

2020-2021

Parent Handbook



**PPSC**  
Portland Porpoise Swim Club



## WELCOME TO THE PORTLAND PORPOISE SWIM CLUB

Congratulations on choosing an outstanding swimming program for your child. We are happy to have your family join the PPSC family. We hope you'll find this handbook helpful as you "get your feet wet" and that it will answer some of your questions about your role and responsibilities as a swimmer parent and how this all works.

The Portland Porpoise Swim Club was formed by the City of Portland Recreation Department in the fall of 1989 as a program within the Aquatics Division. Since then it has become a non-profit, USA Swimming Level 3 Swim Club run by a committed and energetic volunteer parent board. PPSC is not only dedicated to the skill development that will allow your child to succeed as a competitive swimmer but more importantly, to his or her development as a total athlete and individual. We think our mission statement says it best:

**PPSC seeks to provide a foundation of success that transcends swimming. Porpoise swimmers learn teamwork and sportsmanship, and gain a work ethic integral to academic, athletic and civic achievement.**

There is a place on our team for every level of swimmer with the coaching to match his or her desired level of competition. We look forward to getting to know your family as your child grows with PPSC.

See you at the pool!

## COVID-19 GUIDELINES

At PPSC, we are focused on the health and safety of our athletes, coaches, and swim families. These are unprecedented times and we need everyone's help preventing the spread of COVID-19. We have outlined our [health screening, safety precautions and practice procedures](#) and expect all swimmers, coaches, and parents to adhere to these guidelines.

## SAFE SPORT AND OTHER PPSC POLICIES

USA Swimming, Maine Swimming and PPSC are committed to raising awareness about the prevention of abuse in the sport. We believe that the first step to creating an empowered team environment is through education. In January 2020, PPSC became a USA Swimming Safe Sport Certified Swim Club. All of our [PPSC and Safe Sport related policies](#) can be found on our website under Safe Sport.

## TRAINING GROUPS AND REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

### TRAINING GROUPS

It is at the coach's discretion which group your swimmer will be placed into and when he or she is ready for advancement. Advancement is primarily based on ability, but can be influenced by other factors such as age and group composition. For a detailed description of each swim group, ability levels, advancement criteria and equipment needs, please visit the PPSC website (see [Training Groups](#) under Our Team).

### PRACTICE EQUIPMENT

Each swimmer will need both competition and group-specific practice equipment. The required practice equipment varies by swim group. The full list of equipment is available on the PPSC website (see [Equipment](#) under the Our Team tab). All Swimmers will also need a water bottle for practice and meets. If you have questions about your swimmer's equipment needs, please ask their coach.

### COMPETITION EQUIPMENT

The PPSC team uniform consists of a team swimsuit and a team cap with the PPSC logo. Suits can be purchased online by visiting the PPSC website and clicking on the [Gear Store](#) tab. Each September, personalized PPSC caps can be ordered through Board Member Karin Tonello. You can also buy generic PPSC caps throughout the season. All swimmers should wear their team suit and cap unless coaches advise otherwise.

Coach Matt may advise some of our older swimmers to wear a FastSkin-type suit at certain higher-level meets. Please note that as of September 1, 2020, USA Swimming restricts certain tech suits for 12 and under swimmers. Please refer to [MESI's website](#) and [USA Swimming's website](#) for more information.

An array of PPSC logo apparel can be ordered through SwimOutlet by clicking on the Gear Store tab on our website. Additionally, we traditionally do a special gear order through Bob the Screenprinter before the holidays. If you have any questions about the Gear Store or our team suits and caps, please contact Karin Tonello at [karintonello@yahoo.com](mailto:karintonello@yahoo.com).

