



**Meridian Swim Association**

# **Parent Handbook**

**Loving to Swim,**

**Learning to Compete,**

**Living Fit for Tomorrow**

**[www.meridianswim.com](http://www.meridianswim.com)**

Effective August 2016

## 2016-2017 Board of Directors

Meridian Swim Association is a parent-run organization. Each year officers and board members are elected. Each board member strives to make MSA a top-notch organization that fulfills the goals set forth in this handbook.

Feel free at any time to contact a board member with your concerns or questions.

### Board Members:

Position	Name	Phone	Email address
<b>President</b>	Megan Bishop		bishop5825@bellsouth.net
<b>Vice-President</b>	Allen Bishop		bishop5825@bellsouth.net
<b>Secretary</b>			
<b>Treasurer</b>	Susan Kirchhefer		skirchhefer@comcast.net
<b>Billing/Registrar</b>	Erica Heggie	601-595-1740	ericaheggie@comcast.net
<b>Member</b>	Kim Ford		
<b>Member</b>			

## **MSA GOALS**

### **Mission Statement**

Meridian Swim Association is committed to continuing its tradition of competitive swimming excellence. Through dedication and hard work, each team member is given the opportunity to achieve his/her fullest potential as an individual and athlete. By providing a coaching staff, combined with parental commitment, we seek to provide a healthy and motivating environment of enhanced self-esteem and pride in accomplishment. We expect swimming to be rewarding and fun for all our participants.

### **Statement of Philosophy (Vision Statement)**

The MSA coaching staff is committed to helping all swimmers in the program reach their maximum potential. We feel we can do this for swimmers of all ability levels and age ranges. Naturally, at any given time for many team members, the development of potential will be observed as time improvement in swimming events. However, we don't feel that our guidance is limited to this aspect of development. We want our program to touch their lives in a number of meaningful ways.

For the younger age groups, our emphasis is placed on teaching proper technique and enjoyment of the sport. As the swimmers progress to Silver and then Gold levels, we expect them to be able to commit to the pursuit of excellence and to exhibit good citizenship, leadership, and sportsmanship. As we accomplish these goals, we are certain MSA will become more prominent in competitive swimming in our surrounding area, and add to the development of each swimmer's character.

## **STAFF:**

### **Coaching staff**

Head Coach: Wade Heggie [wadeheggie@comcast.net](mailto:wadeheggie@comcast.net)

Assistant Coach: Erica Heggie [ericaheggie@comcast.net](mailto:ericaheggie@comcast.net)

Assistant Coach: Semmes Martin

**MSA's coaching staff is dedicated to providing a swim program that is based on age, ability, and psychological level of each individual swimmer.**

## **TO JOIN OUR TEAM**

Any person may try out for the MSA swim team. The swimmer must be able to swim one (1) length of the pool, unassisted. For more information on the team, please call or e-mail the Registrar.

**Once the coach has determined that the swimmer has been successful in the try out, the following criteria must be filled out and paid:**

- **MS Swim Registration form and insurance fee**
  - **\$62.00 payable to MSA**
- **MCC Registration fee for each semester at MCC**
  - **\$45.00 payable to MSA**
- **MSA first month fees or pay semester in full and registration on the MSA website**

**These forms must be returned or completed before the swimmer can attend practice.**

**You will be able to write one check or pay by credit/debit card (on the website) for the total amount due.**

**Please check with the registrar for MSA if you are unsure of totals.**

## **Non-Returning Swimmers**

If your family decides to leave the swim team, please notify the Registrar or Head Coach in writing by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to your final month of swimming. If no notification is received, then the family will be responsible for the next month's dues.

## **MISSISSIPPI SWIM REGISTRATION AND INSURANCE**

A Mississippi swimming registration form must be filled out prior to allowing the swimmer to swim on the team. This form, along with a non-refundable registration fee of \$62.00 should be given to the registrar on the MSA board. The current registrar for MSA is Erica Heggie.

This registers the swimmer to participate in meets and also covers the swimmer and the team with insurance. This ensures the swimmer from September 1<sup>st</sup> through August 31<sup>st</sup>.

