



Vancouver Swim Club (VSC) Handbook

The purpose of this handbook is to explain to all members what the **VSC** is, and to outline various policies that affect swimmers and families. All families should read it and become familiar with important facts, rules, and guidelines of the club. Please note that, all blue underscored words in this document are hyperlinks that will take you directly to the VSC website page that contains all the VSC documents. The VSC website is www.vancouverswimclub.com.

WHY SWIM?

USA Swimming's age group swimming program is America's largest program of guided fitness activity for children. Age group swimming builds a strong foundation for a lifetime of good health, by teaching healthy fitness habits.

Physical Development

Swimming is considered the ideal activity for developing muscular and skeletal growth by many physicians and pediatricians. Why do doctors like it so much?

- Swimming develops high quality aerobic endurance, the most important key to physical fitness. In other sports an hour of practice may yield as little as 10 minutes of meaningful exercise. Age group swim teams use every precious minutes of practice time developing fitness and teaching skills.
- Swimming does a better job in proportional muscular development by using all the body's major muscle groups. No other sport does this as well.
- Swimming enhances children's natural flexibility (at a time when they ordinarily begin to lose it) by exercising all of their major joints through a full range of motion.
- Swimming helps develop superior coordination because it requires combinations of complex movements of all parts of the body, enhancing harmonious muscle function, grace, and fluidity of movement.
- Swimming is the most injury-free of all children's sports.
- Swimming is a sport that will bring kids fitness and enjoyment for life. Participants in Master's Swimming programs are still training and racing well into their 80's and even 90's.

Intellectual Competence

In addition to physical development, children can develop greater intellectual competence by participating in a guided program of physical activity. Learning and using swimming skills engages the thinking processes. As they learn new techniques, children must develop and plan movement sequences. They improve by exploring new ideas. They learn that greater progress results from using their creative talents. Self-expression can be just as much physical as intellectual. Finally their accomplishments in learning and using new skills contribute to a stronger self-image.

VANCOUVER SWIM CLUB

Vision

"To be the leader in our competitive swim community"

Mission Statement

“To be great citizens by establishing an environment that fosters positive team attitudes, and encourages self-discipline, sportsmanship, responsibility, and friendship.”

Organization

Vancouver Swim Club, Inc. is a parent supported, non-profit corporation that supports a competitive swim team for the young people in the area. A nine-member board of directors is responsible for the operation of the club. Board meetings are held monthly and all members are encouraged to attend. An annual General Meeting is held in the fall for the election of officers and board members. It is at this time that the board presents to all attending members, for their approval, the operating budget for the new fiscal year, which runs from October 1st through September 30th. Two athlete representatives are selected to represent the swimmers. These representatives attend board meetings and relay information between the swimmers and the board.

The success of VSC depends largely upon the willingness of its members to act as officers, committee members, meet volunteers and fund raising volunteers. VSC does have minimum volunteer and participation requirements. Please see our [VSC Registration Agreement](#) for details.

VSC is supported by membership dues (approximately 80% of club income) and proceeds from club-sponsored fundraisers. The Vancouver Swim Club provides a paid USA Swimming certified coaching staff, pool time, and the equipment and support for practice and club meets. The club's monthly newsletter, ***The Wavelength***, provides information about recent and upcoming events, swim meet highlights, meetings and other matters of interest.

VSC is a member of USA Swimming. As such, our members enjoy the privileges of this membership. In order for VSC to be a member in good standing, every VSC swimmer, coach and official must be a registered member of USA Swimming. Swimmers must first tryout for placement and then register before they are accepted on the team. Registration is renewed annually thereafter. Payment for registration renewal must be made no later than December 14th. The registration fee covers mandatory insurance coverage provided by USA Swimming.

VSC is also a member of the local swim committee, Oregon Swimming, Inc. (OSI). Swimmers are automatically registered with OSI when they register with USA Swimming

VSC swimmers are given the chance to train for competitive swimming and swim at meets against other swimmers of similar age and ability, from clubs in the Vancouver – Portland area, and throughout the Northwest. **Swimmers are encouraged to participate to the fullest extent, in practices and meets,** in order to develop the skills, endurance and discipline required for personal improvement through competitive swimming. Swimmers are also encouraged to set realistic goals and then work to develop the skills necessary to achieve those goals. Vancouver Swim Club swimmers consistently demonstrate the outstanding behavior and exemplary values that come as a result of this hard work and commitment. They develop the physical fitness, mental toughness, self-confidence, sportsmanship, responsibility, loyalty and character that make them good citizens.

Team Philosophy

The coaches work to develop the character, technical skills and desire necessary for each individual to reach their maximum potential. The team philosophy is encompassed in the words **COURAGE** and **PERSEVERANCE**.

COURAGE is the willingness to accept risk(s) and endure failings. Courage does not exist unless there is a situation that presents the opportunity for success. We encourage our athletes to embrace these opportunities and not fear the outcome.

PERSEVERANCE is the backbone of success in any endeavor in life. One cannot succeed at the highest levels without enduring some setbacks. These difficult times can create a lack of faith, low self-esteem, and an obvious drop in enthusiasm. Perseverance is the quality that transcends these difficult times. It allows the individual to find the true strength of their character, and to reach his or her highest potential.

Vancouver Swim Club believes that **COURAGE** and **PERSEVERANCE** developed by swimming will prepare the individual for the challenges they will face in life.

COACHES RESPONSIBILITIES

The coaches' job is to supervise the entire competitive swim program. The Vancouver Swim Club coaching staff is dedicated to providing a program for swimmers that will enable them to learn the value of striving to improve oneself – to be the best you can be. Therefore, the coaches must be in total control in matters affecting training and competition.

