



Parent and Swimmer Handbook

2017-18 Season



Registration for 2017-2018 swim season is just around the corner. Please register your swimmers on the website www.mlacswimming.com. Also, be sure to read the following pages in this handbook:

- Welcome back letter from Head Coach Tom Donati (page 3)
- Notes from the MLAC office (page 4)
- MLAC Dues, fee schedule and information on payments (page 5)
- Financial Account Policies (pages 6-9)
- Family Obligations ***updated** for the 2017-2018 season (page 10)
- How to become a USA Swimming Official (page 11)
- MLAC Parent Code of Conduct Form (page 12)
- MLAC Bullying Policy (pages 13-16)
- MLAC/USA Swimming travel policy (pages 17-18)
- MLAC Electronic communication/athlete social media policy (pages 19-21)
- Frequently Asked Questions (pages 23-26)



Dear Mt. Lebanon Aqua Club,

Welcome to the 2017-18 swim season! First, let me start by thanking you for your care and commitment to the Mt. Lebanon Aqua Club. There are countless people working behind the scenes for the benefits of our athletes. It takes dedication, hard work, and serious investment of time to keep Mt. Lebanon Aqua Club running. Our organization is successful because of people like you. The impressive successes are a direct result of our collective effort: thank you doesn't begin to do it justice, but please know your efforts are valued and appreciated.

I believe success comes from focusing on the process, not the result. The Mt. Lebanon Swim Club is performance-minded and process driven. School will teach you about books, how to pass a test, and give you knowledge and how to succeed, but swimming teaches you about life.

As a parent of two kids, I understand the competitive nature of youth sports. Everyone wants to win, and they want to win NOW! As parents, there are times we judge ourselves by how our kids rank versus other kids, When I feel like doing this, I ask myself (wife), what is this going to mean for my child five years from now?

Your child doesn't need to be successful at age 10 to be a Champion! The proof is in our club swimmers like Brian Ramsey, Katie Ford, Drew Damich and Kyle Higgins. All of these swimmers have gone through the MLAC program and have continued to improve into their collegiate careers. Our mission is to develop an around swimmer no matter at what level.

Volume, training intensity, and weight training all can wait. Our goal is to have our athletes swimming their fastest as they leave the Mt. Lebanon Aqua Club. This is not an easy task, nor do we always achieve this goal, but this is the perspective we take when we think about each athletes group assignment, time in the water, skills learned, etc. Athletes at young ages need to enjoy the sport for the sport itself, acquire the skills that will serve them as they age, develop a great attitude about the sport we love, create lasting relationships, and embrace how to do things the right way.

It is our goal at Mt. Lebanon Aqua Club to be the best youth sports organization in Mt. Lebanon. We want to be a community club with a national presence. We want to help everyone in Mt. Lebanon and surrounding communities learn to swim, and we want our athletes to strive to be the very best. Your support allows us to live this vision. So, thank you again for your support, we look forward to working with you and your athlete during this exciting time. Go LEBO!

Tom Donati

Head Coach



NOTES FROM THE MLAC OFFICE

Welcome to the Mt. Lebanon Aqua Club!

The following pages contain important information from the “dry” side of the club, which include answers to frequently asked questions: payment to the club, financial account policies, Electronic/social media policies, travel policy, bullying policy and family obligation information.

You can also find MLAC by-laws, standing rules, code of conduct, electronic communication policy and bullying policy located on the MLAC website.

Please note the changes for the 2017-2018 swim season. Listed below are highlights to the handbook:

- Dues have remained the same for the 2017-2018 swim season- the non refundable registration fee has been reduced
- If you pay in full at registration use the coupon code **PAIDINFULL2017** to receive a 3% discount
- New scholarship/outreach program policies
- Family obligations will remain at 4 sessions/points and 2 donations per family
- How to become a USA Swimming Official
- Electronic communication policy
- Athlete social media policy

We look forward to another exciting year with incredible coaching and great swimming!



BILLING AND PAYMENT STRUCTURE

The information below is the dues structure based on Swim Group. Dues are set yearly for the MLAC membership year which begins September 1st and ends August 31st.

Upon registration, a NON-REFUNDABLE deposit of **\$250** is due.

**YOU ARE REGISTERING TO JOIN THE MT. LEBANON AQUA CLUB
FOR **ONE YEAR** (September 2017 - August 2018)**

Two different payment options are offered: once/year and monthly (October through May). All billing will begin October 1st and membership is required to be paid in full by the month of May.

Unpaid dues will result in the inability to enter swimmers into competition.

**MLAC 2017-2018 Dues
(includes non-refundable **\$250** deposit)**

Stingray - \$1085

Dolphin - \$1185

Barracuda - \$1485

Marlin - \$1585

Shark - \$1835

Meet Fees and swimmer surcharges are the responsibility of each Member.
When swimmers participate in AMS/USA Swimming sanctioned meets, per-event meet entry fees will be applied to the member's account.



