



Laois Marlins Swimming Club

Club Handbook 2023/24

www.laoismarlins.ie

WELCOME

Dear Club Member / Parent / Guardian,

We wish you very warm welcome to the Laois Marlins Swim Club.

The club prides itself on providing an enjoyable, friendly and safe environment for all members to pursue their athletic goals.

The club provides an opportunity for anyone interested in competitive swimming to receive professional coaching and instruction. Our highly qualified, motivated and motivating coaching team, work with the swimmers to encourage and enable them to reach their individual potential in this very demanding but rewarding sport. The club aims to provide a culture that is inclusive for all, everyone is given an equal opportunity and is empowered to participate and everyone is treated with the same level of respect and importance. We have made a commitment to ensure that people from all backgrounds and abilities feel welcomed by us and identify as valued members of the Laois Marlins Swim Club.

The club is affiliated to Swim Ireland, the national governing body of all aquatic disciplines in Ireland and comply with all standards that lead to the safe and harmonious participation in our sport.

The club depends largely on volunteerism in the day to day running of the club. This takes many forms from the organising committee to poolside rotas, gala management and fundraising. We are always looking for volunteers and new ideas to develop the club and enhance our swimmers, so please get in contact if you are interested in supporting the club.

This handbook is designed to provide information and clarity for all Members of the club, including respective parents and guardians. We also run information evenings through the year and update our website, and social media platforms regularly. Of course committee members are also on hand to address any queries you may have.

Thank you for being part of the Laois Marlins Swim Club and wishing you an enjoyable year ahead.

Laois Marlins Swim Club Committee

2023/24 CLUB COMMITTEE

We are delighted to have a full and dedicated committee for this season. The committee can be contacted in person, on via email.

CHAIR – Keith Harnett E: chair@laoismarlins.ie

SECRETARY – Dave Kenny E: secretary@laoismarlins.ie

TREASURER – Rob Farrell E: treasurer@laoismarlins.ie

Club Children’s Officer– Aisling Lalor, E: cco@laoismarlins.ie

PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER – Nicola Donagher E: pro@laoismarlins.ie

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Áine McNamara E: membership@laoismarlins.ie

EDUCATION OFFICER: Agnieszka Tiernan E: Education@laoismarlins.ie

HEAD COACH: Padraic Dolan E: Coach@laoismarlins.ie

.....
GALA SECRETARY– Judith O’Connor E: galas@laoismarlins.ie



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A LAOIS MARLIN?

The aim of the club is for our members to enjoy training hard and become competitive swimmers within a positive and encouraging environment. We understand that sport can be hard work and requires discipline to achieve your goals. Your commitment and attendance levels will determine what you will achieve from swimming.

Regardless of what level you swim at you have the opportunity to train properly during every session.

Swimmers are divided into training lanes based on speed, stamina and ability. This ensures that every swimmer gets the opportunity to train and develop according to his or her individual level. Our coaching team work very closely with all swimmers and are experts in motivating and nurturing each swimmer. Swimmers need to learn to trust their coach, listen to all advice given and learn to be noble in victory and gracious if you do not always achieve your goals.

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.

What is expected from swimmers?

- All swimmers are expected to train at all times to their full potential.
- It is important to arrive on deck on time (10 minutes before training session begins).
- Have all their required equipment, including water bottle.
- Swimmers are expected to listen to and carry out the instructions of the coach at all times.
- Respect other athletes and your opponents.
- Be part of the team and respect and support other team members at all times.

Health & Safety

We endeavour to keep rules and regulations to a minimum but the Club is obliged to provide an environment in which committed, conscientious swimmers have an opportunity to realise their full potential.

- If a swimmer is unwell or excessively tired during a session this should be communicated to the coach who will make the appropriate arrangements.
- All swimmers are expected to be courteous to each other, the coaching team, parents and committee members, the leisure centre staff and other users of the leisure centre. Bad language or any form of horseplay either in the pool area, in the showers or dressing rooms cannot be tolerated.
- Proper respect must be shown for all equipment and fixtures – sitting or standing on lane ropes can result in damage to the ropes but also can result in serious injury.
- Water bottles, floats or pull buoys should not be kicked or thrown.
- Coaches have been instructed to report any or all breaches of discipline without delay. In addition, coaches may at their own discretion request any swimmer who fails to comply with their instructions to leave the water.
- Cameras in any form are not allowed in the changing area at any time.
- Use of mobile phones in the changing area, on deck or in the viewing area is not allowed.



