

At the Pool: Guidelines and Procedures



Cheltenham Amateur Swimming Club

Handbook for Swimmers, Parents, and Coaches

Expectations for Training

Swimmers

Arrive On Time

Every minute counts! Coaches will have planned the session down to the minute and everything is important for our swimmers' improvement. Respect yourself, your teammates, your coaches, and the club you proudly wear on your cap by showing up on time (5 minutes early) ready to give your best effort. Use the toilet and fill your water bottle beforehand.

Be Prepared

Make sure you have all your training equipment with you at every session. This will at the very least include your cap, water bottle, goggles, and fins. All competitive squads require additional equipment; check the Equipment List on Team App for more information.

Uniforms at Training

The only uniform component we require at training is the Cheltenham team cap. Wear this cap with pride! When you are in the middle of a difficult training set, look around at your teammates and know that you are part of something greater than yourself. You will feel unstoppable.

Be a Supportive Teammate

Your fellow teammates are one of the most important parts of your swimming experience. Treat each other as you would like to be treated: praise and congratulate them on their achievements; motivate them when they need your support. We are stronger together.

Know What Really Ails You

Running a fever? Stay home and rest. Stubbed your toe? Have a headache? Gotten injections? Have a scratch that might sting for the first few minutes you're in the water? Get in the pool!

Let Your Coaches Know if You Have an Injury

Communication is key. Let your coaches know if you have a medical reason to modify your session due to injury or sickness. Your coaches can't read your mind but they will be happy to modify your session as deemed necessary.

Respect Your Coaches

Your coaches have a wealth of experience and knowledge that they want to pass down to you in order to help make you the best swimmer, athlete, and person you can be. Your coaches use their time to thoughtfully plan your sessions in advance, and think of tens of different ways to deliver feedback that will make you a better swimmer. They wake up early, go home late, walk around with wet feet, and talk until their voices go hoarse so that Cheltenham swimmers will improve and earn a sense of accomplishment in the pool.

Rather than trying to negotiate a different set from the one your coaches have planned for you, remember that your coaches have already thought of your overall season plan, the work you have done in recent times, upcoming meets, and the many other ways to formulate your session. Whichever session your coaches present to you is the best session for you. Negotiating or complaining only detracts not only from the benefit you would gain from the session, but from your teammates' experiences as well. Nobody likes to have their teammate bring doubts about if the training is beneficial to them or not. If you have a question about how the session is meant to help you, ask your coach privately.

If your coach is talking to you, listen. If your coach asks you to stop talking, stop talking. If your coach asks you to swim in a particular way, swim. If your coach asks you to do it again, then do it again. Everything your coach asks you to do is for a reason.

Be Honest

Coaches can tell when your goggles don't really need fixing. Coaches have been there, done that, and know all the procrastination and lollygagging tricks in the book. If you are having trouble getting motivated for a set, let your coaches know. If your coaches think you need their expert advice, they will be more than happy to give it and help you get motivated again. If this is a common occurrence and your coaches think you just need to swim even though you think the session is too difficult, they will tell you to swim.

Parents

Let Cheltenham Give Your Swimmer 100%

Coaches have a limited amount of time each day with our swimmers. Every minute counts and coaches work hard to ensure they give swimmers as much beneficial feedback as possible.

If you have a question you would like to ask of a coach, please either wait until after the final squad of the day is done swimming and the coach has time to speak with you, or send a message on Team App to arrange a time to speak with the coach. This ensures that coaches are able to give the necessary attention to all our swimmers. If a coach, using his or her discretion, feels there is an opportune time to speak with parents on deck during the session, the coach will initiate the conversation.

Let Swimmers Fully Engage with Coaches

The training session is our coaches' small window of opportunity to teach swimmers many different lessons about this sport, about being an athlete, and about being part of a team. Once the session starts, please take a step back and allow your swimmer to fully engage in the squad environment. If your swimmer has to divide his or her attention between you and the team, your swimmer will fall behind on the learning opportunities of the day. Parents are more than welcome to watch the session, but not get involved during the training timeframe. Please sit on the benches at Waves and refrain from communicating with your child or entering the area behind the wall where swimmers finish the sets (east end of pool).

Communication is Key

If you are interested in the world of swimming and would like to know more about the technique, skills, or training programs we are delivering to your swimmer, please ask your child's coach. Our coaches are more than happy to answer questions, though they may ask you to arrange a time for the discussion rather than on pool deck if the session is busy.

Be Respectful

We are all on the same team. We expect our parents to be respectful to each other, to our swimmers, and to our coaches.

