



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

SWIM TEAM HANDBOOK

County YMCA

INTRODUCTION

This handbook is designed for County Y Blue Dolphins Swim Team families as a reference for team philosophy, structure, policy, and helpful information. It is divided into sections and has an appendix for easy reference. Most of the information in this handbook will be valid year after year. Current schedules, rosters, time standards, and other updates will be posted on the website, and families will be notified on the REMIND App. While this handbook contains a large amount of information, there will inevitably be questions not answered within its pages. Those questions and policies are answered and developed at the discretion of the coaching staff and Executive Director. Issues outside the scope of this handbook will be resolved at the discretion of the YMCA. Please contact one of the coaches or the Executive Director immediately if you have a question concerning the swim team program.

CONTACT INFORMATION

County YMCA

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WELCOME

Welcome to the County Y Blue Dolphins Swim Team. The goal of the swim team, like all Y programs, is to promote youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Competitive swimming is the vehicle through which participants learn life lessons that will impact them forever.

Some of these include:

- Grow personally through the building of self-esteem and self-reliance.
- Clarify values and develop moral and ethical behaviors based on the Y's founding principles.
- Improve personal and family relationships by learning to care, communicate and cooperate with family and friends.
- Appreciate diversity and to respect people of different ages, abilities, incomes, races, religions, cultures and beliefs.
- Become better leaders and supporters through the give-and-take experiences of working toward a common good.
- Develop specific skills and acquire new knowledge and ways to grow in spirit, mind and body.
- And most importantly, Have Fun and enjoy life!

We focus on the values that will enable each participant to build strong character, and we take pride in the leaders and role models who graduate from the program. Throughout the program, you will find constant examples of these traits in action from our coaches, swimmers and parents.

The mission of the YMCA of Greater Erie is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all. The Y's involvement in sports has been one means of teaching Christian ideals, values and behaviors. Sports in the Y have never been an end goal, but rather a vehicle for achieving a much more global purpose: values education. Values education is an integral part of the National YMCA Program. The values of fair play are strongly emphasized along with respect for oneself, for the opponent, and for the official game rules. All these fair-play values contribute to an attitude towards sports which keeps winning in perspective, that is, only one goal among other important goals. We believe that children can benefit greatly from participating in competitive swimming. In swimming they learn to practice healthy lifestyles...spiritually, mentally and physically.

While there will be some experiences that are tougher than others, the coaches and parents comprise an important team in teaching the valuable lessons of a young person's life. We are excited that you are a part of our Y program and look forward to your family's involvement throughout the year.

EVERYONE SWIMS, EVERYONE WINS!

ABOUT THE YMCA MOVEMENT

The YMCA of the USA is a national organization, founded in 1851 (the YMCA movement began in London in 1844 and quickly spread to North America), which has evolved to promote the 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 Y has long valued the importance of fitness activities in the development of young people. All Y programs, including competitive swimming, incorporate values education and character development through the promotion of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility.

Today, the Y engages more than 10,000 neighborhoods across the U.S. As the nation’s leading nonprofit committed to helping people and communities to learn, grow and thrive, our contributions are both far-reaching and intimate—from influencing our nation’s culture during times of profound social change to the individual support we provide an adult learning to read.

ABOUT THE YMCA OF GREATER ERIE

The YMCA of Greater Erie celebrates 165 years of service, not just to the Erie community but with outreach and influence throughout the region of Northwest Pennsylvania.

The YMCA of Greater Erie is a non-profit organization whose cause is to strengthen community through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Our cause is guided by our mission to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all. Serving over 45,000 people annually, the YMCA of Greater Erie includes 5 membership branches, 21 early care and school-age enrichment program centers and YMCA Camp Sherwin, an outdoor camping and recreation facility. We extend our reach through collaborative partnerships with the City of Erie to administer their summer recreation program and the Erie Housing Authority offering afterschool and summer educational and recreational programs. We reach thousands of youth through these programs and further address community need by the Summer Foods Program, offering free meals to children during the summer months.

