

# **Greater Johnstown YMCA**

## **Swim Team**

### **Code of Conduct**

**Included:**

**General Rules and Regulations**

**Practice Policy**

**Locker Room Policy**

**Swimmer Dress Code**

**Parent Policy**

**Team Travel Policy/YMCA National Swim Meet**

**Photography Policy**

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**Electronic Communication Policy**

**Anti-Bullying Policy**

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## **Greater Johnstown YMCA Swim Team - Code of Conduct**

The purpose of the Greater Johnstown YMCA Swim Team Code of Conduct is to establish expectations for athlete conduct while participating in any activity or event associated with the Greater Johnstown YMCA Swim Team and to establish Parent/Guardian Guidelines. This document is not intended to be all encompassing and should be used as a guideline and summary of expected responsible behavior. This document may be revised from time to time, as necessary, to support the Mission and Vision of the YMCA Swim Team.

### **YMCA Mission Statement:**

To put Principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

The YMCA mission statement focuses on the four core values of:

Caring

Honesty

Respect

Responsibility

Definitions: As pertaining to this document.

Athlete – member of the swim team, swimmer

Electronic Communications – any form of communicating either by text, image, or videos between two or more people or via social media (including, but not limited to; messaging/testing, email, Facebook, Snap chat, Twitter, or any platform in existence now or in the future which functions as a platform would constitute or mimic what is commonly understood as current social media platforms using any electronic devise.

Member – a member of the YMCA, including swimmers, coaches, officials, and non-athlete members.

Parent – parent or guardian responsible for the member.

Teammate – member of the swim team, swimmer

## **Part A: Rules, Guidelines & Policies**

### **General Policies**

- The YMCA Swim Team participants and their family are encouraged to support their teammates at practice and at meets. Working together is an important element of membership.
- I will respect and show courtesy to my Teammates, Coaches, and Competitors and will respect the views and opinions of others when different from my own. At no point will we permit abrogation of another's rights, repression of a person or their rights and views. However, no one is entitled to total agreement on all issues.
- I will demonstrate good sportsmanship at all practices and swim meets. I will set a good example of behavior and work ethic for my younger Teammates. I will be quiet and attentive while the coach(s) instruct my practice group and will be respectful of my teammates' feelings and personal space. I will not exhibit sexist, racist, homophobic, or otherwise inappropriate behavior.

- I will display proper respect and sportsmanship toward Coaches, Officials, Parents, and the public and refrain from behavior that may discredit or embarrass the Swim Team.
- I will follow all instructions given by the Coaches at practices, swim meets, and all other Swim Team activities.
- I will refrain from foul language, behavior deemed dishonest, offensive, or illegal.
- I will show respect for all facilities used during practices, competitions, and Swim Team activities.
- I will be respectful of other people's possessions and property and will refrain from activities that may cause damage to either.
- I will not use any electronic or communication devices, or any other photographic means (including but not limited to cell phones and cell phone cameras) in locker rooms.
- I will not physically harm or verbally/electronically harass anyone.
- I will not have a demonstrative relationship with another member of the swim team at any time during an event or activity where I am representing the swim team.

**Practice Policy:**

- Coaches will determine practice policies and communicate them to the swimmers.
- Coaches are responsible for swimmers during practice. If a swimmer needs to leave the pool area during a practice session, a coach must be notified by the swimmer, parent or guardian.
- Parents are responsible for their swimmers prior to the start and at the end of practice. At no time are parents to be on the pool deck.
- Swimmers are to report to their coach immediately upon arrival at a competition.
- Swimmers are to discuss their events with their coach, prior to and after, each race.
- Swimmers are to stay in a designated team/gym area with parents.

**Locker Room Policy:**

- The following guidelines are designed to maintain personal privacy as well as to reduce the risk of misconduct in locker rooms and changing area.
- The YMCA Locker Room Policy is applicable to all YMCA swimmers.
- No videos, photos, or audio is to be recorded in the locker room.
- USE OF CELL PHONE CAMERAS AND OTHER MOBILE RECORDING DEVICES ARE NOT PERMITTED IN LOCKER ROOMS
- Coaches and staff make every effort to recognize when an athlete goes to the locker room or changing area during practice and competition and, if they do not return in a timely fashion, we will check on the athlete's whereabouts.

**Swimmer Dress Code:**

**GJY Team Swimsuit and GJY Cap (if a cap is worn) is required for all Dual Meets**

Swimsuits worn at competition must be nontransparent and conform to the current concepts of the appropriate. To further clarify, boys shall wear suits which cover the buttocks and are not cut too low in the front. Girls shall wear suits which cover the buttocks and the chest area. A violation of the modesty

dress code will be reported to the athlete's coach and the team coach will need to address the violation with the swimmer. Swimmers with suits that do not meet the modesty standards or do not properly cover the areas addressed will be asked to change their attire before they are permitted to participate further in the swimming competition.