Insurance is covered by USA Swimming. Their website is [www.usswimming.org](http://www.usswimming.org).

## **MCC – Meridian Community College Damon Fitness Center**

Fees: Semester fees are assessed by MCC not MSA.

The fall fee will be added to your statement in August for September and the spring fee will be added in January. **There will be NO discount on the MCC semester fees.**

In order to verify your swimmers attendance at the practice facility, your swimmer **MUST** sign in/out at the front desk and coaches will take attendance.

## **PAYMENT SCHEDULE**

At the beginning of each month, your statement will be e-mailed to address we have on file. You are responsible for address changes. Invoices will be sent even if you are set up for automatic payments.

Payment should be made payable to MSA or Meridian Swim Association.

The balance is due by the 7<sup>th</sup> of every month. If your payment is not received, you will assess a \$10 late fee. There will be a \$25 charge for insufficient funds.

There will be a locked box available for you to drop your payment off at the practice facility.

***Do not leave cash with anyone!!!***

We cannot be responsible for cash left with other swimmers/parents.

Anyone more than 2 months delinquent will be contacted by a board member. You will also be asked to bring your account current before your swimmer is allowed back in the pool. **This will be strictly enforced.**

Anytime your swimmer will miss more than a month or more of practice, we must have written notice, phone call, or an email. Please contact the head coach or board member at least 2 weeks in advance.

**Without notification, you will be responsible for the whole month.**

### **EARLY PAYMENT DISCOUNT**

Early payment is always welcome. You will receive a letter stating your discounted balance one month prior to Session 1, 2, or 3. A discount of 10% for full payment of a session is offered during the first month of the session only!

**Early payments are non-refundable.** Payments must be made in the first month of the session.

## **SWIM MEETS**

**Each event carries a FEE. FEES must be paid prior to the next meet and are not refundable. Fees will be billed immediately upon entry.**

Meet fees are your responsibility. The team pays for the fees and charges your individual swimmer back to you along with a \$5.00 coach's fee per meet which helps cover travel expense for the coaches.

Swim meets are a great family experience! They are a place where the whole family can spend time together. Once you have attended one or two meets, it will become very routine, until then hopefully you will find this information helpful. Please don't hesitate to ask any MSA parent for additional information or help.

The swim year is divided into two seasons. The fall/winter season or "short course" runs from September to March. These meets are in a 25-yard or 25 meter pools. The summer season or "long course" runs from early April to July. Meets are held in a 50 meter pool (or "Olympic" competition size), 25 yards or a 25 meter pools.

### **Deciding to attend a meet**

All swimmers are vital to our team. Swim meet participation builds team spirit, motivates swimmers to improve, and assists in obtaining points for the team. The coaching staff, with the parents' permission, reserves the right to make the final decision concerning which events MSA swimmers are entered in at a meet. Each meet is posted a few weeks prior either on the bulletin board, MSA website, MSA Facebook page or email. Once an email is sent out concerning an upcoming swim meet, please mark "Attend or Decline" on the MSA website and what events your child will be swimming.

- **Before the meet starts**

Please have your swimmer at the pool at least 15 minutes prior to the scheduled warm-up time. Upon arrival, check in with your coach. Purchase a "heat sheet." This is a program listing all the event information and swimmers.

- **During the meet**

Make sure your swimmer knows their event, heat, and lanes numbers (write these numbers on their hand/forearm if you'd like). Before your swimmer swims their event, they need to see their coach and discuss their race. Report to the starting block a few heats before they swim. After the swim, make sure your swimmer goes immediately to the coach to discuss the event.

- **What to take to the meet**

MOST IMPORTANT!!

Competition swimsuit, MSA cap, and goggles

Towels- realize your swimmer will be there awhile, so pack a few

Chairs – for your convenience if facility does not have bleachers

Sweat suits – swimmer may want to bring because they can get cold while waiting for events to start.

T-shirts – MSA shirt. Swimmer may want to bring extras to change.

Games – travel games, books, iPods, MP3 players, cards, PSP, or anything to pass time

Highlighter and Pen – for marking your swimmer's events in the heat sheet

Food and Drinks – each swimmer should bring a cooler and snacks.

