

WESTTOWN AQUATIC CLUB

Team Handbook

2025 - 2026 Season



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Table of Contents

Coaches & Admin Staff	2
Mission Statement	3
USA / MASI Swimming Information	3
General Rules	4
Team Apparel & Equipment	5
Practice Groups	6
Tuition	8
Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy	9
Swimmer & Parent Expectations	10
WA Swimmer Code of Conduct	12
WA Parent Code of Conduct	14
Meet Information	15
Meet Preparation & Guidelines	16
Locker Room Policy	17
Use Policy	17
Supervision & Safety	17
Recording Devices	17
Undress & Shower Policies	18
Locker Room Monitoring	18
Anti-Bullying Policy	20
Definition, Reporting Steps	20
Response	22
Photography Policy	23
SafeSport Grievance Policy	25

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Program Mission Statement

Westtown Aquatics is a school-owned and operated USA Swimming program dedicated to providing a safe, healthy, and positive environment for all athletes. Our mission is to give each individual a positive swimming experience that enables them to achieve a high standard of excellence in the sport. We are committed to fostering an atmosphere that prioritizes athlete safety and well-being, including strict adherence to child protection policies. Through a focus on great technique, smart training, and a culture of respect and accountability, we strive to help swimmers reach their full potential in a secure and supportive setting.

USA & Mid-Atlantic Swimming

USA Swimming is the governing body for the sport of competitive swimming in the United States. In this capacity, USA Swimming is responsible for the conduct and administration of swimming in the US. USA Swimming determines rules, implements policies and procedures and conducts National Championship meets, disseminates information about safety and sports medicine and selects athletes to represent the United States in international competitions.

USA Swimming has divided the country into 59 local Swimming Communities (LSC's). Each LSC is responsible for the administration of USA Swimming activities in a defined geographical area and has its own set of bylaws in which it operates.

The business affairs of each LSC are managed by a House of Delegates which includes representation by athletes, coaches, members of the Board of Directors and participating swim clubs. Each LSC is grouped into one of four zones: Western, Central, Eastern, and Southern. Westtown Aquatics is part of Middle Atlantic Swimming (MASI) LSC. MASI extends from Eastern Pennsylvania, South Jersey, and all of Delaware. The MASI requires swimmers to pay a membership fee in order to compete in sanctioned meets. The membership is valid for one year. MASI is part of the Eastern Zone which includes the following other LSC's: Adirondack, Niagara, Allegheny Mountain, Metropolitan, Maine, New England, Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey, Potomac Valley and Connecticut

Westtown School Policies

Westtown Aquatics operates as a guest of the Westtown School. All program participants—including athletes, coaches, and families—are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects respect for the school, its property, and its community. Participants are required to abide by the rules and policies outlined in the Westtown School Handbook. Adhering to these expectations helps maintain a positive and cooperative relationship with the host facility.

General Rules

We ask WA swimmers and families to acknowledge that we are guests of Westtown School!

- Non-swimmers and parents are not permitted on the pool deck or in locker rooms. Please see USA swimming locker room policy in the MAAPP section.

- Please do not remove information from the bulletin boards. If you would have any questions or would like copies of any information posted, please email jj.rudisill@westtown.edu. Defacing or vandalizing the bulletin boards and anything on the Westtown campus is prohibited and frowned upon.
- Please do your best to be on time when dropping off and picking up your swimmers.
- If you have a question for a coach, please wait for practice to be completed or you may email your swimmer's coach.
- Read communications! The best way to help your swimmer is to be in the know.
- Swimmers need to practice with their assigned practice group. We cannot allow swimmers to switch between groups at any point.

Team Apparel & Equipment

Swimmers are highly encouraged to wear the WA team suit and cap (if worn) at all swim meets (or a tech suit). Team suits are available year round through Toad Hollow. Parents are responsible for order placement and pickup.

- Please go to Toad Hollow after you receive team notification that suits are ready for purchase.
- Personalized team caps will be available for order in September and/or October. These caps can be ordered in silicone or latex.
- Kick boards and pull buoys will be provided at all practices.

