

Palos Orland Swim Association



Parent Handbook

Effective April 2018

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is two-fold: to explain to members what POSA is all about and to outline various policies that affect all swimmers, year after year. All families should read it so that they may become familiar with important facts and rules of the Club.

POSA Team Mission

Our Mission is to offer an environment where our athletes can excel to the best of their abilities in competitive age group swimming, while developing the traits of integrity, sportsmanship and teamwork.

Team History

On June 23, 1963, a group of Palos area people met for the purpose of forming an organization to sponsor competitive swimming. The group called the club "The Castle Acres Swim Club" since the Castle Acres Motel in Hickory Hills offered use of their pool for workouts, which included suits, towels and warm-ups. It was stressed at this meeting that the team was being organized for competition, rather than recreational swimming and that the children involved must practice regularly and desire to swim in competition. Thus, it happened, the birth of the thriving organization we know today, with over 150 swimmers and active parent participation.

In 1964, the club took on the new name "The Palos Swim Association" and moved the workouts to Carl Sandburg High School pool. In 1971, the organization took on its third and present name, "The Palos Orland Swim Association", and was officially incorporated as a not-for-profit tax-deductible organization.

Coaching Staff

Nothing has a greater influence on the quality of children's sports than the excellence of the coach. The POSA staff are member coaches of the American Swimming Coaches Association (ASCA), have access to the most comprehensive training and certification program for youth coaches of any sport in the United States. Certified coaches in U.S. Swimming programs possess training and experience in the physiology and psychology of adolescent development. Our coaching staff provides the assurance that the time your children spend in swimming will be quality time. See the website for Coach's profiles.

COACHES RESPONSIBILITIES

POSA 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.

- The coaches are responsible for placing swimmers in practice groups. This is based on the age and ability level of each swimmer. When it is in the best interest of a swimmer, he/she will be placed in a more challenging training group by the coach.
- Sole responsibility for stroke instruction and the training regimen rest with the POSA coaching staff. Each group's practices are based on sound scientific principles and are

geared to the specific goals of that group. At any point in time if you have questions regarding season planning or practice planning, please email the head coach and he will be happy to set up an appointment to address your questions with you.

- The coaching staff will make the final decision concerning which meets the swimmers may attend, and which events they will swim.
- At meets, the coaching staff will conduct and supervise warm-up procedures for the team. After each race, the coaches will offer constructive criticism regarding the swimmer's performance. (It is the parent's job to offer love and understanding regardless of their youngster's performance.)
- The building of a relay team is the sole responsibility of the coaching staff. Some of the considerations that the staff will look at when determining who will swim on a relay are:
 - ✓ A swimmer's personal best time in the event.
 - ✓ Best times to date throughout the season.
 - ✓ Performances at the meet.
 - ✓ Each swimmer's training background, practice attendance, and intensity at practice leading up to the meet.
 - ✓ Coaches may "split" relays in order to even out the teams. Regardless of which relay a swimmer swims on, they are expected to give 100% effort.

TEAM LEVELS

POSA uses a "progressive" age group program designed to develop the child 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 is on participation and 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, we also establish training groups of swimmers who are compatible with 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. Each group has some general age and ability guidelines. These ages may vary, and the coaching staff may make changes based on what is best for each individual swimmer. Once a swimmer

has demonstrated proficient skill level and an increase in commitment, a member of the coaching staff will notify the swimmer and parents that they are ready to move to the next practice group within our team. Please note that throughout the training expectations, yardage numbers will not be given as we stress technique and quality work over counting yards.

Group 6 – Advanced Group

Group 6 is designed for those swimmers between the ages of 11-18.

Attendance Expectations - Swimmers will have five practices a week ranging from 1.5-2 hours. The swimmers are expected to attend a minimum of four practices a week, with a goal of 100%.

Training Expectations - This group is for those swimmers who swim as their main sport and who are mature enough to handle more intense training. Technique is stressed, as is continuing to build upon the skills and training that the athlete learned in Group 5. As this level, swimmers should have their sights set on making the Age Group Regional Meet, with goals for the Age Group State meet.

Competition Expectations – These swimmers should attend most meets on the schedule and have a goal of achieving numerous Age Group Regional cuts, as well as a desire to achieve higher standards. They are required to compete in a minimum of 3 meets per season of their choice (POSA intrasquad, dual, or ISI).

Group 5 – Primary Group

Group 5 is designed for those swimmers between the ages of 10-18.

Attendance Expectations – Swimmers will have five practices a week for 1.5 hours. The swimmers should try to attend a minimum of four practices a week, with a goal of 100%.

Training Expectations – Technique work will be done at this level. By this point in the swimmer's career, they should have very solid stroke technique, and will need minor adjustments at this point. The level of aerobic and anaerobic training will increase as this level should have their sights set on making the Age Group Regional Meet, with goals for the Age Group State meet.

Competition Expectations – Swimmers are expected to compete in as many meets as possible and attend the highest level of competition that they qualify for. They are required to compete in a minimum of 3 meets per season of their choice (POSA intrasquad, dual, or ISI).

