



# Parent Handbook

# Stonegate Serpents Handbook

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Please go to [www.stonegateswimteam.com](http://www.stonegateswimteam.com) for:

- Meet Calendar
- Driving Directions for Away Meets
- Calendar
- And much more!

## Mission Statement

The mission of the Stonegate Serpents Swim Team is to encourage formal but friendly team competition through the Montgomery County Swim League during the summer. We seek to create a fair and wholesome environment in order to develop swimming skills, encourage sportsmanship and teamwork, and foster an appreciation of the relationship between effort and success.

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## Quick Start Guide

Welcome to the Stonegate Swim Team! Below are some tips that we hope will be helpful.

**Check your family folder and swim team bulletin board often (at least twice per week)!**

### **Label, Label, Label.**

With more than a hundred kids on the team, there are a lot of matching goggles, t-shirts, caps and suits. Get out the permanent marker and make it easy to retrieve your child's things (at minimum his/her goggles and team wear) from the pile.

### **Read through this Handbook cover to cover.**

Many frequently asked questions are answered here and it was designed with newcomers in mind. Additionally the meet calendar, the directory and committee information are all in here!

### **Visit [www.stonegateswimteam.com](http://www.stonegateswimteam.com) often.**

Here you'll find the team calendar, directions to away meets, downloads of past newsletters, latest breaking news and more.

### **Swimming is a team sport.**

If your child swims in "A" meets, we'd like to encourage you to take your vacations AFTER swim season. If you have a swimmer that is scheduled to swim on a Saturday meet, please try and schedule vacations around the meets. If you must miss a Saturday meet and you believe there is a chance your child will be swimming in it, please let Brian know that by WEDNESDAY EVENING of that week so that he can make the line up for Saturday's meet. We had some empty lanes last year (which translated into lost points) because of parents who neglected to let the coaches know that their child wouldn't be available to swim.

### **Get involved!**

We need LOTS of volunteers to make the summer swim season work. Sign-up to work on a committee, volunteer to work every meet your child swims in, and to participate in social/spirit events (all of these sign-up sheets are on the swim team board). There is no better way to gain an understanding of the sport of swimming than by working a meet as an official, announcer or timer. An added benefit is that you get a front row seat on all the action.

## From the Coach's Clipboard

### Missing Meets

In order for us to have a successful season, we must have swimmers available to swim in the A Meets. For your child to achieve their full potential and recognize their improvement, they need to swim in a weekly meet (be it a Saturday "A" Meet or a Wednesday night "B" Meet). We want a successful season and we want successful swimmers. If at all possible, please postpone your vacations until after the swim season.

We'd like to encourage you to take your vacations AFTER swim season. If you have a swimmer that is scheduled to swim on a Saturday meet, please try and schedule vacations around the meets. If you must miss a Saturday meet for which your swimmer is scheduled, you need to let Brian know that by **WEDNESDAY EVENING** of that week so that he can make the line up for Saturday's meet.

Last year there were too many families who neglected to mention they would be out of town during a meet that their child was scheduled to swim. The result of this neglect was that we had to swim empty lanes (which translates to forfeiting points). We can only fill in three swimmers on the Saturday of the meet. This is why it is so important to let us know if your swimmer won't be there.

We'd like to swim no empty lanes this summer. Your diligence in alerting Brian to your absence is an essential part of us meeting this goal. Thanks, in advance, for your understanding and support in making this happen!

### What to Eat Before a Meet

The old adage "You are what you eat" is not just a cliché but valuable advice to improve your child's times. Swimming performance is directly related to the quality of food your child eats 24 hours before a swim meet. Pasta, salad, bread and other non-greasy foods the night before a meet will make your child feel and perform better when they are in the pool. Also, overeating before a swim meet will make them feel sluggish in the water. The night before a meet your child should have a carbohydrate rich meal that is low in fat and limited in the amount of protein. The meal the night before the meet will give your child all the energy they need to perform well. Save your burgers, fried chicken, all-you-can-eat restaurants and pizza for Saturday night.

The morning before a meet limit the amount of dairy your child consumes. Eating a breakfast of yogurt, cereal, bagels and cream cheese, and washing it down with a glass of milk could make your child nauseous. Dairy also increases mucus production which make breathing more difficult. Foods rich in refined sugar will give your child a quick boost of energy which will run out before the end of their first race. Fat, protein and fiber take about two to nine hours to digest and will sit in your swimmers stomach as they try to propel themselves through the water. Swimmers should eat a small, carbohydrate-rich meal about two hours before they swim. Toast, cereal, fruit, juice, pancakes, or bagels are excellent choices. If in doubt, a smaller meal is better than a larger one.

**Practice**

For each swimmer to get the fullest benefit of daily practices it is very important to minimize outside distractions. On that note, it is essential for swimmers to arrive at least five minutes early so they do not distract others when they show up mid-practice. Also, Swimmers can be distracted by their parent's presence so please refrain from sitting on the pool deck during practice. It would be best if you ran errands or took a walk during your swimmer's practice, but if you must remain at the pool, feel free to enjoy the shade of the gazebos on the hill or the pavilion. The coaches would love to talk to you about any questions you have about your child or an upcoming event, but we need to keep our eyes on the swimmers during practice times. The best time to talk to us is before or after practice.