WHAT IS EXPECTED FROM PARENTS / GUARDIANS?

Parents / Guardians play a large role in the support of swimmers and the club. Your role within this club is vital. Be supportive and enthusiastic, and please allow the Coach to coach! If you would like to become involved in various club duties please talk to committee members

Training

There are a number of things we must insist upon at training.

- Do not leave a swimmer at the door of the complex and presume coaching staff are present or that somebody else is supervising the session.
- **There must be at least One Parent/Guardian on Supervision duty for all Pool training session.**
- Make sure that the swimming or Dry Land session is taking place.
- Ensure that you are back to collect the swimmer in a timely manner at the end of the session.
- Read the notice board, there is always something going on galas, pool duty & new timetables will also be posted there.
- Never presume that "somebody" is minding your child. Always be sure you know who is in charge. Check the pool duty rota has been signed when you sign in. If not there is no parent currently on duty you should not leave.
- The Person on duty must remain until all swimmers are collected; if the person on duty cannot remain until the end of a session they must organize with another parent / guardian to fulfil this role and to sign on their behalf.

Galas

Where you have entered your swimmer into a Regional (Leinster) or National Gala you must be aware that the club will be given "Officials Slots" based on your swimmers entry. You will therefore be required to assist on the day of the gala by filling a slot. Slots are typically assigned for Timekeeping, Turn Judges or Line Up duties. A rota will issue where possible prior to the gala informing you of your slot.

Person on Duty (Poolside Duty)

There must be a pool and/or a dry-land duty rota for coaching and teaching activities. The duty rota requires an adult in addition to coaching or teaching staff to oversee the teaching/coaching session involving young people reducing the risks to both children and adults and ensures someone is on hand for any emergency that might arise.

The pool duty rota will be organised on a monthly basis and will be communicated in advance to all involved via Laois Marlin's What's App group and also on team unify. Pool duty is obligatory for all parents. If a parent is unable to fulfil their allocated duty it is their responsibility to organise a replacement. Where the adult supervisor fails to turn up, the coach may have to cancel the session.

If an accident/incident occurred in the pool or on the pool bank, you would assist the coach with the situation. The person on duty must position themselves on deck, in proximity to the changing village. If you are the designated person on duty please refrain from sitting in the viewing area, the person on duty should have a full view and hearing of the pool area; this cannot be achieved by sitting up in a stand or behind protective screens or glass.

- 1) Sign in with Coach at the beginning of the session; that way the coach knows which parent is on poolside duty.
- 2) Watch the session. If you see a swimmer get out of the pool and go into changing area, make sure they return. If a swimmer is unwell, you may be asked to contact the parent of that swimmer.
- 3) You may have something to read or review, we just ask that you do keep an eye on the water.
- 4) You are not allowed to be with a swimmer on his or her own. i.e. in the changing room with them and no other parent.

Complaints and Disciplinary Procedure

Swim Ireland requires that we have procedures in place should you have a problem. We have adopted the Swim Ireland Complaints & Disciplinary Rules and Procedures, as amended from time to time.

If you have a concern or complaint you can go to a Committee member, Coach or Club Children's Officer and they can help you with what is the best way for you to be assisted. If they are unable to assist you, you can write a letter / email to the Complaints Committee of Laois Marlins c/o Club Secretary.

secretary@laoismarlins.ie . All complaints must be in writing.

All Members should be assured that all complaints will be dealt with in a private & confidential manner and as expeditiously as possible. All Members should be assured that should they not be satisfied with the outcome of their complaint then an appeal can be made to Swim Ireland.

UNDERSTANDING SQUADS

Laois Marlins Swim Club is comprised of a number of squads, our squad structure commences with Train to Train and progresses right through to Senior Squad. We also encompass a Stars Squad and a Masters Squad.

Train to Train (1 hr per week)

Training Times

Saturday 6.45 am – 7.45am

Train to train provides a link between swimming lessons and pre – club involvement.

