

# Nenagh Neptune Swimming Club

(NNSC)

## MEMBERS' HANDBOOK



[www.nenaghswimclub.com](http://www.nenaghswimclub.com)

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## **1. Introduction**

Congratulations on being selected to join the Nenagh Neptune Swimming Club (NNSC). We are delighted to have you as part of our team and hope that you will thoroughly enjoy your time as a member of the club.

Nenagh Neptune Swimming Club is a competitive Swimming Club based in the Nenagh Leisure Centre, Dublin Road, Nenagh. The club is affiliated to Swim Ireland, which is the sport's national governing body. The club is run by a voluntary club committee which is elected at the AGM, held every Autumn.

Where matters are not covered in this handbook or the Club Constitution, the rules of Swim Ireland will apply.

## **2. Policy Statement**

Nenagh Neptune Swimming Club is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare and protection of its members. Every member must at all times show respect and understanding for the rights, safety and welfare of all other members and must at all times conduct himself/herself in a way that reflects the principles of the club and the guidelines contained in the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport in Ireland.

Under no circumstances will the NNSC committee tolerate any instance of bullying, cyber bullying, harassment, rumour spreading or general misconduct by its members. Breaches of the guidelines referred to above will invoke a thorough investigation. Proven breaches will result in disciplinary action and possible expulsion from the club.

## **3. Club Philosophy**

Dedicated to sportsmanship and the pursuit of excellence in competitive swimming is the basis of our program. Swimmers develop physical conditioning, sportsmanship, team co-operation, mental discipline and other skills that provide immediate and lifelong benefits that go well beyond the waters of the pool.

We are committed to continuously providing a structure which is both progressive and supportive of all members, parents, and coaches and allows each member the opportunities to develop to be the best that they can be. It is hoped and expected that all members are swimming because they enjoy the sport and wish to progress and learn new skills. Coaches constantly encourage, support and teach members the skills needed to succeed in the sport of competitive swimming.

Whether you want to be an Olympic athlete or to qualify for provincial graded competitions, (at whatever level) the club, staff and structures will do everything possible to ensure that you achieve your goal.

## **4. Child Protection**

The Committee of NNSC has a structure in place which operates under the guidelines laid down by Swim Ireland to ensure the environment is safe and enjoyable for all participants. Parents and Members have a part to play in this.

- Swimmers and parents/guardians must read, sign and be bound by the code of conduct form.
- To ensure safety for all participants Parents/Guardians are required to provide supervision at all club events and trips. This operates on a roster in order to ensure appropriate supervision levels required by Swim Ireland.
- Parents/Guardians must be prepared to help out at Galas as required. The club must provide a team leader for the Nenagh Neptune Swimmers at every gala. In addition, many galas require that the club provide timekeepers and turn judges. Again a roster will operate for these duties .
- Parents/Guardians must make themselves aware of the club structures, Committee Members, Club Children Officers (CCO) and Coaches.
- Swimmers, coaches, parents/guardians and officials must be aware of their responsibilities at all times particularly when representing the club.

## 5. Club Training Structure

Full details of the clubs training schedule are available on the Clubs Website [www.nenaghswimclub.com](http://www.nenaghswimclub.com)

Junior Squad - 2 hours per week approx.

Senior Squad - 3 hrs per week approx.

The training schedule is currently under review and additional pool or land based hrs may be provided subject to demand, availability and cost.

Extra training and one-off training camps may be availed of in UL but is undertaken outside of the club organization.

**It is important that swimmers attend all their sessions each week. Swimming is a sport that requires regular attendance to ensure that fitness is maintained and individual swimming standards are improved. Coaches keep a record of each swimmers attendance. If for any reason a swimmer cannot attend a session, parents should inform the Coach.**

**The following is expected from all members at training sessions:**

- To attend on time for every session (THIS IS MANDATORY FOR ALL MEMBERS – ON POOLSIDE – ON TIME – EVERY TIME). This means in time for land-based warm-up, not just for the pool set.
- To help with getting the pool ready for the session i.e. putting ropes in, getting equipment ready etc.
- To attend with the right attitude i.e. Positive “can do”, happy to be here.
- To treat all members, Coaches and officials with respect at all times.
- To leave the facility as you have found it.
- To do the best you can and enjoy yourself.
- Store all personnel belongs in the lockers provided. Do not leave anything unattended in the changing cubicles.

