



Synchronized Skating
Team Handbook
2025-2026

Proud members of Richmond FSC & US Figure Skating

Welcome

Congratulations on your selection to the Richmond Synchro Synchronized Skating Teams for the upcoming season! We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you and your family to our program. We wish you a season full of successful opportunities and learning experiences. This handbook will give skaters/guardians all important information about the Richmond Synchro program, including expectations and policies.

Please read through the handbook carefully and review the contents with your skater, as skaters and all legal guardians (if the skater is under 18) are required to sign an acknowledgement form via TeamSnap registration after reviewing the handbook.

The guidance in this handbook applies to all skaters and their eligibility to participate in Richmond Synchro Synchronized Skating Team events. Richmond Synchro reserves the right to add, modify, revoke, suspend, terminate or change any or all handbook policies, practices, procedures, and benefits, in whole or part, at any time, with or without notice. This handbook supersedes all previous written or oral policies.

Richmond Synchro cannot guarantee a skater's eligibility to participate. Skaters (and their legal guardians) are responsible for the information contained in the handbook.

Mission

Richmond Synchro instructs skaters in, and prepares skaters for, the sport of Synchronized Skating. Richmond Synchro strives for excellence both on and off the ice. Our goal is to provide comprehensive training, unconditional support, and a caring environment for skaters at all levels.

Team Selections

Team Placements are conducted once a year. The Synchronized Skating Director and Coaches will make all final team placements. All skaters are placed where they will be challenged while still being competitive and successful. The factors taken into consideration when making team placement may include but are not limited to: age, test level, skating skills, maturity, work ethic, ability to pick up spatial formations and choreography, practice attendance, and competition/event attendance. Some team rosters may remain open throughout the season.

Included In This Handbook

- Practice Policies – Attendance, Absences & Attire
- Competition Policies – Attendance, Attire & Travel
- Individual Lesson & Practice Requirements
- Team Fees, Volunteer Hours & Fundraising
- Training Skaters, Cross Skaters & Flex/Swing Skaters
- Managing Board & Contact Information
- SkateSafe Policies
- Ethics & Behavioral Expectations

Team Practice Policies

Attendance & Absences:

- A skater's commitment to the team is most evident by their attendance at practice. The team's ability to learn choreography, prepare properly for competitions, and make any necessary element adjustments throughout the season is entirely dependent on having the whole team on the ice.
- Skaters are expected to attend all on and off-ice practices, competitions and exhibitions. A calendar for the season will be provided at the start of the season. Unless there are factors beyond our control (inclement weather, unexpected rink issue) we strive to adhere strictly to the schedule and families should not expect changes or additional practices outside of those published at the start of the season.
- **Injury & Illness Protocol**
 - Should a skater be unable to skate at a practice or event due to injury, they are still a full member of the team and are expected to observe practice, so they are prepared to return upon Doctor approval.
 - Should a skater be too ill to attend practice, **the Head Coach and Team Manager should be notified directly prior to practice via e-mail and/or cell phone.** Please do not send a message via team chat or through another skater/family.
 - Should a skater incur a major illness or Injury that necessitates time away from practice, Richmond Synchro Coaches are committed to adhering to the advice of the skater's Doctor/s to ensure a safe return to team practices.
- **Absences**
 - Skaters will submit an Absence Notification Form at the start of the season for Early Session, as well as at the start of the Fall for the remainder of the season. Camps, family vacations/events and required school events are expected absences; skaters are expected not to add additional absences for other avoidable reasons.
 - **All skaters are expected to be at all on and off-ice practices during the last 2 weeks leading up to a Competition/Event.** If there are absences during these periods, a skater shall be permitted to compete or participate in an exhibition at the discretion of the Director/Coaching Staff.
 - **Skaters are responsible for coming to each next practice prepared after an absence.** Skaters are expected to learn what was missed by contacting a teammate or Coach. Videos may be emailed to assist.
 - Should any skater have challenges with practice attendance, the Director and Coaches reserve the right to sit a skater out at a Competition or Event. In this case, the Skaters/Guardians will be notified with sufficient time to correct the attendance issue, and parameters for the skater's participation will be set.

