

STONEGATE SERPENTS

Parent Handbook



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Mission Statement

The Stonegate Serpents Swim Team provides a platform for the youth of the greater Stonegate community to engage in formal, friendly competition within the Montgomery County Swim League (MCSL) during the summer. We seek to create and maintain a fair and wholesome environment in which to develop swimming skills, encourage sportsmanship and teamwork, and foster an appreciation of the relationship between effort and success.



First Things First

Welcome to the Stonegate Serpents!

Below are some tips that we hope will be helpful:

Make sure that the team has your email address and that you receive the *Serpent eNews* emails. They tell you everything you need to know throughout the season. If you are not receiving them, send an email to Jessica McFadden at jessica.mcfadden@gmail.com, and she'll make sure you get on the list.

Read through this handbook cover to cover. Many frequently asked questions are answered here, and it was designed with newcomers in mind.

Check the bulletin board in the pavilion often. You'll find general information about being a Serpent family and about the coaches and team parent reps, explanations of how some aspects of the meets work, information on team events and outings, lineups for upcoming meets—and plenty more.

Visit the team website at www.stonegateswimteam.com often. You'll find the team calendar, locations of and directions to away meets, practice schedules, and more.

Remember that swimming is a team sport. We need all of our swimmers all season, so we encourage you to take your vacations AFTER swim season is over; August is best. If you must miss a meet, please email Coach Brian ASAP—at least three or more days before the meet that will be missed.

Get involved! We need LOTS of volunteers to make the summer swim season work, and each family is required to work a minimum of four sessions each season. There are plenty of options for both experienced and new swim families at the meets and during team social/spirit events. There's no better way to meet people and gain an understanding of the sport of swimming than to work at a meet as a timer, announcer, or an official. And there's an added benefit: You get a front-row seat to all the action!

Label, Label, Label. With more than 100 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 from the pile.

General Info

The Stonegate Serpents Swim Team is a member of the Montgomery County Swim League (MCSL). This league currently consists of about 90 teams in 15 divisions (A through O), with six teams in each division. Division assignments are based upon the previous season's team performance. To find out our current divisional assignment and ranking, please go to the "About Our Team" section at www.stonegateswimteam.com.

You can find detailed information about the league, member teams, rules, status of officials' certification, and many other topics on the MCSL website at www.mcsl.org.

The season begins after Memorial Day with daily after-school practices. The meets and summer practice schedule kick off at the end of the MCPS school year, and the season wraps up at the end of July. The meet schedule includes Time Trials, four or five Wednesday night dual meets, five Saturday morning dual meets, A and B Relay Carnivals, and the Division Championship, or "Divisionals."

The Serpents celebrate the end of the season with a team banquet on the evening of Divisionals. The team banquet is an entire-family event with an awards ceremony (all swimmers are recognized), catered dinner, viewing of the team video, and much, much more.

Throughout the season, the team organizes many social events, including Friday night pep rallies and potlucks, Team Tuesdays, and Thursday donut breakfasts; being a Serpent is a fun experience from beginning to end!

Practice Information

Pre-Team

The goal of Pre-Team is to engender a love of swimming and to prepare swimmers for participation on the Swim Team once they have acquired the necessary skills. Swimmers will be taught two of the four basic competitive strokes—freestyle and backstroke—and also will be introduced to the diving start.

Daily Pre-Team practices begin after the school year ends and take place Monday through Friday from 10:15am to 11am. Afternoon practices also are offered to swimmers who are attending camp or otherwise cannot attend morning practices: Monday and Tuesday, 6:30pm to 7pm; Thursday and Friday, 5:30pm to 6pm.

Once a Pre-Teamer is able to successfully swim the length of the pool (25 meters), they may be invited to participate in a B meet on Wednesday night and/or practice with the appropriate age group on the Swim Team.

Swim Team

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

Daily after-school Swim Team practices begin on the Tuesday after Memorial Day and run through the end of the MCPS school year. Daily morning practices begin on the first day of summer break.

While school is in session, the practice schedule is as follows: 13 & older, 4pm to 5pm; 9-12, 5pm to 5:45pm; 8 & under, 5:45pm to 6:30pm.

Once summer break begins, the practice schedule is as follows: 13 & older, 8am to 9:15am; 9-12, 9:15am to 10:15am; 8 & under, 10:15am to 11am; Pre-Team, 10:15am to 11am.

Afternoon practices also are offered to swimmers who are attending camp, have job commitments, or otherwise cannot attend morning practices: Monday and Tuesday, 5pm to 5:45pm for 9 & older, 5:45pm to 6:30pm for 8 & under, and 6:30pm to 7pm for Pre-Team; Thursday and Friday, 4pm to 4:45pm for 9 & older, 4:45pm to 5:30pm for 8 & under, and 5:30pm to 6pm for Pre-Team.

