



## Swimmer / Family Handbook

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## Introduction

This handbook was designed by our families to bring you a comprehensive guide to the many attributes and opportunities that make our team a success. As you look over the contents, remember that your time and dedication to our children makes YOU key to this program. Families are asked to review this handbook in its entirety and discuss its contents with their swimmers to ensure a full understanding of the responsibilities of both the swimmer and the swim team family. If you have any questions or suggestions regarding the handbook or team activities, please email or call one of the Board members, they volunteer their time and talents to represent not just the team, but most importantly our families.

## Team Goals

Our goals are to:

- Provide a quality environment that teaches self-discipline, self-reliance, and self confidence. All qualities that help form a positive self-image.
- Nurture the development of every swimmer and encourage each one to strive to be the best he or she can be, while recognizing that every swimmer is different.
- Provide a sport experience that teaches cooperative teamwork.
- Provide families a means to take an active role in the development of their children in a team and community environment.
- Demonstrate a strong sense of community involvement and support.
- Reward and recognize the efforts of ALL swimmers.
- Have FUN in all team activities.

## Organization

The Wendwood Wahoos Swim Team is a recreational swim team for swimmers 18 years of age and under and is a member of the Wendwood Pool or Summerlake Pool. We are a self-supported, family-oriented organization, and are organized and managed solely through the individual efforts of swimmer's families. As a sanctioned member of the Greater Peninsula Swimming Association (GPSA), the Team competes with other Peninsula swim teams during the summer months, with meets held both at Wendwood Pool and neighboring communities.

**Swimmers and Families:** All swimmers and families should become familiar with the rules and responsibilities outlined in this handbook to develop a clear understanding of their individual and family commitments to the team. As a volunteer-run recreational program, it is only necessary for ALL MEMBERS to participate in its activities. Our children do their part by swimming, it is our families' role to lead by example and show an equal commitment to support their swimmers and their accomplishments.



**Swim Team Committee:** The Wendwood Wahoos Swim Team is governed by the Wendwood Association and its board of directors. The Wendwood Association Swim Team Committee Chairperson, as a member of the Wendwood Association board of directors, leads the effort to facilitate all aspects of the swim team. As this is a volunteer-run organization, any adults interested in joining or helping the Committee in any capacity should contact the Committee Chairperson.

**Coaches:** The Wendwood Wahoos have a highly qualified coaching staff. Please refer to the [Coaches](#) page on our website for more information.

## Eligibility

**Membership:** Swim Team membership is open to all members of the Wendwood Pool and Summerlake Pool with children 18 years of age and under. Age is determined by the swimmers age on June 1st.

- Family/Guardian participation is REQUIRED for any swimmer to participate and remain eligible for team membership.

**Skill Requirement:** No competitive swimming experience is required. However, the minimum skill requirement is the ability to swim one length of the pool (25 yards) unassisted in either freestyle or backstroke for ages 8 and under or 2 lengths of the pool (50 yards) for ages 9 and over. Assessments will be conducted by coaches prior to the first week of practice. Any swimmer unable to meet these requirements will be accepted at the Head Coach's discretion and on a first-come first-served basis.

**Swimmer Age Groups:** Boys and girls swim in separate age-specific groups. A swimmer's age on June 1st will determine the age group. Those born on June 1st will swim in the older age group.

## Fees

**Registration Fee:** Registration will take place in April each year. The registration fee is \$75 per swimmer. The fee is used to pay coaches' salaries, league and meet fees, purchase ribbons, trophies/medals, and equipment as needed. Fees must be paid in full on registration day by check or money order.

**Other:** T-shirts, spirit wear, swimsuits, swim caps, special events, social activities, and special meets (Mini Meet and City Championship Meet) may require additional fees. These fees are not included in the registration fee. (Notice of such fees will be announced as required)



## Responsibilities

**Swimmers:** Swim Team members and their families have the responsibility to each other and the Wendwood community to respect people and pool property. The following are some of the rules that help maintain this responsibility:

1. All existing posted pool rules will be observed
2. Adhere to the [GPSA Code of Conduct](#)
3. Swimmers must follow the direction of coaches and pool officials at all activities
4. Horseplay, inappropriate language, or unsafe behavior will not be tolerated
5. Bicycles, scooters, skateboards, and other like articles are not permitted inside the pool area, ample storage is provided outside the pool entrance

Any swimmer not adhering to these rules, the posted pool rules, or any rules established by the coaching staff may be suspended from team activities.