Remember that training is held in public facilities with communal changing rooms and your behaviour should always reflect the Club’s good image and reputation. Unacceptable behaviour may result in suspension from training and/or further disciplinary action.

If swimmers are going to be absent from training for more than one week please let their coaches know. Continued unexcused absence beyond a week will be followed up with parents. This is for child protection purposes. If a swimmer cannot attend training on time please discuss this with the coaches, who will try to facilitate alternative arrangements.

Swimmers are moved from time to time within each squad, to lanes of different ability. Team coaches will be responsible for these movements in consultation with the Head Coach. During the season, Junior squad swimmers may be assessed and if the coach feels the athlete needs to be progressed he/she may be offered a place with the Senior squad training. Coaches assess athletes on an ongoing basis and take in to account the individual athletes development. Consideration is given to the following:

- . Chronological age (actual age)
- . Training Age (Yrs in training)
- . Biological Age (stage of maturation)
- . Technical skill level of athlete
- . Training Performance
- . Child's ability to cope with further training
- . Parental & family support
- . Competition Performance

## **6. Fee Structure**

A copy of the fee structure for each squad can be found on the club website or can be obtained from the club treasurer.

The collection of fees is of paramount importance to the survival of the club. In the interest of the club and its members it is essential that parents make every effort to ensure that all fees are paid on time. An arrangement must be entered into for the payment of fees at the time of registration. All outstanding fees and sanctions must be paid before an existing swimmer will be re-registered or released to join another club. In cases of financial difficulty it may be possible to agree alternative payment arrangements with parents. Contact the club chairperson and/or treasurer to discuss this in the strictest confidence.

## **7. Communication**

Communication within the club is mainly through the club website, the use of texts and verbally through the swimmers. Members should also check the club notice board to keep up-to-date with activities within the club. NNSC is an extremely busy club and while we will endeavor to use texts as much as possible, members and parents must regularly check the website and noticeboard for updates.

## **8. Club Committee**

Nenagh Neptune Swimming Club is managed by a voluntary committee made up of parents of swimmers in the club. The current committee members list can be found on the club website. The committee meets monthly to discuss ongoing operational

issues and any additional issues that may arise. Monthly reports are delivered to the meetings by the Chairman, Treasurer and Head Coach with respect to all issues affecting the operations of the club.

An AGM is held October/November where the events of the past year and proposals for the coming year are discussed and the incoming committee is elected. In addition to the normal offices of Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and PRO found on most club committees, the club has the additional roles of Recorder, Gala Coordinator and Coach Coordinator. The Recorder maintains records of times achieved by members at all galas and also processes entries to galas. The Gala Coordinator meets with swimmers for collecting gala entries and fees, while the Coach Coordinators liaise with the coaches to ensure smooth running of training sessions.

The Committee is comprised of interested parents from both squads. ALL parents are encouraged to help out at committee level. The club needs help on an ongoing basis so if you are interested and have some time to spare please let us know. Even if you do not wish to be part of the committee, there are sub-committees and countless one-off tasks, so whatever you can do for the club would be greatly appreciated.

## **9. Club Children's Officers**

Under the Swim Ireland child protection guidelines for parents and officials, every club must appoint a minimum of two Children's Officers whose principle role is the welfare of the children. The names of the club children's officers can be found on the club website and may be contacted through the website or via the club phone at 085 1859228. They are available to any swimmer or parent who is concerned under the Code of Ethics and Good Practice in Children's sport or under the Codes of Practice of Swim Ireland. They are there for you, our members, to listen to any suggestions you may have to make your swimming more enjoyable and to help you with any problem, big or small, that you may feel you need to discuss. In particular if it is a problem that you are uncomfortable with or that you think is wrong, contact your Children's Officer as soon as possible and they will help you. Your issues will be dealt with in the strictest confidence.