Group 4 - Intermediate Group

Group 4 is designed mainly for those swimmers between the ages of 11-18.

Expectations – Swimmers in this group will have four practices a week, with a hope that they can attend at least three.

Training Expectations – Technique and a building of aerobic base will be stressed at this level. Swimmers in this group may have some swimming experience but will not yet have the skill set to train at a higher level. This group will help fill the swimmer's tool box in the hopes that they can go on and be ready for the next level of our club.

Competition Expectations – Swimmers in this group will be expected to attend as many meets as possible, including the weekend ISI meets. The more meets the swimmers can attend, the better prepared they will be later in their development as the fear and anxiety of competing lessen. They are required to compete in a minimum of 3 meets per season of their choice (POSA intrasquad, dual, or ISI).

Group 3 – Preparatory Group

Group 3 is designed for competitive advancement through training, stroke and skill refinement and team commitment for athletes 8-10. All swimmers must meet certain physical developmental and skill levels.

Attendance Expectations – The swimmers will typically have five practices a week ranging from 1-1.5 hours. The minimum amount of practices attended should be no less than three, with four-five being preferred.

Training Expectations – While technique and fun are still a focus at this level of skill development, swimmers will be expected to increase the intensity of practice and increase the efficiency of their stroke. Race strategy will be a component of training as swimmers will learn to handle some of the longer events for their age group. Goal setting will also begin to be a focus of this group as well.

Competition Expectations – Swimmers in this group will be expected to attend as many meets as possible, including the weekend ISI meets. The more meets the swimmers are able to attend, the better prepared they will be later in their development as the fear and anxiety of competing lessen. They are required to compete in a minimum of 3 meets per season of their choice (POSA intrasquad, dual, or ISI).

Group 2 – Beginning Age Group

Group 2 will be introduced to what it means to be on a swim team. Swimmers will already know the basics of stroke mechanics, starts and flip turns at this point. Swimmers are looking to advance their knowledge to all four strokes. This group will be mainly advanced 8 & unders, with some 9-10 year olds.

Attendance Expectations – There are four 1-1.5 hour practices during the week. For best results, we would like the swimmers to attend at least three a week as often as possible.

Training Expectations - Technique will be heavily stressed during this phase of the athlete's development, along with making swimming and training fun. Kicking will be emphasized as that is the base from which strong strokes develop. It is hoped that the athlete will be legal in all four strokes, and that they will be able to complete a legal 100 IM by the end of the season.

Competition Expectations – Athletes are expected to attend at least 3 intrasquad and dual meets per season. There is typically one every two to three weeks. Athletes are not expected to attend ISI weekend meets at this point in their development, but should the parent and athlete desire to, they should talk with the Head Coach on what events the swimmer should enter.

Group 1 – Intro to a Swim Team

This is our developmental/beginning team group, where both fun and technique are the focus. Athletes ranging in age from 5 to 10 with little or no previous swim team experience will be placed here.

Attendance Expectations – There are four practices a week, which the swimmers should try to attend as many as possible.

Training Expectations – The training will consist of mainly technique work, along with stroke familiarization. Swimmers should already understand freestyle and backstroke and will be introduced to breaststroke and butterfly as well.

Competition Expectations – Swimmers will compete in three meets during the season, including POSA intersquad meets and dual meets.

Beginners Group – Developmental/Pre-Team

This is our developmental/pre-team group, where both fun and technique are the focus. Athletes ranging in age from 4 to 8 with little or no previous swim team experience will be placed here.

Attendance Expectations – There are typically two practices a week, which the swimmers are expected to attend both.

Training Expectations – The training will consist of mainly technique work, along with stroke familiarization. Swimmers should be comfortable in the water already and be familiar with freestyle. A select number of swimmers might be asked to move up to Group 1 during the season, if they seem ready to compete on the team.

Expectations – Swimmers will not compete in meets during the season, having the primary goal to advancing to Group 1. Swimmers might be asked by the head coach to compete at the POSA Last Chance intrasquad at the end of the season.

Practice Sessions

Training sessions are the most important aspect of competitive swimming. Consistent training is needed to progress through the levels of swimming on our team. Training schedules are designed to provide the time that is necessary for a swimmer to accomplish their goals and therefore it is important that each swimmer try to attend as many practices as possible in order to derive the full benefits of the program.

PRACTICE AND ATTENDANCE POLICIES

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 for all.

- As a general rule, the least possible interruption in the training schedule will produce the greatest amount of success. The expectation level to attend practices increases as the swimmer moves to higher levels within our team.