The following gear should be brought to every practice by every swimmer:

- **MINIS** = Fins
- **JUNIORS** = Fins
- **SENIORS** = Fins, Paddles, Snorkel
- **ELITES** = Fins, Paddles, Snorkel

**Gear can be purchased at Toad Hollow or anywhere sold. All gear to be brought to and from every practice, for ease additionally you can purchase a Mesh Equipment Bag at Toad Hollow or online at Amazon.*

Practice Groups

Mini Group

The Mini Group is made up roughly of swimmers ages 6-8. This level is for swimmers who can swim but are still new to the training aspect of swimming. In this group we will focus on swimming the CORRECT way before we are concerned about swimming FAST. Coaches will teach swimmers how to swim Freestyle, Backstroke, Breaststroke, and Butterfly legally and spend most of the time working on technique. Learning the correct technique at this age will prevent injuries in the future. We will have a strong emphasis on kicking in this group because we believe the kick drives all 4 competitive strokes. We will also focus on basic streamlines, starts, turns, and transitions from stroke to stroke.

**We will offer 3 practices a week for this group and expect swimmers to average 2-3 practices per week.*

Junior Group

The Junior Group is made up roughly of swimmers ages 9-12. This level is for swimmers who enjoy the sport of swimming and want to continue to improve their technique and speed. This group will also have a strong emphasis on technique and kicking by using drills while teaching all 4 strokes. In practice swimmers will begin to be challenged both mentally and physically. We will prepare them to race by teaching different strategies for their races. The focus will remain to teach swimming the correct way as opposed to the “fast” way.

**We will offer 4 practices a week for this group and expect swimmers to average 3-4 practices per week.*

Senior Group

The Senior Group is made up roughly of middle school swimmers ages 11-14. This is a very competitive level of swimming so we expect commitment and a willingness to improve. While this group has a step up in training volume we continue to teach technique and quality training as opposed to volume training. We will use more advanced drills to teach technique and continue to work on starts and turns. Race strategy will be taught and reinforced at the meets in this group. We want SMART swimmers before we have fast swimmers. This is the first time most of our swimmers are beginning a dry-land program. We will work on strengthening their core, improving flexibility, and creating explosiveness by using body weight exercises and slowly adding in weights as they get older and stronger.

**We will offer 4 swimming practices a week for this group as well as 2 dry-land practices and expect swimmers to attend 3-4 practices per week.*

Elite Group

The Elite group is for dedicated, talented and hardworking high school swimmers. Swimmers at this level love the sport of swimming and most of their motivation comes from within. They want to improve individually, be a part of this TEAM and be leaders for younger swimmers. Most of the swimmers in this group have a goal to swim at the collegiate level and we will help them reach that goal. Early on in the season a lot of time is spent talking about balance and developing balance between school work, HS Swimming, and Club Swimming. Swimmers will be tested mentally and physically in this group. We will develop an aerobic base, we will continue to teach technique, and we will offer a wide variety of training. We will split into different groups in practice to work on prime specificity groups or distance/sprint training. Dry-land is also a big piece of our training. We will offer a dry-land training to improve flexibility, core strength, and muscular strength. The Speed, Power, and Flexibility gained here will be extremely important to high school swimmers and swimmers looking to compete at the next level.

**We will offer 6 swimming practices a week for this group as well as 3 dry-land practices and expect swimmers to attend as many practices a week as possible.*

Tuition

Registration fees are due when you sign up on TeamUnify and that can be paid using check or CC (with a transaction fee). 75% of the training fees are due on the first day of practice and the remaining 25% will be billed on Nov 1. A valid CC or checking account must be in the system when you register.

USA Registration Fee – An annual fee covers the cost of registering with USA Swimming for insurance purposes. Swimmers previously registered with USA Swimming that are transferring from another club will receive a registration form and transfer form (there is an additional transfer fee). This fee is now collected through USA swimming and parents must complete registration and payment through the online portal.

Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy (MAAPP)

[Link to MAAPP 3.0 Webpage](#)

Here is a link for the USA Swimming MAAPP. This policy must be read by parents and guardians of swimmers who are registered through USA swimming. Please make sure you and your swimmers are aware of this policy. This policy applies to swimmers, parents, coaches, officials, and anyone associated with the USA swimming community.

