



2025- 2026

FCA MEMBER HANDBOOK

Vision

A welcoming community where athletes are driven to achieve their full potential through dedication and teamwork.

VISION, VALUES, AND BEHAVIORS

Our team culture is very important to us, and focusing on this ensures great outcomes for everyone. Below you will find our Vision and where we want to go as an organization. Our Vision is our guidepost for decisions and how we operate as an organization. Our Values and Behaviors and living up to them is how we ensure we are behaving at our best and are great stewards of the team. These are for everyone who is involved with FCA; staff, volunteers, parents, and swimmers. All of us together will create an atmosphere that is uplifting, exciting, and most of all cohesive!

VISION STATEMENT

A welcoming community where athletes are driven to achieve their full potential through dedication and teamwork.

VALUES AND BEHAVIORS

Connection

Communicate clearly and effectively.
Seek out opportunities.
Embrace everyone.

Integrity

Respect yourself and others.
Own your actions.
Wear it with pride.

Consistency

Show up and participate.
Build confidence through preparation.
Align your commitments with your goals.

Passion

Find the joy.
Build dreams and work toward them. Embrace the challenge.

Support

Cheer for everyone.
Be dependable.
Hold each other accountable

WELCOME LETTER FROM THE HEAD COACH

FCA is much more than a place you drop your kids off for swim practice. It is a valuable experience for athletes to meet new friends, overcome adversity, and learn life lessons through achievement they thought was impossible! It is a place that fosters growth. It is a place that fosters confidence. It is a place that fosters self-acceptance. FCA is a place that helps develop young people into young adults equipped with the necessary life skills to succeed once they leave our program.

As a staff, we strive to provide a positive competitive environment that is both challenging and fun. Our competitive year-round program is designed from Minis to Senior to lay a foundation of technique, conditioning, and intensity that grows gradually over time. The practices we plan develop well-rounded swimmers, with both their long-term and short term goals in mind. When it comes to training, we strongly believe in quality over quantity. We are past the days of pounding yardage, and have evolved a more efficient program that avoids “burnout” while still achieving the same if not better results. This is not to say we don’t work hard at FCA, we do! But the hard work is age appropriate and is always mixed with skill, technique, and strategy work, which engages the mind and the body. FCA is a place where we value long term success over short term achievement. It is a welcoming community where athletes are driven to achieve their full potential.

Sincerely,
Coach Jack

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TEAM HISTORY/ABOUT

Founded in 2000, Friends' Central Aquatics (FCA) began as a humble initiative with a bold vision: to create a highly competitive, community-centered club that successfully developed swimmers and fostered a life-long love for the sport. The program began with a high school team and grew to include a USA Swimming club team in 2001. The immediate success of the program allowed for rapid expansion. The weekend swim school began in 2004, soon followed by a Master's team and Team Phoenix, a recreational program for developing swimmers.

The original mission of the team laid a strong foundation for the thriving program that exists today. Over the past 20 years, swimmers have represented FCA at every USA Swimming championship level from 10 & Under Champs to Olympic Trials. The program has produced over 45 collegiate swimmers and helped hundreds more achieve their full potential through dedication and teamwork. FCA has maintained a long-standing presence in the local community, raising over 40,000 dollars for charities such as Alex's Lemonade Stand, ChadTough Defeat DIPG, and most recently the National Drowning Prevention Alliance.

Today, Friends' Central Aquatics continues its dedication to fostering both a competitive spirit and a love of swimming. In a supportive and encouraging environment, FCA provides swimmers the opportunity to hone their talent, build lasting relationships, and learn important life skills both in and out of the water.

USA SWIMMING AND MIDDLE ATLANTIC SWIMMING

USA Swimming is the governing body for the sport of competitive swimming in the United States. In this capacity, USA Swimming is responsible for the conduct and administration of swimming in the US. USA Swimming determines rules, implements policies and procedures and conducts National Championship meets, disseminates information about safety and sports medicine, and selects athletes to represent the United States in international competitions.

