

# Girls' Swimming and Diving Handbook

## Purpose of the Team (Philosophy)

As declared in the Mission Statement for Athletics, the swim team is intended to be part of the educational experience. The lessons that occur as a part of being a member of this team can have a life-long impact. This is the guiding principle for this program.

## The Reality of Swimming & Diving Sports

It is important that students and parents understand that this is a Varsity Sport and not a recreational program. Swimming and Diving are tough and demanding sports. Participating in sports **will** take time away from other activities.

It is often assumed that there are no injuries in swimming. The truth is, as with all athletics, injuries do occur in swimming and diving. And while the most common are repetitive stress injuries, swimming and diving, like all sports, have some risk of serious injury or death.

## Student Responsibilities Students are expected to..

- Conduct themselves in a legal, moral, and ethical manner at all times.
- Treat team-members, officials, coaches, opposing team members, and themselves with respect at all times.
- Read and adhere to the Dewitt Public Schools Code of Conduct as it applies to students.
- Read and adhere to the Dewitt Public Schools Athletic Handbook as it applies to students.
- Arrive on-time and prepared for all team activities.
- Behave in a positive manner at all times.
- Keep negative thoughts and comments to themselves.
- Participate in all official team activities, practices, and meets.
- Maintain or improve grades throughout the season.
- Perform to the best of their ability, at that time, every time they compete.
- Help setup before and clean-up after practices, meets and other team activities.
- Keep issued equipment clean and in good condition.
- At meets stay with the team and cheer for teammates.
- Make a sincere attempt to learn the skills that are taught.

## Social Networking Rules

Texting, Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and others are a great way to stay in touch with friends and family. Please keep these tips in mind:

- Don't post anything (on your site or a friends' site) that you wouldn't mind coaches, parents, principals, etc. seeing. (Assume that the person you'd least like to see your post will see it.)
- Don't think that what you post is actually private because you have a "private" profile. Many people know how to get around these barriers.
- Maintain good etiquette about Facebook. Don't use inappropriate language, comments, Etc. because it reflects poorly on you as an individual and on the team.
- You may face discipline including removal from the team based on what's posted, texted, Etc. so be careful.

## Helpful Tips

- **To help prevent ear infections, after every practice & meet**, put a couple drops of half alcohol/half vinegar (or prescribed ear-drops) in each ear.
- To protect your hair, before practice put a little conditioner (less than you would use when washing your hair) in your hair; comb it in, then put on your cap.
- **To help prevent ear infections, after every practice & meet**, put a couple drops of half alcohol/half vinegar (or prescribed ear-drops) in each ear. (If it's here twice maybe it's that important)
- Your swim cap will last much longer if you dry it and rub baby powder (corn starch) on it after each use.
- Your suits will last longer if you rinse them well in fresh water and hang them up after each use.

## General Information

Please be sure to eat healthy and try to get as much rest as possible especially during the intensive training phase. Be prepared for the weather!! You may leave home in shorts and 70 degree weather and the temperature can change drastically. When it starts getting colder, you need to dress in dry clothes and shoes to leave the pool and wear a hat if it is cold. Be sure to dry your ears after swimming or diving, try not to get sick.

## Season Plan

Here is a general outline of what the team will do this season. Actual timeframes will depend on how quickly the team is progressing. Training before the Late phase crosses all strokes/distances. Training in Late and Championship phases is more event specific.

Once classes begin power training will move to before school. If a team member misses the AM power training they will be allowed to make it up after the PM practice.

Phase of season	Time frame	Primary Emphasis
Early	2-4 weeks	Improve skills and aerobic endurance.
Mid	2-4 weeks	Increase aerobic capacity.
Late	2-4 weeks	Increase anaerobic ability.
Championship	2-4 weeks	Training gradually decreases (taper) as event specific skills are practiced.