1. The coaches are responsible for placing athletes in practice groups. This is based on the age and ability level of each individual. When it is in the best interest of a swimmer, he/she will be placed in a more challenging training group by the coach.
2. Sole responsibility for stroke instruction and the training regiment rests with the Vancouver Swim Club coaching staff. Each group's practices are based on sound scientific principles and are geared to the specific goals of that group.
3. The coaching staff will make the final decision concerning which meets Vancouver Swim Club swimmers may attend. The coaching staff also makes the final decision concerning which events a swimmer is entered in.
4. At meets, the coaching staff will conduct and supervise the warm-up procedures for the team. After each race, coaches will offer constructive criticism regarding the swimmers performance (and it is the parent's job to offer support and understanding regardless of their swimmer's performance).
5. The building of a relay team is the sole responsibility of the coaching staff.

Our highly experienced coaching staff is constantly updating and improving the Vancouver Swim Club program. It is the swimmers and parent's responsibility to make the most of the excellent opportunity this program provides for success in competitive swimming.

TRAINING AND EXPECTATIONS

Training Sessions

Training sessions are the most important aspect of competitive swimming. Consistent training is needed to progress through the levels of swimmers. Training schedules are designed to provide only slightly more time than is required for a swimmer to accomplish this. Therefore it is

important that each swimmer attends as many practices as possible in order to derive the full benefits of the program.

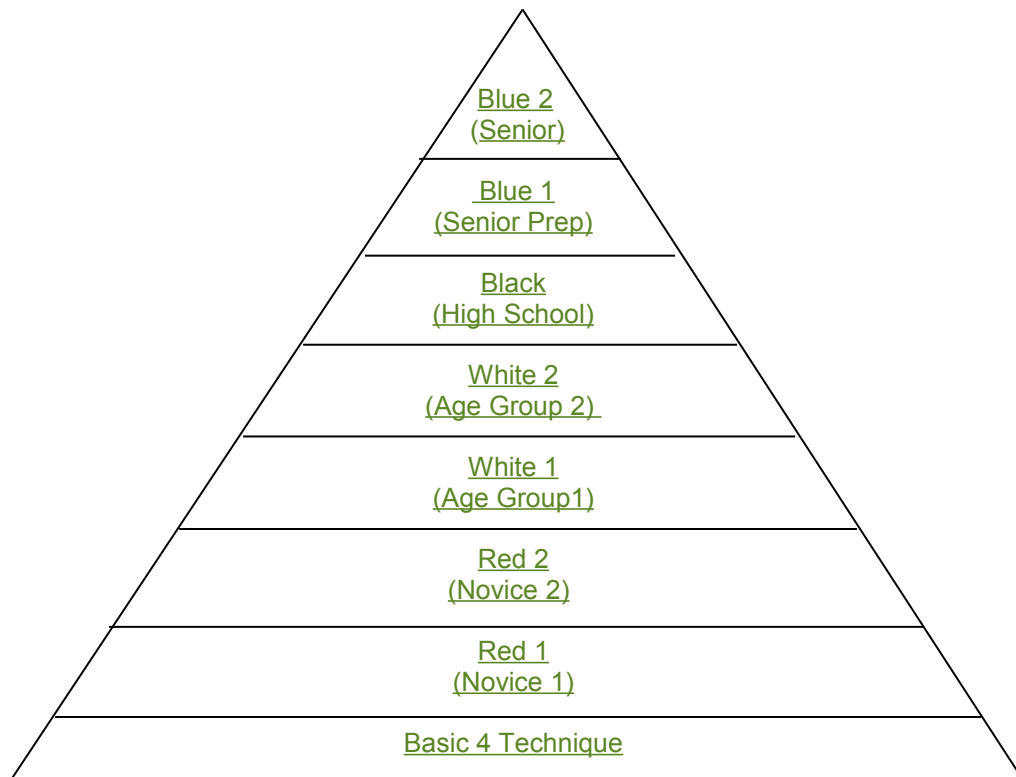
Pool availability is our most limiting factor..... Don't waste it!

Training Groups

The Vancouver Swim Club uses a “progressive” age group program designed to develop the swimmers physically, mentally and emotionally in a systematic fashion. A well-defined, long-term approach of gradually increasing degrees of commitment is essential to reach peak performance levels during a swimmer’s physiological prime. The emphasis in the early stages of participation must be placed on developing technical skills and a love for the sport. In the later years, a more demanding physical and psychological challenge must be introduced to the training program. In this respect, “too much too soon” is more often the cause of failure to achieve maximum potential in senior swimming than in the reverse situation.

In addition to emphasizing long-term rather than short-term results, it is also important that we establish training groups who are compatible in respect to abilities, commitment levels and goals. Unfortunately, this is not always the most convenient approach to take, but it is always the most productive.

At each level, the goals and objectives are specific and directed toward meeting the needs of the swimmer. The long-term goal of total excellence is always in mind. As each child is different, he/she will progress at his/her own rate. The coaching staff recognizes this fact by making team assignments based on a swimmer’s physical, mental and emotional level of development.



Group Requirements

Group placement is subject to coaches' discretion and space availability

Blue 2 (Senior) M-F 3:00 – 5:00, S 8:00-10:00 a.m. and weekday mornings

Requirements:

- 13 yrs old & over and/or coach approval
- Average 6 practices per week (9 offered)
- Must be willing to attend coach recommended meets and championship meets if qualified- minimum of 5 meets per season
- Capable of the following:
 - reading pace clock
 - swimming 5000 to 7000 yards per workout
 - swimming 15 x 100 Free @ 1:30

Blue 1 (Senior Prep) M-F 4:00-5:30, S 8:00-10:00 a.m. and weekday mornings

Requirements:

- 12 yrs old & over and/or coach approval
- Average 4-5 practices per week (9 offered)
- Must attend a minimum of 5 meets per season and the V.S.C. invitational meet, mini meets, and/or championship meets if qualified.
- Capable of the following:
 - reading pace clock
 - understanding and processing more difficult instructions, sets and send offs
 - swimming 4000-5500 yards per workout

White 2 (Age Group 2) M,W 4:15-5:30 and T, Th, F 4:45-6:00, S 8:00-10:00 a.m.