MLAC Financial Account Policies

Dues Payment Plans

- A. **Full payment:** All dues at time of registration—receive a 3% discount: Coupon code **PAIDINFULL2017**
- B. **Monthly payments:** \$250 registration, October 1 - May 1

Roster Group	Dues	One Payment at registration (3% discount)	Monthly Payments: Registration, Oct 1 - May 1
Stingrays	\$1085	\$1052.45	\$250, \$104.38 per month
Dolphins	\$1185	\$1149.45	\$250, \$116.88 per month
Barracudas	\$1485	\$1440.45	\$250, \$154.38 per month
Marlins	\$1585	\$1537.45	\$250, \$166.88 per month
Sharks	\$1835	\$1779.95	\$250, \$198.13 per month

Registration Season

- A. Registration fee of \$250 (or full payment) is due upon registration and before practice may begin for family.
- B. Season is September 1 through August 31 and includes short course (indoor) season and long course (outdoor) season, all dry land activities, and weight room activities for appropriate swim groups.
- C. There is a 30 day grace period in which to decide not to continue with MLAC, but \$250 registration fee is non refundable. Families who cancel within 30 days of registration will receive a refund of all payments over \$250.
- D. Families joining MLAC after **November 1** will pay the \$250 registration fee, and the remainder of dues will be prorated by month(s) remaining in full season (September - August). Payment plans may be limited depending on date of registration.

Payment Methods

- A. Credit card—MLAC requires valid credit card on file on website
- B. Credit card information should be updated promptly in the event of a declined, expired, or stolen credit card (see account standing information)

Meet Entry Fees and Surcharges

- A. Charged to account during week prior to meet
- B. Meet entry fees and surcharges at the deadline of meet registration are the responsibility of the family regardless of attendance or performance at the meet.
- C. Meet fees incurred for a scratched event are the responsibility of the family.



Multi-Swimmer Discounts

- A. A 20% discount is offered for the third swimmer of a family (discount taken off lowest dues).
- B. A 30% discount is offered for the fourth or more swimmers of a family (discount taken off lowest dues).

Family Service Obligations

- A. See the handbook for family service and donation obligations for each family.
- B. Failure to participate in required family service obligation will result in a \$500 charge assessed on the **day following the last service opportunity** of the long course (outdoor) season.
- C. Account will be charged \$30 per missed donation after the last donation opportunity if service hours are completed.
- D. The maximum charge for failure to complete all obligations is \$500.
- E. Obligations will be prorated for late registrants (after September) based on number of weekend hosted meets remaining in season.
- F. Families assessed with the family service obligation charge will not be allowed to register for next season until the charge is paid in full. If there is a dispute after the next season begins, participation will be suspended until the fee is paid in full.

Account Standing

A. Current/Good Standing Accounts

- Account is paid in full on due date
- Account is in compliance with formal Outreach agreement/waiver
- Account is in compliance with formal Scholarship agreement/waiver

B. Late Accounts—No payment received on 1st of month

- Family will receive email within 7 days to notify them for prompt payment to be received by the 15th of the month.
- Swimmer(s) may be asked to leave the pool area in the event that payment is not received by the 15th of the month.
- Family may contact MLAC President and/or VP Membership to apply for Outreach program or Scholarship by the 15th of the month.



Scholarship/Outreach Program

Families in special circumstances and/or financial need may contact MLAC President and VP Membership to apply for reduction of dues by scholarship (if budget allows).

- A. Up to 70% of dues waived after the \$250 registration fee based on need, scholarship budget, and Board approval. If alternate payment plan is approved by Board, all dues must be paid in full by June 30.
- B. Scholarship does not cover team registration fee of \$250.
- C. **Equipment:** Family is responsible for purchase of all equipment (i.e. goggles, training group required equipment such as fins, paddles, etc.) and practice and team swim suits. Replacement of lost/damaged equipment is responsibility of family.
- D. **Meet Entry Fees:** The meet fees and athlete surcharges are the responsibility of the family and will not be covered by MLAC.
Family can apply for Allegheny Mountain Swimming (AMS) Outreach program for reimbursement of meet fees by AMS. AMS reimburses Outreach members for meet fees, but athlete surcharges are responsibility of family. Meet fees are only reimbursed for completed events after application is submitted in a timely manner. Further restrictions may apply for reimbursement. For more information, see amswim.org, Committees, AMS Outreach Membership Information.
- E. Travel meets and expenses (outside of AMS) are the responsibility of the family excluding any extraordinary MLAC/AMS reimbursements outside of AMS Outreach program (such as Olympic Trials).
- F. MLAC reserves the right to terminate any and all scholarship assistance at any point during the fiscal year due to extreme financial crisis of the team. MLAC will give 30 day notification to the recipient before removal of scholarship assistance.
- G. For unforeseen circumstances that may require short-term or unexpected need please contact the Board President who will bring it to the Board for approval.

Expectations of Recipient and Family:

- A. Provide documentation of financial need for significant dues reduction.
- B. Accrued charges (meet fees, etc.) in swimmer's account must be paid each month. Account must remain in good standing with credit card on file.
- C. Family is expected to participate in all team functions including fundraising.
- D. The family will work at every MLAC hosted meet, including one-day meets, for a minimum of one session per day per meet or officiate at each MLAC hosted meet. The family will contribute 2 meet donations unless changes are approved by Board.
- E. Swimmer(s) are expected to commit to the practice standards set by the coach of the roster group of the swimmer(s).
- F. Swimmer must remain in good standing with program. Violations to MLAC's code of conduct and bullying policies (i.e. unsportsmanlike conduct and/or conduct detrimental to MLAC) by either recipient and/or family shall be grounds for removal of financial assistance.
- G. Failure to complete service obligation, may result in removal of scholarship.



