



Manta Ray Aquatics Team Handbook

Updated 2022

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Welcome to the Manta Rays!

Congratulations on joining the Manta Ray Aquatics Swim Team! You are now a member of the “MRA family”. We hope you will find your child’s experience here is rewarding beyond physical activity. As a member of our community, your child will make great friends, be taught and influenced by coaches, and cared for by all.

Our coaching staff is committed to teaching life skills through swimming and we believe there is much more value to our sport than just learning the physical skills. Swimming provides an arena for children to learn to deal with success and failure, as well as the value of hard work and goal setting. Each meet, event, and practice serves as an opportunity for our swimmers to develop both as athletes and as people.

Our coaches view themselves as educators and strive to teach swimmers about more than swimming in the pool. Personal responsibility, integrity, hard work, and other concepts are discussed weekly in the practice groups as they relate to our athletes lives in and out of the pool. Our goal is to teach our swimmers skills and strategies that they can use to enhance their lives far after their participation in competitive swimming is over.

If you are new to competitive year round swimming, you will most certainly have questions. Please feel free to contact any member of the Manta Rays’ family including coaches or other parents.

Welcome to our team!

Regards,

Cathy Elgas
Head Coach

MRA Pool Locations

Granite Hills High School 1719 E. Madison Ave, El Cajon CA 92019
Montgomery Middle School 1570 Melody Lane, El Cajon CA 92019

Training Group Descriptions

Requirements to join the Manta Ray Year Round Program

New swimmers must be able to swim one length of the pool without assistance.

Practice Groups

Practice groups are assigned on the basis of age and/or ability. The coaches will determine what group your swimmer will be in after observing him/her in the water. Your swimmer may be moved up or down a group depending upon performance and/or attitude.

Practice times can vary, go to the team website for the current times. The only weather conditions that cancel workouts are thunderstorms. We do swim in rain, wind and cold!

Novice 1 & 2

This is an entry level group that will introduce all 4 strokes and prepare swimmer for participation in swim meets and for advancement on the swim team. Training will involve intervals, stroke drills and swimming preparation for Level 1.

Level 1

This group is for swimmers who are still developing the skills necessary for the sport of swimming. The training focus is teaching 4 legal strokes, starts, turns, and aerobic development.

Level 2

Works on further developing the skills learned in level 1. Swimmers in this group will learn how to train on an interval, understanding swimming sets, and how to work with teammates.

Elite 3 / Senior Elite

Swimmers in this group have 4 legal strokes, can perform all starts and turns with some proficiency. Swimmers are highly encouraged to attend a minimum of 3 practices per week. Focus of this group is improving stroke technique, offering challenging intervals, and teaching swimmers how to develop solid training habits. Swimmers in this group have a proven ability to show good practice skills, practice etiquette, the desire to improve and ability to swim all 4 strokes consistently.

High School Swim

This group is for high school age swimmers who want to prepare for the high school swim season. Swimmers in this group are highly encouraged to attend a minimum of 3 practices per week. Extensive work on starts, turns, stroke technique, conditioning and mental preparation.

Swimmer Move-Up Procedure

Move-ups are the natural progression of an athlete's development. Our program is designed to assure that swimmers stay within their natural peer group to allow for better socialization and development. There are many factors that go into the decision of which group a swimmer will be a part of and why; age, grade, physical ability, maturity, growth, psychological and developmental factors are considered for each swimmer.

Medical Information/Equipment

It is vital that the coaches are informed about any medical conditions that your swimmer might have, such as allergies to bee stings or asthma. If your child uses an Inhaler or Epi- Pen please let your coach know where it is kept and ensure that the child's name is written on it or it's container.

Manta Ray Aquatic Coaches

All MRA coaches must meet high criteria set forth by USA Swimming. Each coach holds a current First Aid and CPR Training certification. Coaches are also required to complete the USA Swimming Safety Training for Coaches Course and be certified Lifeguards. MRA coaches have also passed a background check. All of the above requirements must be kept up to date for a swim coach to remain in good standing with USA Swimming and MRA.

MRA coaches' main responsibility is to mold all of our swimmers into the best swimmers they can be. In addition, coaches mentor swimmers in life skills and positive values.

