

Training Handbook for Swimmers' Parents

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Dear Parents,

I have been the Head Coach of the Grantham Swim Club since February 2009. The club has had many accomplished swimmers over the years, but our greatest accomplishment should be challenging young people to be the best that they can be. The swimming program is more than a sport for today – it is an education for tomorrow. Please get involved with this sport and the club. I can guarantee that your child will benefit from your support and participation.

I hope that you will find this information valuable to your family. I would also invite you to check the club's website for more information. Other valuable resources include the club's noticeboard at our swimming pool, and the newsletter. The Club also has parent meetings on a regular basis. Please feel free to contact me with any concerns regarding training. Please remember that life is a journey, not a destination, and it is the journey that makes life so special!

Sincerely,

Maciej Rakowski

Head Coach

Grantham Swim Club

My Philosophy

In training young athletes, I always strive to instill in them, an understanding of and appreciation for, such concepts as high self esteem, personal accountability, constructive self motivation, goal setting and goal achievement, as these ideas relate to their success in training and competition. It is my belief that the process of achieving is as significant as realizing the achievement itself. Life is a journey, not a destination. Excellence in this sense represents the achievement of that level at which you know that you have done your utmost to become the best you are capable of becoming.

Why you should be glad your child selected swimming

Sports are supposed to be good for kids. In theory, a sport should build strong bodies, not tear them down. A sport should promote sportsmanship, self-discipline, and perseverance. Unfortunately, not all sports live up to these ideals. Swimming, however, does it quite well. According to many authors of articles on sports for children, the fact that swimming uniquely develops the cardiovascular system to the maximum makes it an ideal sport for children, since an efficient cardiovascular system is the key to life-long health. This is in addition to the fact that children run so little risk of injury in swimming. Swimming is rated as a most desirable sport on insurance company premiums. Swimming is a sport in the true sense of the word. It is a pursuit or a striving for excellence. Its very nature demands self-discipline and great strength of purpose. It is not merely an athletic contest which requires a minimum of training and maximum luck. There cannot blame teammates or bad luck in swimming. There is only the swimmer, the water, and the watch. Swimmers, more than most, learn early the relationship between work and results. Exceptional size and ability are soon overshadowed by hard work. The striving for excellence, absent in so many sports, is what the ancient Greeks revered as being that which brings out the finest qualities in humankind. Swimming makes sense.

Introduction

The purpose of this publication is to prepare the parents of Grantham Swim Club for the complexities and promises of the world of competitive swimming. Often as a parent, your child's experiences in swimming are up to you. Will he/she become successful in this great sport and learn many long-life values or just will he/she end up as a frustrated social swimmer?

I hope that you will find the time to read this handbook in its entirety, for it is an established fact that the positive influence of a swimmer's parents is essential for success. There are virtually no swimmers who have been successful without supportive parents. From the beginning, you should know that your child's involvement in the club will necessitate that you assume certain responsibilities and will require a substantial investment of both your time and money. But the amount of this investment, when compared to the benefits to your child, will seem small, in the long run. However, as a parent of a swimmer, you will not only have responsibilities, you will also have opportunities - opportunities to really get to know your children in pressurised situations; opportunities to praise and applaud their achievements; and even more importantly, opportunities to help them deal with their non-achievements - to redirect them - to learn from them - and in the end, to gain from them. In today's fast-paced society, there are few chances for parents to interact with their children on this kind of level. I feel these opportunities alone will make their career in swimming worthwhile.

Objectives of Youth Sports Program

1. To have fun.
2. To develop motor skills and fundamentals of sports.
3. To teach children how to cooperate.
4. To develop a sense of achievement leading to positive self-esteem.
5. To develop interest in and a desire to continue participation in sports in later years.
6. To help develop independence through interdependent activities.
7. To promote and convey the values of society.
8. To contribute to moral development.
9. To develop social competencies.
10. To help bring the family together.
11. To develop speed, strength, endurance, coordination, flexibility, and agility.
12. To develop leadership skills.
13. To develop self-reliance and emotional stability by learning to make decisions and accept responsibilities.
14. To teach sportsmanship.
15. To develop initiative.
16. To teach children how to compete.
17. To teach goal setting and goal achievement.

Grantham Swim Club

Training Program

16 Values Gained From Swimming

Before you think your child can not commit to this sport for some reason, or you think your child would not be as good academically any more because of the commitment needed in swimming, read this carefully (please note this applies only to those swimmers that are dedicated to the sport).

We all want our children to learn values from the activities they participate in. Here are 16 values that they gain from swimming, and how they gain them.

