



Rockingham Area Youth Swimming (RAYS) Family Handbook

Rockingham Area Youth Swim Team is a year-round competitive swim team offering high quality professional coaching and technique instruction for all ages and abilities. Our philosophy is that hard work and good sportsmanship is essential for great things to happen. Swimmers, coaches and families must work hard to bond as a team. The mission of our team is to foster a genuine team environment. We encourage each student-athlete to realize his or her full potential both in and out of the pool. The RAYS experience will instill positive qualities benefiting athletes far beyond their years on the team.

Our team operates with a 501(c)3 non-profit Parent Advisory Board (PAB) organization. This group is the fundraising and financial decision making arm of the team. It consists of all parent volunteers with positions that include a four (4) person Executive Board and six (6) committees including; Fundraising, Events, Awards, Communications, Equipment and RAYS Branded Gear.

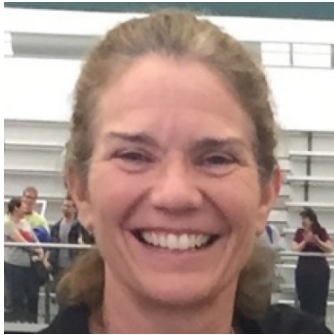
The PAB works hard to support our team by purchasing things like touchpads, cables, laptops, meet software, bulletin boards, electronic scoreboard, coach training, coach accommodations for away meets, team bonding events, swimmer ribbons, awards, banquets, as well as all the fun and serious extras required to run a successful swim team.

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www.teamunify.com/nerays

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All RAYS coaches are USA Swimming and Red Cross certified. USA Swimming and the RAYS are careful to allow only professional and dedicated men and women to represent their organizations. Certifications including background checks are dutifully performed as mandated.

Parent Advisory Executive Board

August 2023- August 2024 RAYS PAB

- **President** - Stephanie Robinson rayspab.pres@gmail.com
- **Vice President**- Susan Field rayspab.vp@gmail.com
- **Secretary** - Jenn Lawson rayspab.sec@gmail.com
- **Treasurer** - Candi Westgard rayspab.treas@gmail.com

Committees

- **Equipment** - Lawson & Ashworth Families
- **Events** - Scheipeine Family
- **Home Meets** - Schreiber Family
- **Awards** - Blais Family
- **Gear** - Knowlton Family
- **Fundraising** - Kupcho & Perez Families
- **Communications** - Muller Family
- **Live Stream** - Burns Family

Team Communication

Information is essential to any organization. We have established a variety of channels of communication for every parent and swimmer to be well informed. The following channels help us spread information to the team.

Team Unify - www.teamunify.com/nerays

Often referred to as TU, this team website is a valuable resource for the RAYS. Documents, updates, team calendar, announcements, meet sign-ups, meet results, best times, and more are available on this website. It is a pivotal part of the administration of being a RAY! Keep all information, contact, emergency, medical or billing all up-to-date here. This is your first source of reference for all team communication.

Email

Emails are sent to provide time sensitive and/or important information. Please be sure these emails are not going to your junk or spam folders and it is critical that these emails are read thoroughly and promptly. Many emails have time-sensitive information like meet registrations and RSVPs for team events.

You can add any additional emails to your TU account so your spouse, family member, swimmer, etc. who wants to receive team emails can. These emails will be sent an email with verification instructions. Emails must be verified BEFORE they will receive emails via TU.

Facebook

We have both a public and private Facebook page. The public page is strictly for marketing the RAYS as a team while the private page is a community page for current RAYS swimming families and coaches. The private page is a great place for updates and questions. The link to the private Facebook group is shared at the mandatory Parent Information Night or ask a member of the team how to find it!

Our public page can be viewed @raysswimmingnh

Instagram

Follow us on Instagram!
[rays_swimming_nh](https://www.instagram.com/rays_swimming_nh)

Direct messaging service

We use an SMS direct messaging service that allows us to notify parents via text message. This is usually reserved for the more urgent messages such as a weather related cancellation. Please be sure to allow us to add your mobile number in Team Unify so you are not missing critical information.

Team bulletin board

Each facility has a team bulletin board that displays various information about the team. Check for updates.

Swimmer folder

Each family has a file folder on a file cart located near the hot tub at the Londonderry facility. Ribbons and medals will be placed in these folders. It is up to the swimmer to check their folder regularly. At times, hard copy information may be put in the folders.