Numerous community programs include Happy Feet, a movement class for differently abled people; Adaptive Swimming Lessons, a program for those in the autism spectrum; ACT, an exercise-based cancer

recovery program; and Healthy Kids Day, a day geared towards healthy living. We also proudly support the community through an active volunteer program and collections of items for donation to area schools and nonprofits.

Combined with reduced fees for childcare, the Y provided over \$856,000 in program and membership assistance. The County YMCA is a branch of the YMCA of Greater Erie.

TEAM STRUCTURE

The County Y Swim Team is set up in groups based on age and ability. Each swimmer's age is determined as:

Winter Season: Swimmer's age is determined as of Dec. 1. If the swimmer turns 9 during the Winter Season on Dec. 2, they will continue to swim in the 8 & under group the entire Y season.

Summer Season: Swimmer's age is determined as of June 1. If the swimmer turns 9 on June 2, they will continue to swim in the 8 & under group the entire Y season.

The practice groups are as follows: (a swimmer may move up to help promote their growth and excel or be placed down a level to avoid feelings of frustration or overwhelmed in their current group).

1. **Novice** - Generally 8 & under
2. **Developmental** - New 13 & under swimmers
3. **Age Group** - Experienced 9 -15 Developing swimmers
4. **Prep Senior** - Excelled in Age Group and preparing for Senior Group **Age Group swimmers may be invited to advance to the Senior group for a practice or permanently upon invitation by the Head Coach.*
5. **Senior** - 12 & older upper-level experienced swimmers aspiring to excel in the highest levels of swimming.

Novice

Minimum Expectations: Complete 25 yards (1 length of pool) freestyle and backstroke without stopping or receiving assistance. This is the introductory level of competitive swimming for swimmers 8 & under. This group teaches the basics of competitive swimming while having fun. This group builds upon the skills learned in Y swim lessons and to learn the long axis strokes, Freestyle and Backstroke as well as introducing the swimmers to Breaststroke and Butterfly. Additionally, the swimmers are taught how competitive swim meets are run so that they know what to expect when they enter their first meet and participate in meets during the season.

Attendance: *Recommended 2 practices per week*

Developmental

Minimum Expectations: Complete 50 yards of freestyle and backstroke with basics of breaststroke and butterfly established. The focus is on improving all four competitive strokes as well as increased yardage to practices. Work on establishing start and turn techniques, race management and strategy is introduced to begin to advance as an overall swimmer.

Attendance: Recommended 2 practices per week

Age Group

Minimum Expectations: Complete 50 yards of freestyle, backstroke, butterfly and breaststroke. Focus on stroke development and technique on the four competitive strokes, as well as start and turn technique improvement continues as part of practice. Additionally, athletes spend an average of about 1/2 of practices working on building training volume to increase yardage. Competitive team aspect is introduced and goals to encourage growth through the season.

Attendance: Recommended 3 days per week, including dry land workouts

Prep Senior

Have excelled in the criteria of the Age Group level and are preparing to become a Senior level swimmer. Intense Goal setting and stroke work to improve competitive performance.

Attendance: Recommended 4 days' commitment per week, including dry land and circuit training

Senior

Minimum Expectations: Complete 500 yards freestyle, 200 yards individual medley and repeat 100s of each stroke. Athletes entering this group must display a desire to begin training on a more committed basis. Senior Group is for swimmers who wish to make a stronger commitment to the team and to competitive swimming. Additionally, training focus becomes more individualized to the types of events the swimmers are most successful in for end of season competitions. Attendance, attitude, team support and work ethic expectations are elevated, and more is expected of the swimmer. Dry land training and structured goal setting are introduced and expected of the swimmer to advance to their full potential. Teamwork, volunteerism and a positive attitude are essential for this level. Swimmers compete in a full slate of competitive events and place greater emphasis on team development. Swimmers aspiring to excel in the highest levels of swimming will benefit from the foundations developed at this level.