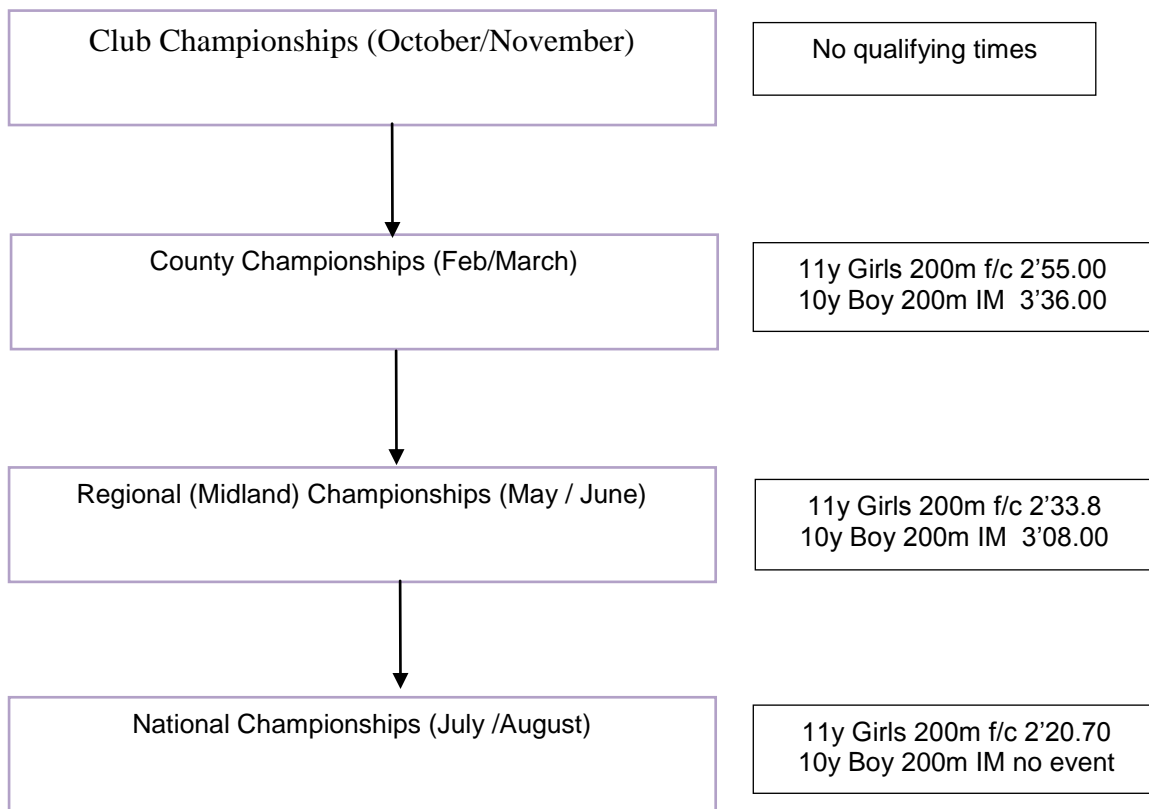
1. **Fitness.** Every study ever done by scientists says that swimming is the best overall sport for achieving total fitness and health. Instilling this at an early age will ensure that the individual retains this value for their whole lifetime.
2. **Self-Confidence.** Good swimming practice teaches each child learns that they can learn; that they can achieve; and that they can struggle and overcome adversity on a daily basis.
3. **Discipline.** To develop a good stroke technique you need discipline. A good practice session requires structure and discipline to consistently achieve what is required when it is required – an athlete who trains properly will see daily results. Best of all, it's self-discipline!
4. **Teamwork.** Swimming is impossible to do as an “individual sport”, it’s way, way too hard! Teammates encourage, lead, follow, and swimmers both contribute and receive ways to improve daily during practice sessions with their friends.
5. **Sportsmanship.** One of the key lessons learned is that everyone has their “moment in the sun” to shine in practice and in meets. Good coaches teach the lesson that we compete “with” people, not “against” people.
6. **Work Ethic.** No sport requires more physical effort than swimming. Lesser “talents” can outwork (over the long haul) the more talented athlete. Over time, athletes learn that their own efforts produce their own results.
7. **Delayed Gratification.** Very hard in today's youth society! But critical! Swimmers learn that the season (the year, the career) is long, and no one short term result can be called success or failure. What you do in practice today will show up in a week; a month; six months; a year; in a swim meet. Swimmers learn to accept that “things take time” to develop.
8. **Time Management.** Swimmers get better grades “in season”. Why? Because time is limited and swimmers are forced to make the best use of the time available to get the most out of it. When they are not in practice, they have plenty of time and things don't get done. A senior swimmer trains 5+ hours a day. With school, sleep, eating, studying, there is not much time left over. A child is forced to learn to be effective and efficient.

9. Dedication. Swimmers learn as they grow older that one cannot be “all things all the time” and that some sacrifices have to be made to achieve in other areas. This is also called focus and concentration. Invaluable life skills.
10. Skill Improvement. Because of the medium of water that we operate in, successful swimmers pay extreme attention to technique and skills, and more and more so as they improve and swim faster. It's all in the details. Another major life lesson.
11. Friendship and Respect. You may not “love” your teammates all the time, but you know how hard they work and you learn to respect that work. You also form friendships based on the solid values on this list. The best kind of friends are the ones you share values with, not dope, secrets and aggressions.
12. Goal Setting. Swimmers learn at an early age to measure success objectively and how to set new goals to motivate themselves, as they climb the ladder of swimming success.
13. Gender Equity. Any boy swimming with any girl in practice will tell you that females can practice better (practice tougher) than males. Any female competing with any male, will tell you that males can get up and race when they need to.
14. Appreciation of your support team. Mum and Dad keep you swimming. Coach teaches and inspires you. Swimmers learn that they stand on other people's shoulders to achieve. Great life lessons.
15. Courage. Each swimmer gets to be a “hero” in their lane, in their world every day. Every day they get a chance to test their courage (and succeed and fail in that regard) in practice. Courage is a “developed trait”. Swimming develops it well.
16. Compassion. Each swimmer succeeds. Each swimmer “fails” from time to time. Swimmers know how it feels. They can learn to support those who are struggling, applaud those who are succeeding, and be inspired by the work of others.

