

Spirit Aquatics Club

Parent & Athlete Handbook

2026–2027 Edition



Welcome Letter

Welcome to Spirit Aquatics Club! We are honored that your family has chosen to be part of our community. Our mission extends beyond swimming and diving—we strive to help every athlete grow in confidence, character, and skill. Whether your child is beginning in Learn-to-Swim or training for championship competition, every athlete is valued and supported. We look forward to building lasting relationships and a lifelong love of the water together.

Our Story

Spirit Aquatics Club was founded to provide a positive, welcoming environment where athletes of all abilities can learn, compete, and grow. Our club offers a six-month fall and winter aquatics program featuring Learn-to-Swim, competitive swimming, and diving. We believe success is measured by growth, teamwork, and character just as much as results.

Mission

For every level, every athlete, and every step—building a lifelong love of the water through growth, character, and community.

Vision

To build a community where athletes become confident leaders of character, demonstrating respect, courage, integrity, optimism, and resilience in everything they do. We strive to create an environment where every athlete feels valued, challenged, and excited to come to practice while developing a lifelong love of the water.

The Spirit Way

The Spirit Way means putting people first. We coach with positivity, celebrate effort, encourage teamwork, and pursue excellence with humility. Our goal is for every athlete to leave each practice better than when they arrived—not only as a swimmer or diver, but as a person.

Core Values

Respect

Treat teammates, coaches, officials, and competitors with kindness.

Integrity

Do the right thing, even when no one is watching.

Courage

Embrace challenges and learn from setbacks.

Optimism

Choose a positive attitude and encourage others.

Growth

Commit to continual improvement.

Community

Support one another and create a sense of belonging.

Leadership

Lead by example through actions and attitude.

Fun

Work hard, celebrate progress, and enjoy the journey.

What Makes Spirit Different

Our focus is developing great people through aquatics. Every athlete has a place, every level matters, and every practice is an opportunity to grow. We believe in excellent coaching, strong relationships, family involvement, and creating an environment where athletes look forward to coming each week.

Chapter 2: Our Programs

Our Athlete Pathway

Every athlete has a place at Spirit Aquatics Club. Our pathway is designed to support long-term development, allowing athletes to progress at their own pace while building confidence, skills, and a lifelong love of the water.

Learn-to-Swim → Spark → Ignite → Ascend → Apex

Learn-to-Swim

Our Learn-to-Swim program introduces water safety and foundational swimming skills in a fun, encouraging environment. Small class sizes allow coaches to provide individualized instruction while helping children build confidence in the water.

Spark – Introduction to Competitive Swimming

Spark bridges the gap between swim lessons and competitive swimming. Athletes learn legal strokes, practice etiquette, basic starts and turns, teamwork, and what it means to be part of a swim team. The emphasis is on fun, fundamentals, and confidence.

Ignite – Development

Ignite athletes continue refining stroke technique while improving endurance, racing skills, and goal setting. Coaches introduce age-appropriate training habits while maintaining a positive and encouraging environment.

Ascend – Novice Competition

Ascend swimmers are committed to regular attendance and continued improvement. Practices emphasize technique, aerobic development, race strategy, and leadership while preparing athletes for higher levels of competition.

Apex – Elite Performance

Apex is designed for athletes pursuing advanced competition. Training focuses on technical excellence, goal setting, leadership, accountability, and preparing swimmers for championship-level performance while maintaining balance and enjoyment of the sport.

Dive Program

Our dive program welcomes both beginner/ foundation and experienced/ competitive divers. Athletes progress through safe skill development, body awareness, confidence on the board, and competitive opportunities under qualified coaching.

Advancement Philosophy

Advancement is based on overall readiness rather than age alone. Coaches evaluate technical skills, attendance, attitude, coachability, work ethic, and emotional readiness. Every athlete develops at a different pace, and our goal is long-term success rather than rushing progression.

Long-Term Athlete Development

We believe children should enjoy the sport while steadily building skills. Success is measured by growth, confidence, character, and a love of learning—not only times, scores, or medals. Families are encouraged to trust the developmental process and celebrate consistent improvement.

Equipment by Program

Program	Recommended Equipment
Learn-to-Swim	Swimsuit, towel, goggles
Spark	Swimsuit, towel, goggles
Ignite	Swimsuit, towel, goggles, fins
Ascend	Swimsuit, towel, goggles, fins, snorkel
Apex	Swimsuit, towel, goggles, fins, snorkel, paddles
Dive	Swimsuit, towel

Chapter 3: Practice & Meet Expectations

Practice Philosophy

Every practice is an opportunity to learn, grow, and have fun. Coaches create a positive environment where athletes are encouraged to challenge themselves, support teammates, and celebrate progress.

Attendance

Consistent attendance leads to steady improvement. Families should notify coaches of planned absences. We understand school, family, illness, and other commitments occasionally require athletes to miss practice.

Arriving for Practice

Please arrive 10 minutes early, bring all required equipment, use the restroom before practice, and be ready to enter the water on time.

Athlete Expectations

- Be respectful to coaches, teammates, officials, and facility staff.
- Listen when coaches are speaking.
- Give your best effort every day.
- Encourage teammates.
- Represent Spirit Aquatics Club with integrity in and out of the pool.