Attendance: Recommended 5 days' commitment per week, including dry land and circuit training

SEASONS

The YMCA **Winter League Season** generally runs from early October through February with a mandatory league Championship meet at the end of February. Swimmers also have the opportunity to advance to the YMCA District, State and National meets.

The **Summer Season** generally runs from early June to late July with an end of season mandatory Summer Championship meet held in late July.

YMCA Winter League Season

The County Blue Dolphin Swim Team is affiliated with the Pennsylvania YMCA Northwestern Section of the Western Districts. The team competes in dual meets with teams from the YMCAs in Titusville, Oil City, Northeast, Corry, Franklin, Warren, Jamestown, and Bradford. Our team does travel to all these areas on Saturdays for swim meets as we are unable to use our pool for meets.

The Winter League meet season generally runs from early October through the end of February, ending with our **League Championship meet** for the whole team. This meet is **MANDATORY** for all County YMCA swimmers where each swimmer has the opportunity to swim in at least 2 individual events plus a relay (if a member of a relay team). To qualify for this event, swimmers **MUST** represent their YMCA in a minimum of 4 separate league meets during the season. If a League swimmer is a member of their HS Varsity swim team, they only have to represent their YMCA in 3 separate league meets to be eligible for the championship meet held at Spire Institute in Geneva, OH. The entire team will swim to represent the team as a whole and earn points for a place.

Swimmers who achieve a **District meet**-qualifying time may continue to practice and prepare for the **PA Western District Swim meet**, held in mid-March at Spire Institute in Geneva, OH.

The six (6) fastest swimmers from each District, for each event, shall be eligible for their event in the **PA YMCA State Championship Meet**, held at West Virginia University.

Swimmers who achieve a National meet qualifying time may continue to practice and prepare for the **YMCA National Swim Meet**, held at the beginning of April. This meet is usually held in Greensboro, NC.

National YMCA League competitive Committee Age Groups:

Novice: 6-8 years of age

Cadet: 9 & 10 years of age

Prep: 11 & 12 years of age

Junior: 13 & 14 years of age

Senior: 15- 19 years of age (21 years if no formal collegiate swim team participation)

Winter League Meets

If a swimmer is attending a dual swim meet they must be registered. Lineups for each swim meet are created approximately a full week in advance. If your swimmer is not registered to attend the meet, they will not be entered in events for the meet lineup. *Scratches for relay events will take place during the meet warmups. If your swimmer is not on time for the meet they will be scratched from the relay entry. If

you selected YES but your plans have changed, it is important to communicate the change to the Head Coach as soon as possible.

Winter League Practices

Practice is offered M-Th and held at the PennWestUniversity McComb fieldhouse and satellite location at the Meadville MARC. Practices will usually start at 5:00pm and last until 6:30pm. Some practices will be extended earlier or later either in the water or on dry land depending on the practice group they are assigned to. Please bring your swimmer early to practice and be there early to pick them up. Late pickup is not accepted.

****Attendance at a minimum of two practices the week before a meet is mandatory to be eligible to compete in League meets through the season and Championships**** Attendance is tracked on deck through a sign in sheet, it is the swimmer's responsibility to check in before practice and arrive at least 15 minutes before practice begins to allow proper stretching with the team.

The more practice sessions your swimmer attends the more improvement you will see. High School swimmers during the high school swim season must check in with the coach weekly to coordinate meet events and discuss progress during the season. Before and after High School season they are required to attend the minimum of 2 practices per week.

All swimmers must enter and exit from the locker rooms located in the basement of McComb fieldhouse. Swimmers will not be able to enter from the pool doors during the winter league season as instructed by the facility director of Penn West.

Winter League Practice cancellations- you will be alerted via REMIND for practice cancelations or updates. If General McLane School District cancels school or has an early dismissal due to WEATHER CONDITIONS practice will be canceled for safety. On days when school is not in session, practice may take place, please reference the practice calendar. Keep in mind - weather conditions in one location may not be the same elsewhere in the area. If there is a question on weather conditions, call ahead. If parents are experiencing hazardous conditions (snow, ice, thunderstorm) while their children are at practice, please come to the pool in case practice ends early. Be on the safe side. Use your best judgment.