## **TEAM MEETS**

MSA's coaches will select meets to attend during the long and short course seasons and notify the Board of Directors of the selections. Swimmers are highly encouraged to participate in meets that are offered.



## **MSA VOLUNTEER PROGRAM**

Meridian Swim Association is a non-profit organization made up of many dedicated volunteers. MSA members donate their time, energy and expertise at every level from the Board of Directors to helping run swim meets and other activities. The success of our team is directly related to the participation of our parents.

The MSA Volunteer Program enables our team to provide the best swim team environment for our swimmers. There are numerous opportunities to get involved and help in almost any capacity. *PLEASE PLAN TO VOLUNTEER.*

## **VOLUNTEER PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

Meridian Swim Association relies on a strong support system of parent volunteers to help run all of our meets, events and team activities. Volunteers are the life-blood of any swim team and the backbone of our sport. Without parental involvement, there would be no swim meets, as meets at every level require the coordinated effort of many volunteers. Your role as a volunteer is vital to the team and will have a great impact on your child's athletic environment.

All MSA families are required to volunteer over the course of the year at swim meets and other various team activities. For team-hosted events, sign-up sheets will be posted prior to the event for job selection. At events hosted by others, MSA may be asked to provide volunteers (such as timers or officials at away meets). We appreciate everyone helping out and taking turns when volunteering.

Meet volunteers are required to work the entire scheduled sessions for which they signed up for. Please do not ask to leave the meet after your child's last race if you have not finished volunteering your session. It is vitally important that everyone shows up on time and follows through with all volunteer commitments. Any family member or even a family friend may fulfill an MSA family's volunteer commitment. Some positions may have minimum age requirements and/or training requirements. The following

Volunteer Opportunity List provides examples of various jobs available.  
MSA is thankful and appreciative of the support of our great families.

**MERIDIAN SWIM ASSOCIATION VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY LIST**

Meet Volunteer Opportunities:

Job assignments are usually for 2-hour blocks unless prior arrangements made.

Awards/Ribbons  
Clean Up Crew  
Concessions Coordinator and Staff  
Head Timer  
Heat Winner Provider  
Hospitality Coordinator  
Runners  
Meet Marshall  
Set-Up Crew  
Take Down Crew  
Timers\*

Meet Volunteers requiring USA Swimming Certification:

Clerk of Course  
Meet Computer Operators  
Meet Coordinator  
Meet Director  
Meet Referee  
Officials

Team Volunteer Opportunities:

Board of Directors  
Officers of the Board: President, Treasurer, Secretary  
Committee Chairs: Registration, Sponsorships, Celebrations, Publicity  
Event Volunteers, i.e. Fun Days, Awards Banquet

*\*NOTE: MSA has enjoyed a partnership with Meridian's Naval Air Station for volunteer timers for past meets. We typically take up donations to cover the cost of pizza, snacks and drinks for these volunteers.*

## **FUNDRAISING**

As a non-profit organization, Meridian Swim Association relies on generous contributions from individuals, businesses and organizations to support our swimming program. Gifts are welcomed year-round and are tax-deductible, as allowed by law.

There are a number of reasons for MSA to fund raise but the primary ones are: to keep our monthly fees down, enable us to provide a quality program and support our coaches (monthly fees are not enough) and improve the financial security of the team. Past fundraisers have included:

1. USA Swimming Foundation's Swim-a-Thon™. A pledge-for-length, two hour swimming event where our team athletes swim as many laps as possible. This family fun event will help raise money from friends and family that is critical to financially helping out our team.
2. Corporate Sponsorships. If your business or employer would be interested in sponsoring MSA, please let us know. In return, and based on MSA sponsorship guidelines, your business and logo may be listed on our web site, team t-shirt, team banner displayed year-round at MCC pool, and recognized in MSA-hosted heat sheets for the 3 local meets each year.
3. Local eatery partnerships. We thank Raising Cane's, Papa John's and McAllister's for supporting our team in the past with a percentage of proceeds for a designated evening.
4. Swim Meets. MSA hosts three meets a year: Fall Semester, Spring Semester and State Games in June. Your volunteer work helps keep your costs down. Thank you for your participation!
5. MSA welcomes new and creative ideas for fundraising. If you have experience in this area, please contact our Board President or Head Coach.

