

GEAUGA OTTERS SWIM TEAM HANDBOOK



www.goswimming.org



YMCA of Greater Cleveland

Geauga Branch

12460 Bass Lake Road
Chardon, OH 44024
440-285-7543

Hillcrest Branch

5000 Mayfield Road
Lyndhurst, OH 44124
216-382-4300

Warrensville Branch

4433 Northfield Road
Warrensville Heights, OH 44128
216-518-9622

Team Purpose / Philosophy / Basic Requirements

Our Mission: The GO Swim Team provides swimmers of all ages and abilities the opportunity to excel through a structured, challenging, and supportive environment that cultivates the spirit, mind, and body. We believe that success is the result of a constant pursuit of excellence in stroke technique and rigorous training. Our goal is to help swimmers develop a life-long appreciation for the sport of competitive swimming and learn lessons from their involvement that can be implemented into all facets of their lives.

Our Vision: The vision of the GO Swim Team is to build an elite swim team, continuing in its tradition of team accomplishment, team pride, team unity, and team spirit. The GO Swim Team shall have as its members swimmers who are well trained, all-around successful individuals; coaches who are role models, both committed and knowledgeable; and parents who are involved, dedicated, and supportive. As a YMCA team, it is our goal to ensure that all swimmers, parents, and coaches embody the YMCA values of caring, respect, responsibility, and honesty.

Basic Requirements of all swim team members:

1. Maintain a current full privilege YMCA membership
2. Complete all registration paperwork prior to your first practice:
 - Registration Form: Includes emergency information, photo release, code of conduct & parent commitment contract
 - Volunteer Background Check Form for all parent volunteers

Team Structure / Training Groups

Otter Cubs (Beginners)

- The purpose of this group is to learn the four competitive strokes, learn the basics of the sport of swimming and most importantly have fun.
- Swimmers are generally under the age of 8 or brand new to the sport.
- The swimmer must be able to swim one length of freestyle (crawl) and backstroke (25 yards) without stopping.
- Attend up to 2 practices per week at your home YMCA location only.
- These swimmers only participate at home meets.

GO Bronze

- The purpose of this group is to develop the fundamentals all four competitive strokes, learn starts and turns, participate in competitions and most importantly have fun.
- Swimmers are generally experienced age 8 and Under or new 10 & Under swimmers; must be able to swim at least 50 yards freestyle (2 lengths without stopping); legally swim 25 yards of backstroke and have the basic fundamentals of butterfly and breaststroke.
- Attend up to 2 practices per week

GO Silver

- The purpose of this group is to perfect the fundamentals all four competitive strokes, increase endurance, learn starts and turns, participate in competitions and most importantly have fun.
- Swimmers are generally age 9-12; must be able to swim at least 100 yards freestyle (4 lengths without stopping); legally swim 50 yards of backstroke and have the basic fundamentals of butterfly and breaststroke.
- Attend up to 2-3 practices per week

GO Gold

- The purpose of this group is to work on stroke development, perfect all four competitive strokes, continue to improve starts and turns, introduce endurance work at practice and most importantly have fun.
- Swimmers in the group are generally ages 11-14; should be able to swim a set of 3 x 100 freestyle in 2:00; legally swim at least 50 yards butterfly, backstroke, and breaststroke; and swim a distance of at least 300 yards without stopping.
- Attend up to 3-4 practices per week

GO Elite

- The purpose of this group is to perfect and fine tune all four competitive strokes, starts and turns, learn about and work in the different energy zones at practice (Aerobic, Anaerobic), understand racing strategies and most importantly have fun.
- Swimmers in this group are very experience, have coaches permission and are generally age 13-18; should be able to swim a set of 4 x 100 freestyle in 1:30 or better; legally swim at least 100 yards of each of the other competitive strokes and swim a distance of at least 1000 yards without stopping.
- Must attend at least 3 practices per week and up to 5
- USA Swimming membership is mandatory

High School

- The purpose of this group is perfect and fine tune all four competitive strokes, starts and turns, learn about and train in the different energy zones at practice (Aerobic, Anaerobic), understand racing strategies and most importantly have fun.
- Will participate in YMCA meets before and after OHSAA High school season
- See other Gold requirements

Swim Team Practice Procedures and Policies

Use of Facilities

- Parents are asked to stay off the pool deck during practice.
- Parents may leave the facility; however, if a lightning storm is in the forecast be prepared to return quickly.
- Swimmers may use the shower and locker room facilities after practice as long as they respect other guests of the facility. Complaints of swimmer behavior may result in the parents being asked to accompany the swimmers to the locker room.

Attendance

Swimmers are permitted to participate at practices scheduled for their practice group ONLY. It is not acceptable to choose to attend another practice group without prior coach permission.

