



# GATORS PARENT'S HANDBOOK

# 2025

We hope this handbook answers many of your questions and eases any anxieties about the season. Swimming is a lifelong sport, and your kids will enjoy making great memories with teammates along the way!





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## **Introduction**

Welcome to the DMSS Gators Swim Club! Competitive swimming fosters physical fitness, discipline, and lifelong skills. This handbook is a resource to help parents navigate practices, galas, and team activities. Our mission is to create an environment that nurtures every swimmer's potential while promoting fun and camaraderie. Coaches and fellow parents are your support network—reach out with any questions. Together, let's make this a memorable journey for you and your swimmer.

## **The Club**

Founded in 2016, Gators Swim Club is the competitive division of DMSS Swim School. Governed by an executive committee and a member-based constitution, it provides structured opportunities for swimmers to excel. The club adheres to Botswana Swimming Sport Association (BSSA) regulations, aligns with international swimming standards to ensure quality experiences for all members, and is duly registered with the Botswana Registrar of Societies (Reg. CR12359).

## **Membership**

Membership is open to DMSS students interested in competitive swimming. The annual fee covers administrative costs, gala registration, and other club activities. Benefits include professional coaching, access to competitive events, and participation in a supportive community. Parents are encouraged to attend the AGM to stay updated and voice feedback. Membership fosters not just skill development but also lifelong friendships and teamwork. All Gators members must register through the DMSS online portal.

## **Team Structure**

Swimmers advance through a tiered system within the swim school—from Entry (Development) to Gold (Elite) squads—based on their skill level, age, and maturity. Coaches of the swim school periodically review placements to ensure swimmers are in groups best suited for their development. Participation in galas helps swimmers gain confidence, improve skills, and set personal goals. For those new to galas, the club offers guidance on what to expect, from race-day logistics to swimming etiquette.

## **Galas & Events**

Galas are integral to the club experience, emphasizing sportsmanship and personal achievement. Attendance at key events, such as the BSSA National Gala and Gators Gala, is encouraged. International competitions, like the Sasolburg Winter Champs, provide exposure to diverse competition levels. Parents should familiarize themselves with the seasonal calendar and support their swimmers in planning for these events. The club also hosts community-building activities like swim-a-thons and team dinners to strengthen bonds among member. The calendar for the upcoming year is usually made available around July of every year, emailed and posted onto the DMSS website: [www.dmss.co.bw](http://www.dmss.co.bw)



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### **Training Attendance & Behaviour**

Regular attendance at training with the swim school is critical to a swimmer's development. Training sets are designed to build endurance, refine techniques, and prepare for competition. Swimmers must arrive on time, bring the required gear, and maintain a positive attitude. The code of ethics emphasizes respect for coaches, teammates, and opponents. Parents play a supportive role by ensuring punctuality and encouraging responsibility in their children. Open communication with coaches about attendance or behavioral concerns fosters a collaborative environment.

### **Parent Involvement**

Parents are the backbone of the club's success. Responsibilities include:

- Ensuring children are prepared with proper attire and equipment.
- Offering emotional support by celebrating progress and effort, regardless of outcomes.
- Avoiding disruptive behaviors, such as sideline coaching or criticizing officials.
- Participating in volunteer roles at meets, such as officiating or managing logistics. Active parental involvement strengthens the club community and sets a positive example for swimmers.

### **Communication**

The club uses multiple channels to share information, including the DMSS online portal, email, WhatsApp, digital notice boards, newsletters, and social media updates. Parents should check these regularly for event schedules, announcements, and policy updates. Direct questions or concerns to coaches or committee members during designated office hours. Transparent communication is essential for ensuring all members are informed and engaged.

### **Volunteer Roles**

Successful meets rely on parent volunteers in roles such as:

- **Officials:** Referees, stroke judges, and timers ensure fair competition.
- **Support Staff:** Marshals and clerks manage swimmer logistics.
- **Event Coordinators:** Handle setup, concessions, and awards. Volunteer training sessions are available, and new members are paired with experienced volunteers for guidance. Volunteering fosters a sense of community and ensures events run smoothly.

### **Swim Meet Guidelines**

Preparation is key for a successful meet. Swimmers should arrive 15 minutes before warm-ups with all necessary gear (e.g., goggles, caps, and team attire). Staying hydrated and consuming healthy snacks is crucial for maintaining energy levels. Parents are encouraged to support from the sidelines, respecting team areas and swