



# NEW CANAAN YMCA

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## AQUIANAS SYNCHRONIZED SWIM TEAM

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### PARENT & SWIMMER HANDBOOK



Welcome to the New Canaan YMCA Aquianas synchronized swim team.

We are a YMCA program, and pride ourselves on developing champion athletes and champion individuals. The Aquianas are known for their respectfulness, responsibility, courtesy and work ethic in and out of the pool.

The professional coaching staff of the Aquianas, with the invaluable support of parents, creates a positive environment where every athlete can grow and attain their personal best. We believe that by being part of a team, our swimmers develop essential life skills while simultaneously becoming more confident, successful, empowered individuals.

Please take a few minutes to read this handbook. It contains a lot of information about our team, our sport, our philosophies and the expectations we have for our swimmers, parents and coaches. The Parents and Swimmers Handbook should answer many of the questions you may have. Should you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me at (203) 966-4528 ext.183.

On behalf of the Aquianas coaching staff, let me take this opportunity to welcome back our returning team members and extend a warm welcome to our new members. We are looking forward to a successful season!

Sincerely



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# NEW CANAAN YMCA AQUIANAS

## YMCA MISSION STATEMENT

The New Canaan YMCA is committed to strengthening our community. The Y is a diverse organization of men, women, and children joined together by a shared commitment to nurturing the potential of kids, promoting healthy living, and fostering a sense of social responsibility.

## THE AQUIANAS TEAM PHILOSOPHY

The Aquianas Synchronized Swimming Team has several interlocking goals.

- To nurture in our swimmers the YMCA core values: Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility;
- To build team spirit and support that places the needs of the team on a higher level than the needs of the individual;
- To enable each swimmer to develop positive self-esteem and achieve personal excellence by performing at the highest level of her ability.

Achieving these goals is not always easy. Synchronized swimming is a unique blend of art and athletics as well as individual and team performances. As in many sports the desire to “win” sometimes overtakes the need to “develop values” or “build team spirit”. When this happens, it is detrimental to the sport, the team, but most of all to the swimmers themselves.

Each of us – swimmers, parents and coaches – has a different role to play in achieving these goals.

**SWIMMERS** must set high, yet realistic, personal goals. They must learn that personal success comes through hard work, discipline, commitment and teamwork. When each swimmer focuses on fulfilling their role on the team to the best of their ability, the entire team will can achieve higher levels of success.

**PARENTS** must support the overall team as well as their swimmer by enabling regular attendance, supporting the Parent Association (PA) efforts, and above all, maintaining their focus on the character building aspects of the sport.

**COACHES** must create a team-learning environment in which individual skills are enhanced while individual character and team spirit are built. Coaches must understand individual needs, abilities and limitations, but they must also require discipline, a team orientation and performance. Above all, they must treat each swimmer fairly.

By understanding and living up to our respective roles we can continue to build competence and character in our swimmers.

# PARENT ASSOCIATION (PA)

Through excellent coaching, dedication of our swimmers and generosity and involvement of our parents, we have earned a reputation as an outstanding organization both in and out of the pool.

The continued success of our program depends on having an active, engaged and involved parent organization. A Board of Directors comprised of the following positions leads our PA:

## **Executive Board:**

President

Treasurer

Secretary

Director of Synchronized Swimming

Assistant Director of Synchronized Swimming

Senior Program Director

## **Additional Board Members:**

Team Manager

Meets/Events Coordinator(s)

Fundraising Coordinator (s)

Travel Coordinator

The members of the Board are appointed in the spring for the following fall-spring swim season. The PA meets every 6-8 weeks to coordinate activities and all our parents are encouraged to attend.

## The Role of PA

The role of the PA is to provide organizational, operational and financial support to the New Canaan YMCA Aquianas. As such, our primary goals are:

1. To **facilitate communication** among the parents, and between parents and coaches.
2. To **allow coaches to focus on coaching** by helping with supportive tasks necessary for successful team operation.
3. To **raise money for the Aquianas team** through a variety of fundraisers to help offset the very high cost of developing and maintaining a nationally ranked team.