Swimmer and Parent Expectations

All swimmers, parents, and families are expected to represent Westtown Aquatics with respect and integrity. If a swimmer does not adhere to the following expectations, the Code of Conduct, or this handbook, a meeting may be required between the swimmer(s), parent(s), and the Director of Westtown Aquatics to determine appropriate consequences. These may include suspension from practice, restriction from a meet, or removal from the program.

1. Be on Time

1. Arrive on time whenever possible. We understand that delays happen, but do not linger in the locker rooms or elsewhere on campus. Always report to the pool deck first.

2. Supervision on Campus

1. Swimmers must be under the supervision of a parent or coach when on campus. Swimmers should not be unattended in hallways or playing games while parents remain in the stands.

3. Respect & Sportsmanship

1. Show respect and kindness to teammates, coaches, parents, personal property, and Westtown School property.

4. Locker Room Expectations

1. No cell phone use in locker rooms—respect others' privacy in accordance with USA Swimming rules.

2. Use appropriate language.
3. Change quickly before and after practice.
4. Do not touch others' personal belongings.

Swimmers are encouraged to keep their bags with them at all times. Westtown Aquatics is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

5. Equipment Responsibility

1. Return all equipment to its proper place neatly, and organized. Take responsibility for both personal and team equipment.

6. No Bullying

1. Bullying of any kind will not be tolerated. Westtown Aquatics will follow the organization's Bullying Policy. We are one team—support each other!

7. Bathroom Use

1. Swimmers should use the restroom before practice, during designated breaks, and after practice. Everyone is expected to participate fully in the main set.

8. Attitude & Focus

1. Be ready to listen to your coach and use practice time wisely.
2. Our pool time is a privilege—respect it.
3. Keep your head above water and ask questions at the appropriate time without interrupting.

9. Pool Safety & Fun

1. No running on the pool deck.
2. No diving in the shallow end.
3. Do not misuse pool or training equipment.

Most importantly—have fun and trust the process!

Westtown Aquatic Club

Swimmer Code of Conduct

The purpose of this Swimmer Code of Conduct is to establish clear and consistent expectations for athlete behavior. As a member of Westtown Aquatics, I agree to uphold the highest standards of sportsmanship, respect, and integrity in all team activities.

1. Respect others – I will treat my teammates, coaches, officials, and competitors with kindness and respect, and take care of personal and team property.
2. Demonstrate good sportsmanship – I will set a positive example through my attitude, work ethic, and behavior at practices and meets, serving as a role model for my teammates, especially younger swimmers.
3. Respect all facilities – I will follow all rules and expectations when using locker rooms, pools, and other venues for practices, competitions, and team activities.
4. Represent Westtown Aquatics with integrity – I will conduct myself in a way that reflects positively on my team, always following USA Swimming's rules and Code of Conduct.
5. Follow locker room policies – I will abide by USA Swimming's rule of NO cell phone use and NO picture-taking in locker rooms.
6. Maintain a clean environment – I will help clean up the pool area before leaving, whether it involves putting away equipment at practice or disposing of trash at a meet.

Prohibited Behavior at All Westtown Aquatic Club Activities

1. Use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or illegal substances – These are strictly prohibited.
2. Disruptive or inappropriate behavior – I will refrain from using offensive language, acting disrespectfully, or disregarding team expectations.
3. Theft or vandalism – Taking or damaging property that does not belong to me will not be tolerated.
4. Bullying of any kind – I will not engage in, support, or tolerate any form of bullying, including verbal, physical, or online harassment.

Accountability & Consequences

I have read and understand the Swimmer Code of Conduct and agree to follow its guidelines. As a Westtown Aquatics swimmer, I commit to acting with integrity at all times while representing my team.

If I fail to adhere to these expectations, a meeting may be required between myself, my parent(s), and the Westtown Aquatics director to determine an appropriate resolution. I understand that violations may impact my ability to participate in practices, meets, or even the team.

Electronic signatures will be collected at registration through TeamUnify.

