

# **ATOMIC SWIM CLUB**

## SUMMER 2024 Team Handbook

### **CONTENTS**

SECTION 1	Introduction	2
SECTION 2	Mission - Vision - Values	3
SECTION 3	Notice of Responsibilities	4
SECTION 4	Team Guidelines: Athletes, Parents/Guardians, and Coaches	5
SECTION 5	Helpful Hints for Parents/Guardians	9
SECTION 6	Grievance Policy & Conflict Resolution	12
SECTION 7	Locker Room Policies	14
SECTION 8	Social Media/Electronic Communication Policies	16
SECTION 9	Safe Sport, Unsportsmanlike Conduct, Harassment and Bullying	19
SECTION 10	Acceptable Communication Policies	26
	Signature Page	28

## SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

The Atomic Swim Club is committed to providing a welcoming, safe, caring and nurturing environment for all members and affiliate members. In that regard, we have prepared these guidelines to assist all concerned in understanding what is expected of them in their role as a swimmer, parent/guardian, or as a ATOM coach and employee. This document and relevant attachments will be updated annually and reviewed with all members of the ATOM community at the beginning of every season.

Program participants are expected to display good sportsmanship in support of the ATOM Vision, Mission, and Values; and should be aware of the non-negotiable guidelines detailed in this document before choosing to join. Additionally, all participants in the program are subject to prevailing the USA Swimming (USAS) Code of Conduct.

### Owner & Head Coach:

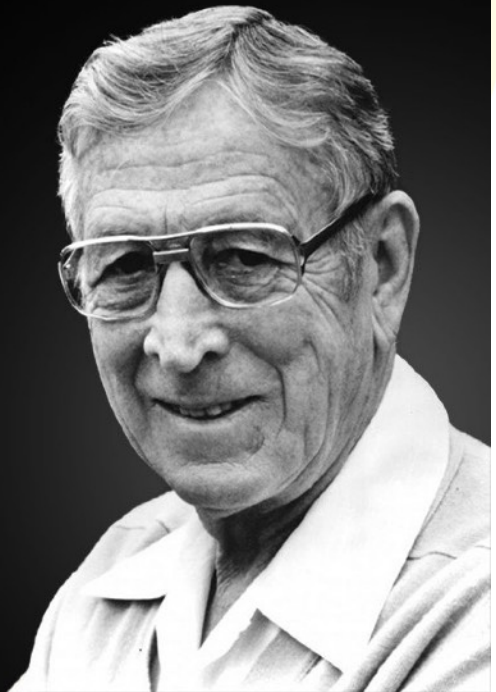
Jesse Grow  
[atomicswimclub@gmail.com](mailto:atomicswimclub@gmail.com)  
(509) 528-0424

### Co-Head Coach:

Ashton Pollick  
[atomicswimcoach@gmail.com](mailto:atomicswimcoach@gmail.com)

Be more concerned with your character than your reputation, because **your character is what you really are**, while your reputation is merely what others think you are.

— *John Wooden*



## SECTION 2 – MISSION, VISION & VALUES

### MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of ATOM to help athletes realize their own potential and prepare them to be outstanding members of their community.

To fully realize this mission, the level of participation of the swimmers, parents and coaches must embody a commitment to the team, a commitment to teammates and the acceptance of a personal role in the pursuit of excellence.

In keeping with our belief there is, ‘a life outside swimming,’ we believe the skills developed in our program: time management, self discipline, sportsmanship, and selflessness provide valuable benefits to each participant long after their swimming career ends. ***It is about the journey, not the destination!***

### VISION

Create enrichment opportunities that serves all swimmers, by providing a safe, healthy, and nurturing learning environment.

### CORE VALUES

- Generosity: Promoting an inclusive culture through community involvement.
- Empowerment: Fostering the leadership skills required to be successful, through continued hard work and dedication.
- Innovation: Striving to provide the highest quality learning environment, utilizing technology, proven teaching strategies, and a positive coaching philosophy.
- Perseverance: Seeing every situation as a learning opportunity for future success

### SECTION 3 - ATOM NOTICE OF RESPONSIBILITIES

ATOM supports a safe environment for all athletes. ATOM also assumes responsibility for all athletes on the pool deck **during practice times**. These practice times are available on team webpage and App for each group. By signing this Notice of Responsibilities agreement, I understand & agree to the following statements:

- I understand that coaches will not enter a locker room with athletes present unless there is an emergency situation, or they are performing locker room checks.
- I understand that ATOM coaches are certified lifeguards/in water certified and trained in CPR, First Aid & AED.
- I understand that in the event of an emergency that ATOM staff members will provide reasonable care to athletes within their scope and scale of training.
- I understand that in the event of an emergency that ATOM reserves the right to contact emergency personnel if an emergency is extremely serious – or if they are unable to contact the athlete’s emergency contact.
- I understand that ATOM staff members will provide emergency care until first responders arrive and take over the situation if needed.
- I understand that all incidents will be documented by coaching staff members and that all incidents will be reported to the parent/guardian, as well as the owner.
- I understand that it is my responsibility to alert coaches of any injuries or medical recommendations for my athlete. It is my responsibility to alert coaches of any medical concerns such as allergies, asthma, etc.
- I understand that if an incident occurs before official practice start time and/or after official end of practice time, that ATOM are not held responsible for that incident and cannot be held liable.
- I understand that it is my duty to educate my athlete that they must quickly change in the locker room and enter the pool on time – and leave practice in a timely fashion. I also understand that ATOM is only responsible for my athlete from 6:15pm to 8:00pm (Monday-Friday). I understand that should something occur to my athlete before or after practice – that ATOM are not responsible and therefore cannot be held liable.

