



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

BLUEFISH SWIM TEAM

Team Handbook

2018-2019

How to Become a Bluefish:

Step #1: Complete the Team Registration Form(s) and payment agreement

Step #2: Parents- read through the Team Handbook and share with swimmers.

Step #3: Swimmers- read, sign and agree to the Swimmer's Contract.

Step #4: Return all completed forms to the front desk with payment.

Step #5: Pick up your Green form from the front desk- a staff member will fill this out so coaches know you have all necessary paperwork turned in. Swimmers will not be allowed to practice until a green form is received.

Step #6: Attend our Parent and Participant Meeting, Monday October 15, 2019, 5:15-6:30

New Swimmers: Attend our Free Orientation Week Oct 9-12! 4:00-5:00 p.m.

Returning Swimmers: Attend Practice starting the week of Oct 16-19!

Step #7: Once payment and registration has been processed you will be invited via email to create an account with TeamUnify! Follow their directions and see what incredible features TeamUnify has available for our swim families.

Have Fun & Swim Fast!

Welcome to the Waldo County YMCA Bluefish!

WELCOME TO THE WALDO COUNTY YMCA BLUEFISH!

The Waldo County YMCA Swim Team program is organized and operated by the Aquatics Department and staff of Coaches here at the Waldo County YMCA. Consistent with the YMCA's focus, the team focuses on youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.

The Bluefish Swim Team participates in YMCA competition at the local, state, regional and national level. We also offer participation in USA Swim Meets that allow further competition.

ABOUT OUR TEAM

The YMCA is committed to offering a quality swim team which emphasizes teaching the value of competition through teamwork, sportsmanship and doing ones best.

The Waldo County YMCA Bluefish's vision is to offer a high-quality; fun and motivating age group and ability level swim team that focuses on overall swimmer and community development.

The swimmers, coaches and parents are all necessary components in carrying out this vision statement. In order to accomplish these goals, we expect the following from our swimmers:

- Attend swim practices on time and with the necessary equipment (goggles are a must-have, swim suit, cap and a towel).
- Keep communication lines open with the coaches; share goals, ideas, concerns and questions.
- Establish reasonable and achievable goals and practice to succeed in those goals.
- Practice good sportsmanship by complimenting your competitors and fellow teammates on a good race. Feel great about things that went well and learn from what didn't.
- Respect the Waldo County YMCA facility and follow our facility rules and guidelines.
- Most importantly... **HAVE FUN!**

TEAM STRUCTURE

The Bluefish Swim Team is managed by the Waldo County YMCA, and is affiliated with the National YMCA organization. Members of the Bluefish Swim team must be annual members in good standing of the Waldo County YMCA. And so, if eligible our Bluefish Swimmers can compete in the National YMCA program ranging from local meets within the State of Maine to the annual meets of New England Regional Championships and the YMCA National Championships.

COACH RESPONSIBILITIES

The coaches are responsible for teaching and training swimmers the four major strokes (Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke and Freestyle) and to help them gain skills, knowledge and confidence to compete in competitive swim meets. These skills include stroke mechanics, drills, and building a swim workout as well as demonstrating good sportsmanship and responsibility to the team and teammates.

The coaches are responsible for placing swimmers in practice groups based on skill level and ability. When it is in the best interest of the swimmer, he/she may be placed in a more challenging group at the coach's discretion. Please **do not** register your swimmer or bring your swimmer to a practice that has not been specifically cleared by the coaches.

Get to know our Bluefish staff by visiting the "Our Coaches" section of our team website, here you'll be able to read a bio of each staff member, learn why they joined the Bluefish staff, and some of their favorite things outside of swimming. Our staff's bios even include pictures so you know exactly which Coach your swimmers are working with at Practices.

We want your swimmer to get to know and relate to his/her coach right at the beginning of the season. The Coach's job is to give your swimmer the tools and skills they need to do their best. **It is up to your**

swimmer how they choose to use those tools. If you have questions about training, our strategies or our coaching philosophy please contact the coaches directly via email to set up a time to meet after practice.

