

Portsmouth Aikido

Learn Everywhere Program



A pathway to earning school credit for martial arts training through the New Hampshire Department of Education's [Learn Everywhere Program](#)

I. Overview

Portsmouth Aikido is a 501(c)3 educational non-profit organization dedicated to practicing and teaching the traditional Japanese martial art of Aikido. We have been in continuous operation since 1995, and in that time we have instructed hundreds of students in the New Hampshire seacoast. Our goal is to provide top-notch instruction and a positive community for kids, teens, and adults to learn Aikido.

In 2022, we were approved to award academic credit via the New Hampshire Department of Education's [Learn Everywhere Program](#). Through this program, we offer the opportunity for school-age students to earn Physical Education credits which can be applied to their academic transcript at their local school or to document participation in physical education for students who are homeschooled.

A summary of the program is as follows:

- Up to two half-credit certificates may be earned
- Each half-credit is earned over a five month period
- Enrollment is open, and students may start earning credit as soon as they enroll in the program
- Students must attend a minimum of 2-3 classes per week
- Students are assessed in the four competency areas of movement patterns, movement concepts, fitness goals, and fitness responsibility
- By the end of the five-month period, students must pass a [USAF kyu test](#) and do a brief demonstration to show/share what they have learned
- Upon meeting the requirements of the course, students will receive a certificate which they can bring to their school as evidence of earning their PE credit

II. Program Description

Aikido is a unique Japanese martial art that teaches self-defense in a non-violent, non-aggressive manner. In Aikido there are no competitive tournaments or sparring. Students practice cooperatively, whereby they learn to naturally respond to conflict with calm, confidence, and integrity.



Kids Program

The goal of our kids program is to provide a safe, positive environment for young people to practice the art of Aikido. Classes are offered twice a week for two age groups - Tanuki Kids (age 5-7) and Kuma Kids (age 8-12). Through their practice, kids will:

- Develop strength, balance, and coordination
- Gain self-awareness and increase their confidence and focus
- Have fun learning a non-competitive martial art

Teens & Adults Program

Students ages 13 and up are incorporated into our adult program, and we maintain the same expectations for school-age students as we do for the grown-ups. We offer six classes a week for this group, with two weekly open-mat practices for self-directed learning.

III. Policies

A. Instructors

Chief Instructor, Aaron Cass, has been training in Aikido since 1995, including three years of study in Japan. He holds the rank of 5th degree black belt and was awarded the title of Shido-in (certified instructor) through the [United States Aikido Federation](#). In addition to his martial arts training, he has taught high school English for over 20 years. At the dojo, he teaches classes regularly for children and adults.



Sofie Larsen, who teaches kids and teens, began her Aikido training in her teens in Belgium. She holds the rank of 4th kyu. In addition to instructing at the dojo, she teaches world languages (French and Latin) at Noble High School in Berwick, ME.

We also have a rotation of black belt instructors who teach adult classes occasionally throughout the week. Each holds the rank of shodan or higher through Portsmouth Aikido and works closely with Chief Instructor Aaron Cass to ensure consistent instruction throughout the program.

B. Admissions

Students can try a class for free before deciding to join the program. Upon joining, they pay a one-time registration fee of \$85, which includes a uniform. Monthly dues are \$100, and additional family members receive a \$25 discount.

Portsmouth Aikido is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that welcomes members of every race, gender, identity and ability. If a student receives special education services via an IEP or 504, we are happy to accommodate instruction and/or modify assessment appropriate to the needs of that student.

For families in need, we offer full and partial scholarships. For more information, contact Chief Instructor Aaron Cass at info@portsmouthaikido.org.

