



Metro Parks Swim Teams

Athlete Safety Best Practices



Metro Parks Staff and volunteers make every attempt to ensure the following best practices:

1. During team travel, when doing room checks, attending team meetings and/or other activities, two-deep leadership and open and observable environments should be maintained.
2. When a coach touches an athlete as part of instruction, the coach should do so in direct view of others and inform the athlete of what he/she is doing prior to the initial contact.
3. All swimming practices should be open to observation by parents.
4. Two-deep Leadership: One coach member and at least one other adult who is not in the water should be present at all practices and other sanctioned club activities whenever at least one athlete is present.
5. If athletes must enter a room occupied by athletes of the opposite gender, which is only allowed for the purpose of meal sharing, the entry door to the room must be propped completely open; athletes of opposite gender are allowed to enter the room, collect food and immediately return to their own room or common meeting place; and the entire process shall be supervised by a coach or chaperone.
6. During overnight team travel, if athletes are paired with other athletes they shall be of the same gender and should be a similar age.
7. Chaperones and/or team managers shall ideally stay in nearby rooms.
8. For athletes 10 years old or younger, their parents are responsible for arranging and/or providing supervision for their athlete outside of training or competition sessions.
9. When only one athlete and one coach travel to a competition, either (1) a "travel companion," who is usually a peer athlete of the same gender who may not be competing, shall accompany the athlete and coach on the trip, or (2) there shall be a "buddy" club with athletes to associate with during the competition and when away from the venue.
10. Non-athlete adult members should respect the privacy of athletes in situations such as changing of clothes, showering, etc. Non-athlete adult members should protect their own privacy in similar situations.
11. Touching athletes should be minimized outside the boundaries of what is considered normal instruction. Appropriate interaction would include high fives, fist bumps, side-to-side hugs and handshakes.
12. In vehicles, athletes of the same gender and age shall sit next to each other when possible. When not possible, have athletes of opposite gender sit next to each other within coach or chaperone's direct line-of-sight.
13. Any time more than one adult is in a vehicle, one adult should have clear line-of-sight on all youth.
14. Athletes are allowed to be separated from direct coach and/or chaperone supervision during travel under the following circumstances:
 - A. The athlete's parent has provided written permission for the athlete to be supervised by a relative of the athlete or a relative of another athlete. Written permission may be provided by the athlete themselves if the athlete is eighteen years old or older.
 - B. For athletes 13 years old or older, they must (1) stay in groups of 5 athletes or more, (2) have a minimum of three working cell phones within each group, (3) check in via photo-text whenever prescribed by the coach (4) must stay within the geography and follow the restrictions set by the supervising coach, and (5) a team meeting place and time must be set prior to group separation. Ideally, the team meeting location shall be the same place where the group initially separates from.
 - C. For athletes 15 years old or older, they must (1) stay in groups of 3 athletes or more, (2) have a minimum of two working cell phones within each group, (3) check in via photo-text whenever prescribed by the coach (4) must stay within the geography and follow the restrictions set by the supervising coach, and (5) a team meeting place and time must be set prior to group separation. Ideally, the team meeting location shall be the same place where the group initially separates from.
 - D. "Photo-text Check-in" procedures are preferred to be randomly solicited by a supervising coach or chaperone, preferably by group-texting the athletes asking for a "check-in." Check-ins should occur no less frequently than every 70 minutes. Any athlete, or group of athletes unable to check-in within 5 minutes will not be allowed to be separated from direct coach and/or chaperone supervision for the remainder of the trip.