

YMCA OF DELAWARE

2023-2024

SWIM TEAM HANDBOOK



**Brandywine Barracudas | Dover Dolphins |
Sussex Tsunamis | Western Wahoos**

Introduction

Welcome to the YMCA of Delaware Swim Team Family. We are excited to have you on board! This handbook will serve as a reference for you as a member of our programs and is a resource for you to find information regarding our philosophy, structure, and policies.

Information such as current schedules, rosters, time standards, and other updates will be communicated via email and/or through our Team Unify page at swimbrandywine.com, swimwestern.com, swimsussex.com and swimdoover.com

While this handbook contains a large amount of information, there will inevitably be questions not answered within its pages. Please contact your local Director of Aquatic Operations and/or Head Coach if you have a question concerning the program.

The YMCA

The YMCA is a national organization. Founded in 1844, it is known as the site of America's first group swim instruction. The YMCA has long valued the importance of fitness activities and the development of young people. All YMCA programs 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 our four key character development values make the YMCA unique from other competitive swimming programs. We develop swimmers that possess strong moral character, not just strong bodies.

Our Mission

To empower youth, foster healthy living, and promote strong communities.

Our Vision

A healthy, inclusive community where all people reach their full potential.

Diversity and Inclusion

The YMCA of Delaware is an inclusive organization open to all. We welcome all people regardless of ability, age, background, ethnicity/race, faith, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation. The Y believes that, in a diverse world, we are stronger when we are inclusive, when our doors are open to all, and when everyone has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive.

Advancing Equity

As an organization focused on addressing the most critical needs of our community and dedicated to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion for all, the Y must begin

to address how to undo racism and become “anti-racists” at an individual, organizational, and societal level. We seek to more effectively lead as an anti-racist, multi-cultural organization.

Program Philosophy

The YMCA of Delaware provides young people an opportunity to develop character through the pursuit of excellence in competitive swimming.

- We embrace the YMCA core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.
- We believe every swimmer should grow and thrive both in and out of the water as a positive contributor for the success and well-being of their community and fellow teammates.
- We are committed to developing swimmers in three domains: physical, mental, and emotional.
- We expect that individuals will develop academically and athletically to reach their potential and at their own rate of growth.
- We will support and encourage our athletes’ academic achievement.
- We encourage each athlete to become the best swimmer they can be and participate in the highest-level meet for which they qualify. We know that all individuals develop at their own rate, both mentally and physically.

Program Fees

- Swim team registration fees cover program practices for the duration of the promoted season as well as a swimmer cap and swimmer t-shirt.
 - Program Fees do not include Swim Meet Entry Fees, USA Swimming Membership, YMCA Membership, or additional offerings announced once the season begins (unless referenced otherwise in communication).
 - Payment for the first month of practice is due at the time of registration. Monthly billing is scheduled for the first of each month. Promotional flyers and the program’s website will provide length of payment based on the program schedule.
 - Household accounts that accumulate late payments may result in the dismissal of the child(ren) from the program. Anyone who is disenrolled from the program for any reason, re-enrollment will be based on availability and is not guaranteed. The YMCA does not offer payment agreements for past due balances.
- **SWIM MEET FEES:** Fees for registered swimmers will be collected through your YMCA Account swimmers during the week leading up to the scheduled swim meet.
- **CANCELLATION POLICY:** In order to cancel from a YMCA of Delaware Swim Team and not be charged addition monthly fees, **Western, Brandywine, Sussex** families must contact the Swim Team Registrar at SwimTeam@ymcade.org and Dover and Bear Business office **by the 15th of the current month** to ensure timely cancellation of the **following monthly fee**. A request to cancel from the program and membership must be referenced in the communication. Any fees already collected will not be refunded.

- **HOLD POLICY:** If a participant needs to step away from the program for medical purposes, the family must put in writing to the Head Coach and Swim Team Registrar the reason and duration of time the swimmer will step away. The situation will be reviewed by a committee and a decision will be shared with the family as to whether a place on the team can be held.

YMCA Membership

All swimmers must be current YMCA of Delaware members. Your child or family must continue to maintain a YMCA membership to be eligible to swim in league dual meets as well as regional & national level competitions.

Financial Assistance (Open Doors)

Our Y membership and programs are designed to be readily available to the public. Our financial assistance policy enables us to assist individuals who would like to participate but cannot afford the entire fee. Please visit the YMCA on the web at www.ymcade.org for more info.

Equal Opportunity Provider

The YMCA is an equal opportunity provider. Program enrollment is accepted without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, age, sex, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, or other protected class. We celebrate diversity and understand our children benefit through an enriched and diverse learning environment.

Group Assignment and Group Progression

Swimmers are assigned to practice groups based on age, ability, and level of development to provide them the best opportunity for personal and athletic growth. Coaches use the same criteria when considering the best time to progress a swimmer from one group to the next. Group size is also taken into consideration to ensure high quality coaching and safety during practices.

Things to remember regarding group assignments and moves:

- Group assignments and moves are decisions made by the coaching staff.
- Each child develops at a different rate.
- A child's group placement is selected because the coaches have determined that it is the best place for them to progress and improve based on their current stage of development. It is not a determination of the long-term success of your child.
- Comparing your child to others on your team or another is not constructive, productive, or healthy for you or your child.
- YMCA of Delaware staff makes group assignments and group moves based on what is best for the swimmer, what is best for the group, and what is best for the team.

Some factors associated with group movement:

- Paramount in the consideration of a move is the swimmer's age, physical and cognitive maturation to handle the group, and the commitment required to be in the group. In addition, it is important to consider the appropriate development of an athlete versus what they may be capable of (it is not about what they CAN handle but where they SHOULD be to thrive and develop).
- Consistency in attendance, work ethic, attitude, training ability, and performance, as well as actual age, physical maturation, and cognitive capacity are all factors considered in determining level placement. Considerations also include:
- Setting them up for long-term success versus momentary success. Not being fully prepared for a group can be more detrimental to their future success than being in a group for which they are overqualified.
- Being placed in a group that may not fully match their age or ability can also be dangerous both physically and mentally.
- Once an athlete is placed in a different group, it is with the desire that the decision not need to be reversed.

If changes appear beneficial for an athlete once the season begins, the coaching staff will evaluate what changes are best and consult with the Head Coach. Our coaching staff will then connect with a swimmer's family to ensure the best recommendation is brought forward for the success and happiness of the athlete. Although group changes are a decision made by the coaching staff, coaches will communicate with parents prior to initiating the move so that parents can prepare for schedule and fee adjustments and address any concerns they may have.

Rules and Responsibilities - Swimmers

YMCA of Delaware swimmers strive to be positive team members in and out of the pool. Swimmers should always remember that they represent the YMCA, the YMCA of Delaware, their team, themselves, and their family. Their words and actions reflect not only on themselves but also on their teammates, parents, coaches, and the YMCA.

Swimmer, Coach, and Parent

The relationship between swimmer, coach, and parent is an important aspect of swimming. We strive for a mutually supportive partnership, but sometimes it can become strained and, ultimately, harmful to a swimmer's experience in the sport. Regular and open communication is necessary to avoid misunderstandings. Please communicate directly to your individual coach or Head Coach regarding any issues and follow the chain of command.

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 triad should be the maintenance of an environment most conducive to the development of the swimmer - both as an athlete and as a person.

Practice Philosophy

Swimming is a sport that requires a consistent training commitment for the swimmer to improve. The more consistent you are with practice attendance, the faster you will improve.

Our practices follow the guidelines recommended by USA Swimming, our country's foremost authority on the sport. These guidelines have been established so the programs can develop their athletes in a way that will enable each swimmer to reach his or her potential with less risk of physical injury or "burn-out". Our workouts adhere to these guidelines with regards to length, composition, intensity, and frequency of practice. These are the same basic guidelines used by the most successful swimming programs in USA Swimming.

Practice Conduct

All team members are expected to be on time and to remain until the end of practice. If there is an exception to this, we ask that there is communication with the coach before practice begins. In addition, the following are important practice routines to understand:

- Important information and coaching instruction is often given to the swimmers at the beginning of practice. All team members should be on the pool deck or dry-land area ten minutes before practice starts.
- Practices begin with a warm-up period (or dry land) which helps prevent injury and increases strength and flexibility.