## General Information

The Stonegate Serpents Swim Team is a member of the Montgomery County Swim League (MCSL). This league currently consists of 87 teams in 15 divisions (“A” through “O”) with six teams in each division. Division assignments are based upon the previous season’s swimmer times. To find out our current divisional assignment and ranking, please go to the “about us” section at [www.stonegateswimteam.com](http://www.stonegateswimteam.com).

Each Stonegate Swim Team family receives one copy of the MCSL handbook at the beginning of each season, which contains detailed information about league policies, strokes, and meets. This and other information is also obtainable through the MCSL Website at [www.mcsl.org](http://www.mcsl.org).

The season begins after Memorial Day, and official meets begin at the end of the school year. The season ends at the end of July (or first weekend in August). The Serpents celebrate the end of the main season with a team banquet held at the pool on the evening following the Divisional meet. Each age group will have a 1st, 2nd and 3rd place trophy which is determined by the total points a swimmer has earned during their A-meet swims. Swimmers who don’t receive one of these trophies will continue to receive a participant trophy. Other individual awards, including Coach’s Award Trophy and many “fun” awards, are also handed out. Additionally, the team provides many other social events, including Friday night socials and donut breakfasts, to keep the season a fun experience from beginning to end.

### Pre-Team

Pre-Team members must be able to swim one-half the length of the pool (12.5 meters) and float on their backs for at least five seconds. The goal of this program is to engender a love of swimming and to prepare swimmers for participation in the regular team once they have acquired the necessary skills. Swimmers will be taught two of the four basic competitive strokes -- freestyle and backstroke -- and also be introduced to the diving start. **Pre-Team practices begin after the school year ends from 10:15-11:00 a.m.** Once a pre-teamer successfully swims a lap, they may be invited to participate in a B-meet and/or practice with the appropriate age group on the Regular Team.

### Regular Team

All pool members who are able to swim the length of the pool (25 meters) and are 18 years old or younger as of June 1 can join the regular team.

Tuesday after Memorial Day through Last Day of School		1 <sup>st</sup> Day of Summer Break (MCPS) through Last Meet***	
13 and up	4-5 p.m.	13 & up	8-9:15 a.m.
9-12	5-5:45	9-12	9:15-10:15
8 & under	5:45-6:30	8 & under	10:15-11:00
(not for Pre-teamers)		Pre-team	10:15-11:00

Starting the 1<sup>st</sup> day of summer break for Montgomery County Public Schools, there will be evening practices on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays for swimmers attending camp or with a job commitment at 5:30-6:15 and at 6:15-7:00. See board or website for details.

\*\*\*Swimmers who will be representing the team at Divisionals or who qualify for all-stars as individuals or as members of relay teams will continue practicing until those meets happen.

Swimmers may be further grouped based on skill level. Practice sessions will address stroke work, endurance and speed. Regular team members will receive instruction in all four strokes including butterfly and breast. The coaches will strive to assist all swimmers in meeting their individual goals. If individual coaching is desired, please contact one of the assistant coaches for availability and rates.

Given the diversity of skill level, some swimmers may have a goal to learn to swim at least one new stroke legally, while others may strive to participate in some of the more selective competitions. Swimmers should be realistic in setting performance expectations. A successful season may best be measured by improvement in one area of a swimmer's own performance. Remember, this is a short-term summer recreational league. The most important thing is that swimmers have a fun and positive competitive experience while improving their swimming skills.

Time Trials are held the Saturday before the first "A" meet. This is a Serpents-only event where all swimmers are able to be timed in as many events as they desire. Time Trials provide the coaches and swimmers with a first cut for each swimmer's times in each event.

### **Parent Volunteers**

The Stonegate Serpents Swim Team is a volunteer organization that requires parental support to function. For example, we need at least 25 parent volunteers in order to run a meet at home. Some positions require League certification, which is provided at several clinics given before the season begins.

Parents must assume certain team obligations and responsibilities when their child joins the swim team. Serpent parents work at least 3 meets and donate items to the snack bar for at least 2 home meets. Working a meet is fun and includes things like selling programs, timing, ribbon writing, and working concessions. **Please sign-up on the swim team bulletin board to work three meets and contribute two items for snack bar.** We had great parent involvement last year and are expecting the same this season. We really do need your participation to make meets possible!

### **Getting In The Know**

- **Website:** We have a new website and address this year [www.stonegateswimteam.com](http://www.stonegateswimteam.com). Please check the "This Week" page each Monday for the latest news and updates to the calendars and information contained here.
- **Bulletin Board:** The swim team bulletin board is located in the pavilion located next to the office. It is the best source for up-to-date information concerning all aspects of the swim team AND for signing up to bring food and work upcoming meets.
- **Family Folders:** Every swim team family has a family folder. The folder will have notices from the team and any uncollected ribbons from meets. The file box with the folders is usually on or under the table by the Swim Team bulletin board in the Pavilion (sometimes it's on the floor in the office).

Flip through the **MCSL Handbook**. Each family receives a MCSL handbook at the beginning of each season which contains detailed information about league policies, strokes, and meets. On the back of the handbook you'll find the standard order of events for all meets except the Relay Carnival. This and more information is also obtainable through the MCSL website at [www.mcsl.org](http://www.mcsl.org).

### **Inclement Weather Policy**

According to County regulations, we are unable to swim for 30 minutes after the sound of thunder. We will not practice if there is less than 45 minutes of practice time after a storm. Please use common sense. If in doubt call the pool. Do not drop off your child without confirming there is practice.

### **Spirit/Social Events**

It just wouldn't be a swim team if there were no celebrations. Here are some of the events that happen during the course of the swim season.