## SECTION 4 - GUIDELINES

### COMMUNITY

It is our goal at ATOM to create an inclusive environment for all athletes to find their own success. We want to be a guiding light for the local community; through acts of kindness and selflessness, setting a good example for those around us to follow.

### SPORTSMANSHIP

Program participants are required to exhibit a high level of respect and sportsmanship at all team/club related events at all times. They should promote mutual respect, display positive behavior, engage in open and constructive communication, and support program coaches, officials, volunteers and administrators.

### ROLES

Swimmers, swim... Coaches, coach... Parents/Guardians, support...

It can be difficult for enthusiastic parents/guardians and supporters not to provide well-meaning instructions to their swimmers. However, it is best for parents/guardians to work together, with the coach in providing skill development related feedback to their swimmers. Parents/Guardians should also support the coaches in addressing the sacrifices and challenges involved in being a member of a team. Swimmers (age appropriate) are encouraged to learn responsibility by speaking with their coach themselves when they are unable to fulfill their ATOM obligations. Similarly, when players have a conflict with their coach, a fellow player, etc. they should personally initiate the resolution process and adhere to the conflict resolution procedure outlined below.

## SECTION 4 - GUIDELINES: ATHLETES

### ATOM ATHLETES

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

**“I understand that swimming is a privilege and not a right.”**

“I will obey all of USA Swimming’s Rules and Codes of Conduct.”

“I will only change in appropriate facilities. No “deck changes” are permitted.”

“I will not be possession or use alcohol or tobacco products.”

“I understand that the possession, use, or sale/distribution of any illegal substance or any weapon is strictly forbidden and that violations are subject to suspension or removal from ATOM”.

“I will refrain from the use of foul language, violence, behavior deemed dishonest, offensive, or illegal.”

“I will respect and show courtesy to my teammates, coaches, and parents at all times.”

“I will display positive behaviors and good sportsmanship at all practices and meets when representing ATOM.”

“I will demonstrate being a teammate and leader by cheering for/supporting my teammates in practices and in competition.”

“I will set a good example of proper behavior and work ethic for my teammates.”

“I will make every effort to attend practice and work to the best of my ability with a good attitude. I will communicate with my coach if issues arise that affect attendance or participation.”

“I will show respect for all facilities (including locker rooms) and other property, treat my own equipment and that of ATOM with respect. I will not throw, damage, or destroy any equipment during practices, competitions, or team activities.”

“I will be respectful of my teammates’ feelings and personal space.” ***Swimmers who exhibit sexist, racist, homophobic, or otherwise inappropriate behavior will be subject to disciplinary actions determined by the coaching staff and team ownership.***

“I will refrain from gossiping, “talking trash,” or disparaging teammates, coaches, or others that are part of the ATOM community, during practice, in locker rooms, at team functions and meets, via social media, or in other spaces.”

“ I will do my best to see all outcomes, both good and bad, as a LEARNING OPPORTUNITY.”

“I will follow the clubs anti-bullying policy and understand that there is zero tolerance for bullying behavior.”

“I will respect the judgment of meet officials, abide by the rules, and accept favorable and unfavorable decisions, as well as victory and defeat, with equal grace.”

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 ownership.

## SECTION 4 - GUIDELINES: PARENTS/GUARDIANS

### PARENTS/GUARDIANS (AND OTHER SUPPORTERS)

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 demonstrate respect for all swimmers, coaches, officials, other participants, and other parents/guardians."

"I will encourage and support my athlete(s); I will do my best to ensure my athlete attends practice (and communicates when needing to miss), arrives on time, and gives best effort each and every day."

"I will encourage my athlete to support their teammates during practice and at meets."

"I will respect coaches' decisions regarding event selection for meets; training; design of practice sets or other aspects of coaching. I will communicate any concerns via email but respect to the expertise and knowledge of the coaches."

"I will get involved by participating in fundraising efforts, attending team functions, volunteering in leadership roles and in other capacities, observing practices, cheering at meets, and talking with my child and their coach about their progress."

"I will empower coaches to make decisions about swimming and communicate (via email) as needed."

"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 decisions made by meet officials, even when they favor the opposing teams. Recognize outstanding performance from all participants."

