



Life Time Swim Team Bridgewater Team Handbook

Welcome to LifeTime Swim Team at Bridgewater! We are so excited to have you join the swim team. This informational packet was created by the LIFE staff as a guide to help you navigate through all of the things you'll need to know to get you and your swimmer(s) off to a great start.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact any of the LIFE coaching staff. Again, welcome to LIFE – we wish you and your swimmer(s) the best of luck.

Team Philosophy

Each swimmer is encouraged to pursue their goals and ability. The sport of swimming is something that each person can take with them for life. We want each swimmer to learn qualities such as: dedication, determination, time management, goal setting, team work, and sportsmanship.

Team Mission

To provide quality training environment for all swimmers within a structured progression to ensure each swimmer reaches their individual potential.



Sport of Swimming

The four competitive strokes are butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke and freestyle. In addition to those events, there is the individual medley (IM) event, which features all four strokes in one race in the order previously listed. There are also relay events that consist of four swimmers. There are freestyle relays, where all four swimmers swim freestyle; and there are medley relays, where each of the four swimmers swims one of the four strokes in the order of backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, freestyle.

Our swimmers compete in different age groups and meets depending on their achievement level and how old they are on the FIRST DAY OF THE MEET. Nationally recognized age groups are 10 and under, 11-12, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18 and Senior (or Open, which is open to any age swimmer). Local meets may also feature events for 8 and under swimmers.

Meets are conducted in one of the three “courses” (pool sizes). A short course pool is either 25 yards (SCY) or 25 meters (SCM). A long course pool is 50 meters (LCM). The short course season goes from September to March and the long course season goes from April through August. The international standard used in the Olympics is 50 meters (LCM). The NCAA College Championships are conducted in SCY or SCM. All world records are accomplished in 25 meter and 50 meter pools. USA Swimming maintains records for 25 yards, 25 meters and 50 meters. The technical rules of swimming are designed to provide fair and equitable conditions of competition and to promote uniformity in the sport. Each swimming stroke has specific rules designed to ensure that swimmers do not get an unfair competitive advantage over another swimmer. The technical rules for each stroke may be found in the publication “USA Swimming Rules and Regulations” on the USA Swimming website



USA Swimming

USA Swimming is the national governing body for swimming in the United States. It was founded in 1980 as a result of the 1978 Congressional Amateur Sports Act. Swimming is now governed by the USA Swimming rather than being one of the many sports under the AAU umbrella. USA Swimming is composed of 60 swimming associations (Local Swim Committees or LSC's). As a USA registered athlete, swimmers will be given a unique identification number, which will follow them throughout their swimming career. This number is composed of the swimmer's birth date, the 1st three letters of his/her 1st name, middle initial, and the 1st four letters for their last name. (For example, if Rachel Elizabeth Harden, born December 31, 1923, was a USA registered swimmer, her swimmer ID would be; 123123RACEHARD). If your swimmer does not have a middle name, then an asterisk will be in that place.

USA Swimming offers a variety of programs that are geared to all levels of swimmers, from youngsters learning to swim to world-class athletes. The USA Swimming Age Group program is designed to benefit younger athletes in the early stages of their competitive swimming careers while preparing them for Senior, College, National, and International Level swimming. Age Group Swimmers participate in local, Regional, and National level meets and various championships. Regionally, Zone Meets are held in four areas of the country at the end of each short course and long course season. The swimmers progress from local Age Group Championships, to Senior Championships, to Zone Championships and/or Sectional Championships, to Junior or Senior Nationals, and then on to various International Championship meets. The local championship meets begin to prepare our swimmers for the national championships and beyond. The Senior National Championships and specially conducted trials are used to select swimmers for the United States National team including the Pan-American, Pan Pacific, Olympic Games, World Championships, and other international competitions.