***Thursday Donut Breakfasts*** – Swimmers get donuts and juice on Thursday mornings to celebrate Wednesday meets and hand out ribbons. Parents are asked to sign up to bring juice (check bulletin board in Pavilion for the sign-up sheet).

***Friday Night Dinners***– All team members (regular and pre-) and their families get together for a theme dinner/event (pizza, pasta, ice cream) to celebrate and decorate for the upcoming home meets. Sign up to bring a dish at the bulletin board in the Pavilion; the schedule shows the designated theme dinners.

***After Meet Cookout*** – After each home meet there is a cook-out at the pool. Food is available for a nominal fee.

***Swim Team Movie*** – Swimmers meet at the Olney theater to watch a pre-determined movie.

***Kings Dominion*** – Swimmers meet at Kings Dominion on a pre-determined date. The team gets a great rate and supervised friends are welcome.

***Swim Team Banquet*** – a family celebration of swim season memories and accomplishments. All swim team (regular and pre-) are welcome to join in the festivities that include awards for mini-teamers, paper plate awards and a slide show under the stars.

Please refer to the Website, Board and the Box for information regarding the team social events including pep rally details, banquets, and special events (e.g., movies, Kings Dominion, etc.). Questions or ideas about how to help out with these or other social/spirit events? Please call Theresa Cali: 301-236-5213.

## Swim Meet Info

There are six lanes in the pool for the meets. The visiting team chooses their lanes for the meet (either lanes 2, 4, and 6 or lanes 1, 3, and 5). Each lane has 3 people to time the swimmer (the middle time is recorded). Several stroke and turn judges observe the swimmers to make sure they're swimming the stroke correctly.

If a swimmer doesn't swim the stroke correctly, uses the bottom of the pool to push off, pushes off from the ropes, or doesn't touch with two hands for breaststroke or butterfly, the swimmer will be disqualified (also called "DQ'd"). This happens quite a bit, especially with younger swimmers. The League follows United States Swimming Rules, with a few exceptions, for starts, strokes, and turns.

**Pre-Team:** The Pre-Team coaches will notify Pre-Team members of any competitive events they may qualify for. All Pre-teamers swim at the last "B" meet.

**Wednesday "B" Meets:** "B" meets are usually held on Wednesday nights against teams from nearby pools. Swimmers need to be at the pool at 5:00 p.m. to warm up. The meet starts at 6:00 p.m. There are 4 "B" meets each season. These meets don't count for official MCSL points, so we often compete against teams from other Divisions. Swimmers get ribbons as long as they don't get disqualified (DQ'd).

Any swimmer who does not participate in the Saturday Meet may swim in the following Wednesday Meet. These swimmers may swim up to three strokes and the Individual Medley (IM). A fourth stroke may be swum for exhibition purposes only. Any swimmer who participated in the Saturday Meet may not swim that event in the following Wednesday Meet (even as an exhibition swim) except under rare circumstances at the coaches' direction. Only swimmers who have shown the coaches that they can legally swim breaststroke or butterfly will be allowed to swim those events in the "B" meets. See the Meet Calendar for a list of all Wednesday Meets.

**Saturday "A" Meets:** "A" meets are official MCSL competitions between teams within each division. For "A" meets, we compete against the other teams in our division. The swimmers with the fastest times swim in the "A" meets. The League's Rules set out the eligibility requirements and limitations on event entries. Swimmers may only enter 3 events in an "A" meet plus 100 IM and a relay. "A" meet swimmers may swim in events other than their "A" meet events in the "B" meet (e.g. if a swimmer swims freestyle in the "A" meet, they cannot swim freestyle in the next "B" meet, but can swim other events such as breast, backstroke, and butterfly). Ribbons are awarded for scoring points in the meet.

"A" meets are scored as a team (not individual) competition, with boys and girls scores combined (unlike high school meets where boys and girls teams are scored separately. Many factors are used by the coaching staff to determine who will swim in each event. These factors include, but are not limited to: a swimmer's best times, performance trends, attendance and participation levels, potential team point opportunities and the legality of a swimmer's stroke.

Line-ups for the "A" meets will be posted on the Bulletin Board on Friday morning before the meet. Swimmers need to be at the meets no later than 8:00 a.m. to warm-up. For away meets,

this means getting an early start to the other team's pool (we usually meet first at Stonegate and caravan together).

Home "A" meets always have a theme, which is indicated on the swim team schedule. Swimmers are asked to dress according to the designated theme. "A" meet swimmers usually receive ribbons for placing 1<sup>st</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> in freestyle, or 1<sup>st</sup> through 3<sup>rd</sup> in the other events. See Appendix C for a list of the types of meets for the season.

THE TEAM'S ENTRIES FOR SATURDAY MEETS MUST BE FINALIZED BY THURSDAY NIGHT. THEREFORE IT IS CRITICAL THAT THE COACHES KNOW IF A SWIMMER WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE BY WEDNESDAY NIGHT.

## Swim Meet FAQs

***Q: When will I know if my child is swimming in an "A" meet?***

"A" meet assignments are made based on most current best times. For each event, the swimmers with the top six times in freestyle and the top three times in the other strokes will be chosen to represent the team at A meets. Since swimmers may only swim 3 individual events, sometimes swimmers with the fourth and fifth fastest times will be chosen to swim. Usually the "A" meet assignments are posted by the end of Thursday.

