

Virginia Gators Swimming



Team Handbook



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Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is two-fold: to explain to new members just what Gator Swimming is all about and to outline various policies that affect all swimmers, year after year. It should be read by all families so that they may become familiar with important facts and rules of the team.

Why swim?

The USA Swimming age group program is America's largest program of guided fitness activity for children. Age group swimming builds a strong foundation for a lifetime of good health, by teaching healthy fitness habits.

Physical Development

Swimming is considered the ideal activity for developing muscular and skeletal growth by many physicians and pediatricians. Why do doctors like it so much? Swimming develops high quality aerobic endurance, the most important key to physical fitness. In other sports an hour of practice may yield as little as 10 minutes of meaningful exercise. Age group swim teams use every precious minute of practice time developing fitness and teaching skills.

Swimming does a better job in proportional muscular development by using all the body's major muscle groups. No other sport does this as well. Swimming enhances children's natural flexibility (at a time when they ordinarily begin to lose it) by exercising all of their major joints through a full range of motion. Swimming helps develop superior coordination because it requires combinations of complex movements of all parts of the body, enhancing harmonious muscle function, grace, and fluidity of movement. Swimming is the most injury-free of all children's sports. Swimming is a sport that will bring kids fitness and enjoyment for life. Participants in Master's Swimming programs are still training and racing well into their 80's.

Intellectual Competence

In addition to physical development, children can develop greater intellectual competence by participating in a guided program of physical activity. Learning and using swimming skills engages the thinking processes. As they learn new techniques, children must develop and plan movement sequences. They improve by exploring new ideas. They learn that greater progress results from using their creative talents. Self-expression can be just as much physical as intellectual. Finally, their accomplishments in learning and using new skills contribute to a stronger self-image.

What is Virginia Gators Swimming?

Roanoke Valley Swimming, Inc. ("RVSI") is the official name of the organization. RVSI is a Virginia non-stock 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. Virginia Gators (GATR) is the team name of RVSI (in other words RVSI is doing business as Virginia Gators). Our team is governed by USA Swimming, Inc. and Virginia Swimming, Inc. (VSI) organizations. Virginia Gators has been serving the Roanoke Valley and surrounding communities for 40 years providing a year-round program for athletes. Virginia Gators Swimming is the premiere swim program in the Roanoke Valley.

Mission Statement, Vision, Philosophy, & Values

Mission Statement

The Virginia Gators are committed to excellence through developing and challenging swimmers in a positive, nurturing environment for success in sport and life.

Vision

The Virginia Gators will continue to be a leader in youth athletics and development in the greater Roanoke Valley. We will continue to be a model, high-performing club throughout the Virginia LSC, the Eastern Zone and USA Swimming. The Gators' will continue to develop and maintain a program that will grow and enhance swimming in the Roanoke Valley and surrounding areas by providing pool access and instruction opportunities for swimmers of all ages and abilities and regardless of socioeconomic backgrounds. From learn to swim programs to Olympic level training and performance, the Gators have the facility and the personnel to help you achieve your goals.

Philosophy

Teamwork: Virginia Gators is a team built upon the commitment, support, and participation of the Board, coaches, swimmers, parents/guardians, and the community at large. The Gators believes that success in achieving the team's goals is dependent upon the cooperation of all members.

Coaching: Virginia Gators is committed to providing comprehensive, expert swim/stroke training by an experienced coaching team. In addition to swim training, the Gators promotes the practice of healthy lifestyle habits, such as good nutrition and sleep.

The Swimmer: The Gators believes that each swimmer is an individual with different backgrounds, needs, and goals. The team focuses on the development of positive self-esteem and individual goal setting. The team encourages swimmers to represent Gators Swimming by participating competitively on a year-round basis. The Gators believes that all members should model team spirit and sportsmanship.

Values

In the continual pursuit of the Virginia Gators mission and vision, all members of our organization, including coaching staff, board members, parents, volunteers and swimmers commit to upholding and investing in four core values: courage, unity, perseverance and kaizen.

Courage: We actively recognize challenges and relish the opportunity to overcome them with confidence and pride. We know that to become the best version of ourselves we must expand our limits to do things we have never done before. We invite new experiences and the possibility of short-term failure as an avenue to long-term growth. We embrace competition, from both our teammates and those outside our team, as a way to bring the best out of ourselves, while also revealing our opportunities to improve.

Unity: We support one another in our pursuit of excellence and realize that no individual is more powerful than the team. We encourage each other to push boundaries and explore the limits of what is possible. We unconditionally celebrate our teammates' success and support them in their failure. We seek to find the best in one another and respect each other and our differences.

Perseverance: We acknowledge that excellence is earned through hard work and dedication. We value long-term, sustained improvement and do not seek quick-fixes or instant gratification. We realize that the pursuit excellence is not straightforward and simple, but rather a long, winding path full of roadblocks, hurdles and challenges that we continually strive to overcome. We set long-term goals and are relentless in our pursuit of those goals.

Kaizen: We seek to continually improve ourselves and our teammates. We stay humble in our successes and reflective in our failures. We view results, positive or negative, as information and catalysts for improvement. We recognize the importance of incremental, sequential change and find enjoyment in the process of continual improvement.

Virginia Gators' History

The Virginia Gators year-round swimming started in the early 1970's practicing at various small pools around Roanoke including the Hotel Roanoke and the 4 lane, 20 yard pool at the Lutheran Boys Home in Salem. In its early days, the team consisted of a few dozen kids. The team became affiliated with the YMCA in the late 70's and early 80's and began competing against other Y teams in the state and participating in the YMCA National Championships with limited success. In 1985, the team moved to Lancerlot in Vinton where it rented lanes. In the early 1990's the coaching staff and Board began planning and fundraising for the "Gator Aquatic Center." The Gators leased land from the City of Roanoke and broke ground in 1992. The GAC opened in 1993 and has been in continuous operation ever since. At the time, the Virginia Gators was the only team in Virginia to own their own pool. As of today, it is still only one of three teams to own their pool. In 2012, the Gators purchased the land from the City of Roanoke and is now the owner of the building and the property.

