



# Team Handbook

Cleveland Aqua Tigers  
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[clevelandaquatigers.com](http://clevelandaquatigers.com)

## 2019-2020 Season

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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Cleveland Aqua Tigers! The Cleveland Aqua Tigers (**CAT**) offers a technique based, comprehensive competitive swimming program for children, adolescents and young adults.

Our team is a year-around competitive swim team offering high quality, professional coaching, focusing on technique, work ethic and good sportsmanship for all ages and abilities. The goal of CAT is to provide every member with an opportunity to improve swimming skills and achieve success at their own level of ability. We are a non-profit club, ran by a Board of Directors who meet every month. All members are welcome to attend each meeting and encouraged to be involved in team activities and fundraisers.

This handbook will familiarize you with all facets of CAT and competitive swimming basics. As you review the following pages, you will be introduced to our history, philosophy, team policies and basic information concerning your day-to-day participation with CAT.

## THE COACHING STAFF

Head Coach

Tony Womac

[womac@hotmail.com](mailto:womac@hotmail.com)

Assistant Coaches

Jeremy & Erica German

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## COACHING PHILOSOPHY

### Mission Statement

My personal mission statement is to develop swimmers into disciplined athletes. These athletes will find success through goal-setting, sportsmanship, and dedicated effort to their team. From this, the young athletes will grow into confident, strong, life-long swimmers, and leaders in our community.

### Vision Statement

Train effectively-Perform excellently

### Belief Statements

I believe...

- Swimmers will be successful by giving their maximum effort to achieve goals set by themselves and the coaches.
- Our swimmers can be positive role models for their peers by being a great teammate and showing good sportsmanship.
- Swimmers can be successful beyond high school by being dedicated and discipline team members.
- Swimmers are the future leaders of our community.

## COMMUNICATIONS

**WEB SITE-** [clevelandaquatigers.com](http://clevelandaquatigers.com) The CAT web page is a great asset of communication for coaches, parents, and swimmers. Here are a couple of sections in the website that you should always look at.

**News Section** - This section of the site includes the most the most up-to-date information for the team, including equipment lists, t-shirt orders and start-up facts.

**Team Events** - We list the meets for the entire season in this section. This is the section where you will declare for meet and meet results will be posted. All meet information will be posted and scratch deadlines for each of the meets are also listed here.

**Swim Groups** - In this section, you will find information about our different practice groups. Description of the groups and their practice times are listed here.

**Calendar** - This is one of the most important sections for you to visit and on the most frequent basis. All practice times and team events will be posted here.

**FAQ** – Check the FAQ page for any questions you may have about the team that have not been answered on any of the previous pages.

**EMAIL** - Another form of communication that will be used is email. Please be sure that your email address is correct and let us know if you are not receiving any of the emails.

**Remind App** - Another form of communication that will be used is the Remind App. Please be sure that your cell number is correct and let us know if you are not receiving any of the text messages.

### **SOCIAL NETWORKING PAGES**

In order to continue to keep up with the latest communication technology the CAT Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/ClevelandAquaTigers>) page and **Instagram** (@clevelandaquatigers) account. Those that have a Facebook page are encouraged to go ahead and become a fan/add as a favorite page so that you can keep up with the latest club news, practice information, and meet results.

Your family is important to CAT, and we do not want you to miss out on information. The responsibility falls on you to read your text messages, check the website, and your email. Please do not hesitate to ask questions if you have one. The better communication is between our coaches and our parents the more that will be accomplished.

### **CONTACTING COACHES**

Parents should use the coach's email if possible. Parents are welcome to contact the coaches via the Remind App at any time. Please limit communication of any type during scheduled practice times.

## PRACTICE GROUPS

### **About Our Group Levels**

Our program group levels offer competitive swimming to all ages and skill levels, from the age of 5 to 19. The Group Levels are a systematic progression through the program. Beginning with the Bronze level group and ending with the Gold level group. Moving swimmers up through the levels is the sole responsibility of the coach staff.

### **Bronze**

This is the introductory group in our swim program. It is designed for the new or younger swimmers entering the swim team. This group focuses on stroke development for freestyle and backstroke, introductory starts and turns. This group swims 60 minutes each practice, 3 times per week.

Entrance Criteria: Must be able to swim or streamline kick 25 yards.

### **Silver B**

In the Silver B group, swimmers will learn the four competitive strokes and the appropriate turns. This level adds the use of the competitive clock and learning interval training. At this time swimmers are introduced to the basic training environment. Silver B will be introduced to dry land training. This group swim 2 hours, 3 times per week.

Entrance Criteria: Must be able to swim freestyle and backstroke efficiently along with proper kick in streamline.

### **Silver**

The Silver continues to focus on technique while introducing race strategy and basic interval training. This group continues to work on starts and turns. Aerobic training is increased along with the teaching of racing strategies. This group continues to increase their stamina with the dry land program. This group will master the clock reading and interval training. Silver will also begin setting goals and charting their personal progress. Silver swims 2 hours, 5 days per week.

Entrance Criteria: Must be able to swim a legal 100 IM, kick 6x50 on 1:00, and proficiently perform 100 IM, 200 Free, and eight consecutive 50's for practice purposes.

### **Gold**

The Gold continues to focus on technique while mastering race strategy and introducing pace training. Swimmers will need to focus on conditioning and training consistently. Aerobic training is increased along with the teaching of racing strategies. This group continues to increase their stamina with the dry land program. Gold swims 2 hours, 6 days per week.

