

Swimming in Southland



It is great that your child is interested in swimming as a sport! They may now want to continue swim training in a squad and have a go at racing at swim meets.

Caregivers often have a lot of questions at this stage and we hope that this helps to answer many of them. Please keep this in a handy place to refer to. Any further questions can be directed to your swimming club or Lisa Hansen: admin@swimsouthland.org.nz

1. Your child may wish to experience swim racing as a “Have a Go” swimmer.

The idea of this is to see how they like competing in a race situation. A child may only compete as a Have a Go swimmer for a maximum of two swim meets. If they like this and want to pursue racing further; then they are expected to become a non-competitive (club) or competitive swimmer.

A non-competitive or club swimmer will be affiliated to a club, can race at most meets, but cannot represent Southland. You will need to choose a club to swim under and pay their relevant membership fee.

If a swimmer wants to race as a representative of Southland or at the Southland Championship meets, then they must become registered as a Competitive Swimmer; this will include the payment of a club membership fee, which will also include the Swimming NZ Competitive affiliation fee.

Many swimmers start off as a non-competitive (club) swimmer and move on to being competitive at a later date, once they start to pick up speed and experience as a swimmer.

2. Which club to choose?

This is up to you and your child. There are several clubs to choose from and their contact details can be found on the Swimming Southland website. If your swimmer is training in a squad (see below), they may not be expected to train on the actual club night. If you want to know more about a specific club, their fees and what they offer, please feel free to contact them and ask plenty of questions before making your decision.

3. I have chosen a club – now what?

Contact the club as soon as possible using their contact details on the Swimming Southland website and they will guide you as to joining, uniforms and how to enter swim meets. Each club has a different policy with regards to how they charge swimmers, enter meets, etc.

4. Swim training / Squad training

If your child wishes to continue swim training and/or race competitively, they may wish to join a training squad. H2o Dreams is the provider of professional swim coaching and training in Invercargill. This business is privately owned and operated by Jeremy Duncan and Lisa Pankhurst. For further information regarding this business please see the website <http://www.h2odreams.co.nz> or email admin@h2odreams.co.nz

In Gore and smaller centres around Southland, your club will be able to direct you to the nearest professional swim coach.

5. What equipment does my swimmer need for racing?

Consider getting togs that are firmly fitting; rash tops and board shorts are not suitable. Your club will have club swimming caps for sale and make sure your child has comfortable, well-fitting goggles. A good swim bag that can hold at least two towels, lunch box, water bottle and dry clothes is recommended. A club t-shirt and warm top will be required and footwear that is easy to take off and put on is a must. Swimmers will require food and water, talk to your coach about suitable snacks for your swimmer to eat before, during and after racing.

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6. What costs are involved?

Squad coaching fees
Club subscription fees
Pool entry fees for squad coaching sessions and swim meets
Meet entry fees (some clubs cover these)
Swim gear

7. When shall we compete and what do we enter?

Throughout the year there are fairly regular swim meets on the Swimming Southland calendar – these can be found on the Swimming Southland website. The meet flyer can be found attached to each meet notification. Your swimmer's coach will be able to advise you or your child as to the appropriate meets to enter and what to enter in each meet. Your club carnival secretary (entry secretary) should notify you by advance email as to upcoming swim meets and closing dates for entries, the flyer for the race will be attached. Late entries may not be accepted so it is important to get entries in well within the time required by the carnival secretary.

8. How do we enter?

Be aware of what your child can physically swim in terms of stroke and length, how many swims they can manage and allow recovery time between events. If you are not sure, please talk to the coach for advice. Once you have studied the flyer and decided what to enter, simply send your club entry secretary an email stating the meet, with the event numbers and details you would like to swim e.g.

Subject: Southland Champs

Hi there

Please enter Abbey in the following:

Event 1 50m Free
Event 6 25m Back
Event 12 25m Breast

Thanks very much

Barbara.

Alternatively, your club may ask that you enter your child online through the Swimming NZ portal. Your club entry secretary will be able to talk you through this process.

9. What happens at a swim meet?

Your child will be expected to sit with their club and parents are respectfully asked to sit away or better still, help with time keeping. Your child will be looked after by the club Team Manager – they will make sure that your child gets to their races on time, eats, drinks and keeps warm. They will also be watching your child's swims, their well-being, giving them positive feedback, watching results and where possible sending them up to get any ribbons, medals or spot prizes. Your child's coach will also be keeping an eye on them when racing and giving them constructive advice prior to racing and feedback after the races. If your swimmer is a Have a Go swimmer and not affiliated with a club yet, your child will be allocated seats with the RDO Lisa Pankhurst and managed by her team on race day. Programs of events are available to buy prior to racing – these are worth getting to follow the order of events and see when your child is racing.

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10. What happens if my child is injured or ill?

If your child is unable to swim at a swim meet that they have entered, please let your club team manager know as soon as possible so that they can be withdrawn from any races entered. It is a good idea to make sure you have your team manager's contact details in case this happens. Please be aware that there may be a fee charged for failing to turn up to a race.

11. How can I help?

Swimming meets take up a huge amount of personnel and these people are all volunteers. We need at least 40 people to run every swim meet to comply with the rules of running a legitimate meet. Volunteering as an official is the absolute best way to meet people and learn more about the sport. It also helps to pass the time and you get the best views of the racing! People usually start by offering to time keep and then move on to becoming an Inspector of Turns – all training is provided. If you would like to volunteer, please ask at the control room prior to the start of a meet.

Some Swimming Terms

SC – Short Course – 25m races (mostly races over winter)

LC – Long Course – 50m races (start at Labour weekend and go throughout Summer)

DQ – disqualification – newer swimmers maybe "DQ'd" quite often when they first start. This can be very disappointing for them but it helps them to quickly learn the rules.

PB – personal best – the best thing!

IOT – Inspector of Turns – stand at both ends of the pool watching that swimmers are abiding by the rules with regards to their starts, turns and stroke.

JOS – Judge of strokes – walking up and down the pool during each race, checking that each swimmer's stroke abides by the rules.

Psych sheets – these are reports released usually a few days before the race showing all swimmers entered and their entry times, ranked from fastest to slowest in each event. You will receive a copy by email. It is important to use these to check that your swimmer is entered into the correct events. If not, contact your club carnival secretary right away.

These can "psych swimmers and parents out" as their swimmer may appear well down on the list. Do not pay too much attention as remember the main person your swimmer is racing is themselves – trying always to improve on their personal bests.

Touch Pads- are the yellow surfaces at the deep end of the pool. When a swimmer touches these at the end of the race, timing stops. As a back-up to these there is also a back-up button which is pressed by a timekeeper when the swimmer touches and also a stop watch is used to provide yet another back-up time.

Blocks – these are the starting blocks at each end of the pool. Swimmers normally dive off these to start a race. If a swimmer is too nervous to dive off the blocks they are allowed to get into the pool and hang on to the side before starting or just jump off the side of the pool.