Observing Practice

Across the YMCA of Delaware, parents/guardians are welcome to observe practice and visit often, however, please respect distance from the coaches and team so that program quality is never compromised or interrupted. Coaches have a responsibility to inspire, motivate, and train athletes, not the parents. We ask that, when observing practice, you do so in a respectable fashion while connecting with other families and strengthening relationships that unite the team and organization.

Here are some important guidelines to keep in mind when observing a practice:

- Young swimmers want their parents' approval. If they know you are watching practice, it is natural for some of their attention to be directed toward you. However, for the swimmers to learn as much as possible, it is imperative that the coaches have your child's undivided attention. We ask that you do not communicate with your child during practice as this will compete with the coach for his/her attention.

- We insist that parents do not interrupt the coaches on deck while they are coaching. If you need to communicate with a coach, please do so before or after practice if they are not coaching another group or via email, phone, or meeting.
- Our coaches spend a considerable amount of time planning weekly training sessions for each of their practice groups. Each training set or instructional drill has a purpose and one practice and/or practice set often builds upon another throughout the week. If swimmers have not attended all practice sessions, they may not understand the purpose of what they are doing on any given day.
- Please do not coach your child based on what you see (or think you do not see) him/her do. Many times, when teaching stroke skills, the coaches ask our swimmers to do things that may not look correct (or may actually be illegal according to the rules), but these practices have an important purpose in teaching skills (i.e. swimming one-arm fly or breaststroke with a flutter kick).

Medical and Emergency Information

The safety and well-being of our athletes and families is our top priority. There may be valuable information which YMCA staff members need to know in case of an emergency. The disclosure of any medical information is voluntary. If a family elects to share personal information, we ask that the information is stored in the swimmer's profile within our Team Unify database.

Connecting with family in case of emergency is only possible when accurate records are listed by families. It is the family's responsibility to ensure emergency contact information is up to date in their YMCA Account (Salesforce) and their Swim Team Account (Team Unify). Any family member who has questions on how to update this information should touch base with our Membership Team (Salesforce Update) or Head Coach (Team Unify).

Sharing of Concerns

In a partnership with parents, the YMCA is committed to the well-being of each child in our care. Our policies and procedures reflect that commitment. Many problems are due to simple misunderstandings or miscommunication and can be easily resolved. 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 individual whom this involves. If a team member or parent has a grievance concerning any aspect of the program, they should go directly to the source. If we do not know there is a problem, we cannot resolve it.

The YMCA of Delaware has selected Ethics Point to provide parents with simple, risk-free ways to anonymously and confidentially report activities that may involve criminal conduct or violations of the YMCA of Delaware Code of Conduct. All reports submitted through Ethics Point will be handled promptly and discreetly with the objective of correcting the situation being reported. A link to the Ethics Point

reporting site can be found on the YMCA of Delaware's website, www.ymcade.org. No retaliatory action will be taken against anyone for reporting or inquiring in good faith about potential breaches of the YMCA of Delaware policies or for seeking guidance on how to handle suspected breaches.

Chain of Command - Who to Contact When

- An issue that is group-specific or swimmer-specific: Practice Group Coach
- An issue that is with the group coach or swimmer-specific issue that did not get resolved by the group coach: Head Coach
- Financial, or administrative concerns: Swim Team Registrar – Brandywine, Western and Sussex & Director of Aquatics Operations – Dover and Bear
- Overall Swim Team – Director, Aquatics Operations

Guidelines & Policies

It is the goal of our YMCA to provide a healthy, safe, and secure environment for all participants. The YMCA teaches the core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. Children who attend the program are expected to follow all policies and guidelines as outlined by the YMCA of Delaware, Y-USA, USA Swimming, or any governing body which the organization follows while interacting appropriately in any group setting or online platform/community. The YMCA reserves the right to terminate enrollment at any time.

Behavior Guidelines

- People are responsible for their own actions.
- We respect each other and the environment.
- Honesty will be the basis for all relationships and interactions.
- We will care for ourselves and those around us.