Practices run through the final Saturday A Meet or Wednesday B Meet, whichever is later. 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 through the dates of those meets.

All practice schedules are listed on the team web site:
www.stonegateswimteam.com.

At practice, swimmers may be grouped based on skill level or age or both. Practice sessions will address stroke work, endurance and speed. Swim Team members will receive instruction in all four strokes (freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly). Given the diversity of experience and 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 the league-wide All-Star meets. 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, and the most important thing is that swimmers have a fun and positive competitive experience while improving their swimming skills.

Inclement Weather Policy

According to Montgomery County regulations, we are unable to swim for 30 minutes after the sound of thunder. Please use common sense, and if in doubt, call the pool. Do not drop off your child without confirming there is practice.



Codes of Conduct

Parent/Guardian's Code of Conduct: Parents and guardians will understand that MCSL and its activities are for the benefit of children. The goals of the league include helping young people establish a love for the sport of swimming, while developing advanced aquatic skills, teamwork, and the principles of good sportsmanship. To accomplish these goals, parents/guardians must conduct themselves in a manner consistent with creating a positive experience for children and their families.

As a parent or guardian of a child registered with an MCSL member team, you are responsible for the conduct of your guests and other family members. MCSL teams will not tolerate a parent or guardian yelling at or belittling a child, an official, coach, or other parent or guardian in any way. As an adult and role model, children are influenced by my words and actions. I agree to the following:

1. I will remember that all children participate to have fun and that competition is for youth, not adults.
2. I will be a positive role model for children and will encourage them to reach the highest levels of sportsmanship and to follow the rules.
3. I will be respectful and courteous of others, and will support and encourage swimmers, officials, team representatives, and coaches through my positive actions and attitude.
4. I will recognize that meet officials are volunteers and will treat them with the same respect that I would expect if I were in that position.
5. I will not engage in any kind of unsportsmanlike behavior with an official, coach, swimmer, or parent/guardian such as arguing, booing, taunting, or using profane language or gestures.
6. I will teach my child to treat other swimmers, coaches, team representatives, and officials with respect regardless of age, race, creed, color, gender, or ability.
7. I will not be aggressive or hostile towards another individual and will teach my child to resolve conflicts without resorting to violence or argument.
8. I will not ridicule or yell at my child or any other participant for making a mistake and will not hold a specific child responsible for losing a competition.
9. I will respect and support the team representatives', officials' and coaches' authority during meets and will never argue with, question, discuss, or confront officials or coaches.
10. I will support a swimming environment for my child that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol, and will refrain from their use at all team events.
11. I promise to help my child enjoy the summer swimming experience by doing whatever I can, such as being a respectable fan, volunteering at meets, and helping with other team activities.
12. I will do my best to make swimming fun for all children.

Swimmer's Code of Conduct

1. I will do my best to listen and learn from my coaches.
2. I will attend every practice and meet that I can and will notify my coach if I can't.
3. I will treat my coaches, other swimmers, officials, and fans with respect regardless of age, race, creed, color, gender or abilities, and I will expect to be treated accordingly.
4. I will not engage in any kind of unsportsmanlike behavior with any official, coach, swimmer, or other parent/guardian such as arguing, booing and taunting; refusing to shake hands; or using profane language or gestures.
5. I will encourage my own parents or guardians to engage in good sportsmanship.
6. I will expect to be treated fairly over the course of a season with regard to meet entries and recognize that certain meets are more competitive than others.
7. I deserve to have fun during my swimming experience and will alert parents/guardians or coaches if there are problems or it stops being fun.
8. I deserve to play in an environment that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol and expect adults to refrain from their use at all swim meets.
9. I will remember that meets are an opportunity to learn and have fun.

Coach's Code of Conduct: As a coach, you will realize you are one of the most important and impactful role models in a child's life. Your words and actions will have a positive and potentially devastating impact on the emotional well-being of the children in your charge. Coaching is a privilege, and with it comes responsibility. Coaches set the tone for the team and are responsible for the conduct of their swimmers, parents or guardians, and any other coaches on the field. All children are influenced by my leadership and authority and as their coach; I understand I am a role model. I agree to the following:

1. I will place the emotional and physical well being of my swimmers ahead of any personal desire or pressure to win.
2. I will not engage in any kind of unsportsmanlike conduct with any official, opposing coach, swimmer, team representative, parent/guardian, or spectator such as: arguing, refusing to shake hands, excessive yelling or belittling or using profane language or gestures.
3. I will treat each official and opposing coach with respect, will not engage in open arguments or confrontations, and will work to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence.
4. I will treat my swimmers fairly and will work toward improving a swimmer's individual skill set.
5. I will be knowledgeable of the rules set forth for swimming by MCSL, will teach the rules to the swimmers I coach, and will adhere to these rules at all times.
6. I will do my best to provide a safe and encouraging competitive environment.
7. I will teach my swimmers to treat other swimmers, coaches, team reps, and officials with respect regardless of age, race, creed, color, gender, or ability.
8. I will use coaching techniques appropriate for the skills that I teach and will do my best to organize practices that are fun and challenging for all swimmers.
9. I will lead by example in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship.
10. I will remember that I am a youth swimming coach and that races and meets are for children and not adults.