Swim Season

The Grantham Swim Club swim year runs from September until July. In August we usually have 2 weeks off. During the swim year, swimmers compete in various galas, be they leagues or open meets. The first competition, which swimmers do not need qualifying times for, is our Club Championships.

Swimming Competitions



Club Champs

- Age on 31st December
- At Grantham the Club Champs are split over 6 galas
- Gala 5/6 are Long distance (800m and 1500m)
- Short course event (25m Pool)
- Trophies / Records for each event 8/u , 9years, 11/u, 13/u, 15/u, 16/over
- Age Group awards for 1st,2nd,3rd for each year group (based on Bagcat Points)
- Sprint IM skins event at last gala (based on the top 8 swimmers in the 12/u age group and the top 8 swimmers in the 13/o 100m IM times)

County Championships

- Age on date of last County gala - usually end of March
- Qualifying times are short course or long course times converted to short course equivalent
- Times must be obtained from July – Jan (early Jan, usually after Boston Open)
- Long distance times (800m and 1500m) are required by December
- The Counties are held at Grantham and Louth swimming pools

- They are split over 8 galas (the 2 long distance events are held in February and have historically been held in the 50m long course pool at Corby. However, this is subject to change)
- Medals are awarded for the top three swimmers in each event and age group
- The Top 12 in each age group get a trophy based on British age group categories (Bagcats)

Midlands

- Age on last date of competition (Usually mid-June)
- Split into Age Group and Youth events (Age groups – for girls 13/u and for boys 14/u)
- Long Course at Coventry
- Short course Midlands in November (15 under and 16 over only age groups)

Nationals

- Age on last date of competition (July / August)
- Age Group and Youth (Age groups – for girls 13/u and for boys 14/u)
- Long Course at Sheffield

Open Galas

Besides the swimming championships, all swimmers are encouraged to do open galas. For some of the Open Meets, the swimmers do not need any qualifying times. The swimmer enters the Open Meet as an individual, but there often is a large contingent from Grantham present. Our club usually does:

Early January - BOSTON OPEN MEET in GRANTHAM

Mid-late April - CITY OF DERBY OPEN MEET in DERBY

May Day Bank Holiday weekend - TULIP OPEN MEET in SPALDING

Early July - DEEPINGS SPRINT OPEN MEET in DEEPINGS

September - GRAHAM SYKES MEMORIAL GALA in COVENTRY

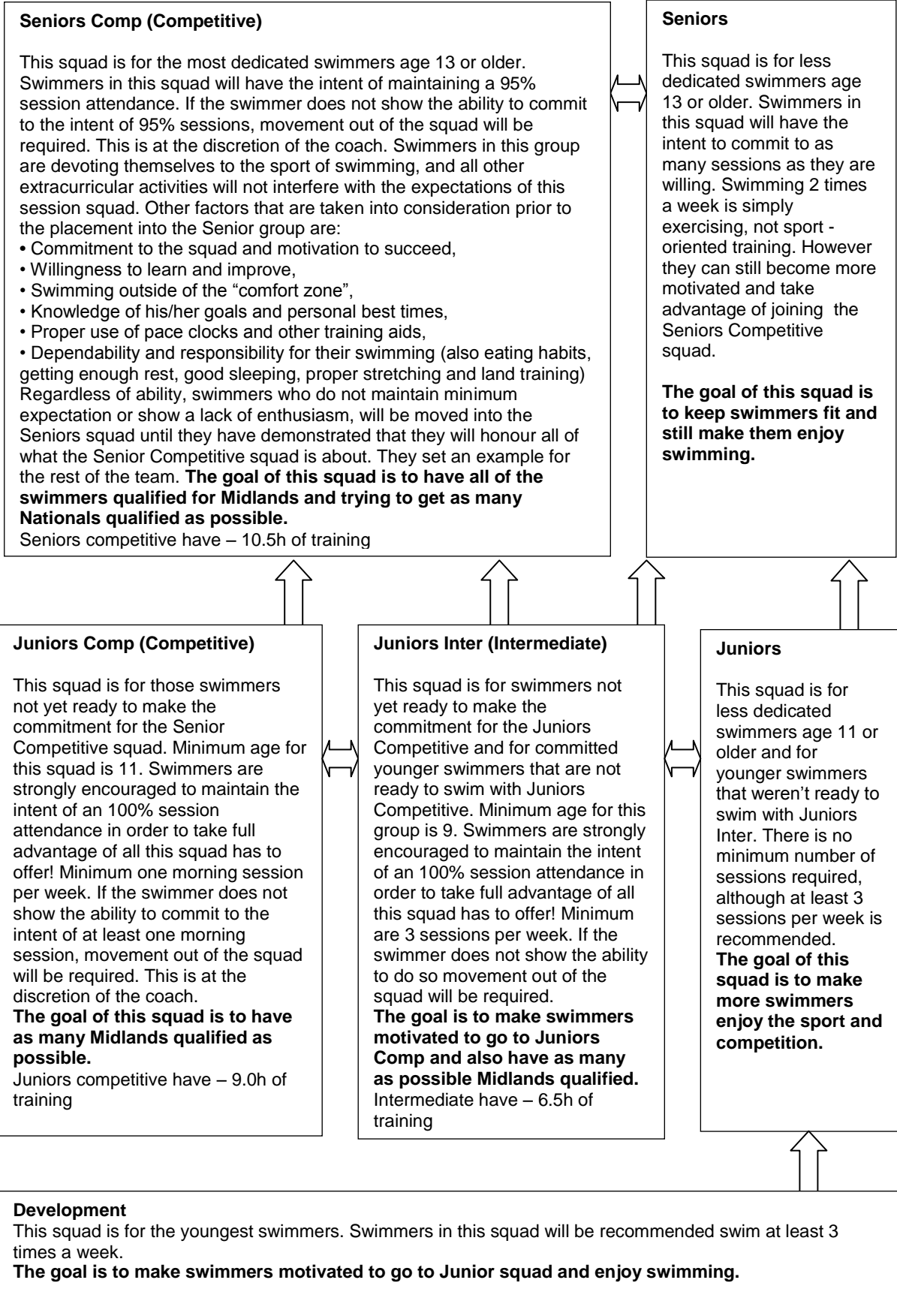
September - DEEPINGS 200M OPEN MEET in DEEPINGS

