team and fairness toward others, student-athletes must comply with the following attendance policy.

- All student-athletes must arrive at assigned practices on time.
- All student-athletes must attend a minimum of 75% of all practices prior to the next race for which he or she is eligible to attend unless such absences are approved by the coaching staff. If the student-athlete fails to meet the minimum attendance requirement, the student-athlete may lose racing privileges for that race and all later races for which he or she is eligible until a student-athlete's attendance is above the minimum 75% attendance requirement.
- Student-athletes must notify the coaching staff if they will be absent from practice. Unexcused absences may affect a student-athlete's seat or boat assignment.
- HHSRC is not responsible for transporting student-athletes to practice.<sup>1</sup> It is the student-athlete's and his or her parents' responsibility to ensure that he or she has reliable and timely transportation to practices. Student-athletes must be proactive in obtaining a ride if needed.
- All student-athletes must attend a minimum of 90% of regattas which he or she is eligible to attend. The coach must be notified ahead of time if an absence is necessary. Unexcused absences may affect a student-athlete's seat or boat assignment. Failure to attend the minimum number of regattas may result in the student-athlete losing racing privileges for the next season.
- The student-athlete may not leave a practice or a regatta site for any reason unless specifically approved by the coaching staff.

### **Sportsmanship Policy**

The sport of rowing, by its nature, demands the highest level of sportsmanship from student-athletes and parents. In exchange for their commitment to true sportsmanship, student-athletes enhance their personal growth by developing life skills such as character, self respect and respect for others, self-control, excellence through discipline, overcoming adversity and failure, resilience and perseverance, leadership, cooperation, respect, maturity, responsibility, citizenship, positive relationships, and the importance of honor and fair play. Conducting oneself in an unsportsmanlike manner exposes HHSRC and its members to penalties from its governing organizations; therefore, the following standards of behavior are expected of anyone associated with the HHSRC while at practice at regattas, during HHSRC travel, or at any HHSRC function.

- All persons, student-athletes, member families, and guests of member families are expected to act in a courteous, respectful, and responsible manner, with good sportsmanship, team spirit, and respect for other rowers, teams and fans.
- Neither student-athletes, parents, nor guests may use obscene language or gestures at practices, races, or any HHSRC event.
- During regattas, student-athletes must heed the instructions of race officials and must not abuse officials, other teams' members, or spectators, delay a race without just cause, or impede or

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<sup>1</sup> HHSRC will provide information regarding families that are interested in participating in carpools to practices.

Student-Athlete initials: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent initials: \_\_\_\_\_

obstruct another boat. Failure to abide by this policy may result in reprimands, warnings, exclusion from events, disqualification, or relegation at races for either the student-athlete, his or her boat, or HHSRC.

- Student-athletes, their parents, and guests shall not intentionally or flagrantly disregard the principles of safety and fairness. Intentional or flagrant acts of unsportsmanlike conduct will result in the expulsion of the student-athlete, his or her parents, and guests from events, seasons, or the team.
- Student-athletes and parents will be expected to use only HHSRC-directed communications platforms for official team communications. HHSRC has determined TeamSnap and Remind as our official platforms.
- Parents and spectators are not allowed inside the boathouse, unless there is a specific event hosted by HHSRC at this site. Current Board of Directors members and volunteers who have completed a background check (\$38 at your own expense), the City of Tampa Waiver and 90-minute fee-based SafeSport certification will be permitted in the boathouse for activities related to their roles or activities approved by the Board of Directors.

### **SafeSport Policy**

- Each year, student-athletes under 18 are required to complete *SafeSport for Youth Athletes*. Student-athletes turning 18 during the race seasons are required to complete the *SafeSport Adult Athlete course*. Course completion information can be found here: <https://www.hhsrowingclub.org/safesport/>
- Student-athletes will be expected to follow all SafeSport Rules and Regulations outlined in the USRowing SafeSport Policy Manual found <https://www.hhsrowingclub.org/safesport/>.

### **Social Media Policy**

HHSRC recognizes and supports the student-athlete's rights to freedom of speech, expression, and association, including the use of social media; however, parents and student-athletes must acknowledge that rowing and competing for HHSRC is a privilege and not a right. As a student-athlete, you have the responsibility to portray your team, your school, and yourselves in a positive manner at all times. For purposes of this policy, social media means any form of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content.