***Q: When will I know if my child is swimming in a "B" meet?***

"B" meet assignments are posted by the end of Monday. If your child swam two or fewer events in the "A" meet, it is likely that they will be swimming in the "B" meet. If they swam no events in the "A" meet they will be swimming in the subsequent "B" meet.

***Q: What if my child is unable to swim in a meet they are assigned to swim?*** Tell the coach AS SOON AS POSSIBLE but please PLAN AHEAD. Tell the coach by WEDNESDAY NIGHT whether or not your child is able to swim on Saturday. It is much better for the team to be able to insert another swimmer in your child's spot than to forfeit a lane.

***Q: When will my Pre-teamer swim in their first meet?*** When they are comfortable swimming the length of the pool (25 meters) the coach will let them (and you) know that they will be in the next "B" meet.

***Q: Once my child starts swimming in an "A" meet will they continue to just do "A" meets?*** Not necessarily. The "A" meet line-up is determined by the fastest swimming times, swimmer availability, swimmer attitude, and attendance. Additionally, swimmers who swim less than three events in the "A" meet can swim the remaining events in the "B" meet. Make sure to check the "A" meet line-up every week to see if your child is scheduled to swim. The coaches try to inform each swimmer and parent that they are swimming in the "A" meet if they usually do not.

# A Step-by-Step Meet Guide

## **THE NIGHT BEFORE THE MEET** (Saturday meets)

A good night's sleep before each meet is essential to swimming fast. Meet day will begin very early and require both physical and mental alertness. It is recommended that all gear packing be completed before going to bed the night before. Here is a list of items that you may want to pack:

- Team suit and a spare\*
- Team swim cap and a spare\*
- Deck shoes
- Towels (Pre-mum of two)\*
- 2 pairs of goggles (back-ups are essential)\*
- Stonegate t-shirt\* and warm clothing
- A water bottle\* and food
- Sunscreen\*
- Favorite book or music or cards
- Blanket and pillow (where space is available)

\* We highly recommend labeling these items with permanent ink.

## **AT THE MEET**

First meets can be confusing. One should plan to arrive 30 minutes in advance of the team's warm-up time which can be found on the swim team bulletin board the day before the meet. For away meets, the coaches usually ask swimmers to be at our pool early, so we can caravan to the meet.

### ***Check In***

The first thing to do upon arrival at a meet is to report to the coach. Then go to the team area. If you'd like to purchase a program, if available (that lists all the events that will be swum, the names of the swimmers and their entry times), now would be a good time to do so!

### ***Unpack***

Go to the Stonegate team area (where the team banner is displayed) and find a chair or area to set up camp. Swimmers must stay with the team. This makes it easier for the coach to locate swimmers, especially if it appears that a swimmer might be close to missing an event, or if a pre-meet substitution needs to be made. This also helps develop friendships, team spirit and team sportsmanship. Should personal items be forgotten or misplaced, the chances of recovery are much better when they are left around friends and teammates.

### ***Warm-Up***

A swimming warm-up period is scheduled for all teams before the actual meet begins. The purpose of these warm-ups is to raise the temperature of muscles and loosen joints for the upcoming races. Other benefits include getting familiar with the water temp, the backstroke flags, the walls and the color changes of the pool depths and the lane ropes. Feet-first entry into the water is the rule for every USA Swimming meet warm-up. No horseplay is allowed. Circle swimming is required. After warming up and after each swim one needs to stay dry and warm.

### ***Competition***

The meet is organized into events. The events are paired into a boys event and then a girls event for a given stroke and distance. The order and description of events is listed on the back cover of the MCSL handbook and in Appendix D.

### ***Talk With the Coach***

Swimmers should report to their coaches approximately six events before their event for a pre-swim conversation. The coach will ask the swimmer to concentrate on certain specifics regarding the upcoming swim and get them excited to do his or her best. If the pre-swim conversation does not occur, the coach cannot properly evaluate the swimmer's response to instruction in a racing environment. In other words, the coach isn't able to help the swimmer achieve the best result. The pre-swim conversation also lets the coach know that the swimmer is ready for his or her event, and alleviates the stress on the swimmers and coaches caused when swimmers have to run to the start of their event. The swimmer should report to the coach ready to swim: Stonegate cap on, goggles ready and restroom visit completed.

### ***Clerk of Course***

As the meet progresses you will hear the announcer announcing the race that is currently getting started and you'll hear them announcing which events should be reporting to the Clerk of Course. It is here that you will get instructions for lining up and you will be given your heat number and lane. In most "A" meets there are no cards handed to swimmers, and it is imperative for the swimmers to speak with their timers before they swim to make sure their name is on the timing sheet. In "B" meets, you will be given a card with all this information, and you will hand it to your lane timer. The swimmer will report to the clerk of course three events before the event to be swum. The swimmer should be standing in the appropriate lane line one to two events before the one to be swum. When walking to the starting end of the pool, please remember to stay out of the way of officials, coaches and the starter. Do not walk near the starter when he or she is in the middle of starting a race.

Upon approaching the starting end one event before the one to be swum, you will hand the timer your card or ask them if your name is on their timing sheet. They will verify that the swimmer is in the right location.

Once the correct location has been verified, the swimmer should pay close attention to the announcer and the starter. The Announcer will announce the event number and the heat. It is essential that the swimmer know the number of the heat before the one to be swum. When the swimmer is in the first heat of an event, he must know the number of the last heat of the previous event. When the heat before the one to be swum is in the water, the swimmer should step onto the deck and stand behind the timers, cap and goggles on and *ready to swim*. This signals to the starter, the referee, and the coach that the swimmer is ready for his event.

