



## Welcome letter to parents

Dear Parent,

The club welcomes you and your child(ren) to Christchurch Seagulls Swimming Club. We hope your child(ren) will enjoy the experience of being a club member including the training, competitions and the social interaction with all our members. This letter is aimed at giving you information that may be of assistance to you as new members. Please do ask the club welfare officers, membership secretary, any committee member or coach if you have other questions not covered in this letter.

The committee is volunteer led, made up of members whose child(ren) swim or have swum with the club. A full list of the committee members and coaches can be found on the notice board and the club website.

[Club website – https://seagullsswimming.club](https://seagullsswimming.club).

The club website will help you stay informed and up-to-date with club news, announcements and events, as well as swimming galas and meet details. The website features our 'Coaches Blog' and includes our coaching team thoughts about swimming in general, training tips, as well as highlighting great performances, commitment, and progress within the club. There is also an area for members to review their swimming times, including time trend analysis and comparisons by stroke and age, as well as club records, rankings and personal bests.

We are an accredited Swim 21 club and we follow the guidance in Wavepower for child safeguarding, the ASA Code of Ethics, and Codes of Conduct. While we hope your child will be happy and content at the club sometimes questions, concerns or issues may arise.

If you have a question regarding coaching you should in the first instance approach your child's coach. Do so at a time convenient to you both and please do not go on poolside and interrupt training sessions. The coaches will be happy to arrange a time before or after training to discuss any training issues.

If you have a question or concern regarding child welfare, the club welfare officers should be informed. Alternatively, there is a dedicated helpline for anyone wishing to raise a safeguarding or welfare concern directly to the ASA, called Swim line - a Swim line poster with contact details can be found on the club notice board at Two Riversmeet.

Our club is committed to providing good child safeguarding practice for all our young members and we have adopted the ASA Safeguarding Policy – Wavepower, a copy of which is held by the welfare officers or can be viewed and downloaded from [www.swimming.org](http://www.swimming.org). Our club is one where we accept that good safeguarding and fair play is paramount for all our young members.

Your child(ren) have already been assessed as to what level they are currently achieving to place them in the appropriate training lane and competition level. Details of squad training times are included in your welcome pack.

### Benefits of swimming

Most of us have learnt to swim in recognition of the basic safety that being able to swim provides us. However, swimming is an ideal sport for developing muscular and skeletal growth (because it uses all the



body's major muscle groups) in addition to high aerobic endurance and stamina. Swimming also enhances flexibility by exercising all the major muscle joints in full range of motion, thus capitalising on the natural flexibility of young athletes. It also develops superior co-ordination because it requires complex muscle movements of all parts of the body, enhancing harmonious muscle function, grace and fluidity of motion. The water pressure against the legs and arms is also beneficial to the circulatory system. The water pressure adds to the muscle pressure exerted on the veins to aid in returning blood to the heart and lungs.

Importantly, swimming is also a very low impact exercise and the provided weightlessness of the water greatly reduces stress on joints (in water you weigh about a tenth of your normal weight). This virtually eliminates the potential of back, knee and other muscular injuries and so swimming is the most injury-free sport of all those offered to children. Therefore, swimming is also a great way of keeping fit for participation in other sports as well. Swimming also becomes more than a sport to many of those who participate, engaging them in fitness for life. But most of all swimming is by far one of the most fun and enjoyable participative fitness activities.

### Benefits of competitive swimming

Participants in Seagulls Swimming Club are taught the fundamentals of competitive swimming including the further development and perfection of stroke skills (far in advance of that provided by a non-competitive club), as well as sportsmanship and teamwork. In addition, swimmers get to meet and interact with others from different clubs and schools while enjoying the health benefits of regular physical activity. Not everyone will perform to the same level, but the benefits that competition brings: self-discipline; goal setting; self-motivation; honesty; self-confidence; team camaraderie; experience of success and how to deal with defeat; academic structure and strength; physical fitness and development, and friends, can all be viewed as valuable life skills. Ultimately though, competitive swimming is a fun team sport where everyone participates & everyone wins through individual & team accomplishments.

### Equipment

Compared with some sports, the equipment required for competitive swimming is a relatively low investment, with the only regular expenditure being the replacement of goggles and costumes.

Standard equipment for both the training and competitive swimming are outlined in the following list:

- Mesh kit bag
- Drinks bottle x2 (min 1 litre)
- Swimming flippers
- Kickboard
- Hand paddles
- Goggles x2
- Poolside towel & shower towel
- Childs Pull-buoy
- Swimming costume (no bikinis)
- Swimming hat
- Swimming snorkel

Please note that you can purchase swim hats, t-shirts, drinks bottles and swimming equipment from the poolside club shop available at a number of sessions. Club branded merchandise such as t-shirts, hoodies, tracksuit tops etc, are available from our official club supplier details of which can be found on our website. In addition New Forest Sports in New Milton also stock swimwear and accessories and offer a 10% discount to club members.



## Competitions

Seagulls take part in a wide range of events meaning that all children will get the opportunity to race for the club at some point. There are a number of novice leagues, intermediate leagues, southern junior leagues and national arena league meetings. There are also 'open meets' where you will not be swimming for a club position but taking the opportunity to race against others, often from different areas, and gain recognised ASA qualifying times for county and regional championships. These events also have different levels to ensure swimmers of all abilities can compete. The club also currently hold championships at different times of the year and fun galas where swimmers of all age groups are teamed up. Although we encourage children to race there is no obligation on them to compete. Above all we want you child to remain active and involved, train hard whilst improving your skills. Please speak to a coach or a committee member if you would like some advice about competitions.

## Social events

Seagulls has an active social calendar, with participation actively encouraged. Over the course of the year there are popular events such as the summer beach party, club discos, Halloween treasure hunts, and the club presentation evening. Swimmers and parents have been involved in a number of fund raising social events, including running a pancake making stall on fireworks night. Parents are also catered for with a regular mum's social night out and the occasional outing for the Dads as well.

The club is often looking for parental help to assist in the running of the club. You may offer to help, or a member of the committee may approach you to see if you are able to assist. We are a voluntary run club and appreciate all the help parents can give us, however small.

We have a parent's Code of Conduct, which goes alongside similar codes for the coaches and swimmers. You will be asked to read and sign the parent's Code of Conduct and countersign that of your child(ren). Finally, we sincerely hope you and your child(ren) enjoy being a member of Christchurch Seagulls Swimming Club.

Regards  
*Club Welfare Officers*

## Appendix.

Useful websites for parents, children and young people:

1. Kidscape - have a helpline and downloadable leaflets on what to do if your child is being bullied. The ASA have formed a relationship with Kidscape and can when required refer swimmers who have been bullied to attend the WIZ course in London. [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)
2. NSPCC - Help for adults Worried about a child? Call the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0800 800 5000. [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)
3. Childline - Help for children and teenagers. Need advice or just want to talk? Call ChildLine 0800 1111. Calls are free and confidential. [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)
4. [www.culture.gov.uk](http://www.culture.gov.uk) - Help keep your child safe in sport. A child protection leaflet for parents. Downloadable or your club Welfare Officer will have a copy.
5. Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) - Call 0116 234 7278. CPSU have useful downloadable documents at [www.cpsu.org.uk](http://www.cpsu.org.uk)