"I will direct my concerns to my child's respective coach first then, if not satisfied, to the Head Club Coach. If I am still unsatisfied, I will reach out to the club owner."

"I understand that I may not be confrontational or threatening to any athlete, official, or staff member of ATOM."

"I will be an exemplary role models by positively supporting all participants."

**" I will Cheer EXTRA loud for ATOM swimmers!"**

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 ownership.

## **SECTION 4 - GUIDELINES: COACHES**

### ATOM COACHES

The purpose of this code of conduct for coaches is to establish common expectations for all members of the coaching staff of the club. It is to be used as a guide to promote a positive team environment and good sportsmanship.

At all times, adhere to USA Swimming's rules and code of conduct.

Set a good example by exemplifying the highest moral and ethical behavior.

Act and dress with professionalism and dignity in a manner suitable to his/her profession.

Treat opposing coaches, participants and parents/guardians with respect.

Respect officials and their judgment and abide by the rules of the event.

Teach swimmers the responsibilities of good sportsmanship.

Demand good sportsmanship and team-oriented behaviors from all swimmers.

Coach in a positive manner and do not use derogatory comments or abusive language or comments.

Model the positive behaviors demanded of the swimmers.

Win with humility and lose with dignity.

Provide feedback at both practice and meets.

Treat every athlete fairly, justly, impartially, intelligently, and with sensitivity.

Encourage swimmers to be the best they can be in swimming and in life.

Always place the well-being, health, and safety of swimmers above all other considerations, including developing performance.

Continue to seek and maintain their own professional development in all areas in relation to coaching and teaching children.

Always maintain a professional separation between coach and athlete.

Any complaints of a coach violating this code of conduct will be brought to the attention of his/her supervisor and/or the club's ownership. All coaches are subject to disciplinary action by the rest of the coaching staff & owner.

## SECTION 5 – HELPFUL HINTS FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

As referenced above, parents/guardians contribute to the success experienced by their athlete(s) and the entire team. Adults serve as role models, and their children emulate attitudes the attitudes that they see. We ask all ATOM parents/guardians to be aware of this important learning opportunity, and strive to be positive role models for all the swimmers. Most importantly, we ask parents/guardians to display good sportsmanship at all times toward coaches, officials, opponents and fellow parents/guardians. Remember that you are teaching your swimmer/athlete and the other swimmer/athletes at all times. We respectfully request that you:

1. Do not impose your ambitions on your swimmer.
2. Be supportive of your swimmer, no matter what.
3. Allow the coach to do the coaching.
4. Have positive things to say at a competition.
5. Acknowledge your swimmer's fears.
6. Do not criticize the officials.
7. Honor your swimmer's coach.
8. Be loyal and supportive of the team.
9. Ensure your swimmer has goals besides winning.
10. Remember that very few swimmers become Olympians.

### SOME ADDITIONAL DO'S AND DON'TS FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

(AUTHORED BY MICHAEL A. TAYLOR, INSTRUCTOR FOR THE STANFORD UNIVERSITY-BASED POSITIVE COACHING ALLIANCE)

#### **DO's for *Yourself*:**

- Do take vicarious pleasure from your swimmer's participation (but avoid becoming overly ego-involved).
- Do try to enjoy yourself at competitions. Your unhappiness can cause your child to feel guilty.
- Do look relaxed, calm, positive and energized when watching your child compete. Your attitude influences how your child feels and performs.
- Do have a life of your own outside of your child's sports participation.

#### **DO's with *Other Parents*:**

- Do engage other parents/guardians at events. Socializing can make it more fun!
- Do volunteer as much as you can. Youth sports depend upon the time and energy of involved parents.
- Do police your own ranks: Work with other parents to ensure that everyone behaves appropriately at practices and competitions.

**DO's with Coaches:**

- Do leave the coaching to the coaches.
- Do give them any support they need to help them do their jobs better.
- Do communicate with them about your child. You can learn about your child from each other.
- Do inform them of relevant issues at home that might affect your child at practice.
- Do inquire about the progress of your child. You have a right to know.
- Do make the coaches your allies.

**DO'S for Your Swimmer/Athlete:**

- Do provide guidance, but do not force or pressure them.
- Do assist them in setting realistic goals for participation.
- Do emphasize fun, skill development and other benefits of sports participation—e.g., cooperation, competition, self-discipline and commitment.
- Do show interest in their participation: help them get to practice, attend competitions and ask questions.
- Do provide a healthy perspective to help them understand success and failure.
- Do emphasize and reward effort rather than results.
- Do understand they may need a break from sports occasionally.
- Do give them some space when needed. Part of sports participation involves them figuring things out for themselves.
- Do keep a sense of humor. If you are having fun and laughing, so will they!
- Do provide regular encouragement.
- Do be a healthy role model for your child by being positive and relaxed at competitions and by having balance in your own life.
- Do GIVE THEM UNCONDITIONAL LOVE: SHOW THEM YOU LOVE THEM WHETHER THEY WIN OR LOSE!