A Week in the Life...

Monday

- ✓ Check the swim team bulletin board in the pavilion to see what your swimmer(s) is swimming on Wednesday night. If your child can get across the pool, he or she is probably swimming in the Wednesday B meet!
- ✓ Sign up to volunteer at the meet; the SignUpGenius link is on the team website at www.stonegateswimteam.com (password: "Sonic") and included in the weekly *Serpent eNews* email.
- ✓ Sign up for Tuesday Fun Days in the guard office (just ask the guard on duty for the sign-up sheet).

Tuesday

- ✓ Come to the Tuesday Fun Day! The themes and activities are posted on the bulletin board in the pavilion, on the website (under the "Calendar" tab), and included in the weekly *Serpent eNews*.

Wednesday

- ✓ Come to the meet! Check *Serpent eNews* for the meet theme.

(Donut) Thursday

- ✓ After practice, eat a donut! Each week, a parent volunteer brings donuts for the kids to enjoy.
- ✓ Check the swim team bulletin board to see if your swimmer is swimming at the Saturday A meet.
- ✓ Sign up to volunteer at the Saturday meet!
- ✓ Check with one of the Team Reps or another parent to see if you have ribbons in the ribbon box.

Friday

- ✓ Come to the Friday night Pep Rally and Potluck. These gatherings are for all Swim Team and Pre-Team members, not just Saturday morning swimmers, and they're a great chance for families to mingle off-deck. The potluck themes are posted on the bulletin board and website and in *Serpent eNews*.

Saturday

- ✓ Come to the meet to swim or, if you're not swimming, cheer on your teammates! Be sure to check *Serpent eNews* for the meet theme.
- ✓ If it's a home meet, hang out afterward to enjoy the team BBQ (tickets are \$5/person)!

Meet Me on Deck...



The calendar at www.stonegateswimteam.com is populated at the beginning of the season with the meet schedule, and the dates of the meets also are posted on the team bulletin board in the pavilion.

Time Trials: Time Trials are held at Stonegate on the Saturday one week before the first A meet of the season. This is a Serpents-only event where all swimmers will be timed in as many events as they desire. Time Trials provides the coaches and swimmers with a baseline or “seed” time in each event and helps the coaches determine which meets and events to put which swimmers in for the next week.

The rest of the season primarily consists of Wednesday night B meets and Saturday morning A meets, some taking place at Stonegate and some at the opponent’s home pool. Coach Brian determines which swimmers compete in which meets and events, and those swimmers are then grouped in heats for each event according to their seed times.

Wednesday night B meets: At Wednesday night B meets, Stonegate swimmers get to compete against swimmers from nearby pools. And although these meets

are not officially scored, the swimmers who participate are recognized for best times and earn ribbons for their swims. Wednesday night meets also provide swimmers with the opportunity to work their way into the more competitive A meets on Saturday mornings.

The lineups for Wednesday night meets are posted on the team bulletin board on Mondays. Each meet has a theme, and swimmers are encouraged to dress accordingly. The meets start at 6pm, and swimmers are typically expected to be there by 4:45pm/5pm for warm-ups (but always double check the report time once the lineup is posted).

In addition to the four or five Wednesday night dual B meets each season, there is a B Relay Carnival meet, typically on a Sunday in mid-July.

Pre-Team: The Pre-Team coaches will notify Pre-Team swimmers of any competitive events they may qualify for, and if they're able to, many Pre-Teamers will swim a B meet toward the end of the season.

Saturday morning A meets: A meets are official MCSL competitions between teams within each division. The meets are scored, and the result of each dual meet helps determine the team's ultimate standing within the division at the end of the season. Scores from boys' and girls' events are combined to add up to the team's overall score, and each place in each event counts the same (i.e., 1st place in 8 & under boys freestyle equals the same amount of points as 1st place in 15-18 girls breaststroke). Swimmers are recognized for best times and earn ribbons for their swims.

Coach Brian determines who swims in which events at A meets, and typically the swimmers with the fastest times swim on Saturday mornings. According to MCSL eligibility rules, in any given A meet, swimmers may only enter three of the four individual stroke events, and no more than five events in total, including individual medley events and relays.

Many factors go into the coach's decision-making process, but generally the swimmers with the top six times in freestyle and those with the top three times in the other strokes in each age group will be selected to represent the team in A meets. However, because swimmers are permitted to swim only three individual events, sometimes swimmers with the fourth- or fifth-fastest times will be chosen to swim.