Student-athletes should understand that third parties, including the media, faculty, and future potential NCAA officials, can easily access your social media profiles and view all personal information. Inappropriate material found by third parties affects the perception of the student-athlete and HHSRC. Student-athletes need to remember that NOTHING is private on social media.

HHSRC will not tolerate disrespectful comments and behavior online, including content that is unsportsmanlike, derogatory, demeaning or threatening toward any other individual or entity. Examples of such behavior include:

- cyberbullying
- derogatory comments regarding another individual

- taunting comments aimed at a Hillsborough High School/Hillsborough County student-athlete or coach, or athletic representative at another institution
- derogatory comments against race, gender, and sex
- photos, videos, posts, or comments that depict or encourage unacceptable, violent, or illegal activities including, but not limited to, hazing, sexual harassment/assault, nudity, inappropriate gestures, discrimination, fighting, vandalism, academic dishonesty, smoking, underage drinking, and illegal drug use.

### **Hazing and Harassment Policy**

Hazing is defined as recklessly or intentionally endangering the mental or physical safety or the health of any student for purposes including, but not limited to, initiation or admission into or affiliation with any organization operating under the sanction of a high school and in accordance with Florida Statute section 1006.63.

A person commits a hazing and/or harassment offense if the person:

1. Engages in hazing, harassment, or bullying;
2. Solicits, encourages, directs, aids, or attempts to aid another in hazing, harassment, and/or bullying activities;
3. Intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly permits hazing, harassment, and/or bullying to occur;
4. Has firsthand knowledge of the planning or occurrence of a specific hazing, harassment, and/or bullying incident involving a student and fails to report the plan to the HHSRC Head Coach or HHSRC Board member to prevent the occurrence;
5. Acts to destroy or remove public or private property for the purpose of initiation in, admission to, affiliation with, or as a condition for continued membership in a group or organization.

HHSRC's Participation Policy defines harassment as the severe or repeated use by one or more HHSRC members of oral, written, electronic or other technological expressions, image, sound, data, or intelligence of any nature (regardless of the method of transmission), or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at any other member that to a reasonable objective person has the effect of:

1. Causing physical or emotional harm to the other member or damage to the other member's property.
2. Placing the other member in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property.
3. Creating a hostile environment for the other member at any rowing activity.
4. Infringing on the rights of the other member at any rowing activity or materially and substantially disrupting the training process or the orderly operation of any rowing activity (which for the purpose of this section shall include, without limitation, practices, workouts, and other events of a member club).

### **Bullying Policy**

Bullying is defined by the Centers for Disease Control as any UNWANTED AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR (S) by another youth or groups of youths who are not siblings or current dating partners that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated. OBSERVED OR PERCEIVED POWER IMBALANCE AND IS REPEATED MULTIPLE TIMES OR IS

Student-Athlete initials: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent initials: \_\_\_\_\_

HIGHLY LIKELY TO BE REPEATED. Bullying may inflict harm or distress on the targeted youth including physical, psychological, social, or educational harm.

Common types of bullying include:

- Physical such as hitting, kicking, and tripping
- Verbal including name-calling and teasing
- Relational/social such as spreading rumors and leaving out of the group
- Damage to property of the victim

If bullying is occurring or it is reported to be occurring at HHSRC, the bullying is addressed by finding out what happened and supporting the youth and/or bystanders involved. In the case of where a student-athlete is involved, HHSRC will engage the parents to assist in mitigation of further bullying. If bullying behavior continues, the student-athlete and/or parent will risk having their membership in HHSRC forfeited.

### **Reporting Procedures**

HHSRC does not tolerate hazing, harassment, or bullying of any kind in any activities, whether team or non-team related. Student-athletes who violate the prohibition of hazing and harassment policy are subject to discipline by their coach, HHSRC Board President, and the Board of Directors. Any potential criminal activities will be reported to the appropriate authorities as well as SDHC.

It is the duty of student-athletes and parents to report any acts of hazing or harassment or bullying to a coach, a current Board member, or by email (hhsrowingclub@gmail.com) to the HHSRC. There is no designated time limit for initiating a complaint under this procedure, but every effort should be made to bring the complaint to the attention of the appropriate HHSRC leadership as soon as possible, to make sure that memories are fresh and behavior can be accurately recalled and the unwanted behavior can be stopped as soon as possible.

