



Parent/Guardian Handbook



2008-2009



YMCA Mission: To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

WELCOME TO THE YMCA SWIM TEAM!

We are delighted that you have joined the YMCA's competitive youth swim team.

Stingrays!

Swimmers will enjoy a happy, healthy and challenging swim season together, building sportsmanship, skill, speed and stamina.

Parents, please get involved! It's the best way to ensure your youth swimmer has a satisfying and successful season. You will find your involvement to be both pleasant and enriching!

This handbook will help you understand much of what goes on during the YMCA swim season, and where and how to get further information.

Don't hesitate! – Ask us about any issues not addressed in the handbook.

C.J. Hoffman
Aquatic Director, Stoney Point YMCA

Paul Below
Head Coach, Stoney Point Stingrays



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YMCA Staff

C.J. Hoffman	Aquatics Director
Paul Below, Greta McChesney,	Head Coach Assistant Coach
Greg Gibson Sue Pokorny	Swim Team Aide Swim Team Aide

Parent Advisory Committee

Tracie Rathjens	Chair
Kelly Groe	Co-Chair
Darrell McChesney	Treasurer
Janet Jacobsen	Secretary

Coaching Philosophy: To provide a fun and challenging competitive swim environment where the swimmers will develop life long character skills and healthy fitness lifestyles.



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Character Development and the YMCA

What are the definitions of the YMCA's core values?

CARING: To love others. To be sensitive to the well being of others. To help others.

HONESTY: To tell the truth. To act in such a way that you are worthy of trust. To have integrity; making sure your choices match our values.

RESPECT: To treat others, as you would have them treat you. To value the worth of every person, including yourself.

RESPONSIBILITY: To do what is right, what you out to do. To be accountable for your behavior and obligations.

What is the YMCA mission? Why does the organization exist?

When the YMCA was founded in 1844, one of its primary goals was to help people develop their character. The YMCA mission is “to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.” This means we help the people we serve put these principles into practice in their daily lives: Their choices, their attitudes, and their behavior.

What principles are eluded to in the YMCA mission statement?

Taken together, they are like a code of conduct based upon Biblical teachings that Jesus challenged us to use as guideposts of our lives: Our choices, attitudes, and behavior. These principles consist of many positive values which are accepted by most as “the right things to do,” because these values encourage us, as a society, to get along. When individuals do not know the difference between right and wrong and do not believe in and act on these common values, we all will face serious difficulties.

How would one describe a person of strong character?

A person of strong character chooses to do the right things (acts on these positive values) even when no one is looking. He or she chooses to do what is right because he or she honestly believes in the positive values as the way to behave.

How does the YMCA develop the character of the people it serves?

We challenge the people we serve to believe in positive values and act on them in their daily lives. Our goal is not to force people to do what is right only when someone of authority is watching them. Rather we hope people will choose to do the right thing because they believe it is the right thing to do. Therefore, our challenge is to find ways to encourage those we serve to do the right things – to believe in and act on positive values.

Isn't teaching values the job of parents?

Yes. Even though teaching life values is primarily the job of parents and other adults who care for children, in today's busy and hectic world parents welcome the help of organizations like the YMCA to help strengthen the character of their children.



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SWIMMERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Any swimmer who disrupts a practice or a meet, damages the property of others, or threatens, intimidates or injures others will be ejected. A second incident, of any sort, will be cause for dismissal from the team. Courtesy, citizenship and sportsmanship are as fundamental to the YMCA competitive swimming program as stroke and speed. These qualities derive naturally from the YMCA core values: Respect, Honesty, Caring, and Responsibility.

Each swimmer and a parent or guardian needs to read this section and discuss it together. When both the youth swimmer and the responsible adult are satisfied that they fully understand what is expected and required of Stingrays team members both will sign and date the "Parent/Swimmer Acknowledgement of Responsibility" form (attached to the end of this handbook, or available from the Stoney Point YMCA Aquatics Director) and return it to the Head Coach before the swimmer participates in any competition.

As a Stingrays Swimmer, I will:

1. Arrive on time to practices. This is very important as our time is limited;
2. Check-in properly at the YMCA, and show my membership card to the Member Service staff at the front desk;
3. Listen to and respect all YMCA staff. (ie: Coaches, lifeguards, building supervisors, member service staff, etc.);
4. Observe all YMCA swimming pool and whirlpool rules. Unless you are 16 years of age or older, the whirlpool is off limits;
5. Observe all YMCA rules, at Cedar Rapids Metropolitan YMCA sites and at other YMCAs.

Swimmers are expected to be courteous and respectful at all meets, home and away. At away meets, swimmers are expected to follow the rules set by the YMCA the team is visiting. Each of us, swimmer or spectator, represents the YMCA of the Cedar Rapids Metropolitan Area at away Meets.

6. Use locker rooms only for dressing, showering and the restroom facilities provided, and respect others who are using the locker room. I will also change and exit the YMCA in an expedient manner if practicing in the late practice session and not prevent the YMCA staff from performing closing duties in a timely manner.

Damage to the locker rooms or other facilities at any YMCA site will be assessed to the swimmer's family. Offending swimmers will be ejected, and may be dismissed from the team and expelled from the YMCA.



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7. Turn in a completed and signed “Season Consent Form” to the Head Coach or Aquatics Director before the time trials. Swimmers will not be allowed to compete without this signed form.

