

Information Sheet - Minor Pool

Here is some information to explain how the minor pool sessions are organised and run:

Minor Pool Groups

Minor pool swimming runs in four 30 minute sessions between 5:30 and 7:30 every Tuesday during term time. Each session is divided into 4 ability groups. Your child will have been placed in a group suited to their current swimming ability.

The 4 groups are as follows:

'Turtles Group' - our first group consisting of non-swimmers and beginners - Development of water confidence, frontcrawl and backcrawl introduced with floats/noodles.

'Crocodiles Group' - Our next group consisting of improvers - these children are water confident and ready to start learning full stroke frontcrawl and swimming on their back without floats. Body movement for butterfly stroke taught.

Turtles and Crocodiles groups often work closely together for some parts of the lessons. At times children may go between groups depending on which skills are being taught, for example a child may be further on in frontcrawl than backcrawl.

'Dolphins Group' - our middle group - further technique development of frontcrawl and backcrawl. Breaststroke introduced. Dolphin kick for butterfly stroke developed.

'Sharks Group' - our top group - further technique development of all 4 full strokes.

The children progress through these 4 groups as their swimming ability increases. The amount of time spent in each group varies greatly. Do not be tempted to compare your child's progress to others within or outside of their group, they will all move through the groups at their own individual pace. Our coaches will monitor each swimmer's progress and you will be informed when your child is deemed fit to move to the next group.

It is very important to note that in the minor pool we are focussed on **technique, not distance or speed**. It is crucial at this stage that the swimmers are taught to become competent in their swimming technique across all 4 strokes before they work on their speed or building up the distance they can swim. It is a common misconception that swimming longer distances or being first across the pool equates to better swimming.

Children in the 'Sharks Group' are invited to swim during an extra session on SATURDAY MORNINGS 8:30-9:30. Please enquire at the club desk if you wish to attend.

Progress through the Club

When the swimmers have progressed through the 4 minor pool groups, the next stage is to swim in the main pool in the Monday night sessions. Initially the swimmers swim for 45 minutes on Monday nights and when they are capable this time is extended to 90 minutes.

When swimmers progress from Monday night swimming, they will then swim as senior swimmers on Tuesday nights in the main pool lanes 1-4 from 5:30 - 7:30.

When they are capable, Monday night swimmers and Tuesday night senior swimmers will have the opportunity to compete for the club in swimming galas. Our junior team competes in the 'Aquasprint League' and our senior team swims in the 'Provential Towns League'.

Practical points to note

- When you bring your child to swimming each week, please accompany them to the club desk (beside the minor pool viewing gallery) to register each week. The desk will be open 10 minutes before each

session begins. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT ACCURATE RECORDS ARE KEPT SO PLEASE REMEMBER TO REGISTER EVERY WEEK.

- Please make every effort to ensure that your child arrives on time for their lesson - it is disruptive to the class for swimmers to arrive late. Also, it is important for the children to warm up at the beginning of the session to reduce the risk of injury.
- When your child arrives on poolside, they should sit on the bench at the side of the pool - no child is allowed to enter the pool until told to by their coach.
- PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOUR CHILD BRINGS A PAIR OF GOGGLES EACH WEEK. Regularly try the goggles on your child, make sure they fit comfortably and that they do not leak. For some children, poor fitting goggles can be very off putting. It is advisable to use a permanent marker to name your child's goggles.
- Long hair should always be either securely tied back or the child should wear a swimming cap.
- The club operates a swim shop at the desk, Monday and Tuesday nights from 5:30, selling swimming caps (approx £3.50), goggles, fins, club hoodies, swimsuits and jammers, kit bags and towels.

Non-swimmers/beginners - How can I help my child?

- Be enthusiastic, interested and relaxed about your child learning to swim. Praise their efforts and focus on what they have done well.
- With our beginners, the most important thing we teach them is **water confidence**. Without this, progress in swimming ability would not happen. Water confidence will allow your child to be happy and relaxed in the water. Children will successfully attempt new activities and learn new swimming skills if they are water confident. You will see the coaches in the Turtles groups organising activities focused on developing this.
- It goes without saying that the beginner swimmer needs to get wet to progress! - For some, this is not easy at first and they may be reluctant to get wet above their shoulders. We are experienced in helping children like this progress. The eventual aim is that the child will happily put their face in the water and achieve a horizontal position, essential for good swimming technique.
- There are a few things you can try at home to help with this - allow your child to fill a sink and splash their face with water. At bathtime (minus the bubblebath!) help them practice putting their chin and mouth in the water and blow bubbles. Allow them to have a go at wearing their goggles in the bath and looking under the water.
- Never give your child the impression that having their face in the water is something to be anxious about (it's not!). Approach the activity in a casual light-hearted way, in other words if we as adults don't make a 'big deal' out of it, hopefully the child won't either. It can be helpful if your child showers before entering the poolside - for some, a splash of pool water on an already wet face is easier than coming into the pool completely dry.
- Reluctant children will not be forced to do something they are not happy to do.
- All our swimmers will become water confident in their own individual time.

Communication

- Information to be passed on to parents throughout the year is often circulated via e-mail. Please check at the club desk with the club secretary and ensure that your e-mail address has been noted.
- There is a swimming CLUB NOTICE BOARD just outside the minor pool viewing gallery - please check this regularly for information.
- A new facebook page has been set up for parents and swimmers age 14 and above. It is a closed group for club members only - 'Ballymoney Amateur Swimming Club'.
- If you wish to speak to your child's coach, you are welcome to do so 5 minutes before your child's lesson or straight after it. Each session normally ends with a short play time during which your coach will be free to talk to you. It is disruptive to the class if parents try to discuss their child when the coaches are supposed to be teaching.

The club is run completely by volunteers, including all the coaches. Without them we simply would not have a club. Many of you have stated on your registration forms that you are willing to help out when necessary with

various tasks in the running of the club, for example as a poolside helper. It is greatly appreciated when parents are willing to become involved in the running of our club. If you think you could help out, please speak to one of the coaches or leave a message at the swim desk.

I hope that this information is helpful to you and that your child enjoys their time at Ballymoney Swimming Club.

Julie Green