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Introduction to Club Handbook

Club Description

Laois Marlins is a competitive swimming club that provides swim coaching to swimmers of all levels, abilities and aspirations. The club was founded in 2009 and caters to over 100 members from our base in Portlaoise Leisure Centre. We are a membership club of Swim Ireland. Where matters which are not covered by this handbook or the Club Constitution arise, the rules of Swim Ireland apply.

The club provides an opportunity for anyone interested in competitive swimming to receive high-level coaching and competition opportunities.

Our highly qualified, motivated and motivating coaching team, work with each swimmer to encourage and enable them to reach their individual potential in this very demanding but rewarding sport. The club aims to provide a culture that is inclusive for all, everyone is given an equal opportunity and is empowered to participate and where everyone is treated with the same level of respect and importance. We have made a commitment to ensure that people from all backgrounds and abilities feel welcomed by us and identify as valued members of the Laois Marlins Swim Club.

The club is a volunteer-run club led a Management Committee that is elected at the AGM each year. The club encourages the parents/guardians of swimmers to become involved and thereby ensuring that the current volunteer ethos of the club continues for future generations. This takes many forms from the organising committee to poolside rotas, gala management and fundraising – the club's Membership and Participation Policy outlines the requirements in terms of parents/guardian's roles and responsibilities.

Objectives of the Club

1. To provide a structured, supportive environment for swimmers of all abilities, from beginners to elite competitors.
2. Encourage participation in swimming for fitness, fun, and competition, making the sport accessible to people of all ages and backgrounds.
3. To offer high-quality coaching programs that focus on improving swimmers' technical skills, strength, and endurance.
4. Provide swimmers with the tools to enhance their performance, whether they are recreational swimmers or aiming for competitive excellence.
5. To instil a love for swimming that extends beyond competitive goals, encouraging swimmers to remain involved in the sport throughout their lives, whether in a competitive or recreational capacity.
6. To create opportunities for members to gain certifications in coaching, lifeguarding, and leadership, equipping them with life skills that enhance their personal and professional growth.
7. Offer a platform for young swimmers to develop leadership qualities, team collaboration, and mentoring roles within the club.
8. Encourage swimmers to contribute their time and skills through coaching, mentorship, and club events, fostering a spirit of giving back and strengthening community ties.
9. To maintain a sustainable, growing club that continually invests in its members, facilities, and coaching resources

Laois Marlins Swimming Club is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of its members. Every individual, including athletes, parents/guardians, coaches/teachers and volunteers, in Laois Marlins Swimming Club should, at all times, show respect and understanding for their rights, safety and welfare

and those of others, and conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of the club and the guidelines contained in the 'Swim Ireland Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures' or most up to date equivalent.

Section 1 - Membership

General Criteria for All Groups

Inclusion in all of Laois Marlins swimming training squads is based on the availability of places, coach agreement, signed registration and parent consent forms, Swim Ireland Affiliation, payment of fees and the agreement of representatives of Laois Marlins Swim Club committee.

Membership of all squads is at the discretion of the Head Coach. The make-up of the squads has a key role in the training environment and the Head Coach will ensure that all movements between squads are done with the best interests of our young swimmers in mind.

Laois Marlins Squads

Please refer to www.laoismarlins.ie to view the training schedule for each squad

Train to Train Squad

Train to train provides a link between swimming lessons and pre-club involvement

Junior Squad

There is a strong emphasis on technique and learning about competing. Swimmers learn to swim with disciplined technique and begin to learn about training for competitions. The swimmers spend two hours per week in the water under the guidance of their coaches. Many junior swimmers will attend their first galas and will enter races in all strokes and individual medley normally at 50m level.

Junior Development Squad

Junior Development will continue to focus on technique, but will also progress to focus on competition and increasing involvement in galas. Swimmers will be encouraged to enter galas over the swimming year with increased distance and in all strokes. There will also be an increased focus on endurance, times progression and efficiency in all 4 strokes.

Senior Development Squad

Senior Development is the next phase of progression through the club, swimmers continue the development and improvement of technique in all four strokes. Training intensity and frequency increases, with an increased focus on endurance. Swimmers will attend numerous galas over the swimming season as recommended by their coaches.

Senior Squad

In the senior squad our swimmers learn to increase the intensity of their training and continue to improve and perfect their technique. Swimmers will be mastering all the swimming strokes and techniques required for competitive swimming. They will swim 9 hours a week. As well as becoming very

accomplished swimmers and competitors the swimmers will also be targeting the achievement of Leinster times and National times.

Masters Squad

Laois Marlins Swimming Club have three Masters Squads reflecting our commitment to ensuring swimming is a lifelong activity. The Masters both compete at regional, national and international competitions and train for health and leisure motives.

Squad Structure and Progression

There are many factors that inform squad selection and ranking within squads with a focus on Individual Medley (IM) times, allowing assessment over Butterfly, Backstroke, Breaststroke and Freestyle. IM times will be refreshed through both competition and club time trials and increasingly, the 200m/400m IM will be used for Senior squad as this provides more information on the swimmers' stamina and competitive abilities.

This encourages the development of well-rounded swimmers and the development of all four strokes.

With young swimmers, performance factors are really dynamic as they are still young and developing. Squad selection and progression therefore is informed by current performance, future potential, training engagement, competition engagement and the motivation of the young swimmer.

The Head Coach reserves the right to move swimmers outside the guidelines where it is felt it will benefit the club and/or the individual. The make-up of the squads has a key role in the training environment and the Head Coach will ensure that all movements between squads are done with the best interests of all children in mind.

Becoming a member

Membership of Laois Marlins SC is accepted at the discretion of club management committee. The membership year is from September, annually. Laois Marlins an affiliated member of Swim Ireland, registration fees are also paid annually to Swim Ireland.

The following must be completed when applying for membership on an annual basis:

1. Club membership form	}	Club documents sent out separately
2. Relevant code of conduct		

Applying for Renewal of Membership

Current members can apply for renewal of membership in June of each year and each application is reviewed by the Management Committee. Squad structure and the ability of LMSC to meet the needs of the athlete and family are considered in this review. Membership of LMSC is offered at the discretion of the Club Management Committee.

Absences/Departures from the Club

The Club reserves the right to fill places in squads left vacant by swimmers who are absent from training for prolonged periods of time (for reasons other than medical/injury) or who decide to leave the club.

If the swimmer wishes to return to the Club at a later date the Club will endeavour to offer a place in the same squad, if appropriate, however, this offer will be dependent on overall membership numbers and cannot be guaranteed.

We require a month's written notice [via email to membership@laoismarlins.ie and treasurer@laoismarlins.ie] if a swimmer is leaving the club and fees for that month must be paid.

Member Participation Policy

Laois Marlins SC is managed and supported by volunteers, made up of club members. We are committed to operating the club at the highest standards and in line with our club ethos and Swim Ireland requirements. To ensure our club is successful we rely on our members' participation in mandatory training, mandatory and voluntary duties. More details are outlined in the member participation policy available in the appendices.

Codes of Conduct

One of the basic policies for all members is the Codes of Conduct. The codes of conduct identify a standard of behaviour that is expected for all the individuals involved in sport.

Breaches of the codes of conduct will be dealt with through the complaints and disciplinary process with the emphasis on resolution through the informal route.

The relevant code of conduct should be signed annually by young people, parents, committee members, leaders, coaches and teachers, returned to secretary@laoismarlins.ie and they will be kept on record.

Joining the club

The entry standard is our train to train squad. Trials for joining the club are offered at the at various times of the season. If you are interested in becoming a member please contact membership@laoismarlins.ie
Places will be offered based on availability.

Laois Marlins endeavours to facilitate all athletes who wish to become members of the club. If you or your child/ children have any special requirements, please contact secretary@laoismarlins.ie

For information on accessibility to the facility/ facilities contact secretary@laoismarlins.ie with your requirements.

Membership Fees

Club fees are payable monthly.

Invoices will be issued when fees are due.

Monthly fees paid by direct debit or standing order must be paid by (10th) day of each month

Payment options available: Bank transfer, direct debit, standing order, cheque, cash. Cheques must be made payable to (club)

Any queries regarding club fees should be directed to club treasurer treasurer@laoismarlins.ie

All financial queries will be treated with confidentiality.

By paying your fees you are committing to membership of the club for that period. Refunds will not be offered to members who decide to leave before the end of that term.

A swimmer will not be allowed to participate in training with LMSC until all required membership documentation has been fully completed AND signed and all fees are up-to-date paid unless alternative arrangements have been agreed in advance with the Management Committee. If at any time there is an issue with fees please contact our treasurer, at treasurer@laoismarlins.ie, who will be happy to help.

Any other additional charges per month such as galas, strength & conditioning training, team events, equipment, etc. will be charged through the appropriate billing types on a monthly basis. All payments must be made via the online payment system

Unpaid fees that are outstanding for more than three months may be referred to the club complaints and disciplinary committee and may result in sanctions in accordance with Swim Ireland Complaints and Disciplinary procedures.

Fee Structure

Each member is required to pay club fees. The annual Swim Ireland fee is also mandatory, full details of fees are listed below.

Membership and SI Fees	<p>Membership Fees are as follows:</p> <p>Competitive member €80 Non-Competitive member €55</p>
Squad/ Team Fees paid monthly	<p>Train to Train €44 Junior Squad €70 Junior Dev €84 Senior Dev €96 Senior €125 Stars €50 Masters 1 €88 Masters 2 €75 Masters 3 €75</p> <p>Reminder: Non-payment of fees may result in sanctions in accordance with SI complaints and disciplinary procedures</p>

Payment of Fees

Members are expected to keep their accounts up to date at all times. Payments are made through electronic bank transfer to the Laois Marlins bank account. Where possible, we would be grateful if payments could be made in advance of 10th day of each respective month.

Bank Details:

Account Name: Laois Marlins Swimming Club

BIC: IPBSIE2D

IBAN: IE68IPBS99072215619324

If paying in branch, please ensure to include the swimmers name as a reference on the payment to ensure it can be correctly assigned to their account

Drop Off and Collection

Swimmers are required to be on poolside 5 minutes prior to start of their session for warm up. Children under 18 will remain the responsibility of their parent / guardian until the start of the pool session.

Parents / guardians should not drop off children without ensuring there is a parent on duty and coach on duty to conduct the session. Parents / guardians should arrive promptly at the end of session to collect children as the Club cannot be responsible for athletes once the session has finished and have left poolside.

Duty rota for sessions

- The rota is organised in advance (on a monthly basis) and communicated to all involved in the LMSC WhatsApp group and via TU.
- Contact details for all individuals on the rota will be available to coaching/teaching staff involved in the session (these details are kept confidential and available for those that need them)
- The person on duty must be over eighteen, and may be an older member of the club, i.e. it does not need to be a parent. However, an athlete may not be the person on duty for their own session or squad
- The coach/teacher must be able to rely on the person on duty being present, some sessions take place at more vulnerable times e.g. early morning
- The person on duty should have a full view and hearing of the pool area/ dry land area; this cannot be achieved by sitting up in a stand or behind protective screens or glass.
- The person on duty should not interfere with the safe coaching or teaching of the session. However, if a young person is in imminent danger the issue must be dealt with immediately
- Concerns should be brought to the coach or teacher in charge of the session or the Children's Officer following a session
- The person on duty is required to remain until all the young people have been collected. Any parent persistently arriving late or being delayed picking up their child/children should be reported to the coach/leader or the committee – this is a breach of the code of conduct and will be dealt with accordingly

Duties of the person on duty

The person scheduled to be on duty must:

