

MSS Policy Manual

Updated February 27, 2023



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Note for Policy Manual: MSS's Operations Manager is also the club's Treasurer.

Financial Policies

Payment Policy

MSS's treasurer is responsible for processing and recording all club financial transactions. Families may review their current invoicing and all billing history by signing in to their TeamUnify account.

All season and related fees are managed in TeamUnify and paid via credit or debit card to MSS. Season and other fees are paid in installments throughout each season. A portion of the season fee is paid at registration, prior to the start of the season. The remaining balance is spread out in multiple monthly installments, paid on the 1st of the month, per each season's posted fee schedule. The season fee schedule is always available on MSS's website.

Season installments are billed automatically on the 1st of the month and charged to a credit or debit card on file. Families do not need to initiate a payment. If a family's payment is declined, they will be notified by the club treasurer and will be required to provide an alternate credit or debit card for payment.

Swim Meet Fees

Every meet a swimmer participates in has associated fees including per event and relay fees, as well as splash and facility fees. Fees are set by the hosting club and are 100% passthrough. By signing up for a meet, families agree to pay all associated fees.

MSS will not reimburse for meets a swimmer signs up for but is unable to attend. If a swimmer is unable to attend a meet, they need to notify the coach immediately so relays can be restructured. If a relay cannot be restructured that swimmer may be billed for the entire relay (as well as their individual events).

Reimbursement Policy

All reimbursements require a receipt for proof of purchase. The club needs this receipt for tax purposes and because it is good business practice. The receipt will be attached to an MSS Reimbursement form, which can be provided by either the President or Operations Manager. The reimbursement form must be properly filled out to indicate the purpose of the purchase, the individual requesting, the president's signature and the individual's signature.

Your signature indicates you have purchased the item(s) for an approved purpose on behalf of the club. If you have any questions about what defines an approved purpose, please check with the president or operations manager (treasurer). The club uses a budget to plan and execute its business and all expenses are required to fall into approved budget categories. Only approved officers and coaches may purchase items on behalf of MSS.

Wreath Fundraising Policy

The wreath sale is our only currently required fundraising event. This is a per-family fundraising requirement for all Shark families with the exception of board members and currently registered officials. All families prepay their determined amount during fall registration.

All information regarding the dates of the sale and when and how to turn in orders will be published by the fundraising chair or another designee of the board. These dates and details must be followed in order to participate in this fundraiser.

We encourage all families to sell wreaths as this fundraiser helps our club. If a family does not wish to participate, then the amount they prepaid at registration will cover their obligation as it is considered a “buy-out” option. Families should collect money for the wreaths they sell. On the designated pick-up night(s), each family will pay for their wreaths with a single check to MSS (or cash).

For families participating in the wreath sale, they can recover the buyout amount they paid (not more) in the following manner:

- For each defined unit (currently each item) the family sells, a designated amount commensurate with the year’s fundraising fee will be removed from their invoice when they pick up their wreaths.
- Each family may recover up to the amount they paid.

Elite Meet Financial Policy

Athletes attending elite meets like the Grand Prix and Junior National meets will be billed an extra fee to pay for coaching expenses. This fee will be split among the participants of the meet and will be billed to each family's TeamUnify account upon return from the meet.

The amount will be calculated by the operations manager and will be based on 50% of the airline ticket and hotel costs for the coach. The club is responsible for arranging all coaching accommodations. An estimate can be furnished upon request prior to committing to a special event. The club will pay the remaining 50% of the airline ticket and hotel costs, all food, rental car (if applicable) and coaching time.

These meets are a great opportunity for our qualified athletes to receive experience and individual coaching attention. Sharks are happy to support our elite athletes! We hope our elite athletes are happy to support their club.

Financial Assistance Policy

MSS has developed a policy to help ensure that our swimmers continue on the team even when an unexpected financial need arises. Every year, the MSS Board approves an amount set aside to assist our families in need. This fund is intended to provide temporary financial assistance. Those seeking assistance are to complete an application and this is submitted for consideration to the Review Committee. The review committee consists of the MSS President, Operations Manager and Registration Chair. All applicants’ identities are kept confidential.