Entrance Criteria: Must kick 12x50 free 1:00, swim intervals at or near SES cuts. 100% practice

## **POLICY ON PRACTICE GROUP ASSIGNMENT**

When the coaching staff assigns a swimmer to a specified practice group, we consider a number of variables including, but not limited to, age, speed, technical ability, emotional maturity, work ethic, and attitude. However, the primary consideration for practice group assignment is a swimmer's technical correctness in the practice environment.

Some of the major considerations in this process are when, why, and how to move swimmers from one practice group to another. Age group swimmers will be moved between practice groups at three specific points during the year. **The first**, obviously, will be in August/September at the beginning of the swim year. **The second** will be in December, following the first series of age group championship meets (Moving swimmers at this time will be kept to a minimum.) **And the final move-up** time during each year will be after our spring break – moving swimmers for the long course season. Move-ups will be unanimously agreed upon by the coach and the swimmer's parents. Unless all of these parties agree that it is an appropriate time for the swimmer to move up to a more intense level of training, we will not move the athlete.

This process includes a series of proper balances and perspectives to ensure that we are working in the best interest of the athlete.

**See Entrance Criteria for each of the practice groups above in the Practice Groups section of the handbook.**

## **POLICY ON BEHAVIOR AT SWIM PRACTICE**

It is the goal of CAT to provide instruction and training during the entire practice session. If time is spent disciplining children rather than coaching, the goals of that session are not being achieved. Therefore, CAT expects swimmers to adhere to the following behavior guidelines:

*Parents are to directly supervise their children before practice starts and again immediately following the end of their child's practice*

1. All swimmers must encourage and support their teammates at practice as well as in competition. Swimmers may not conduct themselves in any manner that is disruptive to others.
2. Swimmers are expected, at all times, to follow the coach's instructions. At no time will disrespectful attitudes or back-talk be tolerated from any swimmer.
3. All swimmers using the locker-room should exhibit proper behavior. Rough-housing, yelling and touching items that belong to other swimmers is not acceptable.
4. Abusive language, lying or stealing are intolerable and are grounds for immediate expulsion from the team.
5. Vandalism will not be tolerated. Any property that is vandalized by a CAT swimmer will be repaired or replaced by the swimmer's family.
6. Bullying, teasing, harassing, and any behavior that makes a teammate feel uncomfortable will not be tolerated.

Violation of the above-mentioned behaviors will be disciplined as follows:

1. First violation will receive a warning.
2. Second violation will result in expulsion for the rest of that practice session and a phone call/meeting with the parents of the swimmer.
3. Third violation will result in suspension from practice for 1 week.
4. Fourth and final violation will result in expulsion from the team.
5. Monthly dues will not be adjusted for suspended swimmers.

## **POLICY REGARDING PARENTS WATCHING PRACTICE**

The CAT coaching staff encourages parents to watch their swimmer's practice occasionally. It is not best for parents to watch practice every day nor is it healthy to never come to the pool. The

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reality of transporting young athletes is that many parents are present every day. However, parents do not need to watch each practice. Here are some important guidelines to keep in mind when observing a practice.

First, young swimmers want their parents' approval. If a swimmer is aware of a parent watching practice, it is natural for some of their attention to be directed toward the parent. However, for the swimmers to learn as much as possible, it is imperative that the coaches maintain the swimmers' attention during practice. We ask that parents never communicate with their children during practice or compete with the coach for his/her attention.

Second, we insist that parents do not interrupt the coaches on deck while they are coaching. If you need to communicate with a coach, please do so by contacting them by phone, email, or in person before or after practice.

**Finally, be your child's biggest cheerleader!** Let the coaches coach and be encouraging to your swimmer. There will be ups and downs during practice, especially when correcting technique. They need all the encouragement you can give them.

### PRACTICE SCHEDULES

Practice Schedules are available on the CAT web site. Any changes to these schedules due to inclement weather, facilities, etc. will be posted to the web site and a Remind text will be sent out.

### PRACTICE EQUIPMENT

**All swimmers will need their own swimsuit and goggles. In addition to these items each group will need some specific equipment. Visit website for exact items to purchase.**

| Bronze                                    | Silver B                                  | Silver                                    | Gold                                      |
|---|---|---|---|
| Team Suit                                 | Team Suit                                 | Team Suit                                 | Team Suit                                 |
| Goggles                                   | Goggles                                   | Goggles                                   | Goggles                                   |
| Mesh bag                                  | Mesh bag                                  | Mesh bag                                  | Mesh bag                                  |
| Long Swim Fins                            | Long Swim Fins                            | Long Swim Fins                            | Long Swim Fins                            |
| Old or cheap pair of lace up tennis shoes | Old or cheap pair of lace up tennis shoes | Old or cheap pair of lace up tennis shoes | Short Swim Fins                           |
| Swim Cap                                  | Swim Cap                                  | Paddles & Parachute                       | Old or cheap pair of lace up tennis shoes |
|   |   | Swim Cap                                  | Snorkel                                   |
|   |   |   | Paddles & Parachute                       |
|   |   |   | Swim Cap                                  |

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**Performance Racing Suits** - Swimmers who are 11 and older and competing for SES or other swimming cuts may wear technical suits **with the coach's permission**. Swimmers 10 and under, or those not competing for cuts, will **NOT** be allowed to wear these suits.

**Policy Regarding Jolyn tie-back swim suits** - USA Swimming has also ruled that the Jolyn tie-back is NOT a FINA approved swim suit, and it is now illegal to wear them during competitions.

During the year if you have swim needs please order from SwimAndTri. You can contact them by phone at their Knoxville, TN location at 877-794-6874 or the direct link for our Team Portal.

