



Handbook

Welcome to the Helena & Butte Dolphins Swim Team! We are so excited to have you join our team. When you are on the Dolphins you are supporting a coached-owned, and women-owned team! Please review the following guidelines and if you have any questions please reach out to Head Coach, Alana Cunningham at alanac@406sportsandaquatics.com or 406-437-1744.

Practice Attendance

We don't have practice attendance requirements, but we definitely encourage a minimum number of practices per week. We recommend the above ideal attendance per group so that you can maintain realistic expectations of what your athlete will get out of the program, but nothing is required. The swimmers will get out of the program what they are willing and able to put in. Swimming is a sport in that you are really only getting better at it if you are doing it. There is a certain level of "feel" of the water that must be maintained on a weekly basis, as well as overall swim fitness. Riding your bike or going for a jog, unfortunately won't make you a better swimmer, though it can help with overall fitness. We offer three to four practices a week depending on the group in order to provide plenty of flexibility for young athletes to keep things balanced.

Practice Groups

Swimmers are placed into the training group that is developmentally appropriate. Swimmers may not go back into a group because you cannot attend the recommended practice times.

Some of the most important factors driving group placement include:

- Maturity (chronological age, physiological age, and emotional development)
- Commitment (practice attendance, meet participation, the priority of the sport)
- Training ability, and technique

Racing times are not a primary factor for group placement, although they may be an indirect factor as racing times translate to meet qualification and training needs. The swimmer's group placement determines a floor, not a ceiling. This means that each group has different standards for membership (the floor) but does not have upper limits of achievement (the ceiling). Group placement does not communicate a coach's belief about a swimmer's potential.

Practice Discipline Policy - In order to make practices the most beneficial and safe for all, a discipline policy must be followed. Swimmers who are being disruptive or disrespectful to other swimmers or coaching staff will be dismissed from practice. During the first infraction, swimmers will be asked to sit out of practice. If the behavior continues at the next practice, swimmers will be asked to call their legal guardian to be picked up and explain why

Equipment

Capital City Health Club will let swimmers use their kickboards and pull buoys (ask at the front desk), however we do recommend the following equipment based the swim group your swimmer is in:

Blue: Kickboard, pull buoy, fins

Silver & Gold: Kickboard, pull buoy, snorkel, paddles, fins

Practice Sign in/Sign Out Policy

- Swimmers under the age of 16 must physically sign in their child at the front desk with your membership card and on the coaches attendance white board. At the end of practice, a legal guardian/parent must sign their child out when they pick them up in a timely manner. If you are running late, please text the coach to let them know as we will not leave the pool deck until they are signed out. Other parents are allowed to sign your child in and out, but they are responsible for them once they do so.

- **Caregivers:** Capital City Health Club (CCHC) and the Helena Dolphins Swim Team (HDST) have an agreement that a caregiver (someone over the age of 18) can assist your swimmer to be dropped off and picked up from swim practice. This is someone who is not linked to the swimmer's CCHC membership. We ask for caregivers to fill out a form and get familiar with some basic swim team/facility rules prior to dropping off/picking up your swimmer.

Once your child is signed out from practice - all liability is released from the Helena Dolphins Swim Team. You are solely responsible for your child and following CCHC's facility rules including their age and access requirements. A copy of that policy can be found by [clicking here](http://www.capcity.club). (www.capcity.club - on the footer)

Locker Rooms

- Swimmers during practice may **ONLY** use the family locker rooms found outside the lap pool doors. Swimmers may use the main locker rooms/family locker rooms after practice to shower and change but ***only after being picked up by their adult***. Swimmers under the age of 13 **MUST** be accompanied by that adult in the locker rooms, or the swimmer may use the family locker rooms and the adult may wait in the hallway.
- Swimmers who are under the age of 16 without supervision at CCHC may be dismissed from that day's practice and/or the next day's practice if caught, and if there is repeated abuse of this rule, the swimmer could be removed from the team.

Other Important Practice Memos

- The coaches recognize that some athletes may be participating in other activities during practice time. During certain circumstances, with the Head Coach's advance approval, athletes with scheduling conflict may be accommodated. Please speak to Coach Alana for accommodations.
- In an effort to minimize disruptions and distractions during practice, we ask for parents to refrain from asking questions or talking to coaches right before and during practice, unless for an emergency.
- Swimmers are responsible for their own personal property and equipment; personal items should be properly labeled and secured. HDST and Coaches are not responsible for lost or damaged personal items/equipment.
- **Hot Tub Use:** Swimmers are not allowed to use the hot tub before practice or after unless a parent is present. If a swimmer is 16 years or older, they are allowed to use the hot tub and the CCHC facility without supervision per CCHC rules. Swimmers who are under the age of 16, without supervision and in the hot tub, may be dismissed from that day's practice or the next day's practice if caught. .
- Swimmers are expected to be on time for practice and be prepared to swim (with suit, goggles, equipment, and water bottle).