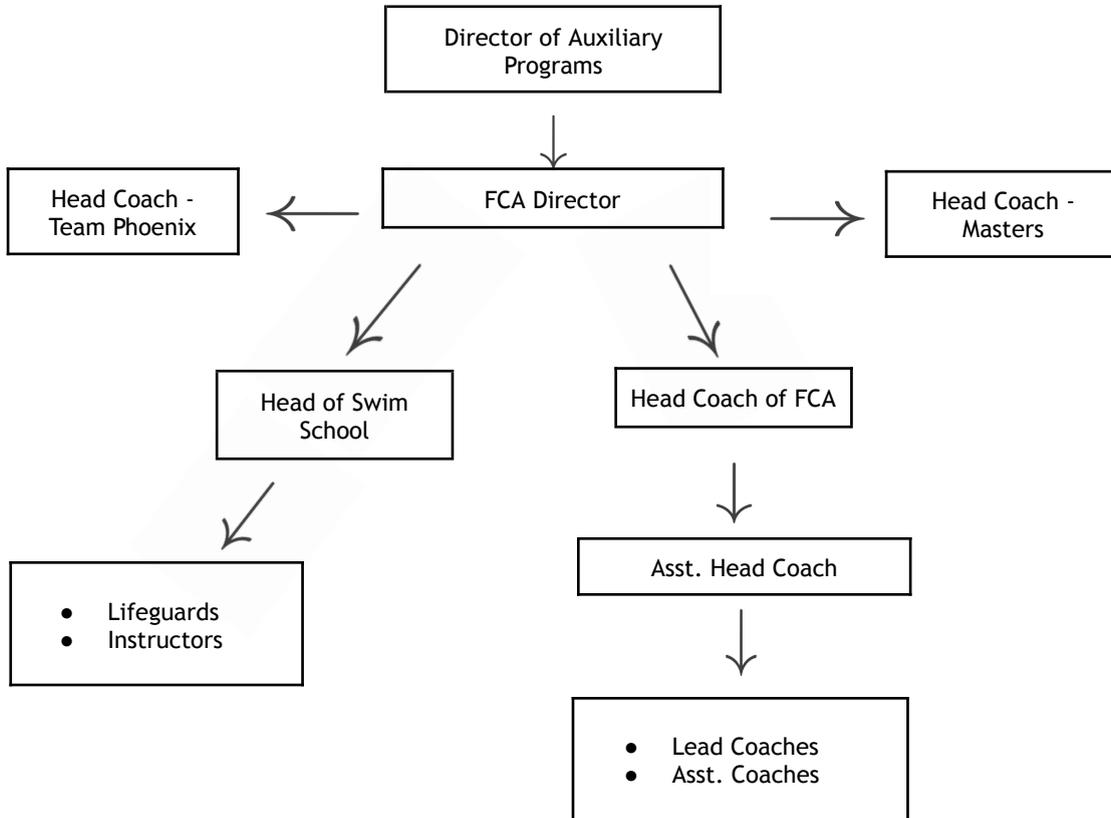
USA Swimming has divided the country into 59 Local Swimming Communities (LSC's). Each LSC is responsible for the administration of USA Swimming activities in a defined geographical area and has its own set of bylaws in which it operates. The business affairs of each LSC are managed by a House of Delegates which includes representation by athletes, coaches, members of the Board of Directors, and participating swim clubs. Each LSC is grouped into one of four zones: Western, Central, Eastern, and Southern.

Friends' Central Aquatics is part of Middle Atlantic Swimming (MASI) LSC. MASI extends from Eastern Pennsylvania, South Jersey, and all of Delaware. The MASI requires swimmers to pay a membership fee in order to compete in sanctioned meets. The membership is valid for one year. MASI is part of the Eastern Zone which includes the following other LSC's: Adirondack, Niagara, Allegheny Mountain, Metropolitan, Maine, New England, Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey, Potomac Valley, Connecticut, and Middle Atlantic.

Additionally, FCA is an extension of Friends' Central School. If there is uncertainty about a particular policy or procedure in the FCA Member Handbook, the [Friends's Central School Students and Family Handbook](#) will serve as the deciding document.

FCA STRUCTURE

Friends' Central Aquatics is a 501(c)3 non-profit under the umbrella of Friends' Central School. Please see below the structure of FCA:



COACHING STAFF

You can view our coaching bios on the FCA website. In the meantime, please see below the lead coaches:

Mini:

Kerry Sherin

Novice:

Alex Reed

Junior I:

Jake Harner & Bridget Brown

Junior II:

Jake Harner & Miranda Smith

Senior I:

Jack Eichenlaub & Jake Harner

Senior II:

Jack Eichenlaub & Jake Harner

COACH RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Did you know that swimming is one of the few youth sports where the coaches are professionals? They are required to have several certifications, continuous training, and levels of experience that rival non-sport professions. If you or your child has participated in other sports, you may be used to parents volunteering their time to be coaches. In the sport of swimming, we are fortunate that coaches choose this path as a profession and they have the credentials and experience to back it up.

The coaching staff is consistently updating and improving FCA. Currently, we have four full-time staff members and 15 part-time coaches. It is the swimmer's and parent's responsibility to make the most out of the opportunity this program provides for success in swimming.

Coach Rights

1. Each coach is a professional and has the right and should be treated with respect by all swimmers, parents, and other coaches
2. Each coach has a right to expect the full support of all parents in FCA
3. Each coach has a right to establish training programs which are safe and will meet the needs and goals of the swimmers, head coach, and FCA



COACH RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Coach Responsibilities

1. The coaches are responsible for placing swimmers in practice groups. This is based on the age and ability level of each individual. When it is in the best interest of a swimmer, they will be placed in a more challenging training group by their coach.
2. Sole responsibility for stroke instruction and the training regimen rests with the Friends' Central Aquatics coaching staff. Each group's practices are based on sound scientific principles and are geared to the specific goals of that group. If you have any questions, please contact the lead coach.
3. The coaching staff will make the final decision concerning which meets FCA swimmers may attend. The coaching staff also makes the final decision concerning which events a swimmer is entered into.
4. At meets, the coaching staff will conduct and supervise warm-up procedures for the team. After each race, the coaches will offer constructive criticism regarding the swimmer's performance. (It is the parent's job to offer love and understanding regardless of their swimmer's performance.)
5. The building of a relay team is the sole responsibility of the coaching staff.
6. Each coach has a responsibility to constantly be aware of the swimmers' safety and well-being.
7. Each coach has a responsibility to be a positive role model for the swimmers.
8. Each coach has a responsibility to be a technical expert on the sport of swimming.
9. Each coach has a responsibility to help construct a vision for the athlete of what is possible in the sport of swimming and the path each swimmer will need to follow to achieve their desired goal.

