

# Cape Fear Aquatic Club Team Handbook



“Building Character Through  
Competitive Swimming”

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Dear Parents,

Welcome to Cape Fear Aquatic Club! We are excited to have you as part of the Cape Fear Aquatic Club family.

Cape Fear Aquatic Club has a tradition of excellence that goes back to it starting in 2002. We try to instill a good foundation for our athletes to build on both in and out of the pool. Each year the club continues to grow and develop first class athletes who are achieving competitive and personal goals set for themselves and by the coaching staff.

Our team competes in both YMCA and USA Swimming meets which could allow our swimmers to go to more than one championship meet a year. We also have a bigger selection of meets because we can attend both YMCA meets and USA Swimming meets.

We are looking at our current team to continue our tradition and build on the foundation of excellence. The Cape Fear Aquatic Club Parent Handbook will help you be introduced to our team rules and procedures and the world of competitive swimming. New Parents meetings will be offered to help go over the handbook and give more detail about Cape Fear Aquatic Club.

We are always available to answer any questions you may have. The Cape Fear Aquatic Club coaching staff is looking forward to a wonderful swimming season and getting to know each of our Cape Fear Aquatic Club family members!

Cape Fear Aquatic Club Coaching Staff

# Introduction

This handbook has been designed for Cape Fear Aquatic Club families as a reference source for team philosophy, structure, and policy. The majority of the information in this handbook will be valid year after year. Current schedules, rosters, time standards, and other updates will be given to families as necessary. While this handbook contains a large amount of information, there will inevitably be questions not answered within its pages. Please contact the Director of Competitive Swimming immediately if you have a question concerning the swim team program.

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## The YMCA

The YMCA of the USA is a national organization, founded in 1844, which has evolved to promote our modern mission to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all. As America's Oldest Swimming Instructor, the YMCA has long valued the importance of fitness activities in the development of young people. All YMCA programs, including the swim team, incorporate values, education, and character development through the promotion of **caring, honesty, respect and responsibility**. Commitment to the YMCA's principles and the promotion of the character development traits make Cape Fear Aquatic Club unique from other swim teams. We develop strong people, not just strong athletes.

## Building Character Through Competitive Swimming

The Cape Fear Aquatic Club (CFAC) swim team is committed to building strong kids and young adults through the sport of competitive swimming. Cape Fear Aquatic Club provides the opportunity for kids to inherit the YMCA's core values of honesty, caring, respect, and responsibility in a fun, challenging, and active team environment. In addition, the program teaches effective and efficient stroke technique in order for kids to excel in a lifetime sport and enjoy a terrific total body workout. The team competes in both USA Swimming and YMCA meets. The combination of meets affords all swimmers with an opportunity to compete in an atmosphere that is fun and challenging, simultaneously allowing swimmers to focus on sportsmanship, personal improvement, and team achievement. Swimmers have the opportunity to compete in one or two meets per month. At Cape Fear Aquatic Club everyone swims!

## Team Philosophy

The Cape Fear Aquatic Club program is built upon the following mission statement: ***Cape Fear Aquatic Club provides a competitive swimming program built upon the core values of the YMCA with a commitment to producing exemplary individuals through the sport of swimming.*** The life lessons learned from the Cape Fear Aquatic Club program give each swimmer the tools and opportunities to excel both in and out of the pool. Our coaches encourage our young people to strive for excellence daily and teach them the process of achieving that excellence. Our swimmers, coaches, and parents understand that it is through hard work, self-discipline, and sacrifice that we ensure this success. Cape Fear Aquatic Club is committed to providing a safe environment for all participants.

## Team Affiliation

Cape Fear Aquatic Club participates in both YMCA and USA Swimming competitions. These two organizations provide competitive opportunities for our athletes. This gives our swimmer the ability to swim not only at Y Nationals if they qualify but also other USA Swimming championship meets; such as North Carolina State Championship meets, Southern Zone Championships, Sectional Championships and National Championships.

The National YMCA Competitive Swimming and Diving Committee governs YMCA swimming and conducts the YMCA National Championship meets. YMCA teams are grouped into local leagues and regional fields. Our league is the Greater YMCA Sunbelt Swimming Association or GYSSA, which encompasses all of North Carolina. YMCA competitions may include dual meets, invitational and championship meets. Only swimmers who are members of a YMCA are eligible to compete in YMCA meets.

USA Swimming (USAS) is the national governing body of amateur swimming. It sets the rules for competitions, implements policies, conducts national championship meets and selects athletes to represent the United States in international competition. USA Swimming requires its coaches and officials to be certified according to its standards. USA Swimming is divided into Local Swimming Committees (LSC's) in order to administer USA Swimming activities in smaller geographical areas. Our LSC is North Carolina Swimming or NCS. You can visit NCS at [www.ncswim.com](http://www.ncswim.com) for information about meets, records, and the organizational structure.

## **Tryouts & Training Groups**

Cape Fear Aquatic Club offers a year-round, nationally recognized competitive swim program. The Cape Fear Aquatic Club uses an age group program designed to develop the child physically, mentally and emotionally in a systematic fashion. A well-defined, long-term approach of gradually increasing degrees of commitment is essential to reach peak performance levels during a swimmer's physiological prime.

The emphasis in the early stages of participation is placed on developing technical skills and a love for the sport. In the later years, a more demanding physical and psychological challenge is introduced to the training program. In addition to emphasizing long-term rather than short-term results, we have established training groups for swimmers that are compatible in respect to abilities, commitment levels and goals.

At each level, the goals and objectives are specific and directed toward meeting the needs of the swimmer. The long-term goal of total excellence is always in mind. As each child is different, he or she will progress at his or her own rate. The coaching staff recognizes this fact by making team assignments based on a swimmer's physical, mental, and emotional level of development.

### **TRYOUTS**

Cape Fear Aquatic Club has tryouts each year in August prior to the beginning of the new swim season. The coaching staff will evaluate swimmers during the 20-30 minute session. Swimmers who make the team will be placed in a training group based on their age as of November 1. This is due the fact they will be competing within their respective age bracket. (8-under/9-10/11-12/13-14/15-18) If the child/swimmer's current ability still needs to work on fundamentals, our coaching staff will provide you with the information and will be directing you toward our lesson program and the Aquatics Director. The coaching staff is responsible for placing swimmers within the appropriate training groups.

### **TRAINING GROUPS**

Cape Fear Aquatic Club offers a variety of training groups to meet the needs of all swimmers in the program.

**BLUE 1**      **Ages: 5 – 8**      **Description:** *The Blue 1 Group is the introductory level to Cape Fear Aquatic Club. Swimmers will develop all four competitive strokes, starts, turns and*

basic swimming knowledge. Stroke construction and technique are emphasized at this level as is having fun while learning the competitive strokes. The “Blue 1” group is for novice swimmers new to competitive swimming who can swim 25 yards of freestyle and backstroke unassisted.

**BLUE 2**      **Ages: 10 – under**      **Description:** *The Blue 2 Group swimmers will refine and perfect stroke technique and be introduced to basic drilling and using a pace clock. The swimmers will also learn basic practice etiquette and procedure.*

**BLACK**      **Ages: 8 – 13**      **Description:** *The Black Group swimmers will become technically proficient in all four strokes, learn racing starts, turns underwater techniques and begin developing aerobic endurance.*

**SILVER**      **Ages: 8 – 13**      **Description:** *The Silver Group swimmers will continue to advance their technique as well as being introduced to conditioning. This group is the precursor to the higher level of training and competition.*

**JUNIOR**      **Ages: 13 – 18**      **Description:** *The Junior Group swimmers will focus on conditioning while still maintaining a focus on technical proficiency. Swimmers will learn how to properly apply technique into a training atmosphere and approach a swim season with both practice and competition goals.*

**SENIOR**      **Ages: 13 – 18**      **Description:** *The Senior Group is our most advanced group and has very high practice and meet expectations.. Swimmers in this group are competing at the State Championships with long term goals of achieving YMCA Nationals. This training group places more responsibility on its members than other groups. Members of this training group dedicate themselves to training, racing and being good teammates. Swimmers understand that being in the Senior group makes them role models for younger swimmers and ambassadors to the community. Senior group is by coach’s invitation only.*

**POST GRAD & COLLEGE**

**Ages: 18+**      **Description:** *The Post Grad & College Group is for swimmers who wish to train when they are home from college and training for national level meets. Please contact the coaching staff directly to arrange a training plan and schedule. Post Grad & College group is by coach’s invitation only.*

**Dry Land Training... What is Dry Land?**

Cape Fear Aquatic Club utilizes a YMCA certified Personal Trainer and the YMCA facility to help strength and train our swimmers and to help prevent injury. During dryland workouts there will be a focus on core strength and stability, balance and developing muscular endurance.