Swimming Leagues

Also during our training year we have teams competing in the Lincs Swimming League and the Fenland League. The teams are made up of the fastest eligible swimmers, picked by the coaching team. Participation in the league galas doesn't develop swimmers sufficiently, as most of the races are too short. However, this is still good experience and helps to build a team spirit. The Lincs Swimming League is divided into the Junior league and the Senior league. In this league our club swims against other clubs in Lincolnshire, with the fastest 6 clubs swimming against each other in the final. The Fenland League is a development league; it means that swimmers can be too fast to participate.

Club Structure – Squad Description and Requirements

To help you understand what our expectations will be, we have developed these guidelines. We will use these to help us determine what squad you will swim in. These are not rules and they can be adjusted to suit your individual needs and goals in swimming. These guidelines will assist us in promotions from squad to squad and setting direction in each squad. They help the athlete determine the objectives and responsibility of the squad they are entering. The main two factors that determine squad assignment is age and the result of T-30 test (an endurance test where each swimmer is asked to swim as many laps as he/she can in period of 30 minutes)



General Nutrition Guidelines for Young Swimmers

This guide has been produced in order to help you understand the dietary needs of our children, and young swimmers. It is not intended to replace the good practices that a lot of you are already doing, but for us to bring together our ideas to help our children.

Good nutrition is a life long commitment to healthy eating, which started when our children were being weaned as babies.

Bread, other Cereals and Potatoes - 5 portions a day

Base most of your meals on these starchy foods. Use wholemeal or wholegrain versions as much as possible and avoid adding lots of fat. These foods give us carbohydrates for energy, fibre, protein and some vitamins and minerals.

Fruit and Vegetables 5 portions a day

Fresh, frozen, juiced, tinned or dried fruit and vegetables are particularly good sources of vitamins, minerals and fibre. 200 ml carton of Fruit Juice is also counted as one portion of fruit.

High Protein Foods 2-3 portions a day

Include a variety of pulses (for example beans, lentils, peas and chick peas), nuts, seeds, eggs, soya, mycoprotein (Quorn) or wheat proteins to give you plenty of protein, minerals and vitamins

Milk and Dairy Products 2-3 portions a day

Good sources of calcium, protein and some vitamins. If you are avoiding dairy foods, choose fortified soya, rice or oat drinks or make sure that you eat other foods that are high in calcium.

Fatty and Sugary Foods 0-3 portions a day

Although we need to eat some fat, we all need to eat these foods sparingly and try low fat alternatives.

HEALTHY DIETS AND SWIMMING

All children use up a lot of energy during their normal daily routine. It is important that children eat the minimum of the required amounts from each of the food groups, and in particular, with any child doing lots of physical activity, that they increase their intake of foods high in carbohydrates (starchy foods).

In an ideal world, children should have a meal or snack high in carbohydrates at least one hour before swimming. All meals should be accompanied by a drink, preferably water. During

their training, your child must have enough drinks with them to last their session, a minimum of 500ml of water or diluted squash. After swimming, your child will be hungry, so a healthy snack (such as a banana, or a cereal bar) should always be in their swimming bag.

GALA DAYS

We all know that these can be very long days, so it is essential that your child has enough food and drink with them, and also always allow for delays in the running of the gala. At break times, your child will need to eat a good meal, so make them sit down to have their lunch.

BREAKFAST

It is important that your child has a sensible breakfast on the morning of the gala, if there is time. Some good suggestions are:

- breakfast cereals – fortified with vitamins and minerals, and served with semi-skimmed milk.
- bread and bread products – muffins, crumpets, pancakes with honey.
- cooked breakfast, with lean bacon, eggs, tomatoes, mushrooms and hash browns (all oven baked).

Drinks – this can be milk, fruit juice, or water.

Fresh fruit – bananas are very good source of energy, and again can be eaten en route.

LUNCH

It is better that you provide a packed lunch for your child. The following are some ideas for lunch time:

- filled rolls/sandwiches/pitta breads/bagels with a protein base – try and use wholemeal varieties if possible.
- pasta/rice/couscous salads with a protein base, and vegetables mixed through it. Add low fat salad dressing or mayonnaise, if required.
- chicken pieces.
- salad or crunchy crudités – add dips for extra flavour.
- fruit – this can be fresh, tinned, dried, fruit smoothies, or juice.
- dairy products – yoghurts, probiotic drinks, piece of cheese.
- drinks.

SNACKS

Probably the most important items that they will need during the day. Snacks should be healthy, and easy to eat on poolside. There is a large selection of snacks available in supermarkets. A few good ones to try are (but no sweets!):

- cereal bars, oatcakes, fruit/malt loaf, muffins, pancakes, teacakes, spiced buns.
- fruit – this can be as before.