GROUPS AND PROGRESSION - COMPETITIVE PROGRAM

Mini

The Mini group as a whole is a bridge group from swim school to the competitive team. The Mini's are in the age range of 6-8 years old. This is an athlete's first true experience with competitive swimming! This group works on fostering a fun environment while developing a passion for swimming!

The Mini's swimmer must be able to complete 25 yards of freestyle and backstroke without stopping. Swimmers must be comfortable with swimming with their face in the water and demonstrate the ability to breathe to the side on freestyle. Swimmers should be able to demonstrate a steady flutter kick with little knee bend and toes pointed. Emphasis will be on making swimming fun while working on developing basic stroke fundamentals through drills. Freestyle and backstroke will be the primary focus before introducing breaststroke and butterfly.

This group offers three practices a week. Attendance at two practices a week is required. The more we see a swimmer at practice the more they will progress. Our program is designed for swimmers to attend most, if not all the practices . Each practice is just one piece of the overall season plan. Like a puzzle, the more pieces a swimmer has to work with, the clearer their picture will be.

Novice

Novice swimmers are in the age range of 7-9 years old. The Novice swimmer must be able to swim 50 yards of freestyle and backstroke without stopping to be considered. Swimmers should be able to demonstrate a correct flutter kick for free and back with the ability to bilateral breathe when swimming freestyle. Some knowledge of breaststroke and butterfly is required. Drill progressions in each practice will be used to continue to create a solid foundation that will be built upon as they develop.

This group offers four practices a week. Attendance at two practices a week is required. The more we see a swimmer at practice the more they will progress. Our program is designed for swimmers to attend most, if not all the practices. Each practice is just one piece of the overall season plan. Like a puzzle, the more pieces a swimmer has to work with, the clearer their picture will be.

GROUPS AND PROGRESSION - COMPETITIVE PROGRAM

Junior I

Junior I is the first level of FCA's competitive Age Group Program - swimmers are starting to make a bigger commitment to swimming, working toward achieving their first-championship cuts, and competing in a variety of events. This may be the first time the athlete goes to farther away travel meets (more than an hour), and first time incorporating dryland to their practice load. This group is intended to develop versatile athletes who train and compete in all 4 competitive strokes.

Swimmers should expect to train and compete in the 10&under IMR (100Fr, 50Bk, 50Br, 50Fly, 100IM) and IMX (200Fr, 100Bk, 100Br, *100Fly, *200IM) events.

This group is also a combination of young swimmers who are committed to swimming year-round, and those who enjoy swimming but want to ensure it balances with other activities. All swimmers should want to attend practice and strive for improvement.

Junior I's will continue to focus on stroke development through drills while interval training is introduced. There will be an increase in practice duration and intensity; as well as additional meets and events opportunities. Swimmers will begin to be taught race strategies, and goal setting.

1. Attendance standard
 - a. At least three times a week
2. Maturity & Expectations
 - a. 9-11 year olds
 - b. Swimmers are self-aware in the water and are avidly learning the basics of training
 - c. Place the swimmer with the group that is best for them at their current level until they demonstrate to the coaches that they are ready to move to the next level
 - i. They can't keep up, playing wall tag, or not training beneficially from the group.

GROUPS AND PROGRESSION - COMPETITIVE PROGRAM

Junior II

This group is intended to develop versatile athletes who train and compete in all 4 competitive strokes. Swimmers should expect to train and compete in the 11-12 IMX events (500Fr, 100Bk, 100Br, 100Fly, 200IM).

The Junior 2 practice group is composed of athletes ages 11 to 13. Athletes in this group are on the path of “self motivation” for swimming, and further wish to develop their passion for the sport. They have met some performance standards and are working toward achieving age appropriate time standards while attending swim meets on a monthly basis.

This group is a combination of swimmers who are committed to training competitively year round, and athletes who enjoy swimming but want to ensure it balances with their other activities.

1. Time Standard
 - a. Must have 6x MA 10 & under champs cuts
 - b. Legal 10&under IMR events (100Fr, 50Bk, 50Br, 50FI, 100IM)
 - c. Must have 2x 11-12 Silvers Cuts
2. Attendance Standard
 - a. 3-4 practices a week.
 - b. Attending all coach-recommended meets - 1 meet per month.
 - c. Expected to attend the highest level meet qualified such as:
 - i. 10&u Champs, Silver Champs, Junior Champs, Zones.
3. Maturity/Age Range of Athletes
 - a. No older than 13 years old
 - b. 10-13 years old

GROUPS AND PROGRESSION - COMPETITIVE PROGRAM

Senior I

This group is intended to develop versatile athletes who train and compete in all 4 competitive strokes. They have a mastery of all four competitive strokes. Swimmers should expect to train and compete in the 13 & over IMR (200Fr, 100Bk, 100Br, 100Fly, 200IM) and IMX (500Fr, 200Bk, 200Br, 200Fly, 400IM) events.

This group is designed for middle and high school athletes who wish to train and compete year-round. Senior 1 is a combination of athletes who do not make the concerted commitment of Senior II, and younger athletes who have not yet met their performance peak. They are acknowledging that they enjoy swimming but they want to ensure it balances with other activities that they have going on - swimming will be a priority the majority of the time.