- Minimum age of 9 years old and/or coach approval
- Average 3 – 4 practices per week (6 available)
- Coach's recommendation
- Attend coach recommended meets (appropriate to ability) every 4–6 weeks and championship meets if qualified
- All strokes and turns must be technically correct
- Capable of the following:
 - understanding and processing more difficult instructions, sets and send offs
 - reading the pace clock

Test set:

- 20 x 25 Free @ :25
- 15 x 100 Free @ 1:45

White 1 (Age Group 1) M-F 4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

- Minimum of 8 years old
- Coaches recommendation
- Must average 3 practices per week (5 available)
- Must be aerobically fit to do the workout

- Must demonstrate a “leadership” attitude (age appropriate)
- Good listening skills
- Follow through
- Must be willing to attend coach recommended swim meets every 6 to 8 weeks and championship meets if qualified
- Capable of understanding and following directions (stroke drills, intervals, send offs, pace clock, etc.)
- Capable of the following techniques:
 - Proficiency in all four strokes
 - Turns
 - Basic starts

Test set:

- 14 x 25 Free @ 30
- 7 x 50 Free @ 1:00
- 10x 50 Free @ 1:10

Red 2 (Novice 2) M-F 4:00- 5:00 p.m.

Advancement Requirements:

- Must be at least 7 years of age
- Must average 3 practices per week (5 available)
- Must be aerobically conditioned to do the next level of workout (during workout strive to be first; push yourself)
- Coaches recommendation
- Demonstrate leadership qualities
- Able to focus attention quickly
- Good listening skills
- Able to follow directions
- Ability to understand swimming terms and directions to perform skills (stroke drills, pace clock etc.)
- Must be willing to attend coach recommended meets and championship meets if qualified
- Capable of the following techniques:
 - Butterfly strong enough to hold stroke at least two lengths
 - Proficient during the IM, following rules and technique guidelines
 - Effective flip turns, back turns, underwater pulls, two-hand touches
 - Streamline position
 - Basic starts, relay starts and procedures

Test set:

- 6 x 25 @ :40
- 4x 50 free @ 1 :15
- 4 x 100 free @ 2:30

Red 1 (Novice1) M, W 4:45-5:30 p.m. T, Th, F 5:00-5:45

- Must be at least 5 years of age
- Completion of Basic 4 Technique or coaches recommendation
- Must be aerobically conditioned to swim the full 25 yards of the pool
- Should make regular practices (at least 2-3 per week)
- Must be willing to attend coach recommended meets
- Capable of the following techniques:
 - Streamlined freestyle with reasonable breathing pattern

- Streamlined backstroke with beginning body roll
- Breaststroke kick properly executed with arm pattern according to U.S.A. SWIMMING rules
- Butterfly kick with legs together and sufficient forward progress achieved

Test set:

- 6 x 25 free @ R :20

Basic Four Technique M-Th 4:00-4:45 or 4:45-5:30 depending on training group

- Must be at least 5 years of age, or have coach approval
- Must be comfortable in the water
- Able to float on back

**Masters M,W 6:30-8:00 p.m. and S 8:00-10:00 a.m. at the School for the Blind
(There is also the possibility of morning practices during the week)**

- 18 years of age and older (18-90+)
- Must be comfortable in the water
- Ability to complete the full length of the pool (25 meters/yards)

Practice and Attendance

The following guidelines are to inform parents and swimmers of the coach's policies regarding practice. These policies have been developed over many years and are designed to provide the best possible practice environment for all.

1. Each training group has specific attendance requirements appropriate for the objectives of that group. As a general rule, the least possible interruption in the training schedule will produce the greatest amount of success. The club does, however, encourage younger swimmers to participate in other activities in addition to swimming. The expectation level of the coaches to attend practices increases as a swimmer moves to higher groups.
2. Swimmers should be ready to swim five minutes prior to the start of their practice time and should be picked up no later than 15 minutes after their practice is over.
3. Plan to stay the entire practice. The last part of practice is very often the most important and announcements are often made at the end of practice.
4. Every effort will be made to notify parents of practice changes or cancellation due to unforeseen conditions (e.g., weather, most of a practice group is away attending a meet, etc.) via the team website and e-mail.
5. While on Marshall Center grounds, the swimmers are the responsibility of the coaching staff. During practice sessions, swimmers are **NEVER** to leave the pool area without coach's permission.
6. Club members have an obligation to act as guests while at Marshall Center (both swimmers and parents). All members should do everything possible to respect this privilege. Any damages to city property may result in financial liability of the swimmer's parents. Any damage may also result in the swimmer being asked to leave the team permanently.

7. Parents are **not allowed on the pool deck during any practice** unless it is an emergency, or with coaches permission. To schedule a meeting with your child's coach, please contact them via e-mail or phone call.
8. **Practice group demotion may be considered when the swimmer:**
 - a. Has demonstrated that he/she is not willing to make the commitment level expected of the practice group.
 - b. Attends practice consistently less often than the group expectations
 - c. Is not able to train successfully on the base interval for the athlete's ability level
 - d. Needs injury rehabilitation at a less strenuous level
 - e. Has seasonal sport or other activity conflicts

Illness and Injury

Whenever possible, the coach should be informed in advance of an illness or injury. Regardless of how serious or trivial it may be, it will almost always be possible to find a physician (or parent) who will recommend abstaining from training and one who will recommend a modified approach. For this reason, the coach must be the one to determine if the absence is excusable (especially for the advanced swimmers). It is helpful to find a family physician who appreciates the importance of participation and who understands the repercussions associated with missed meets and training sessions. If your swimmer will be out of the water over a long period of time with an injury or illness, **please notify your child's coach AND THE CLUB TREASURER.**

Training Responsibilities

As a swimmer's level of ability increases, so does his/her responsibility. The program is designed to encourage all swimmers to be senior swimming bound. As swimmers improve, there is a deep commitment that requires great effort on all parts. A swimmer has responsibilities to the team, the coach, the parents, and most importantly to themselves. Swimmers need to prepare themselves for a 100% effort each time they come to practice.

