



2015-2016

Swimming Team Handbook

Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to outline various policies that affect all swimmers, parents and coaches as well as help new comers what to expect being a member of the Neptunes Water Polo and Swimming Club family. It should be read by all families so that they may become familiar with important facts and rules of the club.

Why swim?

Various studies have shown that children who carry out physical activity and sport are likely to have better social skills, self-esteem, confidence and academic achievements. Researchers have also found a link to friendship, peer acceptance, anxiety, stress, cognitive functioning and attention/concentration, whilst cardio-metabolic health, muscular strength, bone health and cardio-respiratory fitness are also positively affected.

Physical Development:

Swimming is considered the ideal activity for developing muscular and skeletal growth by many physicians and pediatricians. Why do doctors like it so much?

Swimming develops high quality aerobic endurance, the most important key to physical fitness. In other sports an hour of practice may yield as little as 10 minutes of meaningful exercise. Age group swimming teams use every precious minute of practice time developing fitness and teaching skills.

Swimming does a better job in proportional muscular development by using all the body's major muscle groups. No other sport does this as well.

Swimming enhances children's natural flexibility (at a time when they ordinarily begin to lose it) by exercising all of their major joints through a full range of motion.

Swimming helps develop superior coordination because it requires combinations of complex movements of all parts of the body, enhancing harmonious muscle function, grace, and fluidity of movement.

Swimming is the most injury-free of all children's sports.

Swimming is a sport that will bring kids fitness and enjoyment for life. Participants in Master's Swimming programs are still training and racing well into their 80's.

Intellectual Competence:

In addition to physical development, children can develop greater intellectual competence by participating in a guided program of physical activity. Learning and using swimming skills engages the thinking processes. As they learn new techniques, children must develop and plan movement sequences. They improve by exploring new ideas. They learn that greater progress results from using their creative talents. Self-expression can be just as much physical as intellectual. Finally their accomplishments in learning and using new skills contribute to a stronger self image.

What is Neptunes Water Polo & Swimming Club?

Neptunes WPSC is one of the leading waterpolo and swimming clubs in Malta, established in 1929. It is affiliated with the Malta Aquatic Sports Association, therefore abiding with its rules and regulations.

The club premises are situated in the picturesque Balluta Bay, St.Julian's and offers the best facilities that are currently available on the island to both swimmers and waterpolo players. It has a fresh water pool, can be heated during the winter months and is 33.3 metres long and 22.5 metres wide. A fully equipped fitness centre together with upgraded changing rooms and showers are also available on the premises

Mission Statement, Vision & Philosophy

Mission Statement:

Neptunes Swimming Team aims to create an environment where individuals can experience the enjoyment of, and can reach personal excellence in the sport of swimming.

