

Kingsgate Gator's Swim Team

Parent Handbook

2020

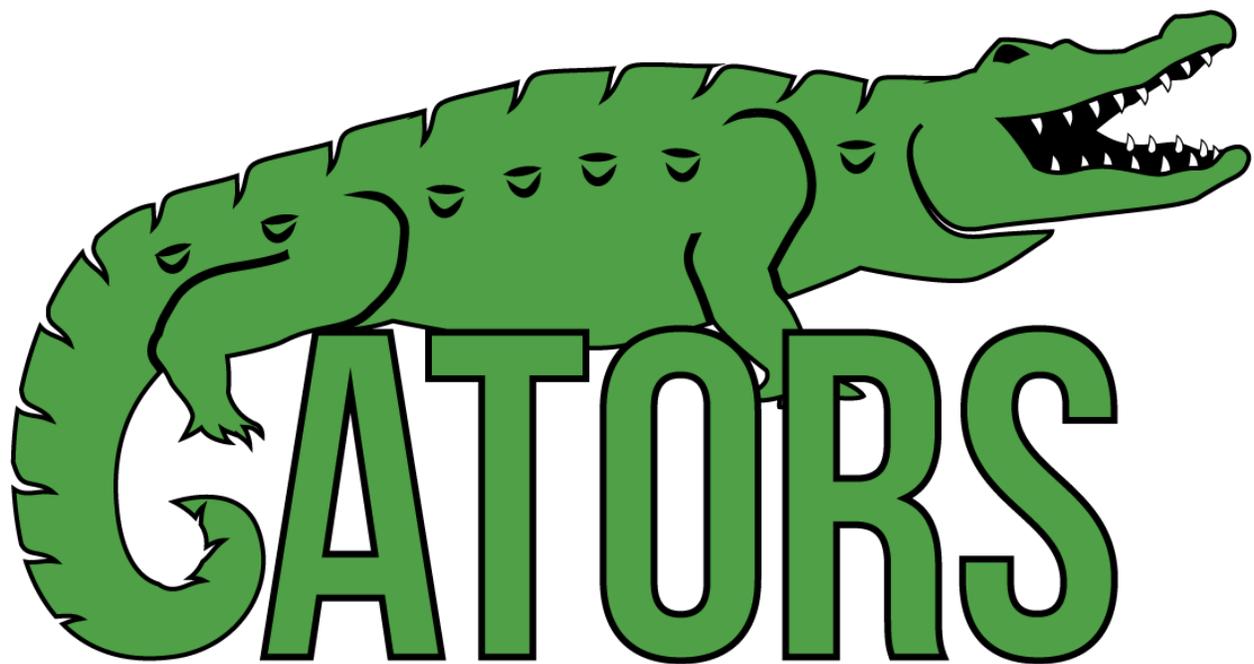


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SECTION 1: Introduction to Gators

Welcome to the Kingsgate Gators Swim Team. Our summer swim team program is made up of swimmers ranging in ages from 6 to 18. Swim season begins each year in mid-May and continues through July. We are part of the Midlakes Swim League, which includes 26 teams in the region. The primary focus of our program is to encourage the sport of swimming for all ages and abilities with an emphasis on technique, sportsmanship, and fun.

a: Team Goals and Philosophy

- To instruct, model, and develop sportsmanship, teamwork, and cooperation among all swim team members, swimmers, coaches, and parents.
- To introduce, encourage and develop proper technique in all 4 competitive strokes, dives, starts, turns and finishes.
- To encourage excellence through hard work and dedication both in and out of the water.
- To promote the sport of competitive swimming amongst all qualified ages in a positive manner.
- To facilitate a fitness activity supporting life-long health and wellbeing.
- To foster a sense of community for swimmers and families.
- TO HAVE FUN!!!!

SECTION 2: Policies & Procedures

a: Swimmer Requirements

Anyone who meets the minimum requirement may join the swim team through the summer following High School graduation up to and including age 19. There will be a swim evaluation at the start of the season for all swimmers in order to validate minimum participant expectations.

Team participant expectations:

- **8 & Under Swimmers:** swim 25 yards freestyle without stopping or touching the sides or bottom of the pool and be able to follow age appropriate instruction.
- **10 & Under through 15 & Over Swimmers:** swim 50 yards freestyle without stopping or touching the sides or bottom of the pool and be able to follow age appropriate instruction.
- All swimmers must attend practices regularly
- All swimmers must be suited in appropriate swim attire for both practices and meets.
No High School or year round competitive team logos are allowed on swim suits or caps during meets by Midlakes rules. Wearing one of these team suits or caps will result in a disqualification.
- All swimmers need to observe both pool and swim team rules and regulations (see code of conduct).

b: Parent Responsibilities

Support the Swimmers

Parents contribute to the success of the Gators by helping to build a positive community. Parents serve as role models for sportsmanship; parent attitude is reflected by swimmer attitude. This support is a key factor in fostering enjoyment and learning as well as contributing to the child's individual success in the pool.

