



GSSC Practice Participation Policy

Purpose: The Practice Participation Policy is designed to insure that all swimmers participating in synchronized swimming benefit from consistent participation by each individual in the team setting.

Synchronized swimming requires swimmers to learn, practice and work together under the guidance of their coach(es) to achieve individual and team goals. Consistent attendance and participation in practice is required for optimal individual and team learning. Each time a team member is missing from a scheduled practice the team is unable to fully complete the team training activities planned for that session. This requires time from the subsequent practice in order to instruct the missing swimmer and integrate her into the team with the new material. Even though parents and swimmers may believe they are not missing frequently, the team practices are not optimal whether one or a series of swimmers are missing, only occasionally. It is unfair to swimmers with good practice participation to be held back in subsequent practices while material is re-taught for missing swimmers.

No practices are to be missed 2 weeks prior to each competition.

ACTIONS:

In order to address the detrimental consequences of missing practice, swimmers will be allowed to miss only **two practices per routine per season** without consequence. Once a swimmer has missed two practices the coach will arrange for a makeup training session separate from the regularly scheduled practice. This will apply to all swimmers regardless of the reason for absence (illness, family vacation, etc.).

It is important for parents and swimmers to recognize that the purpose of makeup training is to insure the swimmer keeps pace with her team mates without holding the team progress back. There are always unforeseen circumstances that arise in busy families and the makeup training is not intended to be seen as a punishment.

Parents and swimmers will be billed for the cost of makeup sessions at the rate of \$20/hour. The cost will cover pool time, coach's extra planning time, coaching time and administrative time. The swimmer will need to be available for the makeup session which will take one or a combination of the following forms:

1. One on One practice with the swimmer's coach at the coach's convenience
2. One on One practice with an alternate coach if the swimmer's coach is not available
3. Fitness training with another team under the guidance of that team's coach

Academic and church events related absences:

In recognition of swimmers' needs to meet academic or religious practice obligations swimmers may also miss **one practice** per season per routine to participate in curriculum related school events such as field trips or alternatively church related events. The swimmer must provide the coach a copy of the school or church issued details of the event that includes date and time within one week of the issued information. Only if the event falls in the two weeks prior to a competition will the swimmer be required to participate in an alternate practice session. Absences beyond the first one for school or church related events will be subject to makeup training time.

Illness related absences:

Illness related absences that require multiple missed practices for recovery time will be reviewed on an individual basis and may require documentation that the swimmer has received medical attention. The swimmer will still be required to make up practice time beyond the first two missed sessions of the season and plans will be made with the swimmer, coach and parents for the remainder of the missed time based on individual circumstances.

Grace Periods

At the beginning of each season the Club will review the calendar of events and pool closures and determine the feasibility of grace periods during which swimmer absenteeism will not require make up practice time. This time may vary for teams that participate in different swim meet schedules. This will vary from season to season depending on the swim meet schedule and the holiday schedule. For example, March Break may be considered a grace period, if it does not fall within two weeks prior to a swim meet.

Thanksgiving, Easter and Christmas grace periods will also be determined and religious holidays not ordinarily scheduled as statutory or public school holidays will be considered on an individual basis. It is very important however that parents communicate in writing to the coach what their swimmers participation will be during grace periods as this will assist the coaches in designing appropriate practices and will also aid the Club in determining whether to cancel pool time that will not be effectively used.

Bereavement

Individual circumstances will be reviewed by the coach if a swimmer is required to miss more than two consecutive practices for bereavement reasons. Bereavement will be considered separately from the initial two allowed missed practices.

Consequences of failure to complete scheduled or replacement training:

Swimmers who fail to complete the replacement training or who require frequent replacement training sessions may be made alternate swimmers for one or more competitions. Swimmers who miss critical training sessions in the two weeks prior to a

competition may also be considered for alternate position if the swimmer is unable to demonstrate a level of performance expected for competition. **Coaches will provide a written notice to the swimmer, parents and the designated board member that this action is under consideration in order to allow the swimmer and parents to take corrective action. Coaches will consult the president or designate prior to making a swimmer alternate for attendance reasons.**