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DISCOVER YOUR POTENTIAL

Lakewood Sharks Swim Team Parent Handbook
LAKEWOOD FAMILY YMCA



Welcome to the exciting world of swimming! We are thrilled that you have become a part of the Lakewood Family YMCA Sharks Swim Team! In order to have a successful program, there must be cooperation among parents, swimmers, and coaches. The progress that a swimmer makes depends to a great extent on this 3-way relationship. It is with this in mind that we hope you refer to this handbook and reacquaint yourself if you are a returning YMCA parent. As a swim parent, you take on a variety of responsibilities and will be offered opportunities – opportunities to really “get to know” your child in pressure situations; opportunities to praise and applaud her/his achievements; and even more importantly, opportunities to help him/her deal with their non-achievements – to redirect them – to learn from them – and, in the end, to gain from them.

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SWIM TEAM PROGRAM FOCUS AND YMCA PHILOSOPHY

The Lakewood Family YMCA Sharks Swim Team is designed for swimmers who wish to pursue competitive swimming in a fun and positive environment. The YMCA swim team staff is dedicated to give families involved in swim team a great experience while providing fitness and fun to children of all ages. We will strive to help each child develop a healthy, spirit, mind and body. We will help your children to gain self-confidence, goal setting abilities, physical fitness, and character.

Our goals are:

- We will help your children reach their full potential as a swimmer.
- We will help your children learn good sportsmanship and the purpose of being on a team.
- We will promote lifelong fitness.
- We will teach children the character development through the YMCA Core Values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.

Swimmer Requirements

All swimmers of the Lakewood Family YMCA Sharks Swim Team must be a member of the YMCA. Swimmers must have passed Level 6 or equivalent and be approved by a coach during try-outs. (Generally, be able to comfortably swim 50 yards of freestyle and backstroke and respond to coach’s instructions.) Swimmers will be taught drills to improve strokes and will work on endurance throughout the season.

SWIM TEAM PRACTICES

Practice Days and Times

Swimmers must have paid swim team fees each month to attend practices and swim meets. During High School swim season High School swimmers must continue to pay their youth membership in order to participate in the State and Regional Meets. In order to participate in the State Meet each swimmer must have represented her/his YMCA in three closed YMCA meets after the last State Meet of each calendar year.

90-Day Rule: Each swimmer must have been a YMCA member in good standing for a period of

90 days prior to the State and Regional Meets. Parents will be notified for weekend, holiday, or other interruptions to the normal practice schedule. Conflicts may arise due to unforeseen circumstances such as construction, maintenance, or pool issues. No refunds will be issued because of cancelled practices. Call the YMCA if you are unsure if practice will be held.

What to Bring to Practice

- YMCA Membership Card to scan when you come to the YMCA.
- Goggles (an extra pair is always good!)
- Swim Cap
- Water Bottle
- Towel
- Running/ closed toe shoes for dryland practice
- Optional: Personal Kickboard, Pull buoy, and Fins

We encourage the children to remember these and not to rely on their parents to bring the items to practice for them.

Appropriate Behavior

Swimmers need to come prepared to swim and listen to coaches. Swimmers need to be Respectful towards other swimmers, towards other members in the pool area and in the locker rooms. Lifeguards are here for your protection, so swimmers are also expected to respect them.

Dry Land Exercises

Dry land exercises with the swimmers are done with direct supervision of the coaches to ensure the exercises are done properly and safe. Dry land exercises will be added to practice at various times during the month. Coaches will give swimmers a heads-up if they bring clothing and shoes for dryland practice.

The goal of dry land training is to condition, stretch and strengthen muscles to prevent injury and promote endurance. Dry land training for children will be modified for ability and age group. Dry land training will not only improve our swimmers ability but will also create more opportunities to meet new teammates, create relationships and reinforce teamwork.

FACILITY ACCESS AND REGISTRATION FEES

Building Access

Swimmers and parents going into YMCA buildings will need to bring their membership cards to practice with them. They will need to have the front desk scan their cards each time they are let through the doors.

Going Above and Beyond

Swim team participants are welcome to swim during lap swim or schedule private swim lessons to practice and reinforce skills they learn in swim team. Look for a pool schedule on the information board outside the pool entrance.