- For the swimmers' protection, they should arrive on the pool grounds NO EARLIER than 15 minutes prior to their workout. Swimmers should be ready to begin practice 5 minutes prior to the start of practice. They should also be picked up NO LATER THAN 15 MINUTES AFTER PRACTICE is over. The coaching staff would like to get home to their families at a reasonable time. Please make sure you pick up on time.
- If swimmers need to use the bathroom do it before or after the start or end of a set. Too many people getting out during a set causes significant disruption for the rest of the swimmers in the pool.
- During practice sessions, swimmers are never to leave the pool area without the coach's permission.
- POSA has an obligation to act as guests while at each pool (both swimmers and parents). Every team member needs to do everything possible to respect this privilege, as this is not only a reflection of the individual, but also the team. Damage to properties at the pool may result in the swimmer being asked to leave the team permanently.
- Before and after practice swimmers are expected to behave appropriately in the locker rooms. This means no picking on any swimmers. This behavior will not be tolerated!
- Parents are allowed to observe practice from the pool stands. Please be considerate and keep conversations at a low volume. If smaller children are attending practice, these children must stay in the designated area, and are the sole responsibility of their parents.
- Do not try to coach or communicate with any swimmer from the observation area. This is not only distracting but can also be distracting to the entire team as well as the coach.
- Feel free to talk to the coaches before or after practice sessions. Talking to them during practice time can be a distraction to all swimmers in the pool. Let the coach do their job. There will be time before and after practice to ask questions.

Swimmers Training Responsibilities

As a swimmer's level of swimming ability increases so does his/her responsibility. The program is designed to encourage all swimmers to be senior swimming bound. As swimmers improve, this is a deep commitment that requires great effort on all parts. A swimmer has responsibilities to the team, the coach, his/her 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 equipment to each practice session. It is the swimmer's responsibility to make sure these items are properly adjusted and that spares are readily available. If possible, please bring an extra pair of goggles to practice. The coaches can't afford to spend 5 – 10 minutes fixing goggles during practice time. Listed below is the

required training equipment needed by each swimmer in each training group. Please note that all equipment should be labeled with your swimmer's name. Also, it is the swimmer's responsibility to pick up the pool deck of all equipment at the end of each training session. We cannot be responsible for any equipment left at the pool.

High School, Group 6, Group 5

- Pull buoy
- Hand Paddles
- Training fins
- Mesh bag

Groups 4 and 3

- Pull buoy
- Training fins
- Mesh bag

Groups 2 and 1

- Training fins
- Mesh bag

Team Gear

The team colors are blue and gold. One of the two recommended items to wear is a team swim cap. Both latex or silicone caps are available to purchase. Swimmers may also purchase personalized caps for themselves during Spirit wear Sales. While not everyone might wear a cap during a meet, if you do wear a cap it should be a team cap. The team suit should also be worn for all competitions. POSA will have a team suit fitting night at practice at the beginning of every season.

For swimmers that wish to purchase a performance racing suit for the end of the season meets, you may do so as long as it is an age appropriate suit. Most of the performance suits are geared toward older swimmers. Typically, younger swimmers do not have the proper body to fit a suit correctly. Also, many of these suits are only good for about 4-6 races and are rather expensive. If you have any questions about racing suits for your swimmer, please check with your coach prior to making the purchase.

Check out the POSA Team Store on the website for suits, caps, and other team equipment

Parking and Drop Off/Pick Up Policy

To assure the safety of all POSA members, everyone is required to cooperate with the following guidelines when dropping off and picking up their swimmers:

- Swimmers are not permitted to leave the building unless accompanied by a parent or responsible adult. The coaches and board are too busy to police this policy; therefore, it is the parents' responsibility to assure their children's safety.
- When dropping off and picking up your POSA swimmer, all cars should park in a designated parking spot in the lot. POSA encourages ALL parents or anyone dropping off and picking up a swimmer to walk their swimmer into and out of the pool area to ensure they get to and from practice safely.
- There is no parking or waiting along **any** of the shop garage doors, near the pool doors or the east drive along the softball fields. See parking map below for more details.
- If you choose to wait in your car to pick up your **older** children (11 and over recommended), please park along the north side of the softball field.
- This is the parent's responsibility to relay the parking policy to anyone dropping off and picking up your swimmer from practice.
- If any POSA Staff sees a car parked in the designated no parking area, POSA will ask the car to move to the designated parking area. Everyone's cooperation is required, if POSA Staff need to tell you to move your car more than once you will risk your swimmer being expelled from the team (this includes all and any infractions per family not per individual).



PROBLEMS WITH THE COACH?

One of the traditional swim team communication gaps is that some parents seem to feel more comfortable discussing their disagreements over coaching philosophy with other parents rather than taking them directly to the coach. This approach does not allow disagreements to be resolved and often results in new problems being created. Please allow our coaches to attempt to address your concerns by promptly and directly communicating your concerns or complaints to them. This approach will benefit everyone and will give the coaches an opportunity to make improvements if necessary.