Coaches shall build relationships with team families to achieve mutually-set goals for each swimmer.

Manta Ray Aquatic Parents

As the Parent/Guardian of a competitive swimmer, your main responsibility is to provide a caring, supporting environment. This support will encourage your child to feel good about his or her interest in competitive swimming. Show your support by ensuring your swimmer's attendance at practices and swim meets.

Parent/Guardians are not participants on their child's team, but contribute to the success experienced by the swimmer and his or her team. Parents/Guardians serve as role models, and children frequently emulate their attitudes. Strive to be a positive role model. Most important, show good sportsmanship at all times toward coaches, officials and other teams.

As a parent of the MRA team, I will abide by the following code of conduct:

1. Practice teamwork with all parents, swimmers and coaches.
2. As a parent, I will not coach or instruct the team or any swimmer at a practice or meets. Any communication with the coaching staff will occur either prior to the start of a coaches shift or after the conclusion of his/her coaching day.
3. Demonstrate good sportsmanship.
4. Maintain self-control at all times and know my role.
 1. Swimmers - swim
 2. Coaches - coach
 3. Officials - officiate
 4. Parents - parent
5. Enjoy involvement with the MRA swim team by supporting the swimmers, coaches and other parents with positive communications and actions.
6. During competitions, questions or concerns regarding decisions made by meet officials are directed to a member of our coaching staff only.
7. I understand that criticizing, name-calling, use of abusing language or gestures toward the coaches, officials, and/or any participating swimmer will not be permitted or tolerated.

Manta Ray Aquatic Swimmers

As a swimmer of MRA, I will abide by the following code of conduct:

1. I will conduct myself with dignity and respect for others and for the property of others.
2. I will be on time for practice, training sessions, and meets.
3. I will comply with all team rules.
4. As a matter of team pride and courtesy, I will leave the MRA team area in a neat and clean condition at the conclusion of each practice session. I understand this also applies to pool locker/restrooms, bleacher areas, pool decks, etc.
5. I will practice and teach good sportsmanship.
6. I will promote positive team spirit and morale.
7. I will offer congratulations and encouragement to his/her opponents.
8. I will support my teammates at practice and at competition. Working together as a unit will benefit each team member and is an important part of MRA spirit.
9. I will follow verbal directions of the coaching staff. At no time will disrespectful attitudes by any swimmer be tolerated.
10. I will respect the rights and space requirements of other groups using the swimming facility.

Team Communication

The coaches of the Manta Ray Swim Team work hard to communicate with swimmers and their families. A parent who accesses these different channels of communication will find immediate answers to many questions regarding swimming with MRA.

Team Web Site - www.mraswim.org

You can look here to find all of the necessary information you need regarding the swim team.

Team e-mails - mantarayaquatics@gmail.com

Email is used to announce swim meets, practice schedules, team social events, fundraisers, and any other important team announcements. Please make sure that the team has an e-mail address that you check regularly as this is a primary means of team communication.

Team Text Messaging

Text messaging is used for time sensitive messages, such as practice changes.

Group Meetings

The coaching staff will conduct one or two meetings per year designed to educate parents regarding their swimmer's group. This is a good chance to hear about the coach's goals and strategies for your child's training group.

Coach/Parent Communication

If you have questions or concerns regarding your swimmer, call or e-mail your coach to set up a time to meet. Please respect during practice the coach is responsible for all swimmers in the group, and must devote his/her full attention to them. During practice time we ask that you refrain from discussing swimmer issues with your child's coach.

Complaint Resolution

- Your group coach is always the first person to contact with any concerns regarding your swimmer.
- Contact Coach Cathy if you are not able to resolve the issue after communicating with the group coach.

Financial Commitment

Listed below are the financial commitments that families make upon joining the team. Swimmers and their families must be members in good standing in order to attend practices, meets, and other MRA events. Members in good standing have adhered to stated team obligations (dues payment, fundraising, and parent commitment hours), and conform to stated codes of conduct.

New Member Registration Fee

Manta Ray Aquatics currently does not have a new member registration fee. We do ask that as soon as possible you purchase a team cap. The cap can be purchased from the coaching staff.