For any serious or unsafe action, or repeat infractions of general rules, a swimmer is subject to temporary or permanent expulsion from the team. In such cases, the Head Coach will notify the Swim Team Committee Chairperson for action.

**Guardians/Family:** Guardians/Family are the foundation to the success of the team. Prior experience or swimming knowledge is not required! Your role is to promote, support, and encourage the goals of the team, coaches, and swimmers through attendance, practice, competition, nutrition, team spirit, sportsmanship, and fundraising. It is essential for guardians/families to:

1. Maintain a balanced perspective on the purpose and philosophy of summer league swimming
2. Adhere to the [GPSA Code of Conduct](#)
3. Adhere to and enforce all team, league, and pool complex rules, this includes the pool area, wading pool, playground, and picnic areas
4. Participate in the required number of volunteer duties both Set Up or Clean Up or Meet Duties (the number required changes depending on the size of our team)
5. Agree to secure a replacement if unable to fulfill an assigned duty
6. Ensure coaching staff is notified of any absence, illness, or other event affecting attendance at either practice or swim meets
7. Attend all Swim Team Family Meetings called by the Swim Team Committee
8. Swimmers under the age of 12 should be dropped off and picked up by a parent, guardian, or responsible party in accordance with pool rules



# Volunteer Agreement

**General:** The Wendwood Wahoos Swim Team is a self-supported program and REQUIRES the individual and family assistance of all swimmers. As a member of the swim team, each family agrees that they will fulfill the required volunteer/support commitments. FAILURE TO MEET THESE COMMITMENTS SUBJECTS THE FAMILY'S SWIMMER(S) TO DISMISSAL FROM THE TEAM.

**Swim Meets:** Each family is required to volunteer their time to work a predetermined number of meets. This number changes based on the number of families that sign up per season. Each home meet requires over 20 volunteers and each away meet requires over 13. Duties include, but are not limited to:

- Referee
- Starter
- Sweep Judge
- Stroke and Turn Judge
- Scorekeeper
- Ribbon Writer
- Timers
- Lane Slip Runner
- Clerk of Course
- Head Timer

NOTE: Training will be provided for each position during the preseason Mock Meet. Some positions require attending clinics by GPSA.

# Communications

**Family/Coach Communication:** The Swim Team Committee is your direct communication with the coaches. Please DO NOT direct issues to the coaching staff. This will ensure their focus remains on the safety and instruction of the swimmers. Families are asked instead to present their issue to any member of the Committee.

**Swimmer/Team/Meet Issues:** Issues regarding team activities, practices, or team business should be addressed to a Committee member.

**Team Website - [wendwoodwahoos.com](http://wendwoodwahoos.com):** The swim team has adopted SwimTopia as our team management system. Team news, schedules, and general information (including this handbook) will be posted there. In order to RSVP for meets, sign up for volunteer positions, view results and photos, you must be logged into the website. Please set up your account before the start of practice. Please do not contact SwimTopia directly for help. You can find some how-to guides on the SwimTopia help page ([help.swimtopia.com](http://help.swimtopia.com)) and look for the *For Parents* box. If you have trouble accessing your account, please send an email to [wendwoodgpsa@gmail.com](mailto:wendwoodgpsa@gmail.com).

**SwimTopia App:** Weather updates and last minute changes will be announced through SwimTopia. If you have the app downloaded and you have done your initial set up and log into the app, then you will get push notifications to your phone. The app also has other useful features (i.e. see recorded times for your kids).



**Absentee Procedures:** If a swimmer will not be able to attend a meet or will be absent from practice for an extended period of time (more than 2 days) please contact someone on the Committee or alert the coaching staff. Notification is a must to ensure meets run smoothly and all point lanes are filled.