C. Indemnification Statement

Per the Learn Everywhere NH Program, parents are required to agree to the following statement:

“I (the parent/legal guardian of, or the emancipated student, _____/_____) covenant and agree at all times to indemnify and hold harmless the (school district), their school boards, officers, directors, agents, employees, all funding districts and sources, and their successors and assigns, (the “indemnified parties”) from any and all claims, demands, actions and causes of action, whether in law or in equity, and all damages, costs, losses, and expenses, including but not limited to reasonable attorneys’ fees and legal costs, for any action or inaction of the state approved Learn Everywhere program, its board, officers, employees, agents, representatives, contractors, guests and invitees, or pupils.”

IV. Facilities and Insurance

A. Educational Facilities

Portsmouth Aikido is located at 620 Peverly Hill Rd. in Portsmouth. We have a dedicated practice space of 1,250 sq ft with special mats designed to safely practice rolling and falling skills. In addition, we have a separate lounge adjacent to the dojo for parents and siblings to work, study, or relax when not on the mat. We have two handicapped-accessible bathrooms, an elevator, and separate changing rooms for boys and girls. If a student prefers a non-gendered changing room the bathrooms are spacious and clean, and they are welcome to change there.



B. Proof of Insurance

Portsmouth Aikido is insured for up to \$1,000,000 for personal injury and \$2,000,000 general aggregate with Francis L. Dean & Associates Insurance.

V. Educational Program

A. Academic Certificates for Learn Everywhere NH

Portsmouth Aikido offers two 1/2-credit certificates (levels I and II). Each level is five months in length and is the equivalent of a one-semester Physical Education elective credit. These certificates are:

Aikido I

Aikido II

Tracking and Recording Student Progress

Participants in our Learn Everywhere program must train 2-3 times/week and keep track of their attendance by logging into our attendance app at the dojo. Instructors meet regularly to discuss student progress, assessing students' strengths and weaknesses and strategizing ways to help them improve their physical, interpersonal, and martial arts skills.

B. Competencies and Student Outcomes

Competencies

1. **Movement Patterns:** Students will demonstrate basic patterns of solo movements and paired techniques that involve throwing and pinning an attacker from various grabs and strikes.
2. **Movement Concepts:** Students will demonstrate an understanding of how to roll and fall safely, and to apply techniques in response to a variety of attacks that allow them to stay safe without harming their partner.
3. **Fitness Goals:** Students will set goals of increasing their fitness by progressing through test skills, refining those skills via instructor feedback, and demonstrating their mastery in a formal test setting.

4. **Fitness Responsibility:** Students will demonstrate proper etiquette, self-regulation, and stress management, and practice safely and cooperatively with their peers.

Student Outcomes

Aikido I Outcomes:

1. **Movement Patterns:** Students will demonstrate the [USAF 6th kyu test techniques](#) of *tai no henko* and *kokyuhō*, and show basic weapons skills with the sword and staff including, bowing, standing, and sitting and showing three *kamae* positions for each weapon.
2. **Movement Concepts:** Students will demonstrate back falls, back rolls, forward rolls, knee walking, a seated pin, and four basic *tai sabaki* (body movements).
3. **Fitness Goals:** Students will successfully pass the USAF 6th kyu test, including regular class attendance, receiving feedback on practice tests, and completing a formal test in front of their teachers and peers.
4. **Fitness Responsibility:** Students will consistently demonstrate formal Japanese dojo etiquette, including bowing, sitting quietly before and after class, listening respectfully during instruction, and practicing safely and cooperatively with other students.

Aikido II Outcomes:

1. **Movement Patterns:** Students will demonstrate the seven paired techniques of [USAF 5th kyu test](#), and show three basic attacks each with the sword and staff.
2. **Movement Concepts:** Students will demonstrate the *omote* and *ura* versions of each test technique, including two seated pins, three joint locks, and five throws.
3. **Fitness Goals:** Students will successfully pass the USAF 5th kyu test, including regular class attendance, receiving feedback on practice tests, and completing a formal test in front of their teachers and peers.
4. **Fitness Responsibility:** Students will continue to demonstrate formal Japanese dojo etiquette, and serve as mentors by helping to demonstrate techniques in front of the class, helping less experienced students, and participating in regular cleaning of the practice space.