## COACHING STAFF

All Porpoise Coaches are registered and have current certifications with [USA Swimming](#), and are members of [ASCA](#) (American Swim Coaches Association). Our team of talented and dedicated coaches include:

- Head Coach and Executive Director: Matt Baxter
- Assistant Coach, Pre-Senior: Erin Shanahan
- Assistant Coach, Age Group 2: Lauren Cote
- Assistant Coach, Age Group 1: Colleen LePage
- Drylands Coach: Erin Gagnon

To learn more about our coaches, visit our website: <https://www.teamunify.com/Contact.jsp?team=meppsc>

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PPSC is operated by a Volunteer Board of Directors. While the Head Coach carries much of the daily operations of the club—deck duties, supervision and education of staff, development and supervision of programs, meet entries, swimmer statistics, and scheduling, to name a few—the Board of Directors is responsible to the membership to ensure that the Club stays on its intended track and is financially viable. Without volunteers, the Club cannot operate. It takes the combined efforts of **many** people to make the Club successful. If you have any questions for the Board, please email [board@portlandporpoises.com](mailto:board@portlandporpoises.com).

## VOLUNTEERING AND FUNDRAISING

**The best way to support your swimmer and the team is to volunteer.** PPSC is a parent run organization that depends on all of its members to assist with fundraising, volunteer at swim meets (timing, officiating, admissions, etc.), help run our social events, donate food for concessions and social events, and more. We can only function if everyone does their fair share. The Board of Directors determines the fundraising events for the year and will communicate to the membership.

[More information about our fundraising](#), including our annual Swim-A-Thon, can be found on our website. If you are experienced in fundraising or have new ideas, please contact a PPSC Board Member.

## COMMUNICATION

Communication is the key to strong relationships. PPSC will do its best to keep you informed, and there are several methods of communication to ensure that information can be passed on and questions can be answered. Other parents, too, are your greatest resource and asking them questions is a great way to make connections.

**Website:** You should rely on the website ([www.portlandporpoises.com](http://www.portlandporpoises.com)) for most of your information needs. Meet schedules, practice schedules, practice changes, policies and general information about the club can be found on the website.

**Email:** Head Coach Matt Baxter will email the membership with reminders about changes in practice schedules, meet information (sign-up deadlines, warm up time, etc.), meet summaries and more. Email will also be used by the PPSC Board to communicate.

**Parent Meetings:** PPSC will hold parent meetings throughout the year. These are vital meeting for parents to attend to obtain important information about the season.

**Phone or Email the Coach:** If you have any questions regarding training, swim groups, coaching, or anything swim-related, you may contact Head Coach Matt Baxter at 207.232.9457 (cell) or [matt@portlandporpoises.com](mailto:matt@portlandporpoises.com). Since Matt coaches early morning practices it's best to reach him before 7:30pm. Matt tries to return all communications with 24-48 hours.

**Email the Club President** If you have any questions regarding volunteering or other administrative matters, please contact the PPSC Board President at [president@portlandporpoises.com](mailto:president@portlandporpoises.com).

**Social Media:** PPSC uses social media to share meet photos and fun notes only. We do not share information on policies, practices, cancellations, etc. in these places:

- **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/PortlandPorpoises>
- **Twitter:** Matt has a twitter page that you can follow: <https://twitter.com/porpoiseme>
- **Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/portlandporpoiseswim/>

## SWIM MEETS

The Portland Porpoises annual meet schedule is posted on the website and usually on the PPSC bulletin boards at Riverton and Reiche. Check the Meet Schedule frequently on the website as changes can and do occur throughout the seasons.

## COMPETITION

Competitive meets are opportunities to elevate personal and team potential. Swim meets also provide the coaches with the opportunity to better know each athlete, to learn what best motivates them, how they respond to praise and constructive criticism, and how they handle success and disappointment. Through these observations the coaches learn how to better coach, mentor, and teach your child. Competition causes a swimmer's mental focus to become sharper, causes their spirit to soar to elevated levels, and causes their body to surpass normal expectations. Porpoise swimmers are trained and expected to compete in all swimming events, distances, and strokes. This promotes versatility and encourages swimmers to explore their potential in a wide range of events offered in competitive swimming.