COMMUNICATION

As a growing team with several practice groups and multiple coaches, we truly need to communicate in both formal and informal ways. As in every organization, communication is the cornerstone of effective functioning. We've set up a few ways for you to have direct communication with the Bluefish coaches & receive information from them. A few ways for families to communicate with the coaches are;

1. **Our Team Website: TeamUnify** Our weekly newsletters, swim meet sign ups, volunteer job postings, and updates will all be distributed from our TeamUnify website and in-app from "On-Deck". These services are included in your Bluefish Program fee, so be sure to use them! Learn about what the site can offer, create your account, and watch some of the Video Tutorials to learn how to get full access from the site.
2. **Email:** If our newsletters or swim meet sign ups bring up questions, email us anytime! This is the best way for coaches and parents to communicate clearly and frequently. We check our email daily wcbbluefish@gmail.com. *To help us communicate effectively please be sure to give a valid email address in your registration packet.*
3. **In person:** Coaches can be available before or after a swim practice if planned ahead. If you would like to meet with a coach **please arrange a meeting ahead of time**. This will help the coaches make time for you and your questions. But during practices, our first priorities are the swimmers in the water.
4. **Team Bulletin Board:** This is located on the second floor of the YMCA in the spectator area. Available here will be all the information on TeamUnify.
5. **Swimmer Mailboxes:** These will be located upstairs in the spectator area. Please check them weekly. This is where your swimmer can pick up their ribbons & medals from recent swim meets.
6. **Waldo County YMCA Facebook Page:** Find the Waldo County YMCA on Facebook and "Like" us! This will be a great tool for our Y to alert families about practice or meet cancelations in bad weather, hear about team and YMCA fundraisers and other Y programs.
 - a. Use #bluefishswim when sharing "Go Bluefish" posts or congratulating swimmers of their accomplishments at swim meets on social media like Facebook and Instagram! When our swim families click on #bluefishswim they'll be able to see all of our amazing team's photos and posts in one place!
 - b. **A reminder for common sense picture taking.** *Never take photos of swimmers in locker rooms, with personal information displayed, and always ask a swimmer and their parents' permission before taking a photo. We are not trying to discourage you from taking pictures! Please just be sure you have verbal consent.*

PHOTOGRAPHY

Each Bluefish swimmer's registration form includes a photo release if photos are taken by a YMCA staff member for YMCA use. If you are taking your own photos at a swim meet or practice, please always ask a parent's permission first. **During meets photos may only be taken from the observation deck.** We love showing off the awesome stuff our kiddos do, but being respectful to our families is also very important. Verbal consent is all we ask!

At the Waldo County YMCA, we have a NO cell phone policy in our locker rooms and do not allow photos to be taken in the locker room areas. Please pass this along to all swimmers who may be of age to have a mobile or digital device. If a swimmer or parent sees someone using a cell phone or sees someone taking photos in a locker room, they should report it to a Coach, Lifeguard, or Aquatics Director immediately.

BLUEFISH PRACTICE GROUPS

Our swim practices are Skill Level based and swimmers need to attend their scheduled practice. Skill level practices allow our coaches to customize a workout for the group which leads to happy swimmers and happy coaches. Coaches will make recommendations when moving a swimmer to another practice group. *Please do not bring your child to a practice group that has not been specifically directed by a coach.*

PRACTICE & TRAINING SESSIONS

Your swimmer is only expected at those practices which you and your swimmer can handle with their family and education coming first, as expected.

- **Please be on time for practice** -being on time is important and arriving even five minutes late is disrespectful to our coaches and fellow swimmers. Arriving late can also set back a practice and the workout schedule for the day.
- **When swimmers arrive at practice they should sit on the Blue Benches that line the wall of the natatorium and wait for instructions from the Coach.** Please do not have your child arrive on deck more than 5 minutes before the start of their practice.
- **Plan to stay the entire practice.** In the event that your child needs to be dismissed early from practice, a note from the parent for each dismissal is encouraged.
- **TeamUnify will allow signups any time before the registration deadline.** Competition in meets is expected for Blue, Red, and Green Group 2 Practice Groups and is recommended & encouraged for Green Group 1. Signups should be completed online from your account on our TeamUnify site under the 'Swim Meets' tab. The coaches will select events that are right for your swimmer's ability and skill. *If not attending please select the "not attending" option.*
- ***During the winter months, we ask that you use your best judgment about traveling to & from practices.** If we are experiencing inclement weather please call the YMCA before traveling. We will send out TeamUnify newsletter update when a practice or a meet has been canceled. **If school is cancelled there will be no practice.**