**DON'TS for Yourself:**

- Don't base your self-esteem and ego on the success of your child's sports participation.
- Don't care too much about how your swimmer performs.
- Don't lose perspective about the importance of your child's sports participation.

**DON'TS with Other Parents:**

- Don't make enemies of other parents/guardians.
- Don't talk about others in the sports community. Talk with them. It is more constructive.

DON'TS *with Coaches:*

- Don't interfere with their coaching during practice or competitions.
- Don't work at cross-purposes with them. Make sure you agree philosophically and practically on why your child is playing sports and what he or she may get out of sports.

DON'TS *with Your Swimmer/Athletes:*

- Don't expect your children to get more from their sports than fun, healthy physical activity, mastery and love of a lifetime sport and transferable life skills.
- Don't ignore their bad behavior in practice or competitions; deal with the inappropriate behaviors swiftly and constructively to reduce the likelihood of it happening again.
- Don't expect your child to talk with you when they are upset. Give them some time.
- Don't make children feel guilty for the time, energy and money you are spending and the sacrifices you are making.
- Don't think of your children's sports participation as an investment for which you expect a return.
- Don't live out your own dreams through your children's sports participation.
- Don't compare your children's progress with that of other children.
- Don't badger, harass, threaten or use sarcasm or fear to motivate children. It only demeans them and causes them to dislike you.
- Don't expect anything from children besides their best effort.
- Don't do anything that will cause your child to be embarrassed.
- Don't show negative emotions while you are watching your child at a competition.
- Don't EVER DO ANYTHING THAT WILL CAUSE THEM TO THINK LESS OF THEMSELVES OR OF YOU!

## SECTION 6 - GRIEVANCE POLICY & CONFLICT RESOLUTION

### GRIEVANCE POLICY

Communication is the best way to reduce conflicts within the club. Coaches usually have time before or after practice to answer questions or provide information. Sending an email or a note with your swimmer is also a good way to get information to them (except in an emergency).

When conflicts between a swimmer/parent and coach do arise, please try hard to increase good faith, proactive (not reactive) communication between the affected parties. Refrain from discussing disagreements with other parents rather than taking them directly to the coach or owner. Not only is the problem never resolved that way, but this approach often creates more problems. Below are some guidelines for a parent raising some difficult issues with a coach:

- Try to keep foremost in your mind that you and the coach have the best interests of your child at heart. If you trust that the coach's goals match yours—even though his/her approach may be different—you are more likely to enjoy good rapport and a constructive dialogue.
- Keep in mind that the coach must balance your perspective of what is best for your child with the needs of the entire team and/or training group. On occasion, an individual child's interest may need to be subordinate to the interests of the group. In the long run, the benefits of membership in the group may compensate for occasional short-term inconveniences.
- If your child swims for an assistant coach, always discuss the matter first with that coach following the same guidelines and preconceptions noted above. If the assistant coach cannot resolve your concern satisfactorily, then ask that one of the head coaches to join the dialogue as a third party.
- If the head coach cannot resolve your concern, then bring the issue to owner.
- If another parent uses you as a sounding board for complaints about a coach's performance or policies, encourage the other parent to speak directly to the coach.
- Spreading false information, derogatory information, or terms, or speaking negatively on the club or its competitors will not be tolerated.

The following procedures regarding problems, questions, or complaints must be followed by the families who elect to become part of the Cougar Aquatics swim team. **ALL grievances must begin the respective procedures down below within a 48-hour time frame or they shall be considered NULL & VOID (unless it relates directly to SafeSport or MAAPP policies).** This is to ensure issues are dealt with in a timely fashion before becoming a larger team problem.

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION

ATOM members are encouraged to address conflicts/concerns in the following manner(s):

Problems/questions/complaints regarding practice, stroke instruction, meets, team rules, or any other part of the TRAINING program should be discussed with the following individuals, IN ORDER, until the situation is resolved.

1. The swimmers respective coach VIA email during normal business hours (8am to 5pm Monday-Friday) or on the pool deck before or after practice. ***Assistant coaches are not to be contacted via phone without their express permission.***
2. The head coaches. Please contact via email or phone during business hours. Please refrain from texting in case of an emergency.

Problems/Questions/Complaints regarding other parents on the team should be discussed with the following individuals, in order, until the situation is resolved.

1. The parent in question.
2. The head coaches. Please contact via email or phone during business hours. Please refrain from texting in case of an emergency.

When swimmer to swimmer problems arise they should be discussed with the following individuals, IN ORDER, until the situation is resolved.

1. We encourage swimmers to meet with one another first to respectfully resolve the problem, if possible.
2. If unresolved, contact the swimmers respective age group coach VIA email during normal business hours (8am to 5pm Monday-Friday) or on the pool deck before or after practice. ***Assistant coaches are not to be contacted via phone without their expressed permission.***
3. If still unresolved, contact Coach Grow VIA email or by phone or on the pool deck before or after practice.