- Find an alternative in the event they are not able to attend; it is the responsibility of the person scheduled to be on duty to do this
- Turn up at a reasonable time before the session starts and remain with any teaching/coaching staff until all the young people are collected
- Be in full view of the pool
- Ensure an attendance record for the session is kept – this can be kept with the coach and should be signed by the coach and person on duty
- Be aware of children leaving and returning to pool, e.g. a child should return to the pool after visiting the toilet
- Allow the coach/teacher freedom to get on with the session – sometimes coaches or teachers need to feedback to individuals on one to one basis, this should be in open view
- Take note of any problems that occur – refer any issues directly to the coach or teacher in charge of the session or, if not possible, to the Children's Officer or club secretary
- Know how or where to access young people's contact details in cases of illness or emergency or in the event the session is cancelled
- In cases of emergency, help the coach/teacher by being an extra adult to supervise children or to assist with a response to the emergency

No person on duty

It is a breach of Swim Ireland rules to not have a person on duty for Swim Ireland sessions, either pool or dry land activities. If a person on duty does not turn up the coach/teacher will take the best courses of action to ensure the

safety of the young people and themselves, this may mean cancelling the session unless a replacement is found. The person on duty who did not turn up may be subject to disciplinary action.

Transfers

If a member wishes to leave Laois Marlins and join another club, they must communicate with the club secretary in writing.

The club may withhold a transfer if:

1. The member owes fees to Swim Ireland or the club
2. The member holds club property
3. The member has a complaint made against them which is in process or pending, or in relation to a sanction which has been issued but not yet served.

If you transfer to another club, you will cease to be a member in Laois Marlins.

Club Gear

Essential kit for training includes swimsuit, swim hat and goggles.

Other recommended equipment includes:

- Flip Flops or Sandals
- Water bottle
- Kickboard
- Pull buoy
- Snorkel
- Fins
- Hand Paddles
- Shammy towel

Coach/ teacher will advise of other kit which may be required.

LSMC swimming hat must be worn at competition, hats are available from the Head Coach.

Additional cub gear available is optional and can be ordered from www.swimkit.ie

Section 2 - Club Roles and Contact Details

The roles covered are:

1. Management Committee
2. Club Children's Officer (CCO)
3. Coaches and Teachers
4. Team Managers
5. Officials

1. Management Committee

The management committee is in place to manage all aspects of the club. It consists of a Chairperson, secretary, treasurer, club children's officer, head coach and a minimum of 4 other members and these are elected at the AGM each year. The chairperson, secretary and treasurer may stand for election for 4 consecutive years. After this time period is up, eligibility for re-election is revoked for a period of 2 years. Meetings take place monthly.

All committee members must be Swim Ireland members; vetted through Swim Ireland prior to taking up their position and must complete the relevant safeguarding course. All committee members must abide by and annually sign the relevant code of conduct. All communication by the committee will be done by email and via TU, please ensure you have provided correct contact details to the club secretary.

2. Club Children's Officer (CCO)

Laois Marlins committed to the creation of a child centres atmosphere within our club. The CCO ensures that young people can talk freely and have a voice in the running of the club. The CCO is also a member of the club management committee.

The CCO is available through cco@laoismarlins.ie

The CCO must be Swim Ireland member, vetted through Swim Ireland/ Swim Ulster prior to taking up their position. The CCO must complete the Safeguarding level 1, 2 and 3. CCO's must abide by and annually sign the relevant code of conduct.

3. Coaches

Coaches and teachers in Laois Marlins have the responsibility for teaching the development of core swim skills and abilities, and for coaching skills and abilities in a progressive way. Coaches and teachers must have access to emergency contact details for athletes and must not hold committee positions if they are coaching/ teaching for more than 3 hours weekly. The head coach is a member of the club management committee. All coaches and teachers must be adequately qualified and licenced for their position. All coaches and teachers must abide by and annually sign the relevant code of conduct.

4. Team Managers

Team managers are appointed for all events and away trips. Parents are expected to help and are encouraged to get involved by attending team manager courses. The club need properly trained people/staff to take responsibility for young people at competitions and away trips. Team managers work with coaches to ensure athletes are supported and supervised when they are away from their parents. The team manager, in conjunction with management committee and head coach/ teacher will organise away trips in line with Swim Ireland's travel policy.

Team managers must be Swim Ireland members, vetted through Swim Ireland/ Swim Ulster prior to taking up their position. The team managers must complete the relevant safeguarding course and a team manager course. Team managers must abide by and annually sign the relevant code of conduct. The club travel policy is on the Swim Ireland website.

5. Officials

Swimming - Officials include timekeepers, turn & stroke judges, referees, starters.

Officials are an essential part of competition for all clubs. Laois Marlins is required to provide officials at regional and national competitions and parents will be asked to assist with these roles. Training will be provided, as necessary.

Current Club Management Committee

Position	Name	Email address
Chairperson	Áine MacNamara	chair@laoismarlins.ie
Secretary	Keith Winters	secretary@laoismarlins.ie
Treasurer	Nicola Donagher	treasurer@laoismarlins.ie
Club Children's Officer	Anna Grimes	cco@laoismarlins.ie
Head Coach	Padraig Dolan	coach@laoismarlins.ie
Complaints and Disciplinary Officer		@laoismarlins.ie
Committee member	Sean Smyth	education@laoismarlins.ie
Committee member	Liang Feng	pro@laoismarlins.ie
Committee member	Enda Behan	membership@laoismarlins.ie
Committee member	Brian Bonham	clubdevelopment@laoismarlins.ie

Club AGM

Laois Marlins Swimming Club holds an AGM annually in June. Members are requested to attend and contribute to the successful running of the club. Committee members are elected annually; these positions are filled by members and parents of members in the club. At the AGM, the executive officers and head coach will provide an annual report to members. Parents / guardians of club members who are under 18 may attend and represent their child /children and may cast one vote only (regardless of number of children who are club members). Parents / guardians who are members of the club may cast a vote for themselves and on behalf of their child/ children. Proxy voting is not permitted.

PRO and promotion of LMSC

The Club PRO is responsible for media coverage of Club swimmers. Any press release regarding Club swimmers and their achievements should only be communicated to the media via the Club PRO. Any mistakes in media coverage should be notified to the Club PRO who will liaise with the relevant media body. The Club endeavors to maintain a high profile. From time-to-time sponsorship is provided to the swimmers by local commercial enterprises. In such cases the Club will arrange a promotional photograph for the local papers. Parents have the right to exclude their children from such photographs if they wish. This decision should be notified to the Chairperson. All sponsorship is approved in advance by the Club Committee. From time to time the Club may also arrange promotional photographs of swimmers during training, such as those taken on the away trip or at galas. It is important in applying for membership of the Club that swimmers and their parents' consent to such photos being taken and used by the Club, unless a swimmer or parent indicates otherwise in writing in advance to the Club Committee.

It is important that it is not possible to promote all club activities, or activities of club members.

Section 3 - Facility Information and Emergency Action Plan

Laois Marlins Swimming Club train and compete in public and private facilities. Our members need to behave when entering the facilities, using changing rooms and showering areas. Once members arrive at the facility, they are representing Laois Marlins Swimming Club and should follow the Code of Conduct they have signed.

Failure to adhere to good behaviour guidelines during training will result in disciplinary action. Please refer to the most recent Code of Conduct.

General Safety

Safety is the responsibility of every individual involved in the Club. Identified risks should be reported to a member of the Club Management Committee or a coach. Laois Marlins Swimming Club is committed to ensuring the safety of its members in, and immediately around the Pool area. In the interest of safety all swimmers and spectators must understand and abide by these simple Pool rules:

- No Running
- No Pushing
- No Bombing
- No Somersaults
- No Backflips
- No Horseplay
- No Diving in the shallow end
- No Outdoor shoes on deck

LMSC uses the facilities of the Laois Leisure for all pool training sessions. For further details of this facility, including access to the changing rooms, emergency access plan and rules of the facility that need to be adhered to by LMSC members, please refer to their website (www.laoisleisure.ie). It should be particularly noted that, in the event of an emergency during a training session, instruction must be taken from the management staff of the Laois Leisure and that first aid treatment may only be administered by their appointed lifeguard on duty, not the coach or parent/supervisor on deck.