Dryland is a very important aspect of the sport. The goals of dryland training are to have injury prevention and performance improvement. A well-rounded dryland program can help develop healthy, balanced athletes, and ultimately decrease the injury rate and improve performance. All of these areas that will improve our swimmers in and out of the pool.

**Practice / Meet Requirements:**

At Cape Fear Aquatic Club, we do not have an attendance requirement but we do track attendance. Cape Fear Aquatic Club is a competitive swim team, so going to meets is a big part of this. We do not require participation in meets, but we strongly encourage it.

## **Memberships & Registration & Program Fees**

YMCA MEMBERSHIP

- REGISTRATION FEE
- COPY OF A BIRTH CERTIFICATE
- PROGRAM FEE

**YMCA Membership**

In order to swim for the Cape Fear Aquatic Club, each swimmer **must** be a YMCA member. See the YMCA website for current Membership rates & categories: [www.ymcasenc.org](http://www.ymcasenc.org)

**Registration Fee**

There is a yearly non-refundable registration fee of \$195 (boys) and \$210 (girls). This fee includes USA Swimming & GYSSA registrations; team t-shirt, team cap, TYR team swimsuit, and team uniform.

\* Price difference is due to increase cost in girls’ swimsuits.

\*\* All new swimmers must also provide a copy of their birth certificate before being registered, and be assessed by a coach for placement in the proper training group.

Training groups are divided by ability and age.

Coaches will have final authority into which training group swimmers will train with.

**Program Fees**

Blue 1	\$564.00
Blue 2	\$763.00
Black	\$896.00
Silver	\$1096.00
Junior	\$1295.00
Senior	\$1495.00

*Siblings are eligible to receive a 10% discount on Program Fees Only – which must be done at the front desk and is not available online.*

**Payment Plans**

There are two payment plans: Annual or Draft

**Annual (Payment in Full)** - At the time of registration, each swimmer pays a non-refundable registration fee plus the full program fee. This may be paid by check or credit card.

**Draft – (Payment by Bank Draft)** - At the time of registration each swimmer pays a non-refundable registration fee plus the first draft payment. A parent fills out a bank draft authorization slip and submits a voided check to authorize drafts. There are seven (7) additional drafts (September through April), making a total of eight (8) payments.

**Financial Assistance**

Financial assistance is available for families needing help in paying swim team program fees. To apply for this assistance please refer to the YMCA website. You will be able to print and fill out a Pathways Application which is located under the “Join the Y” tab on the homepage.

**Cancellations**

To cancel membership in the swim team program, a family must notify the Director of Competitive Swimming/Head Coach in writing. Families will pay a cancellation fee equivalent to one monthly bank draft payment for their child's group. If payment was made in full, a prorated refund will be provided.

## **Pier-2-Pier**

Each Fall, Cape Fear Aquatic Club hosts the Pier-2-Pier swim held at Wrightsville Beach, NC. This is an open water race taking place between Johnnie Mercer's and Crystal Pier. This is Cape Fear Aquatic Club's biggest "home" swim meet of the year, and a fundraiser for the team's operating budget. Parent volunteers are a necessity in making this race a success. We need help with timing, registration, refreshments, awards, sponsorships, set-up/breakdown, etc. This is becoming a well known, popular race for age group and collegiate swim teams, as well as triathletes and masters swimmers. Parents are expected to volunteer and help in some capacity.

## **Fundraising**

Each year the Cape Fear Aquatic Club swim team participates in USA Swimming's Swim-A-Thon. Each swimmer is expected to participate in an effort to raise money for the swim team's competition fund. These monies help to buy equipment, coaches' travel, and scholarships. Prizes will be awarded for top earners. The goal is to have every swimmer raise **at least \$100**.

## **Practice Requirements**

At Cape Fear Aquatic Club, we do not have an attendance requirement but we do track attendance. As coaches, we would love to have swimmers attended every workout of his or her training group meets. Improvement in the sport of swimming is directly related to attendance at workout, paying attention and hard work; very similar to doing one's homework and school. At all levels, practice sessions develop important athletic, personal and social skills. Regular, consistent attendance is necessary to build the abilities of the swimmer, enhance the coach/swimmer relationship, and strengthen the unity of the team as a whole.

### **What to bring to practice**

Swimmers should bring suit(s), goggle(s), cap(s), a water bottle, a towel, and any required training equipment to practice each day. These are the necessities. We recommend that swimmers carry an extra cap, suit, and pair of goggles - "just in case." Coaches do not carry extra items to loan swimmers for practice, and the facilities do not regularly have extras to loan. **CLEARLY LABEL ALL ITEMS THAT ARE TAKEN TO PRACTICE.** Swimmers should bring their bags, clothes, etc. onto the pool deck with them or lock them in a locker during practice. Leaving belongings unattended in the locker room or lobby invites theft or damage. **Locks should be temporary and removed each day at the end of practice.**

### **Punctuality**

Please be on time to all practices. Practices begin with a warm up period to prevent injury. When swimmers are late, they miss this important preparation. Likewise, please avoid bringing swimmers to practice excessively early (more than 15 min.) and pick up swimmers promptly after practice (no later than 15 min. after the conclusion of the practice). Coaches are responsible



for swimmers during specified practice times only. It is impractical and unfair to expect coaches or YMCA staff to “babysit” swimmers before or after practice.

### **Parents At Practice - Observing Workout**

We encourage parents to observe workouts. If you choose to observe workouts please do so from the shallow end of the pool. We insist that parents do not interrupt the coaches on deck while they are coaching. Interrupting a coach while they are on deck during a workout takes the coach away from coaching a swimmer. Practice is time for swimmers and coaches to concentrate on improving the swimmers’ technique, increasing speed and endurance, developing a strong coach/swimmer relationship, and fostering cooperation and unity within the group. It is important that parents allow this development to occur without interruption. Therefore we ask that parents who sit on deck please do not talk to or distract their children during practice. It is distracting for swimmers and coaches alike. We respect parents’ interest in their children’s activities and invite them to observe practice from outside the pool area or in a designated area. Please be respectful of the swimmer’s time. If you need to communicate with a coach, please arrange a meeting time that works for your family as well as the coach.

## **Guidelines To Moving Up**

### **Introduction**

As each season comes to a close swimmers and parents begin to look ahead to the next season, the most common questions asked are often “Will I move up a group this year? How will I know?” Although, there are no hard and fast criteria to answer these questions, coaches typically consider the following factors when evaluating swimmers for a possible move to the next practice/training group.

- **Technique** – the minimum requirements (for all four strokes) before moving between levels.
- **Maturity Level** – ability to handle the increased training, interact socially with the next level, take personal responsibility, positive attitude, etc.
- **Attendance** – although there is already recommended attendance, if a swimmer desires to move up, they should be able to attend the recommended number of practices for the next group.
- **Age** – used as a guideline to assess physical and social readiness.
- **Coach-ability** – ability to listen to the coach and ability to implement and SUSTAIN the recommended technique changes.
- **Test Sets** (if applicable) – physical swim test to ensure the swimmer can handle the next level - both strength and endurance.
- **Meet Participation** (if applicable) – although meet participation is not required for any of our programs, training needs for those who do compete may influence program placement. In addition, coaches encourage meet participation as a means for one-on-one assessment and coaching which may help swimmers advance more quickly.
- **Coaches Discretion** – Is this a good move for the swimmer? How balanced is the enrollment between the programs?

Since the coach may not have complete visibility to everything going on in an athlete’s life, it is important for the coach, parent and athlete to communicate and work together in order to make the best decision for the athlete. The balance of this document will provide more information regarding the move up process and criteria.