Eligibility for AMS Outreach Membership:

Proof of Financial Need

- A. Applicant's family must qualify for Free or Reduced Price lunches through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).
 - 1. Provide letter from school district verifying participation in the Free NSLP Lunch Program for the current/upcoming school year.

Application:

- A. Please contact VP Membership, Lauren Ganoë, at lauren@mlacswimming.com for application form.
- B. Provide Proof of Financial Need as stated in the Eligibility section for significant dues reduction.
- C. All information provided will be reviewed by the Head Coach and Board of Directors and will be kept confidential.
- D. Scholarships are awarded for the current swim season only. An application must be submitted for each new full year season (September – August).

CANCELLATION AND REFUND POLICY

Refunds of Membership Dues are given only with confirmed medical excuse or relocation out of the South Hills area. Withdrawal/cancellation must be made with written notice to the President within thirty days from the team member's first scheduled practice. Refunds of dues or release of obligations for any other reasons requires written justification provided to the President and will be require unanimous approval of the MLAC Board of Directors. The financial obligation for the season remains following the 30 days.

Outdoor programs and practices are not canceled in the event of inclement weather with the exception of thunder or lightning.

No refunds are given due to canceled or missed practices.



Family Obligations

The Mt. Lebanon Aqua Club (MLAC) is a parent run organization. We need every everyone to help run the day to day business of the club, and host meets and events throughout the year. The MLAC volunteer handbook outlines opportunities that are available yearly. Also, each family is required to donate 2 times throughout the year for our various meets concessions.

Each family is required to work 4 sessions per family per year and donate 2 times per season.

Sessions worked will be tracked in your account on the website. When arriving for a position at an event/meet, the Regular Family Member must check in with the proper person in order for credit to be accurately counted. The list will be updated after completion. It will be the Regular Family Member's responsibility to verify sessions worked and make sure that they earn the required 4 sessions and 2 donations.

Donations will have drop off times listed for each item. It will be the Regular Family Member's responsibility to be sure to drop off the correct donated items on the correct day and time and to sign the master list. Credit cannot be given for items dropped off at the wrong day/time or incorrect donations as the concession stand may not be able to use them for the intended purpose.

Should a Regular Member Family fail to earn the 4 event/meet sessions AND donate two (2) items for meet concessions within a registration year, they will be charged **\$500.00** which must be paid in full prior to registering for the next registration year. Requests for exemption may be brought to the MLAC President and Board of Directors for review within 30 days of registration.

Should a Regular Member Family fail to donate two (2) items within a registration year, they will be charged \$30 per donation missing. The maximum charge for failure to complete family obligations is \$500.

If volunteering/donating is not your gift you may opt out by paying the \$500.00 upfront at the beginning of the year but no later than our first meet. Contact the MLAC president to opt out.

For late registrants the family obligation will be prorated based on number of meet sessions remaining in the season at the time of their registration.



One way to fulfill your full family obligation: Become a USA Swimming Official!

HOW TO BECOME AN OFFICIAL - From USA swimming website

Want to get started as an official and help USA Swimming run consistent, high-quality and technically-correct competitions?

Officials join USA Swimming and are certified by the [Local Swimming Committee \(LSC\)](#) where they reside.

Each LSC sets their own requirements for officiating, but there are basic steps required for all officials:

Register as an apprentice official (some LSCs do not offer this option and you must register as a full official to start). Once your training is completed, you will register and pay membership dues as a full official.

Attend an officials clinic (stroke and turn training)

[Complete a Level 2 Background Check](#)

[Complete Athlete Protection Training](#)

Complete on-deck sessions shadowing a certified official

USA Swimming Registration - For Officials from AMS website

- Submit registration to the AMS permanent office (usually done through your swim club's registrar)
- Successfully complete the Level 2 Background Check (for coaches and officials). If you have security clearances from other aspects of your life (teachers' clearances, work, etc.), you'll still need to complete the Background Check administered on behalf of USA Swimming. No exceptions. There is a fee for completing this step. To get to the site to initiate a Background Check, [click here](#).
- You must complete the online Athlete Protection Training (found on the USA Swimming website). There is no charge for this training and generally takes less than 30-45 minutes to complete. To get to the site to complete the APT, [click here](#).

Generally, you'll need to complete six sessions on deck as an Apprentice Official before you can certify as a Stroke & Turn. These take place at AMS sanctioned swim meets (not championship meets). Trainees will move around the deck and work with a number of different Stroke & Turn officials during each session shadowing.

Contact MLAC's General Manager, Mike Kristufek for more information.



PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

As a parent of a swimmer and member of the Mt. Lebanon Aqua club, I will abide by the following guidelines:

1. Practice teamwork with all parents, swimmers and coaches by supporting the values of Discipline, Loyalty, Commitment and Hard Work.
2. As a parent, I will not coach or instruct the team or any swimmer at a practice or meets (from the stands or any other area) or interfere with coaches on the pool deck.
3. Demonstrate good sportsmanship by conducting myself in a manner that earns the respect of my child, other swimmers, parents, officials and the coaches at meets and practices.
4. Maintain self-control at all times. Know my role:

Swimmers – Swim
Coaches – Coach
Officials – Officiate
Parents – Parent

5. Not unduly burden Board members or coaches by directing excessive telephone calls or e-mails to them.
6. As a parent, I understand that criticizing, name-calling, use of abusive language or gestures directed toward the coaches, officials, any participating swimmer and/or parent of a swimmer will not be permitted or tolerated.
7. Enjoy involvement with the Mt. Lebanon Aqua Club by supporting the swimmers, coaches and other parents with positive communication and actions.
8. During competitions, questions or concerns regarding decisions made by meet officials are directed to a member of our coaching staff. Parents address officials via the coaching staff only.