Practice schedule is subject to change due to times of high school meets, holidays, and the University schedule. Please pay attention to the REMIND app for updates and check with coaches for more details.

YMCA Summer League Season

Our Summer League program is affiliated with local teams in Erie County. The team competes with Girard, Lakeshore and Kahkwa Country Clubs, McDowell, Northeast, Erie, Fairview, and Harborcreek. Our team does travel during the week throughout the summer season.

The Summer League season generally runs from early June to late July and concludes with our league "championship meet" for the whole team. The meet is divided into two (2) days and takes place late in July. The two (2) days are split up by the swimmers' ages. This meet is **MANDATORY** for all County YMCA swimmers. There are no other meets following this championship meet, swimmers do not advance to districts, states or nationals. If your swimmer cannot attend the Championship meet, please put this in writing to the head coach.

Summer Swim Meets

If a swimmer will be attending a swim meet they **MUST** be checked off in the Parent Binder as a "YES" the week before (either Wednesday or Thursday practice the week before.) Lineups for each swim meet are created approximately a week in advance. If your swimmer is not listed as "YES" to attend, they will not be entered in events for the meet lineup. Scratches for relay events will take place during the meet warmups. If your swimmer is not on time for the meet they will be scratched from the relay entry and may result in the relay not having enough swimmers to swim.

Summer Season Age Group Meet Events

(swimmers birth date as of June 1st, no exceptions)

6 & under: 25 back, free

7-8: 25 fly, back, breast, free

9-10: 25 fly, back, breast, free

11-12: 50 fly, back, breast, free

13-14: 50 fly, back, breast, free

15-17: 50 fly, back, breast, free

*Free Relay is available for every age group at every meet; the Medley Relay will be available if Coaching staff agrees from both teams.

Summer League Practices

Practice is offered during the week for all age groups. Practice is held at the PennWest University McComb Field House and the MARC. Please arrive on deck and get ready 15 minutes early to the posted practice time to allow for stretching as a team and to enter the water together. Some practices may be extended either in the water or on dry land. Please be there early to pick your child up. All swimmers must enter and exit from the locker rooms located in the basement of McComb fieldhouse. They will not be able to enter from the pool doors. Practice will be in the evenings and will last approx. an hour.

Please check on the REMIND app for practice time changes and updates.

Summer Attendance

The first few weeks of summer season the fundamentals of each stroke will be taught and will be built upon the following weeks. It is recommended to attend as many practices as possible to have your child learn the fundamentals and build on them throughout the summer season. Each swimmer will advance at a different pace, but each skill will be taught during the first few weeks of practice to allow your swimmer to enjoy the summer league meets.

All swimmers **MUST** attend a minimum of 1 practice session the week before a meet to participate in any meet the following week. The more practices your swimmer attends the more improvement they will see.

Summer Practice cancellations- you will be alerted via REMIND app for practice cancelations and updates. The schedule is subject to change due to times of the university schedule, holidays, and coach availability.

PUNCTUALITY AND PRACTICE TIMES

Please be on time to all practices. Practices begin with a warmup period to prevent injury. Instructions and important information are also given to swimmers at the beginning of practice. Swimmers are to arrive up to 15 minutes prior to practice on the swim deck to stretch, check in for attendance and receive updates. Swimmers are to be picked up within 15 minutes of the end of practice. This is particularly important at Edinboro, where coaches wait in the lobby of the building until all swimmers are picked up. Older swimmers must learn to balance their academic and swimming requirements. This is an important life skill they develop through participation in the program. Sometimes academic tasks become particularly demanding, and swimmers feel unusual stress to stretch the balance between school and swimming. In this case work with the coach so that they may help the swimmer to meet the academic requirement. Coaches will facilitate getting out of practice early to study or complete homework.

*YMCA of Greater Erie swimming policy prohibits staff members from transporting program participants in their personal vehicles. Please do not ask County Y coaches to transport your child to or from practices, meets or team activities.

