Manhattan Marlins Parent Handbook



Version 2026

A comprehensive guide for Manhattan Marlins swimmers and families.

Manhattan Marlins Inc. Team Handbook
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Section 1: Welcome to the Manhattan Marlins Swim Team!

Whether you are new to competitive swimming or coming back for another great season, we are excited to welcome you to our year-round swimming family. Joining the Marlins means becoming part of a committed community of swimmers, families, and coaches who believe in developing a competitive program built on friends, fitness, and fun.

Thank you for choosing to be part of the **Manhattan Marlins family**—we're truly glad you're here!

Our Commitment to Swimmers

The Manhattan Marlins proudly support athletes of all ages and ability levels—from early learners discovering confidence in the water to advanced competitors striving for excellence.
Our program focuses on:

- Exceptional, developmentally-appropriate coaching
- A positive and encouraging environment
- A team culture rooted in sportsmanship, respect, and personal growth

About this Handbook

This handbook serves as your comprehensive guide to team policies and procedures. It is designed to help you and your athlete participate confidently and successfully throughout the season.

Additional information, updates, and helpful resources can be found on our team website:
https://www.gomotionapp.com/team/mvmm/page/home

Together, the website and this handbook provide all the tools you need to navigate your Marlins experience.

We invite all Marlins families to take time to review the structure, procedures, and responsibilities outlined in this handbook. When our community is informed and engaged, we build a stronger, more connected, and more successful team.

Your support plays an essential role in creating a positive and meaningful experience for your athlete.

Section 2: Club History, Mission & Philosophy

Club History

The Manhattan Marlins Swim Team has proudly served the Manhattan, Kansas community since 1965 and became a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in 1992. As an affiliate of USA Swimming, we uphold high standards of competitive excellence and athlete development. Over the years, the Marlins have produced national qualifiers, state high-school champions, and countless student-athletes who have gained discipline, resilience, and a lifelong love for the sport.

Organizational Mission & Philosophy

The Manhattan Marlins are dedicated to providing an inclusive, developmentally appropriate, and growth-focused swimming program. We aim to help athletes build confidence, refine technique, and reach their full potential in a positive and supportive environment.

Coaching & Leadership

Under the direction of a professional Head Coach and experienced coaching staff, and supported by a parent-led Volunteer Board of Directors, the Marlins operate with a unified commitment to athlete development, safety, and long-term success. Families are encouraged to trust the expertise and guidance of the coaching team.

Athlete Development

Swimming is a lifelong sport accessible to athletes of all ages and abilities. Our program supports progression from foundational skill-building to advanced competitive training. Athletes are expected to demonstrate sportsmanship, teamwork, accountability, and respect for coaches, teammates, and competitors.

Character & Life Skills

Participation in competitive swimming promotes whole-body fitness and develops essential life skills, including discipline, consistency, time-management, goal-setting, resilience, and personal responsibility. These skills foster long-term success both in and out of the pool.

Family Engagement

A strong team culture is built through shared involvement. When parents, swimmers, and coaches work together, the experience is more rewarding for everyone. Family participation—through volunteering, communication, and engagement in team activities—strengthens the Marlins community and directly supports each swimmer's growth and success. Together, we create an environment where swimmers feel supported, challenged, and inspired. We appreciate the commitment of every Marlins family and look forward to a successful season.

Section 3: Marlins Organization & Governance

Board Positions & Staff

- **Head Coach**
- **President –** president@manhattanmarlins.org
- **Vice President –** vicepresident@manhattanmarlins.org
- **Secretary –** secretary@manhattanmarlins.org
- **Club Administrator / Billing**
- **Treasurer –** mvmmtreasurer@gmail.org

- **Member-at-Large (up to 4 positions)**
- Additional appointed or seasonal committee roles may be established as needed to support Club operations, events, and specialized initiatives.

If you need to get in touch with a Board member or coach, their email addresses are also on the club website under the About Us tab or Coaches link in the upper left hand corner.

Board of Directors

The Manhattan Marlins Swim Team is led by a Volunteer Board of Directors that provides strategic oversight, policy direction, and responsible financial stewardship for the Club. The Board partners closely with the Head Coach, coaching staff, and membership to ensure the program operates safely, equitably, and in alignment with the Marlins' mission and long-term objectives. Board members are expected to maintain transparency, ensure organizational continuity, and help cultivate a positive, supportive environment for all athletes and families. In doing so, Board members also serve as positive role models by upholding and demonstrating the expectations and standards outlined in this handbook

Coaching Staff

The coaching staff is responsible for all athlete instruction, training, and competitive preparation. Coaches manage group placement, practice planning, technical development, meet entries, and on-deck supervision while ensuring safety and training quality at all practices and competitions.

Head Coach

The Head Coach leads the technical vision, training philosophy, and competitive direction of the Manhattan Marlins. Responsibilities include:

- Overseeing practice schedules, meet planning, team travel, and training activities.
- Supervising swimmers at practices and competitions.
- Addressing parent inquiries at appropriate times and guiding families to the complaint procedures outlined in the Handbook.
- Recruiting, interviewing, and recommending Assistant Coaches.
- Ensuring coaching coverage at all meets with Marlins athletes present.

The Board conducts regular performance reviews for the Head Coach. Contract renewals are approved annually at the May Board Meeting, and disputes follow contract procedures.

The Executive Board may override coaching decisions not reserved in the Head Coach's contract. If requested, such matters may be referred to a specially called meeting of the General Membership.

Assistant Coaches

Assistant Coaches support the Head Coach with training delivery, technical instruction, athlete development, and meet coverage. They also provide Pre-Competition early skill development, safety, and foundational technique to prepare young swimmers for competitive training.

Communications

Effective communication is essential to maintaining a well-organized and positive team environment. Families are encouraged to check email and the team website regularly to stay informed. For time-sensitive issues, parents may contact the coaching staff or Board members using the email addresses provided on the website.