Parent Expectations

- Support your athlete's effort rather than results.
- Allow coaches to coach.
- Communicate respectfully.

- Volunteer at meets and events.
- Promote positive sportsmanship at practices and meets.

Practice Etiquette

- Walk on deck.
- No running or horseplay.
- Stay in assigned lanes.
- Keep equipment organized.
- Respect the facility and shared spaces.

Meet Expectations

Meets are opportunities to apply skills learned in practice, demonstrate sportsmanship, and celebrate improvement. Athletes are expected to remain with the team unless excused by a coach, cheer for teammates, and represent Spirit with pride.

Sportsmanship

Winning with humility and losing with grace are equally important. Athletes and families are expected to treat competitors, officials, coaches, and volunteers with respect.

Communication

Club updates will be shared through email, the club website, and official social media channels. Families are encouraged to review communications regularly and contact coaches with questions.

Locker Room Expectations

- Respect others' privacy.
- Keep the locker room clean.
- Follow all facility rules.
- Report concerns to a coach immediately.

Chapter 4: Team Culture & Character Development

Our Culture

At Spirit Aquatics Club, we believe the experience should be about more than swimming and diving. We strive to create an environment where athletes feel welcomed, challenged, supported, and excited to attend every practice. Our goal is for each athlete to leave the club with lifelong friendships, confidence, and character that extends beyond the pool.

Monthly Character Focus

<u>Month</u>	<u>Character Theme</u>
September	Respect
October	Responsibility
November	Optimism
December	Community
January	Courage
February	Integrity

Team Traditions

- Season Kickoff Celebration
- Spirit Spooktacular Swim & Dive Meet
- Holiday Team Gathering
- Spirit Sprint Surge Swim & Dive Meet
- Championship Banquet
- Character Awards
- Swimmer & Divers of the Meet
- Improvement Celebrations
- Team Service Project- December

Athlete Goal Setting

Each athlete is encouraged to set goals in four areas:

- Skill Development
- Character Growth
- Teamwork
- Personal Bests

Goals should be reviewed throughout the season with coaches and families.

Parent Partnership

Parents are an important part of our team. We ask families to celebrate effort, trust the coaching process, encourage independence, and help create a positive environment for every athlete.

Spirit Promise

Together we promise to work hard, support one another, demonstrate character, and enjoy the journey. We believe the lessons learned through aquatics prepare athletes to become confident leaders in school, at home, and throughout life.

Chapter 5: Club Policies & Standards

USA Swimming & SafeSport

Spirit Aquatics Club is committed to providing a safe, positive environment for every athlete. All members, coaches, volunteers, and parents are expected to comply with USA Swimming SafeSport requirements and the current Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy (MAAPP). The official MAAPP is adopted by reference and is available through USA Swimming. Club policies are intended to support—not replace—the current USA Swimming requirements.

Athlete Code of Conduct

- Treat teammates, coaches, officials, volunteers, and competitors with respect.
- Demonstrate honesty, integrity, and good sportsmanship.
- Follow coach instructions and facility rules.
- Use appropriate language and behavior.
- Care for team and facility equipment.
- Support teammates and celebrate improvement.
- Refrain from bullying, hazing, harassment, violence, or discrimination.

Parent Code of Conduct

- Support your athlete regardless of results.
- Allow coaches to coach.
- Model positive sportsmanship.
- Communicate respectfully with coaches, officials, and families.
- Address concerns privately and professionally.
- Volunteer at meets and events and help create a welcoming environment.

Coach Code of Conduct

- Place athlete safety and well-being first.
- Follow all USA Swimming SafeSport and MAAPP requirements.
- Treat every athlete fairly and with respect.
- Maintain professional boundaries.
- Provide positive, constructive coaching.
- Model integrity, leadership, and professionalism.

Anti-Bullying Policy

Bullying, hazing, intimidation, harassment, retaliation, or discrimination will not be tolerated. Athletes or families should report concerns to club leadership. Reports will be reviewed promptly and appropriate action taken.

Photography & Social Media Policy

Photos and videos may be taken during practices, meets, and club events to celebrate athletes and promote Spirit Aquatics Club. Images will be used respectfully and never in a manner that compromises athlete safety or privacy. Families should notify the club in writing if they do not wish their athlete to appear in promotional materials.

Media Release

I grant Spirit Aquatics Club permission to photograph or record my athlete and to use these images or videos in print, digital, website, and social media materials for educational and promotional purposes without compensation. I understand I may revoke this permission in writing for future use.

Communication Policy

Primary communication will occur through email, the club website, and official social media accounts. Families are responsible for reviewing club communications regularly.

Volunteer Expectations

Families are required to volunteer during home meets, team events, and club activities. Volunteer participation will create a successful experience for all athletes.

Registration & Financial Policies

Registration is complete once all forms, waivers, and payments are received. Tuition and fees are due according to the published schedule. No refunds will be administered unless relocation or end-of-season injury.

Parent & Athlete Agreement

By participating in Spirit Aquatics Club, families acknowledge they have read and agree to follow the handbook, club policies, the current USA Swimming SafeSport requirements, and the current MAAPP.

_____ (Participant)

_____ (Parent/ Guardian)