



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# WEST COOK YMCA

## COMPETITIVE SWIM TEAM (TOPS) HANDBOOK

### **West Cook YMCA**

255 S. Marion St.

Oak Park, IL 60302

708-383-5400

[www.westcookymca.org](http://www.westcookymca.org)

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to serve as a guide for new and returning families and set expectations for what is required of the athletes, families, coaches and staff of the West Cook YMCA TOPS Competitive Swim Team. By joining TOPS, the reader agrees to adhere to each of the standards set forth in this document. It is highly advised that all parents and athletes read this document in order to familiarize themselves to the rules and regulations of our club.

## OUR MISSION AND VISION

Our Mission is to provide positive youth development through the sport of swimming. TOPS provides a supportive team environment, for all swimmers, of every age and ability. By striving to achieve their own personal goals and coming together as team to achieve team goals, we believe that every athlete participating can become a champion. The West Cook YMCA Competitive Swim Team seeks to offer athletes a space to cultivate as swimmers and youth.

## OUR HISTORY

Since the 1950s, a group called Oak Park Swimmers has swum out of the West Cook YMCA and has established a long standing relationship with Oak Park and the surrounding areas.

When a young person becomes a member of the Competitive Swim Team, he/she learns the values of sportsmanship and team work. Swimming, through the West Cook YMCA Swim Team, provides physical, emotional and intellectual skills that will last a lifetime.

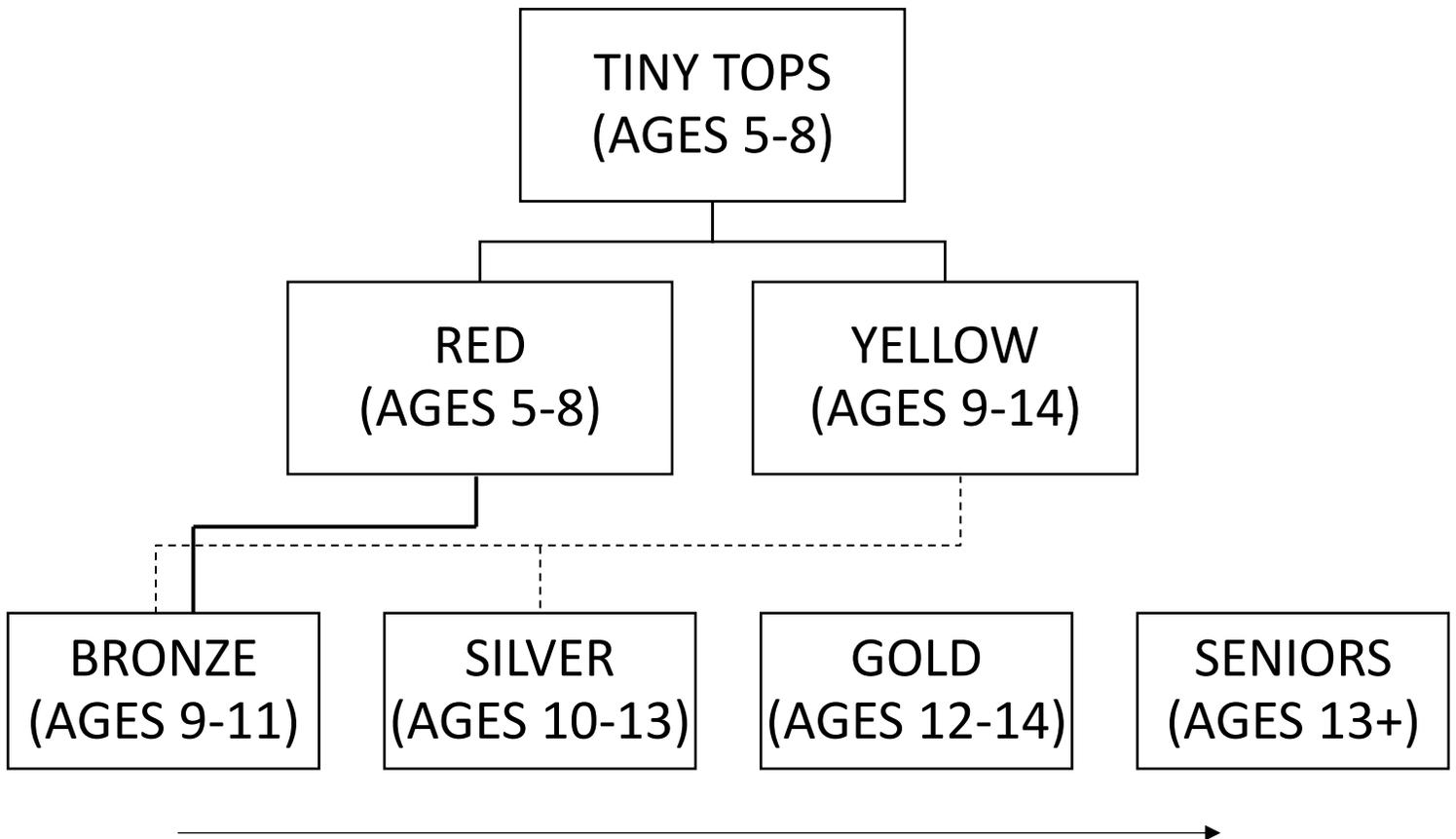
## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Competitive Swimming will follow the guidelines of USA Swimming's Institutionally Owned Clubs Level 1 and 2 protocols. The guidelines are broken down into four areas; Business & Organization Success, Parent & Volunteer Development, Coach Development & Education, and Athlete Performance & Education.

| <b><u>Business and Organization Success</u></b> | <b><u>Parent and Volunteer Development</u></b> | <b><u>Coach Development</u></b>      | <b><u>Athlete Development</u></b> |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Strategic Planning                              | Parent Education and Meetings                  | Coaching Levels                      | Practice Structure and Training   |
| Legal and Financial                             | Communication                                  | Staff Training and Certifications    | Athlete Development               |
| Employee Policies                               | Swim Meet Execution                            | Athlete Training and Development     | Training Group Assignments        |
| SafeSport                                       | Volunteer Development                          | USA Swimming Policies and Procedures |                                   |
| Best Practices                                  | Officials                                      |                                      |                                   |