### **Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug Policy**

HHSRC requires that all athletes remain drug, alcohol, and tobacco-free, while participating in HHSRC events and practices, including travel and during boarding for such events. The use of unlawful steroids is also strictly forbidden. A student-athlete should realize that the use of alcohol, drugs, vaping/e-cigarette or tobacco is detrimental to his/her health and performance and must agree not to use these substances as a member of the HHSRC. To accomplish these goals, HHSRC has enacted policies regarding involvement with drugs, alcohol, or tobacco at and outside of school.

Student-athletes for HHSRC, while in season, who use, are under the influence of, or are in possession of alcohol or drugs as well as tobacco/e-cigarette/vaping products while at practice, team transport, team activities or at local/state/national regattas (including during down time at travel regatta, i.e., while staying at the team hotel) will be disciplined by HHSRC in accordance with guidelines set forth in the Violations of the Participation and Code of Conduct Policies *infra*. Violations of this policy will result in the loss of all awards, honors, and recognition for the seasons affected.

Student-athletes who are or were suspended from any high school program in Hillsborough County for these offenses, will also be suspended from being a member of HHSRC for the length of time specified by the SDHC high school organization in which they are enrolled. If the school year ends before the suspension is complete, the suspension will continue into the next school year.

### **Violations of the Participation and Code of Conduct Policies**

The actions of one student-athlete may result in a generalization of all student-athletes and reflect on the individual, parents, school, team, club, and organization, whether it be positively or negatively. It is expected that all student-athletes abide by HHSRC policies as outlined herein. In addition to all HHSRC policies, student-athletes are responsible for following all local, state, and federal laws. Any participants who do not conform to this Participation Policy may be subject to consequences for their actions.

In accordance with Hillsborough County Public Schools Student Code of Conduct, bringing a firearm or weapon of any kind to any HHSRC-sponsored activity (including but not limited to practices and regattas) or making a threat or false report regarding a destructive device involving any HHSRC-sponsored activity shall be considered “zero tolerance” offenses subjecting the student-athlete to immediate expulsion from HHSRC.

If a violation of this Participation Policy by a participant of the HHSRC is witnessed, the student-athlete, parent, staff person, or volunteer should report said violation to an HHSRC Head Coach or an HHSRC Board member. When requested, every effort will be made to protect the identity of the person reporting the grievance. A grievance need not be filed for disciplinary action to occur.

Violations of the Participation Policy, in spirit or letter, including but not limited to such major offenses as unwanted physical contact, written or verbal threats of violence, possession of alcohol or drugs, etc., will be disciplined as determined by the HHSRC Board or any person(s) to whom the Board shall delegate such authority. The HHSRC Board will exercise its discretion based on the particular circumstances in determining the appropriate level of discipline in accordance with the Hillsborough County Public Schools Student Code of Conduct (“Discipline: Interventions and Consequences), relevant rules and regulations of the Hillsborough County School Board, and the Participation Policies. The student-athlete may need to meet with the HHSRC Head Coach and/or Board members, and discipline may include the following penalties, as appropriate:

- Verbal or Written Warning
- Removal from practices/regattas for a specified period of time
- Expulsion from HHSRC (forfeiting membership)

In accordance with HHSRC bylaws, HHSRC Board may suspend from participation in any HHSRC activity any student-athlete, parent, member, or other person if the Board determines such suspension is appropriate or necessary.

The HHSRC Board recognizes that disciplinary measures that favor relationships over retribution has been shown to be an effective approach to discipline. To further this approach, the HHSRC Board will require the student-athlete to participate in self-reflection and interview with the HHSRC Board or its designee to discuss the student-athlete’s violation of the Participation Policy. The student-athlete, accompanied by their parent or guardian, will be expected to discuss, as appropriate for the nature of the violation, the following:

- The facts giving rise to the violation and the basis for the disciplinary action;
- An explanation of the events leading to the actions giving rise to the violation and why the student-athlete made the choice to act;
- Whether the student-athlete considered how its actions would affect other student-athletes on the team and, if so, why the actions were taken;

Student-Athlete initials: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent initials: \_\_\_\_\_

- What would an appropriate disciplinary action in light of the facts and actions leading to the violation;
- What would prevent or discourage the student-athlete and other student-athletes from violating the Participation Policy in the same manner in the future; and
- Whether the HHSRC Board can take actions to prevent the same violations of the Participation Policy in the future.