Listed below are some guidelines for parents raising some difficult issues with a coach:

- 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 good rapport and a constructive dialogue.
- Listen to the coach. Generally, coaches are very patient with the progress of young swimmers. PLEASE DO NOT misinterpret coaches' patience as uncaring or incompetence. Parents who want to push their children cannot understand the coach who seems to be holding their children back. In reality, most coaches see the larger view of the child's swimming career and are planning a long and steady road of progressively more difficult tasks and satisfying achievement. Coaches do not have all the answers, but their success is dependent upon keeping children in the program for the long term.
- Keep in mind that the coach must balance your perspective of what is best for your child with the needs of the team or training group that can range in size from 10 – 100 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.
- If you have a problem, concern, or complaint, please contact your child's lead coach. If the lead coach cannot satisfactorily resolve your concern, then ask the Head Coach to join the dialogue. If your concern is not satisfactorily resolved after that discussion, you may submit your problem, concern or complaint to the Lyon's Swim Club parent Board of Directors by email at lyonsswimboard@gmail.com.
- If another parent uses you as a sounding board for complaints about the coach, listen empathetically, but encourage the other parent to speak directly to the coach. He/she is the only one who can resolve the problem.

Financial Responsibilities

- **Swim Fees are non-refundable!** All members are expected to keep their account current and in good standing. Please contact the Treasurer if you have any concerns paying your account.
- Registration fees will only be refundable the first week of the season (a \$20 processing fee will be assessed for credit card payments only.) If the swimmer withdraws from the

program after the first week, the registration, fundraising and volunteer fees are considered a donation to our not-for-profit organization.

- Membership payments and meet fees are due on the 1st of the month. You can pay by cash, check or credit card. You can upload a credit card under "Your Account" section on the website.
- A late fee of \$25 will occur after the 7th day of the month. If your credit card was declined on the 1st, it will need to be updated by the 7th to avoid the late fee.
- If your account is not current, you will not be allowed to sign up your swimmer for any additional ISI meets.
- If your account is one month past due, your swimmer will not be allowed to attend practice and/or any meets until the account is paid in full.

CODE OF CONDUCT: ATHLETES AND PARENTS

All members of the team, whether parents or swimmers, must continue to protect and improve the excellent reputation the team has throughout the surrounding communities, and the state.

Athlete Code of Conduct

I. POSA strives to promote the following opportunities for its members:

- A. The development of basic and advanced swimming skills;
- B. The enhancement of physical and mental abilities through individual effort and teamwork;
- C. An environment which supports and encourages all members of the club, regardless of age or ability; and
- D. An atmosphere that encourages friendships and social activities among the swimmers, parents and coaches.

II. As a member of POSA, each athlete will be expected to conduct himself/herself in accordance with the following provisions at practices, meets, social activities and all other occasions where the member is representing the club:

- A. All POSA members shall exhibit good sportsmanship in and out of the pool;
- B. All POSA members shall follow the coaches, officials and other administrator's rules and instructions at all times;
- C. All POSA members shall behave in a responsible manner, including not using or possessing alcohol, illegal drugs, tobacco, or other banned substances;
- D. All POSA members shall respect and take care of all property and facilities whether the property belongs to the member, a teammate, opponent or any other person;
- E. Bullying by any POSA member is prohibited;
- F. All POSA members shall not use profane language or be disrespectful to any other person;

- G. Changing into or out of swimsuits other than in locker rooms or other designated areas is prohibited. Swimmers should not change in the hallway, pool deck or in the stands. They must use the locker room or restroom.
- H. No form of photography or videotaping of any kind (including cell phones and social media) shall be allowed in locker rooms or on the pool deck, including, but not limited to, behind the starting blocks. Please understand that the actual use of a photo, video or other recording device can violate state law and school policies and lead to serious consequences. Keep your cell phone in your bag at all times in the locker room and on deck; and
- I. All POSA members shall not participate in horseplay, running on deck, running in the hallways or any other activity that would create a danger to themselves or others.

III. Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct will result in the following disciplinary actions:

- A. A disciplinary letter will be sent home which explains the misconduct. Prior to the member returning to practice and/or competition, the disciplinary letter must be signed by the member's parent/guardian and returned to the Head Coach.
- B. In the event of repetitive and/or excessive misconduct, the Head Coach, the coaching staff and/or the Board reserve the right to decide upon and enforce an appropriate consequence for the member's misconduct.
- C. If the Board believes that suspension or expulsion from the club is an appropriate consequence based on the member's misconduct, the member's parents/guardians, the member, and the Head Coach must meet with the board to discuss the misconduct prior to the suspension or expulsion being enforced. Any expelled swimmer will not receive a refund.

IV. The Board's decisions are final. The POSA Board and coaching staff endorse and support this Code of Conduct. Any questions concerning the policy or actions that result from this Code of Conduct shall be directed to the Board.

Parent Code of Conduct

The essential elements of character-building and ethics in sports are embodied in the concept of sportsmanship and six core principles: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship. The highest potential of sports is achieved when competition reflects the "six pillars of character." (Arizona Sports Summit Accord)

I therefore agree:

- 1) Parents will remember that children participate to have fun and that swimming is for youth, not adults.
- 2) Parents will teach their child that doing one's best is more important than winning, so that the swimmer will never feel defeated by the outcome of a race or his/her performance.