USA Swimming Safe Sport handbook:

https://www.teamunify.com/mnmcast/UserFiles/Image/QuickUpload/safe-sport-handbook-final_041761.pdf

Team Unify Swimming Web-Site:

<https://www.teamunify.com/team/njltnjst/page/home>

Please familiarize yourself with the Team Unify Swimming website. This is where you will find all meet information, meet announcements, results, time standards, and other important documents and links.



Swim Level Information and Swimmer Progression Life Time Swim Team

Development September-May

The Development Level provides younger swimmers the opportunity to develop fundamental skills in racing. This includes learning the four competitive strokes, correct starts, and proper turns. Swimmers should know how to swim 100 of freestyle and 100 backstroke and, at a minimum, have knowledge of breaststroke and butterfly. To move to the competitive level they must demonstrate the legality with starts, turns and finishes for freestyle, backstroke and breaststroke. They must be familiar with butterfly.

- Ages 6 to 11 years old
- Swimmers are to attend 2 practices per week for a 45 min.
- Attendance at swim meets is required – 1 per every 3 months *if applicable

Dolphins Summer Swim Team June-August

The Dolphins Summer Swim Team is an extension of our development program. Dolphins summer swim team occurs in our outdoor lap pool Monday-Friday, weather depending. We offer morning and late afternoon practices and swimmers are encouraged to come as often as they like. Summer swim team provides younger swimmers the opportunity to develop fundamental skills in racing. This includes learning the four competitive strokes, correct starts, and proper turns.

- Ages 5 to 11 years old
- Perfect introduction to LifeTime team program
- Provides a fun and social atmosphere while providing friendly invitations against neighboring LifeTime Clubs
- Offers 5 days a week Mon-Fri, morning and afternoon times available

Bronze I

The Bronze Level provides younger swimmers the opportunity to develop fundamental skills in racing. This includes learning the four competitive strokes, correct starts, and proper turns. Swimmers should know how to swim 200 of freestyle and 100 IM and, at a minimum, have knowledge of breaststroke and butterfly.

- Ages 6 to 9 years old
- Swimmers are to attend 2-3 practices per week for an 1 hour.
- Attendance at swim meets is required – 1 per every 2 months



Silver

The Silver Level focuses on continued development in stroke technique and efficiency. Aerobic and IM based training will be introduced to this group. Swimmers must be able to do all 4 strokes and swim IM-based sets during practice.

Swimmers in this group are beginning to dedicate themselves to swimming and becoming committed to becoming the best they can be. This will happen through learning race strategies, understanding their strengths and weaknesses in stroke techniques, starts, turns, break-outs, breathing patterns, and finishes.

- Ages 10 to 14 years old
- Swimmers are required to attend at least 3 practices a week, 4 is preferred for 1 hour and 30 minutes to 1 hour and 45 minutes for Silver 2.
- Attendance at swim meets is required – 1 per every month

Gold/Platinum

Currently, this is the highest level on the LIFE team. Swimmers at this level achieve the highest ranks in swimming, with many qualifying for NJ State and regional (Zone/Sectionals/Junior Nationals/Senior Nationals) meets.

Swimmers in this group have dedicated themselves to swimming and are committed to becoming the best they can be by continuing to build on their race strategy, understanding their strengths and weaknesses in stroke techniques, starts, turns, break-outs, breathing patterns, race strategy, and finishes.

These swimmers are the leaders of the team and are expected to represent LIFE in the most positive light. They are willing to come prepared and early to all practices, and are also encouraged to be ambassadors to the sport by taking roles that can help to develop the sport of swimming by either taking on mentoring roles to younger swimmers or by volunteering their time to represent the state of Texas as an athlete representative to USA Swimming. This group is designed to prepare swimmers for all levels of competitive swimming. Aerobic and anaerobic conditioning will increase appropriately. We will focus on continued refinement of stroke technique and further developing race strategy concepts.