1. Time Standard
 - a. 14 & under: 4x 11-12 MA Silver Champs Cuts
 - b. 15 & over: 4x 13-14 MA Silver Champs Cuts
 - c. Automatic: Junior Champs Cut
2. Attendance Standard
 - a. 70% Practice attendance is required to participate in Championship meets
 - i. First offense, verbal warning
 - ii. Second offense, written warning
 - iii. Third offense, meeting with parents
 - iv. 80% attendance or higher is required in this practice group in order to move into Senior 2
 - b. At least one meet per month
 - i. Travel experiences are an expected part of this group
 - ii. Expected to participate in highest level meet qualified for
3. Maturity/Age Range of Athletes
 - a. 13-18 Years old
 - a. Goal oriented and motivated to improve

GROUPS AND PROGRESSION - COMPETITIVE PROGRAM

Senior II

This group is intended to develop versatile athletes who train and compete in all 4 competitive strokes. They have a mastery of all four competitive strokes. Swimmers should expect to train and compete in the 13& over IMR (200Fr, 100Bk, 100Br, 100Fly, 200IM) and IMX (500Fr, 200Bk, 200Br, 200Fly, 400IM) events.

This group is composed of high school aged athletes (14-18 yrs old). Athletes in this group are acknowledging that swimming is a high priority for them and that they are willing to make the commitment to choose swimming. Athletes in the group are focused on high performance in USA Swimming.

1. Time Standard
 - a. MA Senior Champs Cut or Finaling at MA Junior Champs
 - b. 2x 13-14 "A" Motivational Time Standards
 - c. 5x 13-14 Silver Championship Cuts
2. Attendance Standard
 - a. 80% Practice attendance is required in order to participate in Championship meets
 - i. First infraction of not maintaining standard, verbal warning
 - ii. Second infraction of not maintaining standard, written warning
 - ii. Third infraction of not maintaining standards, meeting with parents
 - b. 100% Meet Attendance
 - i. Travel experiences are an expected part of this group
 - ii. Arrangements for missed school are expected to be made for certain meets
3. Maturity, Attitude, Effort
 - a. At least 14 years old
 - b. Goal-oriented and self-motivated to improve
 - c. No distracting or detracting behavior wants to come to practice

FCA-Team Expectations for Practice

Practice with Purpose

1. Swimmers are expected to support their teammates at practice as well as during competition. Working together as a team benefits all individuals in the group and is an important part of FCA. Swimmers are always encouraged to be positive at practice.
2. Swimmers are expected to follow the instructions of the coaching staff at all times.
3. Abusive language, lying, stealing, and/or vandalism will not be tolerated. These behaviors are directly contrary to the objective of FCA and may warrant strict disciplinary actions, up to and including expulsion from the team.
4. Swimmers may leave practice early only with the coaches' permission, or written permission from parents.
5. During workouts, the pool deck is for coaches and swimmers. If parents need to speak with the coaches, please call or email them at least two hours before practice. Parents are discouraged from disrupting the coach or other swimmers with unnecessary communication, unless of course, an emergency arises.
6. Parents are responsible for a swimmer's behavior before and after workouts. This includes carpool members as well.
7. Any individual not registered with USA Swimming, Inc. through FCA is not permitted in the pool at any time or on the pool deck. In accordance with the governing body of USA Swimming, Inc., parents may observe practice from the spectator area. **At no time are parents, siblings, or non-registered people allowed on the pool deck for liability reasons.**
8. Any siblings or guests must have adult supervision at ALL times and in accordance with the governing body of USA Swimming, Inc., may observe practice from the designated area. The pool deck shall remain clear of all patrons.
9. It is of the utmost importance that ALL swimmers and parents remember that we are guests of Friends' Central School and therefore should respect all the rules set forth by the Institution

SWIMMER RIGHTS, CODE OF CONDUCT, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Swimmer Rights

1. To be treated with respect and to be free of verbal or physical abuse from a coach or another swimmer
2. Expect that his or her coach, after being made aware of a limiting physical condition, will not ask the swimmer to perform or train in a manner that the coach knows will be harmful to the swimmer.
 - a. There is a great emphasis on communication between coaches and athletes to continue to manage any health related issues that arise.
3. Expect that all practices, both in and out of the water, will be conducted in a safe manner so that the swimmer will not be exposed to unnecessary risk
4. Know that his or her coach cares about them as a person/individual as well as an athlete
5. Be encouraged to do better, to be congratulated on a good performance, and to receive constructive feedback when improvement is needed and attainable
6. Expect practice to be challenging and that, competition will be rewarding
7. Set their own swimming goals with their coach, and to adjust these goals as deemed appropriate

SWIMMER RIGHTS, CODE OF CONDUCT, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Swimmer Code of Conduct

The following honor code is in effect throughout the year. Note: some of the items refer specifically to team travel. Additionally, anyone who, in the opinion of the coach or coaches, acts in a manner that interferes with the travel objectives listed below, will be subject to immediate return home (at the expense of the parent and/or swimmer) and additional disciplinary actions that may result in barring from future travel meets or other competition, suspension from practice, or dismissal from the team.