There are many ways to become involved and lend a helping hand to the team. Fundraisers need organizers and willing hands, home meets require volunteers and away meets require chaperones. There is a job for everyone and the expectation is that everyone will help by meeting at least the minimum volunteer requirement, which is:

1. Each family is responsible for 2 points for the required volunteer positions. Parents can sign up for various volunteer positions on the team's website. [www.aquianas.com](http://www.aquianas.com). Any unused required points will be fined \$75/point at the conclusion of the season.
2. Each family volunteers at a home meet, either as a chaperone, at concessions, or as a volunteer. Each family is required to do a total of 6 service points at all home meet/events per year. Each unfilled point will be fined \$75 per point at the conclusion of the season.

# PARENT ASSOCIATION BOARD POSITIONS

- President \*** A 2 year position with a maximum of 2 terms. Oversees the organization and the functioning of the PA, including the elected positions. Maintains communication between the coaches and the parents and is responsible for organizing and running PA meetings.
- Treasurer\*** A 2 year position with a maximum of 2 terms. Receives money and pays bills from the Aquianas account, maintains bank accounts and checkbook. The treasurer maintains records of swimmer earnings on fundraisers and oversees disbursement of those earnings, collects all monies for suits, trips and other expenses and oversees team apparel and outfitting.
- Fundraising Coordinator(s)** A 2 year position with a maximum of 2 terms. \* Assists the president in needed areas and is in training to “learn the ropes” of the president’s position. Oversees fundraising efforts, including the annual appeal, booster team, advertising revenues, etc. and creates and oversees support teams needed to successfully execute fundraising efforts.
- Team Manager\*** Coordinates registration, team travel, apparel and other critical team functions.
- Meets/events Coordinator(s)\*** A 2 year position with a maximum of 2 terms. Assists the president in needed areas. Is in training to “learn the ropes” of the president’s position. Coordinates general events, meet volunteer coordinator. Oversees chaperone coordinators, publicity, gifts for awards banquet.
- Secretary\*** A 2 year position with a maximum of 2 terms. Records, types, and distributes minutes of the PA meetings and is responsible for maintaining the Google calendar and assisting coaches with set-up of the calendar. Additionally, the secretary maintains mailing lists assists with email blasts, meeting notices and helps draft needed policies and procedures in consultation with coaches and PA and is expected to check email at least once a day in case there is a message to distribute. Also oversees the publicity
- Travel Coordinator\*** A 2 year position with a maximum of 2 terms Organizes travel plans and itineraries. Responsible for working alongside, chaperone coordinators and coaches to help coordinate and organize swimmers’ and coaches travels.

\* Board members, which means a responsibility to the team.

# Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards

By: BoardSource

1. Determine mission and purpose. It is the board's responsibility to create and review a statement of mission and purpose that articulates the organization's goals, means, and primary constituents served.
2. Select the chief executive. Boards must reach consensus on the chief executive's responsibilities and undertake a careful search to find the most qualified individual for the position.
3. Support and evaluate the chief executive. The board should ensure that the chief executive has the moral and professional support he or she needs to further the goals of the organization.
4. Ensure effective planning. Boards must actively participate in an overall planning process and assist in implementing and monitoring the plan's goals.
5. Monitor, and strengthen programs and services. The board's responsibility is to determine which programs are consistent with the organization's mission and monitor their effectiveness.
6. Ensure adequate financial resources. One of the board's foremost responsibilities is to secure adequate resources for the organization to fulfill its mission.
7. Protect assets and provide proper financial oversight. The board must assist in developing the annual budget and ensuring that proper financial controls are in place.
8. Build a competent board. All boards have a responsibility to articulate prerequisites for candidates, orient new members, and periodically and comprehensively evaluate their own performance.
9. Ensure legal and ethical integrity. The board is ultimately responsible for adherence to legal standards and ethical norms.
10. Enhance the organization's public standing. The board should clearly articulate the organization's mission, accomplishments, and goals to the public and garner support from the community.

## References

- Richard T. Ingram, *Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards, Second Edition* (BoardSource 2009).

# EXPECTATIONS FOR PARENTS

Behind every successful swimmer are supportive parents who have made the commitment that allows a swimmer to excel. Active, informed, involved, cooperative parents are vital to the success of the Aquianas.