- Ages range from 12-18 years old, depending upon skills, level of conditioning, and athlete's motivation.
- Swimmers are required to attend 4-5 practices per week for 2 hours
- Attendance at swim meets is required – 1 per every month



Coaches' Responsibilities

The Coaches' job is to supervise the entire non-competitive and competitive swim program. The LIFE coaching staff is dedicated to providing a quality competitive program for each swimmer. Therefore, the coaches must retain control in matters relating to training and competition.

- 1.** The Coaches are responsible for placing swimmers in practice groups. This is based on age, demonstrated merit, and coaches' recommendation. Coaches reserve the right to place a swimmer in a more challenging group when it is in the best interest of the swimmer.
- 2.** Responsibility for stroke instruction and the training regimen rests with the LIFE coaching staff. Each group's practices are based on current techniques and coaching philosophy and are geared to the goals of that group.
- 3.** The coaching staff will make the final decision regarding which meets swimmers will attend and which events a swimmer will compete in. Please see the **Meet Entry** section for more information.
- 4.** At meets, the coaching staff will conduct and supervise warm-up procedures for the team. The coaches will be solely responsible for offering racing strategies, technical instruction, and constructive criticism regarding the swimmer's performance. All relay teams will be determined by the coaches.
- 5.** All team communication will come from the coaches via Team Unify.

Swimmers Behavior Expectations

1. Workout and Meet Attendance

Each training group has either specific attendance goals or a mandatory number of practices a swimmer must attend. It is the responsibility of the swimmers and parents to familiarize themselves with the attendance goals of their specific group.

Please arrive to each practice on time and ready to swim. Equipment should be ready to go before practice starts.

2. Appropriate Practice Apparel

All swimmers should be wearing a swimming suit appropriate for training; no shorts or shirts are permitted during practice. It is recommended that all swimmers wear caps. Should the swimmer choose to wear a cap, it is preferred to be a LTC swim cap.

3. Listen and follow the coaches' instructions

4. Follow Pool Rules

5. Be courteous and respectful to other patrons of the pool, your teammates, and your coaches

6. Strive to become a better athlete at each practice

7. Encourage your teammates toward excellence

8. Be a team "builder", not a team "divider"



Parent Expectations

1. Parents are strongly encouraged to volunteer their time to help with the development of the team through swim meet assistance, setting up, safety chairman, referee, meet official, etc. end of season banquet, or other team activities that require planning, set up and clean up.
2. Parents are welcome to observe workouts; however, they are asked to stay in the designated seating areas at the pool.
3. Please drop off your child and refrain from coaching your child from the side or the chairs. Each swimmer needs to focus on one coach and should never be distracted during practice with presumed helpful behaviors by parents. Parents should support their children by encouraging them during races, after races, and at home after practice. Please talk with the coach before or after practice via phone, email, text message, etc.
4. Videotaping, pictures, or other distracting behaviors during practice is NOT permitted at any time. Video and pictures are allowed at swim meets as long as you disable your flash and do not stand in front of other coaches, safety marshals, timers, or officials during the meet. This is based on USA Swimming rules and regulations and MUST be adhered to at all times.
5. Never approach meet management, officials, or safety marshals during a swim meet. Communicate all suggestions and questions to LIFE swim coaches only.
6. Parents need to communicate in writing (30 day notice is required), of a voluntary resignation from LIFE.
7. Parents need to show respect to all parents, coaches, swimmers/athletes, competitors, teams, officials, directors, board members, and patrons of Life Time Fitness at all times.
8. Parents are not to "friend" any youth (Under age 18) swimmers on Facebook or Twitter as restricted by law. This does not include your own children. Privacy and safety is very important for all swimmers and needs to be respected through best practices.
9. Please do not attempt to engage the coaching staff in conversation while they are on-deck during practice. This is distracting for both the coaches and swimmers. If you need to talk with a coach, please either call a coach, email a coach, or wait and plan a meeting time with a coach after practice is over and the kids are away from the pool. Communicate via email or voicemail if you need to set up a specific time to talk with the coach. Coaches are typically available a few minutes (10-15minutes) before or after practice, or in between practices, if another coach is available to get the next group started.
10. Please talk with the coaches about any suggestions or concerns you have for improvement outside of swim meets and practice times.
We encourage communication to create positive swimming experiences.
11. Parents must keep their accounts with USA Swimming and Life Time Fitness in good standing. Please make payments on time each month and keep us informed of new address, phone number, email, etc.