**Parents are NOT to contact other swimmers directly, or have their swimmers contact the swimmer in question for them. This will be categorized as a violation of the clubs anti-bullying policy and will face disciplinary action deemed appropriate by the board.**

## DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Team ownership reserves the right to issue disciplinary action to athletes, parents, and in violation of this policy.

## **SECTION 7 - LOCKER ROOM POLICY & AGREEMENT**

The following guidelines are designed to maintain personal privacy as well as to reduce the risk of misconduct in locker rooms and changing areas.

### **REQUIREMENTS TO USE THE LOCKER ROOM OR CHANGING ROOM**

The designated locker room or changing area must be used when an athlete or Applicable Adult changes, in whole or in part, into or out of a swimsuit when wearing just one suit (e.g., deck changing is prohibited).

### **CELL PHONES AND OTHER MOBILE RECORDING DEVICES**

Cell phones and other mobile devices with recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras and video cameras increase the risk for different forms of misconduct in locker rooms and changing areas. The USA Swimming Athlete Protection Policies prohibit the use of such devices in the locker room or other changing areas:

#### **305.3 Use of audio or visual recording devices, including a cell phone camera, is not allowed in changing areas, rest rooms or locker rooms.**

Use of any device's (including a cell phone) recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras and video cameras in locker rooms, changing areas, or similar spaces by a minor athlete or an Applicable Adult is prohibited.

### **DRESSING & UNDRESSING**

An unrelated Applicable Adult must not expose his or her breasts, buttocks, groin or genitals to a minor athlete under any circumstance. An unrelated Applicable Adult must not request an unrelated minor athlete to expose the minor athlete's breasts, buttocks, groin or genitals to the unrelated Applicable Adult under any circumstance.

- Do not leave valuables in the locker room.
- Pick up towels and clean up after yourself in the locker room. Leave the locker room in better condition than you found it.
- **Disrespect, foul language, horseplay and destructive behavior in the Locker Room will not be tolerated and will result in immediate disciplinary action.**

### **ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS**

Except for athletes on the same team or athletes attending the same competition, at no time are unrelated Applicable Adults permitted to be alone with a minor athlete in a locker room or changing area, except under emergency circumstances. If the organization is using a facility that only has a single locker room or changing area, separate times for use by Applicable Adults must be designated.

## MONITORING

The club must regularly and randomly monitor the use of locker rooms and changing areas to ensure compliance with this Policy. Locker rooms and changing areas may be monitored by use of the following methods:

- Conducting a sweep of the locker room or changing area before athletes arrive;
- Posting staff directly outside the locker room or changing area during periods of use;
- Leaving the doors open when adequate privacy is still possible; and/or
- Making occasional sweeps of the locker rooms or changing areas with women checking on female locker rooms and men checking on male locker rooms.
- Every effort must be made to recognize when a minor athlete goes to the locker room or changing area during practice and competition, and, if the minor athlete does not return in a timely fashion, to check on the minor athlete's whereabouts.

## LEGAL GUARDIANS IN LOCKER ROOM OR CHANGING AREAS

Legal guardians are discouraged from entering locker rooms and changing areas. If a legal guardian does enter a locker room or changing area, it must only be a same-sex legal guardian and the legal guardian should notify a coach or administrator in advance.

## SECTION 8 - SOCIAL MEDIA/ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

The purpose of this social media/Electronic Device & Locker Room Agreement is to ensure safety for all ATOM members. Our goal is to create and foster a safe, positive learning environment for our team. It is also to ensure a positive image of ATOM within the community and within USA Swimming as a whole.

ATOM recognizes the prevalence of electronic communication and social media in today's world. Given that our athletes use social media as their primary source of communication, ATOM has established a policy for acceptable use of social media and electronic communication by our athletes. This policy is essential for ATOM to provide a safe and positive environment for all its athletes, officials, parents, and coaches.

- At all times, adhere to USA Swimming's Rules and Code of Conduct.
- All ATOM participants agree to be filmed and photographed by the host club approved photographer(s) and videographer(s) and to allow the rights to use names and pictures before, during, or after the meet such as in public psych sheets, heat sheets, and results or featured on the host club or ATOM website or social media or in public broadcasts of the event via television or webcast.
- Parents and guardians of minor swimmers who do not wish their swimmers' individual pictures featured on any media should fill out our Photography waiver form at the beginning of the season or inform Head Coach Jesse Grow.
- Refrain from foul language or derogatory comments in the locker rooms
- Refrain from talking negatively, gossiping, or otherwise commenting on fellow teammates, coaches, or others within the locker room, on social media and elsewhere.
- Understand that electronic recording devices of any kind are prohibited in the locker rooms, showers, or changing areas of the pool. Failure to comply with this rule will result in immediate disciplinary action determined by the coaching staff.
- Understand that I may not text coaches unless a parent/guardian is attached to the text message.
- Understand that all phone calls with coaches must be interruptible by a parent/guardian.
- Understand that all communications with coaching staff will occur in an area that is public, viewable, and interruptible at all times.
- Understand that all athletes are representatives of ATOM. Any social media post that is made that can be determined as racist, sexist, homophobic, obscene, or profane material of any kind will not be tolerated. Failure to comply with this will result in immediate disciplinary action determined by the coaching staff and owner.
- Understand that I may not "friend" or "follow" a coach on social media or send them direct or personal messages via any social media platform.
- Understand that I may only communicate with coaches during the hours listed within this handbook.