Sanctions:

Should I conduct myself in such a way that brings discredit or discord to the Mt. Lebanon Aqua Club, or USA Swimming, I voluntarily subject myself to disciplinary action. MLAC maintains the right to terminate any membership with/without cause in the interest of our vision, mission and objectives.



Action Plan of the Mt. Lebanon Aqua Club (MLAC) to Address Bullying, Updated November, 2012

PURPOSE

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable with Mount Lebanon Aqua Club (MLAC) and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. MLAC is committed to providing a safe, caring and friendly environment for all of our members. If bullying does occur, all athletes and parents should know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a coach, board member or athlete/mentor.

Objectives of MLAC's Bullying Policy and Action Plan:

- 1 To make it clear that MLAC will not tolerate bullying in any form.
- 2 To define bullying and give all board members, coaches, parents and swimmers a good understanding of what bullying is.
- 3 To make it known to all parents, swimmers and coaching staff that there is a policy and protocol should any bullying issues arise.
- 4 To make how to report bullying clear and understandable.
- 5 To spread the word that (Name of Club) takes bullying seriously and that all swimmers and parents can be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

The USA Swimming Code of Conduct prohibits bullying. Generally, bullying is the use of aggression, whether intentional or not, which hurts another person. Bullying results in pain and distress.

The USA Swimming Code of Conduct defines bullying in 304.3.7. Bullying is the severe or repeated use by one or more USA Swimming members of oral, written, electronic or other technological expression, image, sound, data or intelligence of any nature (regardless of the method of transmission), or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at any other member that to a reasonably objective person has the effect of:

- i causing physical or emotional harm to the other member or damage to the other member's property;
- ii placing the other member in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property;
- iii creating a hostile environment for the other member at any USA Swimming activity;
- iv infringing on the rights of the other member at any USA Swimming activity; or
- v materially and substantially disrupting the training process or the orderly operation of any USA Swimming activity (which for the purposes of this section shall include, without limitation, practices, workouts and other events of a member club or LSC).



REPORTING PROCEDURE

An athlete who feels that he or she has been bullied is asked to do one or more of the following things:

- Talk to your parents;
- Talk to a Club Coach, Board Member, or other designated individual;
- Write a letter or email to MLAC Coach, Board Member, or other designated individual;
- Make a report to the USA Swimming Safe Sport staff.

There is no express time limit for initiating a complaint under this procedure, but every effort should be made to bring the complaint to the attention of the appropriate club leadership as soon as possible to make sure that memories are fresh and behavior can be accurately recalled and the bullying behavior can be stopped as soon as possible.

HOW WE HANDLE BULLYING

If bullying is occurring during team-related activities, we **STOP BULLYING ON THE SPOT** using the following steps:

1. Intervene immediately. It is ok to get another adult to help.
2. Separate the kids involved.
3. Make sure everyone is safe.
4. Meet any immediate medical or mental health needs.
5. Stay calm. Reassure the kids involved, including bystanders.
6. Model respectful behavior when you intervene.

If bullying is occurring at our club or it is reported to be occurring at our club, we address the bullying by **FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED** and **SUPPORTING THE KIDS INVOLVED** using the following approach:

FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED

1. First, we get the facts.

- a. Keep all the involved children separate.
- b. Get the story from several sources, both adults and kids.
- c. Listen without blaming.
- d. Don't call the act "bullying" while you are trying to understand what happened
- e. It may be difficult to get the whole story, especially if multiple athletes are involved or the bullying involves social bullying or cyber bullying. Collect all available information.



- 2. Then, we determine if it's bullying.** There are many behaviors that look like bullying but require different approaches. It is important to determine whether the situation is bullying or something else.
- a. Review the USA Swimming definition of bullying;
 - b. To determine if the behavior is bullying or something else, consider the following questions:
 - 1) What is the history between the kids involved?
 - 2) Have there been past conflicts?
 - 3) Is there a power imbalance? Remember that a power imbalance is not limited to physical strength. It is sometimes not easily recognized. If the targeted child feels like there is a power imbalance, there probably is.
 - 4) Has this happened before? Is the child worried it will happen again?
 - c. Remember that it may not matter “who started it.” Some kids who are bullied may be seen as annoying or provoking, but this does not excuse the bullying behavior.
 - d. Once you have determined if the situation is bullying, support all of the kids involved.

SUPPORTING THE KIDS INVOLVED

3. Support the kids who are being bullied

- a. Listen and focus on the child. Learn what’s been going on and show you want to help. Assure the child that bullying is not their fault.
- b. Work together to resolve the situation and protect the bullied child. The child, parents, and fellow team members and coaches may all have valuable input. It may help to:
 - 1) Ask the child being bullied what can be done to make him or her feel safe. Remember that changes to routine should be minimized. He or she is not at fault and should not be singled out. For example, consider rearranging lane assignments for everyone. If bigger moves are necessary, such as switching practice groups, the child who is bullied should not be forced to change.
 - 2) Develop a game plan. Maintain open communication between MLAC and parents. Discuss the steps that will be taken and how bullying will be addressed going forward.
- c. Be persistent. Bullying may not end overnight. Commit to making it stop and consistently support the bullied child.