- 3) Parents will praise their child for competing fairly and trying hard and make my child feel like a winner every time.
- 4) Parents will inform the coach of any physical disability or ailment that may affect the safety of my child or the safety of others. Parents (and my guests) will be a positive role model for their child and encourage sportsmanship by showing respect and courtesy, and by demonstrating positive support for all swimmers, coaches, officials, and spectators at every meet, practice or other swimming event.
- 5) Parents will demand that their child treat other swimmers, coaches, officials and spectators with respect regardless of race, creed, color, sex, or ability.
- 6) Parents will teach their child to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence.
- 7) Parents will respect the officials and their authority during meets and will never question, discuss, or confront coaches on the pool deck (from the stands during practice or meets), and will take time to speak with coaches at an agreed upon time and place.
- 8) Parents will resolve conflicts with other parents, coaching staff and board members in an open and amicable manner. Parents will keep communication open with all parties involved.
- 9) Parents will wait 24 hours when voicing a complaint from an incident before bringing it to the attention of the coach, club official or administrator to provide a cooling off time for all involved.
- 10) Parents will drop off their child no earlier than 15 minutes prior to the start of practice. Parents will make every effort to have their child at practice on time. Parents will pick them up from practice no later than 15 minutes after practice has ended.
- 11) Parents will not enter the locker room for any reason. Only swimmers are allowed in the locker rooms for changing. POSA Coaches, Officials and Board Members go through a background check and athlete protection training for the safety of the swimmers. If it is necessary to inquire about your swimmer, then the parent should let a coach or board member know and they will enter the locker room to inquire about your child.

If a swimmer needs assistance with changing, or a swimmer's disability warrants assistance, then parents can use the hallway bathrooms to assist their child. Please note, POSA does not have the ability to unlock and lock the hallway bathrooms as well as the doors to enter and exit the pool, this is the responsibility of the Sandburg Staff.

- 12) Parents will not walk on deck during practice. Only the Coaches and Board Members are allowed on deck during practice times, this is for the safety of the swimmers. All Coaches, Board Members, and Officials are required to apply for an annual Non-Athlete

USA Swim card and have a background check and athlete protection training every two years.

If there is an issue and you need to talk with a coach, you should contact the Head Coach. He will then address any issues with the assistant coaches if he feels it is necessary. Please talk with the Coach before or after practice hours. He usually arrives 15 minutes early and stays 15 minutes after practice. You can also email Coach Josh to set up a time to talk at josh.rogers@posaeagles.org.

13) Parents will not coach their swimmer from the stands. The swimmers should have their attention to what the coaches are teaching them. This usually distracts the swimmer, the coach, and teammates. If you have any concerns with what your swimmer is doing during practice, please talk to the head coach before or after practice.

14) Parents also agree that if they or their swimmer fail to abide by the aforementioned rules, guidelines, and policies, they will be subject to disciplinary action that could include but is not limited to the following:

- 1) Swimmer or Parental meet and/or practice suspension with written documentation of incident kept on file by POSA.
- 2) Verbal warning by official, head coach, and/or board of directors.
- 3) Written warning.
- 4) Swimmer or Parental season suspension
- 5) There will be no refund of the any swim fees if a swimmer or family gets expelled from the team due to violations in team policies.

United States Swimming Fees

All POSA swimmers are required to have a current United States of America Swimming (USA) membership. This membership not only supports swimming throughout the country, it also provides very important accident and medical insurance for every swimmer and every club. Each swimmer is covered at any organized practice of POSA and every competition that is USA Swimming sanctioned. All members, coaches, and swimmers of POSA must be members of United States Swimming. You must be a member of USA Swimming even if your swimmer does not plan on competing. The membership is purchased annually, and the money paid for the membership is non-refundable. The membership is transferable, however. If you move, you can transfer your membership from POSA to your new USA Swimming team. The current 2018 USA swimming fees are \$75.

Home Meet Participation

The following procedures are required by all member families of POSA. Our meets hosted by the Club require many workers to be run efficiently. Therefore, each family will be required to volunteer throughout the season. You do not need to know anything about swimming to volunteer. In addition, there are some opportunities to volunteer either before or after (rather than during) the meet. Volunteer positions are filled on a first come, first serve basis through our website, usually about 2 weeks before a hosted meet. A complete accounting of time

volunteered will be kept reviewed by the Board of Directors. If a family fails to meet their commitment, the Board will cash the \$150 deposit check. If you cannot work at the meet, it is your responsibility to let the meet director know that you can no longer volunteer.

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. In addition, there is a combination of the strokes swam by one swimmer called the individual medley. A relay is a group of four swimmers who either all swim freestyle (freestyle relay) or each swim one of the competitive strokes in the order of backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, and freestyle (medley relay).

Swim Seasons

The swim year is divided into two seasons. The winter, or "short course" season, runs from mid-September to mid-February. The meets are held in a 25-yard pool. The spring/summer, or "long course" season, runs from early April to late July. ISI meets during the summer are generally held in 50-meter pools.