USA Swimming Registration Fee

New and returning swimmers are required to pay annual registration fees to USA Swimming. Becoming a member of USA Swimming is a requirement to swim on the team and must be done before joining the team or you will not be allowed to swim until you have registered. Parents will register their swimmers online.

Monthly Dues

Monthly membership dues depend on how many days per week you would like your swimmer to attend. Members leaving MRA must submit a written notice of intent to leave to the coach at least 30 days prior to the date of departure. Failure to give proper notice will result in dues being assessed regardless of the swimmer's continued participation with the team. If you would like to change the amount of days per week you would like your swimmer to attend, written notice to the coach is required 15 days prior to 1st of the next month you would like the change.

Fee Schedule:

Novice -\$ 95.00 per month - up to 3 days per week
Level 1- \$110.00 per month - up to 4 days per week
Level 2- \$115.00 per month - up to 4 practices per week.
Elite 3 - \$135.00 per month - up to 5 practices a week
Senior Elite - \$135.00 per month - up to 5 practices per week

Multi-Swimmer Discount

MRA offers a discount to families with two or more swimmers. The first swimmer pays the full monthly fee. The second swimmer receives \$10 off of monthly dues. The third swimmer receives \$10 off of their monthly dues. Ask Coach Cathy about families with 4 or more swimmers.

Annual Fundraising Fee

Participation in MRA fundraisers is required for every swimmer. All swim teams rely on fundraising for pool fees, training equipment, travel meets, and activities. Each fundraiser will have a minimum fundraising amount that each swimmer or family will be asked to earn. You may choose to “buy out” of any fundraiser by donating the minimum. We ask every family to raise the following per year:

- 1 swimmer = \$125/year
- 2 swimmers = \$150/year
- 3 swimmers = \$175/year

Out teams primary fundraising event of the year is the “Lap-A-Thon”. It is a fun day that includes relays and activities, along with refreshments for the swimmers. Swimmers can request donations from friends, relatives, and local businesses to support their swim and reach their goal.

Meet Registration Fees

There is a swim meet surcharge fee that is not part of the monthly dues. Fees are charged per event by the team hosting the meet when entries are submitted. These fees are typically \$5.00 - \$15.00 per swimmer surcharge and \$4.00 - \$7.00 per event entered, but can change based on the meet.

Meet Surcharge

As a competitive swim team, Manta Ray Aquatics hosts swim meets every year. On the months the team hosts a USA Swimming sanctioned meet, your account will be charged \$10.00 for one swimmer or \$15.00 for two or more swimmers. This fee is to alleviate snack bar costs.

MRA Billing and Payment Policy

Prompt payment of fees and dues is essential for MRA to meet its financial obligations. Members who are delinquent (60 days or more) in paying team dues may be suspended from practice and/or meet participation until the account is brought current.

Billing

Members will have the option of paying their membership dues and other fees by auto pay using either a credit card or a checking account, or pay in person to Coach Cathy. Fees are due to be received on the first of each month. If payment has not been received by the 12th of the month, a late fee of \$10.00 will be charged to the account.

Departing Members

Swimmers leaving MRA must notify MRA, in writing, 30 days prior to leaving the team. Members are responsible for monthly dues for any practice or meet attended prior to, and during the last calendar month spent with the team. All outstanding dues and fees must be paid at the time of departure.

Swim Meets

The “Seasons” of Competitive Swimming

There are two “seasons” of competitive swimming, short course and long course. The difference between the two is the length of the pool that the competition takes place in. Pools of 25 yards are called “short course pools”. 50 meter pools are “long course pools”. We are fortunate that our pool is 50 meters by 25 yards, so we are able to swim both short course and long course.

Time Standards

Meets are designed as A, B, or C meets. The letters refer to the time standards that are used to place swimmers in terms of how fast they swim. Every one starts as a “C” time swimmer and then advances to “B” then “A”. There are also JO (Junior Olympics) time cuts. You can find your swimmers time standards on the website after their first meet.

Types of Meets

C Meets - Limited to swimmers with C times

B Meets - Limited to swimmers with B times

A Meets - Limited to swimmers with A times

Meets can be combined, i.e. AB meets or BC meets.