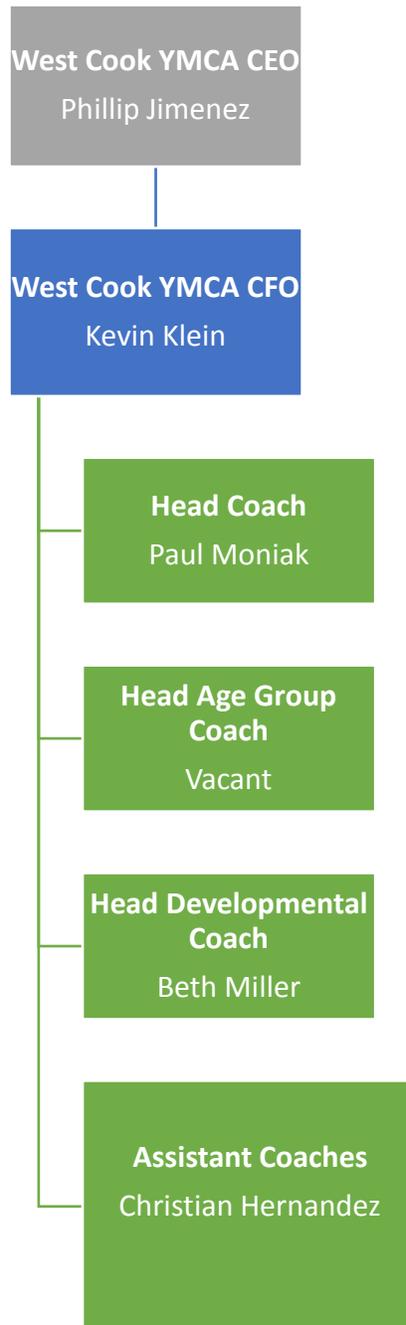
## Competitive Swim Team Progression

See the chart on the following page for a more detailed explanation of each swim group.



| <b>Developmental Level</b> | <b>Intended For Swimmers</b>  | <b>What to Expect</b> | <b>Move Up Potential</b>  |
|----------------------------|---|-----------------------|---|
| Tiny Tops<br>(Age 5-8)     | -Looking to try competitive swimming<br>-Who are able to swim with moderate form and endurance        | -Practice 2x week     | Based on age and ability, swimmer will move into Red or Yellow  |
| Red (Age 5-8)              | -Looking to continue w/competitive swimming<br>-Able to swim with moderate to high form and endurance | -Practice 3x week     | Will move into the Yellow or Bronze groups; based on swimmer age, ability, maturity, and spaces available in the group                        |
| Yellow (Age 9-14)          | -Who have a strong interest in swimming<br>-Minimum Time Standards are used for assessing ability     | -Practice 3x week     | Swimmers will move into Age Group Level OR remain at Yellow level; based on swimmer ability, age, maturity, and spaces available in the group |
| <b>Age Group Level</b>     |   |                       |   |
| Bronze<br>(Age 9-11)       | -Who can legally swim all four strokes<br>- Minimum Time Standards are used for assessing ability     | -Practice 5x week     | Will move into the Silver group; based on swimmer age, ability, maturity, and spaces available in the group                                   |
| Silver (Age 10-13)         | -Show desire to compete in YMCA and USA Swimming competitions in all four strokes                     | -Practice 5x week     | Will move into the Gold group; based on swimmer age, ability, maturity, and spaces available in the group                                     |
| Gold (Age 12-14)           | -Show continued growth and progress in practice and competitions                                      | -Practice 5x week     | Will move into the Seniors group; based on swimmer age, ability, maturity, and spaces available in the group                                  |
| Seniors (13+)              |   | -Practice 5x week     |   |

## ORGANIZATIONAL HIERARCHY



USA Swimming Board of Directors may be found at: <https://usaswimming.org/news-landing-page/2017/02/04/board-of-directors>

USA Swimming Executive Leadership Team may be found at: <https://usaswimming.org/news-landing-page/2017/02/04/executive-leadership-team>

## **PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The Parent Advisory Committee is comprised of parents of swimmers who serve as a liaison and represent the parents of the team at monthly meetings with West Cook YMCA administrators and coaches. This Committee serves as an Event Body, whose primary function is to ensure WCY hosted swim meets are fully manned and operate with high quality, as well as bring questions, comments, and concerns to the organization related to the swim team on a regular basis. Positions for the PAC are listed below.

|                              |
|------------------------------|
| <b>PAC POSITIONS</b>         |
| <b>CO-CHAIRS</b>             |
| <b>VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR</b> |
| <b>MEET DIRECTORS</b>        |
| <b>HOSPITALITY</b>           |
| <b>SOCIAL</b>                |
| <b>OFFICIALS COORDINATOR</b> |
| <b>APPAREL</b>               |
| <b>PUBLIC RELATIONS</b>      |

## **REGISTRATION INFORMATION**

Registration for the Competitive Swim Team follows a bi-annual cycle of 2 sessions broken up into 2 registration time frames; April for the summer season, July for the fall season. Registration is done on a first come, first served basis for all levels. The registration packet for the specific season will be available in person at the Membership Desk or online via this address:

<https://www.teamunify.com/SubTabGeneric.jsp?team=iltyst&stabid=117233>

At registration, you will be prompted with the following payment options; Season Full Pay (pay for season upfront) or Season Monthly Pay (even increments charged to a credit card on file the first of each month of the season; 3 for the summer or 7 for the fall/winter). Illinois Swimming registration fees are required at registration in order to participate in the Competitive Swimming Program. Escrow fees are required at registration for each group and are NON REFUNDABLE. Escrow fees act as a down payment for fees charged to a swimmer's participation in swim meet events. It is encouraged that all of the swimmer's use their escrow fees in full since they are not refundable. In the event a swimmer uses more than their initial escrow payment, families will be billed the difference of what is owed.

**2019-2020 Registration Start Dates\*** *(Subject to change. Please see the TOPS website for most up to date information)*

| Session (2019-20)                | Registration Date |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Short Course (Fall/Winter)       | July 31           |
| Long Course 2020 (Spring/Summer) | April 5th         |

Online Registration Process

1. Go to [www.westcookymca.org](http://www.westcookymca.org)
2. Click the REGISTER tab in the middle of the page
3. The registration page features all of our program categories. Click TOPS or SWIM TEAM for availabilities.
4. Click the link to the group you'd like to sign up for.
5. Click the BLUE register button to sign into your account and complete the registration process.
6. Please bring in your registration packet to the Membership desk.