LOST & FOUND

Every year we accumulate many pieces of lost clothing, towels, goggles etc.... Please be sure that your swimmer has everything when they come to and leave practice ***Writing your child's name on their goggles, suits, and t-shirt is highly encouraged***. (They have a tendency of "wandering off" during the season.) If your child loses one of these items check in with the YMCA front desk staff, coach, or the Aquatics Director before purchasing another set. They may be in the lost and found or wind up in the office. Emphasize to your swimmer that it is their responsibility to keep track of their goggles, suits & caps and bring them to practices and meets.

HEALTHY CHOICES FOR A HEALTHY SWIMMER

Our Bluefish are very active and need well balanced meals and snacks to maintain their energy throughout the day and at practice. Not sure what to feed your new athlete the day of a swim meet or after practice? Email the coaches! They are always happy to help.

The Waldo County YMCA is proudly working with the "5210 Let's Go!" program in our community for a healthier Waldo County. When packing lunches and snacks please keep in mind that sugar is not the best choice for all day energy, especially for athletes. **Choose healthy for your child so that they can be the best that they can be! In and out of the pool.**

MULTIPLE SWIMMER DISCOUNT

For families with more than one swimmer, we offer for the second (and all additional) swimmer(s) to receive a \$45.00 discount on their Bluefish Program Rate. The first swimmer must pay full tuition. (*The first swimmer is the swimmer paying the highest program rate.*) Please be sure to tell the front desk if there are multiple swimmers in your family to take advantage of this discount!

- Parents are still responsible for paying YMCA memberships for all children by December 31st. *If electing to enroll children in USA Swimming, parents are responsible for those fees for all of the swimmers in the family.
- As with all Waldo County YMCA programs, there is financial assistance available to you. Financial Assistance is only available for YMCA swim tuition and membership fees, and is not available for USA swimming through the YMCA. If you are interested in applying for financial assistance, please obtain a form at the Front Desk of the YMCA and make arrangements to speak with Bruce Osgood before the season gets started.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

All Bluefish swimmers must be Annual Members in good standing of the Waldo County YMCA. This is a YMCA of the USA regulation in order to swim in any YMCA swim meet. The annual membership may be paid in full up front or in three monthly payments. If your swimmer is an existing annual member and your membership is auto drafted, that is also accepted.

By becoming an annual member at the Waldo County YMCA, your child will also be able to participate in other YMCA programs at a reduced rate as well. *Financial Assistance is available upon request, if you wish to apply for financial assistance, please begin that process by October 1, all financial assistant applications can be picked up at our front desk, and anyone requesting financial aid will need to find time to meet with our Membership Director, Bruce Osgood. All membership fees must be paid in full by December 31st of the current season for a swimmer to continue swimming on the team and competing in meets. Please speak with a coach if you have any questions.

SWIM SUITS, CAPS AND GOGGLES:

Swimmers should have at least one if not two practice suits. Swim suits usually last three to six months depending on usage & care. Our team swimsuits are for competition only and are not allowed to be used as a practice suit. Your child will also need goggles and a swim cap. Goggles are a must for the amount of time your child will be spending in the water. Please make sure they pack their own goggles each day for swim practice. Caps will keep long hair under control, reduce any drag during a race, and help maintain pool cleanliness. Any swimmer with shoulder length hair needs to have hair pulled back with a hair tie and wear a cap at practice and swim meets. Caps and other gear is available at the Front Desk.

BLUEFISH GEAR ORDERS:

The Bluefish Swim Team has lots of fun, popular apparel such as Bluefish Logo T-shirts, Sweatshirts, hats and swim caps (among other things)! Items such as hats are available year-round, sweatshirts and t-shirts are ordered through a local screen-printer. For these items, order forms are available year-round at the aquatics bulletin board. There will be **3 order dates: First Friday in November, Last Friday in November, First Friday in February.** If you have any questions, ask a coach!

FUNDRAISING

Our swim program depends heavily on fundraising, as do all YMCA swim teams. Although our Bluefish program fees help pay for a portion of our team operating costs, running a swim team of this size is expensive and we are continually making improvements to our team. Since we try to keep our program fees lower than many teams in the State, we need to make up for that difference in fundraising.