The lineup for Saturday morning meets is posted on the team bulletin board by Thursday morning before the meet. Each meet has a theme, and swimmers are encouraged to dress accordingly. Saturday meets (except Divisionals) normally

start at 9am, and swimmers are typically expected to be there by 7:45/8am for warm-ups. If the meet is away, the team usually meets at Stonegate so families can caravan.

We NEVER want to swim empty lanes at an A meet since that means an opportunity lost to another swimmer and zero points for the team. It is critical that the coaches know by the Wednesday before (at the latest) if a swimmer will not be available for the Saturday meet.

**Please see Appendix C for a more detailed list of the types of meets for the season.*



Swim Meet FAQs

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

A: The A meet lineup is posted on Thursday morning on the team bulletin board in the pavilion.

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

A: The B meet lineup is posted by the end of the day Monday. If your child swam two or fewer events in the preceding 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?

A: Tell the coach AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, but please PLAN AHEAD. Tell the coach three days ahead of time, and by WEDNESDAY NIGHT at the latest, if your child is unavailable 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?

A: 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 swims in an A meet, will they continue to just do A meets?

A: Not necessarily. The A meet lineup is determined on a week-to-week basis by Coach Brian and is based on a number of factors, including swimmer times, availability, attitude, and attendance. Make sure to check the A meet lineup every week to see if your child is scheduled to swim. The coaches try to inform swimmers and parents of a swimmer who normally does not swim A meets if he or she has been included in the lineup for the next Saturday. It also is important to check the B meet lineup each week because sometimes regular A meet swimmers will be entered in an event they don't normally swim on Saturdays.

Step-by-Step Meet Guide

The Day Before

Performance is directly related to the quality of food eaten in the 24 hours before a swim meet. Consuming pasta, salad, bread, and other non-greasy foods low in fat and protein the night before a meet will make swimmers feel and perform better in the pool; overeating before a swim meet, on the other hand, will make them feel sluggish in the water. Save the burgers, fried chicken, all-you-can-eat restaurants, and pizza for Thursday and Saturday nights.

The Night Before

A good night's sleep before each meet is essential to swimming fast. If the meet is on Saturday morning, the day will begin very early, and if it's on Wednesday night, it can end quite late. Swimmers should pack all their gear well in advance (the night before for early-morning Saturdays and early in the day for Wednesday nights), and make sure to dress up for the meet theme, which is announced in advance. 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 or flip-flops
- Towels* (one for sitting on and one for drying off)
- Two pairs of goggles (back-ups are essential)*
- Stonegate t-shirt* and hoodie or other warm clothing
- Water bottle* and snack
- Sunscreen*
- Bug spray
- Deck chair
- Something to do: favorite book, device for listening to music, playing cards, games, etc.

* We highly recommend labeling these items with permanent ink.

The Morning Of

The morning of a meet, swimmers should limit the amount of dairy they consume as it could make them nauseous, and it likely will increase mucus production, which makes breathing more difficult. Foods rich in refined sugar will give a swimmer a quick boost of energy, but that will run out before the end of the first race. And fat, protein, and fiber take several hours to digest so will sit in the swimmer's stomach as they try to propel themselves through the water.

Therefore, 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.

Once You Get There

Check In

First, check in with one of the coaches. Then, go to the team area.

Unpack

In the team area, where the team banner is displayed, set up your spot by grabbing a chair (or setting up the one you brought) and settle in until warm-ups. Every swimmer is required to stay with the team in the team area. This makes it easier for coaches to locate swimmers, especially if it appears that a swimmer might be close to missing an event, or if a last-minute substitution needs to be made. This also helps swimmers develop friendships, team spirit, and good sportsmanship. Should personal items be forgotten or misplaced, the chances of recovery are much better when they are left around friends and teammates.

Warm-Ups

Each team's warm-ups are scheduled at a specific time before the 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 becoming familiar with the water temperature, backstroke flags, walls, pool depth, and lane ropes. After warming up and after each swim, swimmers need to stay dry and warm.

Competition

The meet is organized into events, which may be further divided into heats. The events are typically paired into a boys' event and then a girls' event for each given stroke and age group. The order of events is listed in Appendix E.

Talk With a Coach

Coaches often will want to have a conversation with swimmers before their events, and swimmers should report to their designated coach approximately six events before each event they are scheduled to swim. When they report, swimmers should be ready to swim: cap on, goggles ready, restroom visit completed.

During this conversation, the coach typically will tell the swimmer what to concentrate on during the swim and get the swimmer pumped up for the event. If the pre-swim conversation doesn't occur, it is difficult for the coach to properly evaluate the swimmer's response to instruction in a racing environment and, ultimately, the coach isn't able to help the swimmer achieve the best result.

Touching base with the coach also confirms that the swimmer is ready for his or her event and is aware of where he or she needs to be when; this alleviates stress on both swimmers and coaches.