4. Address bullying behavior

- a. Make sure the child knows what the problem behavior is. Young people who bully must learn their behavior is wrong and harms others.
- b. Show kids that bullying is taken seriously. Calmly tell the child that bullying will not be tolerated. Model respectful behavior when addressing the problem.
- c. Work with the child to understand some of the reasons he or she bullied. For example:
 - 1) Sometimes children bully to fit in or just to make fun of someone is a little different from them. In other words, there may be some insecurity involved.



- 2) Other times kids act out because something else—issues at home, abuse, stress—is going on in their lives. They also may have been bullied. These kids may be in need of additional support.
- d. Involve the kid who bullied in making amends or repairing the situation. The goal is to help them see how their action affect others. For example, the child can:
 - 1) Write a letter apologizing to the athlete who was bullied.
 - 2) Do a good deed for the person who was bullied, for MLAC, or for others in your community.
 - 3) Clean up, repair, or pay for any property they damaged.
- e. Avoid strategies that don't work or have negative consequences:
 - 1) Zero tolerance or "three strikes, you're out" strategies don't work. Suspending or removing from the team swimmers who bully does not reduce bullying behavior. Swimmers may be less likely to report and address bullying if suspension or getting kicked off the team is the consequence.
 - 2) Conflict resolution and peer mediation don't work for bullying. Bullying is not a conflict between people of equal power who share equal blame. Facing those who have bullied may further upset kids who have been bullied.
- f. Follow-up. After the bullying issue is resolved, continue finding ways to help the child who bullied to understand how what they do affects other people. For example, praise acts of kindness or talk about what it means to be a good teammate.

5. Support bystanders who witness bullying. Every day, kids witness bullying. They want to help, but don't know how. Fortunately, there are a few simple, safe ways that athletes can help stop bullying when they see it happening.

- a. Be a friend to the person being bullied;
- b. Tell a trusted adult – your parent, coach, or club board member;
- c. Help the kid being bullied get away from the situation. Create a distraction, focus the attention on something else, or offer a way for the target to get out of the situation. "Let's go, practice is about to start."
- d. Set a good example by not bullying others.
- e. Don't give the bully an audience. Bullies are encouraged by the attention they get from bystanders. If you do nothing else, just walk away.



Travel Policy & Requirements

Meets designated as “Team Travel” are defined as meets where the coaching staff and designated team chaperones transport and supervise the swimmers for the duration of the trip. Parents are welcome to attend the meet as spectators, however they must provide their own transportation, lodging and meals. Furthermore, parents and others who are spectators are asked to provide distance from their swimmers allowing them to remain and bond with their teammates and coaches during the trip uninterrupted.

The following requirements apply to ALL meets designated as Team Travel Meets:

1. Only swimmers ages 13 & older will be able to travel with the team to meets. The stipulations for team travel only apply to those on the team travel trip. Swimmers who are 12 years old or younger can still attend certain meets that have been designated as team travel, but they must travel, room, and stay with their parents. Coaches of swimmers 12 and younger will supervise the swimmers during the swimming portion of the trip. Parents/guardians are responsible for all supervision away from the pool.
2. All swimmers must abide by the rules for team travel. No alternate accommodations will be given to anyone at any time.
3. When swimmers are given permission to travel home from the meet with their parents, they may do so ONLY after the final swim for our team has been completed for the entire meet. No one will be permitted to leave the meet before all swimmers have completed their races.
4. Swimmers must stay with the team at all times. No one will be given permission to miss a team meal or leave the team hotel (or the pool) for any reason other than the meet or unless there is an emergency situation.
5. All swimmers must abide by the team rules and travel code of conduct. Swimmers in violation of any team rules or the travel code of conduct will be issued what the coaching staff deems to be the appropriate punishment. THIS MAY INCLUDE IMMEDIATE DISMISSAL FROM THE MEET AT THE EXPENSE OF THAT SWIMMER’S PARENTS/GUARDIANS. YOU ASSUME THIS RISK WHEN AGREEING TO ATTEND TEAM TRAVEL.
6. All coaches and chaperones must sign and abide by the travel chaperone guidelines and code of conduct (revised in 2010 to abide by new USA Swimming athlete protection rules and guidelines).
7. All swimmers must abide by the team uniform policy at all times.
8. Swimmers of families whose team accounts are delinquent in any way will not be permitted to attend meets designated as team travel.
9. If a swimmer, parent, or guardian is unable or unwilling to abide by ANY of the requirements of or for team travel, the swimmer will not be permitted to attend the meet in any capacity.



USA Swimming Required Travel Policies:

(These policies are required addendums to our team travel policies by USA Swimming)

- a) Club travel policies must be signed and agreed to by all athletes, parents, coaches and other adults traveling with the club.
- b) Team managers and chaperones must be members of USA Swimming and have successfully passed a USA Swimming-administered criminal background check.
- c) Regardless of gender, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an athlete (unless the coach is the parent, guardian, sibling, or spouse of that particular athlete).
- d) When only one athlete and one coach travel to a competition, the athlete must have his/her parents' (or legal guardian's) written permission in advance to travel alone with the coach.