FAST FOOD AND HEALTHY DIET

Fast foods are the foods which can be prepared and served very rapidly. Characteristically, fast food is referred as food that is sold in a restaurant or store with preheated or precooked ingredients, and served to the consumer in a form of package for take-out/take-away. Nowadays, fast food consumption has increased dramatically. Fast food statistics suggest that fast food is not good for your health when eaten more than once a week. Also fast food is one of the main reasons for the rapid increase in the rate of overweight and obesity also among kids. Fast food contains high amounts of highly sophisticated carbohydrates, saturated fats, sugars and sodium and also they are devoid of all the vital nutrients which play significant roles in the metabolism. The sugar level in the blood is increased by high levels of carbohydrates and this results in a higher production of insulin. The amounts of fat depositions are raised by high levels of insulin and leads to obesity and an overweight child.

SWEETS

Sweets are the second most dangerous element of modern diets. There is no benefit from eating sweets. Simply banning sugary foods and drinks and encouraging kids to replace junk with healthy, fibre-rich foods, decreases the risk of a child being overweight or obese. Nowadays kids consume so much sugar (sweets, soda etc) that their calorie intake is too great to be used for metabolism needs, and this excess of calories is stored as fat. This leads to a situation where every generation eats more and more sweets and modern society becomes more unhealthy and overweight. An excessive calorie intake from sweets can not be compensated for, even with regular sport training.

FINALLY

- Help your child to understand the principles of healthy eating.
- Make sure that your child drinks enough fluids every day.
- Avoid any Fast Food and eat at home
- At least limit sweet consumption by your child

What to Watch at a Swimming Gala

The following is a brief summary of the rules governing competitive swimming to help convey a better understanding of the sport.

The Racing Course

The length of a short course pool is 25 meters. Most racing courses have six to eight lanes. The long course pool is 50 meters long.

Freestyle Events

In a freestyle event, competitors may swim any stroke they wish, the usual stroke being the Front Crawl, characterized by the alternate overhand motion of the arms.

Backstroke Events

In backstroke, swimmers must stay on their backs except during turns. The stroke is an alternating motion of the arms. Rules allow a swimmer to turn over and do flip turns as in freestyle, before touching the wall with their feet. Backstroke turn rules are a source of continuous confusion for the inexperienced.

Breaststroke Events

Perhaps one of the most difficult strokes to master, the breaststroke requires simultaneous movements of the arms on the same horizontal plane. The hands are pushed forward from the breast on or under the surface of the water and brought backward in the propulsive stage of the stroke simultaneously. The kick is a simultaneous thrust of the legs. No flutter or dolphin kicking is allowed. At each turn a swimmer must touch with both hands at the same time.

Butterfly Events

The most beautiful and physically demanding stroke, the butterfly features the simultaneous overhead stroke of the arms combined with the dolphin kick. The dolphin kick features both legs moving up and down together. No flutter kicking is allowed.

Individual Medley Events

The individual medley, commonly referred to as the "IM," features all four competitive strokes. The swimmer begins with the butterfly, then the backstroke, the breaststroke next and finally the freestyle.

Medley Relay

In the medley relay, the four strokes are swum by four different swimmers. The relay begins with the backstroke, then the breaststroke, followed by the butterfly, and finally the freestyle.

Freestyle Relay

There are few freestyle relays that compete over 100, 200, 400 or 800 meters. Four swimmers each swim a quarter of the race.

It is paramount that in any relay, the oncoming swimmer must touch the wall before the outgoing swimmer starts their leg of the race.

**GRANTHAM SWIM
CLUB
PARENTS**

Your role as Parent

Competitive swimming provides many benefits to young athletes, such as self-discipline, good sportsmanship, time management skills and physical fitness. Competition allows the swimmer to experience both success and defeat in a positive environment. Parents, while not participants on their child's team, contribute to the success of both the child and the team.

Be Enthusiastic and Supportive

As parents, you can make a major contribution to your child's success by providing a stable, loving and supportive environment and by serving as positive role models. Always show good sportsmanship toward coaches, officials, other parents, opponents, and teammates. Supply the love, the support and the encouragement necessary to help your young athlete always feel like a winner. Encourage your child to establish his or her own goals and make progress towards them. This will help your child develop a positive self-image. Be careful not to impose your own standards and goals.

Let the Coach Do the Coaching

The best way to help your child achieve his or her goals is to remember that you are the parent and the coach is the coach. It is important that swimmers receive all the technical information and constructive criticism of their performance at galas and during sessions from only one source – their coach. Too much input, from too many sources will only confuse and overwhelm your swimmer.

Role of the Parent

1. Try to get the swimmer to session regularly and on time. Try to attend galas to watch your child swim.
2. Become an active volunteer to show your child that you support their team.
3. Give credit to the swimmer when an improvement is made, whether it was the winning time or not.
4. Set an example of a healthy attitude toward competition that your child would like to see and follow.
5. Check with the coaches whenever you have a question pertaining to the team and your child's participation. Please try to avoid such enquiries during sessions.
6. Please have the swimmer at the gala on time! It is unfair both to the swimmer and to the coaching staff to have the swimmer show up after instructions have already been given and administrative adjustments made.
7. Check with coaches before you leave a gala to make sure the swimmer is really finished and not in a relay.
8. Parents should conduct themselves in an orderly manner while attending galas. They are there to offer support as a booster of their swimmers and their whole team, and the staff.