A majority vote is required to award funds and this is given as a credit to their TeamUnify account. The review committee may not recommend financial assistance and the ultimate decision of the committee is final. Preference will be given to current and returning swimmers, but assistance is generally awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. The financial assistance includes swim registration fees, USA swim fees, and home meet splash fees. Financial assistance will not include travel, swim gear, swim clinics, fundraising requirements, social events or other charges of the Club.

The MSS policy financial assistance awarded by session as follows:

- 1st Session Request - Maximum of 100% financial assistance
- 2nd Session Request - Maximum of 50% reduced fee and payment plan
- 3rd Session Request - Maximum of 25% reduced fee and payment plan
- 4th Session Request - No financial assistance or reduced fees but will work out a payment plan with the Operations Manager

It is expected that those who are awarded financial assistance pay for any additional expenses incurred during the swim session on a timely basis. If any expenses are not paid in full monthly, if the swimmer fails to participate in a majority of practices, or if there is any violation of the MSS swimmer's code of conduct, financial assistance will be retracted. Volunteering for club events is an expectation for all MSS families, including those receiving financial assistance.

Multi-Swimmer Discount Policy

MSS is pleased to offer a multi-swimmer discount for our member families. The swim fee discounts are applied as follows:

- 7.5% for 2 swimmers
- 10% for 3 swimmers
- 12.5% for 4 swimmers

This discount applies to registration only. Families remain responsible for paying the full cost of USA Swimming membership fees, fundraising fees and splash fees.

USA Swimming Membership Requirement Policy

Every MSS swimmer must secure a current USA Swimming membership prior to getting into the pool for the season.

This is a required step of your registration but takes place outside of MSS's registration portal. Once you have registered with MSS, you will receive additional instructions on how to register your athlete with USA Swimming and purchase an athlete membership.

Registration Policy

Registration is open to anyone who wishes to participate in our program and is in good standing with our club both financially and with respect to our team policies. If you have a question as to whether or not you are in good standing, both the President and Operations Manager maintain an active list of families and or swimmers who do not meet this requirement.

Our registration process is published on our website. It defines when registration opens for each of the various sessions and for currently registered members and new members. Currently, we process registrations online through our TeamUnify site. Members wishing to join our club must follow this process to register.

Your priority is assigned by family. Each family with an active swimmer year-round has the highest priority. The next priority is for families with a swimmer during the fall/winter season. Following are families with an active swimmer during the summer season. The lowest priority for current members is those with a spring session swimmer. These priorities were set in case a group fills up before opening up our registration to new families. It is always our intent to plan for and maintain all our current swimmers!

Rosters for each group will be filled in the following manner:

- Families with currently active swimmers will be placed first according to the priority defined above.
- New families will be placed next in the order they registered (currently using electronic timestamp) until rosters are at capacity.
- A wait list is compiled of swimmers still interested in swimming with our club when a roster is filled. These families will be communicated to by our registration team

At time of registration, families pay a portion of the overall season fees. The remainder of the season fee is paid over several monthly installments. Any outstanding balance of past meet or season fees is due at time of registration and will automatically be added to any registration fees paid during the online process.

All MSS swimmers are required to carry a current USA Swimming Athlete membership. Your MSS registration is not complete until you finish this vital step. This portion of registration happens outside of MSS's registration portal. Families are responsible for purchasing their athlete memberships at usaswimming.org. Information on how this process works is available on MSS's website.

Team Policies

MSS follows the USA Swimming [Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy 2.0](#) and [USA Swimming Code of Conduct](#), both of which are incorporated into this policy by reference and linked here.

Team Policy on Behavior

Upon registration, each must sign an [MSS Behavior Code for Coaches, Swimmers & Parents agreement](#) (also found under the “Parents” tab on our website).

Violation of any part of this agreement may lead to suspension or dismissal from the team. In either case, refunds will not be given for unused training. All splash fees are due, and depending on the violation the swimmer and or family may be placed on the list of people not in good standing with the club.