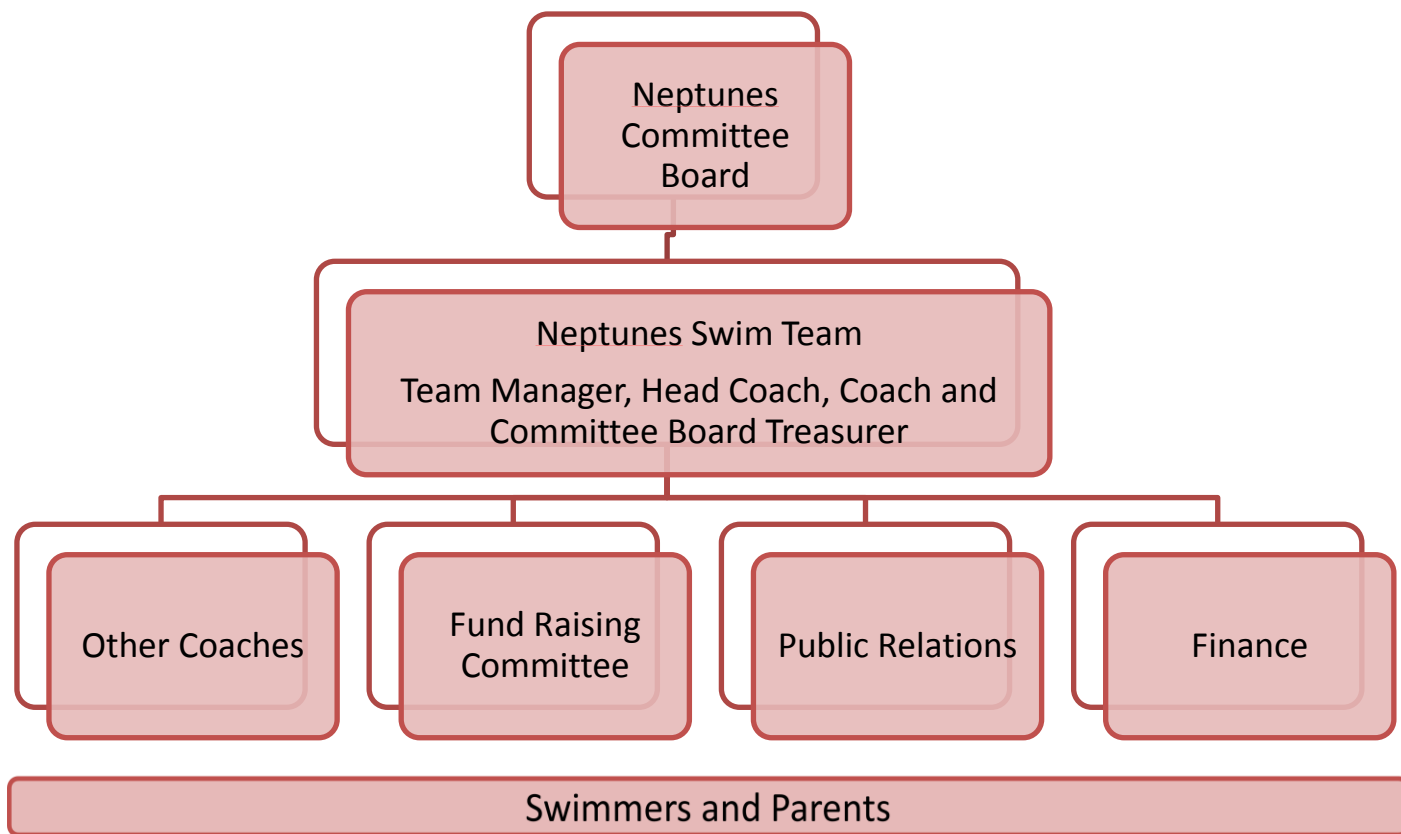
Vision:

Neptunes' vision is to develop and maintain a holistic program that will produce great swimmers, who will represent Neptunes in all levels of swimming competition. Neptunes would like to continue being the aquatic organization that trains these athletes for National and International level performance.

Philosophy:

- **Teamwork** – Neptunes is a team that is built upon the commitment, support, and participation of the Board, coaches, swimmers, parents/guardians, and the community at large. Neptunes believe that its success in achieving the team's goals is dependent upon the cooperation of all members.
- **Coaching** – Neptunes is committed to providing comprehensive, expert swim/stroke training by an experienced coaching team. In addition to swim training, Neptunes promotes the practice of healthy lifestyle habits, such as good nutrition and sleep.
- **Swimmer** – Neptunes believes that each swimmer is an individual with different backgrounds, needs and goals. The club focuses on the development of positive self-esteem and individual goal setting. The team encourages swimmers to represent Neptunes by participating competitively on a year round basis. Neptunes believes that all members should model team spirit and sportsmanship.

Swim Team Governance



Responsibilities of the Swim Team:

The main goals of the team is to:

- 1) Create an environment of team cohesiveness by providing regular social and team-building opportunities to nurture team spirit and instill a sense of team pride.
- 2) Motivate parents/guardians and swimmers to be part of Neptunes where they will feel valued and enjoy themselves.
- 3) Manage the coaches and swimmers performance to ensure that high performance levels are kept.
- 4) Manage the team's budget/finances and seek sponsorships to establish a strong financial base for future growth.
- 5) Make our team more visible to the community through the use of media, community events, team website and recruitment visits.

Coach's Role

Coaches' main responsibility is to mold all of our swimmers into the best swimmers that they can be. In addition coaches mentor swimmers in life skills and positive values. They shall also build relationships with team families to achieve mutually-set goals for each swimmer. They will also help the team to build relationships with other aquatic organizations.