SCHEDULE

The up-to-date schedule will be posted on the REMIND app or website. Some updates and revisions may be necessary, especially during the holidays.

FACILITIES

The County Y Swim Team uses PennWest University and the Meadville MARC. Please be aware that we are guests at each pool and treat that pool as someone else's home.

PRACTICE EQUIPMENT

It is important to bring a suit, cap, goggles, a towel, and water bottle to practice. It is a good idea to have an extra cap, suit, and a pair of goggles - "just in case." Coaches do not carry extra items to loan swimmers for practice, and the facilities do not have extras to loan. **CLEARLY LABEL ALL ITEMS THAT ARE TAKEN TO PRACTICE AND MEETS WITH SWIMMERS' INITIALS.** If items are left behind, PennWest and the MARC have a lost and found you can look in.

WHAT TO BRING TO MEETS

Team suit, team cap, goggles, at least 2 towels, team shirt, sweats, warm-up – parka, pen and paper or sharpie (to write down times and events), shoes & socks, money (for heat sheet, healthy snacks) and snacks (if facility permits). No glass is permitted on the swim decks.

**** CLEARLY LABEL ALL ITEMS THAT ARE TAKEN TO A MEET WITH SWIMMER INITIALS****

Deck space is often limited at meets, so swimmers should pack accordingly and always keep their belongings in their bags. ****Electronics are not permitted on the pool deck.****

LEAGUE AGE GROUP DISTINCTIONS

Swimmers compete according to their age cut off depending on the season. The age groups include: 8 & Under, 9/10, 11/12, 13/14, 15-18. Some meets combine age groups, such as 8 & Under, Senior (13 & Over) or Open (any age). For most YMCA meets in our region, including dual meets, their age group is determined by their age as of Dec. 1 of the current year for short course meets.

PUNCTUALITY

Please arrive at the meet location and check in with coaches on deck to sign in at least 20 minutes before the designated warm-up time. This will permit swimmers to fully stretch and warm up before competing and enable coaches to make relay decisions before the start of competition. Directions will be included in the meet information and announcements.

SWIM MEET TEAM AREA

Swimmers sit in the designated team area on deck. This promotes team support and unity, which in turn contributes to swimming success and fun. Depending on the facility, there may or may not be a separate

spectator area for family members. When there is such an area, parents who are not volunteering to sit in the stands.

BEHAVIOR

Swim meets are an opportunity to display not only athletic ability but also team pride and sportsmanship. Parents and swimmers alike represent the County Y swim team and the YMCA of Greater Erie association. Swimmers are encouraged to cheer for their teammates and to stay until the end of the meet, meet session, or until the last County Y swimmer competes. If a swimmer must leave before the end of a meet, they are to notify one of the coaches **before** the start of the meet. Technology is not allowed on deck for any swimmer during League and Summer season meets.

CHECKING IN WITH COACHES

Swimmers talk to their coaches before and after each swim. This is an important opportunity for coaches to give final reminders and encouragement before the event, and to offer praise and constructive review afterward. The role of parents at a swim meet is to love and support their children and to set a positive example by volunteering.

RESULTS AND AWARDS

Swimmer and Team results are posted on the Team REMIND app once they are delivered to the coach, this could take several days after the meet. 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. Team trophies are given primarily at championship and district meets. All awards are given to coaches at the end of the meet and are distributed at the year-end banquet.

SNACKS

Healthy snacks and beverages (water, sports drinks) are good for swimmers to have during meets, especially during long sessions (see nutrition section for tips). Some facilities do not allow food or drink on deck so please be attentive to policies at the various pools. Swimmers show respect to the facility by picking up all trash in the team area before leaving the meet.

TEAM APPAREL

Swimmers are to wear County Y Swim Team attire, the team suit and cap are mandatory, and team t-shirts are encouraged at all meets. Wearing team apparel promotes team pride and unity. It also helps coaches, parents and other swimmers locate County Y team members. The team suit will be designated by

the YMCA based on performance and economics and may be different for each season. All swimmers must wear a team suit and team cap at all meets that they swim for the County YMCA team. Team suits are not allowed to be worn for practice to maintain their performance.