Parent–Coach Communication

Parents are asked to:

- Avoid approaching coaches during practice.
- Schedule conversations before or after practice.
- Encourage swimmers to self-advocate when appropriate.

Team–Family Communication

The Manhattan Marlins use several tools to ensure families receive timely and accurate information:

- **Team Website** – The central hub for practice schedules, meet information, announcements, and general updates. This is the first place to look.
- **Email Communication** – The primary method for distributing weekly updates, schedule adjustments, and important reminders.
- **Coaching Staff Updates** – Coaches provide group-specific guidance, training expectations, and meet preparation details.
- **Facility Notices** – Bulletin boards or posted notices may be used for reminders and location-specific information.
- **Social Media** – Facebook and Instagram posts
    - Facebook - Manhattan Marlins Swim Team
    - Instagram - @Manhattanmarlins

Family Support Requirements & Volunteering

The Manhattan Marlins depend on active family involvement to support a strong and sustainable program. For team policy purposes, *family* includes individuals living at the same residence who are related by blood, marriage, adoption, legal guardianship, step-relations, or domestic partnerships.

Volunteer participation is essential to team operations, including meets, fundraising, and special events. The Marlins welcome the unique talents and skills each family brings to the program, and any family member associated with a swimmer may volunteer. Volunteer needs will be communicated by the Board and may vary by season.

Families are strongly encouraged to participate in designated volunteer and fundraising activities and are required to meet the **Annual Family Support (AFS)** obligations outlined in section 4 of this handbook. Families who do not meet these requirements will be assessed fees in accordance with Club policy.

Volunteer Opportunities

Some common areas of service include:

- Holding a Board Member position

- Swim Meets - Sign up to help at our home swim meets
  - Meet Director – Help set up/tear down and trouble shoot problems that come up during the running of swim meets.
  - Donate food to our snack shack.
  - Home meet timing and officiating
  - Meet set-up and tear-down
  - Hospitality support during meets
  - Swim Meet Official - Qualification required
  - ***** If a Volunteer does not show up to their signed up volunteer slot a $25 charge may be applied to the swimmer's account.**
  - Committee participation (Fundraising, Grants, Meet Coordination, etc.)
- Volunteer to help run Fundraising events
  - Securing Sponsorships - We are a non-profit organization. Financial donations from businesses or individuals in the community are tax deductible.
- Run our social media accounts and website
- Take Charge of our Merchandise orders (T-shirts, caps, etc.)
- Hospitality/Team events (concessions, banquets, socials, celebrations)
  - Organize and run the meet snack shack including the organization of complimentary meals for our officials and coaches as well as food items for public sales.
  - Additionally, each season the club would love to host extra events for the members of the swim team and their families. Some examples of events we would love to have are: pancake breakfasts, pizza parties, "pot-luck" dinners, team socials, and awards dinners, to name a few. AFS credit will be provided for each event organized.
  - In order to allow these activities to run smoothly, parents are asked to volunteer to chip in for set-up and clean-up duties. These duties count toward AFS requirements and are usually minimal, especially if we have sufficient help. In addition, participation is an excellent way to meet other families.

Fundraising

Each season the club will host several fundraisers to supplement club income and keep swimmer dues as low as possible. Families are required to participate by raising funds in at least 2 fundraisers per year.

Fundraisers include: **securing** sponsorships, hosted swim meets, USA Swimming Swim-A-Thons, Raise Right participation, restaurant nights or other fundraising events/activities.

- **Online shopping with Swim Outlet:** Purchase Marlins gear online through Swim Outlet's affiliate program. The affiliate program is a fundraising tool that is offered to swim organizations, bloggers and other designated customers. An affiliate can earn 8% in cash or 10% in store credit on every applicable order placed through your special link:
  https://www.swimoutlet.com/collections/manhattanmarlins

The Board or Head Coach will notify club members as these fundraising events draw near to seek volunteer assistance, operating on the belief that your assistance not only helps us to raise money, but also helps us to form strong bonds of friendship in the process.

Meet Support

During competitions, **hosting teams** are **required** to provide volunteer timers—positions that must be filled by Marlins families for each session of a meet. Details regarding timing assignments and shifts will be communicated to families in the days leading up to the event. Meets cannot operate without timers, and family **participation is vital** to ensuring fair and efficient competition.

Additional support is required for hospitality, set up and tear-down of meets, details regarding support needs will also be communicated to families in the days leading up to the event.

USA Swimming and Missouri Valley Swimming also encourage parents to become certified meet officials. Officials are always in short supply, are essential to running high-quality meets, may receive compensation for their service, and help reduce costs for teams hosting events. Families interested in officiating may contact the Head Coach for information about training and certification requirements.

Section 4: Financial Policies & Fees

The Manhattan Marlins maintain financial policies that promote transparency, consistency, and fairness for all families. These guidelines reflect typical practices for year-round competitive swim programs and may be adjusted as needed each season.

USA Swimming Registration

All swimmers must maintain an active USA Swimming membership, which provides insurance coverage for sanctioned practices and competitions.

- Registration must be completed at the conclusion of the agreed-upon trial period before a swimmer may continue participating in team practices.
- Families are responsible for the annual registration fee, paid either directly or through the team.
- Membership is valid through December 31 and must be renewed each year.

Team Dues

Each year, the Board of Directors reviews the Club's financial needs and establishes an operating budget. Monthly dues are determined through this process and are based on each swimmer's training group. An annual family registration fee covers shared administrative and system costs.

Meet Fees Policy

Meet fees are set by the host team and listed in the meet information packet. Families should review the meet materials carefully to understand all expected costs before committing to participate, as you will be responsible for all applicable fees. **Submission of a meet entry indicates acceptance of the meet's terms and associated charges. Once an entry has been submitted, the family is responsible for all entry fees, regardless of whether the swimmer ultimately attends or competes.**

- The Club pays meet entry fees upfront when a swimmer is committed to a meet.
- These fees are then charged to the family's account at the time of entry.

- **Meet fees are non-refundable**, regardless of attendance or scratches.
- Championship meets may include additional surcharges.
- A team processing fee may be applied to each entry.

Billing Policies

- Monthly dues are required for every month in which a swimmer participates with the team. Dues are charged at the beginning of the month.
- Swimmers are billed for the full month if they attend any practice during that month.
- Multi-swimmer discounts may be offered and reviewed seasonally.
- Billing continues until written notice of inactive status is submitted, submission required 2 weeks prior to departure.
- Failure to maintain a current account will result in loss of practice and meet-entry privileges.
- Failure to pay two (2) consecutive months may result in removal from the team.

Invoicing & Payment Schedule

- Monthly invoices are generated electronically on the **1st of each month** and include all charges and payments posted to that date.
- **Electronic payments** are drafted automatically on the 1st.
- **Manual payments** are due by the **5th of the month**.
- A **$10 late fee** may be assessed for payments not received by the due date.

Families are responsible for ensuring payments are made on time, even if an invoice email is not received. Account balances, current charges, and projected fees can be reviewed at any time through the online system under **My Account → Billing Summary**. The **"Simulate Billing"** feature allows families to view upcoming charges scheduled for the next billing cycle.

Payment Methods

The Manhattan Marlins accept the following forms of payment:
**** Payments MUST NOT be given directly to coaches.****

- **Electronic Payment** – Set up through the team website. (Contact a Board member for assistance.)
- **Personal Check or Money Order** – Drafted on a local bank, made out to Manhattan Marlins Inc. and mailed to:

  Manhattan Marlins Inc.
  Treasurer
  P.O. Box 1003
  Manhattan, KS 66505-1003

- Cash, vouchers, barter, or other informal payment methods are not accepted.

Financial Hardship Requests

The Marlins recognize that families may occasionally face financial difficulty. Hardship considerations may include: Short-term dues reduction, or Temporary payment extensions

Requests for dues reductions or waivers due to special circumstances (such as long-term medical issues or loss of employment) may be submitted in writing to the Board President. Families may be asked to confidentially provide documentation such as tax returns, medical bills, layoff notices, or other supporting records. All requests are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Team-issued Gear Policies

Caps

Team Caps: Each Marlins swimmer (excluding Summer League) receives two swim caps at annual registration. Replacement or additional caps may be purchased for $5 each.

Districts Qualifier Caps: Swimmers **competing** in the Districts Championships receive one "Districts Team" cap per year, valid for both spring and summer Districts. Caps are distributed at the meet. Replacements may be purchased for $25 each.

Championships Qualifier Caps: Swimmers **competing** in the Missouri Valley Championships receive one "Championships Team" cap per year, valid for both spring and summer Championships. Caps are distributed at the meet. Replacements may be purchased for $25 each.

Shirts

Each Marlins swimmer will receive 2 Marlins shirts as part of their annual registration. Shirts will be ordered after the registration deadline. Ensure shirt sizes are current in the team database.

Family Volunteer Expectations

Annual Family Support (AFS)

Amended by the Board of Directors August 03, 2026

In addition to the financial responsibilities through dues and other club fees, each family also has a commitment to helping the club through various volunteer activities through which the club derives a social or fundraising benefit, as follows:

Effective with the 2026-2027 season, each family shall be required to complete a minimum of six (6) volunteer hours during the swim season. **At least 4 of the required volunteer hours must be completed during the Manhattan Marlins' hosted swim meet.** The remaining two (2) hours may be fulfilled through other Board-approved volunteer opportunities. All volunteer hours must be completed by **August 31** of each season. All other provisions of the Annual Family Support policy, including any fees assessed for unfulfilled volunteer hours, shall remain unchanged unless otherwise amended by the Board.

AFS can be covered through corporate sponsorships, *leads, volunteer opportunities, and/or cash payments. *Credit of 1 hour will be given to each lead (contact name) that turns into a corporate sponsorship for the year.

Any AFS hours not met will be billed to the swimmers account at a rate of $35 per hour at the end of the 6 month period. AFS billing dates will be as follows:

- September 1.
- If you are a family new to the team your AFS requirement will begin starting with the next round after you join.
- **If you choose to leave the team any unpaid AFS funds are due upon departure.**
- Summer League and Masters swimmers are exempt from AFS requirements.

Service hours can be checked by logging into Team Unify and following these steps:

1. Log into Marlins website
2. Click “My Account”
3. Click the tab at the top of the screen “Service Hours” – This will show the hours that you have worked and how many hours are left.

Inactive Status, Extended Absence, or Resignation

Swimmers who will not participate for an upcoming month are not required to pay dues for that month if written notice is provided to the Head Coach, Age Group Coach, Club Administrator, or a Board Member at least two weeks in advance. Accounts are not considered settled upon resignation until all outstanding fees are paid in full.

Swimmers may return to active status at any time without penalty, provided their USA Swimming membership is current, all fees are paid, and space is available in the training group. If space is unavailable, the swimmer will be placed on a waiting list and no dues will be charged until the swimmer returns to active status.

Participation on any day during a month requires payment of dues for the entire month.

Section 5: Training Program & Group Descriptions

Training Philosophy

The Manhattan Marlins training program provides a progressive, developmentally appropriate pathway for swimmers of all ages and experience levels. Training emphasizes efficient movement, proper stroke mechanics, and a strong feel for the water, with each group building on the previous to develop technical skill, aerobic capacity, and competitive readiness.

Technique is prioritized first, followed by aerobic development, race strategy, and competition skills. Group placement and progression are based on individual readiness, work ethic, attendance, coachability, and technical proficiency—not solely on age or time standards.

All swimmers train and compete in all four strokes with an emphasis on IM development; stroke specialization is discouraged. Aerobic training increases as swimmers progress, supporting long-term performance at the senior and collegiate levels.