Clerk of Course

There is a clerk—or clerks—of course at every meet, and it's important to know who they are and where they are set up. At home meets, the clerk of course area is set up by the high dive. As the meet progresses, you will hear the announcer and/or the coaches 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 there that the swimmers will get instructions for lining up and will have their heat number and lane confirmed. The swimmer will report to the clerk of course three events before the event they are to swim and will then follow the instructions of the clerk of course.

Upon reaching the start end, the swimmer must check with the timer to confirm his or her name is on the timing sheet; this will verify that the swimmer is in the right location. Swimmers will need to pay attention to what's going on in their lane and be ready to swim (with cap and goggles on) their event and heat.

Whistles & the Start

The first signal to get into place will be a series of short whistles. Then the announcer or 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 (for backstroke, there is a second long whistle prompting swimmers to get in position at the wall). 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

The fun part! After swimming the prescribed stroke for the required distance, sportsmanship (and, in some cases, rules) dictate that swimmers should wait at the wall until all competitors have finished and the swimmers are instructed to get out of the water. Before leaving the deck, the swimmer may check with the timers to see what their time is and can share this with the coach.

Talk With a Coach (Again)

The swimmer should visit with the coach again after the swim. The coach will review the instructions given before the race and talk about the swim, offering suggestions for improvement where necessary. *These moments are invaluable to swimmers and coaches in establishing clear and effective two-way*

communications regarding expectations and results. This requires consistent one-on-one communication, and parents should not try to accompany their children to these talks with the coaches.

Between Events

Swim meets usually have long stretches between events, though sometimes there is almost no time at all. Swimmers need to be prepared for both situations. Longer periods can be filled with a book or a game. Conserving energy is important, so activities that involve sitting and lying around are excellent choices. Relax, cheer for others, and listen for your events to be called. And remember, stay in the team area.

Checking Results

Times and rankings get posted following each event. When there are multiple heats for a given event, you may need to be patient while Automation processes all the timer sheets. Usually the times and rankings are posted in a common area (look for the swarms of parents). At home meets, we post results on the pool house doors between the office and the pavilion.



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:

Team Tuesdays: Swimmers enjoy time with their teammates and coaches that doesn't involve swimming and often takes place away from the pool. Past activities have included craft-making and tie dying, a trip to the movies, bowling, laser tag, mini golf, and other events.

Thursday Donut Breakfasts: Swimmers get donuts and juice on Thursday mornings after practice. Often, the ribbons earned on Wednesday night are distributed at these breakfasts. (Donuts will be given to Thursday afternoon swimmers as well.)

Friday Night Potluck Dinners and Pep Rallies: All team members (including Pre-Team) and their families get together for a themed potluck dinner/event to celebrate, socialize, and get pumped up for the Saturday morning meets.



Saturday After-Meet BBQs: After each home Saturday meet, there is a cookout at the pool. Food is available for a nominal fee. All team members, whether or not they are swimming on Saturday, are encouraged to attend. Bring the whole family! When not at our home pool, the team often goes out to lunch at a nearby restaurant after the meet finishes.

Team Banquet: This is a fun family celebration of the swim season and the Serpents' accomplishments. All swim team members and their families are welcome to join in the festivities, which include awards, dinner, fun in the pool, and a slide show.

Please refer to the website and *Serpent eNews* for up-to-the-minute information regarding the team social events.

Hey Parents!

Stonegate Swim Team parents play a very important support role—for the swimmers, the coaches, and the team as a whole.

The most important duty for parents is to support and encourage their swimmer; support, love, and encouragement will motivate and sustain the swimmer. This, when combined with the coaches' technical training and conditioning, will provide the swimmer with the confidence to perform at his or her highest potential.



The swimmer (and parents) needs to remember that participation at the highest level of his or her ability is the goal, and the parents' and coaches' support and respect will remain consistent regardless of outcome. This is especially important with the 10 & under swimmers. Inconsistencies are very common with this age group, which can lead parents, coaches, and swimmers down the road of frustration. Parents must remember the 10 & under swimmer still needs to mature physically and mentally. The key is to be patient and allow these younger swimmers time to enjoy and love the sport.

Parents need to be patient with inconsistent times, since every swimmer will hit a low point during the season—at the beginning, middle, or end. Peaks and valleys are normal, and parents can help swimmers focus on trying their best and taking a positive approach to each practice and race. A positive mental attitude is a very important swimming skill that must be nurtured by the parents and coaching staff.

Supporting the coaches means, essentially, respecting the coaching staff and the coach-swimmer relationship. It's important that the coach-swimmer relationship is 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, when the coach must focus on teaching. Coaches will be happy to discuss issues with parents either before or after practice. If a swimmer needs to leave practice early, parents should advise the coach prior to the start of the practice session.

If there is an issue, it's important for parents to remember that children often tend to exaggerate when they are praised or criticized. In order to avoid overreacting, parents should get the facts, talk with the coach, and try to remain as objective as possible. Communication is key.