Westtown Aquatic Club

Parent Code of Conduct

The purpose of this Parent Code of Conduct is to establish clear and consistent expectations for parent behavior and involvement within Westtown Aquatics. As a parent of a swimmer and a member of our team, I agree to abide by the following guidelines:

1. Lead by Example – I will demonstrate sportsmanship, respect, and courtesy at all times toward swimmers, coaches, competitors, officials, and fellow parents.
2. Respect Coaching Boundaries – I will not interfere with coaches or swimmers on deck, nor will I attempt to coach my child or any other swimmer during practices or meets, including through texting or from the stands.
3. Know Your Role –
 1. Swimmers: Swim
 2. Coaches: Coach
 3. Officials: Officiate
 4. Parents: Support
4. Stay Informed & Involved – I will stay engaged by reading team communications, meeting deadlines, and volunteering at meets when needed.
5. Respect Meet Protocol – If I have questions or concerns regarding meet entries or officiating decisions, I will direct them to the coaching staff rather than addressing officials myself.

6. Maintain a Positive Environment – I understand that criticism, name-calling, abusive language, or inappropriate gestures directed toward coaches, officials, volunteers, or any USA Swimming athlete will not be tolerated.
7. Respect Our Facilities – As guests of Westtown School, I agree to follow all school policies and community standards. I will supervise my child before and after practices, meets, and team activities.

I understand and agree to these expectations, and I acknowledge that failure to adhere to them may result in disciplinary action, including possible termination of my child's membership.

Electronic signatures will be collected at registration through TeamUnify.

Meet Information

Westtown Aquatics participates in USA Swimming-sanctioned meets. All swimmers must be registered with USA Swimming to compete, and all coaches must be registered and in good standing to access the pool deck. USA Swimming now assigns each swimmer a unique ID that is not linked to their name.

Types of USA Swimming Meets

- Mini Meets - For swimmers ages 8 and younger.
- A/BB/C Meets - Open to swimmers ages 9 and older with no qualifying times.
- A+ Meets - Require qualifying times for participation.

For specific meet dates and details, please refer to the Westtown Aquatics Meet Schedule.

Meet Preparation & Guidelines

To help swimmers perform at their best, we recommend the following:

1. **Arrival Time:** Swimmers should arrive on the pool deck at least 15-20 minutes before warm-ups.
2. **Nutrition & Hydration:** Swimmers should bring nutritious snacks or meals and plenty of water.
3. **Packing Essentials:** Extra towels, warm clothing (such as sweats), and small activities like cards or games are encouraged. Electronics are not recommended as they can be distracting.
4. **Staying on Deck:** Swimmers should remain on the pool deck unless they have informed a coach before leaving.
5. **Post-Race Check-In:** After each event, swimmers should check in with their coach for feedback. This communication helps build coach-swimmer relationships and supports goal setting.
6. **Checking Out:** Before leaving the meet, swimmers must confirm with the coach that they have completed all events and relays.
7. **Meet Results:** Results are posted during the meet and on Meet Mobile. Please note that Meet Mobile times are unofficial. If there is a discrepancy, swimmers should notify their coach or email JJ as soon as possible. Do not approach a meet official—this is the coach's responsibility.

Westtown Locker Room and Changing Area Policy

Use of Locker Rooms and Changing Areas

Athletes and Adult Participants must use the designated locker rooms or changing areas when changing in or out of a swimsuit. Deck changing is strictly prohibited.

Athlete Conduct and Accountability

First and foremost, Westtown Aquatic Club swimmers should understand personal accountability and recognize that being a member of WA means maintaining a high level of personal character at all times. The use of poor language, inappropriate discussions, and general roughhousing in the locker room is unacceptable. Please notify a coach, Head Coach or Safe Sport Coordinator to report any violations.

Supervision & Safety

To ensure the safety of all athletes, all interactions between Adult Participants and Minor Athletes in locker rooms or changing areas must be observable and interruptible, except in the following situations:

- Emergency circumstances requiring immediate assistance.
- Pre-existing dual relationships, such as a family member acting as a coach. (***Cont'd on next page***)

- Close-in-age exceptions, which apply to younger Adult Participants who are within four years of age of the Minor Athlete.

Use of Recording Devices

The use of cameras, cell phones, or any device with recording capabilities is strictly prohibited in locker rooms, changing areas, and similar spaces.

Undress Policy

- Adult Participants must never intentionally expose themselves to Minor Athletes in any way.
- No Adult Participant may ever request or encourage a Minor Athlete to expose themselves under any circumstance.

This policy does not apply to areas of the body exposed while wearing appropriate swimwear.

Shower Policy

Adult Participants must not shower with Minor Athletes, except in the following cases:

- When a Close-in-Age exception applies.
- When showering as part of a pre- or post-activity rinse while wearing swimwear.

Parents or guardians may submit a written request that their child does not shower with Adult Participants. Westtown Aquatics will honor this request.

Locker Room Monitoring Policy

Westtown Aquatics will conduct regular and random monitoring of locker rooms and changing areas to ensure compliance with this policy. Methods may include:

- Conducting a pre-use sweep of locker rooms.
- Posting staff outside locker rooms during use.
- Leaving doors partially open when appropriate.
- Periodic walkthroughs by staff (with staff only checking locker rooms corresponding to their own gender).

If a Minor Athlete goes to the locker room and does not return in a reasonable time, a staff member will check on their whereabouts.

Media & Championship Celebrations in Locker Rooms and Changing Areas

Photography or recording in locker rooms is prohibited, except in special cases, such as championship celebrations, when:

- Parental/legal guardian consent is obtained (if possible).
- The event is approved by club leadership.
- At least two Adult Participants are present.
- Everyone in the locker room is fully clothed.

If a parent/legal guardian enters a locker room, they must:

- Only enter the locker room of their child's competition category.
- Notify a coach or administrator in advance to obtain approval. They may only enter once written approval has been given.

Anti-Bullying Policy

Purpose

Westtown Aquatics is committed to fostering a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for all athletes. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. It is detrimental to team spirit and can cause lasting harm. We are dedicated to ensuring a positive and supportive atmosphere where all swimmers feel safe, valued, and encouraged to reach their full potential. If bullying occurs, it will be addressed promptly and effectively. All athletes, parents, and coaches are expected to uphold this commitment and report any incidents.

Objectives

- Establish a zero-tolerance policy for bullying.
- Define bullying to ensure all members recognize and understand it.
- Provide clear procedures for reporting and addressing bullying incidents.
- Foster a culture where athletes feel safe reporting bullying without fear of retaliation.
- Emphasize that Westtown Aquatics takes bullying seriously and will support all affected individuals.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying includes any intentional, severe, or repeated actions –verbal, written, electronic, or physical–that harm, intimidate, or create a hostile environment for another individual. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Physical aggression, verbal harassment, or exclusionary behavior.
- Online or electronic harassment, including social media abuse.
- Any behavior that causes fear, emotional distress, or disrupts training.

Reporting Bullying

Any athlete experiencing or witnessing bullying should:

- Talk to a parent, coach, or club representative.
- Submit a written or email report to Head Coach JJ Rudisill or SafeSport Coordinator Melissa Ash.
- Report incidents to USA Swimming Safe Sport staff if necessary.
 - ***Note that SafeSport Reports should be filed in cases of abuse or exploitation towards minors, including verbal, physical, or sexual abuse or assault. In most cases, please initially reach out to your coach or team SafeSport Coordinator.***

Reports should be made as soon as possible to ensure a prompt response.

Response to Bullying

If bullying occurs, we will take immediate action:

- Intervene promptly – Coaches or staff will address the situation as soon as it is identified.
- Ensure safety – Any immediate threats to an athlete's well-being will be managed first.
- Gather facts – We will speak with all involved parties to understand the situation.
- Determine appropriate action – Based on the nature of the incident, corrective measures will be taken, including counseling, mediation, or disciplinary action.
- Follow up – Continued support will be provided to ensure the issue is resolved and does **not** reoccur.

Supporting Athletes

- For those who experience bullying – We will provide a safe space, encourage open communication, and develop an action plan to prevent further incidents.
- For those who engage in bullying – Education and intervention strategies will be implemented to correct behavior and promote accountability.
- For bystanders – We encourage all team members to report bullying, support their teammates, and foster a culture of inclusion and respect.

At Westtown Aquatic Club, we are committed to creating a positive, safe, and respectful swimming environment where every athlete can thrive.

Photography Policy

Purpose

At Westtown Aquatics, we recognize the importance of capturing and celebrating our athletes' achievements while prioritizing their safety and privacy. While most images are taken in good faith, it is essential to establish guidelines to prevent misuse and ensure a secure environment for all swimmers. This policy outlines the appropriate use of photography and videography within our club.