Swimmers will be required to bring specified training accessories (i.e. goggles, cap, water bottle, paddles, etc.) to workouts. It is the swimmer's responsibility to make sure these items are properly adjusted and that spares are readily available. Equipment adjustment and repair will not be accepted as an excuse to miss part of a training session.

Code of Conduct

1. Any swimmer who is known to use alcohol, drugs or tobacco is subject to suspension from the team.
2. Never interfere with the progress of another swimmer, during practice or otherwise.
3. At all club functions, whether practice, meets or social gatherings, we expect each swimmer to behave in such a way that their actions reflect positively on the team.
4. All members of the club, whether parents or swimmers, are expected to continue to protect and improve the excellent reputation the club has throughout the community, state and country.
5. Participants at meets will remain in designated team AREAS, participate in cheers and show team spirit.
6. Coaches will take grievances to the proper authorities and officials at sanctioned team events. Swimmers and/or parents who wish to lodge complaints and/or grievances must do so through the swim coach.
7. Swimmers will keep their areas clean, including the pool and locker room areas at both practices and swim meets.
8. Swimmers will know the swim meet rules and regulations. If a swimmer is unsure of the rules and/or regulations, the swimmer should contact his/her coach for clarification.

9. All persons attending and participating in swim meets will have respect for swim equipment in the pool facility.
10. Attention and respect will be shown at all times to the coaches, meet management, team mates and other participants at all swim meets, or other club sanctioned events.
11. Coaches shall be responsible to educate their swimmers and parents of the above ethics and making sure that the above rules are enforced.

Discipline Policy

1. **Step One: time out**
The swimmer will be pulled aside by the coach for minor behavior problems such as disrupting practice, not staying on task, “needling” others, interrupting the coach, running, pushing, etc.
2. **Step Two: removal from practice**
If time out doesn’t remedy the situation during practice, the next action is removal from practice. Step two action is appropriate without using a time out first for more serious behavior problems, such as foul language, defiance of the coach, threatening others, failure to obey Marshall Center employees and serious horseplay in the dressing room or on the pool deck. This step requires the use of the [Discipline Form](#). It is to be signed by a parent and returned by the swimmer before the swimmer is allowed in the pool area.
3. **Step Three: suspension from the team (3 days)***
This step will be used in cases of fighting or if the step two action does not correct the swimmer’s behavior. Before the swimmer is allowed to return to practice, a contract between the coach and the swimmer will be required.
4. **Step Four: expulsion from team***
Expulsion will be used for chronic cases of misbehavior and will be automatic for swimmers who bring weapons or illegal drugs to swim practice or other V.S.C. functions. The expelled swimmer may petition the Board of Directors for reinstatement.

* If a swimmer misses a meet due to suspension or expulsion, he/she will not receive a refund for meet fees paid, or practice(s) missed.

PARENT’S SECTION

Your Athlete Needs You

To have a successful program, there must be understanding and cooperation among parents, swimmers and coaches. Your child’s progress depends to a great extent on this triangular relationship. It is with this in mind that we ask you to consider this section as you join the Vancouver Swim Club and reacquaint yourself with this section if you are a returning Club parent.

You have done a great deal to raise your child. You create the environment in which they are growing up. Your child is a product of your values, the structure you have provided, and the model you have been. Human nature, however, is such that a parent loses some of his/her ability to remain detached and objective in matters concerning his/her children’s athletics. The following guidelines will help you keep your child’s development in the proper perspective and help your child reach his/her full potential as an athlete:

The coach is the Coach: We want your swimmer to relate to his or her coach as soon as possible concerning swimming matters. This relationship between coach and swimmer produces the best results. When parents interfere with opinions as to how the swimmer should swim or train, it causes considerable, and often times insurmountable, confusion as to whom the swimmer

should listen to. If you have a problem, concern, or complaint, please contact your child's coach. The coach's job is to motivate and constructively criticize the swimmer's performance. It is the parent's job to supply the support, recognition and encouragement necessary to make the child work harder in practice. This in turn gives him/her the confidence to perform well in competition. Please leave the coaching to the coaches!

Ten and Under Swimmers: Ten and under swimmers are the most inconsistent, and this can be frustrating for parents, coaches and the swimmers alike! Parents and coaches must be patient and permit these youngsters to learn to love the sport. When a young swimmer first joins VSC, there may be a brief period in which he/she appears to slow down. This is the result of the added concentration on stroke technique, but this will soon lead to much faster swims for the individual. Please remember that swimmer development is a long-term proposition.

Not every time: Even the very best swimmer will have meets where they do not achieve best times. These "plateaus" are a normal part of swimming. Over the course of a season times should improve. Please be supportive of these meets as well.

Responsibilities

Please make every effort to have your swimmer(s) to practice on time. We have limited time in the pool each day and there is a specific structure to each workout. If your swimmer continually misses parts of a workout, it can be detrimental to their ongoing training process. Please realize that your child is working hard and give all the support you can. Encourage a good diet and sleeping habits - this will serve your swimmer well.

1. The greatest contribution you can make to your swimmer's progress is to be a supportive parent.
2. Vancouver Swim Club hosts one meet each year. A large portion of our fundraising budget is generated from this meet. One of the commitments made when you joined the club was to work at least 8 hours at our own swim meet. It is critical to the team's success, and our swimmers thrive at our home meet!
3. Every family is expected to time at swim meets, help at club-sponsored events, and participate in mandatory fundraisers. There is a financial assessment that is in place should a family not fulfill these obligations to the club. Please refer to VSC's current [Participation Policy](#).

