



Instinct Swimming
Team Handbook



Facility Information:

We practice at Lynn Tech 80 Neptune Blvd, Lynn, MA 01902

Link to practice schedule:



Novice
8 and Unders

Mini Fins is our introductory program that helps athletes transition to the competitive world of swimming.

Mini Fins focuses heavily on proper technique, repetition of correct strokes and learning about how to race.

As the youngest members of Instinct Swimming, we emphasize the learning aspect of the sport and seeing their teammates. Mini Fins will learn their role on the team and how they fit into the Instinct Swimming Family.

Attendance Requirement: 75% (Monthly)

Swim Meet Requirement: Invite Only

Mini Fins Required Equipment:

3 Instinct Caps	Fins
1 Instinct Team Suit	Kick Board
3 Instinct Shirts	Mesh Bag

Age Group



9-10

In our Age Group program, athletes will build upon their learned strokes and start to challenge their skills to develop a racing strategy.

As more experienced athletes, Age Groupers are expected to demonstrate their commitment to Instinct Swimming. Our Age Groupers will continue their development of technique and introduce racing strategy. These athletes are learning what it means to be determined and goal oriented. We begin the conversation of realistic goal setting and setting a plan to achieve said goals.

The expectation for Age Group athletes is that they are not only competing at higher level meets, but scoring as well.

Attendance Requirement: 75% (Monthly)

Meet Requirement: Expected to Attend All Meets

Age Group Required Equipment:

3 Instinct Caps	Fins
1 Instinct Team Suit	Kick Board
3 Instinct Shirts	Mesh Bag
	Pull Buoy

Junior Group



11-14

Junior Group is our transitional group between Age Group and Senior level swimming. Our Junior Group swimmers are expected to attend practices with the intention of becoming better swimmers. We continue the conversation of goal setting and detailing our achievement plans.

Junior Group athletes are now seasoned Instinct swimmers and demonstrate their commitment to the team, their individual swimming and their teammates. They have the fantastic opportunity to not only learn from older teammates, but to set the expectation for the younger athletes.

The expectation for Junior Group athletes is that they are not only competing at higher level meets, but scoring as well.

Attendance Requirement: 80% (Monthly)

Meet Requirement: Expected to Attend All Meets

Junior Group Required Equipment:

3 Instinct Caps	Fins
1 Instinct Team Suit	Kick Board
3 Instinct Shirts	Mesh Bag
Team Warm Up Jacket	Pull Buoy
Technical Suit (Approved by coaches before purchase)	Forearm Fulcrum Paddles
	Hand Paddles
	Resistance Band



Pre-National

15-16

Pre-National is a highly motivated and competitive group. Athletes in Pre-National have aggressive goals and have proven plans to achieve those goals. Athletes are expected to not only want to achieve what is set for them, but to go above and beyond. Athletes in Pre-National are invested not only in their personal success but in their teammates accomplishments as well.

Pre-National athletes are expected to come to practice ready to work hard and expect to be held accountable by their coaches and teammates. These athletes have worked together for multiple years now and should have an understanding for the goals of the group.

As a group, their role is to set competitive standards for the younger athletes and strive to work with the older athletes.

The expectation for Pre-National athletes is that they are not only competing at higher level meets, but scoring as well.

Attendance Requirement: 85% (Monthly)

Meet Requirement: Expected to Attend All Meets

Pre-National Group Required Equipment:

3 Instinct Caps	Fins
1 Instinct Team Suit	Kick Board
3 Instinct Shirts	Mesh Bag
Team Warm Up Jacket	Pull Buoy
Technical Suit (Approved by coaches before purchase)	Forearm Fulcrum Paddles
	Hand Paddles
	Resistance Band
	Drag Socks- Resistance 30



National Group:

- National Group is our most competitive and demanding roster group.
- These athletes must have demonstrated a commitment to Instinct swimming, their coaches, their teammates and their swimming career.
- National group athletes recognize that National group is a privilege and not a right. They must have demonstrated a rigorous work ethic and dedication to swimming.
- National group members go above and beyond what is asked of them- they are not able to settle for the bare minimum.
- National group members cheer, support and hold their teammates accountable to their goals.
- National group members have an open line of communication between their coaches and themselves.
- National group members strive to achieve Junior National, National and Olympic Trial qualifying times.