Team Policy on Social Media

Coaches and Board Members will not become “friends” with MSS athletes under the age of 18. The team Facebook and Instagram pages will be actively monitored for appropriate comments and posts. The purpose of our MSS social media is to recognize and praise our athletes and coaches and inform parents and athletes of any scheduling changes.

Team Policy on Awards

The purpose of our awards program is to recognize milestones in our swimmer's careers. Our team policy on awards is detailed in our [Parent Handbook](#) (found under the Parents tab on our website). We recognize swimmers at all levels and actively seek new opportunities and tools to help our swimmers achieve their goals.

Team Policy on Injury

If a swimmer has a medical condition or injury that prevents them from being in the water for a period of over 3 weeks, we will refund their registration fee given the following conditions:

- The parent or guardian of the injured or ill swimmer notifies the President in writing.
- A note from a doctor or PA is turned in to the President.

Upon receipt of these items, the President and Operations Manager will work together to calculate and process the amount of the refund. The calculation will be based on weeks unable to participate left in the season from the date notification was received. No refund will be made for USA registration, fundraising buyout or bus fees. Splash fees will be subtracted from the refund amount.

Team Policy on Athlete Pick-up

Parents should plan on picking up swimmers no later than 15 minutes after practice ends unless they have made other arrangements with coaches. There is no supervision in the hallways after practice. Any swimmer who is waiting beyond 15 minutes should remain in the pool area. If a swimmer is consistently picked up late or has behavioral problems after practice or in the locker rooms, they may be removed from practice until a correction plan is established.

Team Policy on Coach/Official Training

MSS is happy to reimburse coaches and officials for their background checks and USA training and certification courses. Please follow the Financial Reimbursement Policy to apply for reimbursement.

We recognize it is important to maintain currency with all USA Swimming regulations and will support our coaches and officials.

For other training, please seek approval from the President prior to registering for a course.

Team Policy on Visiting Coaches

MSS is happy to schedule visits with visiting coaches. All requests should be made to the Head Coach and Board President. The Head Coach will approve the date and time pending a current background check and athlete protection training documents have been sent to the President. This is to protect our swimmers and our community.

Team Policy on Guest Swimmers

USA Swimming Members from other clubs may practice as guest swimmers for up to 7 days without charge. Beyond 7 days, arrangements for payment must be made through registration chairs. All guest swimmers must meet all MAAPP requirements prior to practicing with the team.

Team Policy on Safe Sport

MSS is committed to renewing its Safe Sport certification every two years.

To renew this certification, parents and swimmers 12 and older are requested to complete SafeSport training annually. Athletes 18 and older must complete this training before they can compete as a requirement of USA Swimming. Board members are also required to complete annual SafeSport training. Instructions for completing this training can be found under the SafeSport tab on the Sharks website.

In accordance with SafeSport requirements, MSS has established a [SafeSport Grievance Procedure](#) and related [Grievance Form](#). These materials are also available on the MSS website under the SafeSport tab.

Team Policy on 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

MSS 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.

From the SafeSport policy on Locker Rooms and Changing Areas:

Please note that Adult Athletes are Applicable Adults. It is important for adult athletes to carefully read and understand their responsibilities under this section. Please read every point carefully to avoid confusion.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What does the word “expose” mean in Section III?

A: Expose means a purposeful showing of private parts or being bare-skinned for an abnormal amount of time while changing. Adult athletes should be thoughtful to turn their bodies away and shield their private parts from minor athletes while changing.

Q: Does this policy only apply to locker rooms at competitions?

A: No. MAAPP applies to any and all locker rooms or changing areas used by Applicable Adults and minor athletes in connection to USA Swimming activities such as practice, competition, camps, etc.

Q: Does this policy mean that athletes over the age of 18 cannot share a locker room or changing area with teammates under the age of 18?

A: No. Unrelated Applicable Adults must not be alone with a minor athlete in a locker room or changing area except for athletes on the same team and athletes attending the same competition.

Q: Can U.S. Masters Swimming (“USMS”) members use a locker room at the same time as minor athletes?