There are no mandatory attendance requirements. However, it should be recognized that those who progress the most during the season are those who have practiced the most. **YOU GET OUT OF IT WHAT YOU PUT INTO IT!!!**

All swimmers are expected to attend practice on a regular basis. The coaches would like all swimmers to aim for 100% attendance in all groups. Each day, the coaches give valuable instruction and carefully planned workouts. In the world of swimming, there is no such thing as "make up work". Consistently missing practice will mean missing out on specific work each day. This can seriously hinder a swimmers long term development when it comes to stroke technique and fundamentals. In the situation of a prolonged absence, please notify your child's coach.

Check in at Practice Facility

- All swimmers **MUST** present their YMCA membership cards at the YMCA Front Desk before using the YMCA facility. If you are not already a Y member, you will need to join before participating in practice sessions.
- When swimming at Perry, swimmers must sign in at the front desk at the facility entrance.

Promptness

All swimmers are expected to arrive at the pool early enough (at least ten minutes) to be suited and ready to meet the coach at the designated time. If you arrive late, you will lose valuable practice time.

Practice and Meet Equipment

Swimmers should be equipped with:

- A competitive swimsuit for meets- others are acceptable for practice
- a GO swim cap for meets- others are acceptable for practice
- a pair of goggles (several pairs suggested)

Practice Cancellations and Inclement Weather

Practices may be cancelled at the last minute due to weather. The coaches wait as long as possible before canceling a practice but will allow for driving time to the practice facility. Evening practice decisions are made by 4:00pm whenever possible

If practice is going to be cancelled a notice will be placed on the website—www.goswimming.org and an email notification sent out. If practice is cancelled for a reason other than weather the families will be called by the YMCA.

In the event that something occurs at an individual facility that forces practice to be cancelled at the last minute, and swimmers have already been dropped off for practice, they will be instructed to call their parents to have them picked up early. In such cases, a coach will always remain at the practice site until all swimmers have been picked up.

Family Participation

Swim Meet Workers

Each family must provide volunteers to work at swim meets. Depending on the number of families, each family will be asked to provide the following:

- Volunteers for home dual meet your swimmer(s) attend.
- Volunteers at the Divisional, League and/or Zone meet that your swimmer is attending.
- Volunteers for any invitational that GO hosts

Parent Involvement Council (PIC)

The purpose of the PIC is

- To support the mission of the Geauga Family YMCA and the Greater Cleveland YMCA through the development of a quality YMCA swim team by the conduct of swim meets, team public relations, and social activities.
- To advocate for the GO families to the coaches and the Greater Cleveland YMCA, and to advocate for the team and coaches to the parents of the team and the larger community.
- The PIC provides financial support to offset the cost of the swim team program fee when finances permit. The PIC also occasionally presents team members with an end of the season gift- swimmers must have attended a minimum of 3 meets to qualify to team gifts.

The PIC will NOT offer coaching or administrative advice to the coaches. Once a family has been a member of the team for a year, you are welcome to become a member of the PIC. As positions become available you will be informed.

Code of Conduct

As representatives of the Geauga Otters Swim Team and the YMCA, swimmers are expected to speak and behave in a manner that is respectful, responsible, honest, and caring. If each swimmer is mindful of these traits, appropriate conduct should never be an issue. These guidelines are to be followed by Geauga Otters swimmers at all practices, meets, and other team functions.

The undersigned athlete participating on the GO Swimming YMCA and/ or USA Swim Team agrees to abide by the standards of conduct outlined below in addition to those established by the staff for both short and long course seasons. All team members are expected to:

1. Offer congratulations to opponents, win or lose, and cheer on their teammates.
2. Follow the directions of the coaching staff during practice, meets, and other team activities.
3. Not possess, sell, or use alcohol, tobacco, or any non-prescribed drugs. This behavior is not tolerated.
4. Not remove or take any article that does not belong to them, such as clothing, jewelry, or money
5. Respect the property of the YMCA and any other facility the team may visit or use.
6. Display proper respect and sportsmanship toward coaches, officials, and administrators, fellow competitors, parents, and the public.
7. Promote positive team spirit and morale, which includes being humble in victory and courageous in defeat. Deal justly, kindly, impartially, and intelligently with all fellow team members.
8. Refrain from all illegal or inappropriate behaviors that would detract from a positive image of the team or be detrimental to its performance objectives.

Swim team Family Conduct

Our parents and supporters are expected to be Second-Goal Parents ® (from the Positive Coaching Alliance), who "leaves the scoreboard and meets to coaches and athletes and focuses on the life lessons a child takes from sports."

1. Support your child no matter how they perform.
2. Behave well, accept, and support any calls/officials decisions, especially when in disagreement.
3. Cheer for and recognize accomplishments of all athletes, even those on the other team.
4. Avoid critiquing/criticizing your child's performance- that is the coaches job.
5. Know and use the ELM Tree of Mastery (E for Effort, L for Learning, M for bouncing back from Mistakes)
6. Recognize and help reinforce life lessons to guide your child to becoming a well-rounded person.

Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct may result in, but not be limited to:

- Swimmers are not allowed participation in some or all team activities.
- Swimmer immediately being sent home at their expense
- Swimmer being temporarily or permanently dismissed from the team

The coach in charge, along with the Head Coach and the Aquatics Director will make the final decision in matters of discipline or dismissal based on the degree of violation of the above code by the swimmer or parent(s). Any swimmer removed from the team for behavior reasons will not be refunded any money.

Practice Behavior and Discipline

During practice, swimmers are expected to follow the guidelines and rules of behavior for the specific facility they are practicing in. In addition, there are three simple rules that must be followed during practice:

- No talking when the coach is talking
- Eyes and ears must be above water and focused on the coach
- Swimmers must ask permission before going to the bathroom

If these rules are not followed during practice, the following disciplinary actions will be taken by the coach:

- 1st violation – the swimmer will receive a warning from the coach
- 2nd violation – the swimmer will be removed from practice and asked to sit on the deck for the 5 minutes
- 3rd violation – the swimmer will be removed from practice and asked to sit out the remainder of practice

These rules are designed to keep all of our swimmers safe, help teach the swimmers the core values of respect and responsibility and to ensure that the staff is providing the best teaching environment possible.

Competition Swimming

Swimming Seasons

- Fall/Winter – **Short Course**: The season runs from mid-September to the last championship your child is eligible to swim. All swimmers who have competed in 3 dual meets may swim in the YMCA Divisional Championships (beginning of February). Your swimmer's season will end at this championship unless he/she qualifies for the YMCA League Championships, Great Lakes YMCA Zones, YMCA Nationals, or participates in USA Swimming.
- Spring/Summer – **Long Course**: The summer season runs from April through the end of July or beginning of August. Summer swimming ends with a Championship meet, and, for those who qualify, Summer YMCA Nationals.

Participation

Meets are highly recommended since they are the measure of the swimmer's progress in training. Regular scheduled competition is essential for maximum progression in performance.

Not all meets are designed for all the swimmers on the team. Some meets require swimmers to have qualifying (cut-off) times or be members of the USA swimming association.

As part of the Northeast Ohio YMCA Swim League season, we have 6 dual meets and 2 championship meets (Divisional Championships and League Championships). These meets are highly recommended for all swimmers.

The coaching staff carefully plans a set meet schedule to ensure that our swimmers perform well and do not get burned out over the course of the season. **Swimmers will only be able to enter approved team meets.**

Requirements to Participate in Championship Meets

NEO Divisional Championships

- All swimmers are expected to compete at this meet.
- Per YMCA League regulations swimmers must swim three dual meets prior to the division meet in order to be qualified to participate at the Divisional meet.

League Championships

- Swimmers qualify for League championships by competing in the division meet.
- The swimmers will be notified after the Divisional results are posted if they qualified for Leagues.
- ALL GO Swimmers who qualify for the league meet are expected to attend.
- NEW! Qualifying times for Friday night session for ANY swimmer who has met the 3 meet requirement.

Great Lakes YMCA Zone Championships

- Swimmers must swim in at least three "closed" YMCA meets (dual and/or YMCA invitational).
- Swimmers must attain cut-off (qualifying) time(s).

YMCA National Championships

- Swimmers must swim in at least three "closed" YMCA meets (dual and/or YMCA invitational), including one meet that is a YMCA Sanctioned meet.
- Swimmers must attain cut-off (qualifying) time(s).

Meet policies and procedures

Sign-up Deadlines

All dual meets, invitational meets, and championships have signup deadlines, so it is imperative to watch the online calendar in order to get signed up for the competitions you desire.

Dual Meets

It is expected that all swimmers attend the scheduled dual meets. The deadline to register for dual meets is Tuesday before the meet. All meet sign-ups are done via our team website www.goswimming.org on the events tab. You will select YES or NO to every meet. Please be courteous and let the coaching staff know either way if you are participating. If you sign up to come please do not cancel. Any cancellation can affect what other swimmers on the team are able to swim. Otter cubs will attend only home dual meets.

Invitational meets are optional (you can pick and choose according to coach suggestion and your calendar). For a swimmer to attend an invitational, the swimmer needs to sign up via the team website www.goswimming.org. In many cases you will be able to select your own events at the time of sign up on the website as well. **The YMCA will automatically charge your credit card on file for any meet fees that are due once you have indicated that you plan to attend a meet. Once the swimmer is entered in a meet, the entry fees are non-refundable, even if they do not swim.**

Swim Meet Coaching

All available coaches will attend home Dual Meets. An appropriate number of coaches will attend Away Dual Meets. The number of coaches attending invitational meets will depend on the number of swimmers attending the meet. However, at least one coach will attend all approved invitational meets.

Swim Meet Line-ups

Dual meet events are posted at the dual meet. **All decisions of what a child swims in a dual meet is left up to the coaching staff** for overall team effort and best development of the swimmer. Each swimmer can swim up to two individual events and two relays at a dual meet, plus one extra exhibition event at the coach's discretion. If there are not enough swimmers to form a relay for that gender age group then the swimmers will be allowed to swim three individual events.

