

2021-2022

# Parent Handbook



**PPSC**  
Portland Porpoise Swim Club



## WELCOME TO THE PORTLAND PORPOISE SWIM CLUB

Congratulations on choosing our competitive swim 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 swim parent and how our club works.

The Portland Porpoise Swim Club (PPSC) 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.**

We look forward to getting to know your family as your child grows with PPSC. See you at the pool!

## COVID-19 GUIDELINES & WAIVER

At PPSC, we are focused on the health and safety of our athletes, coaches, and swim families. These are still 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. When you **sign up for the 2021-2022 short course and/or long course season registration, you will need to acknowledge that you read the PPSC Covid Waiver.**

## PPSC POLICIES AND SAFE SPORT

### SAFE SPORT

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 2019, PPSC was the second competitive swim club in the state to become Safe Sport certified with USA Swimming. All of our [Safe Sport related policies, links to online training and reporting information](#) is listed on our website (see the Safe Sport tab).

### PPSC BYLAWS & POLICIES

You can find copies of PPSC's bylaws, code of conduct, outreach program, team travel policy, volunteer policy, and others on our website. [Click on this link](#) or go to the Safe Sport tab and scroll down the page.

## 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 the Our Team tab).

### 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.

### TEAM GEAR

The PPSC team uniform consists of a team swimsuit and a team cap with the PPSC logo. Team 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 tech 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 [USA Swimming's website](#) for FAQs, a list of restricted and approved suits, and more.

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 many are members of [ASCA](#) (American Swim Coaches Association). In fact, PPSC has more ASCA certified coaches than any other team in Maine. [Learn more about our coaches](#).

## 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 fun social events, donate food for concessions and social events, and more. We can only function if everyone does their fair share. Visit our [Volunteer Policy](#) to learn more about how you can assist throughout the year. As we say, it takes a village to run a club and a swim meet!

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 PPSC swim parents are also a great 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.

**Back to the Pool Kickoff Event:** In September, PPSC will hold a season kick-off party that's fun for the kids and informative for parents. This is a vital meeting for parents to attend to obtain important information about the season.

**Phone or Email the Head 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 Board:** If you have any questions regarding volunteering, policies, fundraising or other administrative matters, please contact the board at [board@portlandporpoises.com](mailto:board@portlandporpoises.com).

**Social Media:** PPSC uses social media to share swim meet photos, inspirational quotes, etc. We do not share information on policies, practices, cancellations, etc. in these places:

- **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/PortlandPorpoises>
- **Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/portlandporpoiseswim/>

## SWIM MEETS

The Portland Porpoises annual meet schedule is posted on the website. Check the [Team Calendar](#) 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. If you're new to competitive swimming and swim meets, you may want to read our [Swim Meet 101 guide](#).

## 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 sign-ups. 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 prior to the deadline results in your swimmer not being able to participate in the meet. (NOTE: meet fees will be billed upon the swimmer's declaration, as of the commitment date.) You may want to read our [Swim Meet 101 guide](#).

## 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.

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.)

For more information on swim meet expectations, please read our [Swim Meet 101 guide](#).

## 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...).

At this time, PPSC does not facilitate what is considered a "Team Travel" meet. 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 5 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.

## FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

### REGISTRATION

During registration, you'll pay the USA Swimming registration fees, meet surcharge fee, the first installment of the membership dues, and any previous account balances, if applicable. Payments made during registration are non-refundable. Invoices for subsequent membership dues payments and meet entry fees will be sent electronically once the season begins. **Please note that registration for Pre-Senior, Senior 1 or Senior 2 constitutes a commitment for the entire short course (September – March) season or long course (May – July) 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 the last page.

## 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. This fee is sent to USA Swimming and is not refundable.

## MEET SURCHARGE FEE

To cover expenses associated with coaches’ travel and time, PPSC assess a meet surcharge to all swimmers for the short course or long course season. This surcharge does not cover meet entry fees that are passed onto the host team.

## MEET ENTRY FEES

Meet entry fees vary by type of meet, but generally run about \$30-\$90 per meet. Meet fees are always listed in the meet packet, which is posted on the event page on our website. Swimmers must declare their commitment for each meet, prior to the deadline, via the PPSC website. Meet fees are added to your account, under My Account / \$ My Invoice.

## 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. We offer a free, one week trial.
- 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 Fee (annual one-time fee)
  - PPSC Meet Surcharge Fee, first installment

\*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 Pre-Senior, 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 – July) 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.