Please have your swimmer get into the habit of checking this frequently so folders are kept clear. Typically awards will be placed into folders a few days after meets. We are not responsible for or replace ribbons, medals, awards, etc. that are lost or stolen.

Direct contact with coaching staff

During practice sessions, parents are allowed to view from the bleachers. If you need to speak with the coaches, please let them know before or after practice and allow them to return to you at a convenient window or via email. Please do not walk over and try to start a conversation with the coach during practice.

Registration, Membership & Team Fees

Registration

All RAYS swimmers must hold current USA Swimming and NE Swimming registrations. Beginning in the Fall of 2022, families will register their swimmers with USA Swimming using the RAYS registration link. (\$95) Each family will also pay a team registration fee (\$50) These fees are a prerequisite to attend any practice or meet. A quarterly subscription to *SPLASH* magazine is included with USA Swimming registration.

Registration fees are set by the Head Coach annually and are comprised of administration fees for various organizations like New Hampshire Swim Association, Granite State Swim Association and our Team Unify website.

Registration fees are not refundable or transferable to another swimmer's account.

Registration typically happens in August and/or September. Certain circumstances will allow for a swimmer to join the team after October 1. Please contact the head coach to begin this evaluation, registration, and administrative process.

Membership

Swimmers must be a member of The Workout Club to be part of the RAYS. They will receive a key tag from the club and are expected to scan it each time they enter the club. Any issues with key tags can be directed to the Head Coach or Laurie Moran (laurie.moran@theworkoutclub.com).

Your swimmer's Workout Club membership includes:

- Ages 11 and over: Membership at Salem & Londonderry facilities. Use of pools, rock wall and water slide with adult supervision.
- Ages 12 - 15: Membership at Salem & Londonderry facilities. Use of pools, rock wall and water slide with adult supervision. Cardio and fitness classes with the exception of any promotions put out by personal trainers or fees relating to them.
- Ages 16 and over: Full use of Salem & Londonderry facilities including pools, rock wall, cardio and fitness classes with the exception of any promotions put out by personal trainers or fees relating to them. Adult supervision is not required.
- Member pricing for birthday parties, youth camps and paid classes at The Workout Club
- Reduced gym membership price for parents and siblings of swimmer. Please contact Laurie Moran (laurie.moran@theworkoutclub.com) for more information.

Financial Assistance

Please contact Laurie Moran (laurie.moran@theworkoutclub.com) if you need to make special arrangements with the Workout Club to pay for

Team Fees

Swimmers must stay financially current if they choose to remain an active RAYS swimmer.

This fee is collected by The Workout Club and you may choose to pay in monthly payments or pay-in-full for the year. *This charge will appear as ABC Financial on your bank statement.*

This payment does not reflect the total swimming cost. Meet fees, registration, team suit, and other fees will also incur.

You are responsible for the team fee regardless of your attendance. Example; If you are absent for a month, you are still responsible for making that month's payment as part of your membership agreement with The Workout Club.

Meet Fees

Once you have declared your swimmer for one or more meets and have selected events, you are responsible for any fees associated with the meet(s), regardless of whether your swimmer actually attends the meet or needs to cancel.

Every month, you will be able to view your Team Unify(TU) billing account to see all charges associated with meets. You may pay these fees via check, although we prefer that you set up the account for credit card withdrawals which occur on the 1st day of any given month and incurs fees of 2.95% + .30¢ per transactions. That typically amounts to approximately \$1.50 per month based on two meets per month. *This charge appears as Salem Rays on your bank statement.*

To set up a credit card, simply log into www.teamunify.com/nerays and select the following: My Account/Payment set up and enter your credit card information. Please note that all fee balances in the account as of the 16th of the month will incur an automatic, system generated \$10 late fee.

For planning purposes, USA Swimming meets typically will cost a swimmer between \$30 and \$60 per meet depending on the number of events the swimmer signs up for.

Meets are scheduled on weekends October - March. Team members are encouraged to attend as many meets as they can.

Suits, Caps, Technical Suits, RAYS Branded Gear & Team Store

Team suits at meets

All swimmers must wear the designated team swimsuit for any RAYS swim meet or USA swim meet.

- Team suits should be ordered through Varsity Swim Shop immediately following registration. This will allow enough time for swimsuits to be delivered to you directly.

A link to our team store and login instructions is available on our Team Unify webpage or inquire at registration.

Team swim caps at meets

Girls are required to wear a RAYS swim cap at meets. Boys may opt to wear a RAYS swim cap at meets but it is not required.