Championship Meet Line-ups

All decisions of what a child swims in a championship meet, including relays, is left up to the coaching staff for overall team performance and best development of the swimmer. There are many reasons coaches choose to place swimmers in different individual and/or relay events and it is expected and understood that the coaches' decision is final and should be respected. Invitational, Divisional and League meet line-ups will be posted on the website before the meet entries are due. Swimmers should double check this list to make sure their entries are correct.

Accommodations for Travel Meets

For most out of town invitational meets, hotel information will be made available on the team's website. It is up to each family to make their own travel and hotel arrangements. Coaches cannot chaperone swimmers. An adult family member must accompany each swimmer, unless prior arrangement is made with another family.

Team Area

Swimmers are encouraged to sit with the team at all times during a meet and cheer on your team members. Each individual swimmer and their family is responsible to get the swimmer to the coach at least four events prior to their event. Swimmers must keep the area clean and must abide by facility rules.

Swim Meet Apparel

All female swimmers must wear the Otter's cap to swim meets and all swimmers must wear the team swim suit and team t-shirt to swim meets. Team suits, swim caps, GO t-shirts, and GO warm-ups can be purchased through the team. Ordering times will be announced prior to the start of the season.

Swim Team Functions

A few team activities will be scheduled periodically throughout the season. Please pay close attention to the updates for related information. We have some non-swimming activities such as parties, and age group appropriate activities.

Just For Parents

A parent should:

1. Volunteer, volunteer, volunteer! Parent volunteers perform a variety of tasks. All jobs are important for the swim team to operate smoothly and effectively. For this reason, it is essential that every parent participate in some way by volunteering his or her time and talent during the course of the season.
2. Conduct himself/herself in a manner to earn the respect and confidence of the athletes, coaches, officials, and YMCA professional staff.
3. Model good sportsmanship in the following ways:
 - Encourage all swimmers
 - Control your emotions in frustrating situations
 - Abide by referees' or officials' decisions.
 - Congratulate the opponents when they win.
4. Leave the coaching to the coaches! Do not pressure or volunteer swimming advice to your swimmers. Parental coaching can cause much confusion and harm to the swimmer. He needs only one source of coaching input - from the coach.
5. Keep informed! CHECK THE WEB SITE (www.goswimming.org). All relevant documents will be posted on the web page and emailed to the contact email.
6. Abide by and honor the GO Swimming Parent Commitment contract which is updated each year and clearly spells out the volunteer commitment that is required of each family to make GO Swimming successful.

Swim Team Communication

A traditionally inherent challenge in swim organizations the size of ours is communication of information. We need regular communication to and from all parties of our organization and have set up avenues to accomplish this.

Geauga Otters Web Site: www.goswimming.org

This is our most effective form of communication. Please check the web site often!! All meet sign-ups and volunteer sign-ups are done through the website. Meet results, misc. info, team policies, records and more can be found on the website. New families will receive an email with information to set up an account on the website. Please do this as soon as possible to begin receiving information.

Email: It is imperative that the team has your current and active email address and that you check your email often for updates from GO swimming. If you are not receiving emails from the team, please contact the head coach.

The Coaches: Direct communication with the coaches is encouraged, but we ask that you please not engage the coaches in conversation during practice sessions or meets. **PARENTS ARE NOT ALLOWED ON DECK DURING PRACTICE!!** If you have a question for the coaches you may contact him/her via email and if needed a meeting time can be arranged.

Parent Involvement Committee (PIC): As necessary, the PIC members, Coach, and Aquatic Director have a meeting to plan and manage all swim team activities and needs. See the web page for a list of PIC members and contact information.

Finances

1. Before a swimmer can be considered eligible for signing up for the new swimming year, all financial obligations from the previous year must be paid in full.
2. Each swimmer is required to pay the appropriate team fees. The amount depends on which training group the swimmer practices with. The fee covers entire season (fall/winter OR spring/summer) through the last championship meet the swimmer qualifies for. New swimmers may try GO Swimming for one week for free.
3. Invitational meets and USA meets require additional fees. **When a swimmer indicates their intention to participate in one of these meets, the associated meet entry fees will be charged to the credit card on file. Once the swimmer is entered in a meet, the entry fees are non-refundable, even if they do not swim.** Any additional fees/fines that are charged to a swimmer are the responsibility of that swimmer's family to pay and will be charged to the account on file (EG: USA meets where a swimmer does not achieve the cut time).
4. Team fees may be paid in full at the beginning of the season or set up on an automatic monthly draft from your credit card or checking account. If choosing the payment plan option, your first payment is due at the time of registration and subsequent payments will occur on the 1st of the month during that season. Payment arrangements must be taken care of prior to your swimmers first practice.
5. All swim team members MUST have a youth or family YMCA membership.
6. Financial assistance is available from the YMCA for families needing a little extra help paying for swim team. Contact the aquatics director for more information.
7. **Swim team fees are not prorated if you register late and non-refundable should you leave the program during the season.** (exception- documented medical reason)
8. For families with 3 or more swimmers- we offer a price break for the 3rd (and more) swimmer which will be applied to the swimmer(s) paying the lowest program fee(s)