USAswimming.org hosts a wealth of information for both parent and swimmer. There are articles on technique, sports psychology, nutrition, rest etc.

c: Mandatory Volunteer Commitment

Gator swim team is completely volunteer run. It takes about 68 parents to run a home meet. It is mandatory that each swimmers family volunteer for a set number of jobs as defined at the beginning of each season. A complete list of jobs and descriptions/requirements can be found on the Gator website. Minimum age for all volunteers is 16.

The open date of job sign-ups will be set by the volunteer coordinator and generally occurs the second week of practice. Volunteers will sign-up on the Gator website. Be sure to check the start time and end time of the shift.

Each family is required to fulfill all volunteer shifts each season. If a parent does not volunteer for the required number of shifts during the season, the family will not be given priority for registration the following season and all unfulfilled shifts will be added to the required number of shifts in the following season. **If a parent does not report for their volunteer shift for the entire duration of the shift or does not arrange for a substitute, the family will be assessed a \$50 fine and be required to perform an additional shift. Their swimmer(s) will not be allowed to swim in any meet until the fine is paid and that volunteer shift is made up.** The fine does not replace the shift and the shift will need to be made up.

d: Weekly Swim Meet Sign-In Policy

Weekly sign-in or sign-out, means identifying which meets your swimmer(s) will/will not attend. Signing-in as 'will attend meet' is a commitment to attend the meet from start to finish. Even if your swimmer is done swimming please consider staying until the end of the meet as this fosters camaraderie and community.

It is the responsibility of the swimmer/swimmer's family to sign-in or out every week. If no commitment is given for a meet, the coaches will assume your swimmer is not available for the meet and they will not be entered in the meet. YOUR SWIMMER WILL NOT SWIM IF THEY ARE NOT SIGNED-IN FOR THE MEET AND NO DECK ENTRIES WILL BE MADE.

The deadline for meet sign-ups is Friday by 9pm before each week of meets.

After this, entries will be closed and you will no longer be able to make adjustments. The coaches will not allow additions to the meet after this deadline. Please take responsibility and remember to sign your swimmer(s) up for each meet.

If a swimmer committed to a meet and either did not show or withdrew for reasons not considered acceptable by the coaching staff and/or Gator Board (examples of acceptable reasons include emergencies and/or illness) there will be a **\$50 fine assessed to the swimmer/family**. The fine must be paid prior to the Friday meet sign-up deadline. A swim meet "No-show" is considered a code of conduct infraction and will be dealt with as outlined in the Parental Agreement & Code of Conduct. Penalty fees must be paid prior to a swimmer being entered in remaining season meets.

e: Gator Refund Policy

If a team member decides to not be part of the swim team for any reason a refund will be given up until the day before the first swim meet of the season.

Team fees are reimbursed using the following criteria:

- 1) All registration costs will be fully reimbursed starting from the time registered up until fees are due to Midlakes and the Home Owner Association (See calendar for date, usually June 1st).
- 2) Notice needs to be given in writing and dated by the Parent or Guardian of the withdrawing swimmer(s).
- 3) Verbal notice needs to be given to the Parent or Guardian of a swimmer if the coaching staff decides a swimmer is not safe to participate on swim team.
- 4) After June 1st (or date Midlakes/Home Owner Association fees are due) until the first Friday of June, 75% of remaining team registration after payment of Midlakes and Home owner fees will be reimbursed.
- 5) After the first Friday of June up until the day before the first swim meet 50% of remaining team registration after payment of Midlakes and Home owner fee will be reimbursed.
- 6) After the first swim meet reimbursement is no longer available.

Note: Swim team fees are not subject to proration for any reason due to the recreational nature of our team.

If an already registered swimmer has incurred a medical complication and is unable to start practice until a later date the swimmer will be allowed to do so given team availability. All Midlakes and Home Owner association team fees must be paid. Remaining fee will be determined by team registration cost divided by the number of weeks the swimmer will practice. Kingsgate Gators must have signed documentation that the swimmer is cleared to begin practice.

SECTION 3: Practice

a: Practice Season and Expectations

Swim team practice begins in Mid-May (exact date depends on when Memorial Day falls). Practice continues for most swimmers through the 3rd or 4th week of July ending with the season Division Championship meet. Those swimmers who qualify for League Championships will have an additional week of practice. Improvement is positively impacted by coming to practice every day, being prepared to work hard, and listening to the coaches.

b: Practice Groups

Swimmers will practice primarily in their competitive age groups. However, coaches reserve the right to place swimmers in a practice group they feel is appropriate and will maximize their potential. Swimmers must

attend the training group they are assigned. Any questions or concerns regarding swimmers practice group must be addressed to the head coach directly.

c: Team Gear

Team Swim Suits

Swimmers must have a current team suit. *A Gators suit is the one and only mandatory item that needs to be purchased by the family or swimmer.* The Gator organization tries to minimize this purchase by choosing what is called a 2-year suit.

A Gator swim cap is included with your registration, and additional caps, both latex and silicone can be purchased through the Gators' website.

Team Spirit Wear

Team Hoodies, sweat pants, and shirt, are not required team items. We will notify you when you have the opportunity to purchase Gator specific spirit wear early in the season.