### **Parent Policy:**

- **Parents/Legal Guardian of all GJY Swim Team Members and all other volunteers are required to obtain the following clearances: Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance and State Police Criminal Background Check**
- Participation by my child in swimming is voluntary. Participation in meets and events shall not be forced and suggested only when in the best interest of the child.
- I will support the values of Discipline, Loyalty, Commitment, Hard Work, and Teamwork during practice and meets and other swimming events and in my dealings with all coaches, parents, swimmers and officials.
- **Know my role:**
  - \* **Swimmers – Swim**
  - \* **Coaches – Coach**
  - \* **Officials – Officiate**
  - \* **Parents – Parent their swimmer and Praise all swimmers for hard work**
- I will demonstrate good sportsmanship by maintaining control and conducting myself in a manner that earns the respect of my child, other swimmers, parents, officials, and the coaches at all practices and meets. As a parent, I understand that criticizing, name-calling, use of abusive language or gestures directed towards coaches, officials, and participating swimmers and/or parent of a swimmer is unsportsmanlike and will not be permitted or tolerated.
- I will discuss any concerns or take suggestions to a member of the coaching staff. I will not coach or instruct the team or any swimmer at a practice or meets (from the stands, pool deck or any other area), interfere with coaches on the pool deck as they work, or unduly burden Coaches, Swim Team Board Members or YMCA Board Members by directing excessive telephone calls, texting, or emails to them.
- I understand that officials who judge meets are volunteers who have the best interest of all swimmers in mind. I may not agree with calls or decisions made by officials during swim meets and other competitions, but I will respect the official and their decisions, and talk to the coach if I have questions or concerns.
- Should I conduct myself in such a way that brings discredit or discord to the YMCA or the YMCA Swim Team I voluntarily subject myself to the threat of termination or censure by the YMCA and the YMCA Swim Team.

### **Team Travel Policy/YMCA National Swim Meet:**

\*\*\*See Attached Policy

General Guidelines;

- Swim Team Travel Policies must be signed and agreed to by all athletes, parents, coaches, and other adults traveling with the swim team.
- Chaperones traveling with the team must have successfully passed all criminal background checks pertaining to YMCA volunteers:  
Pennsylvania Criminal Background Check

#### Pennsylvania Child Clearance Background Check

- Regardless of gender, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with and athlete (unless the coach is the parent, guardian, sibling, or other spouse of a particular athlete and the relationship is or has been fully disclosed.)
- Athletes/Coaches traveling together need to maintain the two-deep rule, if athletes are minors. A minimum of 2 athletes to travel together with a coach and ideally two coaches or an adult/chaperone should be present.
- A copy of the swim Team Code of Conduct must be signed by the athlete and his/her parent or legal guardian.
- Team should obtain a signed Liability Release and/or Indemnification Form for each athlete.
- Team should carry a signed Medical Consent Authorization to Treat Form for each athlete.
- Curfews shall be established by the team for each day of the trip.
- The directions & decisions of the coaches/chaperones are final.

#### **Photography Policy:**

There has been much talk about whether it is safe to have images taken of children participating in sports. While the great majorities of images is appropriate and are taken in good faith, it is a fact that images can be misused, and children can be put at risk if common-sense procedures are not observed.

- The publishing of a photograph or video recording (including video streaming) of a swimmer under 18 in a published article, on the team website page or on the team Facebook page of swimming should only be done with parent's consent per the team form.
- A parent or guardian has a right to refuse to have children photographed. The exercise of this right of refusal cannot be used as grounds for refusing entry into a swimming competition. Therefore, any photo that may go to press be it through a member of the club or official photographer should receive parental; consent before publishing/displaying the photo via the team consent form.

In case of open swim meets and other competitions where the host club has an official photographer present, all parents attending should be made aware of this in your meet information. If photos are to be published anywhere, the individual parent should be given the opportunity to withhold consent or give consent by a swim meet permission photography form.

All photographs must observe generally accepted standards of decency in particular:

- Action shots should be a celebration of the sporting activity and not a sexualized image in a sporting context.
- Action shots should not be taken or retained where the photograph reveals a torn or displaced swim suit.
- Photographs are not permitted be taken from behind swimming blocks at the start of a race or exhibit a child climbing out of the swimming pool.
- Photographs are not permitted to be taken in locker-rooms or bathrooms.