**GPSA Website:** More information about the GPSA, including directions to pools and championship qualifying times can be found at [www.gpsaswimming.org](http://www.gpsaswimming.org).

## Equipment

**Team Store:** The Wendwood Wahoos have a partnership with SwimOutlet.com and by shopping through our team store a portion of all proceeds goes back to the Wendwood Wahoos. You can find our team store through our website: <https://www.wendwoodwahoos.com/shop>

**Swimmer Property:** Families should ensure a swimmer's property is clearly marked with a name and phone number (towels, bags, etc.). Any article found without a name will be turned into the pool's lost and found. New families to summer swim are encouraged to check out this blog post from SwimTopia describing the basic equipment needs for each swimmer: [Summer League Swim Gear 101](#)

**Swimsuits:** Swimmers are not required, but are encouraged, to purchase a Wendwood team suit for all meets.

**Swim Caps:** Swimmers are not required, but are encouraged, to purchase a Wendwood team cap for all meets and practices. Swimmers are required to wear a cap for all meets.

**Team Shirts:** Swimmers and their families are encouraged to purchase a team t-shirt or other spirit items. This is a key part of showing your team affiliation and spirit. Team t-shirts and other merchandise will be available for purchase at registration. We encourage your whole family to participate as everything is available in youth and adult sizes.

## Swim Team Practices

**Sessions:** Team practices are held at the Wendwood Pool. Multiple practice sessions may be offered to accommodate team size and/or skill level of each swimmer. Families are asked not to interfere with coaches or swimmers during practice sessions.

**Dates and Times:** Practices typically begin on the Tuesday after Memorial Day and conclude the week of the GPSA Championship Meet. Practices are held in the afternoon until Newport News Public Schools end their school year. At that time practices are typically moved to the mornings. The schedule will be posted on the team website.

**Practice on Meet Days:** Practices will be held on meet days!



**Inclement Weather:** Practices will be canceled when weather conditions pose a potential safety hazard (lightning, thunder, torrential rain). As much notice as possible will be given ahead of time.

## Swim Meets

**Age Groups:** Swimmers 6 and under compete in the 25 meter/yard (one lap) freestyle and/or backstroke only. All other age groups compete in one or more of the four swim strokes (freestyle, breaststroke, backstroke, and butterfly) and the individual medley (IM). At the discretion of the Head Coach, a swimmer may be asked to swim in an older age group.

**Mock Meet:** Each year a Mock Meet (time trial) is held before the first swim meet. The purpose of the Mock Meet is to establish times for each swimmer on all four basic strokes and to familiarize team members and families with the manner in which swim meets are conducted. The Mock Meet is considered a full dress rehearsal and will take place at the Wendwood Pool. This event is mandatory for swimmers and families. If you will be absent, notify the coaching staff.

**“A” and “B” Meets:** There are two types of swim meets, A and B. A meets are swum against teams in our division and all scores are counted toward the team’s standing in our GPSA division. B meets are additional exhibition meets that do not count towards our team standing in GPSA and are typically not scored.

**Exhibition Heats and Lanes:** During A meets, additional exhibition heats may be added to each age group and stroke. These heats are intended to give all swimmers the opportunity to improve their individual times and maximize individual participation. Exhibition heats are conducted after the first heat and are not scored. Exhibition lanes are any additional outside lanes (beyond the 4 scoring lanes), usually lanes 5 and 6. These lanes are used to give additional swimmers a chance to improve upon their times during the first heat of an event. These lanes are not scored, but the times are recorded.

**Arrival Time:** Swimmers must arrive at home meets by 4:45 pm and away meets by 5:15 pm. Set up volunteers must arrive at home meets by 4:15 pm. All other meet officials and volunteers must arrive by 5:15 pm and sign in with the Meet Coordinator.

**Schedule:** Meets are scheduled on Mondays and Thursdays, unless otherwise noted, begin promptly at 6:00 pm, and are typically completed by 9:00 pm. A complete schedule of the meets can be found on our website.