Over the last few seasons we've been very lucky to offer three paid coaches at most practices. And that happens to be one of our highest operating costs. Our Bluefish Staff put in an incredible number of hours on deck, planning workouts and being with the swimmers. This includes the hours spent at practices, answering emails, time at home meets and traveling to & from away meets. Other big-ticket items include our swim meet entry fees, meet ribbons, awards for our end of season swim banquet, training for our coaches, and purchasing & maintaining practice & meet equipment and software.

As a non-profit organization, the Waldo County YMCA directs program, membership, and funds raised through fundraising directly back to our Y programs, such as our Bluefish swim team. And we thank you for your support so that we can continue to offer such an impactful and community centered program like the Bluefish!

OTHER COSTS

Last but not least is the high cost of our team providing competition suits for all swimmers on our team. We may be a little crazy for taking on this high-cost item, but it makes a big difference for a lot of families and we love doing it! In order to continue providing suits we need our team fundraisers to be successful. Some of our fundraising activities include: Swim Meet Program Ads, Wreath orders, Splash-a-thon (January 21!), Food concessions at home meets, Annual Masters Swim Meet (May) *Hint, hint parents... that means we want to see you swimming too! 😊 Our team also receives 8% cash back from all purchases made at SwimOutlet.com/Bluefish. Please keep this in mind when purchasing any swim or triathlon gear in the future! If you can think of other fundraising ideas please let us know. We want them to be fun & include the entire team, and these fundraisers won't work without parent volunteers!

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

We encourage all parents to try and participate in at least one fundraiser and get involved with the Y. Everyone is invited to participate and learn what is going on behind the scenes. There are many opportunities to get involved and some allow you to be right on deck with the team. Some of these volunteer opportunities include working concessions, lane timers, swim officials and selling ads for our home meet programs! Ask a coach (or another parent!) if you have any questions.

Find a way to get involved and make this a program you and your child can participate in together! Many hands really do make light work 😊 Please speak with any of our Swim Coaches about other volunteer opportunities or how you can get involved in impacting your community and your child's swim program.

USE OF FACILITIES

Whether home or away, at a practice or at a meet, you are a representative of our YMCA team. Your behavior directly affects our team's image. We are a respected group and will respect others. Please conduct yourselves appropriately in all areas, including those outside the pool deck – i.e., hallways, locker rooms, and restaurants.

KEEPING OUR KIDS SAFE

When not directly participating in a program, Children 10 (ten) and under must be accompanied by an adult at all times while in our building. This means swimmers cannot be dropped off to "hang out" at the YMCA before a practice begins. We do offer Teen Access for Middle School and High School students and YMCA Aftercare for elementary aged children or kids enrolled in our pre-school program. Please ask the front desk for information if you would like to take advantage of these programs.

AWAY MEETS

Trips to meets in other towns are the responsibility of the parents. Carpooling with other swim families is highly encouraged. Please make every effort to attend away meets with your children. Take this

opportunity to become involved, learn more about the sport, watch & cheer for your child's teammates, and meet other swim families from around the state.

Always treat members of other YMCA's the way you would treat the members and staff at our YMCA. Be respectful and remember to practice good sportsmanship.

Swimmers, Please Clean Up After Yourselves At Practices And Swim Meets. 😊

GENERAL POLICIES FOR SWIMMERS

It is our goal at the Waldo County YMCA to provide a healthy, safe and secure environment for all Bluefish participants. The YMCA teaches the core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. Children who attend the program are expected to follow the behavior guidelines and to interact appropriately in this group setting. Please review with your swimmer the "Swimmers Contract" to become familiar with our expectations in regards to behavior and sportsmanship.

We expect our swimmers to maintain certain behavioral standards that are consistent with the YMCA's Core Values and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Swimmers will abstain from the use or possession of illegal substances and will be removed from the team without a refund of program fees if the swimmer does not abide by our team's behavior guidelines.

YMCA CORE VALUES:

- We will **care** for ourselves and those around us.
- **Honesty** will be the basis for all relationships and interactions.
- We **respect** each other and the YMCA, its facility and equipment.
- Participants are **responsible** for their actions.