VOLUNTEERING

By volunteering you are a part of meaningful, enduring change not only in the swim team but your swimmers experience. The Y is volunteer-founded, volunteer-led organization. The Y's cause is to strengthen communities, committed every day to youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Parent volunteers participate in the organization and management of swim meets. There are many roles at meets, so volunteering keeps you active between your child's events. It also gets parents involved in the achievements of all team members and builds relationships with other parents in the swimming community. By sharing volunteer duties at meets, County Y parents contribute to a community of responsibility and support, and they set a positive example for swimmers.

Each family unit is requested to have at least one parent volunteer, either as a general parent volunteer or as a member of a committee. If you have extenuating circumstances that prevent you from volunteering, please contact the Head Coach.

Meet Volunteer Opportunities:

A YMCA Volunteer Application must be completed on the YMCA website.

- **Timers** - Time each heat in a specific lane using stopwatches that are provided by the host team. This job is easy and keeps you right next to the action. No prior experience is necessary. (min 3 meets)
- **Seeding & Lane Assignment Coordinator** – Volunteers are needed to ensure that swimmers are getting to assigned lanes at least two events prior to their scheduled event. Once behind the lanes to make sure our swimmers are in the correct lane and order. (min 3 meets)
- **Parent Support for Swimmers on deck in the Team area**– swimmers may need help knowing what events they are in and have q's about the order of the meet. These parents will help assist the coaches for their support and answer their questions. Maintain swimmer order in team area (min 3 meets)
- **Level I or II Officials** - These include the starter, referee, and stroke and turn judges. They

conduct the meet and address rule infractions. Training and certification are necessary (through USA Swimming and/or YMCA, depending on the meet). There is always a demand for these volunteers. Training is technical but not lengthy or difficult and reimbursed by the YMCA.

- **Team Admin-** Uses Team Manager software updating qualifying times each year, updating team records, helping coach generate performance reports.
- **Meet Admin-** Uses Meet Manager Software to create the meet lineups, generates the meet file, imports events, and generates psych sheets. Seeds the meet, generates heat sheets. Runs the meet software during the meet, generates results and more.
- **Parent Coach Assistant-** help assist coaching staff with practices, meets, invitationals where there are needs. Must have prior swim experience as a high school or collegiate swimmer.

PARENT COMMITTEE OPPORTUNITIES

1. Communications & Outreach Committee

Manages all ways the team interacts with families, community, and the public.

- Team Communications (emails, updates, newsletters)
- Public Relations (community connections, media)
- Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, etc.)

2. Fundraising & Sponsorship Committee

Focused on bringing in financial support and managing team-branded items.

- Fundraising (events, campaigns, sponsors)
- Spirit Wear (team gear sales)
- Concessions (at meets for revenue)

3. Events & Recognition Committee

Responsible for building team culture, celebrating swimmers, and organizing major events.

- Swimmer Recognition (awards, shoutouts, milestones)
- Championships & Blue Dolphins Host Preparation (logistics, volunteers)
- Meets & Invitationals (planning and volunteer coordination)
- Spirit & Social (pep rallies, team building, social events)
- Awards & Banquet (end-of-season celebration)

FINANCIAL/PROGRAM FEES

Operating the swim team involves various expenses. While program fees account for part of the expenses, they do not cover everything. Here is what your program fees include and exclude.

Include	Exclude (Fundraised for)
Coaches' Salaries	Suit, goggles, cap, and training equipment
Pool Rental Fees	Team clothing, special events or parties
General operating costs	Swim bag, team travel expenses
League dues and registration fees	YMCA Championships
Dual meet costs	West Districts, YMCA States, and YMCA Nationals

**Swimmers who register for the Championship meet but do not participate will have the entry fee (about \$35 per swimmer) charged to their account.*

Payment in Full

At the time of registration, a family pays a fee per child and must be a member in good standing of the YMCA of Greater Erie

Swim Meet Fees (Districts, States, & Nationals)

As explained in the Swim Meet section, all meet fees are paid by check, cash, or credit card online, over the phone or at the County YMCA front desk. Travel, lodging, and other expenses are paid directly by the swimmer's family.

