

Parents Responsibilities and Expectations

For the total experience of competitive swimming, the parents are needed to carry the development of sound values into the home. This program faces an important challenge; it is combining good physical development and fun with the formation of very important and basic values, such as teamwork, cooperation and individual goal achievement. Here are some ways parents can help.

- **Parents will be required to volunteer for at least one home meet.**

- Parents should make the time to discuss practice and meets at home. Listen to your child's feelings, as well as the words. Share your ideas and feelings. Your interest in their activity could open new communication channels.

- Parents should emphasize achieving established goals and striving for personal bests. Goal setting is an important aspect of competitive swimming. Goals are set at the beginning of the season between the coach and the swimmer. The goals should be realistic; challenging, but achievable. As the athlete achieves their goals, new goals can be established. Striving for "personal best" times help the athletes to achieve their goals.

- Parents should balance their involvement with their swimmers by keeping in mind that they should support their children and provide positive encouragement, but allow the coaches to do the coaching!

- Parents should help encourage their swimmers to try different events in order to make them more versatile and to help the team. Although YMCA swimming is both a team and individual sport, event participation is based on what is best for the team. **The ultimate decision of which events an athlete participates in at a YMCA meet is made by the coaches.**

- Swimming is a unique sport. Parents should be supportive of the different ways to measure success and winning. Success may be experienced by setting personal bests, by winning (or placing in) an event, or by winning the meet. More importantly, as long as each athlete gives it their all, they will have had a successful meet.

- Fair play, respect, teamwork, self-esteem and team spirit are essential in the building of a successful team. It is important that the entire team remain on the pool deck cheering for the teammates during the meet. Athletes are expected to stay at the pool until the last event is finished at a YMCA meet. The team will go through a series of cheers for Tsunami and our opponents at the start and conclusion of the meet. Other teams usually reciprocate with their own cheers. Parents are expected to refrain from having a swimmer leave the deck early.

- At practice, athletes are grouped by age and skill level. To promote teamwork and team spirit, it is important to keep practice times consistent. ***Parents should request schedule changes only in extreme situations.***

- Teamwork sometimes includes resolving conflicts that arise. Parents are expected to help bring these issues to the attention of the coaching staff.

- Swim Meets should be fun and exciting for team members. However, meets can seem long and drawn out for spectators, especially younger children. Here are a few hints to make the meets more enjoyable for spectators:
 - VOLUNTEER TO TIME ... training will be provided and there are usually 2-3 timers per lane. The meet will go by faster and you will gain a greater understanding of the sport.
 - Help with the concession stand between your child's events.
 - Assist with ribbon writing, officiating, scoring, etc at home meets.
 - Keep a record of your swimmer's times. Meet results are posted on the bulletin boards.
 - Bring a book to read. Bring activities (books, crayons, electronic games, etc.) for siblings).
 - Dress in layers, wearing light/cool clothes. It may be freezing outside but spectator areas in the pools can be very warm.
 - Bring along a chair. Sometimes spectator seating can be limited.

- Parents should feel free to attend practice. However, so as not to interfere with practice and the attention the coaches are giving to the swimmers, the best time to talk to the coaches will be before and after practice. No discussions with swimmers or coaches will be permitted during practice time. *No discussions with swimmers or coaches will be permitted during practice time. In order to assist with this we ask that all parents stay in the designated spectators area during practice (upstairs in the sweet pool and the spectators area in the balfour pool).*

- Parents should check for swim team communication on a daily basis. Please see the Communication section below.

- The coaches, athletes and Parent Volunteer Efforts would like to have all parents participate in the program. Please help out however you can whether it is at meets or at the Parents Group social events. Please see the Parent Volunteer Efforts section in the handbook.

- The coaches will not transport any swimmer to or from any swim meet or practice. It is expected that the parent will respect the policy set by the Coaches and the YMCA.

Just as your child is growing, so may you. Perhaps in some different ways, swimming will provide your family with an avenue for closer ties and companionship. Being on the swim team is a big commitment for the athlete. You need to dedicate yourself to the program as well. Be supportive and the rewards will be endless.