[https://www.swimandtri.com/TeamView\\_ClevelandAquaTigers.aspx](https://www.swimandtri.com/TeamView_ClevelandAquaTigers.aspx)

If the link fails, follow these instructions:

1. Load: <http://www.swimandtri.com>
2. Click on "Team Portal" at the top of the Categories section on the left side
3. Enter the following portal code: CAT09

## ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Consistent attendance is important in the development of all swimmers. CAT does recognize the value of other activities, including other sports. Please discuss with your coach other activities in which you plan to participate. It is ideal to attend all practices offered for each group. As swimmers become more involved and compete at higher levels it is important to check with your coach about extended absences from the pool. If a swimmer is going to miss more than one consecutive practice session, it is very helpful to call your coach and let them know.

## OUT-OF-WATER POLICY

You must give thirty days written notice if your child will not be swimming the following month in order not to be billed for that month. For example, if your child is not going to swim in April then we must receive written notice no later than March 1<sup>st</sup>. Otherwise you will be charged the monthly fee for April.

If your child has an injury or illness that requires them to be out-of-the-water and off of dry land for 30 days or more, the fees for that month can be credited with a note from the doctor. The note must state the reason, and time period for being out.

**This notice must be sent via email to [clevelandaquatigers@gmail.com](mailto:clevelandaquatigers@gmail.com) in order for your notice to be official and exempt you from the month's fee. Telling the coach is not official notification.**

## COLLEGE ATHLETE PARTICIPATION POLICY

We realize that at times our college athletes will want to return to CAT practices. CAT has a very competitive training group going on in the summer. All returning swimmers from college are welcome to join in with this training group. If you choose to train here, certain responsibilities will apply. Such as:

- Attending all practices on time
- Have an end meet you are training for
- Set a positive tone and example outside of the pool

All fees and registrations apply - Fees are USA Swimming registration-\$74 (if you are registered for this year this amount will be credited back to your account), Monthly fees for the Gold group - \$110 per month



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College athletes who return during the Thanksgiving and Christmas breaks will not have to pay for that practice time. They are however expected to participate fully in each Gold practice.

Please remember if your school, college coach, and college team has made a financial investment in you through financial aid or scholarship based on your swimming ability, then it is your responsibility to hold up your end of the bargain by continually training and improving your swimming. That's the great thing about swimming here at CAT, we have coaches, teammates and facilities completely able to aid in this process

### INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

If the City or County schools are closed or close early due to inclement weather, we will not have CAT practice, unless otherwise noted. If you are in doubt for any reason, please check the website. The information will be sent out via the Remind App text message.

### SWIM MEET POLICIES

All swimmers and their parents should understand that the swimmers are under the direction of the coaches at all times during the meet. Any questions regarding this should be directed to the coach. The following policies are expected to be followed by all CAT athletes:

- Team suits and caps (if a cap is worn) are to be worn by all CAT athletes. No gear from other teams may worn. Swimmers not wearing the team suit and cap will be asked to change before competing.
- Be on time for all sessions and team meetings
- Swimmers are expected to swim all events entered, unless it has been discussed with the coach
- Swimmers should remain in the team area and should talk to the coach before and after each event.
- Swimmers are not allowed to attend an out-of-town meet without coach's approval.
- Please let the coach know when you leave the pool area.
- Good Sportsmanship and courteous behavior are expected from all swimmers.
- Swimmers are expected to clean their sitting area at the end of each session. All trash, water bottles, and personal items must be picked up at the end of the session.

### COMPETITIONS

#### TYPES OF MEETS

One of the rewards of swimming on a competitive swim team is participating in swim meets. Swim meets are held throughout the area, just about every week-end, on Saturday and/or Sunday. At all levels, swimmers can expect to attend a meet about once a month, once they are ready. Meets are opportunities for a swimmer to measure his/her progress, by competing in a formal competition against other swimmers, at the same skill level. Meets themselves often serve as motivation. As swimmers improve their performances, they move throughout meet levels where they are eligible to participate, based on their times. Most of the meets that new or young swimmers attend are held on weekends in the area.

At the beginning of each season, a tentative meet schedule is posted on the CAT web site. This schedule lists the meets that the coaches are anticipating will be the best for CAT team members to attend, and each swimmer should make every effort possible attempt to participate in all of the

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meets for which they are eligible. Meets are the way we measure the results of the hours in the pool.

Southeastern Swimming, the organization that governs USA swimming in our region, classifies meets according to the level of qualifying time that is required to participate, the ages of the swimmers, and the length of the pool. The swimming year is divided into two seasons, which are generally named for the pool length. The fall and winter months make up most of the Short Course, or 25 yards pool, season. The summer months make up the Long Course, or 50 meters pool, season. For future reference, only the United States swims Short Course, and that is the length for high school and college meets. The Olympics and World Championships are Long Course.

**OPEN INVITATIONALS** - These are USS meets for swimmers of all ages and ability levels. Open meets are held throughout the southeast about once a month and are usually 2-3 days long. Overnight stays in hotels are sometimes required

**PRELIMINARY / FINALS MEETS** - These are USS meets where there are preliminary swims in the morning, and if you qualify in you would swim those events in the evening. These meets are usually championships meets, but they also do appear during the season. Please see expected protocol of all families participating in Prelims / Finals meets below.