- Information on ordering RAYS caps is available from coaches or the PAB during registration times.
- They can be personalized with your swimmer's name at the time of ordering. This is recommended, as caps with names are not misplaced as easy as blanks.

Practice suits and caps

Any appropriate swimsuit or swim cap can be used for practice. To increase it's longevity, we do not recommend wearing your team suit to practice. Swim caps are optional for boys and mandatory for girls.

The RAYS are an Arena sponsored team. We have a contract with Arena which provides many perks for our team. Because of this, we advise families to purchase Arena products for their swimmer.

Technical suits

Coaches do not feel these competition suits are necessary for all swimmers. If purchased, their use should be restricted to higher-level competitors like Silver and Age Group Championship qualifiers.

NE Swimming has restricted these suits for swimmers 12 & under. Swimmers can be disqualified if wearing a suit that is not approved. Updated policies and lists of restricted and approved suits can be found in the Resources tab on Team Unify.

Team store

A link to our team store and login instructions is available on our Team Unify webpage and found below:

<https://www.varsityswim.com/team-gate.html>

LOGIN: RAYS

PASSWORD: ROCKINGHAM

RAYS Branded Gear

Branded RAYS apparel and gear such as hats, towels and bags are available, through SquadLocker.com Enter the URL below to shop or check out the link on our website.

Many parents, siblings (and grandparents) wear a team shirt at meets. It is great to see the sea of RAYS shirts at our events. We really stand out as fantastic community because of the cheering squad with branded apparel!

<https://teamlocker.squadlocker.com/#/lockers/rays-312235>

Weather Related Issues

During the case of inclement weather, practice may be canceled. When at all possible, we will notify families via text message, email or an announcement posted on the Team Unify RAYS website. There may be times, however, when we do not have advance warning of a closure and practice has already begun when the storm begins. This is often the case during lightning storms during the summer. If lightning is close by, swimmers are removed from the pool area for no less than 30 minutes after the last observed lightning or thunder. If practice time allots, swimmers will resume practice.

During the winter we will monitor weather reports in instances of snow and ice storms. We will make our calls based on the weather in the afternoon so we may not always follow the same closure as schools do. We always recommend you do what you think is best and if you feel driving is bad then do not feel you need to get your swimmer to practice.

Please be aware that a practice may need to end early due to bad weather. Please take this into consideration before dropping your child off at the club and leaving the area. We want our coaches to be safe also so please understand if someone is late getting to a practice when weather conditions may play a role.

Practice Groups, Moving Up, Stingrays & Age Group

The coaching staff feels very strongly that practice attendance demonstrates team support, commitment and is absolutely vital to a swimmer's success. Swimmers who attend practice regularly will see the positive effect in their training plan, goals, and meet performance. In addition, the reverse is true. Those swimmers who are consistently late or absent from practices may be moved to a different practice group. A seasonal training plan designed by the coach will be implemented, and positive results are obtainable only through attendance at practice.

Practice groups

Placements in a practice group are made with the utmost scrutiny to a swimmer's age, ability, time of season, and emotional and physical development. Groupings are not a reflection of status or achievement. They represent the facilitation of the best possible learning environment for your swimmer. The decision to place swimmers in a specific practice group is solely that of the coaching staff.

There are times when changes will occur mid-season depending on ability and in such cases, the coaching staff will work with the swimmer and parents to help ease the transition.

Criteria for moving up

Once a swimmer has been assigned to a particular swim group, coaches should be prepared to go over the specific details of where a swimmer can expect to be in order to move to the next swim group and the criteria for that move.

Swimmers are expected to know and execute certain skills and achieve them in practices and meets, along with all skills for the preceding groups prior to moving up. They should stay focused on developing their strokes at all times and be able to handle the training, including intensity and duration.

Coaches will monitor practices and swimmers will be invited to try out for a potential group when they demonstrate that they are willing to learn things correctly on their own first.

Some of the criteria involved in making the decision if a swimmer is ready to move up includes the following:

- Commitment to attend meets
- Commitment to the program
- Willingness to meet practice expectations
- Focus
- Good attitude
- Good sportsmanship
- Emotional development / maturity
- Skill development appropriate to group
- Age
- Is there enough space to move up?

The coaching staff is available for any questions that swimmers or parents may have. It is important to keep the lines of communication open so that swimmers know if they are prepared to move to the next practice group.