Additional Travel Policies:

- a) During team travel, when doing room checks, attending team meetings and/or other activities, two-deep leadership and open and observable environments should be maintained.
- b) Athletes should not ride in a coach's vehicle without another adult present who is the same gender as the athlete, unless prior parental permission is obtained.
- c) During overnight team travel, if athletes are paired with other athletes they shall be of the same gender and should be a similar age. Where athletes are age 13 & Over, chaperones and/or team managers would ideally stay in nearby rooms.
- d) When only one athlete under the age of 18 and one coach travel to a competition, the swimmer **MUST** be accompanied by at least one of their parents or guardians.
- e) To ensure the propriety of the athletes and to protect the staff, there will be no male athletes in female athlete's rooms and no female athletes in male athlete's room.
- f) A copy of the Club Code of Conduct must be signed by the athlete and his/her parent or legal guardian.
- g) Team officials should obtain a signed Liability Release and/or Indemnification Form for each athlete.
- h) Team officials should carry a signed Medical Consent or Authorization to Treat Form for each athlete.
- i) Curfews shall be established by the team staff each day of the trip.
- j) Team members and staff traveling with the team will attend all team functions including meetings, practices, meals, meet sessions, etc. unless otherwise excused or instructed by the head coach or his/her designee.
- k) The directions & decisions of coaches/chaperones are final.
- l) Swimmers are expected to remain with the team at all times during the trip. Swimmers are not to leave the competition venue, the hotel, a restaurant, or any other place at which the team has gathered without the permission/knowledge of the coach or chaperone.
- m) When visiting public places such as shopping malls, movie theaters, etc. swimmers will stay in groups of no less than three persons.
- n) The Head Coach or his/her designee shall make a written report of travel policy or code of conduct violations to the appropriate club leadership and the parent or legal guardian of any affected minor athlete.



Electronic Communication Policy of MLAC

PURPOSE

The Mt. Lebanon Aqua Club (the “Club”) recognizes the prevalence of electronic communication and social media in today’s world. Many of our swimmers use these means as their primary method of communication. While the Club acknowledges the value of these methods of communication, the Club also realizes that there are associated risks that must be considered when adults use these methods to communicate with minors.

GENERAL CONTENT

All communications between a coach or other adult and an athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. The content and intent of all electronic communications must adhere to the USA Swimming Code of Conduct regarding Athlete Protection.

For example, as with any communication with an athlete, electronic communication should not contain or relate to any of the following:

- drugs or alcohol use;
- sexually oriented conversation; sexually explicit language; sexual activity
- the adult’s personal life , social activities, relationship or family issues, or personal problems; and
- inappropriate or sexually explicit pictures
- Note: Any communication concerning an athlete’s personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues or personal problems must be transparent, accessible and professional.

Whether one is an athlete, coach, board member or parent, the guiding principle to always use in communication is to ask: “Is this communication something that someone else would find appropriate or acceptable in a face-to-face meeting?” or “Is this something you would be comfortable saying out loud to the intended recipient of your communication in front of the intended recipient’s parents, the coaching staff, the board, or other athletes?”

With respect to electronic communications, a simple test that can be used in most cases is whether the electronic communication with swimmers is **T**ransparent, **A**ccessible and **P**rofessional.

Transparent: All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should be transparent. Your communication should not only be clear and direct, but also free of hidden meanings, innuendo and expectations.

Accessible: All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should be considered a matter of record and part of the Club’s records. Whenever possible, include another coach or parent in the communication so that there is no question regarding accessibility.



Professional: All electronic communication between a coach and an athlete should be conducted professionally as a representative of the Club. This includes word choices, tone, grammar, and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of a staff member.

If your communication meets all three of the **T.A.P.** criteria, then it is likely your method of communication with athletes will be appropriate.

FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, BLOGS, AND SIMILAR SITES

Coaches may have personal Facebook (or other social media site) pages, but they are not permitted to have any athlete member of the Club join their personal page as a “friend.” A coach should not accept any “friend” request from an athlete. In addition, the coach should remind the athlete that this is not permitted. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to “private message” each other through Facebook. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to “instant message” each other through Facebook chat or other IM method.

The Club has an official Facebook page that athletes and their parents can “friend” for information and updates on team-related matters.

Coaches are encouraged to set their pages to “private” to prevent athletes from accessing the coach’s personal information.

TWITTER

The Club has an official Twitter page that coaches, athletes and parents can follow for information and updates on team-related matters. Coaches and athletes may follow each other on Twitter. Coaches cannot retweet an athlete message post. Coaches and athletes are not permitted to “direct message” each other through Twitter.

TEXTING

Subject to the general guidelines mentioned above, texting is allowed between coaches and athletes during the hours from 7am until 9pm. Texting only shall be used for the purpose of communicating information directly related to team activities.

EMAIL

Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate. When communicating with an athlete through email, a parent, another coach, or a board member should also be copied.

REQUEST TO DISCONTINUE ALL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

The parents or guardians of an athlete may request in writing that their child not be contacted by coaches through any form of electronic communication.