**CHAMPIONSHIP MEETS** - These are meets for swimmers who meet qualifying time standards.

*Those swimmers that qualify for championship meets are expected to attend.*

of championship meets:

- Southeastern Championships - Southeastern qualifying times
- Southern Zone Sectional Championships - Sectional qualifying times
- Age Group Sectionals - Age Group Sectional qualifying times
- Zone All-Star Championships - must apply & be selected by Southeastern Swimming
- Futures Championships - Futures qualifying times
- Juniors Nationals - Junior National qualifying times
- U.S. Open - U.S. Open qualifying times
- USA Swimming National Championships - National qualifying times
- Olympic Team Trials - Olympic Trial times

## MEET ENTRIES

Meet entries will be chosen by the parent and swimmer with guidance from the coach. One event will be chosen by the coach. All of this must be completed by the scratch deadline listed on the CAT website.

Once meet entries are completed, they are posted on the CAT web site on the event page. Please review these entries with your swimmer(s) so that they are aware of and prepared for the events in which they will be participating at the meet.

Preliminary relay assignments will be posted at the meet. However, relay participants are subject to change at the meet. Who swims on a relay, and who swims which stroke on a relay, is the sole decision of the coach on the day of the meet. If you are seeded to swim a relay, do not leave the meet early because your teammates are counting on you.

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When attending a meet, swimmers will need to wear their team suits and bring their team caps, goggles, two towels, CAT t-shirt, sweatshirt/pants, activities (books, cards, etc.), water bottle and healthy snacks. It is critical that swimmers wear CAT caps at meets so that they are easily distinguished as members of our team.

When a swimmer first arrives at a meet, he/she should then proceed to the warm-up area to begin warm-ups. Stretching will **always** start 15 minutes prior to warm-ups. A proper warm-up is very important to the swimmer, since it gives him/her the chance to stretch muscles and loosen up before competing. After warm-ups, the swimmer should stay warm by putting on a sweat suit, shoes, and a hat.

Prior to the beginning of each meet, it will be helpful for parents to write events the child will be swimming on the child's arm. This will enable the Clerk of Course to determine if the child is in the right place. It is the parent's responsibility to get the child to the Clerk of Course.

Before and immediately after each event, swimmers should check in with their coach. This allows the coach to give instructions and encouragement before the race and to discuss how the swimmer swam the race. This is a critical time for each child to get a clear understanding of what they did well and what they need to work on in the future. Immediate feedback after a race is the most valuable opportunity for swimmers to improve at swim meets.

## LONG COURSE SEASON

The summer long course season is an important part of the CAT program and all swimmers are encouraged to participate. Long course (LC) or a 50-meter pool is the distance in which all National Championships and most International competitions are held, including the Olympics. It is important for all swimmers to participate as much as possible in a LC pool if they have long term swimming goals. LC training is also very instrumental in continuing the development of the swimmers and preparing them for summer meets as well as next fall and winter. The season lasts until the end of July or early August. The LC practice schedule will be released at our parent meeting in the spring and posted on <https://www.clevelandaquatigers.com>

We attend several LC meets per year depending on ability. All CAT athletes are encouraged to swim long course to see the full benefits of swimming year-around.

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

### Registration

To register with CAT, complete the online registration on <https://www.clevelandaquatigers.com>. The registration fee includes USA Swimming registration and insurance, CAT cap and T-shirt. USA Swimming and CAT Registration is \$110.00.

### Dues

All practice groups are billed monthly on the **first** day of the month. Bills are emailed on the first day of each month. They are to be paid by the 10th of each month. Swimmers will be withheld from participation if the account becomes more than 30 days past due. If you are going to be out of town or missing for a month, we must be notified in writing no later than the 29th of the month prior to when you will be out in order for your account to be credited. For example: if you will be out in November the email must be received by September 29.

**CAT TEAM HANDBOOK 2019-2020****Meet Entry Fees**

Meet entry fees are separate from your monthly dues. Meet fees are charged at the time of entry if your child was entered in the swim meet. Remember once the scratch deadline has passed you are required to pay the entry fees even if the child does not attend the meet.

| Practice Group | Monthly Fees | USS/CAT Registration Annual Fee |
|----------------|--------------|---------------------------------|
| Bronze         | \$60 / month | \$110                           |
| Silver B       | \$70 / month | \$110                           |
| Silver         | \$90 / month | \$110                           |
| Gold           | \$110/ month | \$110                           |

**COACH RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Head Coach is to supervise all aspects of CAT. The coaching staff is dedicated to providing a quality swim program that enables each swimmer to maximize their potential. CAT coaches are to maintain their membership with USA Swimming, and be within good standing with all certifications and background checks.

- Coaches are responsible for placing children in practice groups. (See Policy on Practice Group Assignment)
- Coaches are responsible for the meet schedule and the events the swimmers enter. Relay positions are the sole responsibility of the coaches. Coaches are also responsible for warm-up procedures and behavior at swim meets.
- Coaches are responsible for practice schedule and behavior of swimmers at practice.
- Coaches are to keep parents informed of all schedule changes. This includes practice times as well as any information concerning competitions. This information will be posted on <https://www.clevelandaquatigers.com> and emailed out to the membership.

**PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Competitive swimming programs provide many benefits to young athletes. They develop self-discipline, good sportsmanship, and good time management skills. Competition allows the swimmer to experience success, as well as how to deal with defeat and adversity. Athletes will be more physically fit and healthy, and lastly tend to be more adaptable.

As a parent, your major responsibility is to provide a stable, loving, and supportive environment. This positive environment will encourage your child to continue to in the sport. Show your interest by ensuring your child's attendance at practices, and by coming to meets. Be positive role model to your swimmer. Have your swimmer at the pool on time ready to swim for practice and meets. Please have them at practice, at minimum, 10 minutes prior to practice starting. At meets, please adhere to the meet information for your report time.