Photography Guidelines

- Photos or videos of athletes under 18 may only be published (on a notice board, website, social media, or in articles/videos) with prior parental consent.
- Parents/guardians have the right to refuse consent for photography without affecting their child's participation in club activities or competitions.
- Provide clear procedures for reporting and addressing bullying incidents.
- For meets or events where an official photographer is present, all attending parents will be informed in advance, and an option to withhold consent will be provided.

All photographs must adhere to appropriate standards of decency, specifically:

- Images should highlight athletic performance and not be sexualized in any way.
- Action shots should not capture torn or displaced swimsuits.
- No photos should be taken from behind the starting blocks or while a swimmer is exiting the pool.
- Photography is strictly prohibited in locker rooms and bathrooms.

Photography Consent

Westtown Aquatics may take individual or group photos of swimmers under 18 during club activities. These images may be used for club-related purposes, including:

- Club website (secure sections)
- Newspaper articles
- Club notice boards
- Video for training purposes only

Parents/guardians must provide written consent for any of the above uses.

Photography Consent Form Details

Parents will be required to complete a consent form, indicating whether they approve or decline permission for their child's images to be used. This form is embedded in team registration and will be retained by club leadership upon submission.

Westtown Aquatic Club

SafeSport Grievance Policy

At Westtown Aquatics, we prioritize open communication between parents, athletes, coaches, and staff. We recognize the trust parents place in our coaching team, as well as the significant role coaches play in a young athlete's development. Encouraging open, productive conversations about swimming performance, goals, social development, health, and behavior fosters a safe and positive sports environment where athletes can thrive.

Maintaining a safe, respectful, and transparent environment requires a collaborative effort from coaches, athletes, administrators, and parents/guardians. Reporting abuse or misconduct is essential to ensuring the well-being of all members. The process for handling reports depends on the nature and severity of the concern.

Below is a structured grievance process to help guide members in addressing concerns appropriately.

Reporting a Concern

If an athlete or family member has a grievance or concern, they should follow these steps:

- Discuss the complaint with the lead coach responsible for the swimmer, family member, or coach involved.
- If the concern involves a MAAPP (Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy) or Safe Sport violation, it will be immediately escalated to the Safe Sport Coordinator, Melissa Ash, and handled according to USA Swimming's Safe Sport reporting procedures.

If the concern does not fall under Safe Sport, it will be handled as follows:

- The lead coach will work to resolve the issue between the affected parties.
- The lead coach will document the issue and copy all communication to JJ Rudisill.
- Once a resolution is reached, the lead coach will follow up with the complainant unless they were directly involved in the resolution process.

Documentation

The lead facilitator (coach or administrator handling the concern) will document the complaint and resolution, including:

- A summary of the complaint.
- Any evidence collected.
- A summary of the decision reached.

Escalation & Appeals

If a resolution is not reached, the complainant may appeal the decision by escalating the concern to JJ Rudisill for further review.

- The Aquatics Director will review all documentation and evidence, conduct interviews if necessary, and determine the appropriate outcome.
- Appeals will be reviewed within 7 days when possible.
- A formal response will be provided within a reasonable timeframe.
- The decision of the Aquatics Director is final.

Reporting SafeSport Violations

If an athlete, parent, or staff member witnesses a violation of MAAPP or Safe Sport policies, they should report it immediately using one of the following channels:

- USA Swimming Safe Sport Online Report:
www.usaswimming.org/protect
- USA Swimming Safe Sport Coordinator: 833-5US-SAFE (587-7233)
- Westtown Safe Sport Club Coordinator: **Melissa Ash**
- USASwimming SafeSport Phone Number: 719-866-4578
- US Center for SafeSport: 855-5US-SAFE

Examples of SafeSport violations include:

- Criminal activity, drug use/distribution, or physical abuse.
- Inappropriate physical contact (e.g., massages or rubdowns performed by coaches).

- A coach and athlete sharing a hotel room.
- Photos or videos taken inside locker rooms.
- Any violation of USA Swimming's Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy (MAAPP).
- Sexual misconduct, harassment, or sexually explicit communication.

Certain individuals are required to report misconduct immediately under USA Swimming's Mandatory Reporting Rule. More information can be found on the USA Swimming website.



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