## Practices

- Swimmers should wear 2 suits at all swim practices and arrive at practice ready to get in the water.
- If you need to ice or be taped see the trainer before practice starts in order to be ready on time.
- If you miss a practice that a skill you wish to learn was taught, the next practice will not be changed. Each skill will be presented more than once.
- If the group is performing a skill that you missed, watch the others, and imitate them.
- Unless otherwise designated, practices are closed. That means that spectators are not allowed at practice. Do not bring a friend, relative or acquaintance to practice; they will be asked to wait outside. Parents are always welcome to come in to speak with the coach. Please remember practice time spent with parents is practice time not spent with students.
- Practice times will be published in a weekly practice schedule.
- You want to bring a T-shirt, Towel and equipment bag on deck with you to every practice.
- When you arrive, sign in on the notebook provided. When you sign in your name must be readable! If you leave early, sign out by drawing a single line through your name. Do not sign in for someone else!
- In the event of a fire alarm grab your shirt & towel and exit the building - check in with the coach at far side of the parking lot.
- Everyone is responsible for the care and use of equipment.
- We are not the only people who use the locker rooms, so be sure your valuables are locked at all times.
- Anything you want to give to the coach should be placed in the folder marked "IN"

## Varsity Awards

Varsity letters will be awarded based primarily on your performance - the number of points you score. Your attitude and non-scoring contributions to the team are also factors. Those who do not receive a varsity award may receive a freshman or JV award. All students will be extended the opportunity to compete in varsity events. This does not mean that all students will receive Varsity Awards. To earn a Varsity Award you need to score 20 points during the season or in the League or State Championship meet. Students involved in disciplinary actions might not receive awards regardless of points scored.

## Practice Schedule

A practice schedule will be published weekly. The practice schedule will contain the latest information available regarding meet and bus times. You can view practice schedules and more at [www.swimbuz.com/dgs](http://www.swimbuz.com/dgs).

## Attendance

- You are expected to attend all team functions: practices, meets, and meetings.
- If you have a conflict with marching band you must turn in a schedule of practices you will miss, or be late to, at the Friday's practice the week before you will miss practice. Write your name, the date(s) and time(s) of the practices you will miss and the time(s) and place(s) you need to be for the other activity on a clean, 8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> X 11 sheet of paper and put it in the folder marked "IN". If you do not, the absence will be unexcused.
- If you miss school and then miss practice the absence is excused.
- If you have a doctor's appointment you need to bring a note **from the doctor's office**.
- If you miss practice for any other reason the absence will be unexcused. (If you have a special circumstances see the coach!)

To swim in a meet you must not have had an unexcused absence within the last calendar week. NOTE: This means that it is possible for you to miss more than one meet because of missing only one practice.

### **Issued Equipment**

Students are financially responsible for the equipment that is issued to them. This means that if a student's equipment is not returned in good shape, that student will pay to replace the equipment. The athlete will not be allowed to participate in the next sport season if equipment is not returned or paid for.

### **Meet and Training Equipment**

Lane markers, timer, touch-pads and other equipment are expensive - Treat them with care.

### **Meets**

#### **Home Meet Setup:**

Arrive on time and be prepared to do your assigned tasks.

For all away meets you will travel with the team to and from the meet. Be sure to be at the bus loading site at least 5 minutes before the bus is scheduled to leave.

#### **Transportation:**

If there are special circumstances that you would need to travel to or from with a parent, you must first have the form filled out, signed by parent, and given form to coaches before we leave for the meet. Forms are available in the office

#### **Warm-up:**

Be on deck, in your suit, ready to swim when warm up starts. Enter the water feet first.

#### **Sprints:**

First whistle- "take your mark", second whistle- go! Freestyle and backstroke sprints- flip turn but **don't push off!**

Check line-up, you can swim a maximum of 4 events and no more than 2 individual events. Tell us at once if you are not in the line-up or swimming too many events, etc. The coaches will decide what events you will swim at meets. You will be notified what you will be swimming the day of the meet. In general, you should expect to swim each of the events at least once during the year.

#### **Line-up:**

If there is an event you in which you would like to be entered write a note and put it in the folder marked "IN". In most meets everyone will compete. There are some meets where entries are limited. When it is not possible to enter everyone, the coaches will determine who will compete. Students are expected to attend meets even when they will not be competing.