San Diego-Imperial Swim Junior Olympics

They are held twice each year, in Spring and Summer. The Spring meet is short course yards and the Summer meet is long course. Swimmers must have a JO cut in order to participate in these meets.

Swim Meet 101

Arrival

Arrive at the meet in plenty of time. The coach will inform you of what time to arrive.

Check in for Meet

When you arrive at the meet, check in at the check-in table as soon after arrival as possible. If the swimmer does not check in, they will not be able to swim. At check in, the swimmer's name and events that they entered will be confirmed. There are permanent markers available at the check in table for the swimmers to write their events on their hands. This is a useful tool, so that they do not forget their event numbers for that day.

Team Area

There will be a team area where team members sit together fostering team spirit and the exchange of valuable information. Swimmers play games, eat, and enjoy each other's company during swim meets. Come and join the fun in the team area at swim meets. Look for the MRA canopies!

Coach

The swimmer must check in with the coach upon arrival at the meet, preferably after they have already signed in at the check in table. The coach will supervise the swimmer's warm up before the event.

Deck Seeding

Heat and lane assignments are posted 1/2 hour before each event. Each heat places the slowest swimmer in the outside lanes and the fastest swimmers in the center lanes. Be sure to check the heat and lane assignments carefully.

Check-in Prior to Event

After finding your heat and lane assignment for the event your swimmer will swim, the swimmer should check in with the coach and provide this information to the coach. When you arrive at your assigned lane, ask one of the timers working in that lane to check and see if the swimmers name is on the sheet.

Disqualification

If the swimmer is disqualified (DQ'd) from an event, the official will try their best to make contact with the swimmer after their swim to discuss the DQ. Consider being DQ'd a valuable learning tool.

Coach

After swimming an event, the swimmer should ask for his or her time from the lane recorder and report the time to the coach. The coach will use this meeting to give encouragement and suggestions to the swimmer. It gives the coach time to focus on individual swimmers. The swimmer will improve more rapidly if he or she competes regularly and communicates with the coach.

Parents

At all meets, we must help with timing. Teams are assigned a timing lane and one or more chairs. We also need to provide stroke and turn officials. There is training involved with this, please talk to a coach if you are interested.

Parent Timing Commitment

Manta Ray Swim is required to supply timers at every swim meet they attend. Meets cannot run without timers, and swimmers cannot get accurate times without the support of the parent timers. TIMING IS MANDATORY. MRA parents are required to work at least one timing shift at each of these meets. It is each parent's responsibility to find the Timing Chair Coordinator at the meet and sign up for the required number of shifts.

When signing up for a timing shift, please be aware of the meet time line and your swimmer's events and needs. You may find it necessary to fulfill your timing commitment during your swimmer's events or stay after your swimmers have completed their events and time then.

Be a good timer.....and remember that "Often the best seat is a timing chair!"

- Sign up for your timing shift.
- Be prompt for your timing shift.
- Remain in your timing chair until relieved by the next timer.
- Need to change your shift? It is your responsibility to find a replacement.

Timing 101

Timing is very easy, there is no special training required. Usually, there will be two timers per lane. At least one of the timers will have a stopwatch, a clipboard and an event list. If the pool has an automatic timing system, there will be "pickles" for the timers as well. "Pickles" are the backup system in case the swimmer does not touch the electronic pad properly or in case the timing pad malfunctions. There is always a Head Timer whose duty is to start two stopwatches so that if a timer makes a mistake or a watch malfunctions, one of these watches can be obtained to time the swimmer in your lane.

The event cards on the clipboard will list the event number, the distance and stroke, and the names of the swimmers in each heat. When the starter calls a heat to the blocks, verify the swimmer's name on the event card. Report any discrepancies to the starter at once. In events when one length of the pool is swum, the swimmers will either start at the end opposite of the timers, or the timers will be moved.

Record all times on the event card next to the swimmer's name. DO NOT average the times. A runner will collect the completed cards at the end of the event. If you do not have an event card, notify the starter before the event begins, if possible, but remember ALWAYS start the stopwatch anyway. The event card can be obtained and filled out after the heat.