### **How are group advancement decisions made?**

The coaching staff meets twice a year (March and July-August) for the sole purpose of reviewing candidates for advancement. Each lead coach will present future candidates from their program with a particular focus on those candidates who may be ready to advance at the beginning of the next season.

Once an athlete is within approximately eight weeks of a possible advancement, the lead coach will notify the parents (email, verbally on deck, or a phone call) that their child is being considered for a group move and will be told what specifically the child needs to work on in order to move to the next group. They will also solicit any relevant feedback from the parent regarding the possible move. Afterwards, the lead coach will notify the athlete and tell them what they need to work on at practice. Two to three weeks before the target move up date, the lead coach will review the athlete's progress, as well as other information obtained from the swimmer and/or parents, with the lead coach of the next group. Both lead coaches will present their recommendation (typically they are unanimous) to the head coach/head age group coach who in turn makes the final decision. The Fees associated with this group will be communicated to the parents prior to the advancement.

### **Who makes the final decision?**

The Head Coach makes the decision after having received recommendations from the swimmer's lead coach and the lead coach of the program for which they are being considered. If the parent or athlete does not agree with that decision, they may request a meeting with the lead coach and the Head Coach in an effort to resolve the matter. **In the end, the Head Coach will make the final decision if the parties are unable to come to a unanimous decision.**

### **How are decisions communicated to the parent and athlete?**

Once the decision has been made to either advance or not advance an age group swimmer, the lead coach will notify the parents via email, verbally on deck, or by phone. Only those parents whose athlete is being considered for a group move will be contacted. Senior swimmers will be notified directly (rather than indirectly through the parents) of the decision. After the notifications have been made, the lead coach from the new group will send a welcome communication (email, verbal, or phone) to the swimmer congratulating them on their achievement.

### **When does advancement occur?**

Although group moves can occur at any time, they will generally occur at the beginning of the short and long course seasons – September and April. Our intent is to minimize the disruption to an athlete's training mid-season by changing coaches and practice groups.

### **Move up Reminders**

It is important to note that these criteria are simply guidelines and that achieving one or several of the listed criteria does not necessarily mean that a swimmer is ready for the next practice group. Our goal is to place athletes in the program that best meets their specific training needs.

Please Remember...

Swimmers – SWIM  
Coaches – COACH  
Officials – OFFICIATE  
Parents – PARENT

## Seasons and Breaks

The Cape Fear Aquatic Club is a year-round competitive swim program that runs from the end of August/beginning of September through the Long Course Championship meets at the end of July or beginning of August. Each swimming year is divided into two seasons--short course and long course. The short course season runs roughly from End of August/Early September to April. During this time, competitions are held in short course pools, which are 25 yards in length. The long course season begins in May and lasts until August. Long course meets are held in 50 meter pools. All groups take a short break in the spring (between the short course and long course seasons) and a break in August (between the long course and short course seasons). These are important periods of physical AND mental rest for swimmers. The Cape Fear Aquatic Club respects family time together, including vacation time. Parents should be aware, however, that extended time away from practice and competition in the middle of a season will affect a swimmer's performance. The effect becomes greater the older and more competitive a swimmer becomes. One option is to find a team in the town/area that you will be visiting and arrange for your child to practice with them during your stay. This can be a fun way to not only stay in shape, but to learn different training techniques and systems. To discuss time away from practice and meets and/or the effects it will have, please contact the Director of Competitive Swimming.

## Apparel Policy

Cape Fear Aquatic Club prides ourselves on carefully considering all aspects of swimming regarding the competitive development of our athletes. Our team culture has an enormous impact on our swimmers' success. The aim of the policies outlined below is to define that culture in order to (1) improve our unity as a team and (2) ensure that our attire at meets and practice is consistent with our philosophy.

The yearly registration fee includes USA Swimming & GYSSA registrations; team t-shirt, team cap, TYR team swimsuit, and team uniform. In addition, through its affiliation with Toad Hollow Swim and More/CSI Promotions, the Cape Fear Aquatic Club offers a variety of team logo-wear, including backpacks, sweatshirts, warm-ups and t-shirts. Logo-wear is available for purchase every September at the beginning of the short course season. Cape Fear Aquatic Club apparel can be purchased at various times throughout the year. Notices about apparel orders will be posted on Team Unify.

The items listed below are the only things that swimmers must have:

**TEAM SUIT** The Cape Fear Aquatic Club is a "TYR" sponsored team. Swimmers are required to wear "TYR" brand suits when competing at swim meets. Team suits may be purchased online at any time from the Toad Hollow Athletics or their store in Wilmington NC.

The team suit is made of Lycra. Age Group and Senior Cape Fear Aquatic Club swimmers sometimes compete in technical suits at state, zone and national championships. However, their use is limited by the coaches. Swimmers (and parents) are **STRONGLY URGED** to talk to a coach before purchasing an elite technical suit. Swimmers should not use their team suits for

practice.

## **The swimmer makes the suit, the suit doesn't make the swimmer!**

### **Team Suits**

At meets, we want to make our presence known as a club. We are proud to swim for Cape Fear Aquatic Club and dressing uniformly is a way for us to unite as a club.

Our team policy is that for all USA Swimming meets (other than when a swimmer wears a tech suit in compliance with the policy above) all Cape Fear Aquatic Club swimmers are required to wear a team suit.

*For Girls:*

Option 1: Flyback training suit - This suit has spaghetti straps, is polyester (lasts longer) and is generally preferred by older girls.

Option 2: Female super proback - This suit has traditional wider shoulder straps, is polyester (lasts longer) and is generally preferred by younger girls.

*For Boys:*

Option 1: Jammer - This suit extends to the swimmer's knee and is made of polyester for longer wear.

Option 2: Brief - This suit is a traditional cut and is made of polyester for longer wear.

Any Cape Fear Aquatic Club swimmer who is present at a meet without a team suit may be restricted from competition, regardless of the meet's importance or distance from home. **DO NOT LEAVE HOME WITHOUT YOUR TEAM SUIT.** Often, team vendors are at meets, but please do not depend on them being there or having your size in stock.

### **Practice Suits**

Swimmers are not required to wear a team suit during practice. Girls may NOT wear two-piece suits or wear suits which tie in the back to training as they are not made for practice or training at this level. Any other swimming suit that meets the common standards of decency and does not interfere with a swimmer's ability to use proper technique is permitted to be worn at practice.

### **Tech Suits**

"Tech suits" These suits are engineered to reduce a swimmer's drag in the water, artificially enhancing performance. We believe that this is not appropriate for younger swimmers to use a swimsuit to this effect. We want our developing swimmers to value hard work, skill, and technique as the means to improvement. We feel that "tech suits" undermine these values. We will save the boost from a "fast suit" for when our swimmers are older.

Our team policy is that all Cape Fear Aquatic Club swimmers 12 years old & under are not permitted to wear a "tech suit" at practice or in competition in any YMCA or USA Swimming meet. This includes a swimmer who is training with Cape Fear Aquatic Club but competing as an "unattached" swimmer. This policy applies to prelims, finals, and relays at both in-season and championship meets. Swimmers who are 13 years or older on the first day of the meet in question may wear a TYR brand FINA-approved tech suit at championship meets ONLY or with the Head Coach's permission. Championship meets are defined as those end-of-season meets where a swimmer is shaved and rested and focused on a peak performance. Tech suits for 13 years and older swimmers are not required.

Approved TYR racing suits for swimmers 12 & under are listed below:

- Women's Thresher Open Back Tech Suit Swimsuit
- Women's Thresher Aerofit One Piece Swimsuit
- Men's Thresher Solid Racer Brief Swimsuit
- Men's Thresher Short Jammer Tech Suit Swimsuit

*(Please note these suits are for Championship levels meets only and are NOT required.)*

### **Swim Caps**

Swim caps are optional for swimmers with hair shorter than shoulder length. For hygienic reasons relating to the facility, all swimmers with hair shoulder length and longer are required to wear caps at practice. Most girls and many boys with short hair wear caps in order to protect & contain their hair so that they may use proper technique. If your swimmer wears a cap at meets, it must be a Cape Fear Aquatic Club cap. Having all of our swimmers wearing the same cap encourages team unity and enables our coaches to easily spot our swimmers in the pool. Our coaches will make every effort to have extra caps available at meets and practices. During practice, swimmers may wear any swim cap they choose. Team caps can be purchased from the coaches in the swim office. The coaches also bring a few extra to swim meets. The price of the team cap will be charged to the swimmer's account.