## MEET ENTRY PROCESS

The head coach, with the input of level coaches, is responsible for the meet entry process (i.e. entering your child into the events they swim at the meet). The email you receive *may* include a prompt to choose your swimmer's events-ignore this feature. The coaches determine which events each child swims, eliminating the repetition of the few favorite events. A list of your child's events is available on the website once the meet is approved and entries have been sent.

## MEET RESPONSE SYSTEM

**\*\*\*IMPORTANT: PLEASE READ\*\*\***

PPSC uses our website for meet responses. The Head Coach sends an email prior to the upcoming meet soliciting meet responses. The coaches expect that all swimmers attend meets. Parents are expected to read these emails and be aware of upcoming meets and plan accordingly. **A parent must respond via the website whether their swimmer is attending the meet prior to the stated deadline.** Failure to email your response prior to the deadline results in your swimmer being unable to participate in the meet. (NOTE: that meet surcharges will be billed upon the swimmer's declaration as of the commitment date.)

## SWIM MEET EXPECTATIONS

Always remember that both swimmers and parents are representatives of PPSC. At away meets we are guests of the home team and should always be respectful.

All swimmers are required to wear the team suit (or appropriate race suit) and team cap at meets. This promotes pride and enhances team spirit.

All swimmers entered into a meet are required to participate in the warm-up prior to their events. Swimmers should arrive at the pool 10-15 minutes prior to their warm-up time.

A meet session lasts approximately 4 hours, so your swimmer typically swims in the morning or afternoon session. You can find information on each meet on the Maine Swimming website ([www.maineswimming.org](http://www.maineswimming.org)), where you'll find a list of USA sanctioned meets and a link to each. A meet information link is also provided on the PPSC website when available.

Sometimes the Club is responsible for providing timers at away meets. **If you have no timing experience, give it a try — you will be trained prior to the start of the meet — it's easy!** It's a fun way to be in the middle of the action.

At most meets, there are concessions so that swimmers and parents can purchase food and drinks. There are sometimes equipment sales as well, so if equipment (goggles or suit) malfunctions, it can be replaced. (Note: we always recommend that swimmers bring extra caps, goggles and suits to meets in case these things are not available for sale on site.)

## TRAVEL MEETS

There are several meets every year that PPSC attends that require swimmers and their families to travel outside of the greater Portland area. To help clarify PPSC's stance, we have developed a PPSC Team Travel Policy which is posted on our website. In brief:

- For ALL meets, local or otherwise, PPSC will provide appropriate coaching and supervision for your swimmers that are scheduled to swim in that session, and only while they are on the pool deck.
- Swimmers that are not scheduled to swim a session are considered spectators, and should not be on the pool deck. They should proceed to the spectator viewing area to watch the meet with their family or other designated guardian.
- Families are required to provide their own transportation, lodging, and supervision for their swimmers at all times. This includes any and all times the swimmer is not on the pool deck actively competing (locker rooms, hotel, etc...).

The bottom line is that PPSC does not facilitate what is considered a "Team Travel" meet at this time. We are glad to accommodate all swimmers that want to attend the meet, but as a volunteer organization are not yet in a position to organize or accept liability for the team to travel as a group away from their family.

## PARENT GUIDELINES

Communication, understanding, and involvement produce success within the triangle relationship (swimmer-coach-parent), just as with any relationship. It is important to keep in mind that developing a swimmer takes time. The following guidelines help you keep your child's development in the proper perspective:

- Every individual learns at a different rate and methods of presentation;
- It takes a great deal of the swimmer's attention to master the skills of proper stroke technique;
- Plateaus can occur at one time or another in every swimmer's career; it does not happen on a continuum.

Swimmers under 10 years of age are the most inconsistent. This can be frustrating for the parent and swimmer alike. We must be patient and permit our children to learn to love the sport.