1. Encourage your swimmer's involvement in a manner that is consistent with the program's goals of building the YMCA four core values; Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility, while striving to build team spirit and achieving their personal best. Often swimmers have to fight their own battles while you stay in the background. This is often difficult, but through this process the swimmer builds maturity and confidence.
2. Enable your swimmer to attend practice regularly. Synchro demands a lot of time to build individual skills and for team and small routines practice. When one swimmer is missing from a team practice the team is limited in its ability to fully practice and improve the routine. If transporting your child is a problem, please try to arrange a car pool.
3. Leave the coaching to the coaches. They know best which combination of swimmers, routines, music, costumes and practice will produce the desired result.
4. If you have concerns about the coaches or the coaching, please talk directly with the coach. If it is a formal complaint and may require disciplinary action, you will be asked to file your complaint in writing. Problems do arise and should be dealt with directly and promptly. Please schedule an appointment with the coach and please refrain from discussing your individual issues with other parents or swimmers.
5. Support your child by attending as many meets as possible.
6. Attend PA meetings and volunteer for the PA.
7. Support every fundraiser. The more money we raise together, the less we have to pay individually.
8. Monitor the care of your swimmer's suits and team equipment.
9. Pay your bills promptly when asked.
10. If there is an issue that affects team, please bring it to the board's attention. It is possible that the board may already be trying to find a solution.

## Checklist for Parents on Athletic Performance

- Encourage fun
- Emphasize the process versus the outcome
- Develop self-esteem in the person not just the performance
- Challenge athletes to improve, do not threaten them
- Allow athlete to fail and learn from their mistakes and poor performances. It is only a loss if you lose the lesson.
- Learn how to support athletes and encourage them
- Help athletes to relax.

# EXPECTATION OF SWIMMERS

1. **ATTITUDE** – A swimmer’s success in our sport will reflect in their attitude toward the sport, their team, their coaches and themselves. We expect the following:
  - a. **Personal Discipline:** Each swimmer must find within themselves the dedication to high standards, hard work and regular attendance.
  - b. **Respect for Others:** Respect is not reserved for best friends, or high performers or only for our team. Every competitor, teammate, parent, coach, chaperone and official deserves our respect. Rudeness or disrespect will not be tolerated at any time.
  - c. **Accepting Direction:** Swimmers are expected to take direction without debate. Any problems can be discussed with the coaches after practice or after the competition (see Code of Conduct).
  - d. **Dedication to the Team:** Synchronized swimming is a team sport, and the needs of the team come before the needs of the individual. Cooperation and a willingness to carry out the roles assigned by the coaches and an effort on behalf of the team are expected.
  - e. **Sportsmanship:** “It matters not whether we win or lose, but how we play the game.” We play fairly, win with grace and lose with determination to do better next time. A tough competitor brings out the best in us.
  - f. **Care of Team Equipment:** Swimmers are expected to take proper care of team equipment and return them in good condition. Team equipment, including bags, is to be used only at competitions and specified team events.
  
2. **PRACTICE** – Practice is serious business. Everything done at practice has a purpose. Practice is the time to develop and refine skills, both as individuals and as teams. *Whenever one member of a team is absent, it impedes the team’s ability to fully practice its routine.* Remember when you aren’t practicing hard, your competition is.
  - a. **Attendance:** Regular attendance at practice is expected. Practice amounts vary a great deal depending on age, skill level and the number of routines a swimmer is preparing.
    - **Age 12 & Under** at least 3 times per week
    - **Age 13 – 15** at least 3 times per week
    - **Age JR/SR** at least 4 times per weekAt certain times of the year more practice may be required

Regular attendance at practice not only improves skills, but also shows personal discipline and commitment to the team. These factors are important and will be considered when decisions on team compositions and small routine assignments are made.

- b. **Absence Notification:** Please notify the coach as early as possible, but no less than one hour before practice if you are unable to attend. Please call your daughters coach and send her an email as well.
- c. **Unacceptable Attendance:** If attendance at practices prior to a meet is unsatisfactory, the coach may bar a swimmer from competing. If attendance patterns are unacceptable for one month or more, the coach may, after consulting with the parents, remove the swimmer from one or more routines.
- d. **Late pick-up policy:** Any parent that arrives more than 15 minutes after the end of practice for pick up when the facility is closed (i.e. after hours at the Y or Weston pool) will be billed for the overtime amount for the coaches who needed to stay.