## **10. Club Gear**

The only compulsory item of Club Gear is our Club Swim Hat, which everyone must wear when competing. In addition to our Club Swim Hat a comprehensive range of optional coordinating NNSC gear is available from A Sportman's Dream, Kenyon St, Nenagh. They include:

- Togs – designed for NNSC
- T Shirt – with NNSC Logo
- Sports Bag. – with NNSC logo
- Mesh equipment bag, (fins, paddles, pull buoy, kick board) –These aren't required immediately but are needed for training after the first few months of club swimming.

A full range of sizes from children's (approx. 7 years of age) to adult is available. To order, talk to your coach or contact A Sportmans Dream.

## 11. Galas

Attendance at galas at Club, Munster and National level is a requirement of the Club for competitive swimmers. The Club's emphasis is on improving personal best times (PBs), rather than winning medals etc. All athletes are encouraged to do their best and to focus on PB's. It is not realistic for every child to win a medal every time nor for each athlete to improve on every swim every time. The primary aspect of competitions is to gain experience in various events, distances and as the athletes develop, to try different race tactics, etc. Competitive swimming should be an enjoyable experience.

There are a number of different gala types as explained below.

**Provincial Graded Galas:** These are Novice, Grade C, B or A. Initially all swimmers can enter Novice and Grade C galas. Once a swimmer has received a medal at a grade C gala for any event besides a relay, they may no longer swim as a novice. On achieving qualifying times in a prescribed set of events they can no longer swim at Grade C and move to Grade B. On achieving further qualifying times in another prescribed set of events they move to Grade A and then can no longer swim in Grade B competitions. Grade A is the highest provincial grade in swimming but there are many galas at a national level which require faster times. Swimmers compete within age groups at all of these gala types.

**Invitational Galas:** All grades are allowed enter these galas, although qualifying time restrictions may apply. Typically swimmers compete in age groups but not always. These are usually important fund raising events for the clubs organizing them.

In all galas swimmers are seeded based on previously achieved times. Generally, besides National based galas, the club only competes within Munster, although it is possible to compete in other provinces. Galas may be held in a 25m shortcourse or a 50m longcourse pool.

Galas should be planned and carefully selected in conjunction with the coaches. This allows coaches to plan their training programme towards specific galas. It also assists in developing the team spirit within the Club. Gala information is given out through the coach or via the website or by text. The coach will discuss with each swimmer what galas they should attend and what events to enter. It is important that swimmers do not miss training sessions before and after galas as these sessions are crucial to the coaches' programme. The Gala Coordinator will not accept late entries or "phone entries" under any circumstances and no gala entries will be processed without the correct fee having been paid. Major galas may have qualifying criteria which swimmers must meet before they can enter.

Generally the coach will keep it simple with younger athletes. They will focus on one or two key points, get them to do their best and enjoy themselves. Parents should be there to support their child in their attempt rather than 'critique' the swim, that's the coach's role.

**Remember that you are representing your Club and that your behaviour should always reflect the Club's good image and reputation. You should always follow the Coach and Team Manager's instructions and let the Team Manager know when you are leaving the main group. You should try your best in all your events. Damage to property, unacceptable behavior, refusal to do as instructed, unauthorized absences from the group or other forms of insubordination may result in suspension for the remainder of the gala and/or further disciplinary action.**

## **Useful Information for members attending Galas.**

### **Location of Venue:**

Gala information is given out through the coach, gala coordinator, via the website or by text. The location of the gala will be given and any details re: warm-up times, etc.

### **When you arrive:**

No formal sign in/registration is required apart from reporting to your coach/team manager to let them know you have arrived.

The Coach on duty and team manager will normally be evident to the member. Ideally if you arrive first then you should try and command an area on the pool deck so that the club members can locate themselves in an area together. It is important to arrive on time for the start of warm-up. This is both to prevent injuries and to ensure you are not scratched from the days swimming. Due to the level of organization that goes into running a gala, most look for a scratch sheet to be submitted during the warm-up, listing any swimmers who plan to withdraw from the competition. As failure to scratch in time can result in the club being fined the coach may be forced to scratch you if there is any doubt about whether you will be attending. If you know that you will be late arriving let your coach or the team manager know to prevent you being scratched by mistake.