#### **Team Uniform:**

Team suits, warm-ups and parkas are all part of the team uniform. They should be worn on deck at meets only.

#### **No Jewelry:**

This rule includes watches and hair bands worn on the wrist. If you're not sure, don't wear it

If you are not in the water swimming, on the board diving, you should be in the team area not wandering or showering in the locker room.

#### **General:**

No conversations (or text, Etc.) on cell phones. If you forgot something and need to call someone to bring it, ask the coach.

All team members will cheer and watch there team during meets. Not listen to music, do homework, Etc.

#### **Times and Splits:**

Relay swimmers must exit pool immediately or it will interfere with the timing system and you won't get your splits. Check your times and splits when they are posted on the wall.

Stay on deck in suit and warm up through the duration of the meet. Get together for the team cheer, shake hands with other team. Clean up team area; do not leave towels, drink bottles, trash etc. and help us clean up after guests. Same for the locker room throw; away shampoo bottles, **DO NOT LEAVE FOOD OR WRAPPERS OF ANY KIND** or we will have little furry visitors. Be polite, whenever possible; let our guests through the food line first.

#### **End of the meet:**

#### **Smile!**

Have fun, and take pride in your team and yourself. Everyone has the potential to make a positive contribution.

## *Competitive Advantage*

### **A Swimmers Guide to Mental Toughness**

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If you really want to maximize your potential as a competitive swimmer and reach the goals you've set for yourself, then you have to start today to train yourself mentally as well as physically. Without the right head set and mental strategies you'll always swim slower than your capabilities. In order to gain the Competitive Advantage and swim like a winner, you've got to first think like one. Understand and practice the following ideas and steps and they'll help you on your way to becoming a champion! Remember you can't go fast without using your head, and you can't develop mental toughness without consistent practice.

**#1 Keep your Swimming Fun.** Do not wait until you win before you start having fun. Champions go fast because they are having fun! When you enjoy yourself you'll be physically looser and will swim much faster. Make your practices and meets fun! This doesn't mean to play games instead of work, but if you're too serious and turn your swimming into all work and no fun you will definitely run into performance difficulties and be a candidate for burnout. Remember, fun and speed to together. If you find yourself dreading your meets something's wrong.

**#2 Have Clear Goals.** You can't get to where you want to go unless you know exactly where that is. Your success as a swimmer starts with a dream, a goal of how far you'd like to go in the sport. The more detailed a picture you can paint of this goal, the better your chance of turning your dream into reality. Saying you want to be as good as you can or go faster are goals that are general and too vague to be useful. Qualifying for Senior Nationals, or going 50 flat in the 100 fly are clear, specific and more reachable. Your goals are like magnets which pull you in their direction. The more specific and detailed you make them and the more time you spend thinking about them, the stronger they pull. Try to have your goals broken down from long term to intermediate to short term so that even on a daily basis you will have specific goals for practice. This will help you stay motivated over the long haul.

**#3 Make Your Practices Important; Use Simulation in Practice.** Most swimmers spend the same amount of time practicing weekly. However only a small fraction of athletes improve to their potential. The reason behind this lies in your practices. Practice does not make perfect, perfect practice makes perfect. Too many swimmers go through the motions in practice. They put their time in but not their minds or their emotions. They daydream during sets or wish they were elsewhere. During difficult sets they look for ways to dog it. You will compete the way you practice. Practice just like meets, mentally as well as physically, that is, make your practices important, use your imagination to simulate meet or race conditions. Take a few of those long, boring, painful sets and pretend you're actually competing. Practice race turns, finishing fast, getting your pain to work for you, etc. The more important you can make your practices and the more similar to actual meets, the more you'll get out of them. Every chance you get, set up specific race scenarios in your head and then swim as if everything was on the line. If you consistently practice this way, the way the champions do, you'll soon find your meet times dropping.