### 3. **COMPETITION** – Winning is not our most important goal. Doing our best is!

- a. **Eligibility:** Various types of meets have different eligibility requirements (see Meet Types and Requirements). Beyond these requirements, the coaches have final say on which meets and clinics a swimmer is eligible to attend.
  - **Readiness:** A swimmer will be allowed to compete when the coach deems the swimmer ready. Factors include, but are not limited to, performance and attitude in practice, and emotional readiness to compete.
  - **Regular Practices:** Attendance two weeks before a competition is mandatory.
- b. **Qualifying Meet:** Swimmers who become eligible to compete in a higher-level meet based on performance at a qualifying meet are expected to attend the next level competition. Participation remains at the coaches' discretion.

### 4. **SWIMMER HEALTH**

- a. **Physical Exams:** All swimmers MUST have a physical exam each year and signed medical release form to participate.
- b. **Temporary Illness:** Swimmers with severe colds, fevers, flu-like symptoms or any contagious disease should refrain from practice. It is your responsibility to keep the coaches informed of any changes in medical history.

- c. **Soreness and Fatigue are part of training:** Please alert the coaches to any severe soreness or fatigue.

**IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO ALERT THE COACHES TO ANY PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS OR DOCTORS ADVICE AT THE START OF PRACTICE. LONGER TERM LIMITATIONS MUST BE IN WRITING.**

### **Social media Code of Conduct:**

The expectation of the New Canaan YMCA and Aquianas coaches and board is that swimmers use social media responsibly and that comments and posts remain respectful of our team, coaches and fellow swimmers. As such, swimmers with a social media account must ensure that their account adheres to the following:

1. No offensive or inappropriate pictures or comments related to NCA are posted.
2. Any information placed on the website does not violate the ethics and intent behind the NCA Swimmer Code of Conduct that is explained in the NCA Handbook, The New Canaan YMCA code of conduct and all other applicable state, federal and local law.
3. Photos, and/or comments posted on these website may not depict teammates, coaches or any persons involved with NCA in a negative manner.

Violations of these codes of conduct will result in an immediate dismissal from the team.

## **Team Equipment: Outfitting & Routine Suits**

We understand the expense associated with being a member of a synchronized swim team, and have gone to great lengths to keep our outfitting requirements reasonable and age and commitment appropriate.

### **TEAM OUTFITTING**

The Aquianas have a team uniform that varies by level and age of the swimmer. It is expected that each swimmer will have the minimum items required for their level of swimming. Many of these items can be rented from the team, although some must be purchased.

### **ROUTINE SUITS**

Each swimmer will be issued a team swimsuit and a small routine suit, the cost of which is included in the Team fees paid at the beginning of the swim season.

Purchasing swimsuits is expensive, particularly if they are custom-designed. The team does not expect parents to purchase custom-made suits for their swimmers, nor does the team encourage parents to organize an effort to do so for small routines or full team routines. Instead, it has been our policy to purchase new suits as needed, and to design and sew our suits in-house. This not only keeps the cost reasonable, it allows for parent involvement and for the suits to be used for multiple years.

At the same time we recognize that as the swimmers move up the ranks, there may be a higher level of interest in purchasing suits for small routines, particularly solos. Therefore, only swimmers who are 13+ and swimming a solo have the option of purchasing a swimsuit for their routine, but must secure the approval of the coaches beforehand. If this option is exercised, the parents of the swimmer take full responsibility for any decorating or costs associated with decorating, of the suit. Again, the coaches must approve the design, color and style of the suit before it is purchased. If a swimmer purchases their own competitive suit they will receive a \$25-\$50 credit from the team routine swimsuit rental fee which is charged at the start of the season.

Coaches choose suits that best represent a swimmer's routine and every effort is made to embellish and decorate existing suits. At times new suits are purchased not based on the level of a swimmer but on the needs of the team (i.e.—we have needed to purchase more smaller suits in the past few years due to the increasing number of intermediates and younger swimmers)

## Expected Care of Team Equipment

Team equipment: swimsuits, headpieces, sweats, shirts, bags and casual wear for travel are expensive to buy and time consuming to customize to our needs. Ruining a suit in a set of 8 ruins the entire set. Every swimmer is expected to care for team equipment as if it were their own.

