



# Club Handbook

## – FOR SWIMMERS, PARENTS, COACHES & COMMITTEE

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### CLUB OBJECTIVES

- a) To teach swimming to children from the age of five upwards in a safe, supportive and friendly environment.
- b) To promote competitive swimming in order to encourage children to fulfil their potential and to develop their ability to take part in and contribute to a team in a sporting manner.
- c) To ensure that the abilities of every swimmer from learners to elite competitors are catered for in an appropriate way within the Club.

### CLUB STRUCTURE

Swimmers training in the Main Pool will be divided into two sections:

- Senior Club
- Junior Club

Each squad will have its own qualifying criteria for entry. Once a swimmer is in a squad they will have to renew their place each year by swimming a qualifying time during the season. Details of the current Club Structure can be found in the 'About Us' section on the top toolbar menu. Memberships of any squad are also dependent upon the swimmer having paid his/her membership fees by 30th September, or having completed a direct debit form by 30<sup>th</sup> September for that season.

Details of current Membership Fees can be found in the 'Membership' section of the website.

- Larne Learn to Swim School

We also provide Learn to Swim lessons for swimmers from 5 years of age. These lessons are in the minor pool at Larne Leisure Centre and are based upon the Swim Ireland National Plan for Teaching Swimming produced by the National Governing Body for Swimming. More details can be found in the 'Squads' section of the website or by emailing [larnelts@gmail.com](mailto:larnelts@gmail.com)

### SWIMMERS' CODE OF CONDUCT

1. As a member of Larne Swimming Club you are expected to appear and behave in a fitting manner.
2. From arrival at the pool on training nights and home gala occasions, you are responsible for getting yourself ready for the pool quickly and quietly.
3. On entering the poolside area, you will become responsible to the coach in charge of the session or team.
4. Socially improper behaviour or language is not acceptable, either in the company of your teammates or in public.
5. Punctuality is required at all times.



6. Under no circumstances should glass bottles or glass containers be brought to either galas or training sessions.
7. On leaving the poolside area, you cease to be the responsibility of the coach in charge of your session or team and, return to being the responsibility of your parents / guardians.
8. When you leave the poolside area and re-enter the changing room, you are required to dress quickly and quietly and prepare yourself for returning home or for collection from the pool.
9. During outings and away competitions, you are required to act in a courteous and co-operative manner at all times.
10. The coach or team manager has the duty to deal with all disciplinary matters and the authority to impose penalties for any breaches of discipline or this Code of Conduct. These may include withdrawal from the session or competition. Serious breaches of this code will be referred to the parents of the child and the Club Committee for further consideration.

## **GALAS**

Junior Swimmers entering the club for the first time will be eligible for selection for AquaSprint Galas (see separate section for details).

Depending on age, swimmers in the Junior Club may be eligible for selection for both AquaSprint and PTL galas Swimmers in the junior section who are too old for AquaSprint selection will be eligible for selection for the PTL galas. Teams are selected on a competitive basis based on fastest recorded times. There are a number of open galas which occur throughout the year, mainly at weekends, details of which can be found on the website calendar or 'Galas' section. Information about these galas will also be posted on the club notice board and via Teamer.

## **OPEN GALA ENTRIES**

Open galas will be advertised on the club website and notice boards. This will give details of: venue, programme of events, date, and closing date for entries. Swimmers should consult their coach for advice on which events to enter. Enter by email to [swimlarnegalas@gmail.com](mailto:swimlarnegalas@gmail.com) stating: swimmer's name, squad, events and include the swimmers DOB if this is their first open gala.

Late entries will not be accepted.

## **GALA FEES**

Open galas have entry fees per race. Swim Ulster galas usually charge approx £5 per race, but this may vary for other meets. All swimmers must pay their gala entry fees to Larne Swimming Club prior to the gala start date. Swimmers will not be allowed to enter subsequent open galas until all overdue fees are paid.

## **WITHDRAWALS AND FINES**

There will be no refunds once a swimmer has entered an open gala - even if the swimmer withdraws at a later stage. However it is still important to make a withdrawal when a swimmer, for whatever reason, is unable to compete. Swimmers failing to make an official withdrawal results in the club being fined. This fine will be passed directly to the withdrawn swimmer as an additional payable fee. To make a withdrawal contact your squad coach or e-mail [swimlarnegalas@gmail.com](mailto:swimlarnegalas@gmail.com) at least 24 hours prior to the gala start. Fines range from £5, for a regional event, to €50 for a national event



## **GALA OFFICIALS / VOLUNTEERS**

It is a condition of the club's entry to open galas that we provide volunteers to assist in the running of the gala. The roles are varied: programme selling, timekeeping, stroke and turn judges, marshalling, recorder etc (details of volunteering roles can be found in the 'Galas' section on the website). It is therefore a condition of entry with Larne Swimming Club that if a swimmer enters an open gala they agree that they will provide a volunteer for at least one FULL session in one of the required roles.