In Person Registration Process

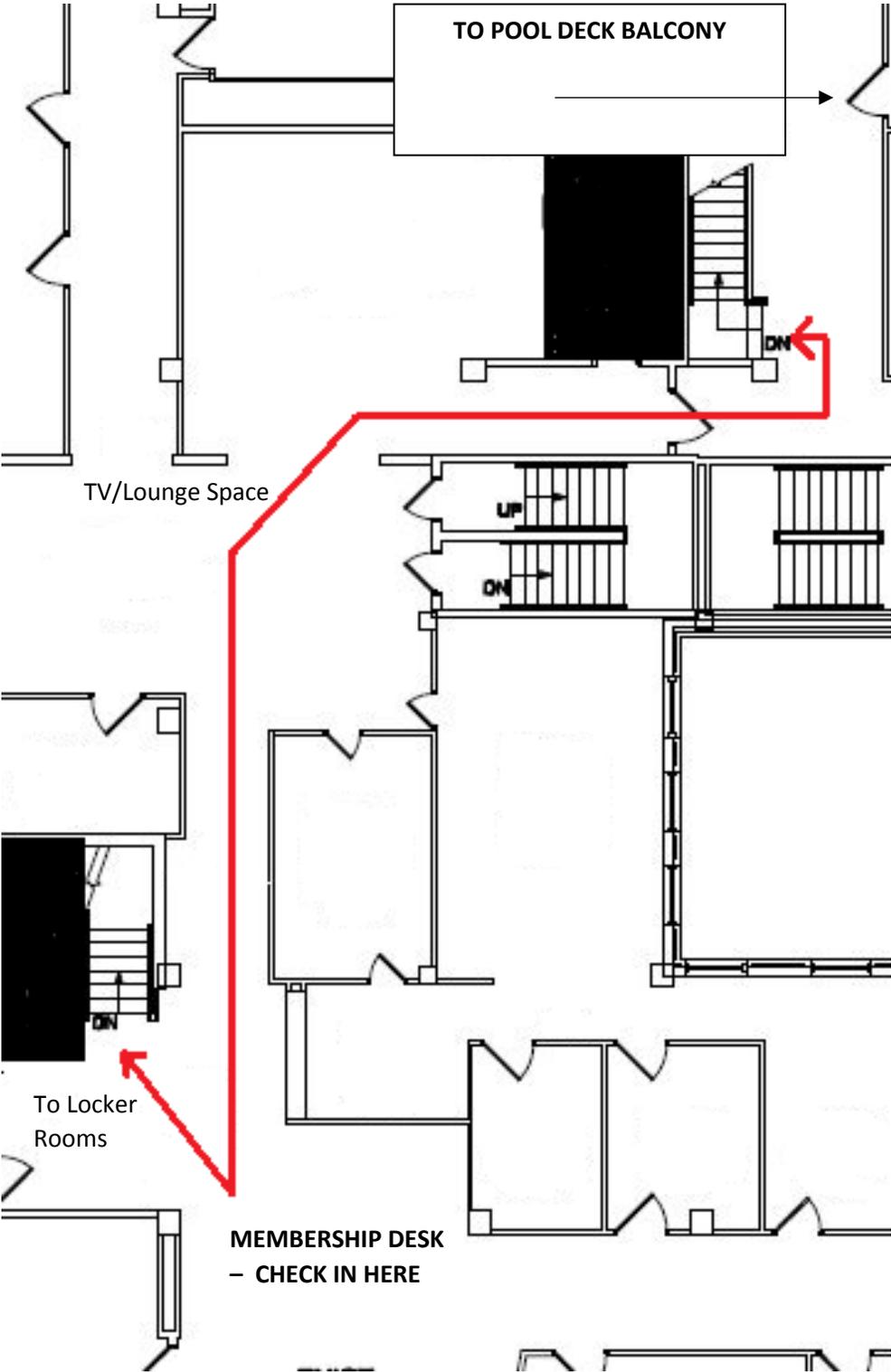
1. Visit the West Cook YMCA Membership Desk and our Membership Staff will assist your process of signing up.  
*If you are in doubt or debating between two groups, sign up for the lower of the two levels and contact the Competitive Swim Team staff for a swim evaluation.*

**FIRST TIME SWIMMING AT THE Y?**

The West Cook YMCA utilizes an ID card entry scan process for all Members and Program Members. Please plan to arrive at least 30 minutes before your first lesson or visit the Membership Desk prior to the first class to set up your ID.

The graphic below denotes a map on how to get to the pool.

### WEST COOK YMCA FACILITY MAP – HOW TO GET TO THE POOL



## FIRST TIME SWIMMING AT OPRF HIGH SCHOOL?

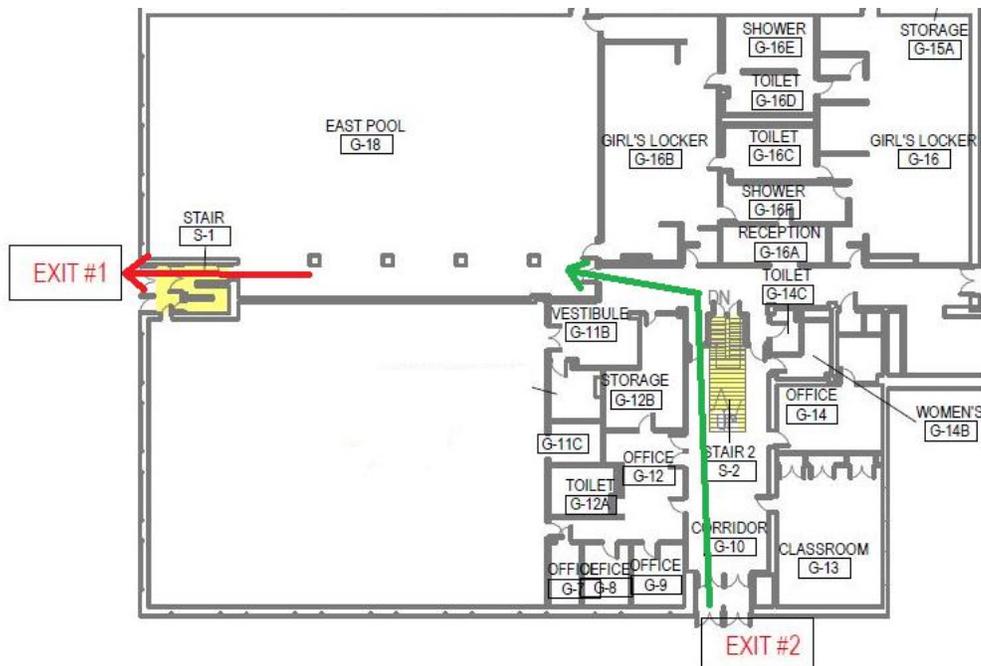
The West Cook YMCA utilizes Oak Park River Forest High School for its Age Group and Seniors practice. As a user and facility group, we strictly follow the protocols of OPRF High School to ensure the safety of the facility, our swimmers, and the organization. Please see the message below from OPRF (March 2018) regarding access to the facility.