Financial Assistance

To apply, complete the online application at ymcaerie.org. Inquiries, the application process, and awards of assistance are kept confidential.

FUNDRAISING

The County Y Swim Team does require each family to participate in fundraisers by raising or contributing a minimum of \$75 per swimmer for the winter and \$50 per swimmer for the summer. Fundraising and volunteering are necessary for the program for specific purposes. Fundraising helps to pay for costs incurred during season such as coach's travel, facility equipment, end of the year Awards Banquet, swimmer's gifts, etc.

COMMUNICATION

Coaches, swimmers, and parents use multiple methods to communicate with each other on a regular basis. Please check the REMIND app regularly and promptly contact the Head Swim Coach or Executive Director if you have questions, concerns or information to share.

INFORMATION FOR SWIMMERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

The REMIND app is used to receive urgent text notices and directly communicate with the coaching staff. Messaging between families is also available through the REMIND app by searching for the family's last name and composing a message. These are the primary means of communication. Please update your information with a REMIND message to the Head Coach when necessary.

The Facebook page will feature team news, swimmer achievements, and updates for the community. Feel free to add anything to this page and share with your family and friends to promote the County Blue Dolphin swim team accomplishments.

County YMCA website: <https://www.ymcaerie.org/county/swim-team/> The Blue Dolphins website is an information reference site. Please check the site often for updates. If you have digital pictures to submit for the site, send them to the Head Coach.

Verbal – Sometimes swimmers are given information verbally by coaches. Regularly ask your swimmer about information given verbally at practice or meets.

Parent meetings – Held monthly throughout the year. These meetings allow coaches to convey information directly to parents regarding the team, the season, and the sport. They also provide an open forum for parents to ask questions and address concerns. If a parent is unable to attend the monthly parent meeting, it is asked that you review the meeting minutes which will be uploaded to the REMIND app. Attendance sheets will be on the pool deck door the week after a meeting is held.

COMMUNICATING WITH COACHES

NOTE: PLEASE DO NOT CALL COACHES AT HOME. Please respect their personal and family time by addressing simple issues before and after practice or scheduling a meeting to discuss more in-depth issues. Parents are not allowed onto the swim deck unless asked to enter by a Coaching staff.

Email – Parents are welcome to email the head coaches with questions, information and ideas. You can reach coach Robin via REMIND message app. Coaches are not required but may provide their cell phone numbers at their own discretion. Please use those respectfully and judiciously.

Meeting (formal or informal) with coaches – Coaches are generally available before or after practice time to answer quick questions. If you would like to address issues that require more time, please schedule an appointment with your child's coach or the Head Coach.

Electronic Communication Policy – YMCA of Greater Erie coaches and volunteers are not permitted to contact program participants by phone or electronically for any purpose other than transmitting program-specific information. Employees may not participate in social network communication with program participants. Please do not solicit such social or casual communication with County Y coaching staff members.

GRIEVANCES

Many issues arise from basic miscommunication or confusion, but they are often straightforward to solve. If allowed to fester, however, problems grow out of proportion and can be harmful to swimmers, parents, coaches, and the program. Immediate resolution of concerns with the right individual can help prevent this issue.

Contact: Practice Level Coach

When: An issue is group-specific, site-specific or swimmer-specific or when there is a question or concern for a specific coach.

Contact: Head Coach or Executive Director

When: An issue concerns the overall swim team, financial or administrative concerns.

SWIMMER, PARENT, AND COACH

The relationship between swimmer, coach and parent is an important aspect of swimming. In order to support the swimmer's development, it is important to maintain a mutually supportive partnership with regular communication. Swimmers, parents, and coaches may not always agree but with respectful and open communication will help maintain a positive relationship. The collective goal of the swimmer-coach-parent triangle is the maintenance of an environment most conducive to the development of the swimmer, both as an athlete and as a person.