Competition Philosophy

The Marlins participate in a multi-level USA Swimming competition program that provides appropriate and challenging opportunities for swimmers of all ages and abilities. Competition is a core component of swimmer development, allowing athletes to measure progress, develop sportsmanship, and support teammates. All swimmers are encouraged to compete, with individual improvement as the primary objective.

Swimmers are trained to set realistic, challenging goals and connect meet performance to daily training. They are prepared and expected to compete in all strokes, distances, and events; specialization is discouraged to promote versatility and long-term development.

At swim meets, swimmers must warm up with the team under coach supervision and check in with their coach before and after each event to receive race strategy and feedback. Proper warm-up is required to reduce injury risk and support optimal performance.

Sportsmanlike behavior is equally important as performance. The Marlins expect respect for officials, opponents, and teammates, along with positive attitudes, encouragement of others, and recognition of effort. These behaviors are actively praised and reinforced by the program.

Team Structure

MINNOWS

The Minnows are the first group in the Marlins swim team. Emphasis is given to learning the 4 strokes: Freestyle, Backstroke, Breaststroke & Butterfly.

- Must be at least 5 years old, typically swimmers in this group are 5-8 years old
- Must be comfortable putting face and head underwater and swimming 25 yards unassisted on front and back.
- EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS: Goggles, swim cap, swim suit, Kickboard and Fins
- Focus: water comfort, safety, freestyle basics, backstroke basics, kicking technique
- Introduces: dives, flip turns, butterfly, breaststroke
- Up to 3 practices per week, 1 hour per practice
- Competition is offered & encouraged but is not required

WHITE GROUP

White Group continues onward with the further refinement of the 4 strokes. More emphasis is given to turns, race strategies & learning how to train. Introduces swimmers to the age-group-level skills they will need to be successful in both practices and competitions. They will learn how to swim on a pace clock and train at an aerobic level scaled to their age and ability level. A large emphasis is placed on stroke technique, starts, and turns. These skills will develop a swimmer's confidence and

passion for the sport, and make them eager competitors. The White Group blends the fun of learning new skills with the competitive drive that is at the heart of all Olympic sports.

- Group Entry Minimum: Must be able to swim 100 freestyle, 100 backstroke, 50 breaststroke and 50 butterfly
- EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS: Goggles, swim cap, training swim suit, Kickboard, Fins, snorkel and Mesh Bag
- Emphasis: technique, drill work, legal strokes, foundational skills, swim meet preparation and individual responsibility
    - learn how to swim & race the 50s and 100s of each stroke, as well as the 100 IM.
    - Refine and enhance butterfly and breaststroke technique and endurance
    - Meet events will be the 50 breaststroke and 50 butterfly, as appropriate
- learn dryland principles including activation, basics of body weight exercise, and stretching.
    - Learn why and how what we do in dryland translates into what we do in the pool.

- Learn the basics of goal setting, time standards and qualifying times for championship meets.
    - Focus on goals that emphasize performance in practice, including making intervals and holding streamlines, kicks off walls, etc.
    - Swimmers will set meet goals and log whether they were accomplished.
- Practice: Up to 4 practices per week, 1 hour per practice
- Competition: minimum 2 meets per year , Home meets required

BLUE GROUP

The Blue Group represents a significant increase in both swimming and dryland training. The goal of this group is to continue developing great technique in all 4 strokes, starts, turns & race strategies, while training intensively.

- Group Entry Test Set: Must successfully complete:
    - 9 x 100 freestyle @ 1:40 (yards)
    - 8 x 100 flutter kick @ 2:30 (yards)
- EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENT: Goggles, swim cap, competition style swim suit, Kickboard, Fins, Snorkel, Paddles, Pull Float, OneSwim Drag Socks (40 lbs), Mesh bag, and an optional but highly recommended Swim bag (More like a backpack for swimming).
- Emphasis: improving technique and increasing speed and endurance training while becoming well-rounded swimmers is the primary focus.
- Practice includes stroke refinement, aerobic work, sprint work and race preparation.
- Swimmers will learn how to race the 100s of each stroke and the 200 IM, as well as select 200s of stroke. Swimmers will also be introduced to training for and racing the 400 IM & 500 freestyle.
- Swimmers are expected to track their competition times and monitor progress toward their goals throughout the season.
    - Goal meetings with coaches are held in the fall and spring.
    - know the qualifying times for championship meets they hope to attend and train accordingly.

    - Coaches will hold swimmers accountable to team standards and individual goals established during goal meetings.
    - Swimmers are also expected to set practice goals, such as making intervals, maintaining streamlines, holding target pace, and executing strong push-offs and underwater kicks.
- Dryland intensity & frequency will increase from the foundation developed in the White Group, and a strength development component will be introduced.
- Practice: Up to 6 practices per week, 2 hours per practice
- Competition: minimum of 6meets per year , Home meets required

PLATINUM GROUP

Platinum is our most advanced training group with a focus on preparing athletes for competition and peak performance. LSC Championships, Sectionals, Futures, Junior Nationals, and national-level competitions are the championship-level target meets for swimmers in Platinum. The Platinum Group is designed for those swimmers that possess the discipline and desire to swim their very fastest. Swimmers in this group will be held to the highest standards on the team.