1. FCA team members should be respectful of their peers, all coaches, and parents. Any FCA team member not acting in such a manner will be asked to change or stop that behavior. If that team member fails to comply, they will be asked to leave, and disciplinary procedures will follow.
2. FCA athletes will treat all training and competition venues with the utmost respect. They will put all training equipment in its storage location after each workout. They will assist in the cleanup of the team area after each day's competition.
3. FCA will travel as a team and as individual families to compete with the best and further strive to better competition. Everyone is expected to behave in an exemplary manner. The reputation of FCA, as well as the other athletes with you, is dependent on your behavior. The coaching staff holds the final word on any rules, regulations, or disciplinary action.
4. Be punctual to all warm-up times and meetings.
5. The consumption or purchase of alcohol, smoking or chewing tobacco, or use of any other illegal drug or USOC banned substance of any kind will not be allowed. In addition, any team member found to be in the presence of others (regardless of team affiliation) partaking in any of the above activities will be subject to the same punishments and probable expulsion from FCA.
6. At no time will male and female athletes be in the same room together unless a coach or chaperone is in the room. This applies to FCA members or members of any other team.
7. No team member may be out of their room after the assigned bedtime. Permission must be obtained from the coach to leave the room past this time.
8. Any damages or thievery incurred at a motel will be at the expense of the athletes assigned to that room, and further disciplinary action will be taken. No loud or boisterous behavior will be tolerated in the hallways or public areas, and such behavior should be kept to a minimum in your rooms.
9. All team members must agree to follow the rules about practice and meet behavior. I recognize my responsibility to abide by the rules and requirements of the Friends' Central Aquatics, which I am representing, and I acknowledge that I have received and read such.

SWIMMER RIGHTS, CODE OF CONDUCT, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Athlete's Responsibilities

As a swimmer's level of swimming ability increases, so does their responsibility. The program is designed to encourage all swimmers to be Senior Swimming bound. A swimmer has responsibilities to the team, the coach, their parents, and most importantly to themselves. Athletes should strive to do their best and give their 100%!!

1. To treat his or her coach with respect at all times and to use proper channels to address any issues or concerns.
2. To adhere to the coach's rules governing training sessions and to focus on the training program
3. To take their commitment to swimming seriously at whatever their respective training level may be
4. To support the FCA team, fellow swimmers, and their coach by offering encouragement and attendance at practice and meets
5. To make the minimum number of training sessions set by the coach and strive for the recommended attendance percentage
6. To communicate schedule conflicts
7. To train and race with maximum effort

TEAM UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT

Practice Equipment

Junior II, Senior I & II swimmers should have ALL the equipment listed below for every practice.

- Short Fins
- Snorkel (junior or senior option)
- Kickboard (junior option)
- Pull Buoy (junior option)
- Mesh Bag
- Water bottle (At every practice!!)
- Paddles (fit to hand size, no larger)*
- Finis Tempo Trainer (optional)*

*Seniors only

Swimmers should also bring a separate dry bag with a towel, goggles, caps, athletic clothes, etc. All equipment can be purchased at FCA's team store which is located on the team's website.

Practice Attire

All swimmers must wear a swimsuit that doesn't inhibit their mobility, is sized correctly, and covers all appropriate areas. Swimmers with long hair must wear a swim cap during practice. However, the youngest swimmers in Minis and Novice with long hair should have hair ties.

PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES AND CODE OF CONDUCT

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

Swimming requires discipline, persistence, integrity, respect, and trust. Your child can only learn these values if you live them yourself. With the assistance of your coach and a positive, supportive atmosphere, your child could achieve dreams which they did not think they were capable of.

A successful swimming program requires understanding and cooperation among the coaches, swimmers, and parents. This relationship is critical to your child's successful development on the team.

The coaching staff appreciates your commitment to your child. The coaches understand that you will always look out for your child's best interests. While the coaches are also committed to ensuring that your child's best interests are served, their responsibility is to serve each athlete on the team.

Your perspective and the coaches' perspective may differ when it comes to your child's swimming development. Patience, understanding, trust, and most importantly communication are the cornerstones of this relationship. With this in mind, please review and consider the following guidelines:

1. Everyone learns at their own pace and in their own way. Some athletes may master a skill quickly, while others might need more time. Please be patient with your child's progress. Communicate to your athlete's lead coach if you are concerned. Sharing those concerns with your child only increases their stress level for thinking they are letting YOU down.
2. Progress takes time. New team members will always need an adjustment period, regardless of their age, which can slow immediate progress. This may be due to increased training demands, a focus on technique, or just nerves. Patience, trust, and open communication between coaches, swimmers, and parents are crucial in supporting swimmers through this phase.

PARENT/GUARDIANS RESPONSIBILITIES AND CODE OF CONDUCT

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities (con't.)