Practice Attire/Gear:

All skaters are **required** to wear to every on and off-ice practice the following:

- Solid Black Leggings – tight, fitted, and with no embellishments. Or Black Skating pants for male skaters.
- Black Team Practice Jacket (any fitted jacket is fine for new skaters before they receive their team jacket)
- Long hair pulled back in a bun
- Athletic Shoes – no fashion sneakers, boots or flip flops for safety reasons
- Team Skate Bag

Competition Attendance, Attire, & Travel

Competition and Exhibition Attendance:

- A list of Competitions/Exhibitions will be published with Team Placement Emails in April and Skaters/Guardians are expected to schedule these exhibitions and competitions on their calendars. Attendance at all competitions and exhibitions is expected for the skaters. Exceptions are made at the discretion of the Director/Coaches.
 - Attendance at competitions includes ALL Official and Unofficial Practice Ice segments as well as off-ice practices and the competition event.

Travel:

- Coaches will determine and communicate where the teams will travel at the start of each season. Our Travel Coordinator will select the team hotel and book room blocks in advance for our families. Information and instructions will be sent to families on booking your rooms for each competition by our Travel Coordinator.
- If Chaperoned trips are offered, details will be shared and arrangements made directly with the team.
- All Coaches, Managers, Chaperones, and Board Members must complete a background check per USFS guidance and be compliant with SkateSafe. Only those that have the required background check will be permitted to travel with skaters and be allowed in locker rooms. Safety and trust is paramount to our organization.
- The Director and Team Managers will set the team itineraries, including arrival times and departure times. These will be set as soon as the competition releases schedule information. The itineraries will be sent to the families as soon as this information becomes available. If families would like to solidify travel arrangements prior to the Official Competition Schedules being released, they will need to book for the duration of the entire event.
- If a skater is traveling with another family to a Competition or Event (in the context of an official Chaperoned Trip or just a personal arrangement), the chaperone must have a copy of the skater's insurance card and a signed letter of permission authorizing them, the Coach and Team Manager to seek treatment in a medical emergency.

Competition Performance Attire:

- Skaters are required to purchase:
 - Competition Dress or Mens' Attire
 - Competition Tights (2 pairs) for female skaters
 - Any necessary hair or make up accessories
- Costs for Competition Attire vary depending on team level & competition package statements will be sent in September. Competition attire goals for the 2025-2026 season are:
 - Aspire 1 - \$75 if we are able to work with a dance company; \$125 if working with skatewear companies
 - Aspire 2 - \$125 or less goal for competition dresses
 - Aspire 3 and 4 - \$150-\$175 goal for competition dresses
 - Tights normally run under \$10 per pair; hair accessories run \$5 or less; makeup may be in the \$15 range

Individual Lesson & Practice Requirements

Individual Practice and Lessons

Skaters at all levels are expected to take private or group lessons weekly and to practice outside of lessons and team instruction*. These requirements are put in place in the best interests of the skaters, so they may be competitive in their respective divisions and also progress through levels consistently.

(*some flexibility is granted to beginning Aspire skaters as they are starting out in the sport)

| Aspire Team Level | Requirements |
|-----------------------|---|
| Aspire 1 | Recommended: Group lessons are not required, but are recommended for Aspire 1 skaters. Group lessons provide ample space and time to acquire the skills needed to advance to Aspire 2 efficiently. |
| Aspire 2 | Recommended: Group or private lesson is recommended for Aspire 2, but not required. Group or private lessons will allow skaters to acquire skills needed to advance to the Aspire 3 division. Skaters in Aspire 2 should begin learning how to practice once weekly on their own, using Public Session Ice. |
| Aspire 3 and 4 | <p>Required: Group or private lesson, with private being highly recommended.</p> <p>Recommended: Skaters should begin private lessons at these Aspire levels so that they may begin Individual Advanced Testing required to move beyond the Aspire divisions at some point. Skaters should practice once weekly on a Public Session or 30 minutes on Freestyle Ice.</p> <p>Individual Advanced Testing: It is recommended skaters aim to test the first (Pre-Preliminary) test while in the Aspire 3 division. Skaters will need to take 1-3 advanced tests before they are eligible to move beyond the Aspire divisions. Advanced Individual Testing will be explained to families who are new to it throughout the season.</p> |

| Sectional and National Levels | |
|--|---|
| Open Adult | Recommended: Group or private lesson if needed. Adult team members are expected to be able to execute the skills within a program - if they need additional time and work on any skills, they are expected to take a group or private lesson. Private lessons are recommended, as they will achieve significantly quicker progress and could also be short-term for skill mastery. |
| Non-Qualifying (Preliminary, Pre-Juvenile and Open Juvenile) and Elite Aspire 4 | <p>Required: 1 Private Lesson and 30-60 minutes practice weekly.</p> <p>Recommended: 1 Private Lesson and 60 minutes practice; 2 private lessons and 60 minutes practice weekly before progressing to Qualifying levels.</p> |
| Qualifying Levels (Juvenile, Intermediate and Novice) | Required: 2 Private lessons weekly and 60 minutes practice on Freestyle Ice. |