Junior Squad (2 hours per week)

Training Times

Monday: 6pm – 7pm

Saturday: 6.45 – 7.45am

There is a strong emphasis on technique and learning about competing. Swimmers learn to swim with disciplined technique and begin to learn about training for competitions. The swimmers spend two hours per week in the water under the guidance of their coaches. Many junior swimmers will attend their first galas and will enter races in all strokes and individual medley normally at 50m level. They will also swim in relay races. A novice swimmer in the junior squad will be aiming to achieve a number of firsts in swimming and each is very important to their development. These can be:

- Completing all training sessions to the best of their ability.
- Attending their first gala. Ideally they should aim for 4-6 galas over the swim year and only in galas suitable for beginners, Level 1 galas are most suitable.
- Only pick 2-3 races per gala and in the 25-50m distance.
- Getting a first Personal Best (PB) in all 4 main strokes
- Using starting blocks for the first time.

Junior Development (3.5 hours)

Training Times

Monday: 6pm – 7pm

Thursday: 6.00 - 7.30pm

Saturday: 6.45am – 7.45am

Junior Development will continue to focus on technique, but will also progress to focus on competition and increasing involvement in galas. Swimmers will be encouraged to enter galas over the swimming year with increased distance and in all strokes. There will also be an increased focus on endurance, times progression and efficiency in all 4 strokes.

Senior Development (6 hours)

Training Times

Monday: 7pm – 8.30pm

Thursday: 6.00pm - 7.30pm

Friday: 7.30pm – 8.30pm

Saturday: 7.45am – 8.45am

Senior Development is the next phase of progression through the club, swimmers continue the development and improvement of technique in all four strokes. Training intensity and frequency increases, with an increased focus on endurance. Swimmers will attend numerous galas over the swimming season as recommended by their coaches.

Senior Squad (9.5 hours)

Training Times

Monday: 7pm – 8.30pm

Tuesday: 5.30 am – 7.30 am

Thursday: 5.30 am - 7.30 am

Friday: 7.30pm – 9.30pm

Saturday: 7.45am – 9.45am

In the senior squad our swimmers learn to increase the intensity of their training and continue to improve and perfect their technique. Swimmers will be mastering all the swimming strokes and techniques required for competitive swimming. They will swim 9 hours a week and have the option of a strength and conditioning session in the gym. As well as becoming very accomplished swimmers and competitors the swimmers will also be targeting the achievement of Leinster times and national Division 1 or Division 2 times.

Expectations from a senior swimmer *“Remember you are Role Models for the younger swimmers”*

- Swimmers are responsible for their own training equipment and self-monitoring recovery and adaptation
- Goal setting is formalised with the coaching team and swimmer.
- A positive approach and attitude in training sessions must be shown.
- Ensure all skills are performed to your best through all sets, including streamlining, racing turns, finishes etc.
- Be disciplined under all conditions, in training, in competition and outside of the pool.
- Attend all target Galas and enter target events as set out by Head Coach and coaching staff.
- Show respect to all members of LMSC and other clubs, including swimmers, parents, coaches and officials.

Stars Squad

Training Times

Monday – 6pm – 7pm

Thursday – 6pm – 7pm

Our Stars Squad is for swimmers with special needs, this squad is open to swimmers who can swim at least one length of a 25m pool.

Masters Squad

Training Times

Masters 1

Tuesday – 5.30 am – 7.30am

Thursday – 5.30am – 7.30 am

Friday

Masters 2

5.30am – 6.30 am

5.30 am – 6.30 am

8.30 pm – 9.30 pm

Masters 3

6.30am – 7.30 am

6.30 am – 7.30 am

8.30 pm – 9.30 pm

Our Masters Squad is for swimmers aged 18 and over who wish to train to compete or train for fitness. There are 3 Masters Squads, Masters 1, 2, 3.



SWIMMER CRITERIA

General Criteria for All Groups

Inclusion in all of Laois Marlins swimming training squads is based on the availability of places, coach agreement, signed registration and parent consent forms, Swim Ireland Affiliation, payment of fees and the agreement of representatives of Laois Marlins Swim Club committee.

Criteria for Trials/Training

Building Fundamentals in Order to join Laois Marlins Swimming Club as a novice member, children are required to meet the following criteria:

1. Swimmer can complete 2 lengths front crawl (basic, regular breathing);
2. Swimmer can complete 2 lengths back crawl, with reasonable body position;
3. Swimmer can complete 1 length basic breast stroke with reasonable body position;
4. Swimmer can complete 1 length basic butterfly kick, with a float;
5. Swimmer can somersault or tumble anywhere in the pool;
6. Swimmer can dive off the pool edge head first in either a sitting, kneeling or standing position;
7. Swimmer has water confidence in all depths of the pool;
8. Swimmer is mature enough to take instruction;
9. Swimmer will affiliate to Swim Ireland.