National Group Expectations

- National Group athletes are expected to maintain a 95% attendance rate, 85% attendance rate during high school swim season.
- National Group athletes are expected to participate in every meet that they are invited to or qualify for.
- National group members are to be role models for the rest of the team, teammates should strive to be like their National group peers.

Athlete

Signature: _____

Parent

Signature: _____



National Group

16+

National Group athletes have demonstrated a vital commitment to Instinct Swimming, their coaches and their teammates. They have shown their drive to compete, to hold their athletes accountable and to learn from their coaches. National group athletes have an expectation of excellence to uphold.

These athletes are held to competitive standards not only to benefit the individual athlete, but to continue the legacy of Instinct Swimming. These athletes are role models for the rest of the team- their actions on and off the pool deck must reflect that of an Instinct athlete.

Attendance Requirement: 95% (Monthly)

Meet Requirement: Expected to Attend All Meets

National Group Required Equipment:

3 Instinct Caps	Fins
1 Instinct Team Suit	Kick Board
3 Instinct Shirts	Mesh Bag
Team Warm Up Jacket	Pull Buoy
Technical Suit (Approved by coaches before purchase)	Forearm Fulcrum Paddles
	Hand Paddles
	Resistance Band
	Drag Socks- Resistance 30



Tuition and Payment Policies:

1. By registering for the Instinct Swimming, you are committing to the team and we are committing to you. Should you choose to discontinue enrollment with Instinct Swimming, the remaining tuition payment for the year is required to be paid in full, as well as any outstanding meet fees. Athletes will not be released to attach to another team until the outstanding balances are paid.
2. Failure to pay outstanding Instinct Swimming fees may result in an expulsion from New England Swimming LSC.
3. The Instinct Swimming has an Annual Tuition for each practice group. Families have the option of paying in Full or through 4 Installments that will be charged on the 1st of the month.
4. All accounts are required to utilize the AutoPay function of the TeamUnify website. Once your registration is approved, you will be responsible for making sure the AutoPay portion of your account is established.
5. At the time of registration you will be charged \$250.00 per athlete for 1 Instinct Team Suit, 3 Instinct Swimming Caps, 3 Instinct Swimming T-Shirts,.
6. Accounts with outstanding balances may be prohibited from competition.
7. Invoices are generated on the 5th of each month, and outstanding balances will be charged to the payment method on file on the first of each month.
8. For all accounts with an outstanding balance after the 15th of each month will be charged a \$50.00 late fee.
9. Prior season's balance due must be paid in full before a swimmer can register for the next season. This includes any outstanding Meet Entry Fees, Uniform Costs or Tuition Fees.
10. Refunds/Prorated dues are not available unless approved by Head Coach Jesse Ford.



11. Swimmers participating in School Sports will not receive prorated team dues.
12. NO REFUNDS for swimmers suspended from Instinct Swimming for disciplinary reasons. Missed days are not subtracted from membership fees.
13. The coaching staff will reserve the right to refuse admittance to practice for any swimmer due to unpaid fees.



Competition and Meet Participation:

Competition is a crucial aspect of the Instinct Swimming program. Just as tests and quizzes provide valuable feedback to teachers on what areas in which students are strong and which they need more work, competition provides the coaches and athletes the same. As such, all athletes will be entered on all days of all meets designated for their practice group. Athletes will be entered in the events that the coaches deem necessary based on the long term developmental goals and placement within the season.

Meets are on an invitation basis, only athletes who maintain their practice group attendance requirements and prove to the coaches that they are able to represent Instinct Swimming in a positive manner will be welcomed to represent the team in competition.

Failure to compete in meets may result in removal from the team with no refund/reimbursement.

Travel Meets:

Instinct Swimming participates in multiple travel meets per year. This is an opportunity for athletes to compete against all over the country. Travel meets are by invitation only. All costs of travel are the responsibility of the athlete's family.



Action Plan of Instinct Swimming to Address Bullying

PURPOSE

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

Objectives of the Instinct Swimming's Bullying Policy and Action Plan:

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

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Generally, bullying is the use of aggression, whether intentional or not, which hurts another person. Bullying results in pain and distress.