Parent Cooperation and Communication

Cooperation and communication between parents and coaches is a vital part of a successful program. If a parent disagrees with a coach, the problem must be resolved privately between the two. A parent's critical comments directed at the coach in the presence of a swimmer may have a negative impact on the confidence the swimmer has in the coach. Once that confidence is lost, success is unlikely. Also, it should be emphasized that confusion will result if the swimmer has two "coaches" (Parent and Coach). The results are almost always better if parents restrict their input to support and encouragement, and let the coach provide technical instruction. Coaches always welcome input from parents and will make themselves available outside of workouts and competition. It is appreciated if parents would email coaches for appointments to discuss matters that are not urgent.



Training Equipment

1. Swimmers are required to bring specific training equipment to each practice. It is the swimmer's responsibility to make sure that equipment is present and ready for use at each practice.
2. Please refer to the Equipment List located on the LIFE website for specifics about the above equipment. All items can be purchased from a designated vendor affiliated with LifeTime Swim, please contact your Head Coach if applicable
3. LIFE is a Speedo sponsored team and therefore we encourage all LIFE swimmers to purchase Speedo products whenever possible.

Equipment

	Gold/Plat.	Silver	Bronze
Goggles	yes	yes	yes
Kickboard	yes	yes	yes
Team Suit	Yes	yes	yes
Team Cap	Yes	yes	yes
Pull buoy	yes	yes	no
Equipment bag	yes	yes	yes
Water Bottle	yes	yes	yes
Hand Paddles	Yes	Yes	No
Fins	Yes	Yes	Yes

Equipment

	Jade	Sapphire
Goggles	yes	yes
Kickboard	No	No
Team Suit	Yes	yes
Team Cap	Yes	yes
Pull buoy	No	No
Equipment bag	No	No
Water Bottle	yes	yes



Swim Meets

1. Team Uniform Policy

Swimmers are required to wear approved LIFE apparel to swim meets. If swimmers do not arrive with the proper apparel, they will not be allowed to compete.

Competitive Uniform Requirements

- LIFE Team Cap
- LIFE Team T-Shirt
- LIFE Team Suit

It is very important that each swimmer is a recognizable LIFE swimmer. Each swimmer should only be wearing LIFE apparel. We strongly recommend wearing Black, Blue and White, as they are the team colors.

2. Warm ups

- Swimmers need to arrive at the competition pool 15 minutes before the beginning of the warm up session.
- Warm ups will always be conducted by the coaches. Parents should not be involved in the warm up process.
- Swimmers are expected to warm up with the team unless excused by the coach.
- It is important that swimmers and parents understand that warm up is an essential part of a successful performance.

3. Team Area

It is customary for us to have a “team area” and for swimmers to sit together as a group. This helps to foster team unity and create a team atmosphere. Also, it allows the coaches to help the younger swimmers be ready for their events on time.

4. Before and After Each Race

Before and at the conclusion of a race, swimmers are asked to come immediately to the coaches present at the meet. This allows the coach an opportunity to discuss the race, as well as offer constructive comments regarding splits, stroke technique, race strategy, etc. If a warm down area is available, swimmers should warm down after each race.