Competition ... and the winner is ...

POSA 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: good sportsmanship, concentration, listening skills, and working toward goals. In competition, the important measure is not who collected the most medals, or even who improved the most seconds. The 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 a 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.

Levels of Achievement

There are five different age group classifications recognized by United States Swimming (the governing body of the sport): 8 and Under, 10 and Under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-18 (Senior). The Senior classification includes any age registered swimmer who has achieved the prescribed qualifying time for the event. Not all group classifications are offered at every swim meet. The swimmer's age on the first day of a meet will govern the swimmer's age for the entire meet. Within each age group beginning at 10 and Under, there are different nationally recognized levels of achievement based on times. All swimmers begin as a "C" swimmer. As they improve, they advance from "C" to "B", "BB", "A", "AA", "AAA", and ultimately "AAAA". The times required for each ability level are published each year by United States Swimming. This permits fair, yet challenging competition on all levels. In some cases, a swimmer may be in a different class in each stroke. 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. See the website for the time USA Swimming and Illinois Swimming time standards.

Types or Levels of Swim Meets

Most USA meets are held over the period of a weekend and are broken up into several sessions. The Friday evening session typically offers longer events for all age groups. Most meets hold a morning and afternoon session on both Saturday and Sunday. Usually 2 age groups participate in the morning session and the remaining age groups participate in the afternoon. This prevents a swimmer from being at the meet all day.

- **Intrasquad Meet/Time Trial** - Swimmers from our own team compete against one another in a mock meet at Sandburg High School. This meet helps new swimmers and their parents become familiar with the workings of a dual meet. Coaches determine which swimmers compete in the specific events. There are no additional costs to swim in the Intrasquad Meet. Time Trials are usually at the end of the season to allow swimmers the opportunity to make championship time cuts (see time standards) and to see improvements from the beginning of the season. Everyone from our team is encouraged to participate.
- **Dual Meets:** Meets that the POSA Swim Team competes in typically during the week days with other area swim teams. These meets have no qualifying time standards and everyone from our team is encouraged to participate. Swimmers are allowed to swim a maximum of 2 individual events and 2 relays per meet. There are no additional costs to swim in Dual Meets. Sometimes our team will compete with two other teams, called a triangular meet. The Coaches will pick the events for all swimmers.
- **Illinois Swimming, Inc Meets (ISI's):** During the season, POSA will participate in large weekend meets hosted by swim clubs in the greater Chicago area. Several teams are entered in these meets, with 100's of swimmers competing. Due to the large volume of swimmers, age groups are broken into different sessions (AM vs PM). Long distance events typically compete on Fridays, and Saturday and Sundays are used to break up the age groups and the events. Parents can sign up their swimmer for specific days and events of their choice (number of maximum events determined by host team). Parents may want to discuss their child's participation in these meets with the coaches. Additional fees are charged per event and per swimmer. Meet packets will be available for review. Please read the meet packet for information on location of meet, day/session times, costs, events, number of events allowed to swim, and other pertinent information. Meet Mobile in your phone's app store might be available to use during these meets. You can use Meet Mobile to track swimmers in real time, view results and swimmer standings, and view swimmers heat and lane assignments. There is an annual fee to use this app.
- **Prelim / Final Meets:** Most championship meets and qualification meets are held in a preliminary and final format. All swimmers compete in the morning or afternoon session

of the meet called preliminaries. The fastest six, eight, twelve, or sixteen swimmers qualify to come back and compete again in the evening session, called finals.

- **Conference Meet:** POSA participates in the South Suburban Swim Conference (SSSC). There are 3 levels in which area teams compete; the Gold, Blue and Red Divisions. POSA is in the Gold division. (SSSC website: <https://sites.google.com/site/ssscsue/>) At the end of the season, each Conference Division holds a championship meet. The team's overall finish determines which division the team will compete in next season. Coaches determine which swimmers will compete. They will inform the conference lineup through email about a week before the meet. Each team in the conference is only allowed to have 2 swimmers per event compete. We have to limit entries to this meet. We are also allowed to have alternates come to the meet. The alternate swimmers are important and needed in case anyone gets sick or can't make the meet. The Conference meets take place in the beginning of February for the Winter Season and the beginning of July for the Summer Season. There is no fee for swimmers to compete, but an admission fee is charged for spectators.
- **Regional Meet:** Towards the end of each season, a Regional Championship meet is conducted. Illinois Swimming Inc. sets qualifying time standards for entrance into this meet.
- **State Championship Meet:** At the end of each season, winter short-course and summer long-course, a State Championship meet is conducted. Illinois Swimming Inc. sets qualifying time standards for entrance into the meet.
- **Zone Championships:** After the State Championships are held in the summer, a swimmer may qualify to participate in the Central Zone Championships by swimming a national "AAA" time. This is an all-star meet where swimmers compete as a member of the Illinois Zone team competing against other states from the Midwest.