* Please note STARS squad swimmers criteria are set out under STARS section.

N.B. Your child will be assessed by the Head Coach who will decide whether or not your child is a competent enough swimmer to join the club.

Depending on availability of places in the squads there may be a waiting time before your child can actually start.

Ranking the Swimmer

Laois Marlins Swim Club has used a ranking process for the swimmers based on Freestyle. It has now been recognised that this does not provide enough data about the swimmers' development. Hence, the club is now ranking the swimmers according to their Individual Medley (IM) times, allowing assessment over Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke and Freestyle. IM times will be refreshed through both competition and club time trials and increasingly, the 200m/400m IM will be used for the Senior squad as this provides more information on the swimmers stamina and competitive abilities.

Lane Criteria

Swimmers' position in the lane will be based on IM times of the swimmer. We will be using the Personal Best time from all four 100m swims to calculate the overall time and lane position for the Senior Squad.

Junior Squad times will be based on four 25m times for each stroke.

Work and Expectations

The Criteria for retaining a lane place with LMSC is based on 2 key areas:

- Training and competition application
- Training/Gala attendance

The Head Coach reserves the right to move swimmers outside the guidelines where it is felt it will benefit the club and/or the individual.

Head Coach: Padraic Dolan Coach@laoismarlins.ie

CLUB FEES

CLUB FEES

The club is self-financing and can only function when all members' fees are paid on time. This allows for pool rental and other overheads to be paid and to deliver the highest coaching standards possible. If at any time there is an issue with fees please contact our treasurer, at treasurer@laoismarlins.ie, who will be happy to help.

Cost Per Month – Season 2023/24

Fees are charged on a month basis during the training season From September to June. Fee charges and training hours are detailed below:

<u>Squads</u>	<u>Cost per Month</u>	<u>Training Hours per week</u>	<u>Billing Type</u>
<u>Junior</u>	<u>€ 66.5</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>On Deck App</u>
<u>Junior Development</u>	<u>€ 76.5</u>	<u>3.5</u>	<u>On Deck App</u>
<u>Senior Development</u>	<u>€ 92</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>On Deck App</u>
<u>Senior</u>	<u>€ 112</u>	<u>9.5</u>	<u>On Deck App</u>
<u>Masters 1</u>	<u>€ 82</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>On Deck App</u>
<u>Masters 2</u>	<u>€ 66.5</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>On Deck App</u>
<u>Masters 3</u>	<u>€ 66.5</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>On Deck App</u>
<u>Stars</u>	<u>€ 41</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>On Deck App</u>
<u>Train To Train</u>	<u>€ 40</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>Monthly invoice</u>

In additional there is an annual Swim Ireland Membership charge of €50 for competitive swimmers and €35 for non-competitive swimmers which covers the swimmers from an insurance perspective in training and during competition.

Any other additional charges per month such as galas, strength & conditioning training, team events, equipment, etc, will be charged through the appropriate billing types on a monthly basis.

Managing Your Account

You can check your account balances from either the On Deck app or through the Team Unify website. Please contact the Membership Secretary if you have any questions in relation to accessing either of these. Please be aware that there may be a delay between payment of any fees and these updating on your account as this needs to be done manually as it is not an automatic process. Please contact the Club Treasurer if you have any queries.

Payment of Fees

Swimmers are expected to keep their accounts up to date at all times. Payments are made through electronic bank transfer to the Laois Marlins bank account:

Account Name: Laois Marlins Swimming Club

BIC: IPBSIE2D

IBAN: IE68IPBS99072215619324

If paying in branch, please ensure to include the swimmers name as a reference on the payment to ensure it can be correctly assigned to their account

It must be noted that non-payment of fees may result in refusal of a swimmer to partake in training and galas until fees have been paid.

GALAS EXPLAINED

As a swimmer, parent or guardian one of the most difficult things to get your head around is which galas should you attend and how do you do that. With that in mind we have pulled together the following summary of the swimming season, what galas we will be attending, whether the gala is in a short or long course pool, any age or time restrictions and whether the gala is fun/competitive in nature.