The Ten Commandments For Parents of Athletic Children

Reprinted from "The Young Athlete" by Bill Burgess in "The Swim Parents Newsletter"

1. Make sure your child knows that win or lose, scared or heroic, you love him/her, appreciate their efforts, and are not disappointed in them. This will allow them to do their best without a fear of failure. Be the person in their life they can look to for constant positive reinforcement.
2. Try your best to be completely honest about your child's athletic ability, his/her competitive attitude, their sportsmanship, and their actual skill level.
3. Be helpful, but don't coach him/her on the way to the pool or on the way back, or at breakfast, and so on. It's tough not to, but it's a lot tougher for the child to be inundated with advice, pep talks and often critical instruction.

4. Teach them to enjoy the thrill of competition, to be “out there trying”, to be working to improve his/her swimming skills and attitudes. Help him/her to develop the feel for competing, for trying hard, for having fun.
5. Try not to re-live your athletic life through your child in a way that creates pressure; you lost as well as won. You were frightened, you backed off at times, and you were not always heroic. Don't pressure your child because of your pride. Athletic children need their parents so you must not withdraw. Just remember there are a thinking, feeling, and sensitive free spirit out there in that swimsuit who needs a lot of understanding, especially when his/her world turns bad. If he/she is comfortable with you, win or lose, then he/she is on their way to maximum achievement and enjoyment.
6. Don't compete with the coach. If the coach becomes an authority figure, it will run from enchantment to disenchantment, etc., with your athlete.
7. Don't compare the skill, courage, or attitudes of your child with other members of the team, at least within his/her hearing.
8. Get to know the coach so that you can be assured that his/her philosophy, attitudes, ethics and knowledge are such that you are happy to have your child under his/her leadership.
9. Always remember that children tend to exaggerate, both when praised and when criticized. Temper your reaction and investigate before over-reacting.
10. Make a point of understanding courage, and the fact that it is relative. Some of us can climb mountains, and are afraid to fight. Some of us will fight, but turn to jelly if a bee approaches. Everyone is frightened in certain areas. Explain that courage is not the absence of fear, but a means of doing something in spite of fear of discomfort.

COMMUNICATION

Swimmers Folders: Most written communication, such as meet information sheets and schedules, announcements, ribbons, etc, will be put in a file folder on deck that has your family's name on it. It is the swimmer's responsibility to check their folder daily.

Drop Box: (*On the Marshall pool deck*). The club drop box is mounted on the wall just outside the girl's locker room. This box is for parents, or swimmers to drop off dues payments, meet entry fees, written communications to the coach(s) or board member(s), etc.

PO Box: Payments and other correspondence can also be mailed to: VSC, PO Box 2604, Vancouver, WA 98668.

Wavelength: The team publishes a monthly newsletter called “*The Wavelength*”. Results of recent swim meets, general information from the coaching staff and announcements from the Board of Directors, and Swimmer's Rep.'s, are covered in the newsletter. The Wavelength is sent out via e-mail around the 5th of each month. Make sure both you and your swimmer read the contents of the newsletter when you receive it, as it contains information about our team and valuable information for your athlete. Past issues of the Wavelength are also available on the team website.

Coach Conference: Contact your child's coach via e-mail if you have questions or concerns, or to arrange a meeting. **Please remember that parents are not allowed on deck during any practice unless it is an emergency, or with coaches permission.**

Communicating with Coaches

One of the traditional swim team communication gaps is that some parents seem to feel more comfortable discussing their concerns over coaching philosophies with other parents, rather than taking them directly to the coach. Not only is a problem never resolved that way, but this approach often results in new problems being created. Listed below are some guidelines for parents:

1. Try to keep foremost in your mind that you and the coach have the best interests of your child at heart. If you trust that the coach's goals match yours, even though his/her approach may be different, you are more likely to enjoy a good rapport and a constructive dialogue.
2. Keep in mind that the coach must balance your perspective of what is best for your child with the needs of the team, or a training group that can range in size from 15 to 130 members. On occasion, an individual child's interest may need to be subordinate to the interests of the group, but in the long run the benefits of membership in the group compensate for occasional short-term inconvenience.
3. If your child swims for an assistant coach, always discuss the matter first with that coach, following the same guidelines and preconceptions noted above. If the assistant coach does not satisfactorily address your concerns, then ask that the head coach join the dialogue as a third party.
4. If another parent uses you as a sounding board for complaints about the coach's performance or policies, listen, but definitely encourage that parent to speak directly to the coach, or to the board. This is the only way to resolve the problem(s).

COMPETITION

Philosophy of Competition

The Vancouver Swim Club engages in a multi-level competition program that attempts to provide challenging, yet success-oriented competitive situations for swimmers of all ages and abilities. The following policies outline our philosophy:

1. Coaches emphasize competition with oneself. Winning ribbons, medals or trophies is not our main goal. Improving times, strokes, turns and racing strategy are all emphasized. We will encourage each swimmer to achieve their highest potential in the sport of competitive swimming.
2. Sportsmanlike behavior is of equal importance. Coaches will teach and encourage respect for meet officials, timers, competitors and teammates (win, lose, or draw!)
3. It is the coach's job to offer constructive criticism and coaching advice. It is the parent's job to support the coach and to always offer their swimmer the love and support necessary to participate and excel. It is the swimmer's job to put in the time and effort to achieve their goals.
4. Swimmers will learn to set long and short term goals. As they mature in the sport, their goals will become more specific.
5. VSC coaches will prepare and encourage swimmers to compete in all swimming events, distances, and strokes. This policy promotes versatility and encourages the swimmer to explore his/her potential in the wide range of events offered in competitive swimming. A

swimmer's "best" stroke often changes as they mature and his/her body goes through physical changes.

The Vancouver Swim Club staff does not see the first place person as the only winner. We'd rather look to see who behaves like a winner. There are certain characteristics of a winner (and every swimmer, no matter where they place, has the opportunity to emulate those characteristics): concentration, listening skills and working toward goals.