Finally, the team cannot be successful without parent volunteers, and therefore, volunteering is mandatory. Parents must assume certain team obligations and responsibilities when their child joins the swim team. We expect each family to fill a minimum of four volunteer spots over the course of each season. There are a variety of opportunities throughout the season, and it is best to sign up early and often so all of our meets and other events run smoothly. We aim for 100% family participation, and we track participation carefully. We use SignUpGenius to make signing up easy, and the various links are sent out in the *Serpent eNews* emails all summer long.

See Appendix A for a synopsis of volunteer positions.

Appendix A:

Volunteer Positions

Parent Volunteers

The Stonegate Serpents Swim Team requires significant volunteer support to function. For example, we need at least 25 volunteers in order to run a meet at home. Most opportunities are open to beginners with no experience and no idea how swim meets run (though you'll soon learn!), but some positions require MCSL certification. Each family with a swimmer on the team is required to fill a minimum of four volunteer spots each season. We would like to think that, in addition to meeting your requirement, you will meet people, learn how the team and the meets work, make friends, and have fun. Sign up early and often.

Here are the volunteer positions that are typically available, roughly in order of experience/skill required ([SSL] indicates SSL hours available to MCPS students):

Friday Night Potluck:

Help to set up, clean up, and serve food at the Friday night pep rally and potluck. **For beginners*

Banquet:

There are various jobs that need to be done ahead of, during, and after the banquet, from setup and decorations to ticket taking and breakdown. A call for volunteers will go out in the *Serpent eNews* during the season. **For beginners*

Ribbons:

Adhere labels to ribbons for all the events at a meet. This is the perfect job for shade-lovers, since you sit under the pavilion or inside with the automation folks. **For beginners [SSL]*

Saturday After-Meet BBQs:

There are various jobs needing to be done at these home-meet cookouts: grill master, vegetable and fruit preparer, setup, cleanup. The call will go out weekly in the *Serpent eNews* for volunteers. **For beginners*



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!). **For beginners [SSL]*

Spirit Wear Sales:

Work the booth where we sell Serpent gear at home meets **For beginners [SSL]*

Runner:

Collect time sheets from timers at end of each event and run them over to the automation table. This is a great way to get steps in! **For beginners [SSL]*

Timer:

Operate a stopwatch to record swimmers' times, from the starting light to the touch at the end. This is a great way to really get into the meet and be with fun people. A tutorial on what is expected takes place before every meet. **For beginners *18 & older preferred for Saturday meets; upper middle school & older preferred for Wednesday meets [SSL]*

Automation:

Computer support at the meets means helping to enter swimmers' times into the meet software, printing labels for ribbons, and posting the results. **For beginners [SSL]*

Head Timer/Assistant Head Timer:

Coordinates with the referee to run an efficient meet, organizes and serves as a resource to the lane timers, may be asked to run timers' briefing before start of a meet, runs two watches for each heat in case a backup time is needed, helps collect time sheets to be given to the runner. **For those familiar with swimming and team members; experience as a lane timer necessary; 18 & older*

Clerk of Course:

Responsible for checking in swimmers before they swim an event, as well as organizing and positioning them appropriately so they end up in the right place at the right time. **For those familiar with swimming and team members and especially good for people who are good at multi-tasking in a hectic environment (not gonna lie about this job; it can be chaotic); 18 & older*

Announcer:

Fulfill your desire to be a sportscaster/DJ. This person keeps everyone on track by announcing what is happening as it happens, calling swimmers to the clerk of course, and making general announcements. Bonus: You get one of the best seats in the house! **For those familiar with swimming and team members; 18 & older*

Stroke & Turn Judge:

Watches multiple lanes of swimmers to check that strokes, turns, and touches are executed legally. Bonus: You get one of the best seats in the house! This is a great job for those who want to really understand what a legal breaststroke is! ***Requires MCSL certification; 18 & older*

Starter:

Starts each race using vocal cues and the starting horn/light. ***Requires MCSL certification; 18 & older*

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. ***Requires MCSL certification; 18 & older*

Appendix B:

Board Members, Coordinators, Contact Info

It takes a village to raise a child, and several villages to run a swim team! The Stonegate Serpents Swim Team board is responsible for all long-term planning and for coordinating with the Stonegate Swim Club and pool management company. The board members also work with the various individuals who volunteer to organize non-meet events. New volunteers are always welcome!

