**BEHAVIOR CODE FOR** **SWIMMERS & PARENTS and SWIM PARENT 101**

*Our guidelines are founded on the principles of mutual respect & cooperation.*

**SAFETY**

1. Lightening, earthquake, fire or personal injuries are incidents that require the full cooperation of all members. Please stay calm and listen for directions from our coaches.

1. During an electrical storm, no one can be outdoors. Coaches must maintain order in the locker/bathrooms rooms and NO SHOWERS can be used.

2. Due to drowning risks and other conditions, children not participating in swim practice or competitions must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

3. No one should ever submerge below a pool cover, nor climb on lane line/cover reels.

4. Running, pushing, or horse play on the deck area are not permitted.

5. It is unsafe to throw training gear. Weights, surgical tubing, medicine balls and exercise balls should be used with supervision and only in the way they were designed for exercise.

6. Swimmers who are waiting for transportation should always wait inside the swim center complex.

7. Persons who seem out of place or unfamiliar and activities of an unsafe, unusual nature should be reported immediately to one of the coaches.

8. No unauthorized or uncarded individuals shall be on deck during practice.

9. Each swimmer should have a current Medical Authorization Form with Medical Release on file with the team.

10. No cameras or cell phone photography of any kind in the locker rooms or behind starting blocks.

**CITIZENSHIP = TEAMMANSHIP**

1. We will refrain from judging or criticizing others. We will not discuss individuals when not in our presence.
2. We will “PRAISE IN PUBLIC AND CORRECT IN PRIVATE”.
3. We will treat all members of the team (coaches, swimmers, parents) and our opponents with dignity and respect.
4. We will refrain from using drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.
5. We are all responsible for the care and proper use of equipment. Practice is not finished until all supplies are returned to storage. Everyone helps.
6. Physically or verbally abusive behavior is unacceptable for members of Piranha Swimming. Piranha Swimming follows USA Swimming’s policy for **No Bullying**, and this type of behavior will not be tolerated.
7. We will be dedicated and loyal to our club and teammates. We will be vocally supportive. We will display our team pride by competing in Piranha Swimming attire at all times. Team caps and suits are to be worn when competing.
8. We will arrive to practice allowing enough time to prepare and begin on time.
9. We will be committed to our best effort every day. An honest effort does not include cutting laps, pulling on the lane line or missing sendoff/sets.

**Parents Code of Conduct**

**Piranha Swimming as an organization highly encourages the following parental behavior:**

1. Open communication between parents, swimmers and coaches emphasizing goal-setting and focusing on the performance expectations of both the swimmer and the parents
2. Meeting with the coaches/swimmers/parents during appropriate times to discuss issues
3. Positive reinforcement of all swimmers in all situations - team spirit, team loyalty
4. Parental involvement on the Board of Directors and in organizing and running of meets and other team events

**Piranha Swimming as an organization will not tolerate the following behavior from parents:**

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

**As a parent of a swimmer and member of Piranha Swimming,**

**I will abide by the following guidelines:**

1. Practice *teamwork* with all parents, swimmers and coaches by supporting the values of *Discipline, Loyalty, Commitment and Hard Work*.
2. As a parent, I will not coach or instruct the team or any swimmer at a practice or meets (from the stands or any other area) or interfere with coaches on the pool deck.
3. Demonstrate good sportsmanship by conducting myself in 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. Respect everyone’s role.

**Swimmers – Swim Coaches – Coach**

**Officials – Officiate Parents – Parent**

1. As a parent, I understand that criticizing, name-calling, use of abusive language or gestures directed toward the coaches, officials, and/or any participating swimmer will not be permitted or tolerated.
2. Enjoy involvement with Piranha Swimming by supporting the swimmers, coaches and other parents with positive communication and actions.

6. During competitions, 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.

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

## Your Responsibilities as a Swim Parent

* Encourage your child to swim, but don’t pressure. Let your child choose to swim (and to quit) if he or she wants.
* Understand what your child wants from swimming, and provide a supportive atmosphere for achieving these goals.
* Put your child’s participation in perspective. Don’t make swimming everything in your child’s life; make it part of life.
* Make sure the coach is qualified to guide your child through the swimming experience.
* Keep winning in perspective and help your child do the same.
* Help your child set challenging but realistic performance goals, rather than focusing only on “winning or getting the best times”.
* Help your child understand the valuable lessons sports can teach.
* Help your child meet responsibilities to the team and to the coach.
* Discipline your child when necessary.
* Turn your child over to the coach at practices and meets – don’t meddle or coach from the deck.
* Supply the coach with information on any allergies or special health conditions your child has. Make sure your child brings any necessary medications to practices and meets.

## Modeling Good Sportsmanship

It’s especially critical that you model good sportsmanship for your child. “Being a good sport” is much easier said than done – just look at the examples of certain professional and collegiate coaches and athletes who do the opposite. It’s crucial that you maintain a cool head and a healthy attitude toward sport if you expect your child to.

Here are ways to model appropriate attitudes and behaviors when you’re at your child’s meets:

* Encourage all swimmers.
* Control your emotions in frustrating situations.
* Abide by referee’s or official’s decisions. Most swimming officials are volunteers who have received special training.
* Congratulate the opponents when they win.