### **Goggles**

Goggles are a necessity for competitive swimmers. They tend to disappear or break, so please ensure your swimmer has a few extra pairs in his/her swim bag for practices and meets. You can buy goggles at Toad Hollow Athletics or order them online using the store at [www.swimoutlet.com](http://www.swimoutlet.com).

## **Swim Meets**

Swim meets are a fun and exciting opportunity for swimmers to measure progress, experience the thrill of competition, and strive for individual and team accomplishments. They provide a break in the practice routine, as well as focal points for practice efforts. All swimmers are encouraged to compete in meets for these reasons. Cape Fear Aquatic Club swimmers are strongly urged to compete in the YMCA meets throughout the year and the YMCA championship meets at the conclusion of each season. Meets are offered approximately once a month for most swimmers.

### **Age Group**

At meets, swimmers compete in age groups with children around their own age. At some meets age groups swim together and are scored out separately. Most meets run 8 & under, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, and 15 & over.

### **Regular Season**

Our regular season consists of meets that everyone can attend. To continue past the regular season you must meet qualifying time for championship meets.

### **Championship Season**

Swimmers must achieve different time standard for different championship meets. Time Standards for Championship Meets are posted on the team website. Feel free to ask the coaches what the time standards are for each meet.

### **YMCA Championship**

Cape Fear Aquatic Club is a YMCA program which gives the team the privilege of competing within the Greater YMCA Sunbelt Swimming Association or GYSSA championship meet. To compete in our league championship, you must swim in at least one YMCA sanctioned meet. For our YMCA regional and national championship meets, you must achieve qualifying times in any event you want to compete in as well as competing in at least 3 YMCA sanctioned meets.

### **USA Swimming**

United States Swimming (USAS) is a whole separate swimming organization. USA Swimming is a much larger organization than YMCA Swimming and the meets reach a higher level of competition. Being a part of the YMCA organization allows us to compete in both swimming organizations.

### **Meet Participation**

Cape Fear Aquatic Club is a competitive swim team, so going to meets is a big part of this. We do not require participation in meets, but we strongly encourage it. Being a YMCA team we have the benefit of going to both YMCA and USA swimming meets. This gives us more swim meet options. Meets allow us to assess our swimmers' progress and be able to work with them in practice to improve our swimming capability.

### **Meet Preparation**

Be early. Have your suit. Be ready for warm ups. This means you have your swim cap and goggles ready to go. Be ready to give every race 100% and don't let a DQ or a bad race discourage you.

### **Punctuality**

Please arrive at the meet location at least 15 minutes before the designated warm-up time unless otherwise specified by coaches. Swimmers need to fully warm up before competing. In addition, coaches must make relay decisions before the start of competition and they will be unable to include a swimmer who is not present for warm-ups. Directions to all meets will be on Team Unify.

### **Traveling**

When we have meets, you may choose to participate in one or multiple days. For any swimmers that can drive themselves to and from the meet and whose parents will let them, may but only with signed letter from their parents. For parents who want their child to go to the meet but cannot go themselves may send their child with another team parent or a responsible party over the age of 21. With a signed letter from their parents. These are the rules for everyone on our team 18 years and younger.

### **What to Bring to Meets**

Team suits, caps, goggles, at least 2 towels, team apparel, sweats, jacket, pen & paper (to write down times), shoes & socks, money (for heat sheet, snacks), snacks (if facility permits), and WATER. \*\* CLEARLY LABEL ALL ITEMS THAT ARE TAKEN TO A MEET.\*\*

### **Team Apparel**

Swimmers are asked to wear Cape Fear Aquatic Club attire at all meets, especially the team suit, cap and designated meet shirt. Wearing team apparel promotes team pride and unity. It also helps coaches, parents and other swimmers locate Cape Fear Aquatic Club team members. Apparel orders will be made at the beginning of the short course season. Strict deadlines will be enforced concerning apparel orders. Anyone wishing to purchase apparel after the order is made will do so on their own, and not enjoy the considerable team discount we receive.

### **Team Area**

Swimmers should sit in the designated team area. This promotes team support and unity, which in turn contributes to swimming success and fun. Parents are not allowed in the team area, with the goal of teaching responsibility, parents are asked to sit in the stands, not with their children. At most meets, parents who are not volunteering are not permitted on the pool deck. This is because deck space is limited and parental interruptions are distracting to swimmers and coaches.

### **Behavior**

Swim meets are an opportunity to display not only athletic ability but also team pride and sportsmanship. Parents and swimmers should always be mindful that they are representing the Cape Fear Aquatic Club and the YMCA of Southeastern North Carolina and should act accordingly, even when other swimmers and parents may not. Swimmers are encouraged to cheer for their teammates and to stay until the end of the meet if possible. Senior swimmers are expected to stay until the end of each meet session to support their teammates, unless directed otherwise by the senior coaches. If a swimmer, at any level, must leave before the end of a meet, he or she should notify one of the coaches *before* the start of the meet.

### **Clerk of Course/Pre-Seeding**

Some 12 & under meets have a clerk of course or bullpen which organizes swimmers in their proper heats and lanes. Otherwise, coaches will help make sure swimmers know when it is time to report to the blocks for their events. Senior meets are pre-seeded. In all cases, swimmers need to stay attentive to what event is being called to the clerk or the blocks. If a swimmer misses an event, he or she usually may not make it up.

### **Checking with Coaches**

Swimmers should talk to their coaches *before and after* each race. Coaches give final reminders and encouragement before the event, and they offer praise and a constructive review afterward. All swimmers should get their time from the timer at the end of their race and tell the coach that time. This is to ensure correct times in the official results.

### **Results and Awards**

Results are posted on a wall at each meet and later on Team Unify. Parents and swimmers may copy official times and places from these results. The kind of awards (medals, ribbons, plaques) and the number of awards given at each meet are determined by the host team, or by league by-laws in the case of championship meets. The meet information indicates what kind and how many awards are given. Some meets recognize high-point achievers for boys and girls in each age group. Team trophies are given primarily at championship meets. All awards are given to coaches at the end of the meet and are distributed at practice.

### **Snacks**

Healthy snacks and beverages (water, sports drinks) are good for swimmers to have during meets, especially during long sessions. Some facilities do not allow food or drink on deck so please be attentive to policies at the various pools. All trash in the team area should be properly disposed of before swimmers leave the meet. It is important that we respect the facility and the host team.

### **Accommodations for Travel Meets**

Whenever possible, the team will reserve a block of rooms for meets 1 ½ or more hours away from Wilmington. Hotel information for these meets will be emailed out and posted on Team Unify. Participants are not required to stay at specific hotel, or stay at all, but group planning promotes camaraderie among parents and swimmers. Carpooling and sharing rooms (when appropriate) also saves on costs.

### **How to Enter**

When we have a meet, we will send an email notifying you that registration is open. Please see the Meet Sign Instructions below.

## **Meet Sign Up Instructions**

### **Signing Up for Swim Meets**

#### *How to Register*

All registration for meets is done through our Team Unify site, [www.capefearaquaticclub.org](http://www.capefearaquaticclub.org). Log into your account and click the “Team Event-Meet Sign-Up” tab to find an updated and detailed list of our meet schedule.

Clicking on each meet will give more information including warm-up/start times, as well as which practice groups are eligible to attend. If your child is eligible and you would like them to participate, you will need to declare them as “Committed” for the meet. Click their name, and select “Yes, please sign [swimmer] up for this Event” from the drop-down menu. If it is a multi-day meet, please also check/uncheck the sessions that they are able to participate, (for example, if they can only swim Saturday out of a Sat/Sun meet.) You can use the note section if there is any additional information you would like the coach to know, such as if your child will have to leave early. Make sure you save your changes. Once the coaches have reviewed and finished the entry, you can check back to confirm that your swimmer has been entered and to view their events.