It's the coach's job to offer constructive criticism of a swimmer's performance. It is a parent's job to supply the unconditional love, recognition, and encouragement necessary to help the young athlete feel good about him/herself.

If you have questions about your child's training, speak directly to their coach. We ask that parents do not undermine the coach in front of their child or other children and ask that parents do not actively participate in coaching in any manner.

Be sure that your child is swimming because he/she wants to. Self-motivation is the stimulus of all successful swimmers.

**Drop-off:** have your child at practice 10 minutes earlier than the assigned practice time. It is beneficial to your children to have social time with friends and plenty of time to prepare/dress for practice. The times listed on the practice schedule are when athletes get in the water.

**Pick-up:** each practice ends at the time listed. Please pick up your athlete at the end of their practice time.

## PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

PPSC requires that parents/guardians read, understand and [sign our Parent Code of Conduct form](#) prior to the first practice of the season.

## HELPFUL HINTS FOR SWIM MEETS

- Spectators (parents) pay to enter all meets, even the ones that we host.
- Programs are available at meets for a fee; bring a highlighter/pen to easily find your swimmer and other PPSC swimmers.
- Do not use flash photography at the start of any race. This could confuse a swimmer and get them disqualified.
- No parents on deck unless volunteering as timer, official or marshal. These are USA swim rules.
- Provide your swimmer with a healthy drink and snack during meet. They may not have time to go to concessions between heats.

- Swimming pools are very hot and crowded. Dress in layers and minimize what you bring.
- It is expected that your child will be present on deck with the team during the swim meet, not in the stands or hanging at concessions. Some swimmers have missed their races because of this.

## FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

### REGISTRATION

During registration, you'll pay the USA Swimming registration fees, the first installment of the membership dues, and any previous account balances, if applicable. Payments made during registration are nonrefundable. Invoices for subsequent membership dues payments, as well as meets fees and other expenses, will be sent electronically once the season begins. **Please note that registration for Senior 1 or Senior 2 constitutes a commitment for the entire short course (September – March) season or long course (May – August) season.** PPSC requires that payments are automated via credit card or withdrawal from your bank account. This helps the club best manage our expenses. For more information on fees and seasons for each group, visit the PPSC website (see Pricing under Our Team).

### MEMBERSHIP DUES

The membership dues correspond to the level of resources required to support the club, namely pool time and coaching. The first dues payment is made at registration. Subsequent payments are due monthly and will only be accepted electronically. If your fees are past due, your swimmer cannot swim in practice or at a meet until the fees are paid.

Membership dues are generally non-refundable. Partial refunds are considered on a case-by-case basis by the PPSC Board of Directors for good cause (ex: your child suffers an injury and cannot swim for a period of time). Refunds are not given on the basis of swimmers not swimming their full training schedule during a session. For more information, refer to "Discontinuing Swimming" on page 10.

### USA SWIMMING FEE

This covers registration and insurance cost from the national organization and is paid annually during Club registration for the short course season.

### MEET ENTRY FEES

Meet entry fees vary by type of meet, but generally run about \$40-\$90 per meet. Meet fees are added to your account along with your monthly membership dues. After the meet deadline, all meet entries and fees are sent to the meet host and are non-refundable.

## MEET SURCHARGES

To cover expenses associated with coaches' travel and time, PPSC assess a "meet surcharge" to all swimmers who commit to participating in a swim meet. These charges break down as follows:

- \$15 per swimmer, per single-day meet for meets within Maine Swimming, Inc. (MESI)
- \$20 per swimmer, per multi-day meet for meets within MESI, except for MESI Championship Meets and Bowdoin Open
- \$40 per swimmer, per meet for MESI Championship Meets and Bowdoin Open and Non-MESI Meets that are not designated as a Championship Meet
- \$300 per swimmer, per meet for Level 1 Designated meets (e.g. ISCA, New England Seniors, Sectionals)
- \$500 per swimmer, per meet for Futures Championship Meets
- \$1,000 per swimmer, per meet for National Championship Meets

Swimmers must declare their commitment for a meet via Team Unify (the PPSC website) prior to the commitment deadline for that meet. **Meet surcharges will be billed based upon the swimmer's declaration as of the commitment date.** If a swimmer is allowed entry into a meet after the commitment has passed (ie: new cut time achieved), meet surcharges will be billed at the time the swimmers commits to the meet.