Athlete Social Media Policy

As representatives of MLAC you have the responsibility to portray your team and yourselves in a positive manner. In addition to the agreed upon behaviors in the Swimmer and Parent Codes of Conduct, if you participate in any electronic communications (e.g., texting, e-mail), interact on a social networking site(s), or use social media (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat) you must avoid inappropriate and offensive behaviors. If a club representative's social media profile and its contents or other electronic communications are found to be inappropriate in accordance with the behaviors listed below, he/she will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the club's Disciplinary Procedures (swimmers) or the Parent Code of Conduct.

Examples of inappropriate and offensive behaviors may include, but are not limited to, depictions or presentations of the following:

- Photos, videos, and comments that are of a sexual nature. This includes links to websites of a pornographic nature and other inappropriate material.
- Photos, videos, comments or posters showing the personal use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco.
- Content online that is unsportsmanlike, derogatory, demeaning, defamatory, or threatening toward any other individual or entity (for example, derogatory comments regarding another swimmer or club)
- Any communications including posts depicting or encouraging unacceptable behaviors such as violent or illegal activities (for example, sexual harassment, vandalism, underage drinking, or illegal drug use).

Remember:

- Always present a positive image and don't do anything to embarrass yourself, your team, your family or the Club.
- The Internet is permanent. Anything posted online is available to anyone in the world. Any content you post is completely out of your control the moment it is placed online, even if you limit access to your page.
- Don't post anything you wouldn't want your coaches or parents/guardian to see.
- Your social media content can and will be reviewed by both potential higher education schools and potential employers.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the purpose of Mt. Lebanon Aqua Club?

A: Our mission is to inspire swimmers to be champions in life through perseverance and discipline while building confidence, self-esteem, life long friendships and fond memories. Our vision is to be a nationally ranked and recognized club that creates avenues for all athletes to achieve their full potential.

Q: How is the club structured?

A: The club is a 501(c)3 non-profit membership organization. The club has a governance board of 11 members, which are elected by the membership in two year rotations. Board meetings take place once a month, are open and members are encouraged to attend. The board establishes policy and procedures (the dry side of the club). The staff creates and implements the swim program (wet side of the club.)

Q: What are the practice groups?

A: Mt. Lebanon Aqua Club recognizes that every swimmer develops at different rates, responds to different levels of conditioning and has different long term interests. From the beginning swimmer, simply wanting to swim a 25 yard fly to a National Team member swimming for a spot on the Olympic Team, we have a place and a program. Our educated and experienced staff works together to develop a comprehensive and successful swim program. Workouts are tailored by the staff to meet the overall goals of the program, the progressive goals of the swim group, and the goals established by the swimmer. The club is divided into 5 groups based on ability.

- **Stingrays** – For beginning swimmers, Stingrays group practices up to 4 times per week for approximately one hour.
- **Dolphins** – Typically have 1-3 years of swimming experience, this group practices up to 5 times per week for one hour.
- **Barracudas** – Intermediate level swimmers who practice up to 5 times per week for 1-1.5 hours.
- **Marlins** – These are “advanced age group swimmers,” and practice up to 6 times per week.
- **Sharks** – Consists of advanced competitive swimmers who practice every day but Sunday, and 2-3 mornings per week before school.

**PLACEMENT IN GROUPS IS DETERMINED BY THE MLAC COACHING STAFF.
Dryland is included at every level.**



Q: What is the difference between MLAC, Minnows, and Piranhas?

A: The **Minnows** team is a pre-competitive program run and coached by MLAC coaches and is intended for children who want to swim once or twice per week but who are not yet ready to commit to the year-round program. The program is held for 10 weeks, 2-3 times during the school year. Minnows swimmers are not MLAC members and are not subject to family obligations. The **Piranhas** is the MLAC summer swim team, which is also run and coached by MLAC. The Piranhas Summer Swim Team swims with the South Hills Summer Swim Conference (SHSSC) against other similar programs in the area. Many MLAC members got their start based on the great experience they had swimming for the Piranhas. Piranhas swimmers are not MLAC members.

Q: My child is involved in other activities - does he/she need to attend every practice?

A: Practice attendance is not required. We encourage our swimmers to have multiple interests and understand that there will occasionally be conflicts. That being said, it is important to remember that your child will get out of swimming what they put into it, so it is important to keep expectations in line with the reality of your child's practice habits.

Q: Is there a separate swim team at the middle school and high school levels?

A: In addition to the various club programs available in our community, the **Mt. Lebanon School District** sponsors both a middle school swim team and a high school swim team. MLAC members typically participate in the school programs, as well, but one does not need to be a club member in order to swim for the middle and high school swim teams.

Q: Will my child know other swimmers?

A: Many Aqua Club members are Mt. Lebanon residents who attend school with your children. We are also an "open club" meaning non Mt. Lebanon residents may join. The teams practice together for 3 or more days each week which provides the swimmers opportunities to make excellent and long-lasting friendships. Swimmers often get to know each other at swim practices, meets, and MLAC functions all year long!

Q: How do I find out more about the MLAC programs?

A: General questions can be sent to coachmikek@mlacswimming.com

Q: Does my child have to compete in meets?

A: We do not require meet participation. However, meet attendance is strongly encouraged as a means to measure your child's progress. Most of our swimmers compete in swim meets, on average, about once per month. Swim meets are structured by ability so that faster swimmers tend to swim



against faster swimmers, and slower swimmers compete against swimmers of the same ability. At different times during the year, there may be more than one meet per month that is available to swim.