Since 1988, Virginia Gators has produced 14 Olympic Trial Qualifiers, 6 NCAA Division I All-Americans, over 100 swimmers have gone on to participate in college swimming; approximately 38 Virginia State record holders and countless state champions.

Notable Team Achievements:

- YMCA Nationals – Team Champions
- NASA Age Group Champions: 2011 (Boys and Girls); 2012 (Boys and Girls); 2013 (Girls); 2014 (Girls); 2015 (Girls)
- Virginia Age Group Champions: 2015 (Girls)
- 2015 USA Swimming Selection as a National Top 40 Board Governed Team
- 2017 Achieved USA Swimming Level 4 Club Recognition
- 2018 Received Gold Medal Status in USA Swimming's Club Excellence Program, ranked #14 Nationally (Only team in VA Swimming to achieve)
- 2019 Received Gold Medal Status in USA Swimming's Club Excellence Program, ranked #9 Nationally (Only team in VA Swimming to achieve)
- 2020 Received Silver Medal Status in USA Swimming's Club Excellence Program

Head Coaches of Virginia Gators

Richard Bader 1980-1983

Bill Beecher 1983-1986

Doug Fonder 1986-2020

Michael Hamann 2020- present

Virginia Gators Swimming

Board of Directors

The Virginia Gators Board is made up of up to nine members and the head coach. The Board of Directors meets together on a monthly basis to discuss issues related to our organization as a whole.

The volunteer board manages the Gators' business planning and fiscal responsibilities. Election of Board Members is held when positions become available or terms expire on a staggered basis. Board officer positions are President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary.

Responsibilities of the Board

One of the Gators' goals is to create an environment of team cohesiveness. By providing regular social, team-building opportunities, the Board hopes to nurture the team and to instill a sense of team pride. Parents/guardians and swimmers will be more motivated to be a part of the Gators, when they feel valued and enjoy themselves.

The Board will manage the budget of the team. The team will build relationships within the community and seek business sponsorships to establish a strong financial base for future growth.

The Gator Board plans to make our team more visible to the community through the use of various avenues:

Media – Articles that highlight the accomplishments of our swimmers at swim meets will be submitted to local news media.

Community Events – Participation in local Roanoke events will make our team more recognizable and serve as a recruitment opportunity.

Team Website – The Gators' website will showcase our team and provide a valuable recruitment tool. The website will also provide a sponsorship tool for the team and an opportunity for interested businesses.

Recruitment Visits – Members of our recruitment team will market our team to community organizations as appropriate.

Coaches

All Gators coaches must meet high criteria set forth by USA Swimming. Each coach is a certified lifeguard and holds a current First Aid and CPR Training for the Professional Rescuer certification. Coaches are also required to complete the USA Swimming Safety Training for Coaches Course. Gators coaches have also passed a background check. All of the above requirements must be kept up to date for a swim coach to remain in good standing with USA Swimming and the Virginia Gators Swimming.

The Gators coaches' main responsibility is to mold all of our swimmers into the best swimmers that they can be. In addition, coaches mentor swimmers in life skills and positive values.

Coaches shall build relationships with team families, to achieve mutually-set goals for each swimmer.

Coaches also help the team to build relationships with other aquatic organizations.

Coaches' Rights

1. Each coach is a professional and has a right to be treated with respect by all swimmers, parents, and other coaches.
2. Each coach has a right to expect the full support and respect of all parents in the Virginia Gators program.
3. Each coach has a right to establish training programs, which are safe and will meet the needs and goals of the swimmers, head coach, and Virginia Gators.
4. Each coach has a right to be free from unnecessary interruption from parents during training sessions or meets.

Coaches' Responsibilities

The coaches' job is to supervise the entire competitive swim program. The Virginia Gators coaching staff is dedicated to providing a program for swimmers that will enable them to learn the value of striving to improve oneself. Therefore, the coaches must be in total control in matters affecting training and competition.

1. The coaches are responsible for placing swimmers in practice groups. This is based on the age and/or ability level of each individual. When it is in the best interest of a swimmer, he/she will be placed in a more challenging training group by their coach.
2. Sole responsibility for stroke instruction and the training regimen rests with the Virginia Gators coaching staff. Each group's practices are based on sound scientific principles and are geared to the specific goals of that group.
3. The coaching staff will make the final decision concerning which meets the Virginia Gators swimmers may attend. The coaching staff also makes the final decision concerning which events a swimmer is entered.

4. The coaching staff will make every effort to attend all meets. If a coach is going to miss a meet or a session during a meet, it will be communicated to parents and swimmers with as much notice and reasoning as possible.
5. At meets, the coaching staff will conduct and supervise warm-up procedures for the team. After each race, the coaches will offer constructive criticism regarding the swimmer's performance.
6. The building of a relay team is the sole responsibility of the coaching staff.
7. Each coach has a responsibility to constantly be aware of the swimmer's safety and well-being.
8. Each coach has a responsibility to be a positive role model for the swimmers.
9. Each coach has a responsibility to be a technical expert on the sport of swimming.
10. Each coach has a responsibility to help construct a vision for the athlete of what is possible in the sport of swimming and the path each swimmer will need to follow to achieve that goal.
11. Each coach has a responsibility to be available to parents and swimmers by office hours or by appointment outside practice and meet schedules.

The coaching staff is constantly updating and improving the Virginia Gators swim program. It is the swimmer's and parent's responsibility to make the most out of the excellent opportunity this program provides for success in swimming.

Parents / Guardians

As the Parent/Guardian of a competitive swimmer, your main responsibility is to provide a caring, supporting environment. This support will encourage your child to feel good about his or her interest in competitive swimming. Show your support by ensuring your swimmer's attendance at practices and swim meets.

Parents/guardians are not participants on their child's team, but contribute to the success experienced by the swimmer and his or her team. Parents/guardians serve as role models, and children frequently emulate their attitudes. Strive to be a positive role model. Most important, show good sportsmanship at all times toward coaches, officials and other teams.