- Group entry test set. Must be able to swim:
    - 15×100 freestyle @ 1:20 (yards)
    - 10 x 100 flutter kick @ 2:00 (yards)
- EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS: Goggles, Caps, Competition style suit, Kickboard, Fins, Snorkel, 2 pairs of Paddles -- 1 x Size XS (green) & 1 x Size Large (light blue), Pull Float, OneSwim Drag Socks (40 lbs), Mesh bag
- Emphasis: Training will be a mixture of high-intensity aerobic swimming, sprint and power training, and include a focus on maintaining and improving technique.
    - Continue to develop race preparation strategies such as:
        - Nutrition
        - Proper levels of warm-up and warm-downs for different races
    - Develop Mentoring and Leadership skills
    - Be a good example to the all swimmers on etiquette
- Swimmers should keep track of their times throughout the season and evaluate their progress toward personal goals.
    - Goal meetings with coaches will be held in the fall and spring.
    - Expected to know qualifying times for championship meets and train with those standards in mind.
    - Coaches will hold swimmers accountable to group expectations and the goals established during meetings.
    - Set practice goals, such as making intervals, maintaining streamlines, completing strong underwater kicks off each wall, and holding goal pace during high-intensity work.
- Practice: Up to 6 practices per week, 2 hours per practice
- Competition: minimum of 8 meets per year , Home meets required

Additional Training Options

Masters Program

SUMMER ONLY (June through close of City Park Pool)
This group is designed to help swimmers improve fitness and/or train for specific goals, and offer active support for a healthy lifestyle through friendship, and camaraderie.

- For adults ages 19+
- Open to all adult swimmers (fitness, triathletes, non-competitive or competitive)
- Must register with US Masters Swimming or USA Swimming (flex membership)
- Practice: Up to 6 practices per week, 2 hours per practice

Summer League

SUMMER ONLY (June through close of City Park Pool)
Practices begin the first week of June. Practice times will be Monday through Friday at City Park Pool in Manhattan from 10:50 am to 11:50 am.

- EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS: Swim suit, swim cap, goggles, pull-buoy, fins & kickboard.
- Learn the basics of the four competitive strokes, flipturns, and starts (dives off the block).
- USA Swimming certified Coaches
- Volunteers from the older, year-round competitive team help with coaching and in-water instruction.
- Swimmers must register with USA Swimming--flex membership is all they need
- Opportunity to compete in meets; our home meets and the Sunflower State Games

Group Advancement Guidelines

Advancement between groups is determined solely by the coaching staff and is not guaranteed; based on age or speed alone. Coaches may move swimmers up, keep them in their current group for development, or adjust training levels as needed throughout the year.
Promotion is based on:

- Consistent attendance
- Demonstrated technique mastery
- Practice focus, effort, and maturity
- Physical readiness for increased training load
- Reliability, responsibility, and positive team behavior
- Understanding of goal setting
- Team involvement

Section 6: General Information & Club Member Responsibilities

General Information

Swim Seasons

The swim year is divided into two main seasons.

- Winter short course yards (SCY) runs from September through the end of March.
    - The meets are held in 25-yard pools.
- Summer long course meters (LCM) runs from March to early August.
    - These meets are generally held in 50-meter pools and only our more experienced swimmers will enter and attend these meets.
    - Throughout the long course season Marlins will pursue short course meets for our novice and beginner swimmers.
    -

Communications

The Marlins Coaches and Board value open, two-way communication with our members. The club website, www.manhattanmarlins.org, serves as the central hub for team information and updates. In addition, the Board sends a weekly email to all active members covering timely and important topics.

If you need to meet with a coach or Board member, please arrange a mutually convenient time in advance. **Conversations during practice are not permitted, as coaches must give their full attention to swimmers in the water.** Coaches are typically available briefly after practice or at other times by appointment.

Practice Cancellations

All regular practice times are posted on the team website under the Practice Times tab and communicated in weekly team emails. Any short- or long-term schedule changes will be shared through these same channels. Questions regarding practice times or duration should be directed to the Head Coach or Club President.

For unplanned practice cancellations, members will be notified as soon as possible by a club representative, typically the coach, using the channels below.

- An email to members of all affected training groups will go out from the membership website
- A notice will be posted on the home page of the team website and also in the News section.
- A notice will be posted, or a coach or Board member will be on site to personally notify families.
- The notification will clearly state the reason for the cancellation, the expected length (if known), and any alternate practice or communication plans.

Coach Responsibilities

- The Marlins coaching staff has full authority over all aspects of the competitive swim program, including training and competition ("the wet side").
- Responsible for swimmer placement in practice groups based on age, ability, readiness, and long-term development. Swimmers may be moved to more challenging groups when appropriate.
- Develop stroke instruction and training plans based on sound training principles aligned with each group's goals.
- In charge of the pool deck and water during all practices and responsible only for swimmers within their immediate supervision. **Any disruption caused by a parent, sibling, or family member may result in immediate dismissal from the facility**.
- Once a swimmer leaves the pool deck (e.g., restroom, locker room, or exiting the facility), the swimmer is no longer under coach supervision.
- Make final decisions regarding meet participation and event selection.
- Attend all team meets (or provide an alternate coach attending the meet) and be responsible for swimmer warm-ups, warm-downs, and race activities.
- Arrive prior to meet warm-ups and remain until all swimmers have completed their events for the session or day.
- Provide all necessary communication with meet officials as appropriate.
- Support each swimmer's development as both an athlete and an individual.

Parent Responsibilities

Parents are valued partners in each swimmer's development and help shape a positive, supportive team environment. Encouragement, patience, and a focus on effort, learning, and enjoyment—rather than times or placements—help swimmers grow and succeed.
Parent expectations include:

- Observe practices only from designated viewing areas and avoid interacting with coaches and swimmers during practice.
    - To maintain a focused training environment, parents should allow coaches to handle all instruction during practice. Parents may not interrupt practice, offer technical advice, or pull swimmers aside—including their own children—while practice is in session.
    - If this guideline is not followed and practice is disrupted, the individual may be asked to leave practice.
- Pay dues and fees on time and help ensure swimmers arrive promptly to practices and meets.
- Arrange transportation and pick up swimmers promptly after practice; park only in designated areas.
- Stay informed by reading team communications and attending parent meetings when requested.
- Notify coaches of extended absences or missed meet sessions.
- Support and encourage your swimmer, but allow coaches to handle instruction and training.
- Maintain a positive, respectful attitude toward swimmers, coaches, officials, and the team.