Coach Code of Conduct:

As a Coach of the Neptunes Swimming Team I will abide by the following code of conduct:

1. Communicates openly and honestly with other coaches and helpers.
2. Works to keep the air clean in relationships
3. Seeks the help from Head Coach whenever questions arise
4. Treats parents with courtesy and respect. Remains calm in communications with parents.
5. Treats officials at meets with courtesy and respect.
6. Takes proactive steps to communicate/educate parent about club policies, procedures and stroke techniques
7. Takes initiative to communicate swimmer problems/issues to parents
8. Communicates any issues with parents or swimmers to Head Coach as soon as possible
9. Never takes out anger on athletes, especially anger left over from issues with their parents
10. Follows Meet Entry procedure protocol on time
11. Knows and conforms to all ASA Swimming Rules and Regulations
12. Knows and conforms to all Club policies, rules and regulations
13. Monitors attendance records for assigned group(s)
14. Attend meetings as and when required
15. Actively contributes opinions and information at meetings
16. Creates an environment where training is challenging, fun and appropriate for the age/ability of the swimmers in the group
17. Encourages improvement through praise for any progress demonstrated by the athlete.
18. Offers praise and encouragement for things well done and constructive criticism for the one thing that the athlete should focus on to improve the most for subsequent meets.
19. Perform at least one appraisal meeting with each individual swimmer per season and document goals agreed.
20. Be available to set meetings with parents when these request it.
21. Refrain from performing coaching duties with another team that is in direct competition with Neptunes Swimming Club unless otherwise authorised.

Parent/Guardian's Role

Parent/Guardian's main responsibility is to provide a caring and supporting environment as to encourage their child to feel good about his or her interest in competitive swimming. They serve as role models as children frequently emulate their attitudes and should therefore strive to be positive role models. This is achieved by abiding by their code of conduct.

Parent Code of Conduct:

As a Parent of the Neptunes Swimming Team I will abide by the following code of conduct:

- 1) Practice teamwork with all parents, swimmers, coaches and helpers by supporting the values of Discipline, Loyalty, Commitment and Hard Work
- 2) As a parent, I will not coach or instruct the team or any swimmer at a practice or meets (from the stands or any other area) or interfere with coaches on the pool deck.
- 3) As a parent I will not question the coaches decisions in public but will ask for a meeting to discuss any issues directly with them.
- 4) Demonstrate good sportsmanship by conducting myself in a manner that earns the respect of my child, other swimmers, parents, officials and the coaches at meets, practices and events organized by the club or ASA.
- 5) Maintain self-control at all times and know my role:
Swimmers – swim, coaches – coach, Officials – officiate, Parents – parent
- 6) Enjoy involvement with the Neptunes Swimming Team by supporting the swimmers, coaches and other parents with positive communications and actions.
- 7) During competitions, questions or concerns regarding decisions made by meet officials are directed to a member of our coaching staff when appropriate to do so.
- 8) As a parent, I understand that criticizing, name-calling, use of abusive language or gestures towards the coaches, officials, &/or any participating swimmer will not be permitted or tolerated.
- 9) As a parent, I understand that our coaching and support staff are not available on a 24/7 basis and therefore I will ask for a meeting to cover any queries that I might have.

Parent Responsibilities:

Parental cooperation is necessary for the club to function. Help is always needed to setup meets, fundraising and working on committees doing the organizational jobs. Please volunteer your time willingly and DO share your concerns or ideas.

Swimmer's Role

Swimmers' main responsibility is to give their best during training sessions, team events and national/international meets. They should encourage each other to become a TEAM whereby Together Each swimmer will Achieve More. The aim is to compete with each other and not against each other. They should also practice positive values and build relationships both within the team as well as with swimmers of other aquatic organizations.

Swimmers need to abide with their code of conduct.

