

# WOLVERHAMPTON SWIMMING CLUB



## Parents and Swimmers Guide

### Introduction

Wolverhampton Swimming Club is a competitive swimming club. Our wish is to ensure that all our swimmers can have the opportunity to achieve their full potential within swimming, irrespective of age, ability or ambition.

As a competitive sporting club our ambition is to be one of the premier competitive swimming clubs in Staffordshire.

It is also our objective to work with and alongside other bodies and where appropriate, other swimming clubs to promote the participation, development and progression of swimming within the area.

We will seek to achieve this by providing a first-class performance based environment that will always focus on the needs and aspirations of individual swimmers within a solid and successful team framework each supporting each other.

Our mission is to provide an unbroken progression ladder for all our swimmers from capable swimmer through the various stages and groups. For most swimmers, this will include open meet competitor, county championship qualifier, regional qualifier, national and British national qualifier and British championships.

We will achieve this by teaching our swimmers the basics of good stroke technique and then providing them with the physical fitness to perform these skills in both training and the competitive environment.

We will strive to promote discipline, respect, commitment, confidence, high self-esteem, and sportsmanship. We believe swimming should be fun, and it should be an enjoyable and rewarding part of our swimmers' lives working within a framework that provides every opportunity for success.

We also recognise the important role that parents play in shaping their child's experience and success, and therefore we encourage parents to play an active role in their child's swimming life and that of the Club.

We emphasise the importance of being part of a team and we will always promote loyalty, responsibility and team spirit within the club

We expect all our members to act in a manner that positively enhances the club's reputation, image and standing at all times and in every situation.

### Individuality

We believe that there is no one size that fits all. Every swimmer is different and so our program is designed to offer the maximum amount of flexibility to meet each swimmer's aspirations and ambitions.

## **Excellence**

Unless we provide the right environment for success it is difficult for swimmers to reach their potential. For each swimmer, we will:

- Provide sufficient pool time for each swimmer at the appropriate level.
- Ensure quality coaching with individual attention at every session.
- Agree individual goals and targets with swimmers, coaches and parents.

## **Care**

We will always strive to ensure every child is supported and valued within the framework of a focused and united team.

## **Success**

Success is not measured merely in terms of medals won or qualifying times achieved. Rather it is determined by each swimmer reaching their own potential.

Success is never gauged in comparison to others but rather against the abilities, aspirations and commitment of each individual swimmer.

## **Partnership**

Wolverhampton Swimming Club is a partnership between swimmers, coaches, parents and the club.

Success is not inevitable but is possible and achievable. However, it takes a lot of commitment and hard work from a number of people to make it happen. Each person within the Club has a role to play that has responsibilities.

## **Expectations**

Wolverhampton Swimming Club expects that everyone associated with the club should act in a manner that will enhance our reputation within the swimming community and that will encourage others to want to join us **at all times**.

## **Swimmers preparation and their responsibility for performance**

Wolverhampton Swimming Club has some basic poolside guidelines for all our swimmers and swimmers and parents are expected to be aware and follow these at training sessions and competitive meets.

## **Parents**

It is not easy being the parent of a competitive swimmer. Whilst it is very rewarding it can also be stressful and often frustrating. In order to help parents, we offer the following advice

and ask for parental support in ensuring our swimmers are supported both in and out of the pool environment.

It is important that children have hopes, dreams and ambitions and that parents support them. However, no matter how good they appear to be, try not to have unrealistically high expectations for your children. There are hundreds of thousands of competitive swimmers in the UK- only 40 or so will go on to represent Great Britain at any Olympic Games.

The parental role is different from the coach. Parents need to provide a "safe haven" of support and encouragement away from swimming for the child to relax and be "normal".

Try to be even handed about both success and disappointment. Both WILL happen. Don't go too high with one and too low with the other.

Try not to compare your child with others at the same age, either an older or younger brother or sister or another swimmer. Every child develops at a different rate. For example, it is simply impossible to predict at 9 yrs of age what any child will look like or swim like by the time they are 13 yrs old.