Swim Meet Ribbons – All swimmers receive ribbons for POSA Intrasquad and Dual Meets. (1st Place, 2nd Place, etc. or a Great Swim for participation). These will be available several days after each meet and can be picked up in the swim office. Each swimmer will have a folder with their name where their ribbon(s) will be placed. When your swimmer checks the ribbons, please make sure they leave the file in the bin. If your swimmer was disqualified from an event, a DQ slip will be in the folder. They should show it to their Coach and ask them what they did wrong. ISI Meet ribbons and trophies may or may not be handed out at the discretion of the host team.

Meet Schedule

Each season's meet schedule is posted on the website at the outset of the season. The meet schedule has been established with the expectation that swimmers will attend every meet available, if possible, at their classification level. We do not schedule a meet unless we feel it is important to participate. However, it is not mandatory to attend every meet. All swimmers

regardless of age and group (except the Beginners Group) are required to compete in 3 meets per season. This is the swimmer's choice and can be any type of meet. You may also choose to enter your swimmer only one day of a two or three-day meet (this counts towards 1 meet). The coaching staff reserves the right to make the final decision concerning meets that POSA swimmers may attend and the events.

Team effort meets - Team championship meets are indicated on the meet schedule. Since the coaching staff places the most emphasis on these meets, POSA swimmers who are qualified, are highly encouraged to attend. The SSSC Conference Meet, Illinois Age Group Regional and State Championships are always considered "Team effort meets". If the coaching staff selects your swimmer to go to the meet to swim relays, we highly encourage your swimmer to attend. Swimmers competing only on relays need to get valuable experience swimming at this level. Also, remember that a relay needs four swimmers to make it work. Don't let down your teammates!

Meet Entry Procedure

You must also register your swimmer for each meet on our website, www.posaeagles.org. For the ISI meets, please check out the meet packets linked on the sign-up page. The meet packets identify when different age groups are scheduled. Entry deadlines are four to five weeks in advance of the meet and it is important that you enter on time. Late sign up is not always available and could mean that your swimmer is left out of the meet. Meet fees (per swimmer and event) will be charged for the ISI Meets. Once we receive the confirmation by the host team that we have been accepted into the meet, the meet fees will be charged to your account. There will be no refunds of any meet fees if you can no longer attend the meet. Meet information is available on our website. Exact starting times and meet timeline is usually available the week leading up to the meet.

PHILOSOPHY OF COMPETITION

POSA engages in a multilevel competition program with United States Swimming that, like our training program, attempts to provide challenging yet success oriented competitive situations for swimmers of all ages and abilities.

The following policies outline our philosophy:

- We emphasize competition with oneself. Winning ribbons, medals, or trophies is not our main goal. Even if the swimmer finishes first but has swum poorly in comparison to his/her own past performances, he/she is encouraged to do better. The individual's improvement is our primary objective.
- Sportsmanlike behavior is as important as improved performance. All the coaches teach swimmers how to behave like a champion when the swimmer has both a "good" and "bad" swim. Respect for officials, congratulations to other competitors, encouragement to teammates, determined effort, and mature attitudes are examples of behaviors praised by the POSA coaching staff.

- A swimmer is praised for improving his/her stroke or time. It is the coach's job to offer constructive criticism of a swimmer's performance. It is the parent's responsibility to provide love and encouragement that bolster the swimmer's confidence along the way.
- Swimmers are taught to set realistic, yet challenging, goals for meets and to relate those goals to practice to direct their training efforts.
- Swimmers are prepared and encouraged 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. Oftentimes, a swimmer's "best" stroke changes as they mature and his/her body goes through physical changes.

EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT SWIM MEETS...BUT, WERE AFRAID 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 very in-depth guidelines geared to help you through your first couple of swim meets. It may seem a little overwhelming, but we tried to be as specific and as detailed as we possibly could. If you have any questions, please ask your child's coach.

Before the Meet Starts

- Arrive at the pool at least 15-20 minutes before the scheduled warm-up time begins. Normally, warm ups are 1 hour before the expected starting time of the session. This time will be listed in the meet entry sheets and the meet participation sheets.
- Upon arrival, find a place to put your swimmer's blankets, swim bags, and/or towels. The team usually sits in one place together, so look for some familiar faces.
- For most ISI Meets, find the check-in place (called Positive Check-In) as your swimmer will need to check themselves in. If you don't check in, you will be scratched from your events. Check for special posted instructions in the area.
- Your swimmer now gets his/her cap and goggles and reports to the pool and/or coach for warm-up instructions. It is very important for all swimmers to warm-up with the team. Swimmers' bodies are just like cars. On a cold day, he/she needs to get the engine going and warmed up before he/she can go all out. As a team policy, coaches reserve the right to scratch a swimmer from a relay that they were scheduled to compete on if the swimmer is late or missed warm-ups without notifying a coach prior to the meet.
- After a warm-up, your swimmer will go back to the area where his/her towels are and sit there until the 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 settles in.