Swimmer Code of Conduct:

As a Swimmer and member of the Neptunes Swimming Team I will abide by the following code of conduct:

- 1) Conduct him/herself with dignity and respect for others and for the property of others.
- 2) Be on time for practice, training sessions and meets.
- 3) Comply with all team rules.
- 4) As a matter of team pride and courtesy to meet hosts, pool facility operators, & janitorial staff member, swimmers are expected to leave the respective team area in a neat and clean condition at the conclusion of each meet or practice session. This also applies to pool locker/rest rooms, pool decks, etc.
- 5) Practice and teach good sportsmanship.
- 6) Promote positive team spirit and morale.
- 7) Offer congratulations and encouragement to his/her opponents.
- 8) Support his/her teammates at practice and at competition. Working together as a unit will benefit each team member and is an important part of the Neptunes spirit.
- 9) Follow verbal directions of the coaching staff. At no time will disrespectful attitudes by any swimmer be tolerated.
- 10) Respect the rights and space requirements of other groups using the swimming facility.
- 11) Follow the Code of conduct both at home and away events.
- 12) Wear Neptunes team wear during all competitions especially during presentations.
- 13) If you are entering a local competition, training with another coach or going abroad, on individual basis to compete, to seek permission from the Swim Team committee beforehand.

Prohibited Behavior: At no time will the following be accepted:

- 1) Use or possession of any illegal substance (i.e. alcohol, drugs, tobacco)
- 2) Destructive behavior
- 3) Inappropriate or unruly behavior, including fights or striking another athlete.
- 4) Inappropriate language (swearing or derogatory comments) or lying
- 5) Stealing and vandalism
- 6) Bully or isolate another swimmer
- 7) Interference with the progress of another swimmer during practice or at any other time.

Consequence for Violation of the Code of Conduct:

This code shall be in force for all Neptunes Swimmers during practice, swim meets and at events sponsored by or in which Neptunes Swimming Team is represented. Disciplinary actions can range from, but are not limited to; reprimands, being sent home from practice or meets at the parents' expense, expulsion from the team, being barred from competition, or receiving any other disciplinary action that the Club deems necessary if a member fails to adhere to the Code in part or in whole.

Squad Classification

Neptunes Swim Team practice group guidelines that have been developed by its coaching team to maximize the growth and development of swim techniques for its swimmers of all levels. Swimmers of similar age and/or abilities will be grouped together to reach the goals set for each level. The assignment of swimmers to a group shall be the decision of the coaching staff. Swimmers may be promoted at the completion of a season and upon fulfillment of the group's goals. In rare instances, an assignment may be modified during the swim year, if the coaching staff believes a different squad would be more appropriate.

Starfish (Level D)

3-5 years old

Eligibility: This is a swimming course aimed at children who cannot swim unaided and still use swimming aids like armbands etc.

Goal: To be able to swim on their own without an assistant.

Focus: Teaching the swimmers how to stay afloat and how to kick and pull in the water.

Seahorses (Level C)

4-6 years old

Eligibility: This is an elementary swimming course aimed at children who have just learnt how to swim unaided (without arm-bands) and now need to be introduced to swimming free-style and back-stroke and gain more confidence in the water.

Goal: To be able to swim freestyle, backstroke and introduction to breaststroke.

Focus: Teaching the swimmers how to do freestyle, backstroke and breaststroke kick with the board and how to swim freestyle.

Dolphins (Level B)

6-7 years old

Eligibility: This is a swimming foundation course aimed at children who have previously attended a swim school, can already swim confidently the length of the 33 meter pool WITHOUT ANY HELP or swimming-aids, and have a basic knowledge of free-style and back-stroke, but need to be taught and improve the proper breathing techniques and the basic swimming strokes (free-style, back-stroke and breast stroke).

Goal: To be able to swim breaststroke and backstroke and manage to do a proper dive.

Focus: Full Breaststroke and Backstroke technique are introduced.

Sharks (Level A)

7-8 years old

Eligibility: This course is intended for children who have previously attended a swimming school at intermediate level and need to continue to improve their swimming strokes. Special emphasis during this course will be aimed at introducing swimmers to more advanced swimming and racing techniques.

Goal: To be able to swim butterfly and be able to do underwater dolphin kicking.

Focus: Butterfly technique is introduced and swimmers will continue improving techniques of the other 3 strokes.

Barracudas (Level AA)

Eligibility: This group is for Advanced Swimmers who train throughout the year. During the lessons of the first week of the Swim School, coaches will assess the swimmer's abilities required for the group that they have registered in. If the coaches feel that a swimmer is in the wrong group level, in the interest of the swimmer him/herself, we will change his/her Group level as necessary in order to maximize his/her learning capabilities.

Goal: To prepare swimmers for Junior Squad where training will be more developed and intensified.

Focus: Techniques of all 4 strokes with emphasis on stamina.