CODE OF CONDUCT: PARENTS

The purpose of a code of conduct for parents is to establish consistent expectations for behavior by parents. As a parent/guardian, I understand the important growth and developmental support that my child's participation fosters. I also understand that it is essential to provide the coaching staff with respect and the authority to coach the team. I agree with the following statements:

- I will actively uphold the Virginia Gators mission, vision, and values at all times.
- I will set the right example for our children by demonstrating sportsmanship and showing respect and common courtesy at all times to the team members, coaches, competitors, officials, parents, and all facilities.
- I will get involved by volunteering, observing practices, cheering at meets, and talking with my child and their coach about their progress.
- I will refrain from coaching my child from the stands during practices or meets.
- I understand that criticizing, name-calling, use of abusive language or gestures directed toward coaches, officials, volunteers, and/or any participating swimmer or parents will not be tolerated.
- I will respect the integrity of the officials.
- I will direct my concerns to my child's coach first then, if unresolved, to the head coach. If I still feel my concerns has not been resolved I will address with an appropriate board member.
- I will schedule meetings to address concerns with my child's coaches and not address issues on deck.

I understand the above expectations and that my failure to adhere to them may result in disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension or dismissal from the team.

Release of Liability

Parent/Guardian hereby releases Virginia Gators, its employees, officers, directors and volunteers and any facility used by Virginia Gators from any liability arising out of any injury to the Swimmer(s) which may occur while the Swimmer(s) is/are participating in Virginia Gators Swimming, including, but not limited to, practices, meets, travel trips, and other team activities, or while the Swimmer(s) is/are using facilities leased or used by the Virginia Gators.

Group Descriptions

The Gators' practice group guidelines have been developed by the coaching team to maximize the growth and development of swim techniques for Gator swimmers of all levels. Swimmers of similar age and abilities will be grouped together to reach the goals set for each level. The assignment of swimmers to a group shall be the decision of the coaching staff.

SENIOR GROUP I & II

Our Senior Program is structured to produce outstanding swimmers and student leaders through intensified training and skill development. Swimmers in this group are passionate about the sport and hold themselves to a high standard of dedication and commitment.

Our goal is to reach National prominence by developing a cohesive, dedicated group of student athletes.

AGE GROUP GOLD I & II

These groups consist of swimmers primarily aged 9-14. Swimmers will be divided by age, ability, effort, practice consistency and meet participation. This group will be guided towards seasonal goals, good work ethic, continued stroke and technique development and a love for racing.

MIGHTY GATORS

This is our top training group for 9 and under swimmers. We will continue to build on stroke mechanics and technique work, while adding moderate training to their program. This group will emphasize bilateral breathing, proper streamlining and turns including back to breast, underwater kicking and proper starts, all the while developing a love for the sport of swimming!

BLUE GROUP

This group consists of mostly 8 and under swimmers. Swimmers will learn the fundamentals of stroke technique and water safety. They will also learn skills like turns and starts, all while learning to love the sport of swimming!

GATOR EGGS

Groups of Swimmers (4 or less) will learn water safety and basic stroke fundamentals with in water instruction. This is an introductory group for our future gators centered around fun and safety!

Other groups are available to be developed based on needs. We are able to accommodate all level swimmers no matter the level.

Swimmer's Rights

Swimmers have a right to:

1. Be treated with respect and to be free from verbal or physical abuse from a coach or another swimmer.
2. Expect that his or her coach, after being made aware of a limiting physical condition, will not ask the swimmer to perform or train in a manner that the coach knows will be harmful to the swimmer.
3. Expect that all practices, both in and out of the water, will be conducted in a safe manner so that the swimmer will not be exposed to unnecessary risk.
4. Know that his or her coach cares about them as a person/individual as well as being an athlete.
5. Be positively encouraged to do better, to be congratulated on a good performance, and to be criticized constructively when improvement is needed and attainable.
6. Expect practice to be challenging and rewarding in competition.
7. Set his or her own swimming goals with his or her coach, and to change these goals as circumstances arise.

CODE OF CONDUCT: Swimmers

The purpose of a code of conduct for swimmers is to establish a consistent expectation for swimmers' behavior. By signing this code of conduct, I agree to the following statements:

- I will actively uphold the Virginia Gators mission, vision, and values at all times.
- I will respect and show courtesy to my teammates and coaches at all times.
- I will demonstrate good sportsmanship at all practices and meets.
- I will set a good example of behavior and work ethic for my younger teammates.
- I will be respectful of my teammates' feelings and personal space. Swimmers who exhibit sexist, racist, homophobic, or otherwise inappropriate behavior will be faced with consequences.
- I will attend all team meetings and training sessions, unless I am excused by my coach.
- I will show respect for all facilities and other property (including locker rooms) used during practices, competitions, and team activities.
- I will refrain from foul language, violence, behavior deemed dishonest, offensive, or illegal.
- If I disagree with an official's call, I will talk with my coach and not approach the official directly.
- I will obey all of USA Swimming's rules and codes of conduct.

I understand that if I violate this code of conduct, I will be subject to disciplinary action determined by my coaches and the swim club's board of directors. This may include but is not limited to suspension or dismissal from the team.

Consequences for Violation of the Code of Conduct:

This code shall be in force for all Virginia Gators swimmers during practice, swim meets, and at events sponsored by, or in which, the Gators team is represented. Disciplinary actions can range from, but are not limited to; verbal or written reprimands, being sent home from practice or meets at the parents' expense, expulsion from the team, being barred from competition, or receiving any other disciplinary action that the Board deems necessary if a member fails to adhere to the Code in part or in whole.

SUSPENSION: Coaches may suspend a swimmer from practice for disciplinary reason. Coaches may also recommend to the board that a swimmer be expelled from the team if in his/her judgment, the swimmer is unable to conform to the disciplinary guidelines established for swim practice and team participation.

SAFETY AND BEHAVIOR: The Virginia Gators Board of Directors reserves the right to terminate the membership of any individual whose behavior places the Virginia Gators in an unfavorable light or jeopardizes our participation in any pool use or sporting event. All swimmers are expected to demonstrate good sportsmanship and act as appropriate ambassadors for the team. They should act as role models for other swimmers at all times.