***Swimmers losing or damaging team equipment will be asked to pay the cost of replacing the items.***

### Proper Care of Swimsuits and Headpieces

1. **Always take care of your suit and headpiece immediately after getting home or to the hotel. Do not leave wet suits in bags or towels.**
2. **Do not shower or shampoo in competition suits. Soap destroys the elasticity of the fabric.**
3. **Rinse suits and headpieces in clean cool water immediately after wearing. Headpieces should be air-dried.**
4. **Hang suits to dry. NEVER PUT SUITS IN A CLOTHES DRYER!!**
5. **To pack competition suits:** either hang on a hangar or lay flat on a towel and fold suit and towel together. This prevents the sequins from catching each other. Headpieces should be packed in a Ziploc bag. Dried suits may be placed in individual Ziploc bags as well.

## Proper Care of Team Equipment

1. **Dry carefully and repack team sweats, parkas and towels in team bag.** You always need the same equipment so it is best to keep it all together.
2. **Follow washing instructions when needed.** Soiled or faded clothes look unprofessional.
3. **Wear and use team equipment only at meets and specified events.** Failure to adhere to this policy may result in a fine or confiscation of equipment.
4. **Follow the designated dress code or outfit of the day.** Team clothing not mandated for meets (i.e., team sweatshirt, fleece shorts or outdated apparel) may be worn outside of a competition. However; the girls need to remember, when they are wearing NCA apparel they are representing our team and need to behavior in a respectful manor.

## Financial Obligation and Fundraising

There are significant costs associated with developing and maintaining a nationally ranked synchronized swim team. As a team, we have been fortunate to have the support of Mrs. Valles, whose generosity has, and continues to cover, many of our costs.

Additionally, the Aquianas, with the assistance of Carol Valles, have been very successful in applying for and winning educational grants to support the club. The grants come from corporations and foundations and the money directly and indirectly helps the swimmers.

These sources of financial support are invaluable to our team, but simply not enough to defray all of our expenses. As such, swimmers are responsible for the following:

1. **YMCA Membership and Program Fees:** these fees are payable by each swimmer at the beginning of the season and cover:
  - a. YMCA Membership
  - b. The full time yearly salary of 3 full time and 3-5 part time coaches, based on an hourly wage for over a 40 week season.
2. **Team Fees:** These fees are payable at the beginning of the season and include:
  - a. Registration fees for US Synchronized Swimming (USSSI)
  - b. Team dues
  - c. Meet fees deposit
  - d. Swimsuit and outfitting rental fees
  - e. Deposit for additional pool time
  - *These fees do not cover a swimmer's cost for equipment, or travel expenses to away meets in their entirety.*

- *These fees are not refunded should the swimmer choose to leave the team. If the swimmer leaves the team due to illness or injury a refund will be determined on a case by case basis*
  - *Swimmers who move from Intermediate to Age Group prior to the start of meet season are required to pay the difference in team fees between the two categories. If the change is made mid-competitive season, then it may be prorated with approval from the PA Board.*
  - *Swimmers who compete at the Age Group and Jr/Sr level are expected to deposit \$500/national meet they will attend for the season. Swimmers who compete in both Jr/Sr and Age Group nationals are expected to have Jr/Sr national deposit by March 1st and Age Group National deposit by April 1st. Swimmers who compete in only Age Group Nationals are required to have the deposit in their account by March 1st.*
    - *Exceptions to families on payment plans and circumstances beyond control.*
3. **Meet Expenses:** Each meet requires entrance fees, and travel to away meets entails expenses for transportation, lodging, rental cars, etc. Fundraisers are used to reduce the costs as much as possible but parents should expect out-of-pocket expenses for each away meet.
- **Swimmer and Parents:** are expected to pay their own transportation, lodging, meals, meet fees and incidental expenses.
  - **Coaches:** The team will pay for the coaches' expenses, meals and travel costs.

Traveling our entire team to an away meet is an expensive proposition, and the NCA Aquinas Board makes every effort to make this as affordable as possible. Flights and rooms are booked early so as to take advantage of the best pricing available.