Junior Squad

9-13 years old

Eligibility: Swimmers should achieve good time standards in races done in a 50m pool and they must be able to swim many lengths in a 50m pool.

Goal: To manage to do a 200m race and be able to do turns.

Focus: Techniques of all 4 strokes are improved and more emphasis will be placed in training and aerobic development. They will also learn how to perform proper starts and turns.

Top Squad

13-16 years old

Eligibility: Swimmers should achieve great time standards in races done in a 50m pool and they must be able to perform a 200m race.

Goal: To manage to do a 400m race or longer events and be able to compete in national and international competitions.

Focus: A much greater emphasis will be placed in training and aerobic development and swimmers will train towards specific events and distances to maximize each swimmer's potential and learn about race strategies.

Progression: Top squad swimmers may be selected by the national coach to join the National Team squad. These swimmers will still be registered with Neptunes and will therefore be considered as ambassadors of the club. Their progress will be followed by both the national coach and Neptunes head coach.

Note: Age groups assigned to squads above are for guidance purposes only as the coaches will then define the placement within the squads. This is done following extensive discussions among coaches and is not solely decided upon fastest times. The physiology and development of each individual, amongst other things, will be considered in view that heavy training load can be counterproductive and may lead to over training and injuries.

Equipment

Equipment: Check with your coach—*not all items are required for all groups:*

Groups A-D:

Junior and Senior Squad:

Practice Suit (Specifically designed for training)	Same as seen on the left of the table
Cap and Goggles	Paddles (Hands and fingers)
Fins	Parachute
Kick Board	Snorkel
Pull Buoy	

Team Attire:

- NEPTUNES W.P.S.C Team Suit or other pre-approved suits are required for all swimmers at meets. Tech suits must be FINA approved suits. Tech suits are encouraged at regular age group meets.
- NEPTUNES W.P.S.C Team Cap (required for all swimmers at meets)

Fees

Junior and Top squads bills are issued four times per season in September (August till October), November (November and December), February (covering January till March) and May (covering April till June). For details of amount of fees see latest list of fees.

Fees are expected to be settled by the end of the period the bill covers. If payment is not received in full by the last day of the period covered the Swimmer may be suspended from further participation in all NEPTUNES W.P.S.C activities, including, but not limited to, practices and meets.

Fees for all other squads are collected upon registration.

Family Discounts

NEPTUNES W.P.S.C will offer a 10% discount on total dues for families with two or more swimmers.

Volunteering

Volunteer Requirements:

On-Deck Volunteering:

During time-trials and other events organised by the club or ASA, parents are expected to help in time keeping activities and other help that may be required.

Neptunes W.P.S.C Team Volunteering:

The running of the team requires a lot of time and energy which is done by parents on voluntary basis. Everyone is expected to give a helping hand when required and as the need arises.

Annual Break

All squads receive a one week break in the Christmas holidays and they also receive a 2-4 week break at the end of the summer competition (National Championships) which takes place during the end of July and beginning of August until the feast of Santa Maria in August.

Club Communication

Web site:

Neptune's primary methods of communication are e-mail, facebook and the website, www.neptuneswpsc.com. The website includes squad calendars, news, events, becoming a member tab and a facilities tab. The site is updated regularly. Neptunes encourages open communication so please feel free to email Team Manager and Coaches.

E-mail:

E-mails will be sent to inform parents/guardians and swimmers of upcoming events, such as swim meets, team social events, etc. You may send an e-mail to the Team Manager and Coaches with any questions, concerns or notifications.

Meetings

The Swim Team will meet on a regular basis, at least once every two months, as per draft agenda:

- Approval of minutes
- Upcoming team events
- Communicate training objectives, achievements and concerns
- Present an update on financial status
- Plan ahead
- Present adhoc agenda items

Note: Parents/Swimmers can put forward items to be included on the agenda by emailing the Team Manager or Coaches.

Concerns

As in any large organization involving significant number of families Neptunes cannot always be all things to all people. As a result conflicts may occasionally arise and therefore we are introducing a protocol for dealing with them.

If you have a concern about administration of the club, coaching, finances, other swimmers' behavior, other parents'/guardians' behavior, or other related matters, one should contact any of the coaches or Team Manager. Concerns raised will be taken to the following meeting and mediated.