3. Every swimmer will experience plateaus at some point in their career, both in competition and training. These plateaus indicate that the swimmer has mastered basic skills, but they haven't yet become automatic enough to focus on more advanced skills. It's important to explain to your swimmer that plateaus are a natural part of physical learning. The most successful athletes are those who push through these temporary slowdowns and continue to improve, ultimately reaching their personal potential.
4. Younger swimmers are often the most inconsistent, which can be frustrating for parents, coaches, and the swimmers themselves. It's essential to be patient and allow these young athletes to develop a love for the sport at their own pace.
5. Parents should understand that a slow development of competitive drive at an early age is normal and often more beneficial than forced or early development. It's crucial for children to learn to compete and develop a healthy competitive spirit. Additionally, adapting to reasonable levels of emotional stress is important, as the small disappointments they face now will prepare them for larger challenges in adulthood.
6. Parents should focus on offering love, recognition, and encouragement to help the young swimmer feel confident and valued.
7. Parents' attitudes often shape those of their children. Even if a child isn't consciously aware, they subconsciously absorb powerful messages about their parents' desires. Show enthusiasm when taking your child to practice, meets, fundraisers, and meetings. View these activities as opportunities, not chores.
8. Criticizing the coach in front of your child undermines their authority and disrupts the essential swimmer-coach support needed for optimal success. If you have any questions about your child's training or team policies, please reach out to the coach directly.

PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES AND CODE OF CONDUCT

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities (con't.)

9. Parents should always act in a manner that upholds the integrity of their child, the team, and the sport of competitive swimming. If there is any disagreement with a meet official, it should be brought to the coach's attention and handled by the coach.
10. Children should swim because they want to, not because they have to. It's natural for them to resist anything that feels mandatory. Self-motivation is the key to becoming a successful swimmer.
11. Avoid pitting your child against their closest competitors, as this can create friction within the team and swimming community. Healthy competition serves two essential purposes for athletes: it brings out their best and highlights areas for improvement.

Please leave all coaching to the coaching staff. If you have questions about technique or coaching strategies, we encourage you to arrange a time (NOT during practice) to speak to your child's coach.

Remember, particularly in the case of younger swimmers, the attitude and behavior of the parents in regard to their outlook on the sport has an important effect on the child. In swimming, as in life, nobody can "win" or succeed all the time – there will always be some disappointments. Every child can gain from his experience, whether or not they ever win a single race. The important thing is to keep on striving to do better next time.

PARENT/GUARDIAN'S RESPONSIBILITIES AND CODE OF CONDUCT

Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct

The purpose of a code of conduct for parents is to establish consistent expectations for behavior by parents. As a parent/guardian, it is essential to provide the coaching staff with respect and the authority to coach the team. I agree with the following statements:

- I will set the right example for our children by demonstrating sportsmanship and showing respect and common courtesy at all times to the team members, coaches, competitors, officials, parents, and all facilities.
- I understand that criticizing, name-calling, use of abusive language or gestures directed toward coaches, officials, volunteers, and/or any participating swimmer will not be tolerated. I will respect the integrity of the officials.
- I will support the program by volunteering, observing practices, cheering at meets, and talking with my child and their coach about their progress.
- I will refrain from coaching my child from the stands during practices or meets.
- I will direct my concerns first to my athlete's lead coach; then to the Head Coach; then, if not satisfied, to the Director of FCA.
- Friends' Central School and FCA are an inclusive community. Hateful language in reference to one's race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, political affiliation, etc. are prohibited.

BEING A GOOD SWIM PARENT/GUARDIAN

The parent's primary role is that of unconditional love and support for their swimmer. There are many ways to fulfill this role:

1. Remind your child that you love them, no matter how they perform either at practice or at a meet
 - Support your child's goals by first allowing them to make goals of their own in consultation with their coach
 - Remember that this is your athlete's childhood. Recognize their dreams and support their ambitions, but don't create them for the child
 - Make sure that your child is having "fun!" If this isn't fun, then why do it? If they are not having fun, find out why or ask the coach to find out why
 - Do not let your child's performance affect your attitude towards them. If your child swims poorly it will not make them feel better to see disappointment in their parents. Before they race encourage them to have fun and after they race tell them you love them. Simple words can have a drastic impact on a child's outlook
 - Do not pay your child or provide material rewards for swimming well. Children must learn that doing a thing well is worthwhile in its own right. Through swimming they should earn respect because of their commitment and not money for their accomplishments
 - Understand that swimming can be daunting, especially to new swimmers or younger swimmers. A fifty meter pool looks awfully long to an eight year old! If your child is afraid to swim an event remind them that the coach would only suggest it or enter them in it because they believe in your child

2. It is imperative that your swimmer believe you support the coach, even when you disagree with them
 - Disagreements are natural and when they exist everyone wants resolution, but there is a time and a place to discuss disagreements. The pool deck is not the place to argue or confront the coach about any disagreement. All coaches are available away from the pool deck and will respond to either email or telephone calls
 - During practice a coach's attention must be focused on the group. If you wish to meet in person with your child's coach please schedule a time to do so; do not arrive at practice assuming that either the coach will be available to meet with you or that it is the appropriate time and place to meet