**#4 Focus on Your race On Stroke at a Time. Not on Winning or Qualifying.** You will swim your best when your concentration is on your race, one stroke at a time. You will choke and swim badly when you get caught up with outcome thoughts (i.e. winning, losing, qualifying times, etc.). The outcome of your race, which is in the future is totally out of your control! Swimmers who get distracted with this kind of future focus almost always swim tight and feel heavy. Stay in the now as you race concentration on what you are doing, while you are doing it. If you find yourself thinking "What if..." that's a reminder that you are mentally in the future and need to change focus.

**#5 Concentrate = Recognize (Step #1) + Bring yourself back (Step #2)** In order to swim as fast as you can you've got to have your mind in the right place. Concentration is the key mental skill to swimming excellence and mental toughness. Here's how to do it! Step 1: Recognize that you are mentally in the wrong place, i.e. in the future worried about an outcome or a swimmer in the next lane. Step 2: Quickly and gently bring yourself back to a proper focus. You learn to concentrate by catching yourself when you're not concentrating! This is the heart of championship concentration.

**#6 Learn to Quickly Let go of your mistakes and failures.** Champions do one thing better than everyone else. FAIL! When a champion has a bad race they not only use this failure for feedback ("What did I do wrong... How can I improve") But just as important, they let it go quickly. In other words, they don't dwell on the past. When you hang onto your bad races and mistakes in a meet, the one thing you can count on happening is the you'll get more of them! Learn to recognize when your mind is in the past and quickly & gently let it go. Telling yourself things like "Here we go again", "Why does this always happen to me" are indicators that your focus is stuck in the past. Only go into the past if your past is a positive, self-enhancing one!

**#7 Stay within yourself, Swim Your Own Race, Stay Mentally in the "Here"** You will swim your very best when you can learn to mentally stay within yourself, focusing on what you have to do and are doing. Psych-outs and intimidation can only occur when you choose to start focusing outside yourself, on another swimmer. Staying within yourself means that you have to want to mentally stay in your own lane when you compete. Thinking about someone else's best times, hoe fast they finish or how awesome they are will only make you choke and swim tight. Stay in the "Here" by recognizing when you're in the wrong mental place and bringing yourself back right away to what you're doing.

**#8 Control your Eyes and Ears for Championship Meet Performances.** Related to #7, learn to control what you look at and listen to, both before and during the race. That is, only visually focus on things that keep you calm, composed and ready to perform well. If looking at the gallery, or other racers, makes you uptight... don't do it! Instead look down at the blocks, or at a spot across the pool, or one on the water which keeps you relaxed. Similarly, make sure any things you "look" at in your mind's eye are positive and confidence enhancing. If you are using imagery and keep seeing a false start, either change the image or actively look at something else. Controlling your ears means that you only want to listen to things that will keep you calm, composed and confident. If your self-talk is making you uptight change it! Or block it out by listening to a Walkman. Control your eyes and ears for mental toughness.

**#9 See what you want to have happen, not what you're afraid will happen.** Winners in and out of the pool have learned to use their imagination (mental rehearsal and imagery) to help them reach their goals. Make it a practice to focus on exactly what you want to happen. Not what you're afraid will happen. Focusing on positive images will calm you down, raise your confidence, and increase your chances of achieving your goals. Practice mental rehearsal 5-10 minutes at a time, preceded by relaxation in area free from distractions. Make your pictures (sounds, feelings) as vivid and detailed as possible, seeing, hearing, and feeling yourself performing just the way you'd like to.

**#10 Let it happen = speed.** When you swim your fastest there is an automatic, effortless quality to your performance. You are working hard without trying hard. It feels easy, yet powerful. When you get into a meet situation you have to remember that in order to swim your best, you have to relax and let the race happen. If you make your race too important, you'll get into trying too hard and will swim slower. Trust that you've done everything you need to, your body and muscle memory knows what to do, and then just let the performance happen. Swim with effortless effort.

**#11 Swim with No-Mind to go fast.** A corollary to #10, if you want to go fast you've got to keep your conscious mind and all of its' thoughts out of the pool. In your best races, not only did you swim on autopilot, but most likely there was a no-thinking quality to your race. Conscious thought slows you down and distracts you. You want to swim unconsciously with no mind. In baseball Yogi Berra once said, "a full mind is an empty bat" the same applies to you and your swimming. The more you think, the slower you'll go. Practice in practice, doing "no-think" swims.