Pay attention to your text messages and emails. You are responsible for the information that is emailed out. Important announcements will be posted on the bulletin board. Always check information posted on <https://www.clevelandaquatigers.com>! Sometimes it becomes necessary to make changes. Upcoming meets information, time standards, and team records are also posted there. Email, and the CAT website are the biggest forms of communication that the coaches use to inform parents and swimmers.

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Your role as a swim parent can be a very difficult, but a very rewarding one. Your attitude towards your child's successes and failures, your child's coaches, your child's competitive swimming experience, will all have a major effect on his/her performance, enjoyment, and ultimately, long term development in the sport.

At the Gold level, the swimmers are expected to be responsible for ALL aspects of their swimming.

## USA SWIMMING- [www.usaswimming.org](http://www.usaswimming.org)

### WHAT IS USA SWIMMING?

USA Swimming is the National Governing Body for amateur competitive swimming in the United States. USA Swimming was conceived in 1978 with the passage of the Amateur Sports Act which specified that all Olympic sports would be administered independently. Prior to this act USA Swimming was the Competitive Swimming Committee of the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) located in Indianapolis, Indiana. USA Swimming Headquarters office was established in Colorado Springs, CO, in 1981 and is located at the Olympic Training Center.

As the National Governing Body for the sport, USA Swimming is responsible for the conduct administration of swimming in the United States. In this capacity, USA Swimming formulates rules, implements policies and procedures, conducts national championships, disseminates safety and sports medicine information and selects athletes to represent the United States in international competitions.

### HOW IS USA SWIMMING ORGANIZED?

**International-** The international federation for the aquatic sports is the Federation Internationale de Natation Amateur (FINA). USA Swimming is affiliated with FINA through the United States Aquatic Sports (USAS).

**National -** USA Swimming is a Group A member of the United States Olympic Committee and has voting representation on the USOC House of Delegates.

**Local -** Within the United States. USA Swimming is divided into fifty-nine Local Swimming Committees (LSCs) each one responsible for administering USA Swimming activities in a defined CAT is part of the Southeastern Swimming LSC (Southeastern Swimming website: <https://www.teamunify.com/Home.jsp?team=szsslsc>). A House of Delegates with representation of athletes, coaches, members or the Board of Directors and clubs is responsible for managing the business affairs of each LSC.

## USA SWIMMING SAFE SPORT

USA Swimming is committed to fostering a fun, healthy and safe environment for all its members. For that reason, we have in place a detailed Code of Conduct. The following rules, policies, reporting structure, education and tools are intended to serve our members as we work together to maintain this environment.

In accordance with USA Swimming, CAT has also produced a Safe Sport section in the team handbook to serve its membership. Please see all the following information below.

**CAT TEAM HANDBOOK 2019-2020****SAFE SPORT LINKS**

- USA Swimming Safe Sport Home Page: <https://www.usaswimming.org/Home/safe-sport>
- USA Swimming Code of Conduct: <https://www.usaswimming.org/articles-landing-page/2017/04/06/2017-code-of-conduct>
- How to Deal with a Safe Sport Concern: <https://www.usaswimming.org/articles-landing-page/2017/05/08/safe-sport-report>

**Action Plan of CAT to Address Bullying****PURPOSE**

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at Cleveland Aqua Tigers and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. CAT is committed to providing a safe, caring and friendly environment for all our members. If bullying does occur, all athletes and parents should know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a coach, board member or athlete/mentor.

Objectives of CAT's Bullying Policy and Action Plan:

1. To make it clear that CAT will not tolerate bullying in any form.
2. To define bullying and give all board members, coaches, parents and swimmers a good understanding of what bullying is.
3. To make it known to all parents, swimmers and coaching staff that there is a policy and protocol should any bullying issues arise.
4. To make how to report bullying clear and understandable.
5. To spread the word that CAT takes bullying seriously and that all swimmers and parents can be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

**WHAT IS BULLYING?**

The USA Swimming Code of Conduct prohibits bullying. Generally, bullying is the use of aggression, whether intentional or not, which hurts another person. Bullying results in pain and distress.

The USA Swimming Code of Conduct defines bullying in 304.3.7. Bullying is the severe or repeated use by one or more USA Swimming members of oral, written, electronic or other technological expression, image, sound, data or intelligence of any nature (regardless of the method of transmission), or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at any other member that to a reasonably objective person has the effect of:

1. Causing physical or emotional harm to the other member or damage to the other member's property;
2. Placing the other member in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property;
3. Creating a hostile environment for the other member at any USA Swimming activity;
4. Infringing on the rights of the other member at any USA Swimming activity;
5. Materially and substantially disrupting the training process or the orderly operation of any USA Swimming activity (which for the purposes of this section shall include, without limitation, practices, workouts and other events of a member club or LSC).

**REPORTING PROCEDURE**

An athlete who feels that he or she has been bullied is asked to do one or more of the following things:

- Talk to your parents;
- Talk to a Club Coach, Board Member, or other designated individual;

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- Write a letter or email to the Club Coach, Board Member, or other designated individual;
- Make a report to the USA Swimming Safe Sport staff.

There is no express time limit for initiating a complaint under this procedure, but every effort should be made to bring the complaint to the attention of the appropriate club leadership as soon as possible to make sure that memories are fresh, and behavior can be accurately recalled, and the bullying behavior can be stopped as soon as possible.