TEAMMATES

It is our goal that each swimmer offer encouragement to at least one other swimmer each day. The better your teammates are, the better our team will be. A "good swim" or "wow, your butterfly looks great!" helps make the practice time shorter and builds friendships. Supporting teammates and giving positive encouragement is a good way to illustrate leadership and demonstrate team spirit.

DISCIPLINE

We want to make sure our swimmers get the most out of every practice. Our swim practices and meets are fun and we want swimmers to have a good time, but we expect the swimmers to listen to the coaches and do what is asked of them. **Please help instill in your swimmer they need to treat their coaches, staff and teammates with respect.** If the coaches have to spend time disciplining one swimmer that takes time away from the rest of the swimmers. For this reason, disobedience/horseplay will not be tolerated. If a coach has to speak to a swimmer, the following will take place:

- 1) Verbal warning. Swimmer will be told is behavior or actions are unsafe or unexcitable and will be asked to be a respectful member of their team and practice group.
- 2) Time out from activity – A child may be asked to take a night off from the program or specific activity. Depending on the severity of the behavior, the parent may be asked to return with the child and remain at the program with the child for a number of sessions.
- 3) Behavior contract – A behavior contract may be drawn up between a staff member and the child. This contract allows the staff member and the child to discuss the behavior and put into writing what the child will do to improve the behavior. The parent will be given a copy of this contract and will be asked to sign and return it to the Aquatics Director or Coach the next time the child comes to the Y. The parent may be asked again to attend the program with the child until behavior shows improvement.

- 4) Suspension – If the behavior continues, we will ask that the child take an extended amount of time off from the Y program. This will be discussed with the parents and if upon returning the behavior is not improved the child will be dismissed from the Y program, effective immediately.

It is not our intention to try to eliminate anyone from a YMCA program. We want your child to have a safe, secure and enjoyable time when participating in any program. In order for this to be accomplished, some basic rules must be followed. Rules around the pool have to be strict and followed by everyone to insure the safety of all children.

There will be no toleration for any vandalism of any kind in the locker rooms or any area in the facility. Disciplinary action for vandalism will be severe and may result in dismissal from program.

WHAT TO EXPECT AT SWIM MEETS

Meets are usually held on the weekends, most often on Saturdays. YMCA Dual meets are when our team competes against one other team. Closed meets are when our team competes against two or more other teams. At YMCA Invitational meets, USA meets, and championships, several teams compete against each other, often vying for higher points & awards.

Meet schedules and practice schedules can be found on TeamUnify under the “Team Calendar” tab and Google Map directions to pools are posted under “Pool Locations”. Please arrange your arrival for all meets and allow for a proper warm-up. If you’re sick, please call/email a coach ASAP!

Meets take time. A long time. A “quick” swim meet is over in roughly three-four hours. Please plan your day accordingly. For swimmers, make sure they bring something to keep them busy while not racing. Dry warm clothes and extra towels are recommended for your swimmer while they wait for their next race (no cotton). Also, encourage them to cheer for their team mates and watch others swim their races. This is a great learning opportunity and a great time to put our good sportsmanship to use!

Swimmers must sit with their teammates during the meet. This is so coaches can find them when their event is up. Before each meet please have a discussion with your swimmers about appropriate behavior and being sure they stay on the deck and not wander around the facility or locker rooms during the meet.

The best way for parents to keep busy at meets is to volunteer to help! There is always a need for timers, computer & timing system operators, swim meet officials, concession workers, and a host of other jobs. Most often, these jobs offer some of the best seats in the house to watch a meet. No experience is needed, just a willingness to learn! The more help we have in organizing and running our home meets, the more smoothly (and quicker!) they run. A well-run meet is a much more pleasurable and positive experience for all involved.

After the meet, ask your swimmer how some of his/her teammates & friends did. Did they watch other kids swim? This will help instill a sense of team membership, caring and responsibility. It will also help your swimmer feel more involved in the meet. Watching older/more advanced swimmers can also be exciting for them, help them set goals and give them something to look forward to when they get older.

We are thrilled that your child & family have chosen to swim with the Waldo County YMCA Bluefish Swim Team! WELCOME TO THE WALDO COUNTY YMCA BLUEFISH!

Waldo County YMCA
207.338.4598
www.waldocountyymca.org
www.teamunify.com/ymca-2519