Once our travel plans have been made, airline tickets booked and hotel rooms reserved, families will be provided with a detailed accounting of their swimmer's travel costs and payment is expected 10 days prior to departure, failure to pay may jeopardize a swimmer's participation in the competition. Payment plans are available and need to be agreed to at the start of the season with the Team's Treasurer. Any expenses incurred during the away meet will be billed upon return and payment is expected within 15 days.

- You also have the option of making installment payments into your swimmer's travel account throughout the year, and fundraising for individual as well as the team accounts will help to offset some of the cost of traveling for an away meet.
4. **Fundraising / Club Dues:** Fundraisers are used to reduce team meet expenses. A variety of cooperative group events (tag sales, car washes, concessions etc.) and individual events (sale of products, ads, and services) are used. New, effective fundraising ideas are always welcome.

# DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDRAISING REVENUE

Fundraising revenue is divided into two parts. Some funds will be earmarked toward individual swimmer's expenses based on that individual or family's contribution to the fundraiser. Another portion of the funds will be earmarked toward a general team expenses fund for such costs as meet expenses and for general operation of the team.

To insure that swimmer's and parents fundraising efforts are rewarded the following guidelines apply:

- a. **Individual Events:** when swimmers are asked to raise funds by selling products, their own service, or shares to others, all proceeds will be earmarked towards their individual expenses.
- b. **Group Events:** When the entire team and the PA are involved as a group fundraising, 100% of the proceeds will go toward the PA general team expense fund. The funds will be used depending on the needs of the general team expenses.

## MEET CHAPERONES

Whenever our team competes we have designated chaperones. Chaperones are needed to help ensure that our team competes safely and effectively. The role of a chaperone is an important one. Being a good chaperone is a demanding job. It requires being on time, organized, wise, fair, caring, patient, tireless and most importantly positive and fun! You will be up well before the athletes and in bed well after. It is not a job for the faint of heart or for those seeking a free trip.

### Selection:

The PA will distribute the competition dates and sites early in the year. Parent availability will then be collected and given to the head coach. There are generally two chaperones for every 10 girls. You need to be able to share the workload with the other chaperone. The coaches will then work together to select the chaperones for each competition. Every effort will be made to make sure those interested get a turn and that more experienced chaperones are working with newer volunteers to help train them. All interested volunteers must receive a background check (provided by the YMCA), and be registered members with USSSI.

### Responsibilities:

Chaperones are responsible for the athletes at all times. They must make sure that they are safe and accounted for at all times especially when they are away from the pool. At the pool they must help the coaches where needed and ensure that the athletes are ready to compete. This may include food, helping put up hair, videotaping or just being a positive cheerleader and giving that extra word of encouragement.

- **Chaperoning must be the first priority:** One must be able to balance the parent-child duty with the duty to all of the athletes. The competition is the first priority. Sightseeing and other outside activities must be cleared with the coaches.
- **Know where the swimmers are at all times.** It is important to make sure that you have the coaches' cell phone numbers and they have yours. Make sure to know all of the athletes' room numbers as well. It is also a good idea to have the athletes' cell phone numbers too. Swimmers may only leave the group with a chaperone or coach's permission (preferably both).

**Safety and Security are priority #1.** Seat belts must be used at all times. Rooms and lockers must be locked. Money and equipment should be safely secured. If athletes are going anywhere (computers in the hotel, gift shop, walking to and from the pool) they must be in a group of at least two, preferably three. Athletes must check out and back in with the same coach or chaperone. During the meet, but away from the competition pool, the girls should always be with at least one other swimmer. If they are going to be somewhere other than a swimmer's room, they are required to

- Be with at least one other swimmer and to make sure that the chaperones know where they are going.
- **Get swimmers where they need to be on time:** Competitions run on a very tight and often early schedule. The coaches will go over the daily schedule with the chaperones. The chaperones are in charge of the logistics. A departure time means that is when you are pulling out of the parking lot not starting to load the car. Being late is unacceptable. Remember it takes longer to move 8 bodies around than one. 15 min early is on time and on time is late and being late is unacceptable. It is helpful to print out ahead of time the meet schedule and draws (if available) and directions to the pool, hotel, and hotel to the pool.
- **Keeping track of Team Equipment:** All team suits need to be collected, rinsed with cool water and hung to dry after each wearing. Headpieces should be rinsed and air-dried. When leaving the pool area make sure all of the NCA equipment is picked up.
- **NCA area at competition site:** The athletes should maintain a clean and tidy area at a meet. **Swimmers** should be responsible enough to clean up after themselves. Make sure that our area is kept tidy during the competition, all trash is picked up when we leave, and the athletes are being respectful of the locker rooms, pool area and hotel rooms. It is the athlete's job to be neat but your responsibility to make sure it gets done. Make sure the athletes always act in a manner that would make us all proud. They are representing the team and it really does MATTER!!