**HOW WE HANDLE BULLYING**

If bullying is occurring during team-related activities, we **STOP BULLYING ON THE SPOT** using the following steps:

1. Intervene immediately. It is ok to get another adult to help.
2. Separate the kids involved.
3. Make sure everyone is safe.
4. Meet any immediate medical or mental health needs.
5. Stay calm. Reassure the kids involved, including bystanders.
6. Model respectful behavior when you intervene.

If bullying is occurring at our club or it is reported to be occurring at our club, we address the bullying by **FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED** and **SUPPORTING THE KIDS INVOLVED** using the following approach:

***FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED*****1. First, we get the facts.**

- a. Keep all the involved children separate.
- b. Get the story from several sources, both adults and kids.
- c. Listen without blaming.
- d. Don't call the act "bullying" while you are trying to understand what happened.
- e. It may be difficult to get the whole story, especially if multiple athletes are involved or the bullying involves social bullying or cyber bullying. Collect all available information.

**2. Then, we determine if it's bullying.** There are many behaviors that look like bullying but require different approaches. It is important to determine whether the situation is bullying or something else.

- a. Review the USA Swimming definition of bullying;
- b. To determine if the behavior is bullying or something else, consider the following questions:
  - What is the history between the kids involved?
  - Have there been past conflicts?
  - Is there a power imbalance? Remember that a power imbalance is not limited to physical strength. It is sometimes not easily recognized. If the targeted child feels like there is a power imbalance, there probably is. § Has this happened before? Is the child worried it will happen again?
- c. Remember that it may not matter "who started it." Some kids who are bullied may be annoying or provoking, but this does not excuse the bullying behavior.
- d. Once you have determined if the situation is bullying, support all of the kids involved.

***SUPPORTING THE KIDS INVOLVED*****3. Support the kids who are being bullied**

- a. Listen and focus on the child. Learn what's been going on and show you want to help. Assure the child that bullying is not their fault.

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- b. Work together to resolve the situation and protect the bullied child. The child, parents, and fellow team members and coaches may all have valuable input. It may help to:
  - a. Ask the child being bullied what can be done to make him or her feel safe. Remember that changes to routine should be minimized. He or she is not at fault and should not be singled out. For example, consider rearranging lane assignments for everyone. If bigger moves are necessary, such as switching practice groups, the child who is bullied should not be forced to change. ii. Develop a game plan. Maintain open communication between the Club and parents. Discuss the steps that will be taken and how bullying will be addressed going forward.
- c. Be persistent. Bullying may not end overnight. Commit to making it stop and consistently support the bullied child.

**4. Address bullying behavior**

- a. Make sure the child knows what the problem behavior is. Young people who bully must learn their behavior is wrong and harms others.
- b. Show kids that bullying is taken seriously. Calmly tell the child that bullying will not be tolerated. Model respectful behavior when addressing the problem.
- c. Work with the child to understand some of the reasons he or she bullied. For example:
  - i. Sometimes children bully to fit in or just to make fun of someone is a little different from them. In other words, there may be some insecurity involved.
  - ii. Other times kids act out because something else—issues at home, abuse, stress—is going on in their lives. They also may have been bullied. These kids may be in need of additional support.
- d. Involve the kid who bullied in making amends or repairing the situation. The goal is to help them see how their actions affect others. For example, the child can:
  - i. Write a letter apologizing to the athlete who was bullied.
  - ii. Do a good deed for the person who was bullied, for the Club, or for others in your community.
  - iii. Clean up, repair, or pay for any property they damaged.
- e. Avoid strategies that don't work or have negative consequences:
  - i. Zero tolerance or “three strikes, you're out” strategies don't work. Suspending or removing from the team swimmers who bully does not reduce bullying behavior. Swimmers may be less likely to report and address bullying if suspension or getting kicked off the team is the consequence.
  - ii. Conflict resolution and peer mediation don't work for bullying. Bullying is not a conflict between people of equal power who share equal blame. Facing those who have bullied may further upset kids who have been bullied.
- f. Follow-up. After the bullying issue is resolved, continue finding ways to help the child who bullied to understand how what they do affects other people. For example, praise acts of kindness or talk about what it means to be a good teammate.

**5. Support bystanders who witness bullying.** Every day, kids witness bullying. They want to help, but don't know how. Fortunately, there are a few simple, safe ways that athletes can help stop bullying when they see it happening.

- a. Be a friend to the person being bullied;
- b. Tell a trusted adult – your parent, coach, or club board member;
- c. Help the kid being bullied get away from the situation. Create a distraction, focus the attention on something else, or offer a way for the target to get out of the situation. “Let's go, practice is about to start.”
- d. Set a good example by not bullying others.
- e. Don't give the bully an audience. Bullies are encouraged by the attention they get from bystanders. If you do nothing else, just walk away.



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### Peer-to-Peer Incidents: A Recourse Guide:

<https://www.usaswimming.org/articles-landing-page/2017/02/16/bullying-prevention>

### Electronic Communication Policy of CAT

#### **PURPOSE**

CAT recognizes the prevalence of electronic communication and social media in today's world. Many of our swimmers use these means as their primary method of communication. While the Club acknowledges the value of these methods of communication, the Club also realizes that there are associated risks that must be considered when adults use these methods to communicate with minors.

#### **GENERAL CONTENT**

All communications between a coach or other adult and an athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. The content and intent of all electronic communications must adhere to the USA Swimming Code of Conduct regarding Athlete Protection. As of June 23, 2019, USA Swimming and CAT adopted the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy (MAAPP), which mandates that any electronic communication between Coach and Athlete must include the minor's parent or legal guardian. (There will be more on the MAAPP policy in the next section.)