Section 4 - General Club Information

Competitions

Competitions details of the upcoming competitions and closing date for entries will be communicated to the relevant squads by email and sign-up is through our website. Some competitions have qualification criteria included in the competition information and it is important to make sure that athletes have reached the required criteria before entering. Coaches will advise athletes on competitions they should enter, and all entries must be submitted through Team Unify. Questions on event entries should be raised with the Head Coach and gala secretary. A Gala Guide is available on the website.

Photography and Filming

LMSC would remind members that no one may video, film or take photographs of children without having received permission to do so. It is a condition of Swim Ireland membership that all members have agreed to this permission. Any image will be in keeping with the ethos of the sport.

There is no photography allowed in Portlaoise Leisure Centre. For all Swim Ireland, regional and club events any person must accept that they may be photographed or filmed as part of the occasion, either as an individual or as a member of a group. When attending events please check with competition manager or facility about permission to video, film or take photographs. Children under 18 must be wearing a t-shirt and bottoms / shorts when having photograph taken out of the pool. The Swim Ireland Filming and Photography policy is available on the Swim Ireland website

Anti-bullying Policy

The Anti-Bullying Policy applies to all members including swimmers, parents / guardians, volunteers, coaches and others who help and assist with club activities. As part of this policy, we support the Anti-Bullying Promise to help create a safe, enjoyable place for young people, free from verbal, physical, exclusion, gesture, extortion and cyberbullying.

Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures

All complaints and disciplinary matters occurring with LMSC will be dealt with in accordance with the Swim Ireland complaints and disciplinary procedures. Full complaints and disciplinary procedures are available on our website or through the club secretary.

Discipline

The disciplinary processes for young people and adults are in place to ensure fair and consistent measures for issues such as breaches of rules or codes of conduct. The procedures clearly state the circumstance under which these may be imposed in order to ensure a process that is fair for all young people involved.

Swim Ireland Policies and Procedures

Please note this list is not exhaustive and updates will be available on Swim Ireland website.

- Swim Ireland Rulebook
- Complaints and disciplinary rules and procedures
- Safeguarding Policies, Working with Young People
- Data Protection and privacy policies
- Swimming pool safety guidelines

Member Participation Policy

As part of our commitment to swimmer development and club sustainability, Laois Marlins has developed a Participation and Development Plan. Laois Marlins Swimming Club is managed and supported by volunteers, made up of club members. We are committed to operating the club at the highest standards and in line with our club ethos and Swim Ireland requirements. As your swimmer progresses through the club, it is mandatory that one parent/guardian per household participates in Swim Ireland training, including Officials, Safeguarding, and Team Manager courses. These requirements are in place to ensure a safe, supportive environment for all our swimmers—and to share responsibility fairly among families.

Training Requirements To support our members in understanding the roles we are asking you to fill and to grow the knowledge base within our club we have implemented a training and development plan for Laois Marlins, as recommended by Swim Ireland. Where possible we endeavour to offer training in-house and at times that are convenient to our members.

Training expectations are outlined below, there is no restriction on members completing training in advance of the timeline.

One parent/guardian must complete the training relevant to that squad.

Garda Vetting - vetting is a requirement for any individual acting in a role, i.e. team manager, licensed official, committee, coach and teacher.

Garda Vetting (for one parent / guardian from each family) is a requirement for yearly registration for Laois Marlins from 2025

Club Links and Policies

Club website <http://www.laoismarlins.ie>

Swim Ireland www.swimireland.ie

Leinster Swimming www.swimleinster.com

Swim Kit www.swimkit.ie

Swim Ireland Policies and Procedures

Please note this list is not exhaustive and updates will be available on Swim Ireland website.

- Swim Ireland Rulebook
- Water Polo Rulebook
- Complaints and disciplinary rules and procedures

- Safeguarding children policies and procedures
- Data Protection and privacy policies
- Swimming pool safety guidelines