**\*\*\*Parents will be given a Photography Permission Form to sign at the beginning of each year.**

## **Cell Phone/Camera/Other Recording Device Policy**

General Guidelines;

- Cell phones and other mobile devices with recording capabilities including voice recording, still camera and video cameras are expressly prohibited to be used in rest rooms, locker rooms and changing area.
  - \* Please leave such devices in swim bags, cars, pockets or with a Parent so that it is not used in the locker room for any reason at any time. All banned uses include, but not limited, to gaming, texting, phone calls, pictures, etc. This policy includes: all phones, tablets, gaming devices, video cameras or any other device with sound recording or picture taking capabilities.
  - \* Swimmers are also asked to not bring cell phones on to the deck during practice times, swim meets and dry land activities.

## **Electronic Communication Policy:**

The Greater Johnstown YMCA Swim Team recognizes the prevalence of electronic communication and social media in today's world. Many of our swimmers use these means as their primary method of communication. While the Team acknowledges the value of these methods of communication, the Team also realizes that there are associated risks that must be considered when adults use these methods to communicate with minors.

### General Content

All communication between a coach and other adult and an athlete must be professional in nature and for communicating about team activities. The content and intent of all electronic communications must adhere to the policies regarding Athlete Protection.

**For example, as with any communication with an athlete, electronic communication should not contain or relate to any of the following:**

- **Drugs or alcohol**
- Sexually oriented conversation; sexually explicit language' sexual activity
- The adult's personal life, social activities, relationship, or family issues, or personal problems should not be discussed
- Inappropriate or sexually explicit pictures
- Note: Any communication concerning an athlete's personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues or personal problems must be transparent, accessible, and professional.

Member to Member Communication (includes coach to athlete or athlete to coach):

Whether one is an athlete, coach, board member or parent, the guiding principle to always use in communication is to ask: "Is this communication something that someone else would find appropriate or acceptable in a face-to-face meeting?" or "Is this something that you would be comfortable saying out loud to the intended recipient of your communication in front of the intended recipient's parents, the coaching staff, the board, or other athletes?"

With respect to electronic communications, a simple test that can be used in most cases is whether the electronic communication with swimmers is transparent, accessible and professional.

**Transparent:** All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should be transparent. Your communication should not only be clear and direct, but also free of hidden meanings, innuendo, and expectations.

**Accessible:** All electronic communication between a coach and an athlete should be conducted professionally as a representative of the team.

**Professional:** All electronic communication between a coach and an athlete should be conducted professionally as a representative of the Team. This includes word choices, tone, grammar, and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of a staff member.

**Facebook, Twitter and other social media sites:**

**Facebook:**

Coaches may have personal Facebook (or other social media site) pages, but they are not permitted to have any athlete member of the Team join their personal page as a “friend.” A coach should not accept any “friend” request from an athlete. In addition the coach should remind the athlete that this is not permitted. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to “private message” each other through Facebook chat or other IM method. Coaches are encouraged to set their pages to “private” to prevent athletes from accessing the coach’s personal information.

**Team Facebook Page:**

The Team has an official Facebook page that athletes, coaches, and their parents can “friend: for information and updates on team-related matters.

**TEXTING:**

Subject to the general guidelines mentioned above, texting is allowed between coaches and athletes during the hours from 7a.m. and 9p.m. Texting should only be used for communication information directly related to team activities.

**EMAIL:**

Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate between the hours of 7am and 9pm. When communicating with an athlete through email, a parent or another coach must be copied.

**REQUEST TO DISCONTINUE ALL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION:**

The parent or guardians of an athlete may request in writing that their child not be contacted by coaches through any form of electronic communication.

**Anti-Bullying Policy:**

**PLAN TO ADDRESS BULLYING:**

Bullying is prohibited. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at The Greater Johnstown YMCA Swim Team and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. The Team is 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.

Objectives of the Teams Bullying Policy and Action Plan:

- To make it clear that the Team will not tolerate bullying in any form.
- To define bullying and give all coaches, parents, and swimmers a good understanding of what bullying is.
- To make it known to all parents, swimmers, and coaching staff that there is a policy and protocol should any bullying issues arise?
- To make how to report bullying clear and understandable.
- To spread the word that The Greater Johnstown YMCA Swim Team takes bullying seriously and that all swimmers and parents can be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

#### WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is the severe or repeated use by one or more GJY 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 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.
- Placing a Member in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or damage to his/her property
- Creating a hostile environment for the other member of any Team activity.
- Infringing on the rights of the other member at any Swim Team activity.
- Materially and substantially disrupting the training process or the orderly operation of any Swim Team activity (which for the purposes of this section shall include, without limitation, practices, workouts, swim meets, and other events of a member of the Swim Team).