BEING A GOOD SWIM PARENT/GUARDIAN

- Support the coach by understanding they do have a life outside of the pool. This sport requires long hours of work. Respect the coach's desire to go home to his/her family after practice
3. Support the team at practice and meets
 - Supporting the team means everything from making sure your child wears team apparel at meets to volunteering your own time at any of our home meets. Do not leave it to others to do this work. Our team extends beyond the coaches and swimmers and we need everyone's involvement to be successful.
 - Supporting the team also means being a positive influence at any meet from the sidelines. There are often instances where parents from opposing teams do not get along, which only creates more tension for the child. We want each swimmer to be a good sport, which means we need our parents to be good sports
 - In order to support the team one must be an active member, beyond just dropping your child off before practice and picking them up afterwards Attend parents meetings
 - Volunteer at meets Become an official
 - Pay all bills promptly and in full
 4. Be punctual for practice and meets and plan for your child to spend the entire practice at the pool. It is disruptive to have a child arrive late or leave early. It also diminishes the value of teaching a child the value of commitment.
 5. Do not coach from the sidelines or stands
 - Leave the racing strategies to the coach.
 - Allow the coach to discuss technical issues with the swimmer and do not second-guess them either with or in front of your child. If you have questions please discuss it with the coach.
 - Do not compare your child to anyone else on the team. Your child is unique, wonderful, and full of potential. Remember that everyone achieves potential in different ways and at different times.
 - Don't time your child from the stands. There are enough timing devices around at meets and at practice. When a parent times from the stands it simply adds pressure on the child.

BEING A GOOD SWIM PARENT/GUARDIAN

6. Do not criticize officials. Most times officials are parents just like you, committed to their children and committed to their sport.
7. Winning is NOT everything. The most important things a child can do in a race are:
 - Have fun!
 - Try to employ the coach's technical instructions and racing strategy. Give their best effort and RACE!
 - Congratulate the other competitors no matter what the outcome.
8. Encourage healthy eating. Make smart eating decisions for your child and for yourself. Your children will emulate the people they respect and love most, their parents. Allow their desire to swim to make a positive influence on your own life and health by using it as another reason to make good eating decisions.

COMMUNICATION AND ESCALATION POLICY

At FCA we value and welcome communication between parents, athletes, coaches, and staff. We understand how much trust parents place in our coaching staff. Increasingly, as swimmers grow older and spend more time at the pool, they spend a great deal of time with their coaches, and coaches often become one of the most important and trusted adults in a child's life. Along the way, parents may want to discuss their child's swimming performance, goals, as well as their social development, health, behavior or concerns.

We encourage engagement and open and productive communication with the coaching staff. In positive sports environments, kids feel safe and free to be themselves. They are better able to focus on training, practice, and competition. It takes the intentional and collaborative effort of coaches, athletes, administrators, and parents or guardians to build and maintain positive sport environments.

Reporting abuse and misconduct helps keep sport environments safer and enables affected young athletes to get help. How those reports are handled will depend on the type and seriousness of the concern or misconduct.

Concerns or possible misconduct can range from one of a MAAPP/Safe Sport violations, one that involves sexual misconduct, or it may be a coach/athlete communication or relationship concern. Below is information to help guide you in your decision on what method to follow for various levels of concern or violations. Reporting, documenting, and following the steps below will help everyone involved reach a resolution.

Grievance Process

If an FCA member (athlete or family) has a grievance or concern, the below process will be followed:

Reporting

Discuss the complaint with the lead coach who is responsible for the swimmer/family member/coach involved.

COMMUNICATION AND ESCALATION POLICY

Suspected MAAPP or Safe Sport complaints will be immediately elevated to the Director of FCA, and handled as per Safe Sport reporting procedure as outlined by USA Swimming.

- Concerns outside of Safe Sport will be handled as follows:
 - The lead coach will work to resolve the issue between the affected parties. The lead coach will also copy all communication with the Head Coach of FCA.
 - The lead coach will follow up with the complainant, once a resolution has been reached, assuming the complainant didn't participate in the resolution process
 - If a resolution is not reached, the lead coach will escalate the concern to Head Coach FCA and Director of FCA, where the process will start over.

Documentation:

The lead facilitator of the concern will keep a record of the complaint as well as the resolution reached to be shared with the Director of Auxiliary Programs.

- This will include a summary of the complaint, evidence collected, and a summary of the resolution reached.
- On a quarterly basis, a summary report of all resolved complaints will be shared with the Director of FCA, and Director of Auxiliary Programs.

Escalation or Appeals Process:

- If a resolution is not reached, the complainant may appeal the decision by escalating the concern to the Director of FCA for further review. They will review all documentation and evidence, conduct interviews if necessary, and determine the appropriate outcome.
- All requests for appeal will be reviewed within 7 days when possible.
- An official response will be provided to the complainant upon the conclusion of the review within a reasonable timeframe.
- The decision by the Director of FCA is final.
- All appeals will be summarized and reported to the Director of Auxiliary and Director of FCA on a monthly basis

COMMUNICATION AND ESCALATION POLICY

Safe Sport Violations

If an FCA member (athlete or family) has observed a violation of MAAPP/SafeSport, please report it immediately to SafeSport through one of the following channels:

1. Make an online report via the USA Swimming Safe Sport website.
2. USA Swimming Safe Sport Coordinator 833-5US-SAFE (587-7233)
3. FCA SafeSport Club Coordinator: Will Gallagher

Violations that qualify:

1. Criminal activity, use/sale/distribution of drugs, physical abuse or inappropriate touching (inclusive of massages/rubdowns performed by coaches), coach and athlete sharing hotel room, pictures/videos taken within locker rooms, or any violation of the USA Swimming Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy (MAAPP).
2. Any reports of sexual misconduct will be handled in accordance with USA Swimming's Mandatory Reporting Rule is found on their website under [USA Swimming Concern](#)
3. In addition to reporting through USA Swimming, any reports of sexual misconduct will also be handled in accordance with the FCS Student Family Handbook and Pennsylvania state law ([see Mandatory Reporting](#)).