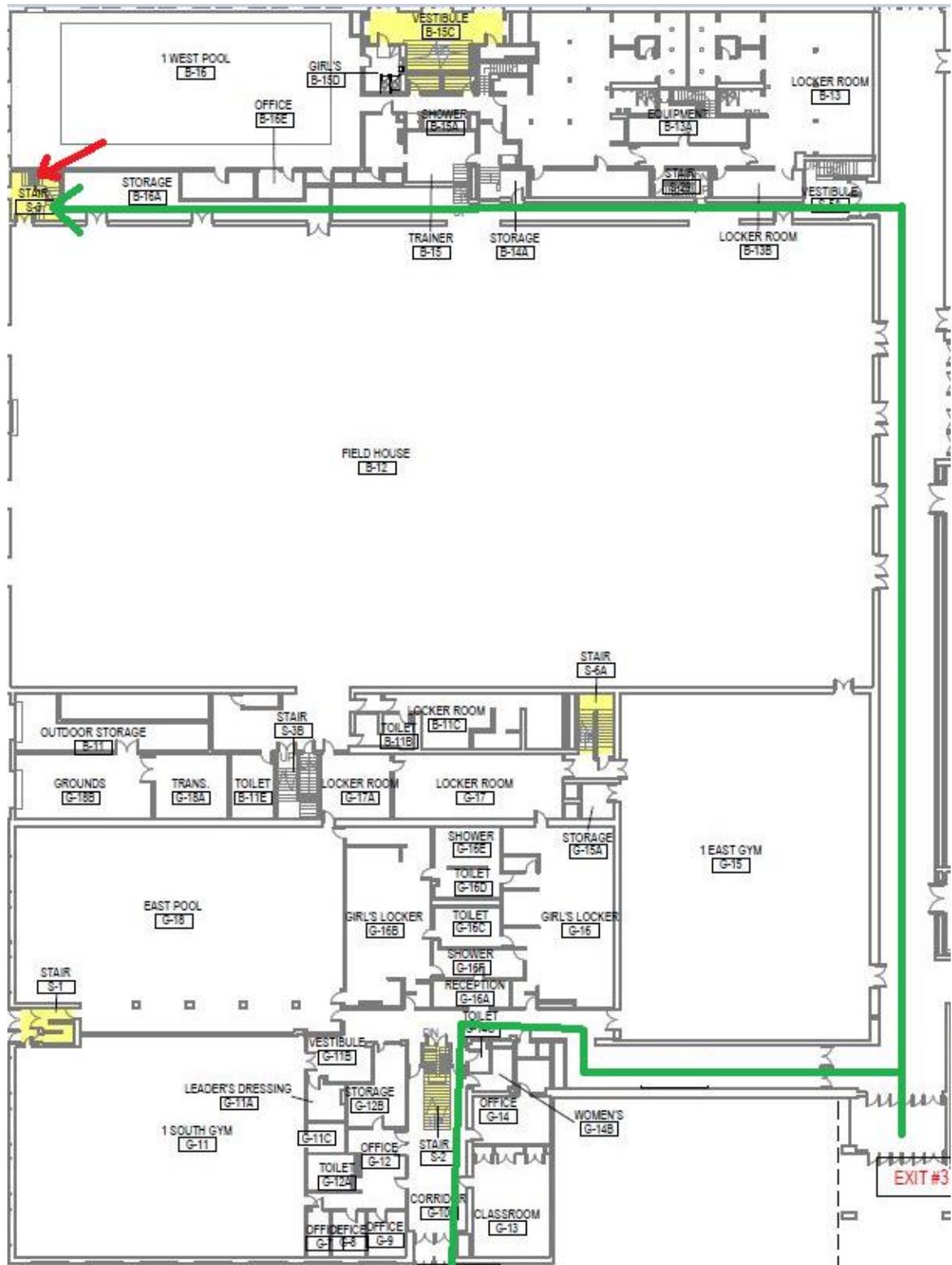
“In light of the recent tragic events across the U.S. in our schools, OPRF has made adjustments to building access when security is not present. Currently, permit feeder groups have events from 6pm until 10pm Monday through Friday. In order to not make changes to that schedule, we need your assistance to continue helping OPRF remain safe and secure.

Effective **immediately**, all feeder group participants in the building AFTER 8pm, Monday through Friday **MUST** exit the building via the Main Entrance at door #4. This applies to all staff, parents and participants. If parents need to pick up their child, they must come in via the main entrance and exit via the main entrance. Exiting via any alternate door will be prohibited unless there is an emergency situation. NO ONE should open doors for anyone coming in the building EXCEPT security or a facilitator.”

As a result, swimmers will be asked to enter specific doors for practice and upon leaving, only allow for egress from the facility. As courteous as it is to hold the door open, we are **NOT PERMITTED** to do so after specific times. Violators of this policy will be subject to discipline by the WCY.

See the floor plan below with the approved walkways for swimmers.





## **COMMUNICATION METHODS**

The Competitive Swim Team staff will primarily communicate with you via emails and by phone, and with parents and/or legal guardians. This information is accessible to staff via the WCY registration software, therefore we ask that you keep your information as up to date as possible in the event staff need to communicate with you. Please visit the Membership Desk to update your information if needed.

## **IN CASE OF EMERGENCIES**

The Competitive Swim Team tries to minimize interruptions in operation as much as possible, but sometimes it cannot be avoided. Due to state and federal regulations, the pool may need to be temporarily closed at a moment's notice for any number of reasons. In the event of one of these unforeseen closures, Swim Team staff will email participants affected as soon as possible as well as make as many phone calls as possible.

In the event of a facility emergency such as a fire alarm or power outage, participants will remain with their coaches and proceed to the nearest emergency exit. Supervisory staff will make the decision if participants will need to physically leave the facility on a case by case basis. Supervisors and coaches will take attendance of participants at the designated areas. For security reasons, participants may not leave with anyone until the alarm is clear, however, parents may stay with their children throughout the alarm. Once the all clear is given, participants will go back inside and complete their practice or get dressed to leave based on the supervisor recommendation.

In the event of severe weather that calls for shelter in place, participants and parents will be asked to go to the locker rooms and other interior spaces in the building.

## **FEEDBACK**

The West Cook YMCA welcomes your feedback and input to help make your experience with us the best it can be. In addition to emailing or calling staff, please be on the lookout for emails from Open Line and SEER, our two data collection methods that allow you to provide real time information regarding your experience in our facilities and programs. These are critical tools that we will actively use to enhance our operational processes, so please let us know your thoughts!

