

# Questions for Swim Parents



## Parent Questions for Clubs:

### 1. Does the club have a code of conduct for coaches and volunteers?

Policies help everyone know the difference between acceptable and unacceptable conduct. Policies also help us spot boundary violations.

USA Swimming's Code of Conduct and the Athlete Protection Policies contain specific information about Athlete Protection. This section covers issues such as: sexual conduct, physical abuse, inappropriate touching, massages, the use of cameras, travel policies, and reporting procedures.

In addition, USA Swimming has provided clubs with Best Practice Guidelines which are recommended for all clubs. These guidelines address the following: parent involvement, two-deep leadership, open and observable environments, team travel, overnight travel, verbal and physical interactions, privacy, and contact outside of swimming programs. It will be useful to ask if your child's club has adopted these Best Practice Guidelines.

### 2. What are the procedures in place for dealing with concerns, complaints, and disciplinary issues?

We are more likely to report when we know that something will be done in response. You will want to find out if the club has policies and procedures for dealing with complaints about coaches and/or volunteers. Ask if there is an anonymous way for you to report in case you don't feel comfortable speaking with the coach directly.

### 3. What are the clubs hiring procedures?

Screening is the first line of defense against abuse. USA Swimming requires that all non-athlete members undergo a background check. In addition, after August 2011, clubs must conduct past employment reference checks or verifications, education verification and state motor vehicle report examination. You could also ask the club if they are doing interviews with the coaches and if they contact the last club where the coach worked. Then, ask if the club does these things regularly and consistently.

# Questions for Swim Parents



4. What does a typical training schedule look like for a swimmer my child's age? OR Does the club have a policy about one coach being alone with one swimmer?

Again, molesters need privacy. As a result, they may ask children to stay late, meet them early or meet them outside of swim practice. If you know what times your child should practice, you can help monitor the coaches.

5. Does the club have procedures for monitoring locker rooms and/or other club facilities?

This question also addresses privacy at the club. Incidents of abuse (perpetrated by adults and other youth) often occur in bathrooms, locker rooms, and other out-of-the-way locations.

6. What is the opportunity for my child to compete for the club and how are teams selected?

Offenders often choose favorites. As a parent, you want to be sure that your club has guidelines designed at providing all swimmers with equal opportunities to succeed based on their skill level.

7. What is the club's policy about communications between coaches and my child outside of practice?

Many cases of abuse involve communication between the offender and the youth outside of scheduled events – which includes electronic communication. Praesidium suggests that clubs set up club Facebook pages instead of allowing coaches and other volunteers or officials to communicate with athletes through their private accounts. Also, if a coach needs to text a swimmer, they should include the swimmer's parent in on the text.

8. What is the club's policy about coaches giving gifts to athletes?

Offenders often give kids gifts as part of the grooming process. They want the victim to like them, so they try to win them over. Your club should have a policy that addresses gift giving outside the scope of acceptable and approved gifts for motivational and reward purposes.

9. What are the club's travel policies?

USA Swimming has provided mandatory and recommended sample travel policies all designed to decrease privacy between and athlete and a coach. Make sure that your club follows these guidelines.