## **AQUASPRINT GALAS**

The AquaSprint League is sponsored by the Forest Feast. The league is divided into three sections, each consisting of seven teams. For many of the younger swimmers, AquaSprint Galas are the first opportunity to swim competitively.

The swimmers are put into groups depending on their age and they will usually swim in several races.

AquaSprint galas are usually held on Friday evenings once a month (from January – May) and last for about an hour and a half. The end of the season final normally takes place at the beginning of June.

A total of 40 events are swum, including individual and team relays. All races are 25m only.

A team is selected by the coaches before each gala and a notice placed on the website and the notice board giving details of those selected and the venue, date and time for the gala. There will also be a notification sent to your mobile and/or email via Teamer (see website for details of Teamer). Swimmers should, if selected, tick their name on the sheet to indicate their availability to take part and reply via Teamer to accept or decline their selection. If there is no reply by the deadline coaches will assume that you are unable to swim and you will not be part of the team for that gala. Attendance, reliability, as well as times, will be taken into consideration by team selectors. Throughout the season times will be monitored by all coaches for improvement and squad selection will be reviewed on a continuous basis. Previous selection does not automatically guarantee future selection. Swimmers might only be selected to swim one event per gala (individual or relay) as it is essential to swim the fastest swimmers, but every swimmer's contribution is important and your support for them is invaluable.

## **P.T.L. GALAS**

The PTL (Provincial Towns League) is similar to the AquaSprint League with 4 Divisions each consisting of 6-8 clubs. Participation in PTL galas is a progression from the AquaSprint and involves swimmers from both the Junior and Senior Club. In certain age groups swimmers will be eligible to compete in both leagues. As with AquaSprint the swimmers are put into groups depending on their age. PTL galas are usually held on Saturday evenings, commencing in September and finishing in March and last for about two hours. The end of the season final normally takes place at the beginning of April. Both individual and relay events are swum in all strokes, including IMs. Races for swimmers in all groups are 50m, apart from the Group A relay where each swimmer swims 25m only. A team is selected by the coaches before each gala and a notice placed on the board and website giving details of those selected along with the venue, date and time for the gala. This notification will also be sent via Teamer to your mobile and/or email. Swimmers should, if selected, tick their name on the sheet to indicate their availability to take part and reply to Teamer to accept or decline. If your name is not ticked by the deadline, coaches will assume that you are unable to swim and you will not be part of the team for that gala. Throughout the season times will be monitored by all coaches for improvement and squad selection will be reviewed on a continuous basis. Previous selection does not automatically guarantee future selection. Swimmers might only be selected to swim one event per gala (individual or relay) as it is essential to swim the fastest swimmers, but



every swimmer's contribution is important and your support for them is invaluable. Dates for PTL galas during the forthcoming season are listed on the Club Calendar on the website and in the 'Galas' section.

## **GUIDELINES AND CODES OF CONDUCT**

Guidelines for young people

Children have a great deal to gain from sport in terms of their personal development and enjoyment. The promotion of good practice in sport will depend on the cooperation of all involved, including young members of clubs. Swim Ireland wishes to provide the best possible environment for all young people involved in the sport. Children have rights, which must be respected, and responsibilities that they must accept. They deserve to be given enjoyable, safe sporting opportunities, free of abuse of any kind. They should be encouraged to realise that they, also, have responsibilities to treat other swimmers and sports leaders with fairness and respect.

Young swimmers are entitled to:

- Be safe
- Feel safe
- Say No
- Be happy, have fun and enjoy their swimming activity
- Have fair play
- Be listened to and have an appropriate response
- Be afforded confidentiality.
- Be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect
- Have a voice in the club
- Experience training and competition at an appropriate level
- Be represented at decision making bodies within their club and Swim Ireland.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

Young swimmers should always:

- Treat Sports Leaders, who may be teachers, coaches, club officials or parents with respect
- Play fairly at all times, do their best
- Respect team members, even when things go wrong
- Respect opponents, be gracious in defeat
- Abide by the rules set down by Swim Ireland and their club.
- Talk to the Coach, Team Captains, Club Children's Officer or Committee Member if they have any problems.