A: An unrelated Applicable Adult must not be alone with a minor athlete in a locker room or changing area. If a USMS swimmer meets the definition of an Applicable Adult, then the Applicable Adult must not be alone with a minor athlete in a locker room or changing area. MAAPP would not prohibit an Applicable Adult, or Applicable Adult(s) from sharing a locker room or changing area with minor athletes so long as the Applicable Adult is not alone in the locker room or changing area with a minor athlete.

Q: Can an athlete deck change?

A: NO. Deck changing is prohibited under USA Swimming rules and by MAAPP.

UPDATED QUESTIONS (June 13, 2019)

Q: If the club or LSC is using a public facility, how can the club or LSC ensure compliance with this section of MAAPP?

A: MAAPP only applies to Applicable Adults and does not extend to the general public. Only Applicable Adults are required to adhere to MAAPP.

Q: If two teams use the same practice facility, can the adult athletes from one team share a locker room or changing area with minor athletes from another team?

A: Yes. Athletes from two teams sharing a practice facility would be treated similarly to athletes on the same team.

Team Policy on Gender-Diverse Minor Athletes

In November 2021, the MSS Board adopted [USA Swimming's recommended policy for the participation of gender-diverse athletes](#).

A minor transgender athlete member is allowed to participate in the MSS swim club in accordance with his/her/their gender identity, irrespective of the sex listed on the athlete's birth certificate or other records and regardless of whether the athlete has undergone any medical procedure. This means an athlete who is biologically female but identifies as a boy/man should be allowed to participate in men's events and an athlete who is biologically male but identifies as a girl/woman should be allowed to participate in women's events.

MSS will further adhere to the practices recommended by USA Swimming, which can be [found here](#).

Team Policy on Photography/Video

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 swimsuit.
- 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.

A photo/video release is provided in the agreements during registration. If you chose to revoke this agreement at any time, the release form can be [found on our website](#).

Additional Documents

- FORM: [Written Permission for a Licensed Massage Therapist or Other Certified Professional or Health Care Provider to Treat a Minor Athlete](#)

Group Travel & Transportation Policies

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 a privilege reserved for those athletes who have demonstrated maturity and respect for our coaches and team.

Team travel is defined as overnight travel to a swim meet or other team activity that is planned and supervised by the club. All McFarland Spartan Shark team travel will be in accordance with USA Swimming Safe Sport policies.

Team Travel

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 level 2 criminal background check. (305.5.B)
- c. Regardless of gender, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangements 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)

Section 2 - Team Policies

Eligible to Travel

- a. Prior to travel, the head coach will seek approval for the trip from the board.
- b. Prior to travel, the head coach will submit a list of swimmers for approval to the treasurer. Swimmers need to be in good financial standing (as defined in our financial policy) in order to participate. The treasurer will return the list to the head coach removing any ineligible swimmers.
- c. Travel plans need to be detailed (dates, method of travel, hotel, etc.) in order to come up with an estimated cost for the trip. The head coach will submit plans and work with our vice president or designated travel coordinator to estimate travel costs for the trip prior to signing up.

- d. Athletes will be responsible for paying 50% of the cost of the trip 2 weeks prior to departure. The treasurer's confirmation to the head coach of payment will constitute board authorization for the athlete to participate.

In Preparation for Travel

- a. A copy of the MSS Code of Conduct must be signed by the athlete and his/her parent or legal guardian prior to any travel. Team members are reminded that when competing in meets, traveling on trips, and attending other meet-related functions, they are representing both themselves and the McFarland Spartan Sharks. Athlete behavior must positively reflect the high standards of the club
- b. A parent or legal guardian must submit a signed liability release for the athlete.
- c. The head coach or chaperone must compile a signed Medical Consent or Authorization to Treat Form for each athlete.
- d. Chaperone(s) will be selected by the head coach/board president and must have a level 2 background check w/ USA Swimming, be in good standing with the club, and willing to pay for their own travel. The number and gender will be decided by the head coach.

