



April 2025
VASC20

VERULAM Amateur Swimming Club Affiliated to Swim England East Region

New Member Handbook

Welcome to Verulam Swimming Club!

Who are we?

Verulam ASC is a Swim Mark accredited swimming club affiliated to Swim England (formerly the ASA) offering learn-to-swim lessons and club/competitive training at Westminster Lodge, Marlborough Science Academy and St Albans High School pools. We have a strong team of qualified coaches and teachers led by our head coach Karl Fenwick. The management and administration of Verulam Swimming Club is carried out by a small committee of parent volunteers and other parent helpers.

Now you have passed the trial and are ready to start. What next?

Based on the trial, swimmers will join one of our swimming groups - Academy 1-5 or a Competitive Squad. On starting at Verulam, most swimmers join the Academy. Which group you join depends on age, technique and stamina. As stamina and technique improves, progress can be made through the groups.

If a swimmer wishes to compete they can move into the competitive squad. If this is something they are interested in they should speak with the senior coach. Any place in the competitive squad is dependent on meeting and maintaining the squad standards which can be found on our website. If the senior coach considers you are ready you will be invited to a trial for the squad. Please refer to our document on squad standards and criteria.

Squad also incorporates some land training at the start of sessions run at Westminster Lodge. We also have competitive squads for each of the groups with an extra dedicated training session.

What will I need for training?

- Well fitting swimsuit or trunks (not beach shorts)
- Towel
- Goggles
- Swimming hat
- Water bottle
- Short training fins*
- Pull buoy*
- Kick board*
- Mesh bag* (useful for storing the above).
- Snorkel

Training kit marked with * can be bought through HT Sports via the club website, as well as at numerous swimming shops online. Verulam club bags, poolside tops, polo shirts, shorts and long pants can also be bought from HT Sports. Verulam swim hats can be bought from our coaches or via the club website.

If you are planning on competing at open galas (see further below) please ensure you have a poolside top with the Verulam logo on.

When can I train?

Verulam offers training sessions up to 8 times a week throughout the year. We train at 5 pools currently: Westminster Lodge, Marlborough School, St Albans High School, Harpenden and Inspire Luton. Swimmers can attend any of the sessions for their group. Generally the sessions for competitive squads and academy are separate, currently with the exception of Wednesday night training. Please see the timetable on our website which lists the sessions you can go to as well as the recommended number of sessions to attend for your group. During school holidays we run a reduced timetable mainly at Westminster Lodge. The sessions remain broadly the same however there are no sessions at the schools and some may be shorter. During the summer we are closed for 2 weeks. Please see emails and our website for holiday timetable arrangements. Parents are very welcome to come and watch or help out. Parents are asked to check if a coach is present before dropping swimmers off and to pick-up swimmers from the pool rather than the car park.

What sort of training will I get?

The club follows Sport England's Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) programme. This is about laying a strong technical foundation for swimmers from the beginning and adding on stamina and strength. This helps build confidence and prevents swimmers peaking too early in their swimming career. We also offer guidance on appropriate nutrition, hydration, recovery and other key aspects to developing as a strong sportsperson.

What sort of competitive swimming is available?

We believe that to get the best out of swimming, competitive events such as those listed below are essential. More detailed information about competition and these events can be found in our swimming competition guide.

Club Time Trials are held throughout the year within training sessions and are not licensed by Swim England (i.e. can't be used for County Level qualification).

Club Championship Galas are held throughout the year and are licensed events. We usually run 3, a "sprint" one in the summer (50 metres and IM) and longer events during the autumn split across two nights. All swimmers are encouraged to enter as many events as they are eligible. Cups, medals and certificates are awarded after the sprint night and in respect of the autumn club championships these are awarded at the annual Verulam Presentation Disco in December.

Swimming League Galas occur throughout the year. Swimmers are picked based on ability, times and commitment. We currently take part in the Arena (U11yrs to Open age groups), Herts Major (U12 to Open age groups) and Peanuts (9yr to U13 age groups) Leagues

Open Meets Those open meets supported by the club are chosen by the coaching team throughout the year. There may be qualifying times depending on the level of the meet (Level 4 up to Level 1) . It is important to carefully check the conditions when these meets are advertised. These are licensed events and swimmers will need to pay a fee to enter.

County and Regional Level Meets. Finally, stronger swimmers may qualify to enter County and Regional Championships. There are qualifying times for these which need to be gained at licensed meets during the current swimming season.

Galas and meets are listed on the Verulam club calendar on our website. Team selection will be via club email. Please bear in mind that spectators pay to watch at all galas. Results are entered into our database and used as a guide for team selection, however, swimmers are encouraged to keep a record of their personal best times (pbs), as these will be needed to enter Open Meets and to gain ASA Competitive Performance Badge Awards.

If I'm ready for competition, what will I need for galas?

- Well fitting swimsuit, trunks or race suit plus a spare pair
- Towel(s)
- Goggles plus a spare pair
- Verulam club hat
- Verulam club poolside shirt
- Warm clothing such as sweatshirt and jogging trousers to wear on poolside between events
- Clean flip-flops or other suitable footwear to keep your feet warm between events
- Water bottle with plenty of water and energy drinks

How much will joining cost?

There are 3 fees to be paid:

1. Verulam Swimming Fee.

Fees are listed on our website. These are payable in February and August each year. We allow a 3-week grace period when your child first joins during which you can decide whether or not to continue with the club. If you decide not to continue we will refund the Verulam Swimming Fee (i.e. not the joining or the Swim England fee). After this 3 week period, please note fees are not refundable for any reason.

2. Swim England Fee

Fees are listed on our website. All our swimmers need to be registered with and pay this fee on joining and then each February. Swim England is our governing body and provides among other things our insurance cover.

3. Joining Fee: Fees are listed on our website.

Can parents come and help out?

Verulam Swimming Club could not function without parental help. We would love to hear from any parents who would like to contribute to the running of the club. Volunteers can help with our coaches on poolside, at galas, with club administration, or follow training courses and become a Swim England official timekeeper or judge. To find out more please contact a committee member either poolside or through our website.

If your child joins the Performance Development or Performance Squad we require one family volunteering representative to support the club. This should be considered when accepting a place within the squads.

How do we communicate with parents?

Most of our communication is via email. We also use the social feed on the “Sports Engine” app. All parents should install this as if there are any last minute pool closures or changes we may need to communicate this way for speed. Please ensure you add our email addresses to your contacts. Emails are backed-up by messages on our website and the app – so please check these regularly. Some pages on the website, including the results page, are protected by being logged-in. If you have difficulty logging in then please contact us.

Finally, the club’s annual general meeting (AGM) is held in March. This is when fees are set for the next year, committee members are voted in and parents can discuss any club issues. All parents and older swimmers are encouraged to attend to learn more about Verulam Swimming Club.

If you have any further queries, please contact us via the website or ask a committee member on poolside.