Sports are not an end in itself, but a vehicle we use to teach children life skills and how to reach their potential. We use sports as organized play to demonstrate and measure one's abilities. Seen in that light, winning without learning is not Vancouver Swim Club's desired intention. In competition, the important measure is not who collected the most medals, or even who improved the most seconds. The real critical measure is who learned the most from the competitive experience.

Swimmers quickly forget the medals, records and other material benefits. They will, however, remember the development of interpersonal skills, discipline, listening skills, time management, goal setting, and enhanced self-image. These are the things that make the swimmer a more successful person with a better chance of living a life closer to their peak potential, and to contribute to the world they live in.

Competitive Strokes

The four competitive strokes are: 1) freestyle, 2) backstroke, 3) breaststroke and 4) butterfly. Events are held in all of the competitive strokes at varying distances, depending on the age group of the swimmer. In addition there is a combination of the strokes swam by one swimmer called the Individual Medley. Other swimming events include relays, which are a group of four swimmers who either all swim freestyle (freestyle relay), or each swims one of the competitive strokes in the following order: backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly and freestyle (medley relay).

Swim Seasons

The swim year is divided into two seasons: Long Course (50 meter pools) and Short Course (25 yard and meter pools). From April through August, we schedule mainly long course meets. From October through March, we schedule mainly short course meets. This is changing somewhat at the National level because USA Swimming is offering their Junior and National Championship meets in December at the present time. They want clubs to start training long course in January, but most teams are limited by the fact that our long course facilities are outside. Most of these facilities can be turned to 25 yards/meters, so that is the way the facilities are typically kept for most of the year. Of course there are exceptions, but even the teams with long course pools only get to train long course when the facility grants them the option.

Championship Meet Policy

One of our team goals is to qualify as many swimmers as possible for the Championship meet(s). The Championship meet is a special experience and extremely important in the athletes development. Attendance, if the swimmer is qualified, is strongly encouraged.

As an Age Group swimmer, our swimmers learn that they swim faster at the Championship meet than at any other time during the season. They are prepared for this; they are taught this; we practice this. If a young swimmer goes to the Championship meet and is not properly prepared, the experience is negative and can affect other championships later in his/her swimming career.

To ensure that all of our swimmers are properly prepared for their championships:

1. Meet attendance and participation throughout the entire season is important. Swim meets offer the experience necessary for attending the championship meets.
2. Practice habits must be within our recommendations for the group the swimmer trains with. **“Consistency”** is the key word.

The goal is to be as prepared as possible and perform to the best of one’s ability at the meet. Sometimes swimmers get the “end” and the “means” mixed up.

Swimmers are special people and deserve to have positive experiences as rewards for their dedication and commitment. Let’s make sure that parents, swimmers, and coaches, are laying the foundation for the best possible experience at the Championship meet.

TIME STANDARDS

Levels of Achievement

There are seven different age group classifications recognized by USA Swimming (the governing body of the sport): 8-Under, 10-Under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18 and Senior. The Senior classification includes any age-registered swimmer who has achieved the prescribed qualifying time for the event. Not all age group classifications are offered at every swim meet. The swimmer’s age on the first day of the meet will govern the swimmers age classification for the entire meet.

Within each age group there are different nationally recognized levels of achievement based on times. All swimmers begin as “C” swimmers. As they improve, they advance from “C”, to “B”, to “A”, to “AA”, to “AAA”, and ultimately “AAAA”. USA Swimming publishes the qualifying times required for each ability level each year. This permits fair, yet challenging, competition on all levels.

In some cases, a swimmer may be in a different class in each stroke. For example: a “C” breaststroke time, a “B” freestyle time and an “AA” backstroke time.

Some swim meets set certain qualification standards. In order to swim in a certain classification, a swimmer must have achieved the qualifying time for that particular classification.

Explanation of Time Standards

Swimmers are always trying to improve their times in each event in their age groups. To help measure that improvement, and to set minimum entry times for some meets, time standards are established.

Oregon Time Standards - Oregon Swimming (OSI) sets “B” and “A” time standards for each age group. “B” standards are the first goals of many swimmers. An “A” standard is even faster and qualifies a swimmer for competition in that event in the State Championships.

These standards are published each year in the OSI Swim Guide and are available for purchase at the J.D. Pence display at the various swim meets. Each year a new guide is available, usually around early November. You can also check for these time standards on the Oregon Swimming, Inc. website. “SCY” stands for “Short Course Yards” and indicated a time that is to be achieved in a 25-yard pool, such as Marshall Center. If there is a classification of “SCM”, it stands for “Short Course Meters” and refers to a standard for a 25-meter pool such as Oregon City or David Douglas. “LC” stands for “Long Course” and refers to times that are achieved in a 50-meter pool, such as Tualatin Hills or Mt. Hood’s outdoor pool.

Sectional Time Standards - USA Swimming has divided the country into various swimming regions. O.S.I., Inland Empire, Montana, Pacific Northwest, Alaska, Hawaii and Snake River are members of the Northwest Section. NW Sectional Championship meets are held at the end of the short and long course seasons. NW Sectional time standards are included in the OSI Swim Guide. This guide can be purchased at swim meets from the aquatic vendor who is tending to that meet (usually it is J.D. Pence).

Western Zone Time Standards - Seventeen LSC's make up the Western Zone. Zone Championships are held each summer. Only Zone teams from each LSC may compete at this meet. Swimmers who achieve Zone Times may be part of the Oregon Swimming Zone Team. Selection standards vary from year to year. Zone time standards are available in the OSI Swim Guide, or from the coaches.

Senior National and Olympic Trials Time Standards - USA Swimming sets these standards for the Senior National Meets and the Olympic Trials. Older swimmers may strive to achieve these standards. These time standards are also available in the OSI Guide or from the coaches.

U.S.A. Swimming Time Standards - USA Swimming sets time standards by age group, beginning with 10 & under. They are somewhat faster than Oregon's standards. They also begin with a "B" classification. After achieving a "National A" time, a swimmer can then attain an "AA", "AAA", and "AAAA". Each standard is faster and more difficult to achieve.