During Travel

- a. During team travel, when doing room checks, attending team meetings and/or other activities, two-deep leadership and open and observable environments should be maintained.
- b. Athletes should not ride in a coach's vehicle without another adult present who is the same gender as the athlete, unless prior parental permission is obtained.
- c. During overnight team travel, if athletes are paired with other athletes they shall be of the same gender and should be a similar age. Where athletes are age 13 & over, chaperones and/or team managers would ideally stay in nearby rooms. When athletes are age 12 & under, chaperones and/or team managers may stay with athletes. Where chaperones/team managers are staying in a room with athletes, they should be the same gender as the athlete and written consent should be given by athlete's parents (or legal guardian).
- d. 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.
- e. 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).
- f. Curfews shall be established by the team each day of the trip.
- g. 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.
- h. The directions & decisions of coaches/chaperones are final.
- i. Swimmers are expected to remain with the team at all times during the trip. Swimmers are not to leave the competition venue, the hotel, a restaurant, or any other place at which the team has gathered without the permission/knowledge of the coach or chaperone.
- j. When visiting public places such as shopping malls, movie theaters, etc. swimmers will

stay in groups of no less than three persons. 12 & Under athletes will be accompanied by a chaperone.

- k. The Head Coach or his/her designee shall make a written report of travel policy or code of conduct violations to the board of any affected minor athlete.
- l. Swimmers are responsible for all incidental charges during travel including their room service charges, any damages to a room, all meals and recreation.

Section 3 - Failure to Comply

- a. Failure to comply with the Honor Code or Travel Policy as set forth in this document may result in disciplinary action. The decision of the head coach is final. Such discipline may include, but may not be limited to:
 - i. Dismissal from the trip and immediate return home at the athlete's expense;
 - ii. Disqualification from one or more events of the competition;
 - iii. Disqualification from future team travel meets;
 - iv. Financial penalties;
 - v. Dismissal from the team; and/or
 - vi. Proceedings for a LSC or USA Swimming National Board of Review.

Section 4 - Completion of Travel

Upon completion of the trip, appropriate fees will be billed to the splash fee account for each athlete. This amount is due upon receipt for the athlete to remain eligible per our payment financial policy.

Additional documents:

- **FORM:** [Written Permission for an Unrelated Adult Athlete to Share the Same Hotel, Sleeping Arrangement or Overnight Lodging Location with a Minor Athlete](#)
- **FORM:** [Written Permission for an Unrelated Applicable Adult to Travel to Competition Alone with Minor Athlete](#)
- **FORM:** [MSS Photography/Video Release \(to opt out\)](#)

Board Policies

Good Standing Policy

MSS Board Members must remain in good standing, as defined in the Payment Financial Policy, while serving in their position on the board.

Exemption from Wreath Sale Policy

MSS Board Members are not required to sell wreaths during the annual fundraiser. Their services to the club are valued as their contribution toward meeting the fundraising requirement. Officials actively volunteering in our home meets are also exempt from this fundraiser.

Priority Registration Policy

MSS Board Members and Officials in good standing receive priority registration each season. MSS's board bylaws require that Board members are a family member of a current MSS swimmer. This early registration ensures that Board members meet this bylaw requirement.

We also allow officials to register their swimmers early as a benefit of committing their time and resources to supporting our team as an official.

Policy on Required USA Swimming Membership & Background Check for Board Members

The following board positions are required to have an annual USA Swimming Non-Athlete membership and complete a background check every two years:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Meet Director
- Volunteer Coordinator
- SafeSport Coordinator

MSS will reimburse these members for associated costs.

Policy Manual Modification Log

February 2023 Update

ADDED:

- Multi-Swimmer Discount Policy (Adopted in April 2022, added February 2023)
- USA Membership Requirement Policy (February 2023)
- Team Policy on Safe Sport (February 2023)
- Team Policy on Locker Rooms & Changing Areas
- Team Policy on Gender-Diverse Athletes (Adopted November 2021, added February 2023)
- Policy on Photography/Video (February 2023)
- Priority Registration Policy (February 2023)
- Policy on Required USA Swimming Membership & Background Check for Board Members (February 2023)

REMOVED:

- Check Policy (January 2023)

EDITED:

- Group Travel & Transportation Policies (moved to separate section) (February 2023)