HHSRC Board President will communicate formal disciplinary actions to the student-athlete team member in question and/or his/her parents. The Board reserves the right to provide an unidentified synopsis of the issue, to protect the privacy of the parties involved. Parents may address concerns regarding such measures directly to the Board of Directors and, if they are not satisfied with the explanation of events and consequences, they may appeal the decision in order to provide additional evidence or information. The Board's decision after any appeal is final.

On occasion, a parent's behavior toward coaches, team members, other parents, regatta officials, or HHSRC leadership may result in sanctions that affect their child's continued involvement with HHSRC. Contentious, confrontational, or blatantly disrespectful athletes or parents who fail to act in a civil, mature manner may be barred from further participation with HHSRC as stipulated in the HHS Rowing Club By-Laws.

If any student-athlete, volunteer, parent, coach, or HHSRC Board member suspects there has been a violation of this Policy, it is incumbent upon that individual to report such violation to a coach, a current Board member, or by email ([hhsrowingclub@gmail.com](mailto:hhsrowingclub@gmail.com)) to HHSRC.

If the child of any HHSRC Board member is the subject of such a report, then that board member shall recuse himself/herself from the subsequent discussion and determination of discipline.

### **Academics**

Student-athletes must maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA (effective Fall 2018) to be considered "in good standing". In the event that a student-athlete's GPA drops below 3.0, that student-athlete's further participation will be determined by the HHSRC Head Coach.

### **Volunteer Hour Agreement**

- HHSRC depends on parent volunteers. For *each season*, Fall and Spring, each family is obligated to contribute 10 hours of their time (20 hours annually) to regattas, activities, and events.
- **Buy-Out Fee:** HHSRC's member's family may elect to "buy" out their obligation at a cost of \$20 per hour.
- **Deficit Fee:** Families not meeting the volunteer hourly commitment by the posted deadline (usually 2 weeks before the end of each season) will be assessed the prorated fee of \$20 per hour for any deficit.

### **Financial Agreement**

**Payment Due Dates:** Members agree to pay dues according to the fee schedule. If payment is not received on the due date, the member or financially responsible party has 72 hours to arrange payment with the HHSRC treasurer. After 72 hours, the student-athlete will be considered inactive and not be allowed to participate in practice, events, or volunteer opportunities for HHSRC or regattas. A \$25 assessment will be made on all fees received after the due date. Student-athletes cannot register for the following season until the previous season is paid in full.

Student-Athlete initials: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent initials: \_\_\_\_\_

- **Refunds:** In order to allow for a trial period, refunds of HHSRC dues will be given to new members during the first two weeks of practice. If a student-athlete leaves the HHSRC during the season, the student-athlete and his family agree to pay all fees for the entire season, including the prorated buy-out amount for uncompleted volunteer hours.
- **Scholarships:** Scholarships may be considered on a case-by-case basis. However, a scholarship will not cover all the initial fees, team unisuit, travel and boarding at out of state regattas. Contact hhsrowingclub@gmail.com for information before the end of the registration period.

**Acknowledgment**

The undersigned parent/guardian and student-athlete acknowledge having received the Participation Policy were given an adequate opportunity to review them in their entirety.

By signing below, the student-athlete and their parent(s) acknowledge that participation in HHSRC is a privilege and not a right; you agree to uphold and abide by this Policy and understand that any violation may result in the student-athlete's immediate suspension from the team and further disciplinary action as outlined in Hillsborough County Schools' and HHSRC policies.

The student-athlete and their parent(s) understand the commitment to the student-athlete's teammates and to this rowing program and that they are accountable for their behavior.

The student-athlete and their parent(s) understand that any violation of the Participation Policy may result in disciplinary action deemed appropriate by HHSRC Board of Directors.

The student-athlete and their parent(s) understand that rowing will include close proximity to others during the course of practice and races and that they will take personal responsibility to reasonably protect myself and my teammates from the spread of germs and viruses.

Signed,

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_