Team Fees, Volunteer Hours, & Fundraising

Richmond Synchro's budget is set each year based on the number of skaters in the organization. Because of this, it is crucial that Richmond Synchro receives the expected payments from each skater throughout the year to maintain the predetermined budget. By signing the Skater Commitment Contract, the skater and their legal guardian(s) understand they are obligated to pay all team fees for the entire season, and a payment plan for team fees may be selected from the options provided below.

| Pay in Full | Two Payments | Monthly Payments |
|--|--|---------------------|
| Season payment at the start of the season* | 50% due on June 1 and 50% due on September 1 | 8 monthly payments* |

*Payment plans are less the \$100 fee paid upon acceptance

Team Fees for the 2025-2026 season cover the following:

- All Team Ice time
- All Coaching fees
- All Competition Entry Fees and Practice Ice Sessions at competitions
- Coaches' competition fees and expenses
- Choreography/music expenses throughout the season
- Team shirt, grip gloves and headband
- Richmond Synchro and Team operating expenses

Individual expenses (to be the responsibility of the skaters and/or legal guardian(s)) will include:

- Competition attire and accessories
- Required teamwear (jacket, bag-may be rolled into monthly payment option), and optional Team Vest
- US Figure Skating or LTS USA annual membership
- Travel expenses to competitions
- Non-team practices/lessons

Team fees should be paid via TeamSnap. Fees can also be paid by check and should be put in the Richmond Synchro payments box at SkateNation Plus. Other fees are to be paid as they are invoiced-we strive to keep any additional invoices to a minimum.

If there are financial issues, the family is expected to discuss them with the Richmond Synchro Treasurer as soon as they arise. It is the skater's or legal guardian's responsibility to pay for all invoiced expenses.

Any exceptions to the obligation to pay the full season's fees must be submitted by the skater or legal guardian(s) to the Richmond Synchro General Manager and Richmond Synchro Treasurer. By unanimous vote, the Richmond Synchro Board may, at its sole discretion, grant an exception in whole or in part.

The following are the procedures for late payment of Team fees:

- 30 days delinquent—reminder letter and/or email*
- 60 days delinquent—past due letter and unable to skate in practice or competition*
- 90 days delinquent— certified letter and skater risks being not in good standing with their US Figure Skating club*
- *If a payment is made, that stops the process. If you owe from a previous season, you may not try out for the following season until any outstanding balance is paid in full. We are willing to work with families anytime a payment is delayed, so families should reach out immediately if they are falling behind.
- Unless granted an exception by the Board, all Team Fees are non-cancellable and non-refundable.

Fundraising & Volunteering:

Richmond Synchro has been successful and consistent in focusing on two major fundraisers each season, and we are able to rely on funds raised to offset season costs. This success is dependent upon families consistently volunteering, and each family is expected to participate actively in volunteer requirements.

Our two main sources of fundraising are:

University of Richmond Concessions

Richmond Synchro has been selected as one of three non-profit organizations in the area to provide volunteers to staff University of Richmond concession stands at various athletic events, including football and basketball games. We simply show up and have fun while volunteering and making money for Richmond Synchro.

South Atlantic Synchro Open (SASO)

SASO is the competition we host each December. It is a major effort on our club's part, and not only provides a large source of fundraising, but also offers a sizeable competition for our teams to attend without travel costs and additional competition fees.