Fundraising

The Geauga Otters host invitational style swim meets to raise funds for our team. There are a myriad of jobs available meeting everyone's talents and capabilities. The money raised at these large meets can range from \$3000-\$10,000 depending on the size of the meet and helps to keep the cost of participating in the Otters Swim Team manageable. Each family is required to provide appropriate volunteers to fulfill roles in the planning, preparation, and operation of these meets. More information on this will be forthcoming. At the beginning of each season the expectations for that year will be clearly communicated. A fee will be assessed to those families who do not fulfill their obligation. Those families who would rather obtain a team sponsorship of at least \$250 will receive credit for their fundraising obligations.

United States Swimming

USA swimming is an optional program offered by the Geauga Otters swim team. USA Swimming offers additional competitive opportunities for the more experienced swimmer. In order to participate the swimmer must have one year of competitive swimming experience or permission from the team coaches. USA participants must register at the beginning of the fall season.

More information about USA swimming can be found at usaswimming.org.

In order to participate in USA swimming the swimmer must be a USA Swimming member. The swimmer must complete a registration form and pay a membership fee at least four weeks in advance of the USA Swimming meet in order to get a membership card. USA Memberships are based on the calendar year expire on December 31st each year. The USA membership includes a copy of the USA swimming magazine on a quarterly basis.

A USA Swimming membership is optional. You only need it if you plan to compete in USA Swimming meets. It is not required to compete in YMCA meets.

If you will be participating in Spring Swimming season the USA registration is required for participation in swim meets.



GO SWIMMING Concussion Policy

For athletes participating in youth sports organizations (non-school sports):

1. Starting April 26th, 2013, parents and athletes are required to receive a concussion information sheet annually for each sport.
2. Coaches, referees, or officials must remove an athlete from play if the athlete is exhibiting the signs and symptoms of a concussion during practice or a game and/or has been visually observed obtaining a head or neck injury. Symptoms include: Appears dazed or stunned; Is confused about assignment or position; Forgets plays; Is unsure of game, score or opponent; Moves clumsily; Answers questions slowly; Loses consciousness (even briefly); Shows behavior or personality changes (irritability, sadness, nervousness, feeling more emotional); Can't recall events before or after hit or fall; Any headache or "pressure" in head. (How badly it hurts does not matter.); Nausea or vomiting, Balance problems or dizziness; Double or blurry vision; Sensitivity to light and/or noise; Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy; Concentration or memory problems; Confusion; Does not "feel right."; Trouble falling asleep; Sleeping more or less than usual.
3. The athlete cannot return to play on the same day that the player is removed.
4. The athlete is not permitted to return to play until they have been assessed and receive written clearance by a physician (MD or DO) or by any other licensed health care provider approved by the youth sports organization

GO Swim Team Bullying Policy

PURPOSE: Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at the YMCA (the "Y") and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. The Y 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, parent, or mentor.

Objectives of the Club's Bullying Policy and Action Plan:

1. To make it clear that the Club will not tolerate bullying in any form.
2. To define bullying and give all council members, coaches, parents and swimmers a good understanding of what bullying is.
3. To make it known to all parents, swimmers and coaching staff that there is a policy and protocol should any bullying issues arise.
4. To make the procedure for reporting bullying clear and understandable.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

The USA Swimming Code of Conduct prohibits bullying. Generally, bullying is the use of aggression, whether intentional or not, which hurts another person. Bullying results in pain and distress. The USA Swimming Code of Conduct defines bullying in 304.3.7. Bullying is the severe or repeated use by one or more USA Swimming members of oral, written, electronic or other technological expression, image, sound, data or intelligence of any nature (regardless of the method of transmission), or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at any other member that to a reasonably objective person has the effect of:

- causing physical or emotional harm to the other member or damage to the other member's property;
- placing the other member in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property;
- creating a hostile environment for the other member at any USA Swimming activity;
- infringing on the rights of the other member at any USA Swimming activity; or
- 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).

REPORTING PROCEDURE

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

- Talk to your parents;
- Talk to a Coach or Mentor;
- Write a letter or email to the Coach or Mentor;
- 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 and behavior can be accurately recalled and the bullying behavior can be stopped as soon as possible.

HOW WE HANDLE BULLYING

If bullying is occurring during team-related activities, we STOP BULLYING ON THE SPOT using the following steps:

1. Intervene immediately. It is ok to get another adult to help.
2. Separate the individuals involved.
3. Make sure everyone is safe.
4. Meet any immediate medical or mental health needs.
5. Stay calm. Reassure the kids involved, including bystanders.
6. Model respectful behavior when you intervene.
7. Reinforce the core character traits of Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility.

If bullying is occurring at our club or it is reported to be occurring at our club, we address the bullying by FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED and SUPPORTING THE KIDS INVOLVED using the following approach:

FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED

First, we get the facts.