YMCA Locker Room Etiquette

It is important to remember that the locker rooms are used by all members of the YMCA and it is VERY IMPORTANT that all swimmers be RESPECTFUL while using the YMCA facility. This means to self, each other, the facility, other members, and staff.

Additional Fees

There may be additional fees for meets or extra practices. We will notify you of any additional fees. There are also additional fees for swim suits, apparel and caps. All swimmers are encouraged to wear the Lakewood Family YMCA Sharks swim cap and team swim suit during all meets. Caps can be purchased for at the front desk or with one of your coaches and information on how to purchase the team swim meet will be communicated with parents.

RULES AND EXPECTATIONS OF SWIMMERS

The coaching staff wants to set ground rules for practices to maintain a POSITIVE learning and practice environment. It is intended to help, not rule.

- Have equipment available and adjusted before every practice. Always
- Have an extra set of goggles with you at every practice.
- Begin sequences of drills on time and finish by touching the wall
- All swimmers will listen and follow directions from coaches. All drills should be performed as instructed. If you do not understand how a drill is done, do not be afraid to ask for clarification.
- Please refrain from talking during drill instruction.
- Do not hang on the lane lines.
- Always display proper sportsmanship.
- Swimmers will treat others with respect and will not interfere with other swimmers as they are completing their workout.
- No horseplay during practice.
- Swimmers will uphold the YMCA mission statement, philosophy, and character values.
- If the coaches feel your child is not progressing past the minimum level of stroke development after a reasonable amount of time on swim team, the coaches may recommend OR require that your child take additional swim lessons for more one-on-one help.
- Maintain proper eating, sleeping and studying habits.
- Be a leader and HAVE FUN!

Discipline Policy

To ensure the safety of all swimmers, the following progressive discipline steps will be taken for those swimmers who disregard pool/safety rules, and/or display disrespect for the coaches, teammates, and/or lifeguards:

1. Verbal warning to the swimmer.
2. Swimmer sits out for 5-10 minutes.
3. Swimmer will be asked to leave the activity or event for the day. Parents will be notified and an incident report will be filed.
4. If the behavior continues, parental attendance will be required at practice until the Aquatics Director deems the situation under control.
5. If the situation does not improve, the swimmer will be asked not to participate for an extended period in team activities. This action will be communicated by the Aquatics Director to the parent and swimmer.

SWIM MEETS

A swimmer is ready for their first meet as soon as they can swim the distance required and feel

confident enough to compete. The sooner the swimmer begins to compete, the sooner they will see improving times. Attending a swim meet is a great way to encourage team bonding and progress a swimmer's competitive abilities. Everyone is encouraged to participate and improve their skills in preparation for the next meet. The Lakewood Family YMCA is part of the Puget Sound Swimming Association (PSSA). Their website is www.psswim.org. The fall meet schedule will be posted on this website as well as on the team website and on the information board in the pool area. There is generally an average of two swim meets per month during the fall/winter season (September thru March). The Washington State YMCA Swim meet is typically held the last Saturday in January. The Pacific Northwest Regional Swim Meet is held the first weekend in March. If a swimmer has signed up for a meet and an unexpected illness or emergency arises and he/she no longer is able to attend the swim meet, please notify a coach ASAP.

Meets can take anywhere from 3 hours to 5 hours (or longer), depending on the number of swimmers present and how efficiently the meet is run. The home sponsor of each meet sets the schedule for their meet, so starting times will vary.

What to Bring

Swimmers will need to bring the following to meets:

- Goggles (2 pairs in case one breaks)
- Towels (Use one during the meet and save the other so you will have a dry one AFTER the meet)
- Healthy Snacks
- Water Bottles or electrolyte drink
- Swim Cap
- Extra Clothes
- Parent should bring the following:
- Folding Chairs
- Dress appropriately – remember indoor pools are hot during the winter season. Layers are best.
- Camera if you desire (no flash photography)

Warm-Ups

It is strongly recommended that all swimmers warm-up at swim meets. Warmups are important in the prevention of injury and gradually prepares the body for events by increasing heart rate and circulation to the muscles. This will also gives the swimmers the opportunity to get familiar with a "new" pool, practice flip turns, and starting blocks. Not all pools are the same, so we highly recommend:

- ALL swimmers arrive early for warm-ups.
- All swimmers must warm up at our assigned team time.
- Please arrive at meet sites at least 15 minutes prior to warm-ups to get settled in and begin stretching.
- Prior to the beginning of each meet, swimmers are to check in with the coach.