## OTHER FEES

All other fees (meet entries, USA Swimming registration, etc.) are not refundable. These are pass-through costs for the club and are simply forwarded to other organizations.

## NEW SWIMMERS

New swimmers can join the club at any point during the year as long as space is available. New swimmers are expected to:

- Meet with the PPSC coaching staff and be assessed for appropriate placement within the club based upon age and ability
- Register on the website and pay any applicable fees
- Pay initial club fees including:
  - PPSC Membership Dues, usually the first installment of the dues\*\*
  - USA Swimming Registration Fees

\*\*NOTE: Initial membership fees are prorated for new swimmers to the nearest half month in which the swimmer joins and is at the discretion of the PPSC Registrar.

## REJOINING THE CLUB

Swimmers who did not swim with PPSC the previous season or did not sign up to swim with PPSC for the current season are considered a "returning swimmer". Returning swimmers are welcomed back to the club with the following guidelines:

- If their designated group has not reached capacity and space exists
- Swimmer's prior and current account balances must be **paid in full**.

The returning swimmer and family must meet with the head coach and get approval for their return. If swimmer's USA Swimming registration has lapsed, they need to re-register and pay any additional registration fees.

## LATE PAYMENTS

Membership dues is the primary source of income for the club and vital to its continuing operation. Therefore, timely payment of accounts is important. It is our policy to give families ample notice of upcoming fees and deadlines and we also publish the entire dues schedule at the beginning of each swim year. To that end, accounts that have outstanding balances that are more than 30 days overdue are assessed a \$15.00 late payment penalty. In addition, accounts that continue to carry balances beyond the 30 days are assessed an additional \$15.00/month for every month that the account is in arrears. If your fees are past due, your swimmer cannot swim in practice or at a meet until the fees are paid.

## NSF/OVERDRAFT

A \$30.00 fee is assessed to any account that submits a payment for ACH that fails to clear at the bank. The family will be contacted and will need to immediately re-issue payment for the original amount plus the \$30.00 fee. This fee is for PPSC to recover any charges levied by our bank in association with the failed transaction. This fee will be over and above any fees that may be levied to your account by your own bank.

## DISCONTINUING SWIMMING

Should you find it necessary to discontinue swimming with PPSC, you must communicate that information with your child's coach immediately and also notify the club registrar at [registrar@portlandporpoises.com](mailto:registrar@portlandporpoises.com). The club requires that this notice be given at least 30 days in advance of the discontinuation.

**Swimmers discontinuing participation in Senior 1 or Senior 2 will be responsible for ALL dues and other account balances through the end of the short course (September – March) season or long course (May – August) season.** For all other groups, you will be responsible for all dues and other account balances accrued through the 30-day notice period. **A verbal conversation with the coach is not considered formal notice.**

We will generally not refund any months prior to this notice regardless of the swimmer's attendance. If you discontinue swimming, you will not be allowed to rejoin the team until the beginning of the following season barring personal injury or other extenuating circumstances.

## DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The above practices and policies are maintained and followed by the PPSC Registrar. Initial questions and disputes should be directed to that person via email at [registrar@portlandporpoises.com](mailto:registrar@portlandporpoises.com). If you are unsuccessful in coming to an agreeable resolution, then you may appeal to the PPSC Board ([board@portlandporpoises.com](mailto:board@portlandporpoises.com)). All issues are reviewed by the PPSC Board and a final determination made.

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I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read and agree to the rules, policies and procedures outlined in the 2020-2021 PPSC Parent Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**