Bullying is the severe or repeated use, regardless of when or where it may occur, by one or more USA Swimming members of an oral, written, electronic or technological expression, image, sound, data or intelligence of any nature



(regardless of the method of transmission) , or a physical act or gesture , or any combination thereof, directed at any other member or Participating Non-Member that to a reasonably objective person has the effect of causing physical or emotional harm to the other member or damage to the other member's property;

- i. Placing the other member in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property;
- ii. Creating a hostile environment for the other member at any USA Swimming activity;
- iii. Infringing on the rights of the other member at any USA Swimming activity; or
- iv. Materially and substantially disrupting the training process or the orderly operation of any USA Swimming activity (which for the purposes of this section shall include, without limitation, practices, workouts and other events of a member Instinct Swimming or LSC).

REPORTING PROCEDURE

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

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

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



HOW WE HANDLE BULLYING

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

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

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

FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED

1. **First, we get the facts.**
 - a. Keep all the involved children separate.
 - b. Get the story from several sources, both adults and kids.
 - c. Listen without blaming.
 - d. Don't call the act "bullying" while you are trying to understand what happened.
 - e. It may be difficult to get the whole story, especially if multiple athletes are involved or the bullying involves [social bullying](#) or [cyber bullying](#). Collect all available information.
2. **Then, we determine if it's bullying.** There are [many behaviors that look like bullying](#) but require different approaches. It is important to determine whether the situation is bullying or something else.
 - a. Review the USA Swimming definition of bullying;
 - b. To determine if the behavior is bullying or something else, consider the following questions:



- What is the history between the kids involved?
 - Have there been past conflicts?
 - Is there a power imbalance? Remember that a power imbalance is not limited to physical strength. It is sometimes not easily recognized. If the targeted child feels like there is a power imbalance, there probably is.
 - Has this happened before? Is the child worried it will happen again?
- c. Remember that it may not matter “who started it.” Some kids who are bullied may be seen as annoying or provoking, but this does not excuse the bullying behavior.
 - d. Once you have determined if the situation is bullying, support all of the kids involved.

SUPPORTING THE KIDS INVOLVED

3. Support the kids who are being bullied

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



4. Address bullying behavior

- a. Make sure the child knows what the problem behavior is. Young people who bully must learn their behavior is wrong and harms others.
- b. Show kids that bullying is taken seriously. Calmly tell the child that bullying will not be tolerated. Model respectful behavior when addressing the problem.
- c. Work with the child to understand some of the reasons he or she bullied. For example:
 - i. Sometimes children bully to fit in or just to make fun of someone is a little different from them. In other words, there may be some insecurity involved.
 - ii. Other times kids act out because something else—issues at home, abuse, stress—is going on in their lives. They also may have been bullied. These kids may be in need of additional support.
- d. Involve the kid who bullied in making amends or repairing the situation. The goal is to help them see how their actions affect others. For example, the child can:
 - i. Write a letter apologizing to the athlete who was bullied.
 - ii. Do a good deed for the person who was bullied, for the Instinct Swimming, or for others in your community.
 - iii. Clean up, repair, or pay for any property they damaged.
- e. Avoid strategies that don't work or have negative consequences:
 - i. Zero tolerance or "three strikes, you're out" strategies don't work. Suspending or removing from the team swimmers who bully does not reduce bullying behavior. Swimmers may be less likely to report and address bullying if suspension or getting kicked off the team is the consequence.
 - ii. Conflict resolution and peer mediation don't work for bullying. Bullying is not a conflict between people of equal power who share equal blame. Facing those who have bullied may further upset kids who have been bullied.
- f. Follow-up. After the bullying issue is resolved, continue finding ways to help the child who is bullied to understand how what they do affects other people. For example, praise acts of kindness or talk about what it means to be a good teammate.



5. **Support bystanders who witness bullying.** Every day, kids witness bullying. They want to help, but don't know how. Fortunately, there are a few simple, safe ways that athletes can help stop bullying when they see it happening.
- a. Be a friend to the person being bullied;
 - b. Tell a trusted adult – your parent, coach, or Instinct Swimming board member;
 - c. Help the kid being bullied get away from the situation. Create a distraction, focus the attention on something else, or offer a way for the target to get out of the situation. “Let’s go, practice is about to start.”
 - d. Set a good example by not bullying others.
 - e. Don’t give the bully an audience. Bullies are encouraged by the attention they get from bystanders. If you do nothing else, just walk away.