## A Swim Parent’s Dos and Don’ts at a Meet

1. Remain in the spectator area during competitions.

2. Don’t advise the coach on how to do their job.

3. Don’t coach your child during the meet

4. Don’t make insulting comments to swimmers, parents, officials or coaches from other teams

5. Don’t drink alcohol at meets or come to one having drunk too much.

6. Cheer for your team.

7. Show enthusiasm, and support for your child.

8. Be in control of your emotions.

9. Help when you are asked by a coach or an official.

10. Thank the coaches, officials, and other volunteers who conducted the event.

## Values Kids Learn Through Sports

Your child can benefit greatly by participating in sports – but those benefits are not guaranteed. They are the result of a cooperative effort among clubs and administrators, coaches, officials and parents. These benefits come more readily when adults put the interest of the children first and leave their own egos and desires about winning at home.

Through sports, your child can:

* Acquire an appreciation for an active lifestyle.
* Develop a positive self-concept by mastering sport skills.
* Learn how to work as part of a team.
* Develop social skills with other children and adults.
* Learn about managing success and disappointment.
* Learn about fair play and being a good sport.
* Learn respect for others.

## Developing a Winning Perspective

Every decision parents make in guiding their children should be based first on what’s best for the child, and second on what may help the child win. Stated another way, this perspective places *Athletes First, Winning Second.*

We’re not saying winning is unimportant. Winning, or striving to win, is essential to enjoyable competition. Pursuing victory and achieving goals are sweet rewards of sports. But they can turn sour if, through losing, you or your child’s proper perspective is also lost.

Maintaining this proper perspective can help some children achieve even more than they would if they were consumed with the idea of winning. An obsession with winning often produces a fear of failure, resulting in below average performances and upset children.

## Building Your Child’s Self-Esteem

Building self-esteem in your child is one of your most important parenting duties. It’s not easy, and it’s made even more difficult in sport by the prevailing attitude of “winning is everything.” Athletes who find their self-worth through winning will go through tough times when they lose.

An athlete can be successful *without* winning. Success is a measure of an athlete’s competency; winning reflects the outcome of a contest. Your child won’t be able to control all of the factors that go into winning a race, but he or she can find success in developing and improving skills.

Building self-esteem in your child takes more than encouragement. You need to show your child encouragement. You need to show your child unconditional approval and love. It’s easy to show that approval and love when a child succeeds; you might be challenged to do the same when your child fails. Don’t praise dishonestly; children can see through that. If your child has a poor meet, don’t tell them that they swam well. Just show the same amount of love and approval for them, not their performance, as you showed before the meet.

## Questions to Ask Your Child after Practice or Competition

* Did you swim better this week?
* What did you learn in practice?
* What do you feel you need to work on?
* What did the coach emphasize after the event?
* Did you have fun swimming today?
* Was your opponent a good sport? Were you?
* Are you getting in better shape?
* What was your favorite part of the event?
* What’s the best part of being part of the team?
* What do you like most about your coach?
* Were you nervous competing today? If you were, why?
* How can your coach help you improve?

## Emphasizing Fun, Skill Development, and Striving to Win

The reason you should emphasize fun is quite simple: Without it, your child may not want to keep swimming. Children don’t have fun when they stand around in practice and don’t get to swim in meets, when they feel pressure to win, and don’t improve or learn new skills. Conversely, they *do* have fun when practices are well organized, they get to swim in meets, they develop new skills, and the focus is on *striving* to win.

A focus on developing skills and striving to win takes the pressure off winning, which one child cannot control. But, all children can improve their swimming skills and when they see that improvement, they are usually motivated to improve more. Developing skills is one of the most satisfying aspects of playing a sport.

## Helping Your Child Set Performance Goals

Performance goals, which emphasize individual skill improvement, are much better than the outcome goal of winning for two reasons:

* 1. Performance goals are in the athlete’s control.
  2. Performance goals help the athlete improve.

Performance goals should be specific and they should be challenging but not too difficult to achieve. For example, you might help them set the goals for completing each swim legally, applying the race strategy their coach taught them, and finishing aggressively.

Your child’s coach and you should help your young athlete set such goals. Help your child focus on performance goals before a race; this focus will help swimming be an enjoyable learning experience for your child.

If you can’t attend one of your child’s meets, don’t ask “Did you win?” afterwards. Ask performance related questions: You could ask, “How did your stroke feel?” “Were you able to visualize the race before you swam?” and “Did you talk to the coach after your swim?”

## Talking With Your Child after a Poor Performance

Sometimes it’s hard to know what to say to your child after a disappointing performance. When children know they did not swim well, they don’t want to hear “You swam great!” And when they have had a poor race they don’t want to be told “It’s really not important.” At the moment, it is important to them, and they should be permitted the dignity of their unhappiness.

Although parents mean well, remarks like these sound superficial and lack sincerity. Children can detect phony comments and resent them. When parents are insincere or provide false praise, children learn to place less value on their words and later on may be unable to get full satisfaction from deserved praise. In short, praise generously and criticize sparingly, but don’t be a phony.