## Unique Responsibilities

- **Insure that the swimmers get enough sleep:** To perform at their best swimmers must get enough rest. It is not a slumber party where they can stay up all night watching TV or text messaging their friends. They must be in bed, lights out, doors locked and quiet at the designated time. It is important that they are respectful of other hotel guest as well, no running down the hall, slamming doors and rough housing are acceptable.
- **Insure that the swimmers are up on time:** The athletes take longer than they think to eat and put up their hair. Make sure they have left enough time. Ready is knocked, make up done, and headpiece and suit on.
- **Insure that the coaches and swimmers get enough to eat and drink** before and after competing. Meals are often squeezed in between events and the girls must be constantly reminded to drink plenty of water. (Especially if the meet is outdoors or it is very humid.)
- **Insure that the team is working as a team:** The best way is to avoid complaining and be positive. There is always stress at a competition and athletes and chaperones handle that stress in different ways. You are there to support the whole team and the athletes are expected to do the same, and when they aren't swimming, they should be cheering on the teammates who are in the pool.
- **Be available to help the coaches with whatever they need.**

## Medical Emergencies and Safety

The first aid kit should be on site at the pool at all times. If you see it needs restocking please do so. If you are purchasing OTC medicines please clear it with the coaches, as some are banned substances by the US Olympic Committee. One chaperone should always be available to the coaches and swimmers in case of an emergency unless the coach has indicated otherwise. If both chaperones have to be away from the pool for any reason they must clear it with the coach first. There must be a copy of the athlete's medical forms with the chaperones at all times. It will be kept in the cooler that you receive before the meet. If you are flying they must be in your carry on. If they are not in the cooler prior to departure please ask the coach or the previous chaperone.

Additionally, you should make sure you have a current team directory with you in case you need to contact a swimmer's parents.

## Coolers

There are generally two coolers designated for away meets. Please use these coolers, as there are important items you will need for the meet inside. The team coolers must be checked out from the designated PA parent. There are items stored in the coolers

which **MUST** be accounted for and returned either to that parent or the next chaperone after the meet. Please be sure to clean out everything perishable and return the coolers clean & dry with all items accounted for. In general, the coolers will contain serving utensils, knives, cutting boards, salad bowls, storage containers and paper goods. The medical kit and medical forms (which **MUST** be at every away meet) will also be in one of the coolers.

**Traveling with cooler** - It must be checked. Take duct tape to tape the cooler shut (but don't do it until you get to the airport). You cannot take the tape as a carry-on, so you'll need to pop it in the luggage that you are checking.

## **Food**

Chaperones are responsible for stocking the coolers with food and making sure that they are filled with enough ice each morning. Generally the athletes will eat breakfast and lunch plus snacks out of the cooler. There is a list of foods that the girls like to eat (which can be tailored to your age group as needed) and you should generally pick from this list. Don't get too fancy; just buy the basics (look for sales but generally don't buy store brands of items like cereal, granola bars, crackers etc. as we are often shopping at stores we are not familiar with). High stress competition is not the time to introduce too many new foods, buy from the list. If there are special items purchased that only one or two people are eating then that individual should pay for it themselves. Please make sure that there are balanced options such as protein, carbohydrates, fruits and vegetables. **Stay away from sugary foods and soda.**

## **Dinners**

Dinners are usually at the end of long days. It is best to think ahead and get food brought in to the hotel, as the athletes will need to unwind and regroup for more competition. If the meet is over, restaurants are fine and we make an effort to have a team dinner at longer competitions. Generally if we take the girls out to eat we usually have them pay for their own meal so an email needs to be sent out before the meet reminding the girls to bring along a specified minimum amount of money for food & other purchases.