- a. Keep all the involved children separate.
- b. Get the story from several sources, both adults and kids.
- c. Listen without blaming.
- d. Don't call the act "bullying" while you are trying to understand what happened.
- e. It may be difficult to get the whole story, especially if multiple athletes are involved or the bullying involves social bullying or cyber bullying. Collect all available information.

2. Then, we determine if it's bullying. There are many behaviors that look like bullying but require different approaches. It is important to determine whether the situation is bullying or something else.

- a. Review the USA Swimming definition of bullying;
- b. To determine if the behavior is bullying or something else, consider the following questions:
 - What is the history between the kids involved?
 - Have there been past conflicts?
 - Is there a power imbalance? Remember that a power imbalance is not limited to physical strength. It is sometimes not easily recognized. If the targeted child feels like there is a power imbalance, there probably is.
 - Has this happened before? Is the child worried it will happen again?
- c. Remember that it may not matter "who started it." Some kids who are bullied may be seen as annoying or provoking, but this does not excuse the bullying behavior.
- d. Once you have determined if the situation is bullying, support all of the kids involved.

SUPPORTING THE KIDS INVOLVED

3. Support the kids who are being bullied

- a. Listen and focus on the child. Learn what's been going on and show you want to help. Assure the child that bullying is not their fault.
- b. Work together to resolve the situation and protect the bullied child. The child, parents, and fellow team members and coaches may all have valuable input. It may help to:
 - i. Ask the child being bullied what can be done to make him or her feel safe. Remember that changes to routine should be minimized. He or she is not at fault and should not be singled out. For example, consider rearranging lane assignments for everyone. If bigger moves are necessary, such as switching practice groups, the child who is bullied should not be forced to change.
 - ii. Develop a game plan. Maintain open communication between the Club and parents. Discuss the steps that will be taken and how bullying will be addressed going forward.
- c. Be persistent. Bullying may not end overnight. Commit to making it stop and consistently support the bullied child.

4. Address bullying behavior

- a. Make sure the child knows what the problem behavior is. Young people who bully must learn their behavior is wrong and harms others.
- b. Show kids that bullying is taken seriously. Calmly tell the child that bullying will not be tolerated. Model respectful behavior when addressing the problem.
- c. Work with the child and parents to understand some of the reasons he or she bullied. For example:
 - i. Sometimes children bully to fit in or just to make fun of someone is a little different from them. In other words, there may be some insecurity involved.
 - ii. Other times kids act out because something else—issues at home, abuse, stress—is going on in their lives. They also may have been bullied. These kids may be in need of additional support.
- d. Involve the kid who bullied in making amends or repairing the situation. The goal is to help them see how their actions affect others. For example, the child can:
 - i. Write a letter apologizing to the athlete who was bullied.
 - ii. Do a good deed for the person who was bullied, for the Club, or for others in your community.
 - iii. Clean up, repair, or pay for any property they damaged.
- e. Avoid strategies that don't work or have negative consequences
- f. Follow-up. After the bullying issue is resolved, continue finding ways to help the child who bullied to understand how what they do affects other people. For example, praise acts of kindness or talk about what it means to be a good teammate.

5. Support bystanders who witness bullying. Every day, kids witness bullying. They want to help, but don't know how. Fortunately, there are a few simple, safe ways that athletes can help stop bullying when they see it happening.

- a. Be a friend to the person being bullied;
- b. Tell a trusted adult – your parent, coach, or mentor;
- c. Help the kid being bullied get away from the situation. Create a distraction, focus the attention on something else, or offer a way for the target to get out of the situation. "Let's go, practice is about to start."
- d. Set a good example by not bullying others.
- e. Don't give the bully an audience. Bullies are encouraged by the attention they get from bystanders. If you do nothing else, just walk away.

Electronic Communication Policy of the GO Swim Team

PURPOSE: The Geauga YMCA Otters or GO SWIMMING (the "Club") recognizes the prevalence of electronic communication and social media in today's world. Many of our swimmers use these means as their primary method of communication. While the Club acknowledges the value of these methods of communication, the Club also realizes that there are associated risks that must be considered when adults use these methods to communicate with minors.

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 related to team activities. The content and intent of all electronic communications must adhere to the USA Swimming Code of Conduct regarding Athlete Protection.

For example, as with any communication with an athlete, electronic communication should not contain or relate to any of the following: drugs or alcohol use; sexually oriented conversation; sexually explicit language; sexual activity; 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, council member or parent, the guiding principle to always use in communication is to ask: "Is this communication something that someone else would find appropriate or acceptable in a face-to-face meeting?" or "Is this something 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 parent council, or other athletes?"

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

1. **Transparent:** All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should be transparent. Your communication should not only be clear and direct, but also free of hidden meanings, innuendo and expectations.
2. **Accessible:** All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should be considered a matter of record and part of the Club's records. Whenever possible, messages should be sent from the Team Website and include another coach or parent in the communication so that there is no question regarding accessibility.
3. **Professional:** All electronic communication between a coach and an athlete should be conducted professionally as a representative of the Club. This includes word choices, tone, grammar, and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of a staff member.
4. If your communication meets all three of the T.A.P. criteria, then it is likely your method of communication with athletes will be appropriate.

