

Safety Policies

by Chris Swensen

Anyone who watches the news knows that there is a lot of questionable, to say the least, behaviors going on by people in authoritative positions over minors. This has happened in daycare, schools, religious organizations, and in sports. USA Swimming and NAAC have been very active in promoting the safety of their memberships, and in particular, that of the athletes. In the interest of ensuring the safety of the swimmers, we will need to enforce existing and new policies with strict adherence. Along with mandates by USA Swimming and SafeSport, NAAC is also under the watch of the US Naval Academy, making it necessary to “walk a tight line.”

15/15 Rule: Swimmers cannot be dropped off at practice more than 15 minutes before the start of practice. I realize that this may be difficult with parents that have swimmers in multiple groups with varying start times, but it is what must be done. No child is allowed to be dropped off and left without direct supervision of an adult. This means siblings of children may not be in the hallways while parents are in the stands watching practice or walking outside. Additionally, the swimmers have 15 minutes after practice to change and meet up with their parent or adult in charge of their car pool. This is required even if a swimmer’s practice ends at 7:45 PM and they have a sibling whose group does not stop practicing until 8:30 PM. Finally, all swimmers and their adult supervisor must exit LeJeune by 8:45 PM or 15 minutes after practice when practice is held at other times during the day.

Entering the pool deck: No swimmer is allowed on the pool deck until there are 2 coaches on deck. This is strictly in the interest of safety and is now a USA Swimming rule as well as an NAAC rule. This applies to practices and meets.

Diving Boards and Diving Towers: The diving boards and towers are off limits. Many swimmers often ask to go off the boards and my reply is “No, I am not a certified diving coach.” In fact, we are a swim club and the Academy does not want us using the boards.

Swimmer Drop Off: When dropping off a swimmer, please do not pull into a handicapped parking space and drop off a swimmer. Handicapped parking spaces are for those in need, and should not be taken up by someone dropping off or unloading their car no matter how short a time period. Similarly, if you have a handicap permit but are not driving around the person the permit was intended for, please do not use the handicapped spaces. This ties into I for Integrity.

Email and social media: While it may be seen as a way for a swimmer to communicate with their coach, please do not allow the swimmer to email coaches without copying a parent or guardian. If the parent or guardian is not copied, the coach will reply with the parent or guardian copied. Additionally, any request to be friended by a swimmer on social media will be ignored/denied by coaches. NAAC has a social media page that swimmers can friend and communicate on.

NAAC PRIDE: Some thoughts on where we are and where we want to be.

P for PREPARATION – Be prepared for practice when you come on deck. This means the swimmer need all of their equipment, including a filled water bottle. Swimmers have been showing up without water bottles, fins, etc. Many than ask to go in the locker room and get them after practice has started. Also, inhalers should not be left in the locker room. Inhalers should be out on the deck near where the

swimmer is practicing. Preparation is important in all we do, and being prepared for practice is a way to learn to prepare for all other life activities.

R for RESPECT – This is respect for parents, coaches, team mates and competitors. One must respect the person as well as their property and the property of the USNA. Unfortunately we have had some incidents in the locker room where individuals are going in other swimmers bags and soaking clothing. This is not acceptable behavior and will hopefully not happen again.

I for INTEGRITY – Simply put, it means you strive to do the right thing no matter how challenging the circumstances.

D for DEDICATION – You don't only show up to practice, but you strive to do your best and work to improve toward a goal. Your actions are purposeful and you push yourself past your comfort zone.

E for EXCELLENCE – Fulfillment of your aspirations. Maximizing performance to achieve goals, whether in swimming, school, or other aspects of life.