Stingrays

Practices are designed for the novice swimmer. Swimmers must be able to swim 25 yards of freestyle and backstroke without stopping. The primary focus will be to incorporate skills and drills in training and we will place an emphasis on developing proper technique in all 4 competitive strokes prior to advancing to Age Group practices.

StingRAYS should attend 2-3 practices per week

Equipment needed

- Team suit
- Team Cap (girl)
- goggles
- Practice suit
- Practice cap (girls)
- Long blade swim fins
- Water bottle

Age Group

Practices are designed for swimmers who have not yet mastered all of the four competitive strokes. Emphasis is placed on technique instruction and an improvement in stamina. Practices will incorporate the concept of "SWIM". Swimmers focus on building the IM, to make them more well-rounded athletes. The goal of this group is to develop these swimmers for their best long-term success and help them to advance to the next training group.

Age Groupers should attend 3-4 practices a week

Equipment needed

- Team suit
- Team Cap (girl)
- Practice suit
- Practice cap (girls)
- goggles
- Long blade swim fins
- Water bottle

Juniors, Seniors + High School Groups

Junior Group Practice

This group is intended for swimmers approximately 10 and over. Selection to the group is dependent upon age, ability and mastery of basic techniques. Emphasis is placed on continued technique instruction, improvement in stamina and the foundation of training methods. The goal of this group is to produce technically proficient swimmers who are ready for advancement into the Senior group.

Junior swimmers are expected to use equipment that is required for this group. These swimmers will become more independent and must be able to read the clock and follow set directions prior to joining the group. These swimmers are expected to be able to listen to and follow directions given to a group of swimmers. These swimmers should also be aware of their peers and be able to work as part of a group during practices. Proper safety and lane etiquette is expected.

During the summer season some high school swimmers may be part of the Junior training group.

Juniors are expected to attend a minimum of 4 practices a week.

Equipment needed

- Team suit
- Team Cap (girl)
- Practice suit
- Practice cap (girls)
- goggles
- Kickboard
- Swim fins
- Swim paddles
- Yoga mat (opt.)
- Pull buoy
- Swim snorkel
- Mesh equipment bag
- Water bottle

Senior Group + High School Group

This group is intended for swimmers approximately 12 and over. Selection to the group is dependent upon age, ability and mastery of basic techniques. Emphasis is placed on advanced technique instruction, advanced training methods including race strategies and mental training, endurance, dryland introduction and growth in the sport. The goal of this group is to produce competitive swimmers who have the ability to achieve the goals they set for themselves both in and out of the water.

Swimmers in this group are expected to handle the practices with commitment and drive. Swimmers should be able to listen and follow set directions as well as be able to read the clock and keep track of their swimming. They are expected to come to practices prepared with the required equipment. Senior swimmers should be self-motivated and cooperative at practices and meets.

High School swimmers are expected to practice and compete with the RAYS from September to mid November and then from mid February to the end of our winter season. (MA HS swimmers follow a different schedule than NH so adjustments will be made for them) During the summer season this group may be part of the Senior training group.

Seniors are expected to attend a minimum of 5 practices a week, unless they have prior consent from the Head Coach.

Equipment needed

- Team suit
- Team Cap (girl)
- Practice suit
- Practice cap (girls)
- goggles
- Kickboard
- Swim fins
- Swim paddles
- Yoga mat (opt.)
- Pull buoy
- Swim snorkel
- Mesh equipment bag
- Water bottle

Equipment Tips and Tricks

- Don't wear team suit to practice. This will keep your suit from getting worn out & lessens the chance of losing it.
- Pack a spare suit, cap, and goggles in your bag at all times – practice and meets.
- Polyester suit fabric will outlast Lycra suits. They are typically a little pricier but they are worth it.
- Snug suits are ideal. Sizing up is not a good strategy. If there are any wrinkles, you need a smaller size.
- Goggles that you use at meets should have tight straps to prevent them from moving while diving.
- Mark you equipment with a Sharpie. Most of the swimmers have the same gear.
- Rinse chlorine from bathing suit after swimming, handwash and lay flat to dry for increased life of suits.
- Caps can be purchased through Head Coach.
- Swimsuits are purchased through the team store, Varsity Swim Shop.

- RAYS branded apparel and gear are available throughout the season via our Squad Locker store on the TU website.

Competition & Meets

Swimming is both a team sport and an individual sport. We feel that the children who get the most out of their time in the pool are those that practice regularly and who compete in meets. Competition in meets allow the swimmers to connect with their teammates in a social situation where they cheer for and support each other and to monitor their individual progress by swimming a variety of events and seeing the improvement of their times.