- Cheer positively at meets without distracting or embarrassing swimmers.
- Schedule time to speak with coaches before or after practice, not during workouts.
- Encourage swimmers to communicate directly with their coach when questions or concerns arise.

Practice Schedules

The current practice and meet schedules are posted on the Marlins website under ***Practice Times*** and are updated if and when changes occur. Additionally, Coaches and Board will communicate changes to practice schedules directly to swimmers and families via email.

Swimmer Responsibilities & Expectations

All swimmers are expected to represent themselves and the Marlins positively and uphold the highest standards of conduct. Swimmers are responsible for their behavior and training, both in and out of the pool. Failure to meet these expectations may result in disciplinary action.
Swimmer expectations include:

- Regular and consistent practice attendance, communicate with Coach if you have conflicts
- Arrive on deck **on time**, prepared, and **ready to train** with a positive attitude.
- No put downs, swearing, or yelling. Always try to take away something positive from each practice.
- Show respect to coaches, facility staff, and fellow swimmers at all times.
- No tampering with the locker room property or facilities. Do not use facility towels.
- Leave the facility in a clean and orderly appearance.
- Swimmers should use the bathroom prior to practice, but if needed, wait between sets and let coaches know you are using the restroom
- Swimmers arrive on deck **ready to begin** on time. Hanging out in the locker room and joining practice late will not be tolerated.
- Bring all required equipment and maintain it properly.
- No running! Use extra caution in the shower area!
- No hanging on the lane lines.
- Keep your hands to yourself - no horseplay, splashing, kicking, pushing, shoving.
- No gum chewing or food during practice.
- Give your best effort and maintain focus during training. Socialize before or after practices.
- Follow lane etiquette, instructions, and practice procedures.
- Feet first entry into the water unless under direct diving supervision of the coaching staff.
- Ask questions when clarification is needed.
- Swimmers communicate proactively with coaches regarding injuries or fatigue
- Follow SafeSport guidelines and report concerns to a trusted adult.

Swimmers are also expected to communicate directly with their coach regarding questions or concerns. Direct communication allows the coach to better understand the swimmer's perspective and provide appropriate feedback or support. This is an important part of developing independence, responsibility, and a strong athlete–coach relationship. At swim meets, parents may not always be able to be on deck, making direct swimmer-to-coach communication essential.

Parents should support this expectation and avoid acting as intermediaries. While parental encouragement is important, intervening on a swimmer's behalf can limit the swimmer's confidence and ability to handle challenges independently. Swimmers are expected to advocate for themselves in a respectful and constructive manner.

Swimmer Meet Responsibilities

- Arrive at meets on time – plan to be there at least 15 minutes prior to warm-ups. Communicate with your coach as soon as possible if you cannot attend.
- While the team does not mandate a specific style/color, bright blue swim suits or swim suits that primarily feature bright blue are preferred. Please refer to current Missouri Valley USA Swimming guidance for wear of tech suits.
- Wear team caps at all meets. Swimmers who have earned a Districts or Championship cap may wear that in lieu of the regular cap at coaches discretion.
- Feet first entry into the pool during all meet warm up or cool down activities. Just like in practices, diving is only permitted under specific, controlled, and observed conditions.
- Always conduct yourself in an honorable manner. You represent your team as well as yourself and you will be held accountable if your conduct is less than honorable.
- Keep a log of your times swum at meets, best times, goal times, time standards, and any other relevant times. It is your responsibility to know these.

Disciplinary Action

To ensure a safe and productive training environment, coaches may excuse a swimmer from practice if their behavior disrupts practice or distracts the coach or other swimmers. The Manhattan Marlins do not use physical activity as a form of discipline. Swimmers will not be required to swim additional laps, perform push-ups, or complete other physical tasks as punishment.

When disciplinary action is necessary, it may involve removal from practice, team activities, or the team if warranted.

If a swimmer is removed from practice, a parent or guardian will be contacted and asked to arrange transportation home.

If a swimmer is disciplined more than one time within a week, he/she will be asked not to attend practice for a week and a meeting will be arranged with the parent to discuss the problem and potential resolutions.

If a swimmer is disciplined a third time he or she will be referred to the Board of Directors for final recommendations to resolve the problem.

To maintain a positive and supportive team environment, parents should not reprimand swimmers during practices or swim meets.

Families are encouraged to address concerns about behavior privately and away from the pool or any Marlins team activity. Conversations about discipline are best handled at home, where they can take place without disrupting the team environment.

Section 7: Meet Procedures

Swim meets are an important part of the Manhattan Marlins experience. Meets allow swimmers to set goals, measure progress, practice race skills, and build confidence. While meet entry is not mandated, all Marlins swimmers are encouraged to enter all scheduled meets for their level.

Swim Meet Entry

The Marlins submit meet entries for all swimmers through a single electronic team entry. Families indicate swimmer availability for meets through their SportsEngine account. Upcoming meets are listed on the team website and announced by email, which will include a link to the meet entry interface.

Once the team entry is submitted to the meet host, the club is financially committed and meet entry fees are charged to each family's billing account. These fees may include a meet processing fee per swimmer. After submission, meet entry fees are non-refundable and are the responsibility of the family.

Detailed meet information is provided in the meet information file attached to the meet invitation on the team website and on the Missouri Valley Swimming website. This file includes fees, event order, session start times, pool location, time standards, and other meet-specific details. Families are expected to review this information in full.

Questions regarding meet entry procedures should be directed to the swimmer's group coach or the Head Coach.

Meet Registration & Entry Process

All meet sign-ups are completed through the team website. Families are responsible for indicating availability by the posted deadline.

Meet Registration Steps:

1. Log into your team account.
2. Select the desired meet under the Events tab.
3. Click "Attend/Decline."
4. For each swimmer, select "Yes, please sign up."
5. Select desired events and add notes if needed (e.g., arriving late, only available Saturday)
6. Coaches will approve or edit desired events based on training, readiness, and development. Encourage swimmers to talk with coaches about events they would like to swim.
7. Coaches will assemble relays as attendance and meet rules allow.