Safe Sport is USA Swimming’s abuse prevention effort, and all member clubs are a part of it. All coaches and officials have passed a criminal background check and have completed Athlete Protection Training. Virginia Gators has the following policies in place:

1. Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy (MAAPP)
 - a. One-On-One Interactions
 - b. Social Media and Electronic Communication
 - c. Travel
 - d. Locker Room and Changing Areas
 - e. Massages and Rubdowns/Athlete Training Modalities
2. Photography Policy
3. Action Plan to Address Bullying

By putting policies in place and communicating expectations, we can create a positive and safe environment for everyone. Nothing is more important than the safety and well-being of our children. If you have any questions you can visit USA Swimming at www.usaswimming.org or contact Safe Sport at: safesport@usaswimming.org or (719) 866-4578.

Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy

The USA Swimming Minor Athlete Abuse Protection Policy (MAAPP) applies to Applicable Adults. This resource is intended to provide information regarding implementing the Applicable Adults definition in the policy.

Applicable Adults

- All USA Swimming non-athlete members and adult athlete members;
- Participating non-members (e.g. meet marshals, meet computer operators, timers, etc.);
- LSC and club adult staff and board members; and
- Any other adult authorized to have regular contact with or authority over a minor athlete. Collectively “Applicable Adult(s)”

General Requirement

USA Swimming member clubs and LSCs are required to implement this Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy in full. The Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy must be reviewed and agreed to in writing by all athletes, parents, coaches and other non-athlete members of member clubs on an annual basis with such written agreement to be retained by the club.

One-On-One Interactions

I. Observable and Interruptible

One-on-one interactions between a minor athlete and an Applicable Adult (who is not the minor's legal guardian) must occur at an observable and interruptible distance from another adult unless meeting with a Mental Health Care Professional and/or Health Care Provider (see below) or under emergency circumstances.

II. Meetings

- a. Meetings between a minor athlete and an Applicable Adult may only occur if another adult is present and where interactions can be easily observed and at an interruptible distance from another adult, except under emergency circumstances.
- b. If a one-on-one meeting takes place, the door to the room must remain unlocked and open. If available, it must occur in a room that has windows, with the windows, blinds, and/or curtains remaining open during the meeting.
- c. Meetings must not be conducted in an Applicable Adult or athlete's hotel room or other overnight lodging location during team travel.

III. Meetings with Mental Health Care Professionals and/or Health Care Providers

If a Mental Health Care Professional and/or Health Care Provider meets with a minor athlete in conjunction with participation, including at practice or competition sites, a closed-door meeting may be permitted to protect patient privacy provided that:

- a. The door remains unlocked;
- b. Another adult is present at the facility;
- c. The other adult is advised that a closed-door meeting is occurring; and
- d. Written legal guardian consent is obtained in advance by the Mental Health Care Professional and/or Health Care Provider, with a copy provided to the club.

Social Media and Electronic Communications

I. Content

All electronic communication from Applicable Adults to minor athletes must be professional in nature.

II. Open and Transparent

Absent emergency circumstances, if an Applicable Adult with authority over minor athletes needs to communicate directly with a minor athlete via electronic communications (including social media), the minor athlete's legal guardian must be copied. If a minor athlete communicates to the Applicable Adult (with authority over the minor athlete) privately first, said Applicable Adult must copy the minor athlete's legal guardian on any electronic communication response to the minor athlete.

When an Applicable Adult with authority over minor athletes communicates electronically to the entire team, said Applicable Adult must copy another adult.

III. Requests to Discontinue

Legal guardians may request in writing that their minor athlete not be contacted through any form of electronic communication by the club, LSC or by an Applicable Adult subject to this Policy. The organization must abide by any such request that the minor athlete not be contacted via electronic communication, or included in any social media post, absent emergency circumstances.

IV. Hours

Electronic communications must only be sent between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., unless emergency circumstances exist, or during competition travel.

V. Prohibited Electronic Communication

Applicable Adults with authority over minor athletes are not permitted to maintain private social media connections with unrelated minor athletes and such Applicable Adults are not permitted to accept new personal page requests on social media platforms from minor athletes, unless the Applicable Adult has a fan page, or the contact is deemed as celebrity contact as opposed to regular contact. Existing social media connections with minor athletes must be discontinued. Minor athletes may “friend” the club and/or LSC’s official page.

Applicable Adults with authority over minor athletes must not send private, instant or direct messages to a minor athlete through social media platforms.

Travel

I. Local Travel

Local travel consists of travel to training, practice and competition that occurs locally and does not include coordinated overnight stay(s).

Applicable Adults must not ride in a vehicle alone with an unrelated minor athlete, absent emergency circumstances, and must always have at least two minor athletes or another adult in the vehicle, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the minor athlete’s legal guardian.

II. Team Travel

Team travel is travel to a competition or other team activity that the organization plans and supervises.

- a. During team travel, when doing room checks two-deep leadership (two Applicable Adults should be present) and observable and interruptible environments must be maintained.

When only one Applicable Adult and one minor athlete travel to a competition, the minor athlete’s legal guardian must provide written permission in advance and for each competition for the minor athlete to travel alone with said Applicable Adult.

Team Managers and Chaperones who travel with the club or LSC must be USA Swimming members in good standing.

- b. Unrelated non-athlete Applicable Adults must not share a hotel room, other sleeping arrangement or overnight lodging location with an athlete.

Minor athletes should be paired to share hotel rooms or other sleeping arrangements with other minor athletes of the same gender and of similar age. When a minor athlete and an adult athlete share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement, the minor athlete’s legal guardian must provide written permission in advance and for each instance for the minor to share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with said adult athlete.

- c. Meetings during team travel must be conducted consistent with the One-on-One Interactions section of this Policy (i.e., any such meeting must be observable and

interruptible). Meetings must not be conducted in an individual's hotel room or other overnight sleeping location.

Locker Rooms and Changing Areas

I. Requirement to Use Locker Room or Changing Area

The designated locker room or changing area must be used when an athlete or Applicable Adult changes, in whole or in part, into or out of a swimsuit when wearing just one suit (e.g., deck changing is prohibited).

II. Use of Recording Devices

Use of any device's (including a cell phone's) recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras and video cameras in locker rooms, changing areas, or similar spaces by a minor athlete or an Applicable Adult is prohibited.