\*\*Complaints under this rule would be first heard by the Club Coaches/Aquatic Director and if necessary would proceed through format termination processes and/or hearing with the YMCA Executive Director/YMCA Board of Directors.

#### 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 parent.
- Talk to a Swim Team Coach or Aquatic Director.
- Write a letter or email to the Head Swim Team Coach or Aquatic Director.

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 Team 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 in our Team or it is reported to be occurring in our team, we address the bullying by **FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED** and **SUPPORT THE KIDS INVOLVED** using the following approach:

#### FINDING WHAT HAPPENED:

- 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 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 maybe annoying or provoking, but this does not excuse the bullying behavior.
- After you have determined if the situation is bullying, support all the kids involved.

#### SUPPORTING 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 child being bullied. The child, parents and fellow team members and coaches may all have valuable input.
- 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 Team 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 that their behavior is wrong and it may harm other individuals.
- Show kids that bullying is taken seriously. Calmly tell the child that bullying will not be tolerated.
- Model respectful at all times 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 is a little different from them.
- 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 need 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 of apologizing to the athlete who was bullied'
- Do a good deed for the person who was bullied, for the Team, or other 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 a 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 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, Aquatic Director.
- 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.
- Set a good example by not bullying others.

#### **Reporting Code of Conduct Violations & Retaliation:**

- It is every member's responsibility to promptly report a violation of the Code of Conduct to a Coach or Aquatic Director.

- Filing a knowingly false allegation of a violation of the Code of Conduct will result in disciplinary action.
- Retaliation for reporting a Code of Conduct violation is not acceptable. No member shall retaliate for a member reporting a Code of Conduct violation, or for any other cause.

### **Part B: Disciplinary Procedures**

- Disciplinary Actions: all parties in disputes or complaints must exercise discretion and due diligence in investigating and resolving issues and enacting retributive and consolatory action.
- For the violations of the rules, guidelines and/or practices detailed in Part A above may include:
- The Athlete may receive a verbal or written warning.
- The Athlete may be dismissed from practice but will remain under the authority and control of the coach until the parent or guardian accepts control.
- The Athlete may be scratched from an event or events of a meet but will remain under the authority and control of the coach until a parent or guardian accepts control.
- The Athlete may be suspended, immediately from the swim team.
- The Athlete may be removed from the swim team.

#### Suspension:

- In the event of member suspension or removal from the swim team, no refunds will be given, either full or partial.

Damage: Members are financially responsible for any damage they cause.

#### Accusations:

- All accusations and occurrences are investigated on a case by case basis. As necessary, the swim team coaches will do their due diligence to research and report occurrences to the proper authorities. All issues are taken seriously and all mandatory reporting persons will abide by their legal obligation and act in a prudent fiduciary manner.

#### Documentation:

- Depending on the severity of the incident, a verbal warning may or may not be given. Violations of the Code of Conduct will be documented and kept in a Swim Team File and a parent/guardian will be notified. Both an athlete and a parent will be asked to sign the documented violation.

#### Notification:

- Please keep in mind that in some situations the authorities including local police, YMCA Executive Director, YMCA Board of Directors, etc. shall be notified. All mandatory reporting persons will abide by their legal obligations and act in a prudent fiduciary manner.

#### Mandated Reporter:

- Swim Team coaches, non-athlete members and athlete members 18 years or older are identified as mandated reporters as per the new federal guidelines that were implemented in February 2018, and are subject to also abide by the PA Child Protective Law (CPSL).

**Agreement: Greater Johnstown YMCA Swim Team - Code of Conduct**

My signature on this document constitutes an agreement with the Greater Johnstown YMCA Swim Team Code of Conduct. I understand that if I violate this Coode of Conduct, I will be subject to disciplinary action detailed herewith.

Return this page signed to the Aquatic Director, as required for participation. Keep the preceding pages for your records and reference.

**\*Swimmers 11 and over: Please sign your name on your behalf.**

**\*Swimmers 10 and under: Parent/legal guardian, please sign on swimmers behalf.**

**\*Parent/Legal Guardian: Please sign on your own behalf.**

**Swimmers:**

Swimmer Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Swimmer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Swimmer Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Swimmer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Swimmer Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Swimmer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Swimmer Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Swimmer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Parents/Legal Guardians:**

Parent Name/Legal Guardian (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature/Legal Guardian:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name/Legal Guardian (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature/Legal Guardian:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_