Swim team coaches are not babysitters nor are other YMCA personnel. Each youth swimmer at any team practice or swim meet, home or away should be under the supervision of an adult. Parents or guardians unable to attend with their youth swimmer need to make arrangements for their child’s supervision and/or transportation. This is an important safety issue!

8. Turn in meet entry sheet to the coaching staff on time. There will be adequate time to fill out entries before all meets. There will be no “default” entry forms.
9. On Meet days:
 - a. **At Home:** Arrive and check in at the YMCA a half hour before warm-ups begin. **Away:** Arrive at the venue at least 30 minutes before the start of warm-ups;
 - b. Check with coaches when I arrive;
 - c. Wear shoes, sandals or swim socks at all times when not on the pool deck;
 - d. Go to holding area and remain there except for: Warm-ups; Event calls (to report to the clerk of course); Restroom visits; Concession stand visits;
 - e. Stay off the pool deck, unless there to swim an event;
 - f. Stay out of the locker rooms, except to use the restroom facilities;
 - g. Stay out of the viewing area, unless cheering for a friend or sibling. Swimmers are competitors, not spectators! Swimmers need to stay in the designated team holding area; Stay out of the gymnasium, fitness center, the sauna, etc. Swimmers risk ejection from the event and expulsion from the team if apprehended in off-limits areas.
 - h. Keep track of which events the clerk of course is calling. When one of my events is called, report to the Clerk of Course promptly. Swimmers will be courteous, respectful and well behaved at the Clerk of Course, while waiting for events.
 - i. Tell a coach if leaving the meet before it is over, especially if not swimming in an assigned relay. My coach may need me to fill a relay team. Relay swimmers who “stand up” their teammates may be dropped from considerations for relay competition at the sectional, state and regional levels!
 - j. Clean up the holding area before leaving. Wipe up spills, and throw away trash in a proper receptacle – this means everyone. Remember food and drinks are to stay in the lobby. Do not bring it in to any other area.
 - k. Make sure to take all personal belongings when leaving (ie: suit, towel, footwear, goggles, caps, playthings) I know that YMCAs usually maintain a “Lost and Found”, but don’t depend on it.



HOME MEETS

Home meets are held at the Stoney Point YMCA. Warm-up and start times will be announced well in advance. Meets typically last 3-4 hours. Larger teams will mean longer meets.

Volunteers – All Parents are asked to volunteer at home meets. We will request one shift from each parent per season.

Holding Areas – The West Gym located at the back of building is the designated holding area for swimmers when not swimming, or reporting to the Clerk of Course. Swimmers are expected to remain in the designated holding area between events.

Shoes – Swimmers (and spectators) must wear shoes, sandals, or swim socks at all times, unless actually on the pool deck. Please remove any muddy shoes before stepping onto the pool deck.

Events – The event your swimmer signed-up for will be posted in the holding area before the meet begins. Especially with younger swimmers, it's a good idea to aid their memory by writing the numbers of the events they are swimming on the back of one hand, or on the inside of an arm. Some markers may be available at the YMCA, but it's wise to bring your own waterproof marker!

The Clerk of Course will be located outside the west gym. Swimmers are individually responsible to report to the Clerk of Course when their event numbers are called. Listen, pay attention, and please, keep the noise down.

Adults performing Clerk of Course duties assemble the swimmers for each event, divide them into heats, and assign swimmers to their proper lane. Clerk of Course personnel are not responsible for locating swimmers who fail to report when their event is called.

There is seating on the pool deck to allow up to four races to hold inside the natatorium. Only eight-and-under swimmers are guided to their assigned pool lane. Swimmers give their event card to the head timer in their lane, to record their official time on.

Eight and under swimmers in 25 yard events begin their races at the starting blocks. Timers move to the far end of the pool to record their times.

Event results are posted on the wall in the entry way to the pool area as quickly as they can be compiled and printed.

Spectator Seating – Seating will be an issue at our home meets. We will have portable bleachers available on the deck for spectators. There should be enough room for between 100 and 120 spectators. Make arrangements with the YMCA Director of Aquatics if handicapped seating is required.



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COMMUNICATION

In a program of this size and nature, good communication is essential! The newsletter is published at least monthly. One copy of each edition will be inserted into each swimmer's folder.

The newsletter will prepare you for upcoming events or changes. Copies of all newsletters, communications, and maps will be posted on the information board at the Stoney Point YMCA and sent electronically to those swim families with electronic mail. Please check these boards frequently.

Parents' Advisory Committee Meetings are held monthly to discuss upcoming events, concerns, etc. Any parent or guardian of a team swimmer may attend and have time to ask questions of the committee members.

An E-mail list will be set up to communicate any information that may be needed by swimmers and parents. E-mail alerts will be sent out in the event of a sudden change or cancellation. A phone tree will also be set up to spread news rapidly in the event of a sudden change or cancellation. Anyone interested in helping out is welcome.

Communications and team related information can also be found on the swim team's website at <http://spstingrays.org>.

Your swimmer is responsible for providing you with information verbalized or – far more frequently – printed and passed out at practice sessions. (You'll probably have to **ask...**)

This **handbook** is provided to answer your basic questions. Please feel free to call the Stoney Point YMCA Aquatics Director, your coaches, or the Parents' Committee officers should you have any questions or concerns.



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