III. Undress

An unrelated Applicable Adult must not expose his or her breasts, buttocks, groin or genitals to a minor athlete under any circumstance. An unrelated Applicable Adult must not request an unrelated minor athlete to expose the minor athlete's breasts, buttocks, groin or genitals to the unrelated Applicable Adult under any circumstance.

IV. One-on-One Interactions

Except for athletes on the same team or athletes attending the same competition, at no time are unrelated Applicable Adults permitted to be alone with a minor athlete in a locker room or changing area, except under emergency circumstances. If the organization is using a facility that only has a single locker room or changing area, separate times for use by Applicable Adults must be designated.

V. Monitoring

The club must regularly and randomly monitor the use of locker rooms and changing areas to ensure compliance with this Policy. Locker rooms and changing areas may be monitored by use of the following methods:

- a. Conducting a sweep of the locker room or changing area before athletes arrive;
- b. Posting staff directly outside the locker room or changing area during periods of use;
- c. Leaving the doors open when adequate privacy is still possible; and/or
- d. Making occasional sweeps of the locker rooms or changing areas with women checking on female locker rooms and men checking on male locker rooms.

Every effort must be made to recognize when a minor athlete goes to the locker room or changing area during practice and competition, and, if the minor athlete does not return in a timely fashion, to check on the minor athlete's whereabouts.

VI. Legal Guardians in Locker Rooms or Changing Areas

Legal guardians are discouraged from entering locker rooms and changing areas. If a legal guardian does enter a locker room or changing area, it must only be a same-sex legal guardian and the legal guardian should notify a coach or administrator in advance.

Massages and Rubdowns/Athlete Training Modalities

I. Definition: In this section, the term "Massage" refers to any massage, rubdown, athletic training modality including physical modalities (e.g., stretching, physical manipulation, injury rehabilitation, etc.) and electronic or instrument assisted modalities (e.g., stim treatment, dry needling, cupping, etc.).

II. General Requirement

Any Massage performed on an athlete must be conducted in an open and interruptible location and must be performed by a licensed massage therapist or other certified professional. However, even if a coach is a licensed massage therapist, the coach must not perform a rubdown or massage of an athlete under any circumstance.

III. Additional Minor Athlete Requirements

- a. Written consent by a legal guardian must be obtained in advance by the licensed massage therapist or other certified professional, with a copy provided to the club.
- b. Legal guardians must be allowed to observe the Massage.
- c. Any Massage of a minor athlete must be done with at least one other adult present and must never be done with only the minor athlete and the person performing the Massage in the room.

Photography Policy

A parent or guardian has the right to refuse to have children photographed. The exercise of this right of refusal cannot be used as grounds for refusing entry into a swimming competition. Parents wishing to indicate refusal of consent for their child to be photographed should be sent via e-mail or by typed letter to the Head Coach.

All photographs must observe generally accepted standards of decency, in particular:

- Action shots should be a celebration of the sporting activity and not a sexualized image in a sporting context.
- 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 never be taken in locker-rooms or bathrooms.

Action Plan to Address Bullying

Purpose

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at Virginia Gators Swimming and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. The team 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 the Team's Bullying Policy and Action Plan:

1. To make it clear that the Team 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 Virginia Gators 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:

- i. causing physical or emotional harm to the other member or damage to the other member's property;
- ii. placing the other member in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property;
- iii. creating a hostile environment for the other member at any USA Swimming activity;
- iv. infringing on the rights of the other member at any USA Swimming activity; or
- v. 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 team 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 Team Coach, Board Member, or other designated individual;
- Write a letter or email to the Team 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 team 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 on our team or it is reported to be occurring on our team, 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 seen as 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.
- 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:
 1. 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.
 2. Develop a game plan. Maintain open communication between the Team 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:
 - 1. 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.
 - 2. 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:
 - 1. Write a letter apologizing to the athlete who was bullied.
 - 2. Do a good deed for the person who was bullied, for the Team, or for others in your community.
 - 3. Clean up, repair, or pay for any property they damaged.
- e. Avoid strategies that don't work or have negative consequences:
 - 1. 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.
 - 2. 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 team 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.

Equipment

Equipment: Your Coach will communicate all equipment needs to you. Check with your coach—***not all items are required for all groups:***

- Practice Suit (must be specifically designed for competition and training)
- Goggles
- Cap
- Fins
- Kickboard

Team Attire:

- Virginia Gators Team Suit or other pre-approved suits are required for all swimmers at meets. Tech suits must be FINA approved suits.
- Gators Team Cap (required for all swimmers at meets)

Practice equipment may be purchased online.

Team caps can be purchased from the Gator store.

T-shirts, sweatshirts and other items, marked with the team name and/or logo are available for purchase in the Gators store. Team attire is strongly suggested to be worn at all meets. Parkas are a highly recommended item to keep swimmers comfortable after workouts, between events at meets and during inclement weather.

Lost & Found

You are strongly encouraged to label all of your swimmer's equipment. Labeled equipment found at practice can easily be returned to the swimmer. Unlabeled equipment found around the pool deck will be placed on the lost and found shelves. It will be kept for 30 days and then if not claimed donated to a local charity. **The team is not responsible for lost or stolen items.**

Dues & Association Memberships

Payment terms

Monthly dues

Roanoke Valley Swimming, Inc.
PO Box 4646
Roanoke, VA 24015-0646

Parents or swimmers may notify our staff in writing at least 30 days prior to the start of the month in which they plan to not swim. In order to reactivate the account within the same season the swimmer/parent notifies the staff in writing at least 5 days before the start of the month in which the swimmer will return. This action will be subject to a \$50 fee for processing the reactivation. There will be no reduction in fundraising or on-deck volunteer requirements as these are annual commitments.

Annual Facility Surcharge

The Gator Aquatic Center is a privately funded not-for-profit 501 (c) (3) organization that is solely dependent on the public and the swim team to keep its doors open. In lieu of charging memberships to each individual and in order to keep the equipment up-to-date, we must charge this fee to each individual /family. The swim team would not be able to exist with its current time and space without the facility, and the facility would not be able to exist without the team. This is a symbiotic relationship, so please remember that when you are paying this charge and you are at the pool, it is partly yours so please treat it with respect and reverence. This surcharge will be used to provide an upgrade to the facility each year and/or ensure that if we go through unexpected mechanical problems or economic downturns, we will be able to keep the facility operating and open. The facility surcharge, along with the other team fees, *does not qualify as membership* to the facility.