When a child does not follow the behavior guidelines, we will take the following steps:

1. Staff will redirect the child to more appropriate behavior.
2. The child will be reminded of the behavior guidelines and program rules, and a discussion will take place.
3. If the behavior persists, a parent will be notified of the problem.
4. The staff will document the situation. This written documentation will include what the behavior problem is, what provoked the problem, and the corrective action taken.
5. Staff may schedule a conference with the parent to determine the appropriate action to be taken.
6. Staff may schedule a progress check or a follow-up conference.
7. If the problem continues, staff will schedule a conference that includes the parent, child, Coach and/or Head Coach and Director of Aquatic Operations. The Head Coach or Director of Aquatic Operations will have all documentation and the notes from the previous conferences for review. If subsequent conferences must be scheduled, a counselor may also be present.

8. If a child's behavior at any time threatens the immediate safety of that child, other children, or staff, the parent may be notified and expected to pick up the child immediately.
9. If a problem persists and a child continues to disrupt the program, the YMCA reserves the right to suspend the child from the program. Expulsion from the program will be considered in extreme situations.

The following behaviors are not acceptable and may result in the immediate suspension of a child:

- Endangering the health and safety of children and/or staff, members, and volunteers
- Stealing or damaging YMCA or personal property
- Leaving the program without permission
- Continuing to disrupt the program
- Refusing to follow the behavior guidelines or program rules
- Using profanity, vulgarity, or obscenity
- Acting in a lewd manner
- Conduct that is considered detrimental to the reputation of the organization and team

If any of these behaviors persist, staff may suspend the child a second time before expulsion. Immediate expulsion may occur if a child is in possession of and/or using tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs, firecrackers, weapons, or explosives.

Dismissal from the Program

While we work hard to ensure that each child in our program is successful, we reserve the right to disenroll any child at any time for any reason. Some of the reasons for involuntary dismissal might include:

Failure to adapt - Most children adapt to a new program within a few weeks. If a child fails to adapt to our program, even though an effort has been made by parents and staff to integrate him/her into the program, the child may be disenrolled so that his or her parents can find an alternative program for their child.

Aggressive/disruptive behavior - If a child's behavior is aggressive, hurtful to others, or disruptive to the program, the child may be disenrolled at the discretion of the program leader.

Policy Violations - YMCA policies are in place to ensure the safety and well-being of our members, employees, volunteers, and facilities. Individuals can be dismissed from programs should a policy violation occur.

Failure to pay tuition - Children shall be dismissed from the program should tuition not be paid per program policies. Please refer to specific information on our payment procedures.

Abusive/disruptive behavior by parents – We reserve the right to immediately disenroll any child whose parent behaves in a manner that violates YMCA policies or procedures, or is destructive, disruptive, abusive, or malicious through their statements or actions toward the staff, their own child, or other parents/children anywhere across our organization.

Excessive late pick-ups – All children must be picked up immediately following the conclusion of the program. Repeated late pick-ups will result in your child's dismissal from the program.

Irreconcilable differences – The YMCA strives to partner with all parents to provide the highest quality service for children. If, at any time, mutually agreed upon expectations cannot be met, we reserve the right to disenroll the child to allow the parents to find an environment that better meets the needs of their child.

Communication

Communication is vital to any organization, and it must be done with respect.

Coaches will make every effort to convey information to swimmers and parents. They will make regular use of the Team Unify page for your swim team; please check this regularly. Likewise, team members and their parents need to communicate with coaches to avoid misunderstandings and to inform them of things that may affect a swimmer's training and competition.

- Website –Team Unify pages - The website contains meet information, practice schedules, and team calendar. Please be sure to check the website regularly.
- Email distribution lists – (Team Unify). This is the primary way information is communicated and distributed. In addition, reminders and last-minute information is sent to families via email. Please be sure we have your email address on file.
- It is the Parents responsibility to keep an updated Team Unify account and checking it regularly for changes that may need to be made to phone numbers, emails, addresses, or swimmer information.

Coaches will communicate with you regarding any **arising issues or injuries** at practice or meets that may need immediate reconciling.