### **Food and drinks**

Bring plenty of food and water as the days are often long and you will need to replenish your energy levels after competition swims. Bring bread rolls/sandwiches, pasta, fruit, breakfast/snack bars and jellies, and plenty of water (write your name on your bottle).

### **Recommended items to bring**

The only item of official club gear that you are required to have at galas is the club swimming hat. Whatever gear is most comfortable for your swim is what you should wear. Bring clothes that you can quickly change into between swims. If you do have club shirts please wear them poolside as it can make a huge difference to the atmosphere and the team stands out among the crowd of other swimmers. The following gear should be brought to every gala:

- Togs x 2 (warm up and race)
- Club Hat x 2 (in case one tears!)
- Goggles x 2 (in case one snaps!)
- T-shirts/Sweat Shirt/shorts (you need to keep warm)
- Towels x 2 (if there for a full day)
- Flip flops or other poolside shoes
- Plastic bags for wet gear
- Water Bottle already filled (write your name on it!)
- Lunch and plenty of snacks

### **Personal belongings when at the venue:**

The only answer to this is use common sense. The swimmers usually congregate together and the bags are left in/around where they are sitting. Bring as few valuables as possible and leave any jewelry at home. The club is not responsible for loss of any items.

### **Coach at the venue**

Parents do not formally meet up with the coach at the event. The coach is normally

on the poolside/among the swimmers.

### **Race Time**

When you arrive you should be able to buy a programme which will give you the session times, etc. Also you can listen out as the races are being called and swimmers are being asked to line up. Your coach might have an approximate time of each heat but also leave at least a half an hour leeway in advance of your race in order that you are guaranteed to be there. Ideally coaches would prefer club members to be together and support each other for the duration of the meet. The swimmers also need to learn how to 'sit around' and get used to being at a gala because as they get older, national level galas can last for 7 or 8 hours per day for a number of days. When considering relays, etc on the day, the coach will need to be able to find the swimmers to discuss tactics with them and to finally select the relays. (relays normally take place towards the end of the gala)

### **Warm-up sessions**

Warm up sessions take place normally during the hour before the gala starts. The Coach will take the warm-up session and give any advice necessary. Diving is NOT allowed during the warm-up except when 'sprint lanes' have been allowed by the Gala referee. 'Sprint lanes' are generally available for c.10 mins at the end of the warm-up.

### **Diving from the blocks**

Children, especially younger ones, may either jump in from the bank/deck or start in the water. The coach is the best person to advise here. The rules of swimming do NOT insist that swimmers dive off blocks. They can start in the water if they wish. Inexperienced swimmers may not want to dive off blocks and the coach is there to support them in an appropriate start.

### **Heats**

The programme will tell you what races are heat declared. Some events are run as HDW (Heat Declared Winner). After the heats of each event have concluded the gala announcer will announce the fastest swimmers who will either swim in the final or he will announce the winners of the HDW event. HDW means the swimmers will only swim once. Check the programme for clarification and the order of how the events will be swum.

### **Swimmers results**

These are usually (but not always) posted in a prominent place around the pool. Swimmers should ask the timekeeper for their time when they finish their race and report that time to the coach who will normally keep his/her own records. If electronic touch pads are used then these will record the official times. In this case the timekeepers result is only a backup and will generally differ from the electronic results.

### **Incidents at the pool**

If a child is hurt in an incident it must be reported to the recorders desk which is normally poolside and in a prominent position. There is a standard accident/incident report form for use at galas. The staff at the pool hosting the event should also be able to provide immediate assistance.

### **Photos/ camcorders**

The use of camcorders or cameras is strictly prohibited for child protection reasons. At some venues a permit is given to those who register their details with the pool reception or gala organizers/desk.

### **Race Disqualification**

Swimmers are occasionally disqualified (DQ) during their event. Reasons for a DQ range from false starts to performing strokes, turns, or finishes incorrectly. DQs are judgments made by the Gala Swimming officials. The coach will explain to the swimmer the reason for the DQ. DQs can be difficult for swimmers and parents to accept, but they do happen to every swimmer sooner or later. It is helpful if the parent accepts the fact that Competitive Swimming has high standards and that the same standards apply to every swimmer. Performing the skills of swimming in accordance with swimming standards is part of the discipline process that makes swimming a character-building sport.

### **Relay Selection**

Relay teams will be selected by the coaches on the day of the gala. Selection will be part based on the performances of the swimmers during the day. Coaches will also try to ensure that everyone who wants to take part in a relay gets a chance sometime but obviously not everyone can make the relay team at a given gala. Typically at more prominent galas the selection will be based purely on performance.

### **Club transport to Galas**

If numbers permit, the club may provide a bus at a small charge for galas held some distance from Nenagh. If so, then some parents must travel on the bus to act as supervisors. Also swimmers must be collected promptly once the bus returns as the supervising parents must remain until all children have been picked up. Details of the bus will be available from the gala coordinator.

## **12. Gala Entries**

Gala entries are carried out by the swimmers or their parents through the gala coordinator in conjunction with the coaches and recorder. Once the club receives details of the gala swimmers should check with their coach as to what events they should swim in. They must then enter as soon as possible as no entries can be accepted after the closing date. All fees must be paid via the gala coordinator prior to the gala. Normally there is only a very short time period between the club receiving details of the upcoming gala and the closing date so it is important not to delay in entering.

## **13. Parent/Guardian Supervision at Coaching Sessions**

It is a requirement of both Swim Ireland and Nenagh Neptune Swimming Club that 2 adults be present (in addition to the Coach) during the full period of every coaching session. A supervision rota is available at the registration meeting each year and parents/guardians must sign up for a minimum of 6 hours of duty per year, prior to registration. It is imperative that parents/guardians attend for their pool duty on time or make alternative arrangements with another parent/guardian. For child protection and safety reasons, training sessions cannot take place without two adults on duty in addition to the coach.

On duty parents/guardians must remain on the pool deck when on pool duty and should attend a few minutes before the scheduled start time of the session and should remain until the end of the coaching session. Where a parent/guardian of the designated family cannot attend, a substitute, who must be older than 18 years must

be arranged by the parent/guardian. Swim Ireland requirements are that should the adult supervisors fail to turn up, the coach is required to **cancel the session**. To ensure that this does not occur, pool duty is obligatory for all parents/guardians and sanctions may be imposed where there is a failure by rostered parents/guardians to turn up for pool duty.

Swimmers are left at the pool by parents/guardians who expect their children to be safe. This can only occur when these safeguards are in place.

**Duties of Parent/Guardian Supervisor:**

- Ensure attendance record for the session is kept.
- Take note of swimmers leaving and returning to pool.
- Allow coach freedom to get on with coaching – sometimes coaches need to provide feedback on one to one basis - this should be in open view.
- Take note of any problems that occur – refer child related issues to the Club Children’s Officer and all other issues to Committee – via the secretary.
- In cases of emergency the parent/guardian can respond by being an extra adult, either to supervise children or respond to emergency.
- In the case of an emergency where the parent/guardian of a swimmer needs to be contacted, please phone the club secretary – 085-1859228 – information also on the website.
- Attend to a child’s needs should he/she feel ill.

**REMEMBER, IF TWO ADULTS ARE NOT PRESENT, THE SESSION MUST BE CANCELLED**

**14. Parent/Guardian Supervision at Galas.**

For every Gala the club attends, the Club appoints a parent/guardian as Team Manager who is in charge on the day. The club also endeavors to ensure that a coach is present for each gala

The role and duties of the Team Manager are as follows:

- Act as a backup for the coach should he/she have to unexpectedly absent themselves from the gala.
- Supervise and ensure the safety of the Club members while poolside.
- Submit a written report to the Club Committee if there are any incidents at the gala which should be brought to the Committee’s attention.