SECTION 4: Swim Meets

A swim meet is a competition between two (dual) or more clubs. Events are split by boys and girls, by stroke, and by age group. If you are a new parent, you may find it helpful to attach yourself to a Gator veteran so you can learn the ropes. New swimmers will have an older swimmer "buddy" assigned to them to teach the new swimmer the ropes.

a: Big/Little Buddy Program

We have designed the Big Buddy program as a way to help younger swimmers transition into being Gators and to help them and their parents navigate swim meets. A "buddy" program in any variation builds team spirit, family and camaraderie by connecting older age groups with the younger ones while helping to increase meet efficiency and fun for all involved.

b: Midlakes Definition of Competing Summer Age and Categories

A swimmer's age for the Midlakes summer season is determined by their age on or before June 15th of that season without exceptions. The age divisions are 8 & Under, 10 & Under, 12 & Under, 14 & Under and 15 & Over (Including the summer after high school graduation). Swimmers in younger groups can "swim up" to an older group as determined by the head coach, but swimmers are not allowed to "swim down" to a younger group.

c: Meets

The Gators are part of the Midlakes league. The league is divided into 5 divisions based on size and team record.

The Gators participate in two swim meets per week against other teams in our division; one home and one away.

At the end of the season our team has the opportunity to participate in championship meets. As one of the Midlakes teams, we participate in two championship meets; Division champs and League champs. As a team we participate in Division champs against all other teams in our division. Swimmers on each team in every division can compete in a League Preliminary Meet to qualify for League Champs Finals. For more information regarding championship meets, you can visit the Midlakes Swim League website, midlakesswimleague.org.

d: Meet Arrival Times

Make sure you arrive early enough to get ready and be on deck and behind the blocks for the team's required warm up session. We recommend arriving at least 20 minutes ahead of time to avoid feeling rushed and to ensure that you are ready to go with swim suit, cap, and goggles when the coach begins warm-ups.

All Meets, Home and Away, begin at 6pm sharp.

Be prepared for warm-ups which usually will start at the following times:

- Home Meets 4:45pm (pool deck opens at 4:15pm)
- Away Meets- 5:15 pm

Away meet information will be provided by the Team Parent as available prior to each away meet.

e: Meet Preparations

Swim meets can last up to four hours. Swim meets are held in rain; meets are **only** canceled for thunder or lightning. Temperatures can vary greatly during a meet, so be prepared and stay comfortable.

Things you need to bring or need to consider as you prepare for a meet:

- Home meets - **set-up in the parking lot is not until 3:45!** We need to allow cars to get out and also to let Pool Set-up designate away team areas.
- Home meets - **remember to use your concessions cards, the remainder is not refunded.**
- Please **make sure to check your folders for ribbons**, etc. after each meet
- Team suit and a back-up suit – marked with your name for easy identification.
- Team cap - one is provided with your registration
- Goggles and back up goggles.
- Lots of towels. A good rule is to have one towel per event plus one extra.
- Sunscreen
- Warm clothes. Sweats, swim parka, rain jacket.
- Blanket(s). To cover the ground or yourself or your swimmer.
- Folding chair(s). Most pools do not have enough seating to support all the spectators.
- Cards, books, devices – to pass time while waiting at the meet.
- Canopy or tent for shelter. Warning not all locations have room for these items. Share with other families if possible. We are the Gator Nation and one of the best things about the Gators is our team spirit and the friendships that arise from a season of meets.

f: Heat Sheets

Heat sheets are the schedule of all swim events and will usually be posted by the end of warm ups. Swimmers are responsible for checking the heat sheet to see what events they are entered in; sometimes last minute changes occur.

Per Midlakes rules the maximum number of events a swimmer can swim at any meet, is four. However, depending on variables each swimmer may swim less than four events at any meet.

Some of the factors the coaches consider while placing swimmers in events including:

Fairness.

Can a given swimmer swim all the strokes legally for the distance required in their age group?

Have swimmers attended practices, worked hard and shown a positive attitude?

g: Starting Blocks

For swimmer safety, no one is allowed to take photos of any kind behind the starting blocks.

Swimmers are responsible for getting to each of their events on time. Learn to listen to the Announcer for first, second, and third call announcements. Events are also usually displayed on an event board at each pool.

SECTION 5: Team Communication

Good communication is the cornerstone to success. The following methods are the recommended ways for swimmers, parents, and coaches to communicate their needs and concerns in an effective and constructive manner.

If you have questions or concerns, please reach out to a board member and they will assist you in obtaining an answer. Email addresses for board members and coaches can be found on the Gator website.

<https://kingsgategators.swimtopia.com>

During practice coaches focus is on the swimmers. If you have any coach related questions, please contact the Head Coach via email.

Thank you for being a part of the Gators Community! We look forward to a great season and enjoying the famous Gator Spirit!

Website resources –

<http://www.midlakesswimleague.org/>

<https://www.usaswimming.org/>

<https://goswim.com/>

<https://www.swimoutlet.com/>