Important Notes:

- Meet entry fees are charged once the entry file is submitted to the host team.

- Changing availability after the deadline may not be possible.
- Parents may not choose or alter events—this is the coach's responsibility.

How Coaches Select Events

Coaches are responsible for designing a balanced meet plan for each swimmer. Swimmers should expect to compete in all strokes and distances at various meets.
Event selection is based on:

- Technical development needs
- Training focus
- Upcoming championship meet preparation
- Ensuring all strokes and distances are practiced throughout the season

Participation in Non-Team Swim Meets

If a swimmer wishes to enter a swim meet that is not on the Marlins' official meet schedule, the head coach must be notified in advance and approve both the meet and the events the swimmer plans to swim.

Only Marlins coaching staff, registered as non-athlete coach members, may serve in a coaching role for swimmers. When appropriate, the coaching staff will coordinate with another attending coach who agrees to support the swimmer. Parents may not act as coaches or represent themselves as coaches. Any parent found to represent themselves as a coach at a meet may be asked to leave the facility by meet officials.

Entering a swimmer in a non-team meet without prior coach approval will result in disciplinary action, including financial penalties of up to three months' dues per swimmer entered and loss of, or ineligibility for, parent leadership positions within the club.

Pre-Meet Preparation

To support a successful meet experience, swimmers and families should prepare ahead of time.

Night Before:

- Pack the swim bag (suit (2 preferred), goggles, cap, extra cap, 2 towels, water bottle).
- Review the meet information and timeline.
- Get adequate sleep.

What to Bring:

- Competition suit and/or tech suit if appropriate for the meet
- 2–3 pairs of goggles
- 1–2 caps (caps break at the worst times!)
- Towels (2–3 recommended)
- Warm layers (sweats, parkas)
- Cool layers to keep the sun off
- Sunscreen
- Water bottle and healthy snacks
    - pretzels, cut up fruits, meat sticks/jerky, rice cakes

    - Think proteins and light carbs
- Entertainment for downtime: books, homework, uno or deck of cards—not electronics whenever possible, not balls to be thrown around (there are people everywhere and this becomes a safety issue)
- Team shirt/spirit wear
- Camping chairs or stadium seats

Meet Arrival & Warm-Up Procedures

Swimmers must arrive at least 15 minutes before warm-up begins unless otherwise instructed.

Warm-Up Expectations:

- Swimmers check in with Coach Reid or a designated coach immediately upon arrival.
- Swimmers complete the entire warm-up session with the team.
- Warm-up is required for participation in the meet.
    - **A swimmer who does not warm up with the team will be presumed absent and will be scratched from events for that session. Any conflicts with arrival times should be discussed with the coach prior to the scheduled warm-up time.**
    - **If unexpected issues arise, immediately communicate with the coach to prevent scratches.**
- Only swimmers and coaches are allowed on deck (per USA Swimming rules).
- Parents should sit in designated spectator areas and avoid approaching swimmers during warm-ups.

During the Meet

Swimmers are expected to:

- Check in with the coach before each race for strategy and reminders.
- Report immediately behind the blocks when called.
- Return to the coach after the race for feedback.
- Discuss any disagreement with official calls **with the coach**, DO NOT approach officials with disagreements.
- Stay hydrated and warm between events.
- Preferably, remain in the team area when not racing, this makes it easier to get swimmers to their events if they lose track of time.

Parents are expected to:

- Cheer positively for all Marlins swimmers.
- Avoid giving technical or strategic advice.
- Do not approach coaches or meet officials to dispute calls or enter the coaching area to speak with coaches during competition. Coaches are aware of official calls and will address any issues with officials as appropriate.
- Support meet operations by volunteering when possible.
- Respect deck access rules.

Sportsmanship & Team Culture at Meets

The Manhattan Marlins emphasize positive sportsmanship at all competitions.

Swimmers are encouraged to:

- Congratulate teammates and competitors.
- Demonstrate respectful behavior toward everyone.
- Display Marlins pride through attitude and effort.
- Poor sportsmanship, arguing with officials, or negative interactions on deck are not permitted and will be immediately addressed by coaches.

Heat Sheets, Results & Time Standards

Most meets publish heat sheets electronically; some meets sell printed versions.

Results:

- Posted at the meet and often available on Meet Mobile.
- Official times are uploaded to USA Swimming's SWIMS database.

Time Standards:

- Swimmers may track progress toward Championship meets.
- Coaches will notify swimmers of qualifying times when achieved.

End-of-Day Procedures

At the conclusion of each meet session:

- Swimmers should check out with the coach.
- Team areas must be cleaned before leaving.
- Families should verify future event times, finals qualifications, or next-day arrival times.

Finals Sessions:

- If a swimmer qualifies for finals, participation is expected unless excused by the coach. You will have to declare your intent to scratch within 30 minutes of the preliminary results.
- Alternates must remain in the facility until a final decision is made. If you are an alternate, prior to the event you MUST be standing near the officials table READY to swim.

Tech Suit Guidelines

Tech suits are advanced racing suits designed for high-level competition. To ensure healthy development:

Marlins Guidelines:

- 12 & under swimmers should wear **age approved** tech suits **ONLY** at championship-level meets.
- Daily meets should be swum in team suits or competitive style practice suits.
- Coaches may restrict use based on developmental readiness.
- This policy encourages swimmers to focus on technique and training rather than specialized equipment.

Section 8: Codes of Conduct & Safety Policies

Code of Conduct

The Manhattan Marlins are committed to providing a safe, respectful, and positive environment for all athletes, families, coaches, and volunteers. The Code of Conducts outline the expected behavior for all members of the Marlins community. The policies are detailed in the appendices.

- Athlete Code of Conduct (Appendix A)
- Parent & Spectator Code of Conduct (Appendix B)

Anti-Bullying Policy

Bullying of any kind is strictly prohibited. Bullying includes repeated or severe behavior that harms, threatens, isolates, or intimidates another member. Bullying may occur in person, online, or through electronic communication.