OFFICIATING AT FCA

To ensure the FCA swimmers have the opportunity to participate in team activities, swim meets, and USA Swimming, Inc. sanctioned competitions, as well as supplement operating expenses, we must host several swim meets throughout the year.

All team affiliated events are staffed between parent volunteers and FCA Coaches. Our hosted meets cannot run without family participation. A family's willingness to volunteer will have a great impact on their child's athletic experience and love for the sport of swimming.

Regardless of whether or not a swimmer actually participates in a meet, it is the positive experience of being involved in the whole TEAM event that will give each athlete the support and fellowship offered by being a valuable member of the FCA Team.

If you would like to participate as a USA Swimming Official, there are multiple benefits to these roles. See below:

- Reimbursement for all paid portions
 - (Background check/ USA Swimming Registration)
- Official MA White polo
- Void all home meet fees
- Gratuity for each meet that is officiated (Amazon gift card)
- Catered hospitality
- Best seat at the pool!
- Opportunities to officiate high level championship meets

FCA MEETINGS

- Parent Kickoff Meeting (**MANDATORY**)
 - Date: Tuesday, August 26th
 - Time: 5:30pm-7pm
 - Location: Shallcross Meeting Room
 - Important agenda information:
 - Vision, Values, and Behavior Statements of FCA
 - FCA Parents Handbook
 - Fall/Winter Schedule
 - New parents and USA Swimming registration
 - USA Swimming Registration/Safe Sport Requirement
 - Head Coach Jack will review parent/coaches roles
 - Meet & Greet with Coach Jack and the other Lead Coaches
- Parent Meeting-Overview of Meets/Safe Sport (**MANDATORY**)
 - Date: Tuesday, September 9th
 - Time: 6:00pm-7:15pm
 - Location: FCC Lecture Hall
 - Important agenda information:
 - Meet entries/commit deadlines...how does this work?
 - Safe Sport Requirement for Parents
- Parent Meeting-Introduction to meets!
 - Date: Tuesday, October 1st
 - Time: 6:00pm-7:00pm
 - Location: Virtual
 - Important agenda information:
 - What to expect at a meet
 - What to bring
 - How does this all work???
- Parent Meeting-Recap of the 10 & Under Meet
 - Date: Tuesday, November 4th 6:00pm-7:00pm
 - Time: 5:30pm-6:30pm
 - Location: FCC Lecture Hall
 - Important agenda information:
 - What to expect at a meet
 - What to bring
 - How does this all work???

FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS (FEES AND MEMBERSHIP PROCESSES)

FCA Registration Fee

FCA allows all its members to choose from a payment in full or monthly installments across the season. All payments go through Commit Swimming. The breakdown of the program costs can be found on our website. Our refund policy is as follows:

No refunds will be given after week four of each season (Post 10/1). From registration to the end of week one, refunds will be allowed minus 10% of program costs. After week two 25%. After week three 50%.

If you registered for the year-long registration, no refunds will be given after week four of the start of the year.

Meet Fees

Payments are to be completed through Commit Swimming. Starting this season, there will be a \$5 credit card fee attached to each meet. Your outstanding balance will be on your invoice from Commit. You will receive your invoice through commit. It will take our office at least 7 days to process. After the 7th day, we will charge the default card on file for payment.

Suits, Caps, T-shirts

These items can be purchased through FCA. Each athlete will receive two FCA t-shirts and silicone swim cap. If you wish to purchase more of these items, we will charge your commit account.

SWIM MEETS

Swim Meet Policy: Meets are mandatory for all swimmers. Entries are submitted weeks in advance, and everyone is entered. We understand, however, that sometimes conflicts do occur. You must email the lead coach and head coach in a timely manner. Once entries are sent in at the deadline of that respective meet, entries are locked in and families are responsible for the meet fees.

Starting this season, you must submit the commit checkbox by the deadline marked on the meets/events page if your swimmer can attend the meet. These dates are subject to change between now and opening of registration.

You have to commit your athlete to the meet by signing into Commit Swimming and checking off what days of the meet they will attend. This will ensure more accurate entries this season. It is critical to complete the commit checkbox by the deadline so we have all entries completed in a timely manner.

If you have notified the coaching staff that your child will not attend the meet after the deadline, you will be billed for meet entries. Please send all communication regarding meets to fcaquatics@friendscentral.org.

10 & Under Meets are for 10 & Under Age Groups only. Eligibility to compete in a particular age group is determined by the swimmer's age on the first day of the meet.

Events: These events are marked in red. These are events that are happening in and around the pool throughout the season! If our schedule allows it, we will add more. At this time, this is the tentative schedule for events. Please note, the Blue-Grey meet is a social/team building event for all of our athletes and attendance is expected.

ABBC Meets: These meets are marked in blue. These types of meets are for 9 & overs. We typically have one of these meets once a month.

Continuing this Fall/Winter Season:

All mini's, novice's, and Junior I's who are 10 & under will participate in the Fall & Winter 10 & Under meets.

Novices & Junior I's that are 9 & Over:

Will participate in the PDR Invite, FCA Holiday Meet, EAAC January Jam, and the UDAC Closed Invite.