This will free up the coach to speak directly to the child about their swimming. If parents also coach their children before and after training sessions and competitive swims and analyse every race back at home, it prevents the coach from doing their job effectively.

By all means ask the coach how your child has performed in training over the last week or month so the child sees you are interested.

Parents should insist that their child give 100% attention during all training sessions and 100% commitment during all races. This is part of the responsibility of partnership.

## **Training Sessions**

Every swimmer should attend every training session with a "can do" attitude, ready to listen and try to do what is being asked by the coach.

Swimmers must not distract or interfere with other swimmers in the pool.

## **Attendance at training sessions**

Coaches will record the attendance of all swimmers in every group during each session.

This information will be passed to the relevant club official for recording and to ensure that swimmers are attending the sessions that they are allocated to and are paying for.

Swimmers are expected to attend each session allocated to them. If for any reason a swimmer is unable to attend or they will be late they should let the coaching team know beforehand. Swimmers regularly not attending sessions may have their allocated place removed.

## COMPETITIONS

Wolverhampton Swimming Club expects that:

- All swimmers will represent the Club in specific competitions if selected.
- All swimmers follow the specific competition program for their ability
- Dates in the Club competition calendar are put into the 'family calendar' to ensure swimmer availability at all club competitions and open meets.
- All swimmers warm up and swim down as requested by the coach.
- All swimmers comply with the swimmers' code of conduct at all times.
- A coach from the club will attend each key targeted competition. Coaches may not attend other non-targeted competitions.
- Coaches will give feedback to swimmers after their races and all swimmers are expected to see the coach after each race, regardless of how they may feel it has gone.
- Coaches will meet with swimmers and parents to discuss swimming issues related to that swimmer which may include goals and targets and any other issues they may require support with.

### Types of different meets

#### What does 'Licensed meet' mean?

Licensed Meets are Open Meets which have been sanctioned by the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) as being either a Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 or Level 4 Meet.

All the times recorded in a licensed meet are shown in the National Rankings, which is open to everyone to see, so a swimmer can prove a time. This is particularly important for qualification into County, Regional or National Events where qualification can only be achieved at certain levels of meet.

**Level 1 and 2 Meets:** Aimed at the higher level of swimmer such as National and Regional qualifiers and the better County Level swimmers. Level 1 Meets must be held in a 50m pool and Level 2 Meets must be held in a 25m pool.

**Level 3 Meets:** Attract a wide spectrum of swimmers and require upper limit times and qualifying times. Level 3 Meets can either be in a 25m or 50m pool.

**Level 4 Meets:** Require upper limit times (except for Club Championships and time trials) but no lower qualifying time. Level 4 Meets are intended for either Novice events or Club Championships to enable those meets or championships to proceed as licensed events with the minimum of red tape.

#### Which competitions can I enter?

All swimming members of Wolverhampton Swimming Club are expected to enter our annual Club Championships unless there are extenuating circumstances which prevent them from swimming. This is the opportunity to compete with your team mates. Your coach will advise you on the events to enter according to your age. The Club Champs take place every year in September. Points are awarded to the top swimmers in each event and trophies awarded to the best male and female swimmers in each age group. These are presented at the Clubs Presentation Evening.

## **How do I enter Open Meets?**

The Coaches prepare a competition calendar at the start of the season. These meets are carefully chosen in the lead up to major meets such as the Counties, Regionals and Nationals as well as the registering of swim times for new swimmers. A list of targeted meets is placed on our main notice board, our website and will be emailed to everyone. Please put these dates in your diary at the start of the year.

The competition secretary will email you when an entry needs to be made. Please make sure that you inform the Club of the most appropriate e-mail address to contact you on, and check your e-mails regularly for updates and closing dates. The competition secretary will attach a link to the relevant website where the information on qualifying times etc. is held. The entry form can be downloaded from the website or the competition secretary may have a small number of blank entry forms. They will indicate the deadline for the forms and cheque being handed in to the Club. Please make sure that the form is returned on time, as Level 3 meets, in particular, are first come first served and are often oversubscribed. Forms handed in late may not be accepted. Please also remember to include a contribution of £2.00 towards the coaches' passes.