Procedures:

- Athletes and parents should report concerns to a coach or board member.
    - Athletes and/or Parents may also report concerns through SafeSport
        - https://www.usaswimming.org/safe-sport
- All reports will be addressed promptly and confidentially.
- Consequences may include warnings, suspension, or removal from the team.

Electronic Communication Policy

All electronic communication between coaches and athletes must be professional, transparent, and in accordance with SafeSport guidelines.

Guidelines:

- Communication must relate only to team activities.
- Parents must be copied on all one-on-one communication with minor athletes.
- Group messaging must be professional and appropriate.
- Coaches may not communicate privately with athletes via social media.

Locker Room & Changing Area Policy

The Manhattan Marlins adhere to USA Swimming's Locker Room Monitoring Policy.

Policies:

- Only athletes are allowed in locker rooms unless assistance is required.
- No recording devices of any kind are permitted.
- Appropriate behavior is expected at all times.
- Bullying, roughhousing, or inappropriate behavior will result in disciplinary action.

Travel & Team Trip Policy

For meets requiring travel, additional expectations apply.

Travel Guidelines:

- Swimmers represent the Manhattan Marlins at all times.
- Curfews set by coaches must be followed.
- Athletes may not leave team areas without permission.

- Hotel behavior should be respectful and quiet.
- Athletes must stay with the team or designated chaperones.
- SafeSport rules prohibit unsupervised one-on-one interactions.
- Consequences for violations may include removal from the trip, reimbursement of travel costs, and additional disciplinary action.

Families attending travel meets are encouraged to sit together, support the team, and follow all facility rules.

Disciplinary Procedures

If violations occur, the Manhattan Marlins may implement the following actions:

- Verbal warning
- Parent meeting
- Removal from practice
- Temporary suspension
- Removal from team travel
- Long-term suspension or expulsion
- Disciplinary action is determined by coaches and/or the Board based on severity and frequency.

Section 9: Glossary, Waivers & Appendices

Glossary of Common Swimming Terms

DQ (Disqualification): A rule violation in a stroke, turn, start, or finish.
Heat Sheet: A schedule listing swimmers' events, heats, and lanes.
Seed Time: A swimmer's entry time used for meet placement.
Split: A time recorded at an intermediate distance during a race.
Taper: A period of reduced training leading into a major competition.
IM (Individual Medley): An event combining butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle.
Long Course: 50-meter pools used in summer.
Short Course: 25-yard pools used in fall/winter.
Championship Meet: A meet requiring qualifying times.

Medical Release Form

Swimmer Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Emergency Contact 1: _____ Phone: _____

Emergency Contact 2: _____ Phone: _____

Medical Conditions or Allergies:

_____

Medications:

_____

Insurance Provider: _____ Policy #: _____

By signing below, I authorize the coaching staff to secure medical treatment for my athlete in the event of an emergency.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Liability Waiver

I understand that participation in the Manhattan Marlins Swim Team involves physical activity that may result in injury. By signing below, I release the Manhattan Marlins, coaches, staff, and affiliated facilities from any liability for injuries or accidents that may occur during practices, meets, or team activities.

Swimmer Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Photo & Media Release Form

I grant permission for the Manhattan Marlins to use photographs, videos, and likenesses of my swimmer for team publicity, social media, website content, or promotional materials.

Swimmer Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

☐ I DO grant permission ☐ I DO NOT grant permission

SafeSport Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have reviewed the Manhattan Marlins SafeSport guidelines and agree to follow all athlete protection policies.

Swimmer Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix A: Athlete Code of Conduct Signature Page (USAS SAFESPORT)

The purpose of a code of conduct for athletes is to establish a consistent expectation for athletes' behavior. By signing this code of conduct, I agree to the following statements:

❏ I will respect and show courtesy to my teammates and coaches at all times.

❏ I will demonstrate good sportsmanship at all practices and meets.

❏ I will set a good example of behavior and work ethic for my younger teammates.

❏ I will be respectful of my teammates' feelings and personal space. Swimmers who exhibit sexist, racist, homophobic, or otherwise inappropriate behavior will be faced with consequences.

❏ I will attend all team meetings and training sessions, unless I am excused by my coach.

❏ I will show respect for all facilities and other property (including locker rooms) used during practices, competitions, and team activities.

❏ I will refrain from foul language, violence, behavior deemed dishonest, offensive, or illegal.

❏ If I disagree with an official's call, I will talk with my coach and not approach the official directly.

❏ I will obey all of USA Swimming's rules and codes of conduct.

I understand that if I violate this code of conduct, I will be subject to disciplinary action determined by my coaches and the swim club's board of directors.

I have read and agree to follow the Manhattan Marlins Athlete Code of Conduct.

Swimmer Name: _____

Athlete Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix B: Parent Code of Conduct Signature Page (USAS SAFESPORT)

The purpose of a code of conduct for parents is to establish consistent expectations for behavior by parents.
As a parent/guardian, I understand the important growth and developmental support that my child's participation fosters. I also understand that 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 will get involved by volunteering, observing practices when possible, 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 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 direct my concerns, first to the Coach; then, if not satisfied, to the appropriate supervisor.

❏ ***Parents who exhibit sexist, racist, homophobic, or otherwise inappropriate behavior will be faced with consequences.***

I understand the above expectations and that my failure to adhere to them may result in disciplinary action.

I have reviewed the Parent/Spectator Code of Conduct and agree to support and promote the team's expectations.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Travel Meet Permission Form

Swimmer Name: _____

Destination Meet: _____ Date(s): _____

Emergency Contact During Trip:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Additional Notes or Medical Needs:

_____

By signing below, I give permission for my swimmer to travel with the Manhattan Marlins and participate in all related activities. I understand that athletes must follow all travel and safety policies.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____