USA Meets

These meets tend to be more competitive and allow our swimmers to compete with swimmers from other New England teams. The swimmers, along with the coaches, choose which events to participate in. These meets have fees associated with them. These are typically 2-3 day meets, but swimmers and families can select the days and or events that work best for them. We generally participate in meets within a 2 hour radius and schedule 1 per month on average.

Once the meet entries have been submitted to the host team, each family is responsible for paying those fees regardless of whether the swimmer actually competed in the meet.

The following information will be posted on the team website and emailed to families in the days prior to the meet: check-in time, warmups, on deck coach(s), as well as their contact information.

Swimmers who have not arrived by the time scratch sheets are due will be removed from the meet and will be unable to swim. If the host team is capable of re-entering the swimmer into his or her events we will work with the host team to do so. If a family is consistently late, the coaching staff will not make an effort to re-enter the swimmer. In addition, that swimmer may not be able to enter travel meets.

All times for check-in and warmups will be posted on the team website and emailed to families in the days prior to the meet including coach on deck and their contact information.

Marking your arm for a meet

Swimmers must come to the meet with a grid drawn with Sharpie on their arm. This grid should be semi-filled out prior to arrival. Swim and event data is found in your Team Unify account. Coaches will add heat and lane information.

A sample of the grid is below. Black is written by parent. Red is written by Coach or Volunteer at meet.

	E	H	L
50 FREE	7	5	3
25 BACK	11	3	4
25 BREAST	15	3	2
25 FLY	21	2	4

E= Event, H = Heat, L=Lane

USA/New England Swimming end-of-season meets

These meets consist of a Regional meet, Silver meet, Age Group Championship meets, Sectionals, Junior Nationals, etc. Most of these meets have qualifying times to be able to participate. Our goal is to have swimmers qualify and participate in at least one of these meets.

RAYS swimmers who meet Silvers meet status are considered part of our **"Championship Team"** and are provided special swim caps as recognition. It is at this level of competition that technical suits are still not necessary but become more acceptable for younger swimmers to use as long as the suit is on the approved list.

State Championship Meets

It is the expectation that all RAYS swimmers make every intention to participate in the NHSA Championships in the winter season (mid-March) and summer season (late July - early August).

This is a team event which includes relays. If you cannot make a State Meets please inform your coach immediately.

Family Commitment, Enforcement & Fines

The success of our swim team lies in our community. We encourage RAYS parents to actively participate in all team events and help us to incorporate healthy habits into the minds of our swimmers.

It is a requirement of the Rockingham Area Youth Swim Team (RAYS) that all parents actively participate in the team's swim events, which include: meets hosted by the RAYS, USA meets & fundraising events.

Home meet assignments

RAYS host 2 home meets annually in accordance to the strict rules and regulations set forth by New England and USA swimming. **Parents are required to participate in a work assignment at those meets.** We prepare a signup sheet in advance so that parents can choose the voluntary job that they want to do. Also, food donations may be requested for concessions for each meet.

- For each of the 2 home meets, the PAB will set up a google document which lists all of the volunteer job opportunities necessary for hosting a meet, as well as any food items needed for concessions. Once the google document is set up, you will receive email notification through TU. Then, you should sign up for the volunteer job that you want.
- If a swimmer is scratched 2 or more days prior to the meet, the parent is to notify the head coach.
- If the swimmer is scratched the day of the meet the parent must notify the Coach in charge who will then notify the Work Coordinator.
- We ask that parents find their own replacements and communicate any changes.
- In rare occurrences, RAYS may need to assign parents to voluntary work assignments even if their child is not participating in the meet.
- Please check out the opportunities to become Stroke & Turn Officials for the team. We will train you and work to make sure you have the proper certifications.

Away meet assignments

When we travel to away meets throughout the season, it is required that we supply a few timers to ensure that the meets run smoothly. We ask that parents come to us and let us know they are available.

When we get several volunteers, the time commitment may be as little as ½ hour, instead of 1 hour. At times, we may need to assign parents if we don't get enough volunteers.

Enforcement of work requirements

First Offense - If a parent/guardian has been assigned a duty for a meet and does not show up and/or notify the appropriate persons, they will be notified via email and will be fined \$100 payable to the RAYS PAB as they are the financial arm of our team.

Parents/Guardians will be given the opportunity to provide an explanation in a closed meeting with the PAB Executive Board. The PAB Executive Board can choose to enforce or cancel the fine.