Practice Cancellations and Inclement Weather

Practices may be cancelled occasionally for various reasons. Examples include inclement weather, pool closures, etc. Many times, we do not know about these cancellations until the last minute. We will communicate these changes by email and our team feed. If something occurs at the facility that forces practice to be cancelled at the last minute and swimmers have already been dropped off for practice, they will be instructed to call their parents to be picked up early. In such cases, a coach or YMCA employee will always remain at the practice site until all swimmers have been picked up.

Practice continues when it is raining. If there is thunder and lightning in the area, practice could be suspended, but not necessarily cancelled. (Lifeguards determine when we can and when we can't swim due to weather once practice starts.) If parents are experiencing hazardous conditions (snow, ice, thunderstorm) while their children are at practice, they should come to the pool in case practice ends early. During these times, there may be occasions where the YMCA of Delaware is conducting practice, but the parent may not feel safe to bring their swimmer. In these instances, you have full support and understanding from the YMCA of Delaware, and you are always encouraged to use your judgement in all matters of safety.

Swim Meets

The YMCA of Delaware has competitive swim teams with the expectation that our athletes will gain the experience of competition. 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 a "test" of how well you are practicing. Competition brings about several opportunities for personal growth through both success and failure, adversity and challenges, and responsibility. Meets will emphasize race strategies and the long-term development for all swimmers by the coaches. The swimmers will be prepared to peak in their performance during the championship season. It is important for all to focus on the season-long journey of improvement and the process, not the outcome of any given race.

Fees for all swim meets are billed separately and communication is provided as meets are available and of interest to attend by the Head Coach of the program.

Age Group Designations (Swim Meets)

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 (Generally, 14 and under are considered age group swimmers and 15 and over Senior swimmers). YMCA age groups are the same except the YMCA includes an 8 & under age group. 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. It is the policy of the YMCA of Delaware that athletes will compete in the "age

designation" that matches their actual age. Twelve and under athlete will not compete in "open" events unless there are extenuating circumstances (i.e., the event is not offered in their age designation, a relay, etc.).

For USA Swimming meets, the swimmer's age group is determined by the swimmer's age the first day of the meet. For inter-association or closed YMCA meets, the swimmer's age group is determined by the swimmer's age on 12/1 of that calendar year.

USA Swimming (www.usaswimming.org) is the National Governing Body (NGB) for amateur competitive swimming. USA swimming 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 (LSC), which administer USA Swimming activities in smaller geographical areas. **USA Swimming memberships are optional for all athletes. However, Head Coaches may request specific swimmers to always retain an active membership. Membership fees are paid to the YMCA of Delaware and the team will pay USA Swimming on your behalf, however, transfer fees that may be required when coming from another USA club will be the responsibility of the family.**

Time Standards

USA Swimming establishes national motivational standards by which its meets are classified (B, BB, A, AA, AAA, AAAA). 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. Many YMCA meets are designated as "open" meaning that all YMCA swimmers may compete, regardless of times. There are separate qualifying times for YMCA Districts, YMCA Nationals, and other meets throughout the short and long course seasons.

Dual Representation

"Dual Representation" is NOT allowed by YMCA swimming and diving rules.

- An athlete has dual representation when representing more than one organization (team) during the current season.
- Exceptions to this rule: High school swimmers are permitted to swim for their high school teams during the high school season. Swimmers are permitted to swim for their Summer Recreational Team.

Swim Meet – General Information

Meet schedules are posted on the YMCA of Delaware swim team website, communicated by coaches, and are subject to change. The coaching staff selects several meets each season to attend as a team or divide our team regionally to participate. In addition, there are meets that are age and ability restrictive.

- Information for interested swimmers will be posted online. Deadlines for meet commitments and any additional payments will be adhered to. Payments for travel trips will be paid prior to the specific meet.
- Be early! Every swimmer should arrive at a meet at least 15 minutes before the scheduled warm-up time and must say goodbye to their coach prior to leaving a meet (To ensure swimmers don't accidentally leave before an event or relay).
- Be sure to write down the warm-up times, start times, directions, and events so that you arrive at the meet on time and properly prepared.
- Relays will be determined by the coaching staff. All participating swimmers are expected to swim relays when needed. Relays are extremely important for our culture and are a privilege for the swimmers. Relays become very important to the athletes throughout their swimming journey. Anyone not available to swim relays should indicate this in the "optional comments" section when you sign up.
- The coaches have final say in which events a swimmer will swim in meets. They may have communication with the parents or swimmers on competition events but, much like practice, the coach's goal is the development of the whole swimmer. If you have questions or concerns about an event, we encourage you to communicate with your Head Coach.
- It is the policy of our program to only enter meets selected by the coaching staff. If a swimmer wants to attend any other meet, he/she must discuss it with their coach. If all parties agree, the Head Coach and Director of Aquatic Operations will provide the necessary directive.