All families are responsible for an **annual \$150.00 facilities surcharge** upon enrollment and every year thereafter upon renewal.

USA Swimming/Virginia Swimming Membership

All swimmers must be registered with Virginia Swimming (VSI), our local USA Swimming organization. This **annual VSI membership fee** is due upon new membership registration and upon renewal of memberships in September. The VSI membership is an annual membership.

Suspension

If the monthly dues are more than 60 days late a late notice will be sent. If after 5 business days your account remains past due you will face a service fee and possible suspension. If your account continues to remain past due your swimmer will not be able to participate in any team activities including but not limited to practices and meet related activities.

If Parent/Guardian becomes delinquent in payment of dues or assessments because of financial hardship, he/she may apply to the board for a waiver of late fees and suspension. A waiver may be granted if satisfactory arrangements are made for payment of the delinquent amounts.

Fundraising Commitment

The monthly training fees are not enough to cover all the costs associated with the teams and facility. In order to keep your monthly costs down, retain the great coaching staff and to keep the facility operational, therefore, we use fundraising activities throughout the year to fulfill this short fall.

The team may take part in a GENERAL TEAM FUNDRAISER where any money earned will go directly to the facility and team improvement.

We have selected Kroger Card sales as our overall team project for this year. Kroger Cards are very easy to use and can turn a profit quite quickly with the cost of groceries and gas today. Please consider choosing Kroger Card to help support the team!

Fundraisers will be announced throughout the season.

Volunteer Commitment: The Virginia Gators subsidize their yearly budget by hosting “home” meets each year. The Gators are a parent run organization from the top down and everyone’s help is needed for us to be a success.

Bingo / Banner Program & Fee Reduction

Bingo / Banner Program:

The bingo / banner program is a vital source of funding, both for the swim team and the Gator Aquatic Center. A large percentage of our annual operating budget is obtained through the bingo / banner program. These funds support not only the team, but the operation of our facilities as well. The Bingo / Banner program is run and operated by the RVSI Board, and everyone’s help with this program is essential to both the Gators and the Gator Aquatic Center.

Gator families with swimmers in the Gold and Senior groups are responsible for one bingo credit commitment per month (12 per year), while those in Mighty Gators are responsible for 6 per year. This commitment can be met in one of the following ways:

1. **Work bingo sessions:** Sign up and work bingo at Gator Hall, located on Williamson Rd. in North Roanoke.
2. **Banner Sales:** You may meet your bingo commitment by selling an advertising banner to be displayed in the Gator Aquatic Center. One banner cost \$500 and equals 6 bingo credits. Two banners sold equals 13 bingo credits.
3. **Opt Out:** You may opt out of working your bingo commitment by paying \$50 per credit. This would be billed to you as \$50 per month until fulfilled or you can choose to pay in one annual payment at the beginning of the year.

Bingo Sessions:

Bingo sessions run from approximately 5-10 pm on Wednesday and Thursday nights at Gator Hall. Sign up is done through a signup genius that is distributed by team email. The following positions are available: Instant ticket sales, Paper Sales, Paymaster, Instant Manager (1.5

credits), Caller (1.5 credits), and Banker (2 credits). No experience is required for Instant Sales. Other positions require some degree of training at the bingo hall. Those positions that earn more than 1 credit are required to be at the bingo hall earlier and/or later than the others and require a training and shadowing period.

Fee Reduction Through Bingo:

We understand that the expenses associated with a competitive, year round sport such as swimming, can be a strain on family budgets. Therefore, everyone is offered the opportunity to reduce their monthly training fees through working additional bingo credits, above their basic fundraising commitment. The following apply to the fee reduction through bingo program:

- Fee reduction can only be applied to monthly training fees and cannot be applied to other fees such as meet entries and coach travel.
- Bingos will be offered in increments of 6 (fundraising only) or 12 (fundraising and fee reduction), and \$50 will be deducted from a family's monthly training fees for each bingo committed to work.
- The "swim year" runs from September to August. Any unworked bingos will be billed at \$50 per credit at the end of the swim season (August).
- Example: A family with a senior swimmer that commits to work 24 additional bingos is responsible for 12 fundraising credits plus 24 additional bingos (36 total) and would receive a \$100 deduction per month off of their bill.
- Bingo obligations will be updated at least quarterly. If you become excessively behind in fulfilling these obligations you may be asked to pay for your unworked bingos to date.
- Bingo sessions are NOT worth actual money and if you retire or leave the team, any unused credits will be lost.
- Bingos can be worked by parents, grandparents, friends, etc, but the worker MUST sign in under your family name so that credit is given to the appropriate account.
- Families may not subcontract to work their bingos.

Volunteering

Volunteer Requirements

Gators Home Meet Volunteering

Each family must provide one adult to volunteer at each Gators hosted meet for one session per meet day. Your family is required to volunteer regardless of whether your swimmer(s) participates in the meet. If you are not able to work, it is YOUR responsibility to find someone to work for you. The penalty for not meeting this volunteer requirement is a \$25 fine for each session missed.

Away Meet Volunteering

Your family is required to volunteer at away meets in which your swimmer(s) participate. The time requirement for away meet volunteering is one session per meet day. If you are not able to work it is YOUR responsibility to find someone to work for you. The penalties for failing to meet these volunteer requirements are:

- First offense: Written warning
- Second offense: \$50 fine
- Third offense: Suspension of meet privileges

Trial Memberships

Trial Memberships are available to new members only at the coaching staff's discretion. The purpose of trial membership is to give families an opportunity to try the sport of competitive swimming prior to making a substantial financial commitment.

Family Discounts

A discount of \$10 is given for a second swimmer and \$20 for a third swimmer. Should you have a 4th swimmer the above discounts do not apply and the 4th swimmer is free. Family is seen as a sibling of a current swimmer.