### ***The Start***

Officially, the first signal to get into place will be a series of short whistles. Then the starter will announce the event. Then one long whistle will announce that the swimmers must step up to the edge of the pool [or enter the water for a backstroke event]. The starter will then say, "Take your mark!" The swimmers must quickly assume their starting positions and hold very still; then, the starter will cause an audible horn to sound that starts the clock and the swimmers.

### ***The Swim***

Officials will observe the actions of the swimmers in the pool. If any infractions are observed, a stroke and turn judge will write out an explanation on a DQ (disqualification) card and confer with the Referee. The Referee will tell the coach. Before leaving the deck, the swimmer may check with the timers to see what they have recorded as the swimmer's time. This can also be shared with the coach.

### ***Talk With the Coach [Again]***

The swimmer should dry off and visit with the coach again. The coach will review the instructions given before the race and relate the swim performance to those instructions. Congratulations will be offered for good accomplishments. Suggestions may be offered for the next race or for the next practice session. *These moments are invaluable to swimmers and coaches in establishing clear and effective two-way communications regarding expectations and results.* At meets, coaches are trying to reinforce the same plans and strategies developed during practices. This requires consistent one-on-one communication. Parents should not accompany their children to these talks with the coaches.

### ***The Waiting***

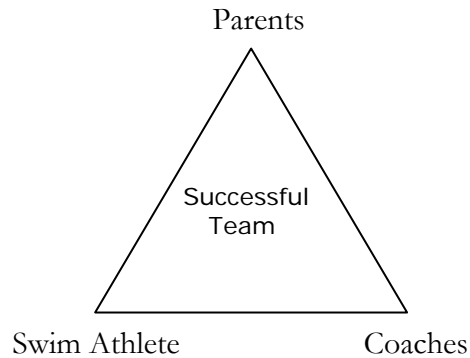
Swim meets usually have long stretches between a swimmer's events. Sometimes there is almost no time at all between events. Swimmers need to be prepared for both situations. The long boring periods can be easily filled with a book, homework, or a video game. Card games can become social events. Friendships can be developed while sitting in the bleachers. Conserving energy is important: activities that involve sitting and lying around are excellent choices. Standing, walking, running, playing ball, etc. should be avoided. Relax, but stay in the team area, and listen for your events to be called.

### ***Checking Results***

Times and rankings get posted anywhere from 5-20 minutes following the event. When there are multiple heats for a given event you may not know how the swimmer placed. Usually the times and rankings are posted in a common area (look for the swarms). At home meets we post results on the pool house doors between the office and the pavilion.

## A Successful Team

A successful swim program requires parents, swim athletes, and the coaching staff to work together well. This is best accomplished when each person takes his or her responsibilities seriously and respects the value that the other roles bring to the equation.



### Head Coach's Responsibilities

The Head Coach supervises the entire Stonegate swim program. He/she establishes overall team goals and strategies and implements them through the Stonegate coaching staff. The Head Coach oversees coaching staff development. The coaching staff also reserves the right to determine which meet events a swimmer enters.

### Coaches' Responsibilities

The coaches are responsible for designing, implementing, and supervising workouts to provide the swim athletes the best technical training, conditioning, and mental preparation to achieve their highest potential in swimming. This well-rounded approach of technical excellence, physical conditioning, and motivation will minimize the gap between the swim athlete's potential and maximum performance. Additional responsibilities of the coaches are as follows:

- **Initial swimmer placements in practice groups.** This is based on the ability level, level of conditioning, and age of each individual. Once assigned to a group, each swimmer is encouraged to complete the developmental skills within the group in order to advance to the next level. Upon completion of the advancement requirements, and when his/her coach has concurred it is in the best interest of a swimmer, he/she will be placed in a more challenging training group.
- **Stroke instruction and the training regimen.** Each group's practices are based on sound swimming principles and are geared to specific goals.
- **Conduct and supervise warm-up procedures for the team at swim meets.** After each race, the coach will offer encouragement and/or constructive criticism regarding the swimmer's performance.

**Relay team member selection.** Relays will generally be organized with the goal of assembling the fastest combination of swimmers as determined using official times for the

same stroke and distance within each meet; however, coaches may apply discretion based on individual or team circumstances when entering individuals in relays, determining order of swimmers, and strokes.

## **Swim Athletes' Responsibilities**

The expectation is that the swim athletes arrive to practice/competition prepared to perform to his/her best. At practices, this means arriving on time with all the equipment required for the training group level, and following coaching direction; during meets, this means being aware of race start times and following coaching direction.

During practices, the Stonegate swim athlete will:

- Be open-minded and trust the judgment of the coach when correction is given.
- Exhibit proper pool/lane courtesy; specifically, not interfering with other swimmers. When passing a slower swimmer, do so in a safe manner. The slower swimmer should also exhibit proper lane courtesy, and allow a faster swimmer to pass easily.

During competitions, the Stonegate swim athlete will:

- Exhibit good sportsmanship toward other swim athletes.
- Wear Stonegate team logo caps and swim suits [or any solid blue suit].
- Respect the facilities, remembering that all actions will reflect on the team's reputation.
- Clean up all applicable trash before leaving the team area.

It is recommended the swim athlete follow these simple lifestyle activities to ensure conditioning is maximized:

- Eat well-balanced meals
- Get plenty of rest
- Ask your coach for guidance for additional dry land workouts, if desired.