#### *Who is Eligible*

Swimmers must swim within their age group at meets. Some meets will group swimmers by specific age, such as 7 year old and 8 year old etc. Other meets will have more general age groups such as 8 & under, 10 & under, etc. Swimmers are allowed to swim up in age but not



down. For example, an 8 year old is considered an 8 & Under as well as a 10 & Under. A 9 year old is a 10 & under but not an 8 & under. A swimmer's age is determined as their age on the day of the meet. If the meet is more than one day, it is their age as of the first day of the meet.

### Scratch Procedure

Coaches have a deadline by which we need to submit the entry to the host team. Once the entry has been submitted, we can no longer add additional swimmers. It is extremely important that you remember to commit by the deadline. If you have committed and been entered but can no longer attend, please notify your swimmer's coach ASAP. We can scratch your swimmer from the meet, however you will still be responsible for paying the entry fees.

### Entries and Fees

Every meet may have different fees, facility charges and individual event entries. For most meets there are 4 fees that must be paid; facility charges, individual event, relay event fees may vary from meet to meet. The last fee is the North Carolina Swimming travel fund fee. This is a \$3 fee for every swimmer for every meet. That money goes to help pay officials at championships meet as well as improving our Local Swimming Committee. For some meets, Cape Fear Aquatic Club may also include an additional surcharge of \$5.00 for local meets & \$10 for travel meets per swimmer in order to help cover travel expenses or relay fees in the event that relay lineups cannot be determined prior to the meet.

### Meet Payment Credit Card - Draft.

For coaches and parents not to have any lapse time or problem with swim meet sign ups, we are now doing all swim meet payments from the member's credit card on file. At the back of this packet is a confirmation letter that gives the YMCA of Southeastern North Carolina permission to charge your credit card on file. The YMCA will only charge your credit card based off your commitment on Team Unify.

## **Parent Expectation**

### **Parent commitment**

Being a swim team parent requires time and effort. Communication between swimmers, parents and coaches requires a collaboration of the swimmer, parent and coach to convey information regarding the status of each swimmer. If a swimmer has an injury or illness that will limit or affect his or her attendance or ability to practice, then a parent of the swimmer must inform the coaching staff of the problem and any limitations.

If a swimmer has any issue that causes him or her to miss practice more than 3 consecutive practices, then the parent should inform, via phone or email.

Part of your commitment will include paying for swim team dues and meet fees, buying suits, goggles, and other equipment as needed, along with providing transportation to and from practices and meets.

Be supportive of your child and give them encouragement whenever you can. You can help the coaches by being supportive and understanding of your child. Not every race is going to be a best time. All swimmers including Olympic swimmers have down periods and poor performances from time to time. Make sure you are providing support and encouragement at all times. As long as the coaches are happy and your child is trying their best, you should be too.

We ask that no parents talk to the coaches while they are coaching as it takes away time from your child as well as others. Also please no interference at all with practice. If you need to talk to

your child, please ask the coach if it is ok and please make it brief. After practice, we can set an appointment to meet your needs along with your child's needs any time during the season.

### **Parent Responsibilities**

Make sure your child is on time to practice and they have the right equipment with them for both swim practice and dry land workout. Make sure they are well rested and are eating properly. Please keep up-to-date with the swim team newsletter, meet entry information and due dates. Please make sure you attend the parents meetings and any team sponsored events.

### **ALL Parent OR NEW Parent Meetings**

There will be all parent or new parent meetings during the year to inform parents on the "state of the team" and new policies or procedures, fund raising events or team social events.

## **Communication Between Parents & Coaches**

Methods of Communication, Face to Face Meeting, Email, Phones and Texting

**OFFICE HOURS** (Face to Face Meetings) – The Coaches' office hours vary due to the nature of the job and the hours of workouts. Generally, the coaches can be reached from 2PM until the start of afternoon workouts. If you need to meet with one of the coaches, please email them and set up a mutually agreed time.

**EMAIL** – Email is allowed between coaches and parents. Please understand the response time is not immediate and should be replied or acknowledged with 24 hours unless a coach is away for a meet, vacation or day off.

**TELEPHONE/CELL PHONES** – Calling is allowed between the Head Coach and parents during the hours from 7am until 9pm. Assistant Coaches may be contacted one hour before or after workout. Please respect the coaches personal time as they need down time also.

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

## **Social Media Policy Between Coaches & Your Children**

**FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, BLOGS, AND SIMILAR SITES** Coaches may have personal social media sites, but they are not permitted to have any athlete member of the Club join their personal page as a "friend."

A coach should not accept any "friend" request from an athlete. In addition, parents and the coaches should remind the athlete that this is not permitted.

Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "private message" each other through social media. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "instant message" each other through Instagram Facebook chat or other IM method.

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

Coaches are encouraged to set their pages to "private" to prevent athletes from accessing the coach's personal information.

**TWITTER Best Practice:**

Coaches are not permitted per USA Swimming to follow athletes on Twitter.

Likewise, athletes are not permitted to follow coaches on Twitter.

Coaches and athletes are not permitted to “direct message” each other through Twitter.

Coaches cannot re-tweet an athlete message post.

Coaches and athletes are not permitted to “direct message” each other through Twitter.

## **Grievances**

Most problems are rooted in simple misunderstandings or miscommunication and can be resolved quickly and easily. If allowed to fester, however, problems grow out of proportion and can be harmful to swimmers, parents, coaches, and the program. This can be prevented by addressing grievances immediately and with the appropriate person. If a team member or parent has a grievance concerning any aspect of the program, he or she should contact the Director of Competitive Swimming to set up a meeting.

## **Annual Awards Banquet**

Each Spring the team has an awards dinner honoring the team’s achievements during the previous year. All swimmers receive participation item/gift. The CFAC Award is given to a male and female swimmer in each age group who best exemplifies hard work, dedication, positive attitude, sportsmanship, and embodiment of the YMCA’s four core character traits of honesty, respect, responsibility, and caring throughout the season. In addition, graduating seniors receive special recognition as they complete their CFAC careers. Additional special awards will be given at the Director’s discretion.

## **Swimmer, Parent, Official and Coach**

The relationship between swimmer, coach and parent is an important aspect of swimming. Usually it is a mutually supportive partnership, but it can become strained and, ultimately, harmful to a swimmer’s experience in the sport. Regular and open communication is necessary to avoid misunderstandings. The swimmer, the coach, and the parent must each understand and respect his or her role so that conflicting or negative signals are not sent. Swimmers, parents, and coaches may not always agree but respectful and open communication will help maintain a positive relationship. The collective goal of the swimmer-coach-parent triangle should be the maintenance of an environment most conducive to the development of the swimmer - both as an athlete and as a person.

## **Parents**

Parents are a vital part of every child’s life. They are central figures in the growth and development of their children. Parents are the primary example after which children pattern their behavior and beliefs. For athletes, especially teenagers, the role of parents may change as coaches assume a strong role not only in their physical achievements but also in their mental and emotional development. Because coaches and teammates have such a strong impact on a swimmer, parents should fully investigate the philosophy and conduct of the program before registering their child. When a child begins swimming on a team, the parents put their faith in

the program and its coaches to make the child's swimming experience positive, rewarding, and enjoyable. There are ways in which parents can also aid the experience.

### **Unconditional Love**

In swimming, the primary duty for parents is to love and support their swimmer(s) regardless of performance and achievement level. A child needs to know that no matter what happens he or she is loved. Swimmers should be praised for their own personal achievements and should never be compared with other swimmers or with the past achievements of a parent. Whatever a swimmer does or doesn't achieve is a result of many factors and is not a reflection on his or her parents. Please do not try to live vicariously through your child's swimming experience.

### **Set a Good Example**

Children tend to pattern their attitudes and behavior after the example set by their parents. Please be aware of your attitudes and behavior, especially in the team setting. Exemplify good sportsmanship and the positive values of the YMCA. The Cape Fear Aquatic Club encourages swimmers to be honest, caring, respectful and responsible, to ask questions and address concerns directly and to serve others. Observing these habits in parents further enforces the lessons taught at the YMCA. After all, parents represent the team and the YMCA as much as the swimmers and coaches do.