FACEBOOK, MYSPACE, BLOGS, AND SIMILAR SITES

FACEBOOK: Coaches may have personal Facebook (or other social media site) pages, but they are not permitted to have any athlete member of the Club join their personal page as a "friend" until that athlete reaches the age of 18. A coach should not accept any "friend" request from an athlete prior to then. In addition, the coach should remind the athlete that this is not permitted.

The Club has an official Facebook page that athletes and their parents can "friend" for information and updates on team-related matters.

TWITTER: Coaches may have personal Twitter pages, but a coach should not "follow" an athlete on Twitter until that athlete reaches the age of 18.

The Club has an official Twitter page that coaches, athletes and parents can follow for information and updates on team-related matters. This feed will be operated by a designated Coach and the team is not permitted to follow athletes through this Twitter account.

TEXTING: Subject to the general guidelines mentioned above, texting is allowed between coaches and athletes during the hours from 7am until 9pm. Texting only shall be used for the purpose of communicating information directly related to team activities. Texts should ideally be sent from the Team Website when possible.

EMAIL: Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate between the hours of 7am and 9pm. When communicating with an athlete through email, a parent or another coach should also be copied. Emails should ideally be sent from the Team Website when possible.

REQUEST TO DISCONTINUE ALL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS: The parents or guardians of an athlete may request in writing that their child not be contacted by coaches through any form of electronic communication.

Glossary

A glossary of those strange and wacky words we use in the sport of swimming. Parents! You may or may not find these words in the English Dictionary, and if you do, their definitions will probably be radically different than the ones listed in this Glossary. Relax and take your time reading. Soon, you'll be understanding and maybe even speaking some "SWIMSLANG."

Anchor - The final swimmer in a relay.

Backstroke - One of the 4 competitive racing strokes, basically any style of swimming on your back. Backstroke is swam as the first stroke in the Medley Relay and second stroke in the I.M. Racing distances are 50 yards/meters, 100 yards/meters, and 200 yards/meters. (Some meets/leagues with 8-under divisions offer the 25 yards/meters backstroke).

Blocks - The starting platforms located behind each lane. Some pools have blocks at the deeper end of the pool, and some pools have blocks at both ends. Blocks have a variety of designs and can be permanent or removable.

Breaststroke - One of the 4 competitive racing strokes. Breaststroke is swam as the second stroke in the Medley Relay and the third stroke in the I.M. Racing distances are 50 yards/meters, 100 yards/meters, and 200 yards/meters. (Some meets/leagues with 8-under divisions offer the 25 yards/meters breaststroke).

Butterfly (Fly) - One of the 4 competitive racing strokes. Butterfly (nicknamed FLY) is swam as the third stroke in the Medley Relay and first stroke in the I.M. Racing distances are 50 yards/meters, 100 yards/meters, and 200 yards/meters. (Some meets/leagues with 8-under divisions offer the 25 yards/meters freestyle).

Championship Meet - The meet held at the end of a season. Qualification times are usually necessary to enter this meet.

Colorado Timing System - The state of the art electronic timing system used at swim meets. This system allows for an accurate account on swimmers times and places.

Distance - How far a swimmer swims. Distances for short course are: 25 yards (1 length), 50 yards (2 lengths), 100 yards (4 lengths), 200 yards (8 lengths), 400 yards (16 lengths), 500 yards (20 lengths), 1000 yards (40 lengths), 1650 yards (66 lengths). Distances for long course are: 50 meters (1 length), 100 meters (2 lengths), 200 meters (4 lengths), 400 meters (8 lengths), 800 meters (16 lengths), 1500 meters (30 lengths).

Disqualification (DQ) - Every child is DQ'd at some point in their career. Keep in mind that there are specific rules governing each stroke that certified USA Swimming judges use in determining whether the stroke was "legal."

Dual Meet - Type of meet where two swim teams compete against each other.

Dropped Time - When a swimmer goes faster than the previous performance they have "dropped their time".

Entry Fees - The amount per event a swimmer or relay is charged. This varies depending on the type of meet.

Entry Limit - Each meet will usually have a limit of total swimmers they can accept, or a time limit they can not exceed. Once an entry limit has been reached, a meet will be closed and all other entries returned.

Electronic Timing - Timing system operated on DC current (battery). The timing system usually has touchpads in the water, junction boxes on the deck with hookup cables, buttons for backup timing, and a computer type console that prints out the results of each race. Some systems are hooked up to a scoreboard that displays swimmers' times.

False Start - When a swimmer leaves the starting block before the horn or gun. One false start will disqualify a swimmer or a relay team, although the starter or referee may disallow the false start due to unusual circumstances.