## **Parent Responsibilities**

As members of Stonegate Swim Team, the swim athlete's parents play a very important role of support. Specifically, they support the swim athletes, the coaches and the team.

The most important parental role in this swimmer triangle is one of support/encouragement to the swim athlete. Parental support, love and encouragement will motivate and sustain the swim athlete; when combined with the coaches' technical training and conditioning, this will provide the swim athlete with the confidence to perform at the highest potential.

The swim athlete (and their parent) needs to remember that participation at the highest level of his/her ability — regardless of whether they win or lose — is the goal. Parental support, along with the coach's respect, will always remain consistent regardless of the outcome. This is especially important with the 10-and-under swimmers. Inconsistencies are common with this age group, which can lead parents, coaches, and swim athlete down the road of frustration, breaking the triangle of success. Parents must remember the 10-and-under swimmer still needs

to mature physically and mentally. The key is to be patient and allow these younger swim athletes time to love the sport and nurture the commitment to advance further as they mature.

Parents need to be patient with inconsistent times; generally, most swimmers hit a low point during the season. Peaks and valleys are normal. The parents need to be supportive during the down times and help the swim athlete focus on the competitive spirit of participation and trying one's best. A good positive mental attitude is a very important swimming skill that must be nurtured by the parents and coaching staff.

Supporting the coaches is essentially about respecting the coaching staff and the coach-swimmer relationship. It is important that the swim athlete and coach relationship be built on trust, discipline, and mutual respect. Parents should not attempt to conduct a conversation with the coach or with the swimmer during practice times. The pool is like a classroom in that the coach must focus on teaching to their plan and on the swimmers/students. Coaches will be happy to discuss items with parents either before or after practice. If a coach needs to talk to a parent during practice, the coach will initiate the conversation. If a swimmer needs to leave practice early, parents should advise the coach prior to the start of the practice session.

Parents need to remember that children tend to exaggerate when praised or criticized. Parents need to avoid overreacting. They should get the facts, talk with the coach, and discuss situations in an objective manner. Communication is key.

Finally, the team cannot be successful without parent volunteers. Parents must assume certain team obligations and responsibilities when their child joins the swim team. This year we expect parents to work at least 3 meets and donate items to the snack bar for at least 2 home meets. **Please sign up to work three meets and contribute two items for snack bar on the swim team bulletin board.** We are aiming for 100% parent participation this year and will be tracking participation carefully.

Bottom Line:

1. Provide unconditional support for your child.
2. Make sure your child has transportation to and from all meets.
3. Work three meets (e.g., timing, judging, monitoring, selling, etc.)
4. Donate 2 items for the snack bar.
5. Keep up with what's going on: check the box and board at least twice a week

## APPENDIX A: Meet Volunteer Positions Defined

(\*\* indicates that position requires League certification)

- Announcer:** Fulfill your desire to be a sportscaster/DJ. This person keeps everyone on track by announcing what is happening, calling swimmers to the clerk of course and identifying swimmers prior to the event they are swimming in. One of the best seats in the house.
- Automation:** Computer support at the meets means helping to enter swimmers times into the Meet Manager software; printing labels for ribbons (for “A” meets) and posting the results.
- Clerk of Course:** Responsible for checking in swimmers before they swim an event, organizing and positioning them appropriately so that they end up in the right place at the right time.
- Head Timer/Asst. Head Timer:** Coordinates with the Referee to run an efficient meet. Organizes and educates the timers at the start of a meet. Serves as a resource to the timers. Has a couple of watches running in case a back-up time is needed. Helps collect time sheets to be given to the runner.
- \*\*Referee:** Head judge and official who ensures all rules and regulations are being enforced and followed. The Referee has final say on virtually all on-deck issues.
- \*\*Starter:** A person who has been trained to start each race using vocal cues and the starting horn/light.
- \*\*Stroke and Turn Judge:** watches multiple lanes of swimmers to check that strokes, turns and touches are executed legally. One of the best seats in the house and great for people who want to really understand what a legal breaststroke is!
- Age-Group Monitors:** These unsung heroes enable our fabulous coaches to focus on coaching during the meets instead of being distracted by crowd control. We are looking for age group monitors for “A” and “B” meets. Responsibility includes: ensuring the kids in your child’s age group stay (and behave) in the team area between events and helping those same kids report to the Clerk of Course at the right time. A great job for someone who enjoys being in a crowd of kids and who may have other children with them (the more the merrier...right?)!
- Team Wear and Program Sales:** Sells promotional items and programs at home meets from the start of the meet until after the Ten Minute Break (before the 15-18 100IM and Breaststroke).
- Timer:** The people who seek to accurately document the time that elapses from the starting light to the touch at the end of the race. A great way to really get into the meet and be with fun people...NO EXPERIENCE REQUIRED (a lesson is given at the start of each meet). If you can’t work an entire meet, you are welcome to share a timing slot with a buddy so that the lane is covered for the duration of the meet even if you can’t be.
- Snack Bar:** Sell food and drink to the masses while making \$ for the team! This is a great way to be with people and still step out to watch your child race. If you have a teenager who longs to be in retail, bring them along to help out (as long as they aren’t swimming)!

## Appendix B: Board, Committees & Contact Info

It takes a village to raise a child and a several villages to run a swim team! The executive board (asterisked below) is responsible for pool/team relations and all non-meet related, long-range planning. Other positions on the board ensure the smooth running of meets and compliance with MCSL. The remainder of work is done collectively in committees. New volunteers are always welcomed!