Swim Team Board & Job Coordinators

Team Representatives (“Team Reps”): The MCSL dictates that each member team have one or more Team Reps, which is something like an athletic director and traveling secretary all rolled into one. The Team Rep(s) has responsibilities within the league as a whole, within his/her team’s division, and within the team itself, interacting with coaches, swimmers, parents and pool management, among others. Staffing and running the meets is perhaps the most visible aspect of the job. In order to cope, we “divide & conquer” as follows:

A meet representative(s): Plans and presides over all board meetings. Represents the team at MCSL meetings, within our MCSL division, and at official league meets. Relays to the board and coaches information from the MCSL meetings, including schedule information and rule changes. Works with Team Reps from other pools to schedule events and administer Saturday morning A meets and other division meets, including contact with appropriate Team Reps the Friday night before each Saturday meet. Administers Saturday meets (including provision of all necessary equipment/supplies needed to run meet). 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). Works closely with the head coach. Negotiates coaching salaries, working closely with the treasurer. Resource and sounding board for parents and buffers coaching staff/parent relations, if necessary.

For the 2022 season:

Theresa Curtis, theresacurtis48@gmail.com

Tom Lang, tlangjr@gmail.com

B meet representative(s): Schedules Wednesday night B meets during the off-season for the following summer and coordinates individual swimmer evaluations at the beginning of each season. Works with reps from teams on the B meet schedule to administer Wednesday night meets, both in the days preceding each meet and at the meet itself. This includes ensuring all necessary equipment/supplies needed to run meet are on hand, signing up volunteers to fill all positions—including timers, runners, clerks of course, and certified officials (referees, starters, stroke & turn judges). Works closely with the head coach, and acts as point of contact for families—especially newcomers.

For the 2022 season:

Hillary Jackson, hilljax@yahoo.com

Ilia Rodriguez, eirodriguez@verizon.net

Treasurer: Keeps track of the team's finances, including maintaining the bank account, budget, record of receipts, and expenditures. Provides cash box for all sales events. Collects and disperses all funds. Coordinates with Team Reps regarding coaches' salaries and all team financial needs.

For the 2022 season: Emilie Grahl, emgrahl@gmail.com

Secretary: Responsible for disseminating information to parents, coaches, team members, pool board members, and the community in a variety of ways—including sending regular emails throughout the season and ensuring the team website is up to date.

For the 2022 season: Jessica McFadden, jessica.mcfadden@gmail.com

Social Chair: Plans and coordinates volunteers to make social events a success.

For the 2022 season: Erika Lang, erikaqlang@hotmail.com

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.

For the 2022 season: Mary Ross Southworth, mrsouthworth@gmail.com

Additional Jobs and Responsibilities

Automation: This individual is in charge of and oversees all computer operation and support for the swim team at meets and otherwise. This includes producing a team roster, meet lineups, team email list, and meet programs. Uses team laptop and necessary software.

For the 2022 season: Mary Ross Southworth, mrsouthworth@gmail.com

Home-meet BBQs: This individual is responsible for coordinating all aspects for the team BBQ following home A meets on Saturdays, including organizing volunteers, shopping, prepping, and selling tickets.

For the 2022 season: Amy Wofford, vandria@yahoo.com

Photography & Team Video: Responsible for taking and aggregating pictures of Serpents in action at practices, meets, and social events and putting together a DVD for the end-of-season banquet.

For the 2022 season: Erika Lang, erikaqlang@hotmail.com

Snack Bar: This individual is in charge of buying and selling food at the various meets and also includes coordinating volunteers to set up concessions, sell, and clean up at all home meets. Also provides refreshments for officials and other volunteers at home meets.

For the 2022 season: Marjie Dewey, marjie.dewey@gmail.com

For specific inquiries:

Banquet: Jessica Ryan, jrodriguez292929@yahoo.com

Friday Night Potlucks: Erika Lang, erikaqlang@hotmail.com

Team Photo: Kate Dawson, dawsonkp@yahoo.com

Team Tuesdays: Christina Bartley, schwizalm@gmail.com

Donut Thursdays: Sara Brooks, sara.brooksmd@gmail.com

Trophies/Awards: Alice Crawford, alicemargaret@gmail.com

Spirit Wear: These individuals select, order, and sell team merchandise (shirts, caps, team suits, other).

For the 2022 season:

Diane Gload, tdgload@verizon.net

Tracey Linck, trlinck@comcast.net

Volunteer Organizer: This person tracks family participation to ensure that every family meets its requirements.

For the 2022 season:

Maggie Conley, magconley95@gmail.com

Andrea Stubbs, andrea_stubbs28@msn.com



Appendix C:

Competitive Meets Explained

A & B Meets

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

Divisional Relay Carnival*

The Divisional Relay Carnival is held once annually, typically 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 from the Divisional Relay Carnival compete at the end of the season in the countywide All-Star Relays.

B Relay Carnival

The B Relay Carnival is held toward the end of the regular swim season, also typically on a Sunday. This meet includes swimmers from many of the teams we swim B meets against and possibly other nearby teams as well. The coach selects the fastest combination of swimmers to compete against the other teams in a series of relays.

Divisionals*

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

Coaches Invitational Long Course Meet*

The MCSL sponsors this meet, which is held on a Tuesday in mid-July. This meet includes the top eight swimmers in each event, from the entire MCSL. Swimmers swim twice the distance of the event in which they qualified (so a qualifying 50 breaststroke time would place the swimmer in the 100 breaststroke). Stonegate normally sends several swimmers to Coaches Long Course.