Second Offense- If a parent/guardian has been assigned a duty for a meet and does not show up and/or notify the appropriate persons for a second time that person will be notified via email and required to pay the "opt-out" fee of \$500 payable to the RAYS PAB as they are the financial arm of our team.

- Payment of fines must be made within 10 days of due date or swimmer will not be able to participate in any further meet until the fines are paid.
- If any outstanding fines have not been received at the end of the season, families will not be able to register their swimmer with RAYS.
- The coaches and/or the Workout Club reserves the right to contact New England Swimming if the family tries to register with another team within NE Swimming.
- If the fine has not been paid and the swimmer is signed up for an upcoming meet, the swimmer will not be able to participate in the meet.
- Parents may send disputes regarding said fines in writing to the PAB President. These disputes will be addressed and discussed with the Head Coach and the PAB Executive Board.

Fundraising

RAYS have participated in a variety of fundraising over the years. We encourage families to participate as much as they can. These are the funds that allow the PAB to host a banquet, purchase awards, ribbons, book team bonding events, etc.

Without these fundraising dollars the RAYS would be a much different team. We thank you ahead of time.

Codes of Conduct

All team members are expected to be orderly, courteous, and show good sportsmanship during practices, meets, and any team-related function. Inappropriate behavior may constitute cause for dismissing a swimmer from practice or to be sent home from team functions at the family's expense. All violations of conduct will be reviewed by the coaching staff and may lead to suspension or dismissal from the team.

The coaching staff cannot be responsible for supervision of any swimmer who does not report to them on deck. Therefore, parents of younger swimmers are strongly advised to ensure that these swimmers safely reach the pool deck for practice and check in with the coach or parent overseeing their group at meets.

Parent Code of Conduct

The RAYS are fortunate to have highly experienced, professional coaches working to develop our children into better swimmers and more importantly, disciplined people. As parents, it is absolutely essential that we give our coaching staff the respect and authority they deserve to run our swim team. Our coaches are hired for that purpose.

Our organization highly encourages the following parental behavior:

- Open communication between coaches, swimmers and parents emphasizing goal-setting and focusing on the performance expectations of both the swimmer and the parents;
- Positive reinforcement of all swimmers in all situations - team spirit, team loyalty;
- Parental involvement on the Parent Advisory Board and in organizing and running of meets, fundraisers and other team events.

Our organization will not tolerate the following parental behavior:

- Coaching your children at practice or during meets; that is the coach's job;
- Interrupting or confronting the coaching staff on the pool deck during practice or meets;
- Abusive language towards coaches, swimmers, parents, officials and your own children;
- Any behavior that brings discredit or disruption to our swimmers and our organization.

To this end, RAYS expects and requires parents of swimmers and members of the Workout Club to abide by the following guidelines:

- Practice teamwork with all parents, swimmers and coaches by supporting the values of Discipline, Loyalty, Commitment and Hard Work.
- As a parent, not to coach or instruct the team or any swimmer at practice or meets (from the stands or any other area) or interfere with coaches on the pool deck.
- Any parent communications with on deck coaches during any practices, must take place before or after practice, unless parent is approached by a coach.
- In the event that there is a disturbance amongst RAYS personnel the issue must be handled in a calm, and respectful manner. At no time, is it acceptable to escalate the conversation or make any parties feel uncomfortable.

- Any issues amongst RAYS personnel must be addressed via email to the head coach within 3 hours of occurrence, to be sure those issues are resolved in a timely manner.
- If issues cannot be resolved by both parties, the Workout Club, along with the head coach(es) we will take appropriate action. In some cases, that may mean immediate removal from the Workout Club and permanent loss of Workout Club privileges.
- We ask parents to let the coaches handle any swimmer issues during practice. If any on deck coach(es) feel they need parents' assistance, they will ask the parent or PAB member for his/her help.
- Demonstrate good sportsmanship by conducting themselves in a manner that earns the respect of their children, other swimmers, parents, officials and the coaches at meets and practices.
- Maintain self-control at all times. Know their role: Swimmers – Swim, Coaches – Coach, Officials – Officiate, Parents – Parent
- As a parent, they understand that criticizing, name-calling; use of abusive language or gestures directed toward the coaches, officials, and/or any participating swimmer will not be permitted or tolerated.
- Enjoy involvement with RAYS by supporting the swimmers, coaches and other parents with positive communication and actions.
- During competitions, questions or concerns regarding decisions made by the meet officials are directed to a member of our coaching staff. Parents address officials via the coaching staff only.
- Should a parent of a RAYS swimmer conduct themselves in such a way that brings discredit or discord to the RAYS or USA Swimming, they voluntarily subject themselves to disciplinary action.
- RAYS maintains the right to terminate any membership with/without cause in the interest of our vision, mission and objectives.
- Please refer to the Workout Club agreement signed during registration for specific information.
- The coaches' responsibility only extends to the pool and pool deck area during prescribed practice. Once the child exits the pool area the coaches can no longer be held responsible for the child's actions, behavior, or whereabouts.
- It is the responsibility of the parent to provide proper supervision of their child(ren).