### SWIM TEAM BOARD

**\*TEAM CO-PRESIDENTS:** Represents the team at Pool Board Meetings. Supports and coordinates volunteers for all non-meet related committees (Social, Banquets, Team Wear, Membership, etc.). Calls and presides over any team meetings. Serves on Coach Liaison committee.

**\*TREASURER:** keeps track of the team's finances and reports to the Stonegate Pool Board. Maintains bank account/budget/record of receipts & expenditures. Provides Cash box for all sales events. Collects & disperses all funds.

**\*SECRETARY:** Responsible for taking minutes at executive board meetings and for disseminating information via appropriate channels.

**\*SOCIAL CHAIR:** Plans and coordinates volunteers to make social events a success.

**MEMBERSHIP:** Coordinates the registration process and enters data into the team database. Checks that all team members are members-in-good-standing at the pool. Provides team roster to coach and secretary.

**"A" REPRESENTATIVE:** Represents the team at MCSL meetings, within our MCSL Division, and at official League meets. Provides the Board and coaches with information from the MCSL meetings, including schedule information, rule changes, and special events. Works with other Division "A" representatives to schedule events and administer swim meets, including contact with appropriate "A" representative the Friday night before each Saturday meet. Administers Saturday meets (including provision of all necessary equipment/supplies needed to run meet). The A Rep also heads the coach liaison committee and serves as liaison between coaches, team and parents.

**"B" REPRESENTATIVE:** Schedules and administers the Wednesday meets. Recruit/pick an alternate/assistant "B" Rep. Schedules Wednesday Meets (in the fall for following summer). Orders "B" Meet ribbons. Communicates to coaches and parents, policy on eligibility for Wednesday Meets. Discusses ground rules for Wednesday Meets with coaches and representative from other teams. Administers Wednesday meets (including provision of all necessary equipment/supplies needed to run meet, and labeling swimmer cards)

**PRE-TEAM COORDINATOR:** Works with coaches and parents to make the pre-team experience a great one including helping the pre-teams participate in the fun meet on 7/14.

**OFFICIALS COORDINATOR:** Assures that the team has the needed timers and other deck officials in order to run a meet. Recruits/ensures the team has enough certified officials: referees, starters, stroke & turn judges.

## COMMITTEES

**AUTOMATION:** this committee is in charge of the computer functions of the swim team, at meets and otherwise. Uses the team laptop computer and related software. Works with coaches to prepare team roster, meet line-ups (both “A” and “B” Meets), etc. Computer support/operation at the “A” and “B” meets. “A” Meet Programs. Maintains Team Email list.

**INFORMATION/COMMUNICATION:** chaired by the secretary, this committee is in charge of disseminating information to parents, coaches, team members, pool board members and the community in a variety of ways. Updates Web Site copy. Community Relations (including notification of swim team registration and schedule in Pool Registration packet; signs at pool notifying of late opening/early closing dates). Maintains Bulletin Board/make signs as needed. Registration coordination (Set date, reserve meeting space, send notices and info). Maintains Records Board. Represents swim team to the Pool’s board of directors.

**COACHES LIAISON:** chaired by the A Rep, this committee works closely with the coaches hired by the team. Recruiting/Hiring. Development of Employment Contracts. Salary (Determination, Interface w/Pool Company to get coaches paid). Performance Evaluation/Bonus Recommendations. Communicates Board policy with respect to guidelines/expectations for coaches. Conducts annual survey to identify strengths and weaknesses in the program. Establishes practice schedule with coaches. This committee consists of A Reps, B Reps, officers and age-group reps.

**EQUIPMENT:** Maintains team equipment, including starting device, lane ropes, etc. Coordinates with Officials coordinator to buy stop watches as needed.

**SNACK BAR:** this committee is in charge of buying and selling food at the various meets. Buys food for all home meets (A & B). Concession Set-up, Sales and Clean-up for A & B Home Meets. Provides refreshments for Officials at meets.

**SOCIAL/SPIRIT:** this committee is in charge of generating a sense of team spirit in a variety of ways. Banquet (makes reservation in fall, sells tickets, format, decorations). Pep Rallies and Social Events (Schedule, activities/materials, food). Team Cheers. Order Trophies/awards (with Team Reps & Coaches Liaison). Recruits a Team Photographer. Arranges for Team Pictures.

**TEAM WEAR:** this committee selects, orders and sells team merchandise (shirts, caps, team suits, other)

**FUNDRAISING:** this committee is responsible for enrolling sponsors and looking for creative ways of raising funds for the team.

**HOME BBQ:** this committee is responsible for all aspects (shopping, prepping, selling tickets) of the team BBQ following home “A” meets.

**EQUIPMENT:** this committee is responsible for maintaining and purchasing equipment used and/or needed by the team.

## **Appendix C: Summer Competitive Meets Defined**

### **Regular Team Meets (A & B)**

Swim Meets for regular team members occur on Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings. The Wednesday evening meets are a great opportunity for our swimmers to experience friendly, informal competition in a more relaxed setting. The Saturday morning meets (Dual Meets) are more competitive and participation is determined based on a swimmer's official and other factors, within the rules adopted by the MCSL.

### **Divisional Relay Carnival\***

The Relay Carnival is held once on a Sunday around the mid-point of the season. This meet includes swimmers from all of the teams in our division. The coach selects the fastest combination of swimmers to compete against the other teams in a series of relays. First place teams compete at the end of the season in the County-wide Relay All Stars meet.