National Top 16 - USA Swimming sets a "Top 16 Best Times Cutoff" that is faster than "AAAA". Achieving a "Top 16" time means a swimmer is qualified to be listed as attaining one of the fastest 16 times in the country for a given event and age group. [These time standards are available in the U.S.A. Swimming handbook. Oregon Time Standards.](#)

COMPETING AT A SWIM MEET

Swim Meet Sign Up

Sign-ups for swim meets will be available on our VSC website at the beginning of each season. Please click on the calendar/event and follow the directions from there. Remember, each meet has a sign up deadline. It is often difficult, if not impossible to make changes after this deadline. Please be prompt with your sign ups.

VSC pays for meet entries with one check. Billing for individual swimmers will appear on your monthly VSC invoice. There is a small basic fee for dual meets. All other meet fees are designated by Oregon Swimming and the team/facility hosting the swim meet(s). There is a small fee for each event entered as well as an Oregon Swimming surcharge, and a facility surcharge. There is also a VSC surcharge which helps to cover a portion of the cost of providing coaches for our swimmers.

Once you commit to attend a meet, you will be responsible for the payment of that meet whether your swimmer attends or not. VSC will have already paid for all swimmers, plus relay fees. Host teams do not refund fees for swimmers that are unable to attend. Please keep this in mind when you sign up for a meet and do not attend: #1- you are out some money and #2- someone else did not get to swim in the meet. Meet hosts limit the number of participants in order to keep the timeline manageable.

As a coaching staff, we recommend that your swimmer compete once every 4 to 6 weeks. Occasionally, due to scheduling (set by Oregon Swimming), competition may occur more often, but we try to stick to no more than once a month. Swimmers who qualify for championship meets

are expected to compete at that meet. Some swimmers are expected to participate in relays if selected by the coaching staff.

Meet information will be in your swimmer's mailbox on deck about one week before the event. This information will include the athlete's events (which are selected by the coaching staff), warm up times, and meet start times.

Payment: Charges for meet entries will be billed to your account as required. You can review these charges through your online VSC web account. Please remember, if you sign up for a meet and are not able to attend for any reason, you will still be responsible for the entry fees.

Types of Swim Meets

VSC swimmers will be offered a variety of swim meets to participate in during the short and long course swim seasons. There are several types of swim meets:

- **Dual Meets** – These are usually small meets attended by one or two other clubs, and are usually short in duration;
- **Open/Invitational Meets** – These are attended by several teams. These meets may be designated for a certain level of swimmers (such as swimmers that have met “A” or “B” qualifying times). They are usually split into two sessions, one for 12 and under swimmers, and one for 13 and over swimmers. Each session will last about 4-5 hours (including the warm up period).
- **Championship Meets** – At the end of each season (short course and long course), there are several championship level meets offered. These meets require that swimmers meet specific time standards that are published by Oregon Swimming Inc. every year, unless it is an Olympic Trial cut, which is good for 4 years. Championship meets include: State Championships (10 and under, 11-14, Senior), Sectionals (Age Group and Senior), Zones (All Star team selected by Oregon Swimming Inc.), Junior National Championships, National Championships, and Olympic Trials.

Prelims & Finals Meet Format - In a preliminaries and finals meet format, the purpose of the preliminary swim is to qualify for the evening finals session. If a swimmer places among the top 8 (in an 8-lane pool) after his/her morning swim they then qualify to swim in the Championship finals in the evening session. Some meets also swim a Consolation final. If a swimmer places from 9th – 16th place from preliminaries, he/she qualifies to participate in the Consolation finals in the evening session. In the evening finals session, the Consolation heat is swum first, followed immediately by the Championship heat. During the prelims, the results are usually posted within ½ hour of the conclusion of the event. If a swimmer does not wish to swim in a final swim he or she may “scratch” the event and not be penalized. This must take place within a half-hour of the posting of the preliminary results. Therefore, within approximately an hour of the end of an event, a swimmer should know if they have made finals. A swimmer should never leave the meet without making sure if they are a finalist or an alternate. USA Swimming rules dictate that if a swimmer makes a final event and fails to show up they are barred from remainder of the meet (individual events and relays). Alternates (the 17th and 18th place swimmers) should check with his/her coach about attending finals.

Awards & Points

The swimmers who participate in the championship finals and consolation finals receive awards as listed in the meet information. All of these swimmers score points for the team. One very important thing: once a swimmer has made the championship final, the worst they can place is

8th, regardless of how they place in the finals. The swimmers who participate in the consolation finals may place no better than 9th (the winner of the heat) regardless of how fast they swim. It has been known to happen that the winner of the consolation finals swims a time that would have placed him/her 2nd or 3rd in the championship finals, but the highest he/she can score is 9th. That is why it is important to swim very fast in the morning prelims session to make the championship finals. If a swimmer is disqualified in finals, they do not score points or get awards. However, non-finals swimmer cannot be moved up to score. The place simply is not awarded. Alternates occasionally get to swim and can score the same as any other swimmer.

The All Day Event

1. The first consideration is fluid replacement:
 - a. Swimmers lose water via sweating, especially if waiting in a hot environment between competitions, as well as through the kidneys.
 - b. Restricting water to prevent the urge to urinate when going to the blocks can decrease performance. This urge is most often a reaction to “nerves” and water restriction is not the answer. Drink liquids throughout the day!
2. The second consideration is nourishment:
 - a. Eat foods and beverages in small amounts throughout the day to ward off hunger, provide needed calories, help maintain blood glucose levels, and meet fluid needs. [Snack Ideas](#)

Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Swim Meets...But Were Afraid to Ask (or didn't know what to ask)

Swim meets are a great family experience! They're a place where the whole family can spend time together. Listed below are some guidelines to help swimmers through their first couple of swim meets.

