15622 Country Club Drive
Mill Creek, Washington 98012
office@WESTswimteam.com
425.379.8806

**WEST SWIM TEAM GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS**

There is and has always been much discussion on the importance of the Support Triangle structure of parent, athlete and coach. Each plays a critical role in the development of the swimmer. Swimming is a very demanding sport but through the hard work and perseverance, invaluable lessons are instilled. WEST strives for the swimmer's long-term success and our goal is they continue swimming past high school. With such long swimming careers ahead of them, each part of the triangle plays an important part in determining how the swimmer develops, not just as an athlete.

**It is crucial we all work together and keep in mind several general rules of thumb:**

1. Swimming is a sport and sports are supposed to be fun.
2. Each part of the Support Triangle plays a specific role. By each maximizing our specific roles and working together, we maximize the potential for the swimmer.
    a. Swimmer: always put forth best effort and strive for perfect attendance.
    b. Coaches: provide training and council on demands of the sport of swimming.
    c. Parents: provide consistency, love and unconditional support for your athlete.
3. Nutrition – as a parent, you primarily influence your child's diet. They exercise a lot and will need to eat a lot, but we want to maximize performance and development, so it is important they are getting what they need.

. Avoid supplements – get what you need from real food first

a. Take a multi-vitamin (+maybe vitamin D in the winter) – soil nutrient levels aren't what they used to be and the demand on the athlete's body requires adequate vitamins and minerals.

b. Water, water, water – we don't really need to drink anything else. Hydration plays a major role in performance and recovery.

c. "Shop the Perimeter" – it has been said that everything essential for your body to survive can be found on the perimeter of the grocery store: Veggies, Protein, Grains, and Dairy.

d. "Eat a Rainbow" – try to have a variety of colors of vegetables with every meal. You can't eat enough veggies.

4. Rest – growing bodies need extra rest already, and with training, it becomes that much more important. 6-8 hours per night minimum.
5. No Pressure – anyone that spends as much time with his or her face in the water, as these swimmers do, learns to take it pretty seriously. Swimmers should already put pressure on themselves to perform. As Coaches, we need to be able to also put pressure on the athlete to perform. However, the Support Triangle will crack if it is getting pressure from all sides. It has been regularly noted, and through my own experience swimming and the people I swam with, the ones that made it the farthest in the sport had parents that we most "Hands-Off" and did not put any additional pressure on them to succeed.

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6. Show the swimmer that you support them – Being "Hands-Off" doesn't mean not to get involved with your child's swimming. They need to know that you support their hard work and dedication to the sport and that you care about them.

. Volunteer & Stay Connected – help out at meets, meet and interact with other swim parents. WEST isn't just a swim team, it's a swimming community.

a. Provide transportation – we understand that our busy practice schedule and attendance expectations also put heavy demands on parents. We strongly encourage more carpooling.

b. Keep them happy – although we all go through ups and downs, overall, kids should be happy. If they aren't please speak with their respective coaches so we can work on a solution.

7. Family, School, Swimming – whenever facing hard decisions, remember the order of priorities.

**The most important job as a parent is to SUPPORT:**

- Support ALL WEST swimmers, yours and others.
- Support your age group and level.
- Support the coaches.
- Support other parents.
- Support positive communication.
- Support ALL WEST hosted meets as a volunteer.
- Support WEST and PNS / USA Swimming at all meets.
- Support ALL WEST fundraising opportunities.

**and for your swimmer…**

- Keep them fed, clothed and healthy.
- Bring them to practice.