2025-2026 Season Fundraising Requirements *per family*:

- Aspire 1, 2, and Open Adult:
 - 2 SASO volunteer shifts or jobs
 - 2 UR shifts*
 - 1 of the UR shifts may be eliminated by taking on a chairperson position in another area of need this season (these positions will be discussed further as the season starts)
- Aspire 3, 4, Sectional and National Levels:
 - 2 SASO volunteer shifts or jobs
 - 3 UR shifts*
 - 1 of the UR shifts may be eliminated by taking on a chairperson position in another area of need this season (these positions will be discussed further as the season starts)

Additional UR Concessions Notes:

- Volunteers can be the skater or skater's family member(s), age 15+.
- If the required shifts are not worked, there will be a **fee charged of \$50** per family per missed shift. Please note, though, that if we do not staff these events, we will not be invited back in future seasons and will lose this very lucrative fundraising opportunity.

Managing Board & Communications

Managing Board

Richmond Synchro has a volunteer managing board that works with the coaches to help maintain and run the teams efficiently. The Board consists of the Director, Coaches, the Team Managers, the General Manager, the Treasurer and Secretary. Board meetings are held monthly. All non-Coach Board members are volunteers. We are extremely grateful to have the continued help and support of our wonderful Board members and welcome new members or Chairs throughout the season.

Communications

Our website serves the needs of all of our members. **Parents/Guardians must set up an account with TeamSnap to ensure they will be able to access all pertinent information throughout the season.** Travel schedules, event itineraries, program music downloads and more will be available.

Email via TeamSnap will be our number one source of communication and ALL information disseminated throughout the season will be sent via email. We will supplement the emails by putting the information on the website or social media groups as well.

Videography/Photography: Videotaping during practices by any person other than the coaches, or someone assigned by the coaches, is prohibited. No videos of the teams may be posted to YouTube, Facebook or any other public social media platform without permission from the Program Director or General Manager. **No photography is allowed in locker rooms per US Figure Skating.**

Social Media & Internet Communication: Skaters/Guardians should exercise caution with regards to social media posts, and adhere to US Figure Skating policies. Information that is posted on any internet site is public information, and the poster should assume that it can be viewed by anyone at any time, including U.S. Figure Skating Officials and our team coaches. Posting negative comments about any events, other teams/organizations, officials, etc. is considered unsportsmanlike behavior.

Skaters will sign an Athlete's Code of Conduct, which will include social media rules. We strive to provide a safe and healthy competitive program, and a Code of Conduct will ensure the skaters are aware of program standards.

SkateSafe Protocols & Policies

SkateSafe: All Team Managers, Chaperones or anyone wishing to enter Locker Rooms at U.S. Figure Skating sanctioned events must complete SkateSafe training, along with a background check in order to be credentialed at an event and enter the Locker Room along with the team. This policy was put into effect by U.S. Figure Skating in order to ensure a safe environment for all skaters at any and all synchro events.

All Richmond Synchro Coaches, Board Members, Managers, and legal guardian(s) are expected to adhere to the SkateSafe standards of conduct in their interactions with Richmond Synchro athletes. Richmond Synchro follows USFS SkateSafe protocols in order to protect our athletes both on and off the ice. SkateSafe seeks to provide a safe and positive environment for an athlete's physical, emotional, and social development in an environment free from abuse and misconduct.

All Richmond Synchro Coaches and Team Service Personnel (managers, chaperones, board members) are specifically required to maintain up to date SkateSafe compliance with US Figure Skating. All Richmond Synchro Coaches and Team Service Personnel are required to pass an annual background screening. Any allegations of suspected misconduct involving any individual associated with Richmond Synchro shall be promptly reported to the Director and General Manager.

Ethics/Behavioral Expectations

Practice Behavior and Expectations

Progress can only be made with a cooperative and respectful attitude and environment. During all on and off-ice practices, coaches expect skaters to:

- Refrain from derogatory comments or foul language (including in locker rooms)
- Listen to Coaches
- Be attentive to directions and move quickly into positions
- Leave cell phones in skate bags

Competition Behavior/Attire, and Supervision at Events

When at any competitions or other events, skaters are expected to:

- Arrive on time to all on and off-ice practices as noted on the team itinerary
- Wear the appropriate Richmond Synchro attire as specified in event itineraries
- Attend other Richmond Synchro performances at the event when possible
- Demonstrate good sportsmanship throughout the competition

Should any behavioral or disciplinary situation arise, the Coach and Team Manager will speak with the skater and legal guardian(s) promptly. A second incident may necessitate a meeting with the skater, legal guardian(s), Team Manager and/or General Manager, and any third incident may result in a change of performance status for the skater.