Young swimmers should never:

- Cheat
- Use violence
- Use physical contact that is not allowed within the rules
- Shout or argue with officials, team mates or opponents
- Harm team members, opponents or their property
- Bully or use bullying tactics to isolate another person
- Use unfair or bullying tactics to gain advantage
- Use bad language
- Take banned substances
- Keep secrets about any person who may have caused them harm



- Tell lies about adults / young people
- Spread rumours.
- Behave in a manner that might bring Swim Ireland or their club into disrepute

## **GUIDELINES FOR SPORTS LEADERS IN SWIM IRELAND**

Leaders in children's swimming should strive to create a positive environment for the children in their care. They have an overall responsibility to take the necessary steps to ensure that positive and healthy experiences are provided for their swimmers.

Swim Ireland recognises the key role leaders (parents, club officials, teachers and coaches) play in the lives of children involved in Swim Ireland clubs. All Leaders should have as their first priority the children's safety and enjoyment of the sport and should adhere to the guidelines and regulations set out in the Code of Ethics in Swim Ireland's child welfare guidelines and in their club Rules.

Leaders must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every child and must treat everyone equally, regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion or ability. Leaders working with young people in Swimming, Diving, Water polo, Synchronised Swimming or any other branch of aquatics under auspices of Swim Ireland should be suitably and appropriately qualified. Leaders are expected to go through appropriate recruitment and selection procedures. There is an annual "sign-up" procedure, whereby the appointed/reappointed leaders agree to abide by the Code of Ethics, the policies and rules of Swim Ireland and the rules of their club. Once appointed the Leader must act as a role model and promote the positive aspects of their sport and maintain the highest standards of personal conduct. Leaders should communicate and co-operate with medical and ancillary practitioners in the diagnosis, treatment and management of their swimmer's medical or related problems. Avoid giving advice of a personal or medical nature if you are not qualified to do so. Do not carry out any medical testing such as lactic acid testing unless you are medically qualified to do so and only then with the parent's consent. Be aware that children may be sensitive to their height, weight etc and avoid anything that may heighten that sensitivity. Any information of a personal or medical nature must be kept strictly confidential unless the welfare of the child requires the passing on of this information. The use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco is incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity and must be discouraged. Leaders should avoid the use of alcohol, before coaching, during events and on trips with young swimmers.

When travel/overnight travel is involved, the Leaders travelling with children must sign a separate agreement and swimmers must also be asked to sign permission forms in these instances. When young swimmers are invited into adult groups/squads it is advisable to get consent from a parent/carer. The Code of Ethics must apply. Leaders who become aware of a conflict between their obligation to their swimmers and their obligation to Swim Ireland must make explicit the nature of the conflict and the loyalties and responsibilities involved, to all parties concerned.

## **Code of Conduct for Club Committees**

Committees should familiarise themselves with the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport and with the Swim Ireland Guidelines and ensure that:

- There is a club constitution in place and a child protection policy is included in the club constitution
- The necessary procedures are in place in accordance with the Code of Ethics and Rules of Swim Ireland
- A club designated person is appointed
- At least one club children's officer is appointed and preferably two
- A club complaints committee is formed and a complaints procedure clearly set out
- A complaints book containing problem-action-outcome is kept. It is essential that this book is stored in a confidential manner



- Copies of all documentation with respect to any appointments are kept
- The club has a safety statement
- Rules of the club are set up and implemented
- A discipline committee is appointed when required
- Correct procedures are followed in the appointment of teachers/coaches and leaders
- A recording of incidents/injuries is maintained including incident/action/outcome
- There is an adequate adult to child ratio. This will depend on the nature of the activity, the age of the participants and any special needs of the group.
- An adult, other than the coach, should be on the bank at all sessions for the protection of both the children and the coach
- Parents are informed if injury to their child occurs
- When other problems arise parents should be informed
- Changing rooms are adequately supervised
- Guidelines are in place for day/overnight trips
- Times for start and end of training sessions, or competitions, should be clearly stated.
- Guidelines should be in place for drop off and collection of children.
- A record is kept of attendance at training
- Parents are informed in advance and have their consent sought in relation to matters regarding away trips, camps or specially organised activities
- Minutes of club committee meetings and General Meetings are kept (including Treasurer's reports)
- Changes in membership are monitored and any unusual dropout, absenteeism or club transfers by children or Sports Leaders are followed up.
- Rumours are not ignored and are acted on.
- Coaches should not be members of the Committee but should report to and liaise with the Committee on a regular basis

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COACHES/TEACHERS**

Coaches/Teachers should ensure that:

- They are familiar with the Code of Ethics, with Swim Ireland Child Welfare guidelines, with Swim Ireland and their club rules and are aware of and follow the required procedures
- They are qualified for their position and are up-to-date with the knowledge and skill required
- They create a safe environment for their swimmers
- They remember that young swimmers participate for fun and enjoyment and that skill development and personal satisfaction have priority over highly structured competition.
- They plan and prepare appropriately
- They are positive during sessions. Praise and encourage effort as well as results and never ridicule or shout unnecessarily at swimmers.
- They are careful to avoid favouritism. Each child will require attention appropriate to their needs.
- They take care not to expose a child to persistent criticism, sarcasm, or hostility
- They never make winning the only objective and will set age-appropriate and realistic goals for the swimmers.
- They insist that swimmers in their care respect the rules of the sport and will insist on fair play and ensure swimmers are aware that cheating or bullying behaviour will not be tolerated. They should encourage the development of respect for opponents, officials, coaches and other swimmers and avoid criticism of fellow coaches or other leaders
- They are aware of boundaries between a working relationship and friendship with their swimmers.
- They should avoid working alone with swimmers and ensure there is adequate supervision for all activities.



- There is another parent/lifeguard/leader on duty at all times while teaching/coaching children.
- They involve parents where possible and inform parents and/or Children's Officer/club committee when problems arise.
- They co-operate with the recommendations from medical and ancillary practitioners in the management of swimmers' medical or related problems. Coaches may request a certificate of medical fitness if thought necessary.
- They avoid giving advice of a personal or medical nature if not qualified to do so or undertake any form of therapy (hypnosis etc.) in the training of children.
- They do not carry out any medical testing such as lactic acid testing unless medically qualified to do so and only then with the parents consent.
- They recognise developmental needs and realise that certain procedures may affect a child physically or psychologically and should thus be avoided.
- They are aware that children may be sensitive to their height, weight etc and avoid anything that may heighten that sensitivity.
- They keep any information in relation to a swimmer of a personal or medical nature strictly confidential unless the welfare of the child requires the passing on of this information.
- They never use physical punishment or physical force, nor punish a mistake by verbal means, physical means, or exclusion.
- They never engage in rough physical games, sexually provocative games nor allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind, and /or make sexually suggestive comments about, or to a child.
- They never exert undue influence over a participant in order to obtain personal benefit or reward.
- They acknowledge that the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco is incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity and must be discouraged. They should avoid the use of alcohol before coaching, during events and on trips with young swimmers.
- They agree to step aside if a report concerning child abuse has been made against them.

## **Code of Conduct for Parents / Guardians**

- Parents/ Guardians have the primary responsibility for the care and welfare of their children.
- They should encourage their children to participate in sport for fun and enjoyment and should ensure that their child's experience of sport is a positive one.
- Parents should always remember that children play sport for their own enjoyment not that of the parents/guardians.
- Parents/ guardians and Leaders will ideally work in partnership to promote good practice in their club and to support all efforts to protect the children against all forms of abuse.
- They should ensure that their club treats their children with fairness, respect and understanding, and that it is fulfilling its responsibility to safeguard children by ensuring the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport is being implemented in their club.
- They should encourage their children to tell them about anyone causing them harm.
- They should become aware of club procedures and policies, in particular where changes are made that affect them or their children, and be informed of all matters relating to ethics and good practice.
- Parents/Guardians should remember that children learn best by example
- To assist in the promotion of good practice with the club they should:
  - Be encouraged to become members of the club and to contribute their time and effort in the daily running of the club. No club can operate successfully without their help.
  - Be available for poolside duty and/or other duties if and when required, these requirements and duties should be set out under your club rules.





- Be aware of the Code of Ethics for Young People in Sport, the Swim Ireland Child Welfare Guidelines, the rules and constitution of Swim Ireland and the rules and constitution of their own club
- Be aware of the relevant Leaders and their role within the club
- Show respect for Coaches/leaders and their decisions
- Be informed of the training and/or competitive programmes
- Ensure that the environment is safe and enjoyable for all children
- Encourage their child in fair play
- Behave responsibly on the pool deck and viewing areas

Focus on their child's efforts rather than performance

- Focus on the fun and participation of their child in the activity
- Liaise with the Leaders in relation to the times/locations of training sessions, medical conditions of their children and any other requirement for their child's safety.
- Avoid communicating with coach during sessions, organise time to speak to them outside these times
- Out of courtesy, if possible, inform the coach if their child will not be attending sessions
- Have a right to have their comments and suggestions considered and their complaints acknowledged and dealt with as they arise through an effective and confidential complaints procedure.
- Accept that a swimming club is not a baby-sitting service
- Be responsible for their children's safety, including delivering and collecting from swimming from the time the coaching session starts and immediately after it ends.
- Not leave their children waiting unsupervised at the pool at any time.
- Ensure their children are always in possession of direct contact information should this be required for any reason.
- Adhere to rules/guidelines in relation to the possession and use of mobile phones, picture mobiles, cameras and video cameras.
- Adhere to rules and regulations of Larne Swimming Club.

Tuesday, 19 January 2016