Fastest to Slowest - A seeding method used on the longer events held at the end of a session. The fastest seeded swimmers participate in the first heats followed by the next fastest and so on. Many times these events will alternate one girls' heat and one boys' heat until all swimmers have competed.

Flags - Pennants that are suspended over the width of each end of the pool approximately 15 feet from the wall.

Freestyle - One of the 4 competitive racing strokes. Freestyle (nicknamed Free) is swam as the fourth stroke in the Medley Relay and fourth stroke in the I.M. Racing distances are 50 yards/meters, 100 yards/meters, 200 yards/meters, 400 meters / 500 yards, 800 meters / 1000 yards, 1500 meters / 1650 yards. (Some meets/leagues with 8-under divisions offer the 25 yards/meters freestyle)

Heat - A division of an event when there are too many swimmers to compete at the same time. The results are compiled by swimmers' time swum, after all heats of the event are completed.

Heat Sheet - The pre-meet printed listings of swimmers' seed times in the various events at a swim meet. These sheets vary in accuracy, since the coaches submit swimmers' times many weeks before the meet. Heat sheets are sold at the admissions table and are used mainly to make sure the swimmer has been properly entered in all the events they signed up for. Parents enjoy looking at the seedings prior to the race, and swimmers can tell how the order the events will be conducted and get a rough idea how long the meet sessions will last.

Individual Medley (IM) – a swimming event using all 4 of the competitive strokes on consecutive lengths of the race. The order must be: Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Freestyle. Equal distances must be swum of each stroke.

Invitational – Type of meet that requires a swim team to request an invitation to attend the meet.

Lap - One length of the course. Sometimes may also mean down and back (2 lengths) of the course.

Lap Counter - The large numbered cards (or the person turning the cards) used during the freestyle events 500 yards or longer. Counting is done from the end opposite the starting end. The numbers on the cards are "odd numbers" only with the final lap being designated by a bright orange card.

League / League Meet – GO Swimming is a part of the North East Ohio YMCA Swim league. Our league and league meet is made up of approximately 25 YMCA's in north east Ohio.

Leg - The part of a relay event swum by a single team member; a single stroke in the individual medley (IM).

LSC – Local Swimming Committee. GO Swimming is a USA Swimming program operating in the Lake Erie LSC. Teams in our LSC are from the Cleveland, Akron, Canton, Youngstown area- as far west as Sandusky, east as the Pennsylvania line and south to the outlying areas of Canton.

Long Course – a 50 meter pool.

Qualifying Times - Published times necessary to enter certain meets, or the times necessary to achieve a specific category of swimmer. See "A" "AA" (etc.) times.

Relays - A swimming event in which 4 swimmers participate as a relay team, each swimmer swimming an equal distance of the race. There are two types of relays: 1.) Medley relay - One swimmer swims Backstroke, one swimmer swims Breaststroke, one swimmer swims Butterfly, one swimmer swims Freestyle, in that order. Medley relays are conducted over 200 yd/meter and 400 yd/meter distances. 2.) Freestyle relay - Each swimmer swims freestyle. Free relays are conducted over 200 yd/meter, 400 yd/meter, and 800 yd/meter distances.

Scratch - To withdraw from an event after having declared an intention to participate. Some meets have scratch deadlines and specific scratch rules, and if not followed, swimmer can be disqualified from remaining events.

Seed - Assign the swimmer's heats and lanes according to their submitted or preliminary times.

Short Course - A 25 yard or 25 meter pool.

Split - A portion of an event, shorter than the total distance, that is timed. For example, a swimmer's first 50 time is taken as the swimmer swims the 100 race. It is common to take multiple splits for the longer distances.

Starter - The official in charge of signaling the beginning of a race and insuring that all swimmers have a fair takeoff.

Stand-up - The command given by the Starter or Referee to release the swimmers from their starting position.

Step-Down - The command given by the Starter or Referee to have the swimmers move off the blocks. Usually this command is a good indication everything is not right for the race to start.

Stroke Judge - The official positioned at the side of the pool, walking the length of the course as the swimmers race. If the Stroke Judge sees something illegal, they report to the referee and the swimmer may be disqualified.

Taper - The resting phase of a senior swimmer at the end of the season, before the championship meet.

Timed Finals - Competition in which only heats are swum and final placings are determined by those times.

Time Standard - A time set by a meet or governing body (YMCA or USA) that a swimmer must achieve for qualification or recognition.

Timer - The volunteers sitting behind the starting blocks/finish end of pool, who are responsible for getting watch times on events and activating the backup buttons for the timing system.

Time Trial - An event or series of events where a swimmer may achieve or better a required time standard.

Touch Pad - The removable plate (on the end of pools) that is connected to an automatic timing system. A swimmer must properly touch the touchpad to register an official time in a race.

Warm-down - The loosening a swimmer does after a race when pool space is available.

Warm-up - The practice and loosening session a swimmer does before the meet or their event is swum.

Zone / Zone Meet – GO Swimming is a part of the Great Lakes Zone. Our zone meet includes YMCA teams from Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky and West Virginia.