Fee Schedule

1. **Training Fees (due monthly):** Team dues are due on the 1st of every month. Automatic payment must be set up in Team Unify. Team Unify accepts all forms of payment such as debit card, credit card, and ACH. Training fees are structured for each group differently based on the water time, recommended attendance, and type of training each group receives. Account balances are expected to be paid by the 3rd of the month. A late fee of \$15.00 will be applied if not paid by the 3rd.
 - a. We understand that things happen and things come up. Please discuss flexibility in payment if needed.

Practice fee schedule 2023 Summer Season:

Blue: 1x-2x per week: \$80 /mo
Silver: 2x-3x per week: \$115 /mo
Gold: 3-4x per week: \$125 /mo

2. **Registration Fee (due semi-annually):** HDST has a registration fee of \$50.00 (per swimmer) at the beginning of every season (short course and long course). Registration fees will go directly to our booster club, Montana Southwest Dolphins Swimming, to help support the upcoming season. The registration fee is tax deductible and you will receive a donation letter when payment is received. The registration fee will be automatically charged to accounts in the first week of April (official first day of long course season) and the first week of September (official first day of short course season) of every season. This is seen as the fairest way to assess the cost of running a high quality, year-round program to each family and keep dues as low as possible. The registration fee is non-refundable. Registration fees will be applied in April and September invoices.
3. **USA Swimming Membership (due annually):** All members of HDST must be a member of USA Swimming. This membership is renewed annually in the Fall time. New swimmers have a membership within 10 days of joining the team. Types of membership:
 - **Premium Athlete:** Endless opportunity to compete throughout the year and will allow swimmers to qualify and attend championship level meets.
 - **Flex Membership:** This membership is only for athletes 12 years and younger, and meets that are below the LSC Championship level. Swimmers are only allowed to swim in two meets throughout the year. Swimmers can upgrade membership at any time by paying the difference.
 - **Outreach Membership:** Montana Swimming and HDST wants to encourage everyone to participate in our swimming programs. Through the Outreach Membership program, reduced priced memberships are offered to athletes from low-income families. The outreach year-round membership fee is \$7.00 per athlete. In addition, Montana Swimming also offers reduced championship meet fees for outreach athletes as well. Outreach athletes pay a flat \$10 entry fee to enter any of the Montana Swimming championship meets including Short Course State, Junior B-C Championships, and Long Course State.

Note: All USA Swimming Membership registrations are done through USA Swimming and paid to USA Swimming online. This fee is paid directly by you through your individual account after USA Swimming finalizes the process.

4. **Capital City Health Club:** All members of HDST are members of Capital City Health Club (CCHC). One parent/legal guardian has to be on the account with your swimmer. CCHC has waived the joiners fee for new members who are signing up for the club and joining the swim team.

Membership Info:

<https://www.capcity.club/membership-capital-city-health-club-helena>

Membership Discounts:

https://www.capcity.club/files/ugd/d13312_be0545bf36034aa9baa8772df2cbabf5.pdf

Multi-Swimmer Families Discount: There is a 15% discount on the 2nd/3rd child for the training fees for all swim levels .

Cancellations: 2 week written notice is required to cancel your dues for the following month. Requests can be made to the Head Coach, Alana Cunningham, at alanac@406sportsandaquatics.com.

Refunds/Credits:

- Will not be issued if swimmers do not attend practice or cancellations that are made after the 1st of the month.

Financial Assistance: Additional discounts, credits, financial aid is considered on a per season basis and applies to training dues and registration fees. The amount of aid is dependent upon available funding for that season and is not guaranteed from season to season. To qualify for financial assistance swimmers must qualify for the outreach membership through USA Swimming. We also will consider special circumstances when providing assistance. For additional information on financial assistance please contact Coach Alana at alanac@406sportsandaquatics.com or (406) 437-1744.

Delinquent Accounts

- Account balances are expected to be paid by the 3rd of the month. Fees past due will be charged a late fee of \$15.00 per month until they are unpaid.
- Any families with accounts more than 60 days past due will be placed on Inactive Status (which includes not participating in any HDST activities, meets, or practices).
- Accounts that are 90 days past due will go to collections. The family shall be liable for all court costs and attorney's fees incurred in the collection of delinquent accounts.
- All outstanding accounts must be paid in full before a swimmer can be re-registered with the team.