Our coaching staff are great motivators who emphasize that swimmers are ultimately competing against themselves. One of the best things about swimming is that it allows for precise measurements of performance (swimming races are timed to the one hundredth of a second) and every time a swimmer races, they have an opportunity to perform a personal best time. This is how we measure progress—by comparing your child to what they have done previously, not by whether he or she achieved a certain overall standing or whether they beat a particular swimmer from another team.

Q: Who determines what event my child will swim at a meet?

A: You may pick your swimmers events, however, it will be reviewed by their coach and the coaching staff which determines appropriate events for swimmers. MLAC believes in well-rounded athletes and emphasizes long term development. Coaches work to provide the appropriate challenge for every athlete at each competition. Most meets have no qualifying standards, however, there are some meets with qualifying times. Usually the more experienced your swimmer, the more likely they will see qualifying standards at meets. Most meets have entry limits that cap the number of events a swimmer can compete in on a daily basis and/or for the entire meet. Occasionally, host clubs limit the number of participants in certain events due to timeline constraints.

Q: How is it determined which coach attends which meet?

A: Mt. Lebanon Aqua Club is fortunate to have a talented coaching staff with great depth and knowledge. The goal of the club is to have your child's primary coach present for their meet as often as possible. The Head Coach and Head Age Group coach assign coaches to meets considering first, who is swimming; second, how many weekends has this person coached at a meet this year; and finally, what are the overall needs of the program. On occasion the Head Coach will attend portions of Age Group meets to watch swimmer development and build relationships with younger swimmers who will soon move up into advanced programs. However, the Head Age Group Coach is the primary coach for this group.

Q: Does MLAC recognize the swimmers achievements?

A: At the conclusion of the short course season, MLAC its annual banquet, which is dedicated to recognizing the efforts and achievements of our swimmers. This is fun-filled night where the swimmers of all ages are awarded for their accomplishments. All first year members receive their team banners. All members also receive a "year" pin. They can also earn pins for achieving new time standards and competing in distance events. In addition to the banner and pin awards MLAC recognizes a male and female swimmer in each age group that has the highest IMR/ IMX score. These swimmers receive trophies, many named after the best MLAC swimmers of the past, influential club families and coaches.



Q: If I want a private lesson, how do I schedule one?

A: Private lessons are periodically offered through the MLAC website for an additional fee. Register online.

Q: How much does it cost to attend a National level competition?

A: A week at a National or Junior National meet typically costs the swimmer's family between \$1200 and \$1500. The club provides minimal support against these expenses. Allegheny Mountain Swimming does provide a stipend for each of these meets to help defray the costs. Warm-ups, bags and suits for these swimmers are provided by Speedo, who recognizes national elite level swimmers.

Q: What is USA Swimming's Club recognition program?

A: The Club Recognition Program offers our club members a working blueprint for developing strong, stable, financially sound and athletically productive organizations. Designed by USA Swimming's Club Development Committee (comprised primarily of coaches), this voluntary program presents four levels of achievement across four component areas deemed critical to long-term club success. The program encourages clubs to establish organizational goals and to benchmark their progress toward those goals.

The ultimate objective of the program is to strengthen the club system in USA Swimming by guiding clubs through a development process that ultimately positions the program and its coaches to better serve athletes.

The Club Development Committee looked at many different factors that helped create "great" clubs. The committee grouped all of the factors into four major component areas:

1. Business & Organizational Success
2. Parent & Volunteer Development
3. Coach Development & Education
4. Athlete Development & Performance

As of 2015, MLAC is a Level 4 Recognition Club

Q: How is the club funded?

A: Mt. Lebanon Aqua Club has an annual budget in excess of \$600,000. Registration fees, hosted swim meet profit, learn to swim, and other programs all combine to help fund the club.



Q: How is the money spent?

A: Annually, the board presents a budget. The club expenses breakdown as follows:

- 61% Administration (rental to fee to Mt. Lebanon School District for use of the Aquatics Center, salaries, office rental and equipment, club insurance, etc.)
- 10% expenses related to hosting meets
- 4% Fundraising expenses
- 24% Team Social Expenses

Monthly, the board receives and reviews financial reports.

Q: Does everyone pay the same amount?

A: The dues are structured in accordance with the practice schedule for your swimmer. The more hours a swimmer is expected in the pool, the higher the dues.

Q: How are the staff compensation and benefits decided?

A: Each year the Board does a full evaluation of the head coach based on their individual performance and the performance of the club. The head coach then evaluates his staff. The Head Coach's salary is set by the Executive Officers.

Q: So if I pay dues, why do I have a family obligation?

A: Meet revenue provides the club with approximately a portion of our annual resources. Without our families helping we would need to hire people to run the meets which would then significantly increase all levels of dues for the club.

Q: Who do I talk to if I have a concern or question?

A: Most operational questions can be answered by e-mailing the General Manager at coachmikek@mlacswimming.com. Practice questions should be directed to your swimmer's coach. Governance questions about policies or budgets should be directed to a member of the board.

NEED MORE HELP?

We hope that we have addressed any questions you may have about our program. If you have any additional questions please contact our General Manager.



Thank you!

Have a great season!