Parent Volunteer Opportunities – Swim Meets

YMCA of Delaware Swim Teams may host swim meets throughout the year. Our organization has a reputation for the quality of hosted meets and that is because of our volunteers that make it all happen. We need all hands-on deck for the continued success of these meets, and it is our desire to maintain the amazing culture of volunteerism that our organization is well known for.

All volunteers must meet current YMCA of Delaware vetting requirements which are updated annually and provided separately across the organization. Questions can be directed to your local Director of Aquatic Operations.

Volunteer Opportunities include:

- **Timers** – Time each heat in a specific lane using stopwatches that are provided by the host team. This job is very easy and keeps you right next to the action. No prior experience is necessary.

- **Officials*** – These include the starter, referee, and stroke and turn judges. They conduct the meet and address rule infractions. Training is necessary (through USA and/or YMCA, depending on the meet). There is always a demand for these volunteers. Training is technical but not lengthy or difficult. The YMCA of Delaware strives to offer at least one training per year and will pay for you to get your certification and maintain your registration each year.

***Parents are needed to become certified officials. If you are interested in becoming a certified official, please contact your Head Coach.**

- **Runners** – After each heat, this person takes cards from timers to the computer operator. No prior experience necessary.
- **Set-Up and Clean-Up** – Before a meet can begin and after a meet ends, these volunteers help set up the pool/deck for the meet and return the pool/deck to its normal condition after the meet.

Togetherhood & Swim Team

Each season YMCA of Delaware Swim Teams look for opportunities to strengthen community as a team. As opportunities come forward, our Head Coach & Director of Operations will identify volunteer opportunities in the community for the team to participate. When we make a difference for others, we strengthen community! Benefits of Togetherhood include:

- **Good for individuals** | Volunteering improves people's well-being, helps them forge strong relationships, and gives them an outlet to explore their passions and discover their purpose. *Research shows that volunteers experience wellness benefits including lower depression, improved mood and self-esteem, less stress, better heart health and lower mortality rates.*
- **Good for the community** | Togetherhood leverages the Y's powerful network and cause-driven mission to unlock people's potential to improve lives and contribute to a stronger and more connected society. *A culture of volunteerism can yield social benefits that extend beyond individual projects, including lower unemployment, greater income equality, and youth that are more likely to stay in school and avoid risky behaviors.*
- **Good for the Y** | Through Togetherhood, the Y is mobilizing a movement of highly engaged members who are using their creativity, passion, and hard work to transform communities. In the process, we're demonstrating to potential donors and partners that we're more than just a gym and swim—we're a charity dedicated to strengthening community. *Volunteers donate ten times more money than people who don't volunteer and two out of three volunteers give their money where they give their time. Plus, when members make friends at the Y, they are more likely to stay!*

YMCA of Delaware

Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy

PROTECTION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The YMCA of Delaware Swim Team experience is designed to create life changing experiences through a safe, fun, and competitive environment, where we build honest, meaningful, and transparent relationships.

We have a zero-tolerance policy for abuse. The YMCA of Delaware and all swim teams within the organization abide by the [USA Swimming Safe Sport](#) requirements as well as the [Safe Sport Act](#) which was passed in 2018. Both Safe Sport and the Safe Sport Act protect our athletes and create an environment where each athlete feels safe and protected. YMCA of Delaware Policies and Procedures and Safe Sport requirements ensure this environment stays in place and our athletes are protected.

In April 2019, the U.S. Center for Safe Sport created the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (MAAPP) to set a baseline for acceptable safety standards that limit one-on-one interactions between adults and minor athletes. All USA-Swimming participants, coaches, and clubs are required to implement MAAPP in their programs.