## **PROGRAM ENRICHMENT**

Did you know the West Cook Y has other programs and services to offer? From youth sports, to after school and camps, to competitive swimming, we have the tools built for you and your families continued growth. Please check out the most up to date brochure for programs or reach out to our staff for assistance on building upon your swim lesson experience!

## REFUND AND CREDIT POLICY

- A full refund will be given if the Y cancels a class/program.
- If you withdraw from the Swim Team before the first official practice, a 100% refund will be given either by check or returned to your original credit card. Refunds by check usually take 10-14 business days to process.
- There will be no refunds for Season Fees after the first two weeks of practice from the official start time of the swimmer's respective season.
- ISI Registration Fees are non-refundable. West Cook YMCA membership dues are subject to the policy of the YMCA.
- Returned Checks – because the West Cook YMCA is charged a \$10 returned check fee by its bank, any returned checks will receive a \$10 fee.

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Scholarships are available to participants who meet the eligible criteria. Please visit the Membership Desk for more information and the application.

## EXPECTATIONS OF OUR COACHING STAFF

Coaches are held to a high standard when it comes to quality and safety. For the safety of the athletes and coaches, all coaches participate in thorough background checks, are trained on how to identify child abuse, how to report child abuse, and how to keep themselves and participants safe as coaches. Background checks are run regularly, and re-training happens on a scheduled basis. Should you as a parent recognize any concerns in regards to child safety, please speak immediately to your child's coach.

The coaches are responsible for creating workouts, as well as the supervision and safety of the athletes from when they arrive to when they are picked up by a guardian. The decisions made by coaching staff should be respected and are final. Any comments or concerns about a decision should be brought to the coach's and administrations attention in a civil manner and appropriate location so the issue can be resolved.

## EXPECTATIONS OF OUR SWIMMERS

**Role Models:** As a part of the West Cook YMCA Swim Team, each swimmer is expected to be caring, respectful, honest, and responsible. This includes the time spent in and out of the water. One of our goals is to create a group of swimmers who can serve as role models for the younger generations of swimmers.

**Act as a Guest:** Swimmers are expected to act as guests at each pool they visit (including the West Cook YMCA , PAV YMCA, and OPRF High School). Horseplay in the shower areas, pool deck, inside the pool, and locker room areas is not allowed. Damages to any facility can result in financial liability to be covered by the swimmer's parents, as well as the possibility of the swimmer being asked to permanently leave the team.

**Practice:** Swimmers should arrive 15 minutes before the start of practice. This way they are prepared to swim 5 minutes before practice starts. If a swimmer arrives over 30 minutes late, without previously alerting a coach, they will not be allowed to swim and will be asked to leave practice.

Each swimmer is expected to stay the entire practice. The practices are designed with the swimmer's health in mind. Each practice includes a warm-up and cool-down period to help prevent any injuries to their bodies. These portions of practice are as important as the main swim sets.

**Swim Meets:** During swim meets the same rules apply. Facilities are allowing us to be guests, and TOPS Swimmers must act as such. Swimmers should arrive to swim meets at least 15 minutes before their sessions start.

**Positive Check-in:** Coaches are not responsible for checking swimmers in at swim meets. If a swimmer misses positive check-in, the coaching staff will try to get the swimmer entered back into the meet, but there is no guarantee they will be allowed to swim, and there will be no refund for a missed swim meet session.

**No Deck Changing:** The USA Swimming Safe Sport initiative has procedures to protect athletes. As such, there is absolutely NO DECK CHANGING under any circumstances. Deck changing is the putting on or removal of any swimsuit in a location other than the designated locker rooms and changing areas. You may be removed from the meet for not following safe procedures.

**Disciplinary Rules:** If a swimmer is known to use alcohol, drugs, or tobacco they are subject to disciplinary action which may include mandatory hiatus or suspension from the team.

Swimmers found to be bullying are subject to disciplinary action which may include mandatory hiatus or suspension from the team (bullying policy found later in this document).

## **EXPECTATIONS OF OUR PARENTS**

**Parent Support:** At TOPS we expect the parents to provide a healthy, caring environment for the athletes. Parental support throughout the season can help keep a swimmer motivated and help them develop in and out of the water.

**Parent Role Models:** Parents should contribute to the success of their athlete by serving as positive role models. Parents should always demonstrate good sportsmanship towards the coaches, officials, other parents, other teams, and anyone involved with USA Swimming and The YMCA.

**Communication:** Communication between parents and coaches is an important component of TOPS. It is requested that parents inform the swimmer's Head Coach (via note or email) if a swimmer is going to be late or miss a practice, is injured, sick, or has conflicting commitments. Parents are also responsible for signing up their swimmer for swim meets and special events in a timely manner. Sign-ups can be found on [www.topswim.org](http://www.topswim.org).

**Practices:** Parents are not permitted to remain on the pool deck during practices, but are permitted to observe practices from the balconies of the practice pools.

**Swim Meets:** Parents are asked to be supportive of all athletes, regardless of team, at swim meets. Parents should remain off the pool deck at all times unless they are providing volunteer help, or the spectator seating is located on the pool deck. During the swim meet there is to be no flash photography, and absolutely no photography allowed behind the swimmer on the blocks.

**Rules:** By joining TOPS parents are expected to follow the standards set forth in this document, Part Three of the USA Swimming Rulebook, as well as Safe Sport/Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy. A PDF copy of the current USA Swimming Rulebook is located on the TOPS web site > Records/Standards tab. The Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy is covered later in this document. Failure to do so can lead to disciplinary action. Parents found to be bullying or acting in an unsportsmanlike manner risk suspension of themselves and their swimmer from the team (bullying policy found later in this document).

## **VOLUNTEER POLICY**

The success of the team is only possible through the dedicated efforts of all Competitive Swim Team parents. Like other non-profit organizations and area swim clubs, the Competitive Swim Team relies heavily on volunteers to achieve its goals. In the process of volunteering, you not only fill an essential role in developing a successful team but you have an opportunity to develop friendships, have fun, and learn first-hand about the sport your athlete is involved with.

During the summer, while we encourage all parents to volunteer, there will be no requirements of first season Tiny TOPS. For the parents of all returning Tiny TOPS, and new or returning Red, and Yellow swimmers, as well as all parents of Bronze, Silver, Gold and Senior swimmers, volunteer requirements for the 2019-2020 Short Course season include the following:

1. Each family is required to work two sessions during the Claire Statton Swim Meet (Late January). This participation is required even if your swimmer is not competing in the meet. A volunteer other than the parent (16 or older) may satisfy volunteer obligations, as long as the substitute can competently perform the volunteer task. Sessions are broken down into AM and PM on Saturday and Sunday, totaling 4 sessions to choose from.