## **TEAM OPERATIONS**

### **Practice Sessions**

Your swimmer is not required to attend each session that is offered. However, the more they swim, the more coaching they will receive to help him/her achieve their personal goals.

The practice schedule will be posted on the website ([www.meridianswim.com](http://www.meridianswim.com)) and given to the swimmer at the beginning of the sessions.

You will be notified (by e-mail and/or via MSA's Facebook page) of any session that must be canceled or has a time change. During weather emergencies, listen to your local radio or television station for school closures. If MCC is closed, MSA practice will be cancelled.

**Please help keep our practice facilities clean and orderly!!!**

**MCC DAMON FITNESS CENTER/POOL GUIDELINES FOR MSA**

- All swimmers must sign in at the front desk and present a current MCC I.D.
- Proper footwear is recommended in dressing areas and on the pool deck. Shoes are required in the lobby and on the grounds.
- It is recommended that all patrons take a soap shower before entering the pool.
- Individuals with infectious conditions, communicable diseases, skin infections, abrasions, open wounds or a known sickness will not be allowed to use the pool. Persons wearing adhesive bandages will not be allowed to use the pool.
- Individuals with bowel incontinence will not be allowed to use the pool. Individuals who have had stomach or bowel disorders within 24 hours should not use the pool.
- Children who are not toilet trained will not be allowed to use the pool.
- Running on deck is not allowed.
- Swimmers must wait on the top deck until the class in the water has started to exit.
- Enter and exit through the dressing areas unless the hallway provides easier access.
- When practice is over, please exit in a timely manner and dry off before you enter the lobby. Also dry off your aqua shoes or change into dry shoes before entering the building or dressing area. This will help keep floors dry. **CLOTHING IS A MUST WHEN COMING THROUGH THE LOBBY! IT IS SAFETY FOR YOUR SWIMMER!**
- If you become ill please notify the Lifeguard or Coach immediately.
- If you notice anything that may need our attention, let the lifeguard know immediately.
- MCC does not provide towels; individuals should bring their own.
- A limited number of lockers are available. Individuals are encouraged to bring their own lock and remove it when they leave. Lockers are not available for overnight use in any of the locker rooms. Locks left on the lockers will be periodically removed.
- Do not leave any valuables unlocked or unattended in the locker room.
- All individuals using the Damon Fitness Center and facilities are expected to follow the policies that are established by Meridian Community College.
- Anyone on deck during swim team practice must be a registered USA Swimming coach or USA Swimming registered athlete member.
- When the water temperature drops below 75 degrees Fahrenheit the pool will close. It will reopen when the water temperature reaches 75 degrees Fahrenheit.
- During thunderstorms, the lifeguard will make the determination on when the pool will close.
- Return all equipment to its proper place and tidy up your area. This will include kickboards, fins, swim bags, dry erase boards, etc.
- Coaches MUST wait until all MSA swimmers have left the facility. There are no exceptions!
- **Parents must pick up swimmers on time.** This is a must! No swimmers are allowed to run around in the facility or outside on campus in front of the fitness center.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **COMMUNICATION**

Open communication between the coaches, swimmers, and parents is a vital element in maintaining good solid relationships. MSA offers many paths of communication.

- General Parent's meeting – we schedule this once a year, usually in August or early September.
- Email – sent out by board member or coaches
- Team meeting – called by the Head Coach as necessary
- Individuals – contact board members for questions or concerns
- Coach-Swimmer-Parent conference – may be requested by any person involved. Please arrange by calling or emailing the coach.
- DO NOT disturb the coach during training.
- Bulletin board – check for upcoming events and activities

### **APPAREL AND EQUIPMENT**

Websites to find swimwear:

Competition apparel: [www.swimandtri.com](http://www.swimandtri.com)

General swimming supplies, suits, etc: [www.swimoutlet.com](http://www.swimoutlet.com) (click link on our website for MSA to get a percentage of each purchase)

Swim suits, goggles, etc: [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

***Speedo is our team sponsor. When purchasing your new suits or equipment, please try to buy this brand.***

**PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES:**

A program's success depends on the strength of its parent's support.