YMCA of Delaware Swim Team coaches are held to high selection and screening standards before ever working with athletes. Coaches must pass National, State and Local Background Checks, the DOJ Sex Offenders Registry, participate in Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Trainings and additional education with the United States Olympic Committee SafeSport Center and YMCA of the USA. Safety and Abuse Prevention are top priorities for YMCA of Delaware Leadership & Coaching Staff. However, creating a safe environment is a collaborative effort between staff, parents, and athletes. We need your help to reinforce an appropriate culture and to ensure the safety, inclusion, and transparency outlined. Working together, we will ensure a safe culture and promote positive behaviors.

Here's what we need from you:

KNOW: Understand what's appropriate, what to look for, and how to protect our athletes and families.

SEE: Be engaged in your athletes' activities, communications, and interactions.

RESPOND: Stop inappropriate behaviors and report immediately to the State of Delaware Child Abuse Hotline (800-292-9582), your Coach and/or their Supervisor.

The following practices apply to all YMCA of Delaware Swim Team and USA Swimming members, including all YMCA of Delaware Swim Team events.

Should there be a violation of these policies, athletes will be sent home at the parent's expense and risk missing their meet and future team functions. No refunds will be issued in these instances.

SWIM TEAM ACTIVITIES

- Coaches may only meet face-to-face with athletes to discuss matters pertaining to a YMCA of Delaware sponsored program, event, or activity in a space where at least one other adult is present so that all interactions are observable and interruptible.
- When a coach touches an athlete as part of instruction, the coach should do so in open view of others and inform the athlete of what he/she is doing prior to the initial contact. Touching athletes should be minimized.
- Coaches will communicate to parents if bullying incidents occur.
- Parents are prohibited from direct communication with another athlete unless they have consent from the other child's parent/guardian.
- Coaches encourage parents to communicate frequently and often for any concerns, questions, or feedback.
- Horseplay of any form is not allowed in the locker rooms.
- Videos and pictures will not be taken at practices or meets without prior permission by the YMCA of Delaware Swim Team Coaches/Leadership.
- Coaches will never massage (with hands or object) an athlete for any purpose.
- Coaches will never touch an athlete in an area covered by the bathing suit.
- Encouraged physical interactions would include high fives, fist bumps, side-to-side hugs, and handshakes.
- Coaches will not invite or have an athlete(s) to their home.
- Athletes should not sit on the lap of or otherwise inappropriately touch any YMCA of Delaware team member or coach.
- Coaches will not date or have a personal or sexual relationship with YMCA of Delaware athletes or program participants.

CONDUCT FOR TEAM TRAVEL

- Athletes & Coaches cannot travel one-on-one, regardless of age or other circumstance. This includes travel trips, rides to and from practice, or any other travel.
- All interactions between athlete and coach should be **observable** and **interruptible**.
- When entering athletes' rooms on travel trips, for purpose of curfew and safety checks- there will be at least two coaches/chaperones.
- If athletes are sharing a room with other athletes, they will be of the same gender and similar age.
- There will be no male athletes in female athletes' rooms and no female athletes in male athletes' rooms.
- Athletes are not permitted in coaches' rooms.
- Swimmers are to always remain with the team during the trip. Swimmers are not to leave the competition venue, the hotel, restaurant, or any other place at which the team has gathered without the

permission/knowledge of the coach and/or chaperone.

ELECTRONIC AND SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATION

The YMCA of Delaware Swim Team recognizes the prevalence of electronic communication and social media in today's world and that many of our swimmers use these means as their primary method of communication. While our organization acknowledges the value of these methods of communication, we also realize that there are associated risks that must be considered when adults (coaches/volunteers) use these methods to communicate with minors (athletes). Additionally, athletes need to adhere to a set of standards when communicating with one another via electronic communication and social media.

CONDUCT FOR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

All communication between a coach /other YMCA of Delaware adult and an athlete must be professional and solely for the purpose of communicating about YMCA of Delaware Swim Team activities. The content and intent of all electronic communications must adhere to the [USA Swimming Code of Conduct](#) regarding Athlete Protection.

All communication between an athlete and coach or athlete and their peers should be **T**ransparent, **A**ccessible and **P**rofessional.