2. Each family is required to work a third session during the season. This requirement can be met in a variety of ways listed below. It is important that all parents participate and share the responsibility of team timing at away meets.

- A. In addition to timing at non-hosted meets, examples of other volunteer opportunities include becoming certified as either a YMCA or USA swimming official, social activities, publicity or serving as a member of the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC).

3. Families will be charged a \$50 fee per session for each session requirement that is not met.\*

4. The volunteer coordinators will make every effort to credit families for sessions worked, however, it is the responsibility of each family to be sure the correct number of sessions has been recorded. You can contact the volunteer coordinators at [topsvolunteer@gmail.com](mailto:topsvolunteer@gmail.com)

When registering your swimmer for the 2019-2020 Short Course season, you will be asked to check the appropriate box on the Registration Form to indicate that you have read, understand and agree to the Volunteer Requirements of this team. Agreement is a condition of registration.

\*\*If you do not wish to volunteer, you can pay a one-time \$150 fee at the beginning of the season to cover your volunteering dues.\*\*

## **PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PAC)**

The PAC is a group of volunteers dedicated to enhancing the West Cook YMCA Swim Team by supporting the team's volunteer efforts, the coaching staff, swim team, and West Cook YMCA. Each PAC member is assigned a specific responsibility. These responsibilities, as well as the PAC Bylaws, can be found on the TOPS website. The PAC meets monthly at the YMCA to discuss upcoming events and volunteer efforts, receive updates from the West Cook YMCA, and provide feedback to the Y about their experience thus far. These meetings are open to all who are current participants of the Competitive Swim Team.

## GROUP PARENT LIAISONS

Group Parent Liaisons are volunteers who help support the needs of the specific practice groups. Along with assisting returning parents, the liaisons are responsible for providing a helpful, friendly face for new members to turn to if they have any questions. If a parent has questions or concerns about their swim group, they should first reach out to the Parent Liaison, as many questions can be answered by these experienced swim parents. If the question or concern cannot be resolved by the Parent Liaison, parents can then reach out to the coaching staff.

## OFFICIATING

Swim meets require more than just coaches and swimmers. Each swim meet requires officials to run the meet and ensure that the swims are legal. Without officials, any swim would not count as a recorded time. This is where we need parents to help. Most officials at swim meets are swim parents who are interested in learning more about the sport and helping to support their swim team.

Since our team is unique in that we are both a USA Swimming and a YMCA team, there are options to become certified as both a USA Swimming Official (information about certification can be found at [www.usaswimming.org/officials](http://www.usaswimming.org/officials)) and as a YMCA Official (information about certification can be found at [www.ymcacompetitiveswim.org](http://www.ymcacompetitiveswim.org)).

If you would like more information about officiating, or are interested, but not sure how to get started, don't hesitate to contact PAC's Officials Coordinator.

## BULLYING POLICY (Sections from USA Swimming)

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at TOPS and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. TOPS 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, board member or athlete/mentor.

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

1. Causing physical or emotional harm to the other member or damage to the other member's property
2. Placing the other member in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property
3. Creating a hostile environment for the other member at any USA Swimming activity
4. Infringing on the rights of the other member at any USA Swimming activity
5. Materially and substantially disrupting the training process or the orderly operation of any USA Swimming activity (which for the purposes of this section shall include, without limitation, practices, workouts and other events of a member club or LSC).

It is important to remember that bullying is not just limited to children. TOPS is committed to creating a safe environment for not just the athletes, but the parents, coaches and general staff of the YMCA as a whole. By joining TOPS, the parents, athletes, coaches and staff are all held to the same standard.

## REPORTING PROCEDURE

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

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

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

## HOW WE HANDLE BULLYING

Once all the facts have been gathered the appropriate actions will be taken. There will be a discussion between the leadership staff and the PAC to help decide what the action should be. The family of the victim and the person responsible for bullying will be involved in the decision-making process. In extreme situations the person responsible for the bullying may be immediately suspended or removed from the team.

## SICKNESS

Children will not be accepted into the program with the following symptoms:

- ◆ Temperature of 100 degrees or above
- ◆ Diarrhea
- ◆ Sore throat with fever & swollen glands
- ◆ Severe coughing
- ◆ Yellowish skin or eyes
- ◆ Redness of eyes with discharge/Pink Eye
- ◆ Unusual spots or rashes
- ◆ Infected patches
- ◆ Vomiting – must be free of any symptoms
- ◆ Severe itching of body or scalp

Participant must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to your lesson.

*NOTE: Parents will be notified immediately if any of the above symptoms occur while the participant is in the program.*

### Re-Admittance After Illness

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Temperature of 100 degrees:</b> ..... | 24 hours after temperature has broken  |
| <b>Stomach Flu/Diarrhea:</b> .....       | 24 hours after vomiting has stopped and when the child no longer has diarrhea or a fever |
| <b>Severe Coughing:</b> .....            | When coughing has stopped or Doctor states the child is no longer infectious             |
| <b>Pink Eye:</b> .....                   | 24 hours after medication has been administered  |
| <b>Spots or Rashes:</b> .....            | One week after disappearance or until diagnosed by Doctor                                |
| <b>Strep Throat:</b> .....               | 24 hours after medication has been administered  |
| <b>Vomiting:</b> .....                   | 24 hours after vomiting has stopped  |

**Diarrhea:** .....24 hours after diarrhea has stopped  
**Severe Itching of Body/Scalp:**.....24 hours after treatment has begun  
**Chicken pox:** .....Until all lesions are crusted over, usually 7–10 days  
**Rash with fever or joint pain:** .....Until diagnosed as not being measles or rubella  
**Measles:** .....5 days after rash starts  
**Lice**.....48 hours after treatment begins  
**Ring worm:** .....48 hours after treatment begins

## **ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION POLICY**

### **PURPOSE**

With the heavy reliance on electronic communication (including but not limited to: email, social media, text messaging, etc.) it is important that we at TOPS address what is expected when using these methods of communication. This includes any communication between the swimmers, staff, parents, YMCA Leadership, and any party associated with TOPS or The YMCA.

### **GENERAL CONTENT**

All communications between a coach or other adult and an athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. The content and intent of all electronic communications must adhere to the USA Swimming Code of Conduct regarding Athlete Protection (Addressed in Articles 304, 305, and 306 in the 2014 USA Swimming Rulebook).