## **Expenses**

The cost of chaperone's airfare, hotel and food is allocated between the girls they are chaperoning. Prior to the meet the chaperones will collect a determined amount of money from each swimmer. This money will be used to purchase food for the cooler and cover any extra travel expenses (i.e. check luggage fees). Any remaining money can be evenly divided and reimbursed back to the swimmers at the end of the competition. Chaperones buy cooler food and carryout meals that are brought to the room/pool to

share amongst the girls. Please send the team treasurer a copy of your receipts along with an allocation to each girl and chaperone as soon as you return from the meet. Be prepared, the athletes eat a lot of food and you will be shopping often for a longer competition. You are responsible for trying to keep costs down, so for example, Preparing a salad rather than buying one from a restaurant would generally be better. Use your judgment. You aren't saving if you buy some weird brand that nobody will eat. At the discretion of the coaches and/or treasurer, chaperones are sometimes compensated for gas, for example if they are transporting a coach to a distant meet (not Hamden). Please keep your gas receipts in this case.

## **Conflicts**

They are unavoidable and must be resolved quickly. Every athlete has a signed code of conduct and is expected to follow it. Any infractions should immediately be brought to the coaches' attention. You are there to help and the athletes should treat you with the same respect that they give the coaches. Let the coaches handle the majority of the disciplinary actions.

## **Non-competition activities**

Occasionally there is free time at a meet. All outside activities, even ones that do not seem like a big deal, need to be cleared by the coaches. For instance, sitting out at the pool in the sun would seem harmless. The coaches most likely would disagree since the sun can cause exhaustion, dehydration and sunburn, all of which impede top-notch performance from an athlete. Nine times out of ten they will say yes or yes with some limitations but it is better to ask than beg forgiveness later.

There are many experienced chaperones on our team. We encourage you to use them as a resource, and to answer any questions you may have about chaperoning. If you would like a specific recommendation on who to speak with about chaperoning, please contact the Board president or Vice President – Events.

# **MEETS** **TYPES and REQUIREMENTS**

1. **Meet Types:** We compete in several different meets, feeding into different ladders of competition. The following definitions and flow charts will hopefully help you understand.
  - a. **Intermediate:** Intermediate level skills. A three level ladder - State, Region and Zone for ages 10 & Under, 11/12 and 13 & Over.
  - b. **Age Group:** A four level ladder, which includes State, Region, Zone and National. Swimmers progress based on placement in the top three. Swimmers compete in figures and routines (solo, duet, trio and team). A swimmer may compete in up to 3 routine events and may swim up to an older age group when needed. Age Divisions are 10 & Under, 11/12, 13-15, 16/17 and 18/19.

- c. **Junior/Senior Level:** Open to swimmers 14-18 years of age. Swimmers compete in routine and figures drawn from the Junior figure list. Progression is Junior Association, Junior Zone, Senior Zone, US Nationals and/or the US Open based on qualifying scores.

2. **Meet Schedules:** We work as hard as we can to avoid conflicts with school vacation schedules and to avoid missing school, but conflicts do occur.

- a. **Association Meets:** Are planned by the CT Association. Every effort is made to avoid vacation conflicts. However, limited pool time and schedules dictate when the meets are held. Sometimes these meets are held in conjunction with other associations and may require out-of-state travel.
- b. **Zone, Regional, National Meets:** These meets are scheduled at the National convention giving us little control over the dates.

3. **Home Meet Volunteer Requirement:** When NCA hosts a home meet it takes the effort of our entire team to make it a success. Home meets are a great way for our swimmers to perform in front of friends and family members. It is also an opportunity for our team to raise funds and showcase our team.

- a. In order to successfully host a home meet each family must volunteer for a minimum of 6 volunteer points per year.
  - i. If a family does not meet the minimum requirement they will be charged a penalty of \$75/point that is not fulfilled.
  - ii. This policy applies whether or not your daughter is competing in the meet.
  - iii. If your family cannot volunteer at one meet, the expectation is that they will make up the extra shifts at the next meet or pay the fee.

# NEW CANAAN YMCA Aquianas Contract

## Swimmer

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read the document, New Canaan YMCA Aquianas Handbook, I agree to the terms and conditions outlined in the handbook.

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Swimmer's Signature

Date

## Parent:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read the document, New Canaan YMCA Aquianas Handbook, I agree to the terms and conditions outlined in the handbook.

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Parent's Signature

Date