### **Positive Problem Solving**

We ask that parents reserve concerns and disagreements about the program for discussion with a coach or the Director of Competitive Swimming. Questioning or criticizing a coach, team member, or the program in front of a swimmer seriously damages the swimmer's trust and confidence in the coaching staff and the team. If your swimmer has a problem, try to gather as much information as possible and address it with the coach or appropriate person directly. Avoid passing judgment, jumping to conclusions or discussing it with others. Gossip is never constructive.

### **Social Media**

Make sure what you and your child post on social media demonstrates good sportsmanship and positive aspects of Cape Fear Aquatic Club.

Our coaches WILL **refrain** from being "Friends" with children on social media outlets and platforms.

### **Get Involved - Parent Commitment**

We invite parents to become involved in the swim team in a constructive way. There are numerous volunteer opportunities that allow parents to be more involved in swimming and in the Cape Fear Aquatic Club.

Volunteers are needed to work at swim meets, by becoming a swim meet official (all meets, but especially those swim meets/events hosted by Cape Fear Aquatic Club) require extensive volunteer efforts to run these events well.

Another way of volunteering is by accepting an appointed volunteer position, or by serving on the Parent Advisory Board.

Team social events bring parents, swimmers and coaches together in an informal and fun setting. Parents will be asked to acknowledge this commitment when they register their child for the Cape Fear Aquatic Club.

### **...But not *too* involved**

Please respect the time your swimmer spends with his or her coach and teammates by not interrupting a coach or swimmer during practice or team activities. During practice times and meets PLEASE DO NOT SIT ON DECK NEAR POOL. Please refer to sections on practices and meets. It is distracting to both swimmers and coaches. Furthermore, please refrain from offering swimming-related instruction to swimmers (your own or others). This is confusing for swimmers and disrespectful to coaches. If you have a question or concern, contact your child's coach. Teach good sportsmanship and practice good sportsmanship with all parents, swimmers and coaches at meets and practices.

Support the Y values of Caring, Responsibility, Honesty, and Respect. Refrain from coaching, or instructing, any swimmer at practices or meets. Refrain from interfering with coaches on the pool deck. Never criticize other swimmers, coaches or officials regardless of the circumstances.

Maintain self control at all times. Know everybody's role:

Swimmers – Swim  
Coaches – Coach  
Officials – Officiate  
Parents – Parent

During competitions, questions or concerns about decisions by meet officials must be directed to a Cape Fear Aquatic Club coach. Parents shall not address officials directly. Any conduct (including abusive language or gestures, racially insensitive remarks, damaging other people's property, illegally consuming drugs or alcohol) that reflects poorly on the individual, the YMCA of Southeastern North Carolina, and/or the Cape Fear Aquatic Club is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. (See the team's anti-bullying policy and electronic communication policy, both of which are appended to this handbook.)

## Swimmers - Roles and Responsibilities

Cape Fear Aquatic Club swimmers strive to be positive team members in and out of the pool. Most importantly, swimmers should always remember that they represent the YMCA and the CFAC Swim Team. Their words and actions reflect not only on themselves but also on their teammates, parents, coaches, and the YMCA. With the guidance of coaches and parents, swimmers are expected to demonstrate the YMCA's character development traits of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.

### **Focus on Team**

Individual achievements are important but supporting others and working together toward a common goal raises everyone's performance level. Furthermore, shared experiences are more fun and exciting than individual ones. *Together Everyone Achieves More.*

### **Act, Think, Look, and Talk Positively**

Attitudes are contagious so make sure that yours is worth catching.

**Take responsibility** - for your belongings, words, actions, and swimming. Attend practice regularly. Be on time and remember all equipment (cap, goggles, suit, towel, etc.) Don't blame others when things don't go your way. Excuses satisfy only the person who makes them.

**Demonstrate good sportsmanship at all times.** Athletes with good sportsmanship habits earn the respect of their competitors and gain pride and confidence in themselves. Loud, emotional, or rude displays are inappropriate, regardless of the reason. Always think before you speak or act. Remember that you represent the YMCA - at the pool and away from it.

**Show respect.** The best way to gain respect is to show respect. Allow others to share their opinions and ideas freely. Follow rules set forth by coaches and officials. Do not talk while others (esp. coaches) are talking, and don't talk back to coaches or officials. Refrain from speaking or acting negatively toward other swimmers, teams, coaches, or officials. Do not misuse or abuse property - in YMCAs, at meets, in restaurants, etc.

**Be honest.** Do not lie. Refrain from gossip (which often involves at least one untruth). Do what you think is right, not just what is popular. Give an honest effort toward achieving your stated goals. Communicate with coaches regarding anything that might affect a swimmer's performance, or the team as a whole.

### **Code of Conduct**

As representatives of the Cape Fear Aquatic Club and YMCA of Southeastern North Carolina, swimmers are expected to speak and behave in a manner that is respectful, responsible, honest, and caring. If each swimmer is mindful of these traits, appropriate conduct should never be an issue. These guidelines are to be followed by Cape Fear Aquatic Club swimmers at all practices, meets, and other team functions. Special activities, such as team travel trips, require adherence to additional activity-specific conduct guidelines, which must be signed and returned prior to the activity or trip.

### **Practice Behavior and Discipline**

During practice, swimmers are expected to follow the guidelines and rules of behavior for the specific facility they are practicing in. In addition, there are three (3) simple rules that must be followed during practice:

- No talking when the coach is talking.
- Eyes and ears must be above the water and focused on the coach.
- Swimmers must ask permission before going to the bathroom.

If these rules are not followed during practice, the following disciplinary actions will be taken by the group coach:

- 1<sup>st</sup> violation – The swimmer will receive a warning from the coach.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> violation – The swimmer will be removed from practice and sit on the deck for the remainder of practice.

These rules are designed to help teach the swimmers the core values of respect and responsibility and to ensure that the staff is providing the best teaching environment possible. In addition, swimmers are expected to adhere to the following behavioral guidelines when at practices, meets, and team activities.

### **The following behaviors are not acceptable:**

- Unsportsmanlike conduct - taunting, teasing, or speaking negatively about teammates, competitors, officials, or coaches.
- Use of inappropriate, strong, or vulgar language or gestures.
- Lying, deceit, dishonesty.
- Littering, abuse, or misuse of equipment, furniture, or other items of property.

The first violation will receive a verbal warning. The second will result in dismissal from the practice, meet, or team function where the violation was made. The third violation will result in suspension from the team for a period of time determined by the Director of Competitive Swimming. A fourth violation will cause the removal of the swimmer from the program. Parents will be notified at each step.

### **The following actions will not be tolerated:**

- Verbal or physical abuse toward others.

- Theft of any kind.
- Vandalism or any destruction of property, public or private.
- Use of tobacco products or other illegal substances.
- Consumption of alcoholic beverages or other illegal substances.

## Coaches

Coaches occupy a unique place in a swimmer's life - part parent, part teacher, part friend. Cape Fear Aquatic Club coaches take these roles seriously and strive to be good role models, leaders and listeners.

### Coaches:

- instruct swimmers in all aspects of the sport: technique, training methods, mental preparation, competitive strategy, etc.
- offer encouragement, constructive criticism, and honest assessments with suggestions for improvement
- demonstrate and encourage values and behaviors consistent with the principles of the YMCA
- lead the team at competitions
- make decisions about group placement, meet opportunities, and events for swimmers (based on a number of factors and with the interest of the swimmer and the team in mind)
- communicate with swimmers and parents about plans, issues, and philosophy within the program.

### Swimmer, Parent, Official and Coach Reminders - Points to Keep in Mind:

- Individual swimmers develop at different rates. This fact by itself may cause stress for swimmers and external pressure cannot quicken or slow the pace of natural development. Excessive pressure can, however, contribute to burnout.
- Swimmers, Parents, Officials and Coaches are human. Mistakes are inevitable. The most productive response is to admit them, excuse them, and move on. Grudges help no one.
- Let the coaches coach, let the swimmers swim, let the officials officiate and let the parents parent.
- The *process*, not the awards, is the most valuable part of competitive swimming. The friendships, lessons, skills, and memories gained from participating in the sport last forever and help create a healthy, happy and strong person. It is important to look at each child's long term development. Instant gratification is only temporary and often leads to problems later in life.
- As stated before, parents, swimmers, officials and coaches may not always agree but honest and open communication maintains mutual respect and a positive relationship.