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

1. Drugs or alcohol use
2. Sexually oriented conversation; sexually explicit language; sexual activity
3. The adult’s personal life e.g. social activities, relationship or family issues, etc.
4. 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. \*

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?”

“Is this something 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?”

### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

#### **1. Facebook:**

- Coaches may have personal Facebook (or other social media site) pages, but they are not permitted to have any athlete member of the Club 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. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to “instant message” each other through Facebook chat or other IM method.

- The Club has an official Facebook page that athletes and their parents can “friend” for information and updates on team-related matters. Coaches are encouraged to set their pages to “private” to prevent athletes from accessing the coach’s personal information.

## 2. Twitter

- Coaches are not permitted to follow athletes on Twitter. Likewise, athletes are not permitted to follow coaches on Twitter. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to “direct message” each other through Twitter.

## TEAMUNIFY

Our website is hosted by a company called TeamUnify. This website will have all the information you could need to know, including this handbook, a swim meet survival guide, information about PAC, and FAQ, and many educational articles and documents.

To login to topswim.org you will be provided a login ID and password. The ID will be the primary email address associated with the account, and the password will be created by you. There is currently no way to have multiple email addresses serve as a login ID for a single household. It is important to remember that all email addresses associated with the account will still receive all communications sent out, and the email used as the login ID serves as nothing more than a login. No email will receive priority over another. There is no harm in sharing the password with other members of your family who need access to the website.

Our practice schedules are located on this website as well. By clicking on the “Calendar” tab, you will be directed to a calendar. From here you can select your group from a drop down menu above the calendar. If you are logged in to the webpage, you are able to subscribe to the calendar to receive updates and new postings.

This website also allows you to track your swimmers progress by going to “My Meet Results” which is an item under the “My Account” tab found on the left hand of the webpage.

This information is accessible from your smartphone by downloading the free OnDeck Parent application from your app store. To login to this application you must use the TeamUnify login ID and password provided to you at the beginning of the season. There is also a “team alias” that you need to fill out. **The alias for TOPS is iltyst.**

## MEET REGISTRATION

This website is also where you will be responsible for registering swimmers for events, and committing to volunteer for certain events. There are a few steps to do this.

1. Log in to topswim.org using the login that will be provided to you once you register
2. Go to the Meets & Events tab
3. Click the swim meet/event you need to register for
4. To the top right of the event page you will see either “edit commitment” or “job signup,” click whichever tab you need and register for the event

**DO NOT LEAVE THE WEBPAGE BEFORE REGISTRATION IS COMPLETE, THIS WILL INVALIDATE YOUR ACTIONS**

If you have any trouble, feel free to contact a coach for assistance. We hope you explore the website and become comfortable with all the information we have provided!

## **SPLASH FOR CASH FUNDRAISER**

Splash for Cash is our **only** annual fundraising event. The money we raise goes towards creating a better environment for the Competitive Swim Team! The event varies year to year with new activities, but the fundraiser as a whole serves as a way to re-invest in the success of our swimmers.

Swimmers are asked to fundraise by gathering donations. While we do not have a requirement that all families participate, we ask that each family tries their best to raise \$75 for the event.

Volunteering at this event is extremely important because we need help to keep track of the distance each swimmer has swum. Without help from volunteers it will be very difficult to keep an accurate tally of every swimmer on our own, and we want to make sure they are credited for the hard work they put in during the event.

## **GREEN INITIATIVE**

TOPS is dedicated to creating a better future for swimmers in as many ways as possible. The TOPS Green Initiative is a pledge to be as responsible as possible when it comes to the environment. This includes actions such as: only providing digital heat sheets at swim meets, recycling as many products as possible, working together to create carpools, and doing our best to create a healthy future.

## **USA SWIMMING MINOR ATHLETE ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY AND SAFE SPORT**

As a USA Swimming Team, the West Cook YMCA is dedicated to creating a safe environment for all athletes. USA Swimming Safe Sport includes the Code of Conduct found in the USA Swimming Handbook (Section 304) and the USA Swimming Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy (MAAPP). It is **REQUIRED** that all athletes, coaches, volunteers, and family members follow these guidelines including, but not limited to:

Reporting of all suspected sexual abuse to the USA Swimming Safe Sport Director. If you have firsthand knowledge of abuse or have received credible information about abuse, you must report that information as soon as possible.

There is to be absolutely no use of electronic devices of any kind in locker rooms or changing areas.

There are absolutely no pictures allowed behind the starting blocks, or of swimmers in torn or displaced swim suits.

### **THIS POLICY APPLIES TO:**

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

## **GENERAL REQUIREMENT**

USA Swimming member clubs and LSCs are required to implement this Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy in full. The Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy must be reviewed and agreed to in writing by all athletes, parents, coaches and other non-athlete members of member clubs on an annual basis with such written agreement to be retained by the club.

## **ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS**

### **I. Observable and Interruptible**

One-on-one interactions between a minor athlete and an Applicable Adult (who is not the minor's legal guardian) must occur at an observable and interruptible distance from another adult unless meeting with a Mental Health Care Professional and/or Health Care Provider (see below) or under emergency circumstances.

### **II. Meetings**

- a. Meetings between a minor athlete and an Applicable Adult may only occur if another adult is present and where interactions can be easily observed and at an interruptible distance from another adult, except under emergency circumstances.
- b. If a one-on-one meeting takes place, the door to the room must remain unlocked and open. If available, it must occur in a room that has windows, with the windows, blinds, and/or curtains remaining open during the meeting.
- c. Meetings must not be conducted in an Applicable Adult or athlete's hotel room or other overnight lodging location during team travel.

### **III. Meetings with Mental Health Care Professionals and/or Health Care Providers**

If a Mental Health Care Professional and/or Health Care Provider meets with a minor athlete in conjunction with participation, including at practice or competition sites, a closed-door meeting may be permitted to protect patient privacy provided that:

- a. The door remains unlocked;
- b. Another adult is present at the facility;
- c. The other adult is advised that a closed-door meeting is occurring; and
- d. Written legal guardian consent is obtained in advance by the Mental Health Care Professional and/or Health Care Provider, with a copy provided to the club.

### **IV. Individual Training Sessions [Recommended]**

Individual training sessions outside of the regular course of training and practice between Applicable Adults and minor athletes are permitted if the training session is observable and interruptible by another adult. Legal guardians must be allowed to observe the training session.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS**

### **I. Content**

All electronic communication from Applicable Adults to minor athletes must be professional in nature.