Competition

Swimmers are required to compete in at least 2 meets per season (1 each season, or 2 if you are swimming only one specific season). We believe that competition helps swimmers understand the reasoning behind what we do at practice, bond closer to their peers, and increases confidence. While we have this swim meet requirement, we make sure that each swimmer is ready to head into competition as we want it to be a positive experience. Please work with Coach Alana to determine when your swimmer is ready for their first swim meet.

Team Communication

BAND App

The app is the team's primary source for all information about the team. Swim meet announcements, practice updates, events, etc are posted here. This is also a great place to communicate with other parents when needed. To join please visit the following links to download the app and be added to our group.

For Parents: <https://band.us/n/a4a2846cUcj81>

For HDST Swimmers: <https://band.us/n/ada98f6bUcL0d>

Swimmers BAND APP: HDST swimmers also have a BAND app where coaches will post swimming tips and a safe place where swimmers can interact with one another and share team photos. This is monitored by multiple coaches and a couple of parents.

E-mail

Newsletters/email memos from the Head Coach are sent out as needed.

Team Website

The team's website is the primary resource for all information about the team. Swim meet announcements are made on the homepage, and other tabs will lead you to more detailed information including practice schedules, team records, forms, documents, team policies, etc.

Social Media

HDST maintains multiple social media accounts.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/HelenaDolphinsSwimTeam

Instagram: Search for @helenadolphinswimteam

Tik Tok: Search for @helenadolphinswimteam

These pages are used to help promote HDST and allow friends and family members to keep up to date with the latest Dolphin happenings.

Safe Sport & Other Policies

The Helena Dolphins Swim Team (HDST) is recognized by USA Swimming as a Safe Sport team. Our top priority continues to be keeping our athletes safe. No form of abuse, including child sexual abuse, has a place in our sport. As a part of our continued commitment to safeguarding our athletes, HDST & USA Swimming have enacted enhancements to our Safe Sport policies and requirements. Our policies can be found on helenadolphins.com website, under the Safe Sport tab or by clicking below:

[Landing Page for our Safe Sport Policies](#)

When you participate on HDST you agree to adhere to the following policies below, click to be directed to that policy (policies can also be found on the landing page link above):

- [Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy \(MAAP\)](#)
- [Electronics and Social Media Communications Policy](#)
- [Grievance Procedure](#)
- [Parent Code of Conduct](#)
- [Athlete Code of Conduct](#)
- [Photography Policy](#)
- [Addressing Bullying Action Plan](#)
- [HDST Locker Room Monitoring Policy & Handling Misconduct](#)

Safe Sport Training for Athletes & Swimmers

HDST encourages athletes (12 and older) and parents to take the free online training offered by USA Swimming's Safe Sport program. The parent and athlete training can be accessed through your USA Swimming portal. We offer incentives for completing the training. \$25.00 credit will be rewarded for every person who does the training.

[Click here for instructions on how to complete the training.](#)

3-Strike Policy

HDST will implement a 3-strike policy for all team policies that are set by the team:

- First strike : A written letter to the swimmer and/or parent explaining the violation and understanding that continuous violation could result in suspension from all team activities for a set-amount of time.
- Second strike: A written letter to the swimmer and/or parent explaining the violation and understanding of the second strike results in suspension from all team activities for a set-amount of time.
- Third strike: A written letter to the swimmer and/or parent explaining the violation and immediate suspension or expulsion from the team.

Sportsmanship / Behavior Expectations

Every swimmer and parents/legal guardian will be expected to treat their teammates, peers, as well as competitors, coaches, officials, and volunteers with the utmost respect. An individual's behavior is a direct reflection of the Helena and Butte Dolphins Swim Team.

Bullying, harassment, use of profanity, insubordination, violations of the Helena Dolphins Swim Team Code of Conduct, a negative impact to team culture (including via social media), and general poor behavior will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action.

Athletes and parents will be expected to clean up after themselves and to leave practice, competition, and host locations of team functions in a clean state. Vandalism or disrespectful use of these areas will result in disciplinary action.

An observation by the coaching staff of any of these implications will be immediately addressed. The coaching staff takes these items very seriously, and multiple violations or behaviors that threaten the safety of an individual or the team will not be tolerated. Consequences of such behavior could include disciplinary action ranging from meetings with the coaching staff, up to and including removal from the team.