It is the function of the coach to advise swimmers how to swim their events and to review the results with them.

9. Give encouragement to the swimmer when needed.
10. Treat all swimmers, parents, coaches and officials with respect and consideration. (The way you and your swimmer want to be treated.)
11. Remember, the attitudes and behaviours of the parents in regard to their outlook on the sport, has an important effect on the child. Every child can gain from his experience whether or not he ever wins a single race. The important thing is to keep on striving to do better next time. The secret is not to produce great swimmers, but to produce great young people who happen to swim.
12. Do not try to talk to or communicate with your child during sessions. The entire attention of the swimmer should be given to the coaches.
13. Avoid giving materialistic rewards for good performances. It will set you up for the rest of the child's life to always owe them something for the things they do. It also de-values the accomplishment itself, and puts all the emphasis on the prize.
14. Avoid participating in negative conversations about any swimmers, opponents, parents, facilities or coaches.

The Ten Commandments for Parents of Athletic Children

- 1 Make sure your child knows that - win or lose, scared or heroic -- you love him/her, appreciate their efforts, and are not disappointed in them. This will allow them to do their best without a fear of failure. Be the person in their life they can look to for constant positive reinforcement.
- 2 Try your best to be completely honest about your child's athletic ability, his/hers competitive attitude, their sportsmanship, and their actual skill level.
- 3 Be helpful, but don't coach him/her on the way to the pool or on the way back, or at breakfast, and so on. It's tough not to, but it's a lot tougher for the child to be inundated with advice, pep talks and often critical instruction.
- 4 Teach them to enjoy the thrill of competition, to be "out there trying," to be working to improve his/her swimming skills and attitudes. Help him/her to develop the feel for competing, for trying hard, for having fun.
- 5 Try not to relive your athletic life through your child in a way that creates pressure; you lost as well as won. You were frightened, you backed off at times, and you were not always heroic. Don't pressure your child because of your pride. Athletic children need their parents so you must not withdraw. Just remember there is a thinking, feeling, sensitive free spirit out there in that uniform who needs a lot of understanding, especially when his world turns bad. If he/she is comfortable with you -- win or lose -- he/she is on their way to maximum achievement and enjoyment.
- 6 Don't compete with the coach. If the coach becomes an authority figure, it will run from enchantment to disenchantment, etc., with your athlete.

- 7 Don't compare the skill, courage, or attitudes of your child with other members of the team, at least within his/her hearing.
- 8 Get to know the coach so that you can be assured that his/her philosophy, attitudes, ethics, and knowledge are such that you are happy to have your child under his/her leadership.
- 9 Always remember that children tend to exaggerate, both when praised and when criticized. Temper your reaction and investigate before over-reacting.
- 10 Make a point of understanding courage, and the fact that it is relative. Some of us can climb mountains, and are afraid to fight. Some of us will fight, but turn to jelly if a bee approaches. Everyone is frightened in certain areas. Explain that courage is not the absence of fear, but a means of doing something in spite of fear or discomfort.

A short guide to Grantham Swim Club Parents based on ASA LTAD (Long Term Athlete Development)

For parents of the swimmers in the Development Squad (squad that trains from 4.30-5.30 on Sunday and from 6.00 till 7.00 on Thursday)

1. Be excited, if your child sees you are excited about his/her swimming he/she will be too
2. Support your child by praising each time he/she trained well – make sure that he/she knows that this is the only thing you (and the coach) expect
3. Support your child by criticizing each time he/she pulls the rope during the session, doesn't do what he/she was told to, doesn't do tumble turns, has too many toilet breaks, plays with the goggles or gets out to stretch to avoid swimming – make sure he/she knows that swimming this way is not acceptable to you (and the coach)
4. Try to make your child swim at least three times a week (less than this will never make them better and never make them feel good about themselves)
5. Try to encourage your child to do one morning session. The session for Development Squad is now on a Tuesday morning.
6. Encourage them to be competitive. If your child learns the lesson of how to be successful (it means being as good as he/she can be) in swimming, he/she will most likely be successful in his/her life.
7. Encourage to compete. As long as kids are picked by coaches to do the leagues, you must sign your child up to do all the Club Champs Galas, all our official time trials, and some of the Open Meet galas that have no entry times.
8. Praise your child for racing well.
9. Make sure that you never say that this race, this gala is not about the winning. Life is about winning. However, your child and you must understand that being competitive in sport is not winning with others, but winning with his/herself – ie achieving PBs
10. Make sure that your child understands that working hard during sessions makes them better in races.

11. Make sure that your swimmer doesn't eat a big meal in the 2 hours before the training session or gala. As a parent, it is your responsibility if your child gets sick and stops everyone from training or racing. Two hours is enough to safely digest the meal that your child ate.
12. There is nothing wrong with expecting excellence from your child. Never underestimate him/her by not setting high standards.