### **II. Open and Transparent**

Absent emergency circumstances, if an Applicable Adult with authority over minor athletes needs to communicate directly with a minor athlete via electronic communications (including social

media), the minor athlete's legal guardian must be copied. If a minor athlete communicates to the Applicable Adult (with authority over the minor athlete) privately first, said Applicable Adult must copy the minor athlete's legal guardian on any electronic communication response to the minor athlete. When an Applicable Adult with authority over minor athletes communicates electronically to the entire team, said Applicable Adult must copy another adult.

III. Requests to Discontinue

Legal guardians may request in writing that their minor athlete not be contacted through any form of electronic communication by the club, LSC or by an Applicable Adult subject to this Policy. The organization must abide by any such request that the minor athlete not be contacted via electronic communication, or included in any social media post, absent emergency circumstances.

IV. Hours

Electronic communications must only be sent between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., unless emergency circumstances exist, or during competition travel.

V. Prohibited Electronic Communication

Applicable Adults with authority over minor athletes are not permitted to maintain private social media connections with unrelated minor athletes and such Applicable Adults are not permitted to accept new personal page requests on social media platforms from minor athletes, unless the Applicable Adult has a fan page, or the contact is deemed as celebrity contact as opposed to regular contact. Existing social media connections with minor athletes must be discontinued. Minor athletes may "friend" the club and/or LSC's official page.

Applicable Adults with authority over minor athletes must not send private, instant or direct messages to a minor athlete through social media platforms.

## **TRAVEL**

I. Local Travel

Local travel consists of travel to training, practice and competition that occurs locally and does not include coordinated overnight stay(s). Applicable Adults must not ride in a vehicle alone with an unrelated minor athlete, absent emergency circumstances, and must always have at least two minor athletes or another adult in the vehicle, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the minor athlete's legal guardian.

[Recommended]

Legal guardians must pick up their minor athlete first and drop off their minor athlete last in any shared or carpool travel arrangement.

II. Team Travel

Team travel is travel to a competition or other team activity that the organization plans and supervises.

- a. During team travel, when doing room checks two-deep leadership (two Applicable Adults should be present) and observable and interruptible environments must be maintained.

When only one Applicable Adult and one minor athlete travel to a competition, the minor athlete's legal guardian must provide written permission in advance and for each competition for the minor athlete to travel alone with said Applicable Adult.

Team Managers and Chaperones who travel with the club or LSC must be USA Swimming members in good standing.

- b. Unrelated non-athlete Applicable Adults must not share a hotel room, other sleeping arrangement or overnight lodging location with an athlete.

Minor athletes should be paired to share hotel rooms or other sleeping arrangements with other minor athletes of the same gender and of similar age. When a minor athlete and an adult athlete share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement, the minor athlete's legal guardian must provide written permission in advance and for each instance for the minor to share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with said adult athlete.

Meetings during team travel must be conducted consistent with the One-on-One Interactions section of this Policy (i.e., any such meeting must be observable and interruptible). Meetings must not be conducted in an individual's hotel room or other overnight sleeping location.

## **LOCKER ROOMS AND CHANGING AREAS**

### **I. Requirement to Use Locker Room or Changing Area**

The designated locker room or changing area must be used when an athlete or Applicable Adult changes, in whole or in part, into or out of a swimsuit when wearing just one suit (e.g., deck changing is prohibited).

### **II. Use of Recording Devices**

Use of any device's (including a cell phone's) recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras and video cameras in locker rooms, changing areas, or similar spaces by a minor athlete or an Applicable Adult is prohibited.

### **III. Undress**

An unrelated Applicable Adult must not expose his or her breasts, buttocks, groin or genitals to a minor athlete under any circumstance. An unrelated Applicable Adult must not request an unrelated minor athlete to expose the minor athlete's breasts, buttocks, groin or genitals to the unrelated Applicable Adult under any circumstance.

### **IV. One-on-One Interactions**

Except for athletes on the same team or athletes attending the same competition, at no time are unrelated Applicable Adults permitted to be alone with a minor athlete in a locker room or changing area, except under emergency circumstances. If the organization is using a facility that only has a single locker room or changing area, separate times for use by Applicable Adults must be designated.

### **V. Monitoring**

The club must regularly and randomly monitor the use of locker rooms and changing areas to ensure compliance with this Policy. Locker rooms and changing areas may be monitored by use of the following methods:

- a. Conducting a sweep of the locker room or changing area before athletes arrive;
- b. Posting staff directly outside the locker room or changing area during periods of use;
- c. Leaving the doors open when adequate privacy is still possible; and/or
- d. Making occasional sweeps of the locker rooms or changing areas with women checking on female locker rooms and men checking on male locker rooms.

Every effort must be made to recognize when a minor athlete goes to the locker room or changing area during practice and competition, and, if the minor athlete does not return in a timely fashion, to check on the minor athlete's whereabouts.

VI. Legal Guardians in Locker Rooms or Changing Areas

Legal guardians are discouraged from entering locker rooms and changing areas. If a legal guardian does enter a locker room or changing area, it must only be a same-sex legal guardian and the legal guardian should notify a coach or administrator in advance.

**MASSAGES AND RUBDOWNS/ATHLETE TRAINING MODALITIES**

I. Definition: In this section, the term "Massage" refers to any massage, rubdown, athletic training modality including physical modalities (e.g., stretching, physical manipulation, injury rehabilitation, etc.) and electronic or instrument assisted modalities (e.g., stim treatment, dry needling, cupping, etc.).

II. General Requirement

Any Massage performed on an athlete must be conducted in an open and interruptible location and must be performed by a licensed massage therapist or other certified professional. However, even if a coach is a licensed massage therapist, the coach must not perform a rubdown or massage of an athlete under any circumstance.

III. Additional Minor Athlete Requirements

- a. Written consent by a legal guardian must be obtained in advance by the licensed massage therapist or other certified professional, with a copy provided to the club.
- b. Legal guardians must be allowed to observe the Massage.
- c. Any Massage of a minor athlete must be done with at least one other adult present and must never be done with only the minor athlete and the person performing the Massage in the room.
- d. [Recommended] Any Massage of a minor athlete must only occur after a proper diagnosis from a treating physician and be done in the course of care according to the physician's treatment plan.



## WEST COOK YMCA

I acknowledge that I have received, read and understood the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy and/or that the Policy has been explained to me or my family. I further acknowledge and understand that agreeing to comply with the contents of this Policy is a condition of my membership with The West Cook YMCA – TOPS.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

## **FURTHER QUESTIONS**

Any other questions/concerns not found in this TOPS Handbook can be addressed to Coach Paul Moniak

[pmoniak@westcookymca.org](mailto:pmoniak@westcookymca.org)