Before The Meet

1. Arrive at the pool at least 15 minutes before the scheduled warm-up time begins. This time will be listed in the meet information handed out to all VSC swimmers. Always plan to attend warm-ups, as they are required by the coach and necessary for peak performance.
2. Upon arrival, find a place to put your swimmer's blankets, swim bags and/or sleeping bags. The team usually sits in one place together so look for some familiar faces.
3. Seniors: find the check-in place and check yourself in.
 - a. This is usually around the area marked “Clerk of Course”.
 - b. Check for specific instructions in the area. Normally you will need to circle the swimmer's name, or number before each swimmer's name, in each event that they are swimming that day. If this is not done, the swimmer will not be allowed to swim that event. This check-in process helps the people running the meet know who is actually in attendance and makes the timeline more efficient.
4. Write each event, heat, and lane number on your swimmer's hand in ink. This helps him/her remember what events he/she is swimming, and what event number to listen for. This is especially helpful for age group swimmers.
5. Your swimmer now gets his/her cap and goggles, and reports to the pool and coach for warm-up instructions. It is very important for all swimmers to warm-up with the team. Swimmer's bodies are just like cars on a cold day – they need to get the engine going and warmed-up before they can go all out.
6. After warm-up, your swimmer will go back to the area where his/her towels are and sit there until their next event is called. This is a good time to make sure he/she goes to the bathroom if necessary, gets a drink, or just gets settled in.

7. The meet will usually start about 10 – 15 minutes after warm-ups are over.
8. According to USA Swimming rules (because of insurance purposes), **parents are not allowed on deck** unless they are serving in an official capacity. Similarly, all questions concerning meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of a meet, should be referred to the coaching staff. They, in turn, will pursue the matter through the proper channels.
9. Heat Sheets are usually available for sale in the lobby or concession area of the pool. Heat sheets generally sell for anywhere from \$3.00 to \$7.00, depending on the size of the meet (1 day, 2 days, 3 days, etc.) and whether it is an invitational or championship meet. It lists all swimmers in each event in order of “seed time”. When the team entry is sent in, each swimmer and his/her previous best time in that event is listed. If the swimmer is swimming an event for the first time, he/she will be entered as a “no time” or “NT”. A “no time” swimmer will most likely swim in one of the first heats of the event.

During the Meet

1. It is important for the swimmer to know what event numbers, heat and lane he/she is swimming (again why they should have the numbers on their hand). He/she may swim right away after warm-up or they may have to wait awhile. It is important for the swimmer to keep track of what event the meet is currently on.
2. A swimmer’s event number will be called, usually over the loudspeaker, and he/she will be asked to report to the “blocks” for their event. Swimmers should report with his/her cap and goggles. Generally girl’s events are odd-numbered and boy’s events are even-numbered. Example: “Event #26, 10-Under Boys, 50 freestyle, first call”. 8 & under swimmers may be asked to report to the “bull pen”.
3. The “Clerk of Course” area is where swimmers check in before the warm-up.
4. The swimmer swims their race.
5. After each swim:
 - a. He/she is to ask the timers (people behind the blocks at each lane) for his/her time.
 - b. He/she should go immediately to their coach. The coach will discuss the swim with each swimmer.
 - c. Generally the coach follows these guidelines when discussing swims:
 - i) positive comments or praise
 - ii) suggestions for improvement and constructive criticism
 - iii) positive comments
6. Things you, as a parent, can do after each swim:
 - a. Tell him/her how great they did! The coaching staff will be sure to discuss stroke technique with them. You need to tell him/her how proud you are and what a great job he/she did.
 - b. Take him/her back to the towel area and relax.
 - c. This is another good time to check out the bathrooms, get a drink or something light to eat.
 - d. The swimmer now waits until his/her next event is called and starts the procedure again.
7. Even though a swimmer’s events may be finished for the day, it is important to **check with the coach before leaving** to make sure your swimmer is not included on a relay. It is not fair to other swimmers who may have stayed to swim on a relay where your swimmer is expected to be a member and he/she is not there (the coaches speak from experience on this issue). The relay fee will have to be paid by the absent swimmer’s family unless the relay can be filled with another swimmer.

What Happens if Your Child has a Disappointing Swim

If your child has a poor race and comes out of it feeling bad, be positive and uplifting. Try focus on the positive elements of their swim and let them know that they will do better next time. There is nothing wrong

with a swimmer being critical of a race. The important thing is for the child not to dwell on it and be ready for their next race with a positive attitude.

What to Bring to the Meet

1. Most important: swim suit, goggles and Vancouver Swim Club cap.
2. Towels: realize your swimmer will be there awhile so pack at least two.
3. Something to sit on: i.e. sleeping bag, old blanket, or anything that will be comfortable to sit on. The swimmers will be spending a lot of time on it.
4. Sweat suits: bring one. Each swimmer may want to bring two because they can get wet and soggy.
5. T-shirts: two or three. Same reason as above.
6. Games: travel games, coloring books, and books.
7. Food: each swimmer is usually allowed to bring a small cooler. It is better to bring snacks. They usually have snack bars at meets but don't always sell the healthiest food. Suggestions for items to bring include Hi-C, fruit juices, Gatorade, PowerAde, granola bars, fun fruits, yogurt, cereal, Jell-O cubes, sandwiches, bagels and cream cheese etc.

Once you have attended one or two meets this will all become very routine. Please do not hesitate to ask any other Vancouver Swim Club parent for help or information regarding meets!

Meets are a lot of fun for the swimmers and their families! He/she gets to visit with his/her friends, play games and meet kids from other teams. He/she also gets to "race" and see how much he/she has improved from all the hard work he/she has put in at practice.

Parent's Note

The pool area is usually very warm. Therefore, you need to make sure you dress appropriately. Nothing is worse than being hot at a swim meet. It makes the time pass very slowly!

Learn the language of swimming; for a list of swim terms and words use the [glossary](#).