For the parents of the swimmers in the Junior Squad (squad that trains from 5.30-7.00 on Sunday and from 7.00 till 8.00 on Thursday)

1. Be excited, if your child sees you are excited about his/her swimming he/she will be too
2. Support your child by praising each time he/she trains well – make sure that he/she knows that this is the only thing you (and the coach) expect
3. Support your child by criticizing each time he/she pulls the rope during the session, doesn't do what he/she was told to, doesn't do tumble turns, has toilet breaks each session, plays with their goggles or gets out to stretch to avoid swimming – make sure he/she knows that swimming this way is not acceptable to you (and the coach)
4. Try to make your child swim at least three times a week and be very consistent with this number. Having breaks from training means breaking the training cycle, this means that the swimmer will never build any solid training base and will never succeed. Swimming twice a week is exercising not training.
5. Try to encourage your child to do one morning session. The session for the Junior Squad is now on Thursday morning.
6. If you think 10 hours training per week is too much for your child and they will not be successful in school, you can not be further from the truth. Statistics say that swimmers in particular, can organize their time better and get better grades in school than other kids. It doesn't matter if your child trains 10 or 20 hours per week. If your child learns how to work hard, how to set and achieve goals, how to endure daily training, they will do much better in any area of their life, including self education. Successful kids in swimming are very successful in school.
7. Encourage them to be competitive. If your child learns the lesson of how to be successful (it means being as good as he/she can be) in swimming, he/she will most likely be successful in his/her life.
8. Encourage them to compete. As long as kids are picked by coaches to do the leagues, you must sign your child up to do all the Club Champs Galas, all our official time trials, and some of the Open Meet galas that have no entry times.
9. Make your child swim everything. Swimmers should never pick what he/she wants to swim. To develop the swimmer he/she must swim 400/800m and even 1500 meters and 200 IM frequently. At this stage there is no one swimmer that is either a sprinter or a distance swimmer. The swimmer needs to swim all strokes and distances to make their full development possible.

10. Make sure you and your child understand different intensities. In order to fully take advantage of the training preparation, the swimmer needs to sometimes swim steady, longer distances, with medium intensity (aerobic training) and sometimes shorter distances but very intense (anaerobic intensity). Swimmers that are not able to “push” himself/herself and develop anaerobic metabolism will swim an average of 10% slower in races. This means, for example, 8 seconds slower in the race that averages 1 minute and 20 seconds!
11. Encourage your swimmer to do land training. We are not increasing muscle mass, but we improve the overall strength of the body – we make your child healthy. In land training the main focus is the core muscles. Without strong, proper developed muscles your child may always have a curved posture and may be more limited in any daily activities. Do you sometimes experience lower back pain when you are lifting things? This is caused by weak core muscles, so lets make your child more healthy than you.
12. Make sure that your child tries to win every race. They should win within their own limitations not those of other swimmers – so expect PBs from your child
13. Make sure that your child understands that working hard during sessions makes them better in races.
14. Make sure that your child eats a proper healthy diet. There is nothing wrong with almost completely banning eating sweets or fast-food. Moreover, eating sweets during a gala has a major negative impact on races, because it causes the wrong insulin reaction.
15. Make sure that your swimmer doesn't eat a big meal in the 2 hours before the training session or gala. As a parent, it is your responsibility if your child gets sick and stops everyone from training or racing. Two hours is enough to safely digest the meal that your child ate.
16. Make sure that you support your coach even when he moves your child down a lane, or moves him/her out of the sport squad due to a poor training/work ethic. In this squad we all have to teach responsibility. If the child does not reach the standard of the squad, they will be moved down until he/she works hard again to show the coach that they are ready to be moved back. In this process, you as a parent can take a major role. Encourage the swimmer, acknowledge the reason why your child was moved down, and make sure the swimmer also understands this.
17. Make sure that you understand that the coach wants your child be as good as he/she can possibly be. The coach wants your child to succeed. If you want the same, never try to coach your child, and only support your child.
18. There is nothing wrong with expecting excellence from your child. Never underestimate him/her by not setting high standards.

For the parents of the swimmer in the Junior and Senior Sport Squad:

1. Be excited, if your child see you are excited about his/her swimming he/she will be too
2. Support your child by praising them each time he/she trained well – make sure that he/she knows that this is the only thing you (and the coach) expect
3. Support your child by criticizing each time he/she pulls on the rope during the session, doesn't do what he/she was told to, doesn't do tumble turns, has toilet breaks in each session, plays with their goggles or gets out to stretch to avoid swimming – make sure he/she knows that swimming this way is not acceptable to you (and the coach)
4. Try to make your child do at least one morning session and do all evening sessions available. Be very consistent with attendance. Having breaks from training means breaking the training cycle, this means that the swimmer will never build any solid training base and will never succeed. .
5. If you think 10 hours training per week is too much for your child to be successful in school you can not be further from truth. Statistics say that swimmers, in particular, can organize their time better and get better grades in school than other kids. It doesn't matter if your child trains 10 or 20 hours per week. If your child learns how to work hard, how to set and achieve goals, how to endure daily training, they will do much better in any area of their life, including self education. Kids who are successful in swimming are very successful in school.
6. Make your child swim everything at the beginning of the season. A swimmer should never pick what he/she swims. Seniors should, during the endurance training phase, swim 400/800 and 1500 meters and 400 IM frequently. A swimmer needs to swim everything to get ready for further specialization.
7. Make sure you and your child understand different intensities. In order to fully take advantage of the training preparation, the swimmer needs to sometimes swim steady, longer distances, with medium intensity (aerobic training) and sometimes shorter distances but very intense (anaerobic intensity). Swimmers that are not able to “push” himself/herself and develop anaerobic metabolism will swim an average of 10% slower in races. This means, for example, 8 seconds slower in a race that averages 1 minute and 20 seconds!
8. Encourage your swimmer to do land training. We don't build muscle mass, but we improve overall strength of the body – we make your child healthy. In land training the main focus is the core muscles. Without strong, proper developed muscles your child may always have a curved posture and may be much more limited in their daily activities. Do you sometimes experience lower back pain when you are lifting things? This is caused by weak core muscles, so lets make your child be more healthy than you.
9. Make sure that your child tries to win every race. They should win within his/her limitation not that of other swimmers – so expect PBs