Behavior Policies

Bullying

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable by those associated with RAYS and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. The RAYS are committed to providing a safe, caring and friendly environment for all of our members. If bullying does occur, all athletes and parents should know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a coach, board member or athlete/mentor.

What is bullying?

The USA Swimming Code of Conduct prohibits bullying. Generally, bullying is the use of aggression, whether intentional or not, which hurts another person. Bullying results in pain and distress.

The USA Swimming Code of Conduct defines bullying in 304.3.7. Bullying is the severe or repeated use by one or more USA Swimming members of oral, written, electronic or other technological expression, image, sound, data or intelligence of any nature (regardless of the method of transmission), or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at any other member that to a reasonably objective person has the effect of:

- causing physical or emotional harm to the other member or damage to the other member's property;
- placing the other member in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property;
- creating a hostile environment for the other member at any USA Swimming activity;
- infringing on the rights of the other member at any USA Swimming activity; or
- materially and substantially disrupting the training process or the orderly operation of any USA Swimming activity (which for the purposes of this section shall include, without limitation, practices, workouts and other events of a member club or LSC).

Reporting procedure

An athlete who feels that he or she has been bullied is asked to do one or more of the following things:

- Talk to your parents;
- Talk to a Club Coach, Board Member, or other designated individual;
- Write a letter or email to the Club Coach, Board Member, or other designated individual;
- Make a report to the USA Swimming Safe Sport staff.

There is no express time limit for initiating a complaint under this procedure, but every effort should be made to bring the complaint to the attention of the appropriate club leadership as soon as possible to make sure that memories are fresh and behavior can be accurately recalled and the bullying behavior can be stopped as soon as possible.

How we handle bullying

If bullying is occurring during team-related activities, we STOP BULLYING ON THE SPOT using the following steps:

- Intervene immediately. It is ok to get another adult to help.
- Separate the kids involved.
- Make sure everyone is safe.
- Meet any immediate medical or mental health needs
- Stay calm. Reassure the kids involved, including bystanders.
- Model respectful behavior when you intervene.

If bullying is occurring at our club or it is reported to be occurring at our club, we address the bullying by FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED and SUPPORTING THE KIDS INVOLVED using the following approach:

Finding out what happened

First, we get the facts.

- Keep all the involved children separate.
- Get the story from several sources, both adults and kids.
- Listen without blaming.
- Don't call the act "bullying" while you are trying to understand what happened.
- It may be difficult to get the whole story, especially if multiple athletes are involved or the bullying involves social bullying or cyber bullying. Collect all available information.

Then, we determine if it's bullying. There are many behaviors that look like bullying but require different approaches. It is important to determine whether the situation is bullying or something else.

- Review the USA Swimming definition of bullying;
- To determine if the behavior is bullying or something else, consider the following questions:
 - What is the history between the kids involved?
 - Have there been past conflicts?
 - Is there a power imbalance? Remember that a power imbalance is not limited to physical strength. It is sometimes not easily recognized. If the targeted child feels like there is a power imbalance, there probably is.
- Has this happened before? Is the child worried it will happen again?
- Remember that it may not matter "who started it." Some kids who are bullied may be seen as annoying or provoking, but this does not excuse the bullying behavior.
- Once we have determined if the situation is bullying, support all of the kids involved.

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Behavior Policies

How we support the kids involved

Support the kids who are being bullied

- Listen and focus on the child. Learn what's been going on and show you want to help. Assure the child that bullying is not their fault.
- Work together to resolve the situation and protect the bullied child. The child, parents, and fellow team members and coaches may all have valuable input. It may help to:
- Ask the child being bullied what can be done to make him or her feel safe. Remember that changes to routine should be minimized. He or she is not at fault and should not be singled out. For example, consider rearranging lane assignments for everyone. If bigger moves are necessary, such as switching practice groups, the child who is bullied should not be forced to change.
- Develop a game plan. Maintain open communication between the Club and parents. Discuss the steps that will be taken and how bullying will be addressed going forward.
- Be persistent. Bullying may not end overnight. Commit to making it stop and consistently support the bullied child.