Attendance at graded galas (usually Graded Munster and National galas) is dependent upon the Club providing gala officials. All parents/guardians of swimmers attending a gala are required to make themselves available to act as gala officials for each gala their child/children attend. Usually, the parents/guardians are asked to act as timekeepers or turn judges for a session or part of a session. Timekeeping is usually carried out by two people in each lane. Due to electronic timekeeping at most galas, the duty is not very onerous. The Club can be fined for failure to provide gala officials, in which case the fine will be passed on to the parent/guardian who did not fulfil their gala rota duty.

The club normally runs at least one gala a year at Nenagh Leisure Centre for which we need quite a few volunteers, both as officials and behind the scenes. We would encourage all parents to volunteer to help out at these galas. It increases parents

understanding of competitive swimming and is great way to get involved in their child's sport. As many parents will be present for the duration of the gala you might as well get involved instead of just sitting in the viewing gallery. Training courses for officials are run from time to time for those who want to become qualified in these roles.

## **15.Nutrition**

**When preparing to compete at a swimming competition you need to pay careful attention to what you eat. Read on to find out what to eat the day before the event and during the day.**

### **THE DAY BEFORE**

When competition time comes round, you'll have plenty on your mind already. So the day before the event, keep exercise to a minimum – if anything at all – and eat meals and snacks high in complex carbohydrates. You need to keep those glycogen stores topped up.

- Drink fluids little and often to stay properly hydrated.
- Eat little and often – every two to four hours to keep your blood sugar levels steady and fuel your muscles in preparation for your event.
- Avoid big meals or over-eating in the evening – this will almost certainly make you feel uncomfortable and lethargic the next day.
- Try to stick to familiar foods. Curries, spicy foods, baked beans and pulses (unless you are used to eating them) can cause gas and bloating, so avoid eating anything that may cause stomach discomfort the next day. It's best to stick to foods that you are familiar and compatible with!

### **THE MORNING OF THE EVENT**

- Don't swim on empty. Even if you feel nervous, make breakfast happen. Stick to easily digested foods – cereal with milk, porridge, banana with yoghurt, some fruit or toast with jam.
- If you're really struggling, try liquid meals such as milkshakes, yoghurt drinks or a smoothie.
- It's a good idea to rehearse your competition meal routine in training so you know exactly what agrees with you.

### **SNACKS BETWEEN HEATS**

- Try to eat as soon as possible after your swim to give yourself as long as possible to recover if you have to swim again.
- High fat and simple sugar foods will do you no favours in competition – instead search out the complex carbohydrates again.
- If you can't stomach anything solid try sports drinks, flavoured milk or diluted juice that will help replenish your energy supplies and assist the recovery of aching muscles.

The list below offers great food options to be snacking on in and around training for a competition. Remember to keep eating healthy foods from your regular diet though, such as fresh vegetables, nuts and fruits.

### **Here are some more you can try**

- Water, diluted fruit juice with a pinch of salt or a sports drink
- Pasta salad
- Plain sandwiches e.g. chicken, tuna, cheese with salad, banana, peanut butter
- Bananas, grapes, apples, plums, pears
- Dried fruit e.g. raisins, apricots, mango
- Smoothies
- Crackers and rice cakes with bananas and/or honey
- Mini-pancakes, fruit buns
- Cereal bars, fruit bars, sesame snaps
- Yoghurt and yoghurt drinks
- Small bags of unsalted nuts e.g. peanuts, cashews, almonds
- Prepared vegetable crudités e.g. carrots, peppers, cucumber and celery

Checkout <http://www.swimming.org/swimfit/nutrition-and-competitive-swimming/> for more information on nutrition for competitive swimmers.

## **16.Nenagh Neptune Swimming Code of Conduct**

Refer to [http://nenaghswimclub.com/NNSC\\_Code\\_of\\_Conduct.pdf](http://nenaghswimclub.com/NNSC_Code_of_Conduct.pdf) for the Nenagh Neptune Code of Conduct.

## **17. Swim Ireland Code for Young People, Parents/Guardians & Coaches**

Refer to <http://nenaghswimclub.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Codes-of-Conduct-20101.pdf> for the Swim Ireland Codes of Conduct.