Pick-Up Times

Ensure you are timely in picking up your child after practice. Parents of swimmers aged 12 and younger should be on deck at the time which training finishes. Older swimmers may make arrangements to meet parents outside at a predesignated area of the car park.

Coaches

Arrive On Time and Prepared

Coaches will have planned sessions beforehand and will arrive on time to deliver the best quality of session as possible.

Feedback

Coaches analyze and consider their swimmers' movements and give feedback based on how the swimmer can improve his or her performance.

Expectations and Standards

Cheltenham sets high expectations and standards of our swimmers, which coaches enforce so that our swimmers can achieve their potential. Coaches stick to these standards and ask swimmers to repeat a set if the quality was not up to par based on the coach's expectation.

We hope our swimmers will feel motivated to rise to high expectations and standards in order to create an environment of excellence for themselves and their teammates. Coaches strive to provide a culture which benefits the team as a whole.

Working with Parents

Coaches understand that open, respectful communication with parents is an important aspect of providing a quality program for Cheltenham swimmers. If a coach feels that a one-on-one conversation with a swimmer's parents is necessary to the growth and development of the swimmer as an athlete, the coach will request this discussion. Parent-Coach chats are great ways to ensure that all parties are on the same page.

Expectations for Meets

Swimmers

Uniform

Cheltenham Swimming Club has a proud history in competitive swimming. As such, we encourage all club members to wear our uniform with pride. There is nothing better than looking at your teammates at swim meets and training, and feeling like you are a part of something greater than yourself. You are a part of our team. Go Chelt!

In training, we expect our swimmers to wear the black Cheltenham cap. **At competitions, the required uniform consists of our team cap and shirt.** Team photos will be taken only with those who are wearing their uniform. If you do not yet have a uniform, you should at the very least wear black-only or black and red clothing.

Being with your team on deck

Cheltenham Swimming Club considers all our members to be a part of a team. We value teamwork and unity as fundamental to the success of all our athletes. Swimming is a team sport, and achieving – whether it is a small PB or swimming a National Qualifying time – feels best when your teammates are by your side and supporting you. Our team culture is such that we train together, race together, and support each other every step of the way. Sitting with teammates on deck and cheering for them when they're swimming builds a strong team dynamic that will help our swimmers be faster and more confident in the water. This behaviour also teaches independence and develops swimmers into stronger competitors.

Cheltenham swimmers are to arrive at the meet on time for warm-ups and ask their coach where the team will be "camped" for the day. If the meet is at MSAC, usually swimmers will store their bags on deck at the indoor pool and will be mostly with each other in the indoor pool, unless the meet is outside and a teammate is racing, in which case we will go outdoors to support the racing swimmer.

Bring warm clothes, water bottle, and all necessary equipment

Being prepared for the meet is the easiest way to ensure you are able to swim to the best of your ability. Swimmers need to keep their bodies warm and comfortable while not swimming, thus you should have an extra set of clothes (track pants and a jumper) that you can wear over your bathers at a meet. Hydration is also essential and all swimmers should bring their water bottles to meets as well as to marshalling. Healthy snacks such as grapes, oranges, apples, and sandwiches are necessary at swim meets.

Know your event numbers and be able to find your heats and lanes

Have a look at the event numbers the night before a meet and work out what you will be swimming. On the day of the meet, write your event numbers on your hand; if the Meet Program is published you should also write your heats and lanes for each event. When you get to the meet, know where you can find the Meet Program (it will usually be posted on a wall, near Marshalling). Swimmers are in charge of knowing their events, heats, and lanes.

Arrive on time for initial warm up

A proper warm up is the essential starting point for a good race. Swimmers need to feel the water and allow their bodies and minds to acclimate to the meet. Cheltenham coaches will run swimmers through a proper meet warm-up and ensure the swimmers have the foundation for a successful meet.

Make sure to arrive on time for warm-up as advertised (or as advised by your coach). Immediately find your coach and let them know you are at the meet. If the meet is outdoors at MSAC, swimmers should bring their bags on deck with them so they have warm clothes to change into after the warm up, and the swimmers will not have to travel up and down to the stands and back to the pool. If the meet is at MSAC and is indoors, swimmers should bring their bags downstairs and prepare to “camp” on deck for the meet; if the meet is elsewhere, ask your coach where the camping area is.

Talk to your coach before the race

Coaches are at meets to educate swimmers and help them in every aspect possible. While swimmers are encouraged to spend time and socialise with each other on deck, before each race coaches will expect swimmers to find them and discuss the race plan.