Address bullying behavior

- Make sure the child knows what the problem behavior is. Young people who bully must learn their behavior is wrong and harms others.
- Show kids that bullying is taken seriously. Calmly tell the child that bullying will not be tolerated. Model respectful behavior when addressing the problem.
- Work with the child to understand some of the reasons he or she bullied. For example:
- Sometimes children bully to fit in or just to make fun of someone who is a little different from them. In other words, there may be some insecurity involved.
- Other times kids act out because something else—issues at home, abuse, stress—is going on in their lives. They also may have been bullied. These kids may be in need of additional support.
- Involve the kid who bullied in making amends or repairing the situation. The goal is to help them see how their actions affect others. For example, the child can:
- Write a letter apologizing to the athlete who was bullied.
- Do a good deed for the person who was bullied, for the Club, or for others in your community.
- Clean up, repair, or pay for any property they damaged.
- Avoid strategies that don't work or have negative consequences:
- Zero tolerance or "three strikes, you're out" strategies don't work. Suspending or removing from the team swimmers who bully does not reduce bullying behavior. Swimmers may be less likely to report and address bullying if suspension or getting kicked off the team is the consequence.

- Conflict resolution and peer mediation don't work for bullying. Bullying is not a conflict between people of equal power who share equal blame. Facing those who have bullied may further upset kids who have been bullied.

Follow-up

After the bullying issue is resolved, continue finding ways to help the child who bullied to understand how what they do affects other people. For example, praise acts of kindness or talk about what it means to be a good teammate.

Support bystanders who witness bullying.

- Every day, kids witness bullying. They want to help, but don't know how. Fortunately, there are a few simple, safe ways that athletes can help stop bullying when they see it happening.
- Be a friend to the person being bullied;
- Tell a trusted adult – your parent, coach, or club board member;
- Help the kid being bullied get away from the situation. Create a distraction, focus the attention on something else, or offer a way for the target to get out of the situation. "Let's go, practice is about to start."
- Set a good example by not bullying others.
- Don't give the bully an audience. Bullies are encouraged by the attention they get from bystanders. If you do nothing else, just walk away.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The RAYS share USA Swimming's philosophy toward diversity, equity and inclusion. USA Swimming is committed to a culture of inclusion and opportunity. In the context of swimming, diversity is the invitation to our sport, inclusion is making sure our sport is welcoming, and equity is ensuring all members have what they need to be successful. Diversity, equity, and inclusion is critical to achieving the mission of USA Swimming.

Photography and videography

RAYs may wish to take photographs and videos (individual and in groups) of swimmers under the age of 18 that may include your child during their membership on the RAYs. These could be used on the online, in newspaper articles and releases, bulletin boards and advertisements as well as photos and videos for training purposes.

Beginning in the 2020-2021 season, the PAB purchased GoPro will be used by coaches at various times during the season. It is the intent of these videos to be used as a training tool to help swimmers see their strokes and/or performances. These videos will be taken by coaches and will follow USA Swimming's Safe Sport concept of T.A.P. They should be Transparent, Accessible and Professional.

Parents have a right to refuse agreement to their child being photographed or included in video.

USA Swimming Safe Sport Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy – original formatted document available on TU



Rockingham Area Youth Swimming adapted the MAAP policy on June 23, 2019 and will continue to stay up-to-date in this endeavor.

- All USA Swimming non-athlete members and adult athlete members;
- Participating non-members (e.g., meet marshals, meet computer operators, timers, etc.);
- LSC and club adult staff and board members; and
- Any other adult authorized to have regular contact with or authority over minor athletes. Collectively "Applicable Adult(s)".

Each season you will be provided a USA Swimming Safe Sport Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy to read, review and sign off on electronically. A copy of this policy is found on our team website.

Proof of Agreement

After reading through the Rockingham Area Youth Swimming Family Handbook and its policies, you will have to log your proof of agreement for the following categories:

- Registration, Membership terms and team fees
- Team suit policy
- Family commitment and fundraising requirements
- Fine policy
- Policy to address bullying
- Photography and videography
- Read the handbook
- USA Swimming Safe Sport Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy – separate form

This form must be completed online by October 1.

Web address

QR code