- Understand that I may be contacted outside of the designated hours listed in this handbook by coaches if there is an emergency.
- Understand that coaches will perform random sweeps of the locker room before and after practice to ensure safety and to monitor behavior.
- Understand that I am to respect all equipment owned by Cougar Aquatics and Washington State University and to treat all facilities with respect.

### ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Each ATOM athlete must exhibit ethical and responsible conduct in all online communications and activities and respect the rights and privacy of all other ATOM, IES, and USA Swimming athletes, coaches, officials, and parents. ATOM prohibits cyberbullying or cyberstalking of any athlete, coach, or official by any means or method, including but not limited to the use of Facebook, Instagram, Text Messaging, Instant Messaging, Twitter, E-Mail, and SnapChat. Cyberbullying and Cyberstalking are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

### CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying involves the use of electronic information and communication technologies to support deliberate or repeated harassment, intimidation and/or hostile behavior by an individual or group through personal attacks, threats, or other means that harms others, whether intentional or not. Examples of cyberbullying includes mean text messages, emails, tweets, or posts including rumors sent by email or posted on social networking sites, and embarrassing pictures, videos, websites, or fake profiles.

### CYBERSTALKING

Cyberstalking involves the use of electronic information and communication technologies to communicate words, images, or language directed at or about a specific person, causing substantial emotional distress to that person. Harassing, intimidating, and hostile mean any electronic communication that is perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic including race, color, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, physical attributes, socioeconomic status, physical or mental ability or disability or any other characteristic related to athletic performance that a reasonable person should know under the any of these circumstances:

- Will have the effect of harming another athlete or has the effect of substantially interfering with another athlete's performance or opportunities.
- Has the effect of having a negative impact on another athlete's emotional or psychological well-being.
- Has the effect of insulting or demeaning another athlete to cause disruption in or substantial interference with practice, any swim meet, or any other ATOM related activity.

- Has the effect of creating a hostile environment for any athlete at any USA Swimming activity or swim meet.
- Has the effect of substantially disrupting the training process or the orderly operation of any ATOM practice, workout, or other events or swim meets of any other club or high school.

## REPORTING

If cyberbullying or cyberstalking does occur, the incident will be dealt with promptly.

Any athlete who is being bullied or stalked or is aware of any such bullying or stalking occurring is asked to talk to his or her parents or talk to a ATOM coach. When an athlete talks to his or her parents or a coach, the athlete should also show to the parents or the coach the electronic communication that constitutes the incident. Safeguarding the electronic communication as evidence of the bullying or stalking will help ATOM conduct its investigation of any incident. While there is no time limit for reporting bullying incidents, reporting quickly gives the Club an opportunity to address the situation immediately and stop the bullying.

Upon receiving a report of cyberbullying or cyberstalking, the Head Coach will commence an investigation of the incident. ATOM takes cyberbullying and cyberstalking seriously and all athletes and parents can be assured that ATOM will support them when an incident is reported. Any type of bullying and stalking is counterproductive to the team atmosphere and team spirit ATOM wants to maintain and foster on a daily basis. Again, ATOM is committed to providing a caring and supportive environment for all of our athletes.

## **SECTION 9 – SAFE SPORT, UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT, HARASSMENT AND BULLYING**

Unsportsmanlike conduct, harassment and bullying will not be tolerated at the ATOM under any circumstances and may result in immediate suspension from the team, pending further review by ATOM Head Coaches.

### **UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT**

Displaying behaviors inconsistent with the Vision, Mission and Values of the Club such as disrespecting another individual or group, being discourteous to others, displaying bad temper, using inappropriate language, raising voices, being unfair or knowingly violating the rules, cheating, etc.

### **HARASSMENT**

Harassing behaviors of any nature that have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee's or coach's work performance, with a swimmer's participation in the program, or in any way creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment, may result in immediate suspension from the team, pending further review by the ATOM Head Coaches.

### **BULLYING**

Bullying is considered a form of harassment and is potentially devastating to the victim, counterproductive to team spirit and may result in immediate suspension from the team, pending further review by the ATOM Head Coaches and ownership.

Because bullying is increasingly prevalent in contemporary life, we will provide more detail on this important topic in separate handouts and team awareness and training sessions every season.

The USA Swimming Code of Conduct specifically prohibits bullying. Should anyone become aware of a bullying incident, he/she is expected to immediately report the matter to his/her coach, the Head Coaches. ATOM considers the act of bullying as defined in this document to include and apply to all ATOM members.