The Role of the SWIM TEAM PARENT

- To support and encourage your swimmers to achieve their personal best.
- To help your swimmer(s) be on time, have proper nutrition, encouragement to be competitive and maintain a positive attitude.
- To respect the coach's decisions and practice times. The coach will be available before and after practices to answer any questions.
- If more time is required to address an issue, please schedule a time to discuss with the coach.
- To participate in the parent volunteer role or committee areas and fundraiser events.
- Attend monthly parent meetings and be an active member of the swim team unit.

ROLE OF THE SWIMMER

As representatives of the County Y Swim Team and the County YMCA, swimmers are expected to speak and behave in a manner that is respectful, responsible, honest, and caring. These guidelines are to be followed by County Y swimmers at all practices, meets, and other team functions as well as in electronic communications. Special activities, such as team travel trips, require adherence to additional activity-specific conduct guidelines. The following behaviors are not acceptable and may result in suspension from the team:

- 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.
- Misuse of the locker room facility or disrespect to another swimmer or University property.

Each family will receive a Parent and Swimmer code of conduct to review together, sign and turn in before the first practice of the season. If at any time, there are questions or concerns about another swimmer or parent violating the code of conduct please promptly address this with the Head Coach or Executive Director.

VIOLATIONS TO THE PARENT AND SWIMMER CODE OF CONDUCT

Parents will be notified at each step.

The first violation will receive a verbal warning.

The second offence will lead to removal from the practice, meet, or team event where the violation took place.

The third violation will result in suspension from the team for a period of time determined by the Head Coach.

A fourth violation will cause the removal of the swimmer and/or parent from the program as determined by the Executive Director.

The following actions will not be tolerated and may result in family removal from the team:

- 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.
- Sexual activity

DRESS CODE

Swimmers are expected to dress with dignity and appropriate taste whenever representing the team. This includes going into and out of practices, meets and team activities. Swimmers should not show any part of their undergarments (boxer shorts, bra straps, etc.) outside of their clothes. Rude or suggestive pictures or writing are not acceptable. Skirts and shorts must be of an appropriate length. Pants, shorts, and skirts should not hang at the waist lower than the hip bones. Swimmers should routinely monitor the condition of their suits so that they are not worn by themselves when they no longer provide adequate coverage and support.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

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

HEALTH

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 the 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 always 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 Basic Life Support (CPR PRO), Basic First Aid, Oxygen Administration, and either Lifeguarding or Safety Training for Swim Coaches.

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 mature 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 other team members and coaches to the same illness. Once recovered, swimmers can return to practice and work to 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, Q-tip (carefully), or gently shake your 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. Applying a few drops in each ear may reduce the presence of normal bacteria and aid in drying the ear. ** Children who have PE tubes or holes in their eardrums should not have alcohol or vinegar placed into their ears. (Information borrowed from Dr. Raymond B. Coors, MD.)

NUTRITION

Everyone relies on food for energy, and how well it functions depends heavily on the quality of what you eat. In terms of quantity, young swimmers must strike a delicate balance between consuming enough calories and nutrients to promote growth and skeleton-muscular development on the one hand and not eating so much that they are sluggish due to excess food storage. As for quality of food, carbohydrates should make up the highest percentage of a swimmer's diet. Carbohydrates provide the greatest source of energy during physical exertion.

Swimmers may need a boost of "fuel" before and after practice, so eating smaller meals plus snacks during the day can be helpful in sustaining a swimmer's energy. Furthermore, the body more quickly and efficiently digests smaller amounts eaten throughout the day than it does large meals eaten three times a day. This is particularly important during meets that can last several hours per session. Snacks at meets should be small, easily digestible, and able to be quickly converted to energy (foods high in carbohydrates and low in fat). Try to leave at least 20-30 minutes between the time you eat a snack and the time you swim your next event.