### **Divisionals**

This meet is held the Saturday after our last "A" dual meet and is a division-wide meet in which the two swimmers from each of the six teams compete. Our best two swimmers and an alternate are selected by the coaches for each event.

### **Coaches Invitational Long Course Meet\***

The MCSL sponsors this meet which will be held in mid-July. This meet involves the top eight swimmers in each event, from the entire MCSL. Stonegate often sends a swimmer or two to Long Course.

### **County All Star Relay Meet\***

The MCSL sponsors this meet which is held the week after Divisionals. This meet involves the first place finishers from each event in the Division Relay Carnival. We usually send a relay or two to All Star Relays

### **County Individual All Star Meet\***

The MCSL sponsors this meet which is held the week after Divisionals. This meet involves the top 16 swimmers -- who meet benchmark times -- in each event, from the entire MCSL. We usually send several swimmers to All Stars.

\* The Coaches or team representatives will notify the swimmers who qualify for these events.

## Appendix D: Order of Events for Regular (Dual) Meets

Boys	Girls	Age Group	Event
1	2	12&U	100M Individual Medley (Fly, Back, Breast, Free, 1 length each)
3	4	Open	200M Medley Relay (Back, Breast, Fly, Free, 2 lengths each)
5	6	8&U	25M Freestyle
7	8	9-10	50M Freestyle
9	10	13-14	50M Freestyle
11	12	11-12	50M Freestyle
13	14	15-18	100M Freestyle
15	16	13-14	100M Individual Medley (Fly, Back, Breast, Free)
17	18	8&U	25M Backstroke
19	20	9-10	25M Backstroke
21	22	15-18	100M Backstroke
23	24	11-12	50M Backstroke
25	26	13-14	50M Backstroke
<i>Ten Minute Break</i>			
27	28	15-18	100M Individual Medley (Fly, Back, Breast, Free)
29	30	8&U	25M Breaststroke
31	32	9-10	25M Breaststroke
33	34	11-12	50M Breaststroke
35	36	13-14	50M Breaststroke
37	38	15-18	100M Breaststroke
39	40	8&U	25M Butterfly
41	42	9-10	25M Butterfly
43	44	11-12	50M Butterfly
45	46	13-14	50M Butterfly
47	48	15-18	50M Butterfly
49	50	One from each age group except 15-18	175M Freestyle Relay (2 lengths 9-10, 2 lengths 11-12, 2 lengths 13-14, 1 length 8&U)

## Appendix E: 10 Commandments for Swimming Parents

**Thou shalt not impose your ambitions on thy child.** Remember that swimming is your child's activity. Improvements and progress occur at different rates for each individual. Don't judge your child's progress based on the performance of other athletes and don't push him/her based on what you think they should be doing. The nice thing about swimming is every person can strive to do his/her personal best.

**Thou shalt be supportive no matter what.** There is only one question to ask your child "Did you have fun?" If meets and practices are not fun, your child should not be forced to participate.

**Thou shalt not coach your child.** You have taken your child to a professional coach, do not undermine that coach by trying to coach your child on the side. Your job is to support, love and hug your child no matter what. The coach is responsible for the technical part of the job. You should not offer advice on technique or race strategy. That is not your area. This will only serve to confuse your child and prevent that swimmer/coach bond from forming.

**Thou shalt only have positive things to say at a swimming meet.** If you are going to show up at a swimming meet, you should cheer and applaud, but never criticize any child or coach.

**Thou shalt acknowledge thy child's fears.** At a first swimming meet any race can be cause a stressful situation. It is totally appropriate for your child to be scared. Don't yell or belittle, just assure your child that the coach would not have suggested the event if your child was not ready to compete in it.

**Thou shalt not criticize the officials.** If you do not have the time or the desire to volunteer as an official, don't criticize those who are doing the best they can.

**Honor thy child's coach.** The bond between coach and swimmer is a special one, and one that contributes to your child's success as well as fun. Do not criticize the coach in the presence of your child, it will only serve to hurt your child's swimming.

**Thou shalt not jump from team to team.** The water isn't necessarily bluer at the other team's pool. Every team has its own internal problems, even teams that build champions. Children who switch from team to team are often ostracized for a long, long time by the teammates they leave behind. Often times swimmers who do switch teams never do better than they did before they sought the bluer water. (Moreover, the League has strict limits on switching teams if you haven't moved homes.)

**Thy child shalt have goals besides winning.** Giving an honest effort regardless of what the outcome is much more important than winning. One Olympian said, "My goal was to set a world record. Well, I did that, but someone else did it too, just a little faster than I did. I achieved my goal and I lost. This does not make me a failure, in fact, I am very proud of that swim."

**Thou shalt not expect thy child to become an Olympian.** There are over 300,000 athletes who swim. There are only 52 spots available for the Olympic Team every four years. Your child's odds of becoming an Olympian are 1 in about 5,000. Swimming is much more than just the Olympics. Ask your coach why they coach. Chances are, s/he was not an Olympian, but still got enough out of swimming that they want to pass that love for the sport on to others. Swimming teaches self discipline and sportsmanship; it builds self esteem and fitness; it provides lifelong friendships and much more. Most Olympians will tell you that these intangibles far outweigh any medal they may have won. Swimming builds good people and you should be happy that your child wants to participate.

Taken from the *U.S. Swimming Parents' Handbook*