Find your coach when the marshalling one or two events before yours is being called. At MSAC, if the meet is outdoors, you may have to check both the indoor and outdoor pool in order to find your coach as coaches will be running between both pools for races and recovery swims. It is the swimmers’ responsibility to find their coach before the race.

Marshall on Time

Having your events, heats, and lanes on your hand will ensure you are prepared to go to Marshalling on time. When you arrive at a meet, find where the Marshalling will be published; sometimes this is on the scoreboard and sometimes it can be on a whiteboard.

Make sure to find your coach an event or two before your event is being called to Marshall; when your event is being called swimmers should walk to the Marshalling room. You want

to be on time to Marshalling to ensure you are able to swim in your event. If you are late, your heat may go without you and you may miss your opportunity to swim the event.

Talk to Your Coach after the Race

Swim meets are valuable opportunities for swimmers to learn both how to improve their racing and their training. After each race, coaches will have feedback they need to communicate to the swimmer to ensure the swimmer learns from the race and has focus points for next time. It is the swimmers' responsibility to find their coach after the race.

Recovery after the Race

Swimmers need to recover after races to reduce their heart rate and help remove lactic acid created by the race they have just completed. Coaches will advise the swimmer of how far to swim in their warm-down and what to include in it. Swimmers are expected to complete this recovery even if the coaches are not present with the swimmer at the time of the warm-down.

Warm up for the next race

Completing a warm-up for the next race is essential for preparing the body; as such swimmers are expected to warm up before each race. Sometimes the warm-up can be included in the warm-down if there is insufficient time between races; in either case the coach will advise the swimmer of the best recovery and preparation plan.

Relays

It is an honour and a privilege to be a member of a Cheltenham relay at any meet. If our coaches have selected a swimmer to be part of a relay, that means the coach has carefully considered the swimmer's capabilities and believes the relay is a good opportunity for the swimmer's development.

It is important that all swimmers and parents realise that relay teams are selected based on a number of factors and are always selected with the team's best interest in mind. All relay teams are selected by the coaches with the final decision being made by the head coach.

Training on Meet Days

It is up to your coach if you will train on the same day as you have competed. At the junior level, we have a blanket policy that swimmers will focus only on the competition event and not train the same night or morning of a meet. At the senior level, your coach will advise if he or she wants you to train on the same day as a meet or not.

Parents

Helping Prepare your Swimmer

The night before a meet, parents can help prepare their swimmer by encouraging them to pack their necessary belongings so the swimmer does not need to worry about having all their equipment on the day of the competition. Male swimmers aged 11 years and under will need to wear short bathers, and female swimmers 11 and under will need to wear bathers without a zipper and which do not extend below the hips. Other essential meet belongings include a towel or two, Cheltenham cap, goggles, team uniform to wear on deck (including warm clothes like the team deck coat), water bottle, and food.

Nutrition Before and During a Meet

Parents should help ensure swimmers are eating nutritious food the night before the competition, such as pasta. During the competition, snacks such as grapes, apples, oranges, and sandwiches are best for swimmers' performances. Junk food such as lollies, chocolates, foods with refined sugar, and sugary drinks will impede swimmers' performances by giving them a quick sugar rush followed by a crash of their energy and mood.

Supporters' Uniform

When swimmers look into the stands and are able to see their team being supported, swimmers feel emboldened and more confident about performing on the big stage (in the pool). We hope all our parents, volunteers, and supporters will be proud to wear the Cheltenham supporter uniform and cheer for all our swimmers during races. This is a great way for parents and guardians to support their children and recognize all their hard work that they have done in the pool.

Cheltenham supporters are expected to sit together in the stands and celebrate our swimmers. At MSAC, we sit in the section closest to the starting blocks on the west side of the pool. This is also time that parents get to socialize with each other and enjoy being part of a team of dedicated families.

Parents on Deck

The Swimming Victoria policy is that only swimmers, meet officials, volunteers, and coaches may be on deck during a swim meet. This is to ensure swimmers' safety and is a policy with swimmers' best interests in mind. It also helps swimmers develop their independence and be part of our team.

Your swimmer will appreciate your support from the stands, and will enjoy their time on deck with their teammates. This time is crucial towards building relationships and a stronger team.

Parents may need to volunteer at meets

It takes a team effort to run a meet; often the volunteer team consists of representatives from the clubs involved in the meet. Clubs provide volunteers, generally time-keepers, based on the number of their swimmers attending the meet.