County All-Star Relay Meet*

The MCSL sponsors this meet, which is held the weekend after Divisionals. This meet involves the first-place finishers from each event in the Division Relay Carnival (in some cases, the second-place finishers will also advance). Stonegate normally sends a few relay teams to All-Star Relays.

County Individual All-Star Meet*

The MCSL sponsors this meet, which also is held the weekend after Divisionals. This meet involves the top 16 swimmers—who meet benchmark times—in each event from the entire MCSL. Stonegate normally sends several swimmers to All-Stars.

**The coaches or Team Reps will notify the swimmers who qualify for these events.*



Appendix D:

Heard Around the Pool

Age: For MCSL purposes, a swimmer shall compete at the age he or she is on June 1.

All-Star Time: Benchmark time required to be eligible to participate in the MCSL Individual All Star Meet. Achieving an All-Star Time is an outstanding accomplishment for a swimmer. All-Star Times are denoted in results with an asterisk. The top 16 swimmers in Montgomery County in each age group and event compete in the County Individual All-Star Meet at the end of the season.

Best Time Bag: This is a bag full of goodies! When swimmers get a best time in any meet, they can go find the keeper of the bag and get a candy or other treat as a reward.

Chairs: This is the Clerk of Course area where swimmers are required to report when called, typically several events ahead of the one they are due to swim. It is set up on or near the pool deck and will have several rows of numbered chairs. The rows and numbers symbolize heats and lanes, respectively.

DQ or DQed: This is shorthand for disqualification or disqualified, and it happens when a swimmer doesn't swim the stroke correctly or fails to follow all the rules of a particular stroke. MCSL follows USA Swimming rules for starts, strokes, and turns (with a few exceptions), and the coaching staff coaches to these rules so swimmers know what is expected of them. That said, getting DQed happens to everyone, and it should be viewed as an opportunity to learn and correct any bad habits.

Exhibition Swimmers: An exhibition swimmer is someone who is permitted to swim an event for time ONLY and cannot place, score or ribbon. An exhibition swimmer is designated with an X beside the exhibition event.

Individual Medley or I.M.: Events in which the swimmers do each of the four strokes in the following order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, freestyle.

Medley Relay: Relay event in which each of the four swimmers does a different stroke in the following order: backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, freestyle (this one's alphabetical, so easy to remember).

Open Events: Events that are open to swimmers of all ages.

Pool Records vs. Team Records: Pool records are the fastest times in each event achieved in the pool at Stonegate; pool records may be held by swimmers from any team. Team records are the fastest times in each event achieved by Stonegate swimmers; team records may be achieved in any pool. Check out the records board on the back wall of the pool house!

PVS: Potomac Valley Swimming, or PVS, is the name of our Local Swim Committee (LSC). LSCs are subsets of USA Swimming.

RMSC: Rockville Montgomery Swim Club, or RMSC, is one of the larger year-round swim programs in the area. Many Stonegate swimmers also swim for RMSC during the school year. For more information, go to www.RMSCswimming.com.

Scratch: When a swimmer does not compete in an event in which he or she is scheduled to swim.

Seed Time: This is a swimmer's best time—and the time to beat!—in a particular event for their age group. Each summer, swimmers establish new seed times at Time Trials at the beginning of the season or when they swim a particular event for the first time during the season.

Swim-ups: On rare occasions, swimmers may compete in an older age group (e.g. a 12-year-old may compete in the 13-14 age group). This is only permitted when there are an insufficient number of swimmers in a given age group.

Tech Suits: Swimsuits frequently worn by top-flight swimmers and desired by many younger swimmers. USA Swimming banned tech suits for swimmers aged 12 and younger as of Sept. 1, 2020. The Stonegate team suit is not a tech suit.

USA Swimming: The national governing body for swimming. By and large, all MCSL rules adhere to USA Swimming rules.

Appendix E:

Order of Events for Dual Meets

Boys	Girls	Age Group	Event
1	2	12&U	100M Individual Medley (fly, back, breast, free; 1 length each)
3	4	13-14	100M Individual Medley
5	6	15-18	100M Individual Medley
7	8	8&U	25M Freestyle
9	10	9-10	50M Freestyle
11	12	11-12	50M Freestyle
13	14	13-14	50M Freestyle
15	16	15-18	100M Freestyle
17	18	8&U	25M Backstroke
19	20	9-10	25M Backstroke
21	22	11-12	50M Backstroke
23	24	13-14	50M Backstroke
25	26	15-18	100M Backstroke
10-minute break			
27	28	Open	200M Medley Relay (back, breast, fly, free; 2 lengths each)
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 (9-10, 2 lengths; 11-12, 2 lengths; 13-14, 2 lengths; 8&U, 1 length)