- According to USA Swimming rules, 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.
- Admission and Heat sheets. Generally, you pay an admission to be a spectator at a swim meet. A heat sheet is usually available for sale in the lobby or concession area of the pool. Heat sheets generally sell for several dollars per session. 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. Only times from a USA Swimming sanctioned meet will be used. (Please note: Intra-squad and Dual Meets do not have admission charges.)

At the Meet

- It is important for any swimmer to know what event numbers he/she is swimming, He/she may swim right away after warm-up or they may have to wait awhile.
- A swimmer's event number will be called, usually over the loudspeaker, and he/she will be asked to report to the "Clerk of the Course" (typically 10 & Under Swimmers only) or behind the starting blocks. Swimmers should report with his/her cap and goggles. The people running the clerk of the course will seat them according to their heat and lane. The clerk will usually line up all the swimmers and take them down to the pool in correct order.
- You can usually expect at least 4 – 10 heats of each event.
- The swimmer swims their race. After each swim:
 - He/she is to ask the timers (people behind the blocks at each lane) for his/her time.
 - He/she should go immediately to their coach. The coach will ask him/her their time and discuss the swim with each swimmer.
 - Generally, the coach follows these guidelines when discussing swims: positive comments or praise and suggestions for improvement.
 - Things you, as the parent, can do after each swim: • 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.
 - The swimmer now waits until his/her next event is called and starts the procedure again at the clerk of course.
- When a swimmer has completed all of his/her events he/she and their parents get to go home. However, you 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.)

What Happens If Your Child Has A Disappointing Swim

If your child has a poor race and comes out of it feeling bad, talk about the good things. Don't dwell on the negative things done during the race!! If your child comes up to you and says, "That was a bad race, don't tell me it wasn't," there is nothing wrong with a swimmer negatively evaluating a race. The important thing is for the child not to dwell on it. You should move the swimmer onto something good or positive. If you spend too much time worrying about a bad race, it will affect your next race!

What To Take To the Meet

- Travel games, playing cards, coloring books, books, anything to pass the time.
- Food - It is better to bring snacks. Some suggestions for items to bring are: drinks (fruit juices, sport drinks, or best of all water), snacks (granola bars, fun fruits, yogurt, cereal, sandwiches, etc.). Most pools do not allow eating/food on deck, please make sure your swimmer knows to eat at the concession area only.

Once you have attended one or two meets, this will all become very routine. Please do not hesitate to ask any other POSA parents for help or information!

These meets are a lot of fun for the swimmers! 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 of the hard work he/she has put in at practice.

Special Parent's Note

Sessions often run 4 hours, not including warm-ups. 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! Also, the bleachers normally have no backs; you may want to consider a bleacher seat with a back.

Championship Meets

One of our team goals is to qualify as many swimmers as possible for the Championship meet(s). Whether attendance is REQUIRED or OPTIONAL, the Championship meet is a special experience and extremely important in the athlete's development. As our season progresses, all of the swimmers get excited and motivated to make a "cut". Unfortunately, some of the swimmers do not have the consistent practice habits nor the USS meet experience to make the cut, yet, through an extremely psyched swim and a lot of desire, they do the time. Because they don't have the practices and meet experience, the swimmer will probably not repeat the time at the Championship meet. As an Age Group swimmer, our swimmers are taught 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. We, as coaches, believe that the honor

of competing in a championship meet is earned through consistent practice habits and competitive experience at USA swim meets. There's a big difference between "wanting" to go to the championships and "deserving" to be at the championships. Talent plays a supporting role to commitment.

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

- Meet attendance and participation throughout the entire season is important. ISI meets offer the experience necessary for the championship.
- Practice habits must be within our recommendations for the group the swimmer trains with. "Consistency" is the key word. The Championship Meets are not the ultimate goal. It is a seasonal goal that should lead to these meets and beyond. Making the "cut time" is simply a requirement to attend the meet. 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 a 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.

Receiving Awards in Public

Whenever there is a system of presenting awards at a meet, it is customary for swimmers to be prompt and to cooperate fully with the presentations. A team uniform or shirt is to be worn when accepting the award. It is also customary for POSA swimmers to be polite and modestly thankful for any awards they receive. It is appropriate to congratulate other swimmers and receive the same with poise and a "thank you". Good sportsmanship is essential. If photos are being taken, we ask the swimmer to remain until the shooting is complete, being sure to cooperate with the photographer. Do not ham it up! The picture may be special to someone else. The image a swimmer presents is a direct reflection of the team.

I have read and agree to POSA's team handbook outlining, but not limiting to, the swimmer and parent code of conduct, financial responsibility, locker room policy, cell phone policy, parking policy, and bullying policy and understand that the agreement to follow the rules and policies is required to participate on the team.

Family Name: _____

Date: _____

Swimmer Signature: _____

Swimmer Signature: _____

Swimmer Signature: _____

Swimmer Signature: _____

Parent Signature: _____