## SAFESPORT

USA Swimming's top priority continues to be keeping our athletes safe. No form of abuse, including child sexual abuse, has a place in our sport. As a part of our continued commitment to safeguarding our athletes, USA Swimming has enacted enhancements to our Safe Sport policy and education requirements.

The U.S. Center for SafeSport, the separate, independent, organization that oversees all sexual misconduct reports in the Olympic and Paralympic Movement created the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies to set a baseline for acceptable safety standards that limit one-on-one interactions between adults and minor athletes.

On April 29, 2019, USA Swimming released its Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy (MAAPP) addressing one-on-one interactions, social media and electronic communications, travel: local and team, locker rooms and changing areas and massages, rubdowns and athletic training modalities. All USA Swimming member clubs were required to implement MAAPP in full by June 23, 2019.

Training our members in abuse prevention and mandatory reporting is just as important as creating policies. USA Swimming is required to provide regular and consistent training for all adults who interact with and have direct contact with minor athletes, including adult athletes. Starting June 23, 2019, as a condition of membership, all athlete members ages 18 and over must complete Athlete Protection Training.

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list. If you are not sure who to contact with a concern please *contact Safe Sport Staff at the National Office* and we will be sure to talk through your concern, answer your questions and connect you with the correct people.

If your concern deals with any of the following:

- Sexual Misconduct
- Sexual Harassment
- Sexually Explicit/Inappropriate Communication through Social Media
- Criminal Charges
- Use, Sale, or Distribution of illegal drugs
- Physical Abuse
- Inappropriate Touching
- Lap Sitting
- Coaches sharing hotel rooms with Athletes
- Rubdown or Massage performed by coaches
- Pictures or video taken in locker rooms or changing areas
- Peer to Peer Bullying
- Adult to Athlete Bullying
- Parent Issues
- Violations of team rules and team code of conduct

## USA SWIMMING CODE OF CONDUCT

## MANDATORY REPORTING RULE

### ARTICLE 306 - SEXUAL MISCONDUCT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- 306.1 It is every member's responsibility to promptly report any incident regarding sexual misconduct by a member as described in Article 304.3.8 to USA Swimming's Director of Safe Sport. Reporting must occur when an individual has firsthand knowledge of misconduct or where specific and credible information has been received from a victim or knowledgeable third party. Various state laws may also require reporting to law enforcement or to a designated child protection agency.
- 306.2 No member shall retaliate against anyone who has made a good faith report under 306.1.
- 306.3 False reporting of sexual misconduct made in bad faith is prohibited.
- 306.4 Neither civil nor criminal statutes of limitation apply to reports of cases of sexual abuse."

### USA SWIMMING MINOR ATHLETE ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY (MAAPP)

USA Swimming **requires all adult athletes to complete the online Athlete Protection Training (APT) course. This includes 17 year old athletes who must complete the training before their 18th birthday or will risk ineligibility.** Per USA Swimming, failing to complete the requirement on time "will result in an athlete's inability to swim in a meet or at practice." To summarize:

- All adult athletes (18 years or older) must complete the APT.
- Any 17-year-old athlete must complete the APT by their 18th birthday or risk ineligibility once they turn 18.
- Adult athletes must complete the APT every year – it expires 12 months after you complete all three courses.
- Athletes who do not fulfill this requirement will be ineligible to compete in meets or practice, and times swum while ineligible will not count for qualification to any meets.

#### **Additional points of information:**

- All electronic communication between a minor athlete and a coach must take place between 8am & 8pm except in emergency circumstances.
- All electronic communication between a minor athlete and a coach must include a parent/guardian in the conversation/thread (in the past we've allowed any 3rd set of eyes but now it must be a parent/guardian as per the MAAPP).
- No coach may friend/follow a minor athlete or have a minor athlete as a friend/follower on any social media account. Coaches may not send any type of instant/direct message to a minor athlete through any social media platform.

## ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS BULLYING

ATOM does not tolerate bullying of any kind. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. ATOM 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 or team owner. Retaliation for reporting incidents will not be tolerated.

Objectives of the ATOM Bullying Policy and Action Plan:

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

### **What is Bullying?**

#### USA Swimming Code of Conduct 304.3.7

Bullying is the severe or repeated use by one or more USA Swimming members of oral, written, electronic or other 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 that to a reasonably objective person has the effect of:

1. Causing physical or emotional harm to the other member or damage to the other member's property.
2. Placing the other member in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property.
3. Creating a hostile environment for the other member at any USA Swimming activity.
4. Infringing on the rights of the other member at any USA Swimming activity; or
5. 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 club or LSC).

## REPORTING PROCESS

An athlete who feels that they have been bullied is asked to do one or more of the following things:

- Talk to your parents.
- Talk to a Coach.
- Write a letter or email to the Club Coach or the club's Safe Sport Representative.
- 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 club 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 taking the following steps:

1. Intervene immediately. It is ok 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 club or it is reported to be occurring at our club, we address the bullying by FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED and SUPPORTING THE KIDS INVOLVED using the following approach:

## FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED

1. We get the facts.
  - Keep all the involved children separate.
  - Get the story from several sources, both adults and kids.
  - Actively listen without blaming.
  - Don't call the act "bullying" while you are trying to understand what happened.
  - 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.
  - Review the USA Swimming definition of bullying.