Transparent: *Your communication should not only be clear and direct, but also free of hidden meanings, innuendo, and expectations.*

Accessible: *All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should be considered a matter of record and part of the YMCA of Delaware Swim Team records. Whenever possible, include another coach or parent in the communication so there is no question regarding accessibility or content. The YMCA of Delaware Swim Team will utilize a group messaging service whenever possible.*

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

SOCIAL MEDIA (FACEBOOK, SNAPCHAT, INSTAGRAM, TIC TOC, TWITTER, ETC.)

- Coaches are not permitted to have any athlete member of the YMCA of Delaware Swim Team join their personal social media accounts as a "friend."
- A coach should not "friend" request or accept any "friend" request from an athlete. In addition, the coach should remind the athlete that this is not permitted. Athletes should report (to a trusted Coach, YMCA of Delaware Leader or family member) if they receive a "friend" request from a coach.
- Coaches and athletes are not permitted to "private message" each other through any social media accounts.

- The YMCA of Delaware Swim Team has an official Facebook/Twitter/Instagram page that athletes and their parents can “friend” for information and updates on team-related matters.

OTHER COMMUNICATION PRACTICES

- Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate; a parent or other YMCA of Delaware coach should be included.
- Coaches may communicate electronically with an individual athlete to convey practice/program information; communication should include a second adult (preferably another YMCA of Delaware coach or parent).
- Vulgar, bullying or sexualized communication will not be tolerated between YMCA of Delaware Swim Team athletes, coaches or parents via text, email, or social media.
- Athletes may not text, email, post, tweet, or otherwise communicate with derogatory content regarding the team, a coach, or a teammate. This includes vulgar, bullying or sexualized language, photos or videos).
- Athletes, parents, and staff will discuss proper social media usage at the beginning of each season.
- No one should be taking photos/videos while behind blocks or in the locker rooms at any time.
- No one should post personal information of any kind about another member of the team without prior consent.

Violation of these policies could result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the YMCA of Delaware Swim Team & Membership Privileges.

LOCKER ROOMS AND CHANGING AREAS

- Athletes and coaches must use designated locker rooms or changing areas when changing into or out of a swimsuit. Changing, in whole or in part, is prohibited on the pool deck.
- YMCA of Delaware staff will randomly and regularly monitor the use of locker rooms and changing areas. This monitoring will be conducted through:
 - Sweeps of the locker rooms before athletes arrive
 - Regular intermittent staff supervision during periods of use
 - Leaving doors open when adequate privacy is still possible
 - Making occasional sweeps of the locker rooms with women checking on female locker rooms and men checking on male locker rooms

YMCA of Delaware

PHOTO, VIDEO & AUDIO RELEASE

Consent & License

For my participation in activities to be conducted by YMCA of Delaware, and collaborating third parties, I consent, now and for all time, to the making, reproduction, editing, broadcasting, or rebroadcasting of:

- Video film or footage of me
- Soundtrack recordings of me
- Photo reproductions of me
- Any narrative account of my experience

My consent includes a perpetual license to the Y and collaborating third parties for the use of the above materials for publication, display, sale or exhibition in promotions, advertising, education, and commercial uses. Use includes reproductions in any form and media currently existing or later conceived, adaptations and/or revisions, throughout the world in perpetuity.

I understand and agree there may be no additional compensation for this license, and I will not make any claim for payment of any kind from the Y or collaborating third parties. I may, or may not be, identified in such licensed uses; however, my name will not be used to endorse any products or services.

Ownership, Confidentiality, and Shared Use.

With respect to any of the above uses, I further agree:

- All works shall belong to YMCA of Delaware.
- The Y has no duty of confidentiality regarding any licensed uses.
- YMCA of Delaware shall exclusively own all known or later existing rights to the uses throughout the world.
- The Y and collaborating third parties may use any video film, footage, soundtrack recordings and photo reproductions of me and/or my narrative account for any purpose without additional compensation to me.

Release from Liability

I agree that my consent is irrevocable. I hereby release and discharge The Y and collaborating third parties, from any and all claims, actions, lawsuits or demands of any kind arising out of my consent, license grants, uses, or the shared uses of any works or materials referenced herein.