Individual Events

Swimmers may generally swim in three individual events. Events are usually separated by age group and gender. The age group for the swimmer is determined by the age of the swimmer on the day of the meet. The following age groups are used in most competitions:

- 8 years and under

- 9 -10 years old
- 11-12 years old
- 13-14 years old
- 14-21 years old

The events included in each meet are varying distances of the four competitive strokes: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke and freestyle, as well as the individual medley, which is a combination of these four strokes.

Relays

Relays consist of four swimmers. Competitive relay events include Medley relays and freestyle relays. Swimmers may usually swim in two relays. Relays will be determined by the Coaches at the swim meet. Relays will be based on individual times, attendance at practice, swimmers' ability, and swimmer's attitude.

Meet Transportation

Parents are responsible for driving their swimmer to and from meets.

Carpooling is encouraged, but not facilitated by the YMCA. Coaches are not permitted to be involved in transportation due to YMCA insurance limitations.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Parent Involvement

We are often looking for Parent Volunteers. Your help makes things run smoother and makes events a great success. Please plan on volunteering for at least one swim meet. The following are areas we may also need help with.

Social Activities

If you like to plan parties, please join us in this fun volunteering experience! We plan to have pot lucks and other events for you to help with to celebrate swim team with the swimmers.

Swim Meets

Timers, clean-up helpers, runners, etc, etc, etc. It takes a lot of people to help the children get ready. Any helpers we can get, we will sure use.

Parent Expectations

Communicate to coaches about:

- Meet attendance.
- Illnesses and injuries of swimmers.
- Any concerns you may have regarding the progress of your child
- Respect other parents and swimmers.
- Pay all dues on time.
- Encourage all swimmers at meets and practice.
- Encourage swimmers to practice on own time.
- Volunteering at swim meets and other social activities

Healthy Habits

Proper nutrition is essential for first-rate athletic performance. Please instill healthy habits with your swimmers! In general, you should try to keep your child on a balanced diet and

reduce junk food. Use whatever vitamin supplements that have been recommended by your doctor. Swimmer's ear" is common among swimmers and can typically be avoided by making sure the ears are DRY after practicing and showering. Muscle cramping is also common and can be avoided with electrolyte drinks and fruit, especially bananas. Please also bring a bottle of water to every practice and meet. To prepare for a swim meet, a proper night's rest and an evening meal high in carbohydrates and protein (like spaghetti) is recommended. Breakfast should be high in carbohydrates like a whole grain bagel and fruit.

The Coach is the Coach

We want to build a strong relationship with your children in order to maximize their potential. It is important that you not only trust your coach's ability and judgment, but that you exhibit that trust and support in front of your children. When parents have conflicting opinions on how they should train or swim, it can cause insurmountable confusion for the swimmer. If you feel as though there is a concern that is not being resolved, please feel free to discuss the matter in private with one of the coaches.

The Best Kind of Parent

The coach's job is to motivate and constructively criticize the swimmer's performance. It is the parent's job to supply the love, recognition, and encouragement necessary to make the child work harder in practice, which in turn gives him/her the confidence to perform well in competition. Do not become overly involved in your child's eagerness to compete and win. Many swimming careers have ended prematurely because of increased pressure by parents. If your child has an event where they don't swim their best time, let the coach talk with them and problem-solve it. Encourage your swimmer in everything including workouts and in meets. There is always something positive to focus on with your child.