## YMCA Rules and Regulations

- All swimmers must abide by the YMCA code of conduct signed in the registration packet at all times.
- All swimmers must shower prior to entering the water, in order to conform to New Hanover County health code statues, before each practice.
- All swimmers and parents **must** enter through the front desk entrance only.  
All Swimmers must scan their membership cards at the check desk.  
No one will be permitted to enter through the glass pool doors.

- Swimmers will respect and obey the coaches and aquatic staff at all times.
- Swimmers are expected to behave properly in the locker rooms before and after practice. Swimmers are encouraged to either lock their valuables in a locker, or bring their bags onto the pool deck with them.
- Most importantly, swimmers are expected to have **fun, learn, and grow** through the sport of swimming!

## **Health and Well Being**

Swimming is an ideal sport to promote total health and fitness. Here is some basic information on health and well being to prevent injury and to help ensure improved performance in practice and meets.

All pools have safety rules posted. Please read and follow them. These standard pool safety rules always apply:

1. Don't run.
2. Never swim alone.
3. Look before you dive.
4. Never bring glass containers on a pool deck.
5. No horseplay on pool deck or in locker rooms.

Some other safety guidelines pertaining to swim practices and meets:

1. Inform coaches of medical conditions and prescription drugs.
2. Swimmers with asthma should always bring an inhaler and have it ready for use.
3. Swimmers should bring and use a water bottle for practice and meets.
4. Wear proper shoes and clothing for outdoor activities.

Swim coaches are required to be trained in First Aid, CPR, and Safety Training for Swim Coaches. Common sense can prevent them from having to demonstrate their skills.

### **Injuries**

Injuries incurred during practice, meets, or team activities will be treated immediately and parents will be notified. Sometimes swimmers experience pain that is not the result of a particular wound or accident. Muscle pain is common, especially as swimmers age and their muscles develop further. Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between soreness and injury. If pain restricts movement or lasts more than 3-4 days, swimmers should seek medical attention. Coaches are **not** doctors and can only give advice, not diagnosis or treatment. It is, however, important to keep coaches informed of injuries, treatments, and rehabilitation.

### **Illness**

In case of illness, swimmers should let their bodies heal by restricting activity. It is also better to miss a practice or two than to expose many other team members and coaches to the same illness. Once recovered, swimmers can return to practice and regain their strength in the water.

### **Swimmer's Ear**

Otitis Externa, commonly known as "swimmer's ear," is an infection of the skin in the ear canal. The dark, warm, wet environment of a swimmer's ear canal is a breeding ground for such an



infection. To prevent swimmer's ear, dry the ear well after each time in the water. Use a towel, Qtip (carefully), or gently shake the head on its side. Commercial products aid in the prevention and treatment of swimmer's ear. A cheap and easy remedy is to make a solution of 50% rubbing alcohol and 50% white vinegar. A couple of drops in each ear will help kill some of the normal bacteria and will help dry out the ear. \*\* Alcohol or vinegar should not be put in the ears of children with PE tubes in their ears or holes in their eardrums. (*Information borrowed from Dr. Raymond B. Coors, MD.*)

## Classifications

The Cape Fear Aquatics Club competes in both YMCA and USA Swimming meets. These swimming bodies both provide competitive opportunities, but they are slightly different.

### USA Swimming

USA Swimming is the national governing body for amateur competitive swimming. It sets rules for competitions, implements policies, conducts national championship meets and selects athletes to represent the United States in international competitions. USA Swimming requires coaches and officials to be certified according to its standards. USA Swimming is divided into Local Swimming Committees (LSCs) which administer USA Swimming activities in smaller geographical areas. Our LSC is "**North Carolina Swimming,**" or NCS. All CFAC swimmers competing in USA Swimming sanctioned competitions are automatically registered as USA Swimming members and are eligible to swim in USA Swimming meets for which they have the qualifying times.

### YMCA

YMCA Competitive Swimming and Diving is unique in that it, like other YMCA sports programs, emphasizes the overall development of the athlete. It promotes not only physical achievement, but also mental and spiritual growth. The National YMCA Competitive Swimming and Diving Committee conducts the YMCA National Championship Meets and local leagues oversee local and regional competitions. Teams are grouped into regional groups and local clusters or leagues. CFAC is in the Upper Southeast Region. Our league is the "**Greater YMCA Sunbelt Swimming Association,**" (GYSSA) which encompasses all of North Carolina. YMCA coaches and officials are certified by YMCA standards. YMCA competitions include dual meets, invitationals, and championship meets. Swimmers must compete in at least three YMCA meets during a season to be eligible for the national championship meets.

### Age Group Designations

In both USA Swimming and YMCA meets, swimmers compete according to their ages. USA Swimming age groups are divided as follows: 10 & under, 11/12, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18. USA Swimming meets will often combine the last two into a 15-18 age group. YMCA age groups are the same except there are also 6 & under and 8 & under age groups. Sometimes, in both USA Swimming and YMCA meets, 13 & Older swimmers are combined into a "senior" age group. In "open" events or meets, swimmers of any age may swim. For USA Swimming meets, swimmers compete in their age as of the first day of the meet. For YMCA meets, their age group is determined by their age as of Dec. 1 of the current year for short course meets and May 1 for long course meets.

## **Time Standards**

USA Swimming establishes national motivational standards by which its meets are classified (B, BB, A, AA, etc.). These standards are based on a national average of performances with the goal of allowing swimmers to be grouped in competition with swimmers of the same general skill level. Our YMCA league (GYSSA) classifies its championship meets and some invitational meets the same way. Many YMCA meets are designated as "open" meaning that all YMCA swimmers may compete, regardless of times.

Link to the USA Swimming National motivational Time Standards:

<https://www.usaswimming.org/docs/default-source/timesdocuments/time-standards/2020motivationaltimes-top16.pdf>

## **Meet Classification and Progression**

Swim meets attended by CFAC are classified as either YMCA or USA Swimming (USAS) meets. The rules governing YMCA and USAS meets vary slightly, and this is a primary factor in determining the meet classification. In addition, YMCA classified meets are open only to YMCA swim teams. In more general terms and at both YMCA and USAS meets, meets are classified by the swimmer's ability/achievement level, the length of the competition pool, and the format of the meet. Here are some terms and definitions that will help both swimmers and parents understand how meets are classified:

- **Short Course** – Meets are held in pools that are 25 yards in length. The short course season lasts from September through April.
- **Long Course** – Meets are held in pools that are 50 meters in length. The Olympics and US Nationals are held in pools of this length. The long course season lasts from May through August.
- **Timed Finals** – In meets of this format, swimmers are seeded according to their entry time against other swimmers within their age group. Athletes swim each event only once during the meet.
- **Preliminaries (Prelims)/Finals** – In this meet format, swimmers race each event once in the preliminary heats. Out of these heats, the top eight, sixteen, or twenty-four swimmers advance to the finals for that event. The number of swimmers who qualify for finals is determined by the meet host. During the finals, swimmers are re-seeded according to their preliminary times for the final heats. The following example is used for a meet in an 8-lane pool: The “championship final” consists of the fastest 8 swimmers from the prelim heats, the “consolation final” consists of the 9<sup>th</sup> through 16<sup>th</sup> place swimmers from the prelim heats, and the “bonus final” consists of the 17<sup>th</sup> through 24<sup>th</sup> place swimmers from the prelim heats.
- **Time Standards** – Time standards are set in order to determine the level of the meet in which a swimmer competes. In some instances, meets may be set up to exclude faster swimmers, while some meets may exclude slower swimmers.
- **Age Group Meets** – These meets group individuals by age into specific age groups. The age groups used in YMCA and USAS meets are: 8 & under, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, and 15-18.
- **Senior Meets** – These meets have no age groups. This means that it is possible for a 12 year old to swim in the same event as a 19 year old. Meets that are strictly senior include Senior Sectionals, YMCA Nationals, US Nationals, and Olympic Trials. In addition to the classification of meets, there is a progression of meets that swimmers follow throughout their careers based on their current ability level and level of achievement. This progression is outlined below.