1. Meet all financial obligations
2. Transport swimmers to practice and swim meets
3. Offer positive encouragement to your swimmer. Leave constructive criticism and development of stroke technique to the coaches.
4. Promote MSA in your business; this is an excellent program for the community.
5. During a MSA hosted meet, VOLUNTEER!!! We can't be successful without you!
6. Help support during any fund raiser.
7. Treat all swimmers, coaches, and officials respectfully.
8. Abide by the Parent's Code of Conduct at the end of the Handbook.

**SWIMMER RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- HAVE FUN!!
- Attend swim meets
- Establish your own personal goals
- Treat all swimmers/coaches respectfully, whether on our team or other teams
- Support MSA, you represent not only the team but yourself
- Abide by all the statements in the Swimmer's Code of Conduct at the end of this handbook



## MERIDIAN SWIM ASSOCIATION'S PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

As our organization grows and we continue to expand our programs, we seek to establish or clarify our policies. Our policies help guide the organization and ensure continued success. One of the first areas to be addressed is the parent behavior – specifically, what type of behavior is expected of swimming parents.

This Parent Code of Conduct was developed as a standard to emphasize our organization's commitment to making everyone's involvement without club a positive experience.

As parents, it is absolutely essential that we give our coaching staff the respect and authority they deserve to run our swim team. Our coaches are hired for that purpose.

### **Meridian Swimming Association encourages the following parental behavior:**

- Open communication between parents, swimmers and coaches emphasizing goal-setting and focusing on the performance expectations of both the swimmer and parents.
- Meeting with the coaches/swimmers/parents during normal operating hours to discuss issues.
- Positive reinforcement of all swimmers in all situations – team spirit, team loyalty
- Practice teamwork with all parents, swimmers and coaches by supporting the values of Discipline, Loyalty, Commitment, and Hard Work.
- Parental involvement on the Board of Directors and in organizing and running of meets and other team events.

### **Meridian Swimming Association will not tolerate the following behavior from parents:**

- Coaching your children at practice or during meets, that is the coach's job
- Interrupting or confronting the coaching staff on the pool deck during practices or meets
- Abusive language towards coaches, swimmers, parents, officials and your own children
- Any behavior that brings discredit or disruption to our swimmers and our organization

As a parent of a swimmer and member of MSA, I will abide by the following guidelines:

- As a parent, I will not coach or instruct the team or any swimmer at practice or meets (from the stands or any other area) or interfere with coaches on the pool deck.
- Demonstrate good sportsmanship by conducting myself on a manner that earns the respect of my child, other swimmers, parents, officials and the coaches at meets and practices.
- Maintain self-control at all times. Know my role.
- As a parent, I understand that criticizing, name-calling, use of abusive language or gestures directed toward coaches, officials, and/or any participating swimmer will not be permitted or tolerated.
- During competition, questions or concerns regarding decisions made by meet officials are directed to a member of our coaching staff. Parents address officials via the coaching staff only.
- I have reviewed and understand the MSA travel policy and the MSA electronic policy.

### **Sanctions:**

Should I conduct myself in such a way that brings discredit or discord to MSA or MCC, I voluntarily subject myself to disciplinary action. MSA maintains the right to terminate any membership with/without cause in the interest of our vision, mission and objectives.

**MERIDIAN SWIM ASSOCIATION'S  
ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**

Meridian Swimming Association recognizes the benefits of electronic communication and the prevalence of social media in today's world. MSA regards social networking platforms as important tools for information sharing, member engagement, retention, recruitment, transparency, news releasing and the amplification of all that SunKist has to offer. This electronic communication policy is meant to protect our athletes and coaches while applying as few restrictions as possible.

The content and intent of all electronic communications must adhere to the USA Swimming Code of Conduct regarding Athlete Protection as well as adhering to team rules and code of ethics. MSA holds all members who participate in social networking to the same standards we hold athletes and coaches with broad understanding that no matter the digital forum you are always representing the team. At all times, exercise discretion, thoughtfulness and respect for all swimmers and teams.