10. Make sure that your child understands that working hard during sessions makes them better in races.
11. Make sure that your child understands that working hard during sessions doesn't always make him/her faster than other swimmers that don't train as hard. It is all based on talent. Good life lesson – life is not fair.
12. Make sure that your child does eat a proper healthy diet. There is nothing wrong with banning eating sweets or fast-food. Moreover, eating sweets during a gala has a major negative impact on races, because it causes the wrong insulin reaction.
13. Make sure that your swimmer doesn't eat a big meal in the 2 hours before the training session or gala. As a parent, it is your responsibility if your child gets sick and stops everyone from training or racing. Two hours is enough to safely digest the meal that your child ate.
14. Make sure that you support your coach even when he moves your child down a lane, or moves him/her out of the sport squad due to a poor training/work ethic. In this squad we all have to teach responsibility. If the child does not reach the standard of the squad, they will be moved down until he/she works hard again to show the coach that they are ready to be moved back. In this process, you as a parent can take a major role. Encourage the swimmer, acknowledge the reason why your child was moved down, and make sure the swimmer also understands this.
15. Make sure that you understand that the coach wants your child be as good as he/she can possibly be. The coach wants your child to succeed. If you want the same never try to coach your child, and only support your child.
16. Swimming is one of the most challenging sports. And it takes a great amount of mental toughness to be successful. It is good to understand that you as a parent can be overprotective in your daily life, but not your coach. To be successful, the senior swimmer needs to endure tough sessions, tough expectations, tough races and tough coaching. There is no other way to do it. You let the coach be tougher on your child and it is more likely that your child will progress quicker in the sport. You make the coach be softer on your child and it is more likely that your child will never reach his/her potential. Support the toughness, because this builds the core of the swimmer, as long as it is done in a respectful manner. Note, that adult life can be very tough sometimes, so make your child be ready for it.
17. There is nothing wrong with expecting excellence from your child. Never underestimate him/her by not setting high standards.

Most frequently asked questions about training

How often should my child swim?

It depends on age, ability and experience. But if your child wants to be successful, bear this in mind:

- 1 session per week would simply maintain your child's fitness
- 2 sessions per week would also just your child's fitness. This is not enough for training, this is only 60% of the effect of 3 training sessions per week
- 3 sessions per week – this is the minimum number for any sport training, any swimmer thinking about competing should do at least 3 sessions per week
- 4 sessions per week – training effect is 105-113% compared to 3 sessions per week
- 5-6 sessions per week – training effect is 120-140% compared to 3 sessions per week

It comes down to this – the more you train – the better you will be. This is your choice.

My child can not make three sessions per week, so we run instead. Is this ok?

Unfortunately no. In sport we train specific movements, specific metabolism. Training in other sports, although recommended for general development, would have not much of an effect on swimming. In order to train to be a swimmer, you have to do swimming sessions.

Don't we train too much in Grantham Swim Club?

No, most of the national federations recommend more training than the average swimmer does in GSC.

Do we need a break in August?

Yes, even the best Olympic swimmers sometimes take a break from swimming. It is good to have time to "refuel the batteries". However, remember that the time needed to bring fitness back is roughly as long as the break. So if you take 4 weeks break, the next 4 weeks you will spend bringing your fitness back, before you start regular training.

What is the training cycle?

This is the period where you have a phase of general preparation, specific preparation, taper and gala. It is really important to work properly, with different intensities in different phases so the swimmer can prepare better for the gala. The art of coaching is to provide optimal intensities throughout the cycle.

What is the taper?

The taper is the end of the training cycle, where the swimmer is doing less intense work. In this time the swimmer is getting ready for his/her best performance in the season. If the swimmer worked with proper intensities during the whole season, taper fitness usually

raises up to 7%. If the swimmer didn't work very well, then the taper will not bring any major improvement.

Do we taper before every gala?

No. Usually swimmers are tapered once or twice a year. To see the positive effect of tapering, the swimmer first needs to work systematically without any breaks for at least half a year.

My child is a sprinter, so why does he/she need to do T-30 or any endurance sets?

The young swimmer is neither sprinter nor distance swimmer. However, some swimmers are early-maturers and can easily overpower those smaller swimmers in shorter races. That's why they think they are sprinters. Swimmers up to age of 15-17 are not specialized by distance or stroke, because their metabolism is not fully developed yet. They are all IM-ers and distance swimmers. The developing years is the time to build endurance. The best, world ranked sprinters, also had to train in endurance at first.

My child works so hard but is never picked to the leagues, because he/she is still too slow. Why?

To be fair for everyone we have to pick the fastest kids to swim in the leagues. However, you still can sign up your child for open galas and get some solid races. If your child works hard, stay patient. Most likely he/she is a late-maturer and will shine after puberty growth. Usually those late-maturers are much faster in their senior years than those kids that become mature early.

What is the chronological age?

The number of years a person has lived.

What is the biological age?

Age determined by physiology rather than chronology. Kids can vary greatly in biological age before puberty. It is reported that kids aged between 10-16 may vary in their biological development by up to 5 years. Now you know why your little child is not a Midland swimmer.....yet.