**#12 GIGO - you swim the way you think.** The difference between your best and worst swims is usually related to your mental "strategies" just before and during your race. That is, what you think, say to yourself, and imagine both before and during your race determine whether you'll go fast or slow. If you program garbage into your computer (brain) before a race ("what if I false start," "what if I blow my turn," or "he'll probably catch me at the finish and win") you will get garbage back out in your performances. Learn to "program in" good stuff and that's what you'll get back out.

**#13 Be positive - nothing good comes from negativity.** When you're negative or down on yourself you sap energy, drain your confidence, and insure that you will swim poorly. Practice being positive about yourself, teammates, and coaches, NO MATTER WHAT. A positive attitude will help you overcome hardships and setbacks and keep you going. A negative attitude will trick you into giving up too soon, Winners in and out of the pool are positive. "Can't," "Never," and "Impossible" do not exist in the dictionary of their minds.

**#14 Reframe adversity.** Learn to look at obstacles and setbacks as a way to get more motivated and to increase your confidence. Most swimmers complain bitterly about pool temperature, lane assignments, rain, and fatigue. The great swimmers use any kind of adversity to help them get the competitive advantage over their opponents. For example, you can do 1 of 2 things with the pain and fatigue of a race you can dread it, fight it, complain about it and consequently tighten up and back down from it-going slower; or you can reframe it. You can say to yourself "everyone in this race has to deal with this pain, and I'm mentally tougher to handle it than everyone else... pain and fatigue is an indicator that I'm going fast, that my body's working well, and a signal for me to move towards it, stretching it out and lengthening the stroke." Learn to think like a winner by reframing. When your swimming gives you lemons... make lemonade out of them.

**#15 Act as if.** If you want to become a winner, first you have to learn to act like one. Acting as if is the master strategy of champions. If you act the way you want to become, you'll become the way you act. Acting as if has to do with your posture or how you carry yourself physically. Watch swimmers after they've had a bad race and you'll see some interesting stuff. Their heads will be down, shoulders drooping, facial expression down, and they'll be dragging their feet. If you act this way physically, like a loser, you'll perform like one. A winner's fall back position is to act as if. If you're totally intimidated and freaking out before a race, act as if: act calm and confident. Have your head up, put a smile on your face, pick your shoulders up and put a spring in your step. Even if you're dying inside, show your opponent someone who on the outside looks in control.

**#16 Learn to be your own best fan.** It's real easy to be nice to yourself and supportive when you're winning. Champions, however, separate themselves from everyone else because they've learned to be supportive to themselves when things are going badly. Being down yourself for bad performances will not help you in the long run. It will kill your motivation and make you an unhappy camper. Learn to be your own best fan; someone who is here to share the success and to help out through the tough times. After all, that's when you need support the most, especially from yourself.

**#17 You are not your races.** Learn to separate who you are as the athlete and person from how you do in your meets. You are not the results of your races. If you have a great meet this does not make you a great person. More important, if you have an awful meet, this does not make you the scum of the earth. If you get caught up in putting your ego on the line whenever you compete, you can be sure of one thing, you'll take a fall a whole lot. A swim meet should never be viewed as a measure of self-worth and respectability. By you, your coaches, or your parents!!

**#18 Learn to relax.** In order to stay within yourself and swim your own race you need to have the ability to handle competitive pressure. For many, this ability does not come naturally. You can learn to stay composed under pressure by practicing one or two of the many relaxation techniques available to athletes. Probably one of the best is to learn to slow and deepen your breathing. By taking a few slow diaphragmatic breaths you can very quickly calm yourself down pre-race. Practice at home sitting for 5 minutes at a time, inhaling slowly through your nose to a count of 4 then exhaling to a count of 7-8 and continuing this process for the allotted time. Every time you drift you can practice recognizing that you've lost your focus and then bring yourself back.