The coaches advise that generally swimmers should only enter two events per session but if you are unsure about what events to enter please see the coaches.

## **What is a PB?**

PB is short for Personal Best. It is the best time an individual has achieved for a particular stroke at a given distance. A record of PBs from licensed events can be found by searching the British Swimming website:

<https://www.swimmingresults.org/individualbest/>

## **What does 'age on 31st December' mean?**

If a gala is run on an 'age on 31st December' basis it means how old the swimmer will be on the 31st December in the year of competition. It does not mean the age of the swimmer on the day of the competition, which may be different. So, for example, if a competition is being held on 30<sup>th</sup> August and the swimmer's birthday was the 20th December and they turned 12 years old on that date, they would swim as a 12 year old in the competition even though at the time of the competition they were still 11 years old.

## **What does 'Short Course' mean?**

Events held in a 25m length pool.

## **What does 'Long Course' mean?**

Events held in a 50m length pool.

## What happens on the day of a gala?

One of the coaches will always accompany swimmers to targeted meets. Swimmers should arrive on poolside, in your swimming kit, a minimum of 20 minutes before the start of warm up. All swimmers should report to the coaches to ensure they know you have arrived. The coach will tell you when to start warm up and also tell you which heat and lane you will be in for your event.

Once on poolside swimmers should not disappear off poolside without letting their coach know. Coaches will not 'go looking' for swimmers when it is time for them to race. Swimmers who are not present on poolside are likely to miss their race and may get no pre-race preparation from the coach.

When it is time for you to go for your event the coach will prepare you for your race and direct you to 'marshalling'. Officials will then show you where to sit and, eventually direct you to the start end of the pool. You should then go to your lane where a time keeper will be waiting. The time keeper will check your name on their heat sheet to make sure you are in the correct heat/lane.

You must wait for the long whistle blast before stepping up onto the blocks (or getting into the pool for a backstroke event, or if you have not achieved the Competitive Start Award and therefore have to start in the water). Once the long whistle blast has sounded, it is important for **ALL** those on poolside to be very quiet, otherwise it will be very difficult for swimmers in the current heat to hear the starting signal. The starter will say; 'take your marks' and will then fire a gun or sound a buzzer. At the end of your race, it is important that you wait until you are told to climb out of the pool.

After you have completed each race all swimmers should return to their coach for post-race feedback.

## What to bring to a gala?

It is essential that you attend each gala with the necessities (food, drink and swimming equipment) of the day. Very often the breaks from swimming are short and you will not have sufficient time to have 'long breaks' or leave poolside.

More specifically a good checklist of items will include :

- Drinks and snack/food to keep you hydrated and fed
- More than one towel
- Club Kit
- More than one set of hat and goggles
- Trainers/Flip flops to wear on poolside

## Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are not encouraged on poolside. As well as there being a risk of them being damaged or stolen, in nearly all swimming pool environments their use is prohibited by safeguarding requirements.

Parents should not expect to be able to keep in touch with their child by phone or text messaging, and parental coaching or comments on their child's performance by phone to the swimmer by phone during meets is prohibited.

## Training Session Requirements

Swimmers should:

- Arrive on poolside 15 minutes before the start of each session.
- Arrange all equipment so it is easily accessible from the pool and place their kit bag away from pool edge.
- Have a spare pair of goggles with them in their kit bag.

Swimmers Must:

- Start the session warm up on time when told to do so.
- Complete all sets without stopping or putting their feet on the bottom of the pool during the set.
- Not intentionally interfere with any other swimmers.
- Start each swim on the correct time using the pace clock or as directed by the coach.
- Leave the required gap between each swimmer (3sec or 5sec as instructed by the coach).
- Pay attention and not enter their own conversations while coaches are trying to explain or instruct swimmers.
- Attempt to complete each swim including warm ups and swim downs as instructed and at the pace required.
- Know their own personal best times for swims.
- Always go in speed order unless told otherwise by the coach.
- Never pull on lane ropes during swims.
- Never turn round before reaching the end of the length.
- Always move out of the way so that swimmers behind can reach the wall on their swim.