**Rescheduling:** In the event of a meet postponement due to inclement weather or other factors, the meet will be rescheduled within one week. We will communicate with you as soon as a date is chosen. If the new date conflicts with your schedule and you are not able to fulfill a volunteer duty or your child is unable to swim, please contact a Committee member or the coaching staff as soon as possible.





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**Directions:** Directions to all away meets can be found on the GPSA website. All home meets will be held at the Wendwood Pool.

**Events:** GPSA rules limit any swimmer from participating in more than 3 scored individual events and 1 relay event. Unless the team has less than 64 swimmers on its official roster and the swimmer's age/gender group has 3 or less swimmers in that bracket, the swimmer can participate in 4 scored individual events.

**Disqualifications:** Families and swimmers should be aware of general GPSA rules that subject swimmers to disqualification (DQ) during competitions. Families are asked to explain that there is a possibility of DQs during a meet and that the purpose is to identify and correct stroke errors, which in turn, will make them better swimmers. The coaching staff will help the swimmer to correct the infraction that led to the DQ. DQs will be given for (but not limited to):

- 2 false starts or any deliberate false start
- Improper stroke execution
- Swimmer entering the water before being told by the starter
- Any unsportsmanlike conduct before, during, or after the meet
- Not starting and finishing the race in the same lane
- Not using a two-handed, simultaneous touch for turns/finishes during breast and fly
- Swimmer propelling themselves in a forward motion off the lane ropes

**Protests:** Protests arising from a disqualification or other team competition issue must be made to the designated GPSA Representative at the meet within 30 minutes of the alleged infraction. The GPSA Representative may then at his/her discretion, present the protest to the meet referee. The Referee shall resolve the protest immediately, stopping the swim meet if necessary. Rulings made by the Referee are final.

**Ribbons:** In accordance with GPSA rules, designated place ribbons will be awarded for 1st, 2nd, 3rd place finishes in all individual scoring events, and only 1st place for all participants on the winning relay team. All other finishers and exhibition swimmers will receive participation ribbons without a place designation, unless they received a DQ.

**Mini-Meet:** This is a GPSA event near the end of the swim season intended for swimmers aged 8 and under. Swimmers may enter any event in which they do not already have a City Meet qualifying time. This meet affords all swimmers to participate in a large multi-team championship-style meet. We highly encourage your swimmer's participation, but it is not required. There are entry fees associated with this meet, depending on the team budget you may be asked to cover your swimmer's entry fees.

**City Championship Meet:** At the end of the regular season, GPSA sponsors the City Championship Meet. This meet takes place either on the last Saturday in July or the first Saturday in August starting at 8 am and ending approximately at 5 pm. To qualify for this meet, swimmers must meet minimum GPSA qualifying times throughout the season or at the Mini Meet. Unlike other meets, swimmers are required to swim in their actual age group and will be competing with swimmers from all GPSA



divisions. The coaching staff will be in contact with your swimmer as they qualify or get close to qualifying. If your swimmer qualifies, their participation is not required, but highly encouraged. There is a nominal entry fee per swimmer, depending on the team budget you may be asked to cover your swimmer's entry fees.

## Team Pictures

Team and individual pictures will be taken at the Wendwood Pool. The date and time will be posted on the website calendar and announced at practice and via email. The team picture is for all swimmers and they must be at the pool in their suit at the designated time. Orders and payment information will be provided to each family.

## Team Recognition

**End of Season Awards Ceremony and Banquet:** This event is typically held after the City Championship Meet. The exact date and time will be posted on the Team Calendar on the website. It typically will take place at the Wendwood pool. This is our final event of the swim season and is an opportunity for our swimmers to be recognized and have fun together in pool party fashion.

## Financial Support

**Team Financial Supporters:** We are always on the lookout for community businesses and individuals to offer monetary support throughout the season. All details about different support levels can be found on our website, on the financial support page.

**Door Prizes:** Our team is always looking for business willing to donate gift cards or goods that we can use to recognize our swimmers throughout the season or to be used as raffle prizes at the End of Season Awards Banquet. If you have an idea or know of a business that might be interested, contact a Committee member.

