

Sharks Aquatic Club is a Team dedicated to the long-term development and success of our athletes, through reaching their potential at every level. The etiquette and protocols described in this handbook are meant to help further this mission.

Practices - Coaches are busy during practice coaching our swimmers, so the best way to communicate is outside of practice - by text, email or phone call. This allows the coach's full attention to be devoted to staying engaged with the swimmers to ensure each swimmer gets the most out of each practice he/she can. To this end, we also prefer that parents do not stay on the pool deck during practice. As it is important for the coach to engage with the swimmers, so it also is for the swimmers to stay fully engaged with the coach during practice. Parents can, even unknowingly and unintentionally, become a distraction, and prevent a swimmer from taking ownership of his/her participation in the sport. In the event a parent must stay during practice, please refrain from interacting with your swimmer in any way.

Communication - will be primarily by email, followed by text, phone calls and in-person. Coaches will respond to any questions, comments or concerns that arise.

Schedule Changes - Schedule changes to either practice or meets are avoided if at all possible, but inevitably become unavoidable. Any practice changes to our regular weekly schedule will be communicated in person, by email and text, and through the website.

Meets - Although we don't require it, we strongly encourage each swimmer to take part in every swim meet. Signing up for swim meets is accomplished by 1) logging in to our team website, 2) clicking on "Edit Commitment" beside the meet name, 3) clicking on your swimmer's name and 4) selecting "Yes" or "No" from the drop-down menu. If you have a specific instruction on days of the meet your swimmer can/cannot attend, please leave that in the "Notes" box.

- **Entries** - Coaches will complete all entries for swimmers. We will challenge swimmers, while keeping in mind their experience and ability levels. This may mean swimmers will be signed up to swim events they don't think they can swim, or events they've never done before. The coaches will make sure each swimmer is prepared and encouraged appropriately. Our youngest swimmers should consider competing in only one day of any meet.
- **Championship meets** - generally, these are qualifying meets (meets for which you need certain time standards to attend), and occur at the end of a training cycle, so that swimmers are rested and ready to swim fast. This applies to our 13 & older swimmers, especially those who are training seriously on a consistent basis (at least 75% attendance). These swimmers, based on communication with their coaches, will shave, taper (rest) and wear a tech suit for agreed-upon meets during, or at the end of either short course or long course season. For our 12 & unders, practices are centered more around learning stroke and training techniques rather than serious training routines. For our swimmers under 12, every meet is an opportunity to improve times, and we do not necessarily taper for any one particular meet. Our 12 & unders do not shave, nor do they wear tech suits.
- **Swim Meet Protocols** - Swim meets are a great opportunity for swimmers to foster relationships with their teammates, and coaches. As swimmers become more accustomed to the flow of meets, we like them to spend most of their time in the team area. Whenever possible, our team will have an area (usually chosen by the kids) where swimmers only will sit. This will also help coaches find swimmers if need be. After each race, we ask that

swimmers first come talk to their coaches. Then they can get a towel, use the restroom, talk to parents, get a snack and return to the team area.

Moving between groups -

The major areas of consideration are, in no particular order:

- age & experience level (number of seasons swimming year-round)
- maturity level (physically, mentally, emotionally)
- practice attendance the previous season (especially during the summer)
- swim meet participation
- skill/talent level (times)
- improvement over the season (both with times and visible technique, although the two are generally linked)
- consistency of work ethic in practice
- perceived potential to be appropriately challenged at the next level. In other words, do the coaches think the swimmer needs the added stress of a higher group in order to continue to improve. Also, quite simply, can they keep up without regularly over-exerting themselves.
- swimmers' input

Useful resources -

- Apps
 1. OnDeck - keep track of swimmer's times
 2. Meet Mobile - follow meet results
 3. Deck Pass - great app for swimmers to keep track of their times, follow important swimming news, follow friends, get awards from coaches, etc.
- Websites
 - A. www.SharksAquaticClub.com - our team website for team info (schedules, news etc.), ordering team gear, signing up for meets/volunteering.
 - B. www.swimnc.com - North Carolina Swimming website, find meet info, time standards, info on camps and athlete rankings etc.
 - C. www.usaswimming.org - USA Swimming website, find great educational info, keep track of swimmer times
 - D. www.swimswam.com - swimming news of all kinds

Fundraising - Shark's main fundraisers at this point are the swim meets we host. We ask that all families chip in to volunteer at the swim meets. Your time helps us run the meets successfully, which in turn help raise money for the team.

Team Gear - We like our swimmers to be proud of their team! We will ask them to have a team cap and suit for swim meets. These are important so everyone (including our coaches!) can recognize them! Besides that, a couple t-shirts will help them look sharp at swim meets, but also at practice, at school, etc. This gear can be ordered through our website.