For example, as with any communication with an athlete, electronic communication should not contain or relate to any of the following:

- drugs or alcohol use;
- sexually oriented conversation; sexually explicit language; sexual activity
- the adult's personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues, or personal problems; and
- inappropriate or sexually explicit pictures
- Note: Any communication concerning an athlete's personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues or personal problems must be transparent, accessible and professional.

Whether one is an athlete, coach, board member or parent, the guiding principle to always use in communication is to ask: "Is this communication something that someone else would find appropriate or acceptable in a face-to-face meeting?" or "Is this something you would be comfortable saying out loud to the intended recipient of your communication in front of the intended recipient's parents, the coaching staff, the board, or other athletes?"

With respect to electronic communications, a simple test that can be used in most cases is whether the electronic communication with swimmers is **Transparent, Accessible and Professional**.

*Transparent*: All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should be transparent. Your communication should not only be clear and direct, but also free of hidden meanings, innuendo and expectations.

*Accessible*: All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should be considered a matter of record and part of the Club's records. Whenever possible, include another coach or parent in the communication so that there is no question regarding accessibility.

*Professional*: All electronic communication between a coach and an athlete should be conducted professionally as a representative of the Club. This includes word choices, tone, grammar, and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of a staff member.

If your communication meets all three of the **T.A.P.** criteria, then it is likely your method of communication with athletes will be appropriate.

**CAT TEAM HANDBOOK 2019-2020****FACEBOOK, BLOGS, TWITTER, INSTAGRAM AND SIMILAR SITES**

Coaches may have personal Facebook (or other social media site) pages, but they are not permitted to have any athlete member of the Club join their personal page as a “friend.” A coach should not accept any “friend” request from an athlete. In addition, the coach should remind the athlete that this is not permitted. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to “private message” each other through Facebook. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to “instant message” each other through Facebook chat or other IM method.

The Club has an official Facebook page that athletes and their parents can “friend” for information and updates on team-related matters.

Coaches are encouraged to set their pages to “private” to prevent athletes from accessing the coach’s personal information.

**TWITTER**

The Club has an official Twitter page that coaches, athletes and parents can follow for information and updates on team-related matters. Coaches are not permitted to follow athletes on Twitter. Likewise, athletes are not permitted to follow coaches on Twitter. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to “direct message” each other through Twitter.

**TEXTING**

Subject to the general guidelines mentioned above, texting is allowed between coaches and athletes during the hours from 7am until 9pm. Texting only shall be used for the purpose of communicating information directly related to team activities.

**EMAIL**

Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate between the hours of 7am and 9pm.

**REQUEST TO DISCONTINUE ALL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS**

The parents or guardians of an athlete may request in writing that their child not be contacted by coaches through any form of electronic communication.

**Team Travel Policy for CAT**

**Purpose:** Athletes are most vulnerable to misconduct during travel, particularly overnight stays. This includes a high risk of athlete-to-athlete misconduct. During travel, athletes are often away from their families and support networks, and the setting – new changing areas, locker rooms, workout facilities, automobiles and hotel rooms – is less structured and less familiar.

Team Travel is defined as overnight travel to a swim meet or another team activity that is planned and supervised by the club or LSC.

**Section 1 - USA Swimming Required Policies**

Club and LSC travel policies must include these policies. These items are Code of Conduct stipulations in the USA Swimming Rulebook.

- a. Club travel policies must be signed and agreed to by all athletes, parents, coaches and other adults traveling with the club. (305.5.D)
- b. Team managers and chaperones must be members of USA Swimming and have successfully passed a USA Swimming-administered criminal background check. (305.5.B)

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- c. Regardless of gender, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an athlete (unless the coach is the parent, guardian, sibling, or spouse of that particular athlete). (305.5.A)
- d. When only one athlete and one coach travel to a competition, the athlete must have his/her parents' (or legal guardian's) written permission in advance to travel alone with the coach. (305.5C)
- e. A coach may not travel locally or to travel competitions alone with a minor athletes unless written permission is provided from the minor athlete's parents or legal guardians. See MAAPP policy and letters of permission.

**Section 2 – Other Policies**

- a. When only one athlete and one coach travel to a competition, at the competition the coach and athlete should attempt to establish a “buddy” club to associate with during the competition and when away from the venue.
- b. To ensure the propriety of the athletes and to protect the staff, there will be no male athletes in female athlete's rooms and no female athletes in male athlete's rooms (unless the other athlete is a sibling or spouse of that particular athlete).
- c. A copy of the Club Code of Conduct must be signed by the athlete and his/her parent or legal guardian.
- d. Team members and staff traveling with the team will attend all team functions including meetings, practices, meals, meet sessions, etc. unless otherwise excused or instructed by the head coach or his/her designee.
- e. The directions & decisions of coaches/chaperones are final.
- f. When visiting public places such as shopping malls, movie theatres, etc. swimmers will stay in groups of no less than three persons. 12 & Under athletes will be accompanied by a chaperone.

**Section 3 - Other Policies**

The following, organized by topic, is a bullet-point list of additional travel policies to consider. Teams and LSCs may want to utilize some of these policies based on their individual preferences and needs.

*Behavior*

- a. Be quiet and respect the rights of teammates and others in hotel;
- b. Be prompt and on time;

*Financial*

- a. No room service without permission;
- b. Swimmers responsible for any damages or thievery at hotel;
- c. Must participate in contracted group meals; and

**Code of Conduct / Honor Code**

All team members, team staff, and parents of minors are apprised in writing of this Code of Conduct and the attached USA Swimming Code of Conduct. A signature on this document constitutes unconditional agreement to comply with the stipulations of both documents.