Usually we are able to ask who would like to volunteer at meets, and make a roster based on parents' preferences. Sometimes, however, we find difficulty in acquiring enough volunteers to fill the spaces we need; in this case Cheltenham will develop a roster and let parents know that they are expected to volunteer. It is a requirement that if your child is entered in to a swimming meet, you must make yourself available for volunteer duties. If unable to assist it is your responsibility to make alternative arrangements by finding a replacement volunteer.

Parents support their swimmers; Coaches coach the swimmers

Our club is aware that parents care deeply about their swimmers and want to see their children succeed. We know that parents want to help their children perform well. The best way for parents to support their children is to help them remain positive and enjoy their swimming experience.

If a child swims a time that is slower than his or her Personal Best, let the coach talk with the swimmer about what happened during the race. If a swimmer races with technique that is seemingly not efficient, let the coach discuss the swimmer's technique. Chances are that the coach has been working with the swimmers on his or her technique before the meet and the swimmer has tried to implement it during the race, but sometimes it can be difficult to race using a different technique. Your support to your swimmer will mean a lot to them, especially when they have had a race about which they are not happy. Praise their effort, let them know they can do better next time, make them feel better about themselves and happy to be a swimmer. *Leave the coaching to our coaches.*

Children look up to their parents and follow their examples. We expect Cheltenham parents to obey all swimming rules, be respectful of fellow competitors, and be gracious in victory and dignified in defeat.

Coaches

Coaches Support our Swimmers

Cheltenham coaches' primary role is to use their expertise to help our swimmers achieve to the best of their ability and as part of the Cheltenham team.

Coaches arrive at the pool at the start of the initial warm-up and will facilitate the dryland and warm-up. Coaches will also let swimmers know where will be the best area for them to store their bags during the meet, and where is best to "camp" while not racing, doing the warm-up or recovery, or cheering for Cheltenham teammates.

Our coaches will be present for all races to be swum by Cheltenham swimmers at targeted meets.

Race Plans and Feedback

Coaches will speak to swimmers before their races to finalise their race plan and give them the confidence for their competition. Afterwards, the coach will give swimmers feedback based on the coach's observation of the race. This feedback can pertain to the swimmer's technique, stroke counts, stroke rates, times, mindset, and execution of the race plan.

It is the swimmers' responsibility to find the coach before and after the race to discuss the plan and feedback. The swimmer may need to look in both the indoor and outdoor areas at MSAC before the race, as the coach's location will depend on if a Cheltenham swimmer is in the competition pool or if the coach is able to be in the warm-up pool. The easiest way for the swimmers to find Cheltenham coaches after their race is to go straight to the coach on pool deck when the race is finished. The coach will have watched the race and will have feedback ready to give to the swimmer.

Glossary of Terms

Aerobic: Longer distance, moderate intensity, short rest period swimming sets that focus on building endurance

Anaerobic: Shorter distance, high intensity, long rest period swimming sets that focus on building power

Ascend: Getting slower (i.e. the time taken increases). Ascend sets ask swimmers to start fast and progressively increase the time they take to complete the distance.

Blocks: The platform from which swimmers begin races. Decades ago, they were simple metal or wooden blocks and looked more like podiums than the sleek, high-tech ones of today, but the old name has stuck.

Catch: The point in a swimmer's stroke at which the swimmer's hand grabs the water in front of them and applies downward pressure to move the body forward.

Deck: The area surrounding the pool at practices and meets, not including the bleachers or stands. Swimming Victoria rules state that at meets, only swimmers, coaches, officials and select volunteers may be on the deck.

Descend: Getting faster (i.e. the time taken reduces). Descend sets ask swimmers to get faster each time they do the certain distance.

Distance: Generally, Freestyle events 400 meters or longer.

Dolphin kick: Once just the leg motion for butterfly, the dolphin kick (which mimics the undulating motion by which the sea animal moves through the water) is now considered the fifth stroke. It is done underwater in streamline position to in order build momentum on fly, freestyle and backstroke starts and turns. Swimmers are even allowed to take one dolphin kick in breaststroke.

Drill: A controlled form of stroke designed to draw attention to a particular aspect of that stroke: Straight Arm, 1-arm, Early Vertical Forearm, 8-3-8, 6-1-6, Double Arm Backstroke, Double pull Breaststroke, and many more.

Dryland: A catch-all term for all physical conditioning done outside of the water. This can range from pre-practice stretching to regular sessions dedicated to lifting weights or doing resistance exercises, yoga, Pilates, spin classes, etc.

Hand entry: The position the hand is in at the time it touches the water after the recovery and before the catch phase. The hand should enter with the fingers together and pointing downward, as if putting on a glove. It should also enter in line with the shoulder to avoid injury.