Communication

Website

The Gators' *primary methods of communication* are email and the team website, www.virginiagators.com. The website includes practice schedules, news and events and job sign-up tabs. The site is updated regularly. Please check for new and updated information.

The Virginia Gators are committed to clear and open communication. Please email the coaching staff at any point if you have questions or concerns.

Email

Emails will regularly be sent to inform parents/guardians and swimmers of upcoming events, swim meets, team social events, fundraising opportunities and volunteering events. **Be sure to keep your e-mail address current on the TeamUnify website.**

You may visit our website to send an e-mail to any member of the coaching staff with questions, concerns, updates or notifications. The coaching staff will respond to your email within 24 hours or, if received on weekend, the Monday following the weekend.

Roanoke Valley Swim, Inc./Virginia Gators

Grievance Procedure

The Roanoke Valley Swim, Inc./Virginia Gators Grievance Procedure provides swimmers, parents, coaches, club leaders and employees a system to address and report grievances in a productive, systematic way. Following these Procedures provides the appropriate parties a means to properly investigate, intervene, and take disciplinary action when needed.

WHERE TO REPORT:

For issues dealing with sexual misconduct, sexual harassment and/or sexually explicit or inappropriate communication through social media:

- U.S. Center for SafeSport: 720-524-5640 or <https://safesport.i-sight.com/portal>

For issues dealing with physical abuse, emotional abuse, criminal charges and the use, sale or distribution of illegal drugs:

- USA Swimming Safe Sport: safesport@usaswimming.org or <https://fs22.formsite.com/usaswimming/form10/index.html>

For issues dealing with known or suspected child abuse, report to both:

- VA Child Protective Services: (800) 552-7096
- Roanoke City Police: (540) 853-2212

For issues dealing with peer-to-peer bullying, coach-athlete bullying, parent issues, violations of the Virginia Gators Code of Conduct and violations of the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy:

- These issues are handled at the club level following the procedures outlined below:

WHOM TO NOTIFY OF A GRIEVANCE (Chain of Command)

Regarding the Conduct of a Swimmer - Contact the swimmer's coach.

- Should a parent or swimmer feel another swimmer's conduct is inappropriate or violates the Roanoke Valley Swim, Inc./Virginia Gators Code of Conduct, the parent/swimmer should discuss these concerns with the coach of the swimmer responsible for the violation. (This complaint should be made in person or in writing. Coaches will ensure the Roanoke Valley Swim, Inc./Virginia Gators Board of Directors is notified of the complaint and will participate in assessing behavior.

Regarding the Conduct of an Assistant or Age Group Coach - Contact the Head Coach

- Should a parent or swimmer feel an Assistant or Age Group Coach's conduct is inappropriate or in violation of any Club policies or procedures, the parent/swimmer should notify the Head Coach of this violation. This complaint should be made in person or in writing. The Head Coach will ensure that the Roanoke Valley Swim, Inc./Virginia Gators Board of Directors is notified of the complaint and will participate in assessing behavior.

Regarding Conduct of Head Coach – Notify the Roanoke Valley Swim, Inc./Virginia Gators Board President

- Should a parent or swimmer feel the Head Coach's conduct is inappropriate or violates any Club policies or procedures, the parent/swimmer should notify the President of the Board of Directors of this violation. This complaint should be made in person or in writing. If the President is not immediately available, this complaint may be presented to any member of the Board of Directors, with notification made in writing to the President. This complaint will be subject to review and discussion by the full Board of Directors.

Regarding Board of Director Member Conduct - Notify the Roanoke Valley Swim, Inc./Virginia Gators Board President

- Should a parent or swimmer feel a Director's conduct is inappropriate or violates any Club policies or procedures, the parent/swimmer should notify the Board President of this violation in person or in writing. If the Board President is the Director whose conduct is in question, the Board Vice President should be notified in writing or in person *instead of* the Board President. This complaint will be reviewed and discussed by the full Board of Directors.

Regarding Parent or Swim Official Conduct - Notify the Head Coach and Board President

- Should a parent or swimmer feel another Roanoke Valley Swim, Inc./Virginia Gators parent's or an official's conduct is inappropriate or violates any Club policies or procedures, the parent/swimmer should notify the Head Coach and Board President of this violation in person or in writing. This complaint will be reviewed and discussed by the full Board of Directors.

Note: With the exception of issues which immediately affect the health and safety of swimmers, all matters should be discussed before or after a coaching session, as coaches should not be expected to deal with issues during water time.

HOW GRIEVANCES WILL BE HANDLED

The Board of Directors have the authority to impose penalties for infractions of the Roanoke Valley Swim, Inc./Virginia Gators Athlete, Parent and Coach Codes of Conduct or any behavior(s) they deem not conducive to the best interests of the Club or other swimmers. Consequences are at the sole discretion of the coaches and/or Roanoke Valley Swim, Inc./Virginia Gators Board of Directors and may include, but aren't limited to, verbal warnings, dismissal from practice, contacting parents, temporary suspension from club activities and expulsion. Involved parties will be informed of the processes and range of potential consequences. The U.S. Center for SafeSport, USA Swimming and local law enforcement (if applicable) will be contacted within 24 hours if a coach, parent, or swimmer violates the SafeSport Code for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movements, the USA Swimming Code of Conduct, Athlete Protection Policy, or local laws.

1. Gathering Information: The appropriate individuals will contact the person who filed the grievance, and the person against whom the grievance is being filed, to ask questions about what happened. In addition, other witnesses may be contacted for more information. All information will be recorded on the Roanoke Valley Swim, Inc./Virginia Gators grievance procedure form.
2. Assessing Behavior: The behavior of the person(s) against which the grievance was brought, will be assessed using club policies and facility rules, USA Swimming Code of Conduct, USA Swimming Safe Sport policies, as well as applicable local and state laws.
3. Consequences will be given and disciplinary action will be taken, if appropriate. These consequences and disciplinary actions will be decided using the following general guidelines:
 - a. Nature of the misconduct
 - b. Severity of the misconduct
 - c. Prior disciplinary actions
 - d. Adverse effect of the misconduct
 - e. Application of the Code of Conduct

Swim Meets

By its very name, the purpose of competitive swimming is to compete and that means attending swim meets! Individuals seeking membership on the Virginia Gators Swim Team should understand that we are a competitive team, not a recreational team. Swimmers should be willing to accept the responsibility of membership and participate in meets. For many new swimmers, taking the first step and going to their first competitive meet is a big undertaking. Our coaches understand this and are happy to share information about each meet and what meets may be good for beginners.