- 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?
- 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.
- Once you have determined if the situation is bullying, support all of the kids involved.

### SUPPORTING KIDS INVOLVED

#### 3. Support the kid(s) who are being bullied.

- 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.
- 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:
  - Ask the child being bullied what can be done to make them feel safe. Remember that changes to routine should be minimized. They are 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.
  - Develop a game plan. Maintain open communication between ATOM and parents. Discuss the steps that will be taken and how bullying will be addressed going forward.
- Be persistent. Bullying may not end overnight. Commit to making it stop and consistently support the bullied child.

#### 4. Address bullying behavior

- Make sure the child knows what the problem behavior is. Young people who bully must learn their behavior is wrong and harms others.
- Show kids that bullying is taken seriously. Calmly, tell the child that bullying will not be tolerated. Model respectful behavior when addressing the problem.
- Work with the child to understand some of the reasons they bullied. For example:
  - 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.

- 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 need additional support.
- 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:
  - Write a letter apologizing to the athlete who was bullied.
  - Do a good deed for the person who was bullied, for the whole team, or for others in your community.
  - Clean up, repair, or pay for any property they damaged.
- Avoid strategies that don't work or have negative consequences:
  - 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.
  - 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.
- Follow-up. After the bullying issue is resolved, continue finding ways to help the child who 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.

### SUPPORT ADDITIONAL ATHLETES

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.

- Be a friend to the person being bullied.
- Tell a trusted adult – your parent, coach, or club board member.
- 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. Example: “Let's go, practice is about to start.”
- Set a good example by not bullying others.
- 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.

## SECTION 10 - ACCEPTABLE COMMUNICATION POLICY

All communications between a coach or other adult and an athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. The content and intent of all electronic communications must adhere to the USA Swimming Code of Conduct regarding Athlete Protection.

For example, as with any communication with an athlete, electronic communication should not contain or relate to any of the following:

- Drugs or alcohol use;
- Sexually oriented conversation; sexually explicit language; sexual activity
- The adult's personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues, or personal problems;
- Inappropriate or sexually explicit pictures
- **Note:** Any communication concerning an athlete's personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues or personal problems must be transparent, accessible and professional.

### GOLDEN RULE

Whether one is an athlete, coach, or parent, the guiding principle to always use in communication is to ask: "Is this communication something that someone else would find appropriate or acceptable in a face-to-face meeting?" or "Is this something you would be comfortable saying out loud to the intended recipient of your communication in front of the intended recipient's parents, the coaching staff, or other athletes?"

### TRANSPARENCY

All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should be transparent. Your communication should not only be clear and direct, but also free of hidden meanings, innuendo and expectations.

### ACCESSIBLE

All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should be considered a matter of record and part of the Team's records. **Always, include athletes parent in the communication so that there is no question regarding accessibility.**

### PROFESSIONAL

All electronic communication between a coach and an athlete should be conducted professionally as a representative of the Team. This includes word choices, tone, grammar, and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of a staff member.

If your communication meets all three of the T.A.P. criteria, then it is likely this method of communication with athletes will be appropriate.

### FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, BLOGS, AND SIMILAR SITES

Coaches may have personal Facebook (or other social media site) pages, but they are not permitted to have any athlete member of ATOM join their personal page as a “friend”.

- A coach should not accept any “friend request(s)” from an athlete.
- In addition, the coach should remind the athlete that this is not permitted.
- Coaches are encouraged to set their pages to “private” to prevent athletes from accessing the coach’s personal information.

The Club has an official Instagram and Facebook page that athletes and their parents can “friend” for information and updates on team-related matters.

### TEXTING AND EMAIL

Subject to the general guidelines mentioned above, texting and emailing is allowed between coaches and athletes. This communication shall be used for the purpose of communicating information directly related to team activities.

### REQUEST TO DISCONTINUE ALL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

The parents or guardians of an athlete may request in writing that their child not be contacted by coaches through any form of electronic communication.

## ATOM TEAM RULES & EXPECTATIONS AGREEMENT

The 2024-25 Handbook containing all team policies and the team Code of Conduct can be found on the ATOM Website under the – Please log in to the website (you must be logged in to read/print this document) and read this document thoroughly.

As members and swimmer(s) of the ATOM, our signature below acknowledges that I/we have received, that I/we have read and that I/we agree to abide by the standards outlined in the ATOM Handbook and the **Code of Conduct**—as long as we are ATOM program participants and ATOM affiliates.

**I/we understand that failure to comply with those standards may result in suspension or termination from the Atomic Swim Club.**

Family Name (please print clearly): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Swimmer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Swimmer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Swimmer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Swimmer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*The original copy of this signed document will be kept on file at the ATOM.*