Heats: Swimmers are grouped in heats according to their entry or seed time, with the fastest swimmers in each heat assigned to the middle lanes and each heat getting progressively faster. Circle-Seeding of heats is where the fastest swimmers are distributed among the last three or four heats, with the fastest assigned to lane 4 in the final heat and the next fastest athlete in lane 4 in the penultimate heat, etc.

Heats & Finals: At large, championship-style meets, swimmers must qualify for the finals by posting one of the fastest preliminary times.

High elbow: By keeping the elbow hinged during the recovery phase above the water, the high elbow catch maximizes the surface area making contact with the water. It essentially positions the forearm, wrist and hand to act like an oar, pushing more water than the hand could manage on its own. Thus, the swimmer covers more distance with each stroke. This technique also keeps the shoulder in a more stable position, which helps prevent repetitive-use injuries.

IM: This term stand for individual medley, an event in which a swimmer performs all four competitive strokes. The order is Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke, Freestyle. The order is different in a Medley Relay, where the order is Back, Breast, Fly, Free to allow for Backstrokers to start in the water. IM race distances are 100 (one length of each stroke, contested only in a short course, or 25-meter pool, mostly for 10-and-unders), 200 and 400. In a short-course pool, a 200 IM is 50 meters or two pool lengths of each stroke; in a long-course or 50-meter pool, it's one length. In a 400 IM, the swimmer does 100 meters of each stroke. In short-course, that's four lengths; in long course, it's two.

Long course: A 50-meter pool. This is the true definition of Olympic-sized pool. Most long-course racing is done in the summer from September to March. A swimmer's long-course times will generally be slower because there are fewer turns. There are several online calculators for converting short-course times to long and vice versa.

Meet Program: At large meets, officials distribute printed listings for each heat of each event to be swum. Swimmers should already be aware of what events they are entered in, but the heat sheet will tell them the order of events as well as the group and lane to which they are assigned. Athletes should take this this timetable into consideration when planning when to warm up and when to leave the deck to go to the bathroom or the vendor area, lest they miss their heat.

Number 1: Your best stroke which is not Freestyle.

Number 2: Your second best stroke which is not Freestyle.

Pull: Arms only (no kicking), often with a pull buoy

Pull Buoy: The foam buoyant object which goes between your legs for pull.

Recovery: This term has two meanings for swimmers. It can pertain to the point in the stroke in which the hand is above the water line preparing for the next stroke. It can also be used to describe the process of resting and refueling after practice or a race.

Scratch: To withdraw from an event at a meet. **Sculling:** A drill in which the swimmer gently moves their forearms and hands back and forth through the water, developing a sense of how each move affects the swimmer's forward progress.

Short course: 25-meter pools and races, which occur from March to September.

Split: The time for a portion of a race, such as each 50 of a 100-meter race. Coaches will compare the split for the first (or front half) part of a race with the second (or back half) to determine where the swimmer was fastest and slowest. A *negative split* means the swimmer swam the second half faster than the first.

Split-Stroke: a skill completed off every wall while swimming Breaststroke. Arms start overhead in streamline after the swimmer does a dolphin kick, and arms pull under the body in one motion. Legs then do a Breaststroke kick while the body angles towards the surface, with the arms sneaking back up to be ready to do the first Breaststroke pull on the surface.

Sprint: All out, as fast as you can go, breathing as little as you can.

Streamline: When the body is pointing in a long, straight line with the arms at the ears, locked together with one hand on top of the other, while the legs are together and the toes are pointed. It is used on starts and turns because it minimizes drag or resistance underwater.

Taper: A few weeks before a major meet, the coach will begin scaling back the volume or workload at practice in favor of working on fine details, like starts and turns. This allows the swimmer to get more rest in hopes of dramatically improving their times at their goal meet. Warning: You may find your swimmer suddenly has a lot more energy after practice while at the same time telling you, "I can't take the rubbish out because I'm on taper."

Touch-Turn: A two-handed turn in Butterfly and Breaststroke whereby the swimmer touches the wall and brings legs to the wall in a tuck-like position, then does a backwards or sideways motion to push off in a streamline to begin a new lap.

Tumble-Turn: A somersault at the wall when a swimmer has completed a length but needs to turn around and swim again. The swimmer pushes off on his or her back, in streamline, before immediately turning to the front.

Underwaters: The time a swimmer spends below the surface doing dolphin kick in streamline position or the breaststroke split-stroke. Swimmers are permitted to go 15 meters underwater off the start or turn.