Parents, coaches and athletes must follow common sense guidelines regarding the volume and time of day of any allowed electronic communication.

**Website/Email:**

The primary form of team communication occurs through team website and via email communications. Coaches are best reached through email and will do their best to respond in a timely manner.

**Texting:**

Texting is permitted between parents, coaches and athletes. Please keep text messages concise and cordial. In general, it is best not to text a coach during practice or while on deck at a meet. Please do not text a coach after the hours of 10:00pm or before 7:00am, unless a matter of the utmost importance and urgency. Please understand coaches may be unreachable at times and unable to reply.

**Facebook and other social networking sites:**

Friending/following is permitted between parents, coaches and athletes. Posts and messages between coaches and athletes should be non-personal in nature. MSA maintains a private group page on Facebook and encourages all members to join. Posts within the group should be non-personal and non-political and, above all, relevant to the team. Posts within the group are considered internal discussions and viewed as proprietary. Group administrators oversee and govern all group posts and admittances. Members and posts may be removed from group page as deemed necessary.

**MERIDIAN SWIM ASSOCIATION'S  
TEAM TRAVEL POLICY**

Team Travel is defined as overnight travel to a swim meet or other team activity where the coaching staff and designated team chaperones transport and supervise swimmers for the duration of the trip. This policy does not apply to swim meets and team activities in which parents/guardians are responsible for travel plans, transportation and lodging; however, safety, proper judgment and responsible behavior is expected at all times as covered under team rules and code of ethics. Additional rules and policies may be established for designated team travel events. Being a member of any team trip is both a privilege and a responsibility, failure to comply with rules and policies may result in disciplinary action.

With regard to TEAM TRAVEL, USA Swimming Required Policies:

1. Club travel policies must be signed and agreed to by all athletes, parents, coaches and other adults traveling with the club. (305.5.D)
2. Team managers and chaperones must be members of USA Swimming and have successfully passed
3. a USA Swimming-administered criminal background check. (305.5.B)
4. Regardless of gender, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an
5. athlete (unless the coach is the parent, guardian, sibling, or spouse of that particular athlete). (305.5.A)
6. When only one athlete and one coach travel to a competition, the athlete must have his/her parents' (or legal guardian's) written permission in advance to travel alone with the coach. (305.5C)

Additional TEAM TRAVEL Policies:

1. Team travel members will display proper respect and sportsmanship toward coaches, officials, administrators, teammates, fellow competitors and the public at all times.
2. Team travel members will refrain from any illegal or inappropriate behavior that would detract from a positive image of the team or be detrimental to our performance objectives.
3. Team travel members will follow team travel schedule, including abiding to curfews, room checks and lights out times.
4. During overnight team travel, if athletes are paired with other athletes they shall be of the same gender. Athletes 13&over may stay in rooms without chaperones provided chaperones or coaches are staying in nearby rooms. Athletes ages

12&under will stay with chaperones and consent shall be given by athlete's parents or legal guardians.

5. Swimmers are expected to travel and remain with the team at all times during the trip.
6. The usage of cell phones, laptops and other electronic devices may be restricted by coaching staff.

**MERIDIAN SWIM ASSOCIATION'S  
SWIMMER CODE OF CONDUCT**

**Members of Meridian Swim Association must abide by the following Code of Conduct. When joining the team, members must agree to follow team rules and code of ethics. The actions of each swimmer and parent reflect upon the entire club. MSA swimmers are expected to act responsibly and exhibit appropriate behavior at all times. MSA swimmers are expected to behave in an exemplary manner. The following rules are in effect at all times:**