Ups and Downs

Even the best swimmers have meets and practices that they don't perform their best. These intermittent 'plateaus' are a normal part of swimming. Over the course of a season, times and technique should improve. Please be supportive of these 'poor' meets. The older swimmers may have only 2 or 3 meets a year for which they will be rested after "taper" and be prepared to achieve their best times. Actively communicate with your coaches and the team to determine the progress of your child and the measures taken to improve your child's swimming ability. Ultimately, we want your swimmer to be excited by what happens in the pool. Occasionally, athletes can feel overwhelmed from the combined pressures of school, family, and the demands of participating in a sport. Find ways to keep them organized, motivated, and focused.

Communication with the Coaches

If you plan to communicate with the coaches please be considerate. You are more than welcome to send a note with your swimmer, email us, call us, or converse with us on the pool deck. Please refrain from asking questions while coaches are coaching practice and speak with the head coach during normal practice times. Additionally, please have an open conversation with us about any concerns so that we can resolve any concerns.

Please consider:

- We have the best interests of the child at heart and have adapted our approach with your child in mind. If you trust that your coach has the same goals for your child, you're more likely to enjoy a more constructive conversation.
- Keep in mind that we must balance the perspective of what is best for your child as well as

the needs of the team.

- If your child swims for an assistant coach, please discuss that problem with that coach first. If the problem cannot be resolved, ask the head coach to join the dialogue as a third party.
- If another parent comes to you with a complaint, please encourage them to speak directly to a coach. The problem can be acknowledged and resolved more effectively with active conversation with the coaches.

How to Contact Us

Lakewood Family YMCA Phone Number: 253-584-9622

Website: ymcapkc.org/lakewood-family-ymca/programs/swim/swim-team/

Head Coach: Matt Edde at medde@ymcapkc.org

Aquatics Director: Sarah McGhinnis at (253) 460-8940 or smcghinnis@ymcapkc.org

Email List

We will be making an email list! This will be a great way to mass communicate with other parents and coaches.

PARENT CODE OF ETHICS

I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, and officials at every game, practice, or other youth sports event.

I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my child ahead of a personal desire to win.

I will support the implementation of the YMCA's four character development values, caring, honesty, respect and responsibility.

I will support coaches and officials working with my child, in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.

I will demand a sports environment for my child that is free from drugs, tobacco, and alcohol, and will refrain from their use at all YMCA youth sports events.

I will remember that the game is for youth - not for adults.

I will do the very best to make the youth sports experience fun for my child.

I will help my child enjoy the youth sports experience by doing whatever I can, such as being a respectful fan, volunteering, or providing transportation.

I will teach my child to treat other players, coaches, fans, officials with respect regardless of race, sex, creed, or ability.

I hereby pledge to provide positive support, care, and encouragement for my child participating in youth sports by following this Parents' Code of Ethics.

SWIM TEAM CODE OF CONDUCT

As a responsible athlete of the Lakewood Family YMCA Sharks Swim Team, I agree to conform to the following Code of Conduct at all times while representing the Sharks Swim Team and the Lakewood Family YMCA:

At Practice / Meets I will:

- Be on time for practice and warm-ups.
- Bring goggles, cap, towel, and water bottle to all practices and meets.

- Respect all lifeguards, coaches, swimmers, officials, and visitors while representing our team.
- Ask questions when I am not sure of coaches instructions.
- Assist other team members when they are lost or confused.
- Cheer for teammates during races.
- Offer congratulations to my opponents win or lose.
- Be humble in victory and honest in defeat.
- Strive to do my best, and encourage all team members to do the same.
- Encourage YMCA core values caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.
- Abide by the Lakewood Family YMCA Member Code of Conduct

At Practice / Meets I will NOT:

- Cause physical harm or threaten physical harm to a fellow team member, coach, or parent.
- Possess, use or be under the influence of alcoholic beverages, chemical, or illegal drugs.
- Behave in a manner that in the opinion of the coaches or team representative is contrary to normally accepted behavior.

All coaches and assisting staff will follow the agreed upon discipline pattern:

- 1 verbal warning
- 5-10 minute timeout.
- Removal from event, with parental follow-up from coach

I understand that violation of these guidelines may cause dismissal from practice, meets, and/or the team, at my parent's expense. I understand that the values contained in this Code of Conduct, remains in effect for as long as I am a member of the Lakewood Family YMCA Sharks Swim Team.