These golden nuggets of information will ensure you and your swimmer are fully prepared for the season ahead:

Golden Nugget 1: The swim season is divided into two parts.

From Sept 1st to Dec 31st all competitions are run in short course pools (i.e. 25 metre)

From Jan 1st to July 31st a lot of competitions are run in long course pools (i.e. 50 metre)

Note: when checking the swim schedule see if there is an S or an L next to it – (S) is for short course (25m) and (L) is for long course (50m). A swimmer should have competed in a number of short course galas before taking on a long course gala. If in doubt ask your coach.

Golden Nugget 2: There are 5 different types of galas (note number on swim schedule)

- Level 1: (Fun Gala) – example – our own Laois Marlins gala
- Level 2: (Development or Local Gala) – example Leinster Development, St Fiaccs, Kilkenny
- Level 3: (Qualifying gala or Advanced Local gala) – example Leinster Qualifying gala, Schools or Wexford
- Level 4: (Regional Championship gala) example Leinster Short course Championships
- Level 5: (National Championship gala) example National Short course Championships

Golden Nugget 3: Which galas should I attend?

- Level 1: These are fun galas aimed at younger swimmers from our own club as well as our surrounding clubs – this is a great entry into competitive swimming and it is highly recommended for all swimmers regardless of age.
- Level 2: Development and local galas have a dual purpose:
 - If a swimmer wants to achieve a time for a level 3 gala then they can use times achieved in a level 2 gala for that purpose - note they cannot use times achieved in a level 1 gala for a level 3
 - If a swimmer wants to compete and better his/her times but isn't interested in competing at regional or national level then level 2 local galas (i.e. Carlow, Kilkenny, Nenagh) are a great place to do this.
- Level 3: Qualifying Galas and Advanced Local galas are the most important step for swimmers who want to compete at regional championships. To compete at a level 4 (Regional Championship gala) you must have achieved a qualification time in a level 3 gala within the qualification time period (typically that calendar year)
- Level 4: Regional Championship galas are only for swimmers who have met the qualification standard for that event and achieved the standard in either a qualifying or advanced local gala (i.e. Level 3)

- Level 5: National Championships galas are only for swimmers who have met the qualification standard for that event and achieved the standard in their relevant level 4 regional championships.

Golden Nugget 4: What age should I be?

All ages for swimming are based on your age as at the 31st of December of the year you are in.

- For level 1 galas you must be 9 as at 31st December of the year of gala
- For level 2 galas you must be 10 as at 31st December of the year of the gala.
- For level 3 galas you must be 10 as at 31st December of the year of the gala

Golden Nugget 5: My son/daughter would like to attend the schools gala – how do I organise this?

The Leinster Minor and Senior schools gala is one we encourage all our swimmers to attend, however, please note that its organised through Leinster Swimming and not through the club. The club may facilitate the entries, but all the details will be on the Leinster Swimming website. All the details for the Irish Minor Schools which you qualify for through competing at the Leinster Minor schools will be on either the Leinster swimming website or Swim Ireland. Watch their social media to keep up to date.

All other swim entries are done via the club. If in doubt please contact the club gala secretary:

galas@laoismarlins.ie

Golden Nugget 6: How do I enter a gala for the first time?

- **Step 1:** Make sure you are on the Laois Marlins Whatsapp group & On Deck App (part of Team Unify)
- **Step 2:** An announcement of an upcoming gala will be put on the On Deck App & a notification sent to the appropriate squad.
- **Step 3:** Consult with your coach – ask them what swims your son/daughter should do.
- **Step 4:** Consult with a fellow parent – ask them what happens at a gala, what do you bring, times etc – we have all been through it and knowing what to expect is half the battle.
- **Step 5:** Go onto the On Deck App & click on the Events tab & click on the Gala you wish to attend. Enter your swimmer into the events they wish to do. The fees which will be stated in the event description will be paid directly by the club to the hosting team & you pay as normal into the Laois Marlins Bank account. They will appear as part of your monthly Team Unify invoice.
- **Step 6:** The Gala Secretary will approve the entries & if there is a query they will consult with the coach & then contact you with any suggested changes.
- **Step 7:** Details of the Gala will be sent via email a few days beforehand of the Coach, Warm up times, Team Managers & other useful information.
- **Step 8:** Make it a special day out for your swimmer and your family, leave the swimming advice to the coach, and just make sure your child is dressed appropriately, knows where to go and is fed!