Short & Long Course Seasons

USA Swimming recognizes two seasons within each calendar year. The season beginning around Labor Day and ending in mid-February is referred to as the short course season. During the short course season meets are recognized as “yard” events. There is also a long course swim season that begins in March and ends in early August. Meets during long course season are recognized as “meter” events.

Meet Schedules

Meet schedules will be distributed by coaches and are available on the Website.

Swim Meet Procedures

As a competitive swim team, we encourage all of our swimmers to attend swim meets and compete in events recommended by their coaches. Swim meets provide an opportunity for the swimmers to measure the progress of their training and practice. They are also a social time, which enables the swimmers to build friendships with fellow teammates.

All swimmers must compete in all of the Gators home meets they qualify for, unless excused by the coach.

Swimmer Events:

Your swimmer’s coach will select the events that they will participate in.

The coaching plan, swimmer ability, coach-swimmer goals, and other factors will be considered as the events are being selected. Swimmers and parents/guardians are able to request events during the sign up process, but the coaches make the final decision.

Newer swimmers will initially be placed in events that they will succeed in. As their skills build, they will be placed in more challenging events as determined by their coach.

Meet Fees:

A meet entry fee (approximately \$6.00) and event fees (approximately \$3.00 per event) are required for entry in a swim meet. Meet fees for swim meets are the responsibility of the parent. The Meet Administrator will invoice the swimmer’s account and payments may be made along with the following month’s dues. Delinquent meet fees will result in a suspension in meet privileges until the swimmer’s account becomes current.

Upon passage of the meet sign up deadline, the Gators submits all entries and meet fees to VSI. Meet fees are non-refundable to the Gators once they have been submitted to VSI. If a swimmer is unable to attend the meet (for any reason) after the submission of the entries and payment, the swimmer will still be responsible for payment of the meet fees. If the Gators' coaches or staff make an error in a swimmer's entries, the team will be responsible for the subsequent erroneous fees.

Signing Up for a Swim Meet

Not all squads attend the same meets throughout the season, so please check the Meet Schedule to determine if a swim meet is appropriate for your swimmer's level before you commit.

Please pay particular attention to the deadline and commit your swimmer through your www.virginiagators.com account as early as possible!

Log in on the Gator website. You will be brought to a page on our team website that will allow you **to commit** or **not commit** your child to the meet. If you have more than one child swimming you will see them listed on this page.

Here are the steps if you **ARE NOT GOING**:

- Click on the Member Names [they default to Not Committed]
- Then click on the Signup Record pull-down and select **No**
- If No, just click on the [Save Changes] button to save the changes
- If you have more than one child, repeat the same task as listed above

Here are the steps if you **ARE GOING**:

- Click on the Signup Record pull-down and **select Yes**
- Once yes is selected, you will see the sessions that are available for this meet. If you are signing up by Day/Session and want to see what events are available, simply click on the meet name next to the ?Meet Name:? heading.
- Check the Checkbox to the left of the name for those Sessions you would like/can swim
- Once you have finished, click on the Save Changes Button in the lower right
- Repeat the process for additional swimmers **Please pay careful attention to:**
 - **Maximum Event Entry Limitations IF PRESENT. Click on the >>View if present.**
 - **Add any notes that you want the Coach or Administrator to see**

Your coach or team administrator will review your declaration and APPROVE or REJECT your request and once they submit the final choices you will be able to review by signing in and clicking on the Attend This Event button for any events listed on our team website. **Look at the Coach Approval column for the events that you have been confirmed to swim.**

Important Swim Meet Information

Meet Sheet

Each swim meet will have a meet sheet that will provide information such as location, date, time, directions, events, cost of events, etc. Please consult this meet sheet prior to signing up. It can be accessed through the Gators website.

Timeline for the Swim Meet

Some swim teams provide a timeline for the swim meet. The timeline will show the estimated time for each event, which will allow you to better plan your weekend. You may visit the same Forms/Document heading as for the meet sheet above, to see if a timeline is available. Do not use this timeline to determine your arrival time at the meet. Your swimmers' coach will tell them when to arrive for warm-up.

Timing Assignments

All swimmers attending a swim meet must provide a timer for the time assigned to them by the Away Meet Coordinator. Timers must be at least 16 years of age. The Gators will provide timing assignments based on the number of chairs required, the number of swimmers/families in attendance. In most cases you will receive an e-mail on the Thursday or Friday prior to the meet letting you know your assignment(s).

Expected Behavior at a Swim Meet

1. All Gator swimmers, coaches and parents are representatives of our organization. All members of our organization will behave with respect and courtesy towards other parents, swimmers and coaches.
2. As a matter of courtesy to the officials and meet host, parents must stay off the deck and out of the competition area unless they are serving as an official, timer or meet volunteer.
3. Similarly, as a matter of courtesy, all questions swimmers or parents may have concerning meet results, an officiating call, or the conduct of a meet, should be referred to the coaching staff. The coaching staff will address the matter appropriately.
4. All decisions on team relays will be made by the coaching staff. Relay teams will be chosen on a variety of factors, including but not limited to best time, recent results and best relay combination. All relay decisions are final and should be respected by all swimmers, coaches and parents.
5. As a matter of pride, leave the team area and the pool in a neat and clean condition at the conclusion of each session of the meet.

6. The coaching staff will have final discretion in any scratches or deck-entries.

7. Swimmers who qualify for finals in prelim-finals meets are expected to compete in the finals. If you would like to scratch a finals swim, direct your concern to the coaching staff. As mentioned above, the final discretion of scratches belongs to the coaching staff.

8. Swimmers and parents are expected to offer encouragement and support to all members of the team. Positive comments, encouragement and team spirit are beneficial to everybody, while negative body language, comments or thoughts can be detrimental to those around you.