- a. Team members will display proper respect and sportsmanship toward coaches, officials, administrators, teammates, fellow competitors and the public at all times.
- b. Team members and staff will refrain from any illegal or inappropriate behavior that would detract from a positive image of the team or be detrimental to its performance objectives.
- c. The possession or use of alcohol or tobacco products by any athlete is prohibited.
- d. The possession, use, or sale/distribution of any controlled or illegal substance or any form of weapon is strictly forbidden.
- e. No “deck changes” are permitted. Athletes are expected to use available change facilities.

### **Locker Room Monitoring Policy of CAT**

#### **MONITORING**

Coaches and staff make every effort to recognize when an athlete goes to the locker room or changing area during practice and competition and, if they do not return in a timely fashion, we will check on the athlete's whereabouts.

We discourage parents from entering locker rooms and changing areas unless it is truly necessary. In those instances, it should only be a same-sex parent. If this is necessary, parents should let the coach or administrator know about this in advance.

If an athlete needs assistance with his or her uniform or gear (for example, a child under the age of eight), or an athlete's disability warrants assistance, then we ask that parents let the coach, or an administrator know beforehand that he or she will be helping the athlete.

CAT has staggered practices, with different groups arriving and departing throughout the day. It is therefore not practical to constantly monitor locker rooms and changing areas over this extended course of time. While we do not post staff or a coach inside or at the doors of the locker rooms and changing areas, we do make occasional sweeps of these areas. Staff and coaches conduct these sweeps, with women checking on female locker rooms, and men checking on male locker rooms. No coach or applicable adult shall be in the locker room alone with another minor athlete at any time. Please see MAAPP policy.

#### **USE OF CELL PHONES AND OTHER MOBILE RECORDING DEVICES**

Cell phones and other mobile devices with recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras and video cameras increase the risk for different forms of misconduct in locker rooms and changing areas. The USA Swimming Athlete Protection Policies prohibit the use of such devices in the locker room or other changing area:

*305.3 Use of audio or visual recording devices, including a cell phone camera, is not allowed in changing areas, rest rooms or locker rooms.*

**All athletes are required to leave phones, tablets, and any other device with a camera or recording abilities in the pool office.**

### **Photography Policy of CAT**

#### **PURPOSE**

There has been much talk about whether it is safe to have images taken of children participating in sports. While the great majority of images are appropriate and are taken in good faith, it is a fact that images can be misused, and children can be put at risk if commonsense procedures are not observed.

A parent or guardian has a right of refuse to have children photographed. The exercise of this right of refusal cannot be used as grounds for refusing entry into a swimming competition. Therefore, any photo that may go to press or on a notice board, be it through a member of the club or official photographer, should receive parental consent before publishing/displaying the photo, preferably in writing. A suggested form allowing parents to indicate refusal of consent is to follow.

All photographs must observe generally accepted standards of decency :

- Action shots should be a celebration of the sporting activity and not a sexualized image in a sporting context.

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- Action shots should not be taken or retained where the photograph reveals a torn or displaced swim suit.
- Photographs should not be taken from behind swimming blocks at the start of a race or exhibit a child climbing out of the swimming pool.
- Photographs should not be taken in locker-rooms or bathrooms.

**Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy (MAAPP)**

In their April meeting, the USA Swimming Board of Directors reviewed and approved changes to USA Swimming rules related to a Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy (MAAPP). The policy addresses risk areas that present opportunities for abuse to occur and will become official for all USA Swimming Member clubs June 23, 2019.

You may read more from the USA Swimming board chair and USA Swimming CEO and also review the policy in its entirety, by clicking here: <https://www.usaswimming.org/articles-landing-page/2019/05/08/maapp-member-letter>

Cleveland Aqua Tiger's MAAPP policy can be found following this link:

[https://www.teamunify.com/secat/\\_doc\\_/463994\\_2\\_CAT%20MAAP%20.pdf](https://www.teamunify.com/secat/_doc_/463994_2_CAT%20MAAP%20.pdf)

**TERMS & CONDITIONS for PARTICIPATION**

**Terms and Conditions for Participation**

**Cleveland Aqua Tigers**

1. The yearly registration fee is not refundable and must be paid prior to the swimmer entering the water.
2. Monthly dues are automatically paid on the first day of each month. Failed payments will result in processing fees as well as late charges. Swimmers with balances due on the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month will be held out of practices until the account balance is paid in full
3. Meet entry fees are in addition to the monthly dues.
4. Should a swimmer decide to discontinue participation with the Cleveland Aqua Tigers, written email notification must be received by the 5th day of the month prior to stopping. Notification received after that day will result in the next month's fees being charged. Developmental swimmers must send their notification 30 days prior to the next session start date.
5. All swimmers, who are members of the Cleveland Aqua Tigers are required to participate at their highest level of achievement in championship meets (including relays)
6. Each parent and swimmer are responsible for reading and understanding and abiding by all the contents of the Cleveland Aqua Tigers handbook.

I understand and agree to the above terms and conditions as well as all other aspects of the Cleveland Aqua Tigers handbook in exchange for the privilege of my child(ren), to participate in the activities and swimming program of Cleveland Aqua Tigers.

|                    |                   |      |
|--------------------|-------------------|------|
| Swimmer Print Name | Swimmer Sign Name | Date |
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| Swimmer Print Name | Swimmer Sign Name | Date |
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| Swimmer Print Name | Swimmer Sign Name | Date |
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|                   |                  |      |
|-------------------|------------------|------|
| Parent Print Name | Parent Sign Name | Date |
|-------------------|------------------|------|