1. Swimmers are expected to follow coach instructions at all times without being disruptive.
2. Swimmers are expected to maintain a positive attitude.
3. Swimmers are expected to come to practice and focus on improving their abilities.
4. Swimmers must ask coaches for permission before leaving practice or swim meets early.
5. Swimmers shall commit to teamwork and support the values of discipline, loyalty, and hard work.
6. Inappropriate language will not be tolerated at any time.
7. Any swimmer who is in possession or known to use alcohol, illegal drugs, or tobacco in any manner is subject to suspension or dismissal from the team.
8. Any swimmer involved in stealing or vandalism of any kind is subject to suspension or dismissal from the team.
9. No swimmer shall participate in any activity that is considered hazing, initiation, or bullying.
10. No swimmer shall interfere with the progress of another swimmer, during practice or otherwise.
11. Taunting, splashing, name-calling and any other behavior considered detrimental to the team will result in serious disciplinary action.
12. Swimmers shall not display inappropriate affection toward each other during team activities.
13. Swimmers shall demonstrate good sportsmanship, humility, grace, and dignity at all times whether at practice or at meets, regardless of the outcome of a race or competition.
14. Unsportsmanlike behavior will not be tolerated at any time. This includes inappropriate language, gestures, and physical behavior toward another person.
15. Failure to follow Code of Conduct will result in disciplinary action or, if necessary, dismissal from team. When correction is appropriate, swimmer will first be reprimanded by their Coach with correction and expectation of behavior. If same behavior is

repeated, Head Coach will be notified, and swimmer will receive appropriate reprimand. If both of the previous corrective interactions fail to resolve said issue, parents will be notified, and swimmer will be put on probation.

**All swim team members shall abide by these team rules which will help us meet our goals with respect to being good community representatives, improving our swimming techniques, and times, developing socially, and enhancing our swimming experience. I recognize my responsibility to abide by the rules and requirements of MSA. Should I conduct myself in such a way that brings discredit or discord to MSA, I voluntary subject myself to disciplinary action. MSA maintains the right to terminate any membership with/without cause in the interest of our vision, mission, and objectives.**

## **Action Plan of Meridian Swim Association to Address Bullying**

### **PURPOSE**

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in Meridian Swim Association (MSA) and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. MSA is committed to providing a safe, caring and friendly environment for all of our swimmers, parents, coaches, officials and visiting teams. 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, board member or athlete/mentor.

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

1. To make it clear that MSA will not tolerate bullying in any form.
2. To define bullying and give all board 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 how to report bullying clear and understandable.
5. To spread the word that MSA takes bullying seriously and that all swimmers and parents can be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

### **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:

- I. causing physical or emotional harm to the other member or damage to the other member's property;
- II. placing the other member in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property;
- III. creating a hostile environment for the other member at any USA Swimming activity;
- IV. infringing on the rights of the other member at any USA Swimming activity; or
- V. 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 Club Coach, Board Member, or other designated individual;
- Write a letter or email to the Club Coach, Board Member, or other designated individual;
- 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 kids 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.

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:***

##### **1. 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 and model respectful behavior when addressing the problem.
- c. Work with the child 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:
  - i. Zero tolerance or “three strikes, you’re out” strategies don’t work. Suspending or removing from the team swimmers who bully does not reduce bullying behavior. Swimmers may be less likely to report and address bullying if suspension or getting kicked off the team is the consequence.
  - ii. Conflict resolution and peer mediation don’t work for bullying. Bullying is not a conflict between people of equal power who share equal blame. Facing those who have bullied may further upset kids who have been bullied.

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 club board member;
- 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.

**Medical Release**

Does swimmer have any medical conditions or allergies the coaches should be aware of? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please explain

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby give MSA the authority to seek medical treatment for my child, \_\_\_\_\_, in case of an emergency.

Also, I, \_\_\_\_\_, give MSA the authority to seek medical treatment for myself, in case of an emergency.

Preferred Hospital \_\_\_\_\_

Family Doctor and phone number \_\_\_\_\_

**Photo Release**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, give permission for MSA to use a photo of myself or child(ren) for promotional purposes.

Signature of Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature Page**

We, the parent(s) and swimmer(s), fully understand and agree to comply with the following policies:

- MSA's Handbook
- MSA's Electronic Communications Policy
- MSA's Parent Code of Conduct
- MSA's Swimmer Code of Conduct
- MSA's Team Travel Policy
- MSA's Bullying Action Plan

Parent (or Guardian) Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent (or Guardian) Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Swimmer(s) Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_