5. Parent Participation at Meets

- Timing is a great way to help the LIFE community. This important part of each meet is actually quite easy and fun. Timers help run the meet. While helping, you get a lot of benefits. You get the best view of the swimmers, you will interact with parents of swimmers on other teams, and you will share the positive attitude towards swimming on the pool deck during the meets.
- Parents must conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner at all times during swim meets.
- As a courtesy to officials and the host team, parents should generally stay off the pool deck during a meet unless serving in an official capacity.
- Similarly, parents are asked to refer all questions and concerns regarding meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of a meet to the coach. The coach will pursue the concern through the appropriate channels

6. Meet Fees

Parents are responsible for paying for all swim meet fees that their swimmer incurs. This included event fees, facility/athlete surcharge and the Life Time surcharge for each meet. Parents forfeit any meet fees if a swimmer is scratched or does not show up for the meet in which they have already been committed and entries have been submitted to the hosting team. Once the team submits the payment all financial responsibilities are final.

Meet Sign-up

The LIFE coaching staff wants to ensure that the first meet you attend is a great experience for you and your swimmer. As a new LIFE member, you should receive access to the Team Unify website to register your swimmer(s) in upcoming swim meets.

The LIFE team website is: www.lifetimeswimteamhouston.com

As swim meet registrations approach, you will receive an informational e-mail requesting you to commit, or not commit your swimmer in the upcoming meet.



Swim Meet Checklist

Below are some of the items you should bring with you to every event:

1. 2 goggles (just in case a strap breaks)
2. 2-3 towels (you'll want to keep your swimmer warm in-between events)
3. Spare swim cap
4. Sharpie, Pen/Pencil, and Highlighter (these are for the parents)
5. \$5 - \$10 (for meet program)
6. Change of clothes for after the meet (most venues provide showers for your swimmer(s))
7. Sweats/Towel-pants/Bathrobe (optional)
8. Blanket (optional)
9. Chairs (some venues have limited bleacher space so it is always a good idea to have chairs available)
10. Games or cards (some meets will have a large number of swimmers so keeping your swimmer occupied during down time is always a good idea)

Your swimmer(s) will burn a lot of energy throughout the day so bring snacks that will help them re-fuel. Below are a few suggestions:

- Water, water, water
- Fruit
- Bagels
- Energy bars/Gatorade
- Nuts

Most venues provide a concession stand but it is always a good idea to bring snacks you know your swimmer(s) will actually eat.

Tracking Events

On the Team Unify website under the Events/Meet tab, you can pull up meet information and view the meet details such as location, warm-up times, etc. This is usually provided as a link within the Swim Meet summary.

To help you and your swimmer(s) remember what events they are swimming, when (heat) they are swimming, and where (lane) they are swimming, it is a good idea to write your swimmer's information on their arm or leg with a Sharpie. This is something most kids look forward to – writing on themselves without getting into trouble.

The meet program will provide you with all the information you'll need. A sample program is provided which contains: events, heats, and lanes for every swimmer registered to swim.



Team Travel Code Of Conduct

As an authorized representative of LIFE, local LSC, and USA Swimming, I will comply with the following guidelines.

1. The possession or use of alcohol, tobacco products or controlled substances by any athlete is prohibited.
2. Curfews established by the coach (es) will be adhered to each day.
3. Team members and staff will attend all team functions including meetings, warm-ups, practices, competitions, meals, etc., unless otherwise excused or instructed by the coach of record.
4. To ensure the propriety of the athletes and to protect the staff, there will be no male athletes in female athletes' rooms, and no female athletes in male athletes' rooms.
5. Team members and staff will refrain from any illegal or inappropriate behavior that would detract from a positive image of the LIFE Team, local LSC, or USA Swimming or be detrimental to its performance objectives.
6. Team members will display proper respect and sportsmanship toward coaches, officials, administrators, fellow competitors, and the public.
7. Any additional guidelines for the team will be established as needed by the coach of record.

IMPLEMENTATION

Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct as set forth in this document may result in disciplinary action.

Such discipline may include, but not limited to:

1. Dismissal from the team and immediate return home (**at the parents expense**);
2. Disqualification from one or more events, or all events of competition;
3. Disqualification from future LIFE team travel; or
4. Financial penalties (return from meet, lost entries, payment of damages, etc.).