- **Open YMCA Meets** – These meets are YMCA meets open to anyone that is a current member of any YMCA swim team. These meets are geared more towards introducing those swimmers new to YMCA and year-round swimming to the competition environment. There are typically no time standard requirements for these meets and the focus of the meet is to ensure that the swimmers are having fun and enjoying their competitive experience.
- **YMCA/USAS Invitationals** – Invitationals are 2 to 3 day meets typically held within our state but may be held outside of our state for faster swimmers. These meets are usually categorized into the following levels according to time standards: “B-BB” (new or novice swimmers); “A-AAAA” (swimmers typically competing at a state, regional or national level); or “open” (any level swimmer). These meets may be timed finals, prelims/finals, age group, senior, or a combination thereof.
- **YMCA Championships** – Championship meets are held near the end of both the short and long course seasons. There are generally qualifying standards for these meets. The major championship meets for our program are the GYSSA Championships, and the YMCA National Championships. Swimmers must have competed in three YMCA meets (open or invitational) during the season to be eligible to compete in the YMCA championships meets.
- **GYSSA Championship** – This meet serves as a championship meet for all YMCA swimmers. There are no qualifying standards for most events, and all CFAC swimmers are encouraged to attend this meet. This is a timed finals meet for all age groups. Swimmers must have swum one Y meet to participate in this meet.
- **YMCA National Championship** – This meet is the national championship for all YMCA swim teams. This meet is run in a senior format and is open to only those swimmers ages 12 and older who meet the qualifying times for each event. There is a national championship meet held for both short and long course seasons. This is a prelims/finals meet.
- **USAS Championship** – These meets are also held near the end of both the short and long course seasons. These meets are run in both age group and senior formats and typically have varying time standard requirements. The major USAS championship meets for our program are the North Carolina Swimming Age Group Championships (also called JOs), the Senior Sectional Championships, the US National Championships, and the Olympic Trials.
- **NCS Age Group Championships** – These are the North Carolina state championship meet for age group swimmers. These are also known as “JOs”. There are both short and long course age group championship meets for swimmers ages 14 and under only. The long course championship meet is for all age groups. There are specific qualifying standards for both meets. These time standards will vary from year to year. This is typically a timed finals meet for 12 and under swimmers and a prelims/finals meet for 13 and older swimmers.
- **Age Group and Senior Sectionals** – Sectionals are regional championship meets for qualified swimmers. Meets are run in a prelim/final format and are used as qualifying meets for US Nationals.
- **US Nationals** – This meet consists of the fastest swimmers in the United States. Swimmers qualify by meeting the required time standards for each individual event. This is a long course prelims/finals meet format.
- **Olympic Trials** – This is the selection meet for the US Olympic Team. This meet is only held only in Olympic years, and swimmers must meet the long course qualifying standards. These standards are faster than the qualifying times for US Nationals to ensure that only the most elite swimmers in the US qualify for this meet. This is a prelims/finals meet.

# **Cape Fear Aquatic Club Handbook**

## **Appendix A - Anti-Bullying Policy**

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at the YMCA of Southeastern North Carolina & the Cape Fear Aquatic Club (CFAC) and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. The Cape Fear Aquatic Club coaches are committed to providing a safe, caring and friendly environment for all of our members. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a coach, or other YMCA employee. If bullying does occur, all athletes and parents should know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively, according to the procedure outlined below.

### **What Is Bullying?**

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

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

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

### **Reporting Procedure**

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

- Talk to your parents;
- Talk to a Cape Fear Aquatic Club coach;
- Write a letter or email to the Cape Fear Aquatic Club Head Coach.

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

### **How We Handle Bulling**

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. We reassure the kids involved, including bystanders.

6. Model respectful behavior when we intervene.

If bullying is occurring on our team, 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 we try 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. We try to 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, we 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 we have determined if the situation is bullying, we support all of the kids involved.

### **Supporting the Kids Involved**

1. Support the kids who are being bullied.

a. We listen and focus on the child. We learn what's been going on and show we 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:

- i. Ask the child being bullied what can be done to make him or her feel safe.

Remember that changes to routine should be minimized. He or she is not at fault and should not be singled out. For example, consider rearranging lane assignments for everyone. If bigger moves are necessary, such as switching practice groups, the child who is bullied should not be forced to change.

ii. Develop a game plan. Maintain open communication between the coaches, swimmers and parents. Discuss the steps that will be taken and how bullying will be addressed going forward.

c. We are persistent. Bullying may not end overnight. We commit to making it stop and consistently support the bullied child.

2. Address bullying behavior.

a. We make sure the child knows what the problem behavior is. Young people who bully must learn their behavior is wrong and harms others.

b. We 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. We work with the child to understand some of the reasons he or she bullied. For example:

i. Sometimes children bully to fit in or just to make fun of someone is a little different from them. In other words, there may be some insecurity involved.

ii. Other times kids act out because something else — issues at home, abuse, stress — is going on in their lives. They also may have been bullied. These kids may be in need of additional support.

d. We involve the kid who bullied in making amends or repairing the situation. The goal is to help them see how their actions affect others. For example, the child can:

i. Write a letter apologizing to the athlete who was bullied.

ii. Do a good deed for the person who was bullied, for the Y, or for others in our community.

iii. Clean up, repair, or pay for any property they damaged.

3. We avoid strategies that don't work or have negative consequences:

a. 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.

b. 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.

c. Follow-up. After the bullying issue is resolved, we 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.

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

a. Be a friend to the person being bullied;

b. Tell a trusted adult – your parent, coach, or club board member;

c. Help the kid being bullied get away from the situation. Create a distraction, focus the attention on something else, or offer a way for the target to get out of the situation. "Let's go, practice is about to start."

d. Set a good example by not bullying others.

e. Don't give the bully an audience. Bullies are encouraged by the attention they get from bystanders. If you do nothing else, just walk away.

# **Cape Fear Aquatic Club Handbook**

## **Appendix B – Travel Policy**

### **Traveling**

Cape Fear Aquatic Club currently does not take part in “Team Travel”. Team Travel is defined as overnight travel to a swim meet or other team activity that is planned and supervised by the club or LSC.

For out-of-town meets, parent(s) must be in attendance with their swimmer(s), and parent(s) will be responsible for swimmer(s), lodging, food, and transportation. This applies to everyone on our team under the age of 18.

Under all travel conditions (“Team Travel” or parent-supervised travel), Cape Fear Aquatic Club will always defer to the policies set forth by USA Swimming. They are summarized below.

### **Section 1 - USA Swimming Required Travel Policies**

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

- a. Club travel policies must be signed and agreed to by all athletes, parents, coaches and other adults traveling with the club. (305.5.D)
- b. Team managers and chaperones must be members of USA Swimming and have successfully passed a USA Swimming-administered criminal background check. (305.5.B)
- c. Regardless of gender, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an athlete (unless the coach is the parent, guardian, sibling, or spouse of that particular athlete). (305.5.A)
- d. When only one athlete and one coach travel to a competition, the athlete must have his/her parents’ (or legal guardian’s) written permission in advance to travel alone with the coach. (305.5C)

### **Section 2 - Recommended Policies**

- 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. A copy of the Club Code of Conduct must be signed by the athlete and his/her parent or legal guardian.
- g. Team or LSC officials should obtain a signed Liability Release and/or Indemnification Form for each athlete.
- h. Team or LSC officials should carry a signed Medical Consent or Authorization to Treat Form for each athlete.
- i. Curfews shall be established by the team or LSC staff each day of the trip.
- j. 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.
- k. The directions & decisions of coaches/chaperones are final.
- l. 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.
- m. When visiting public places such as shopping malls, movie theatres, etc. swimmers will stay in groups of no less than three persons. 12 & Under athletes will be accompanied by a chaperone.
- n. The Head Coach or his/her designee shall make a written report of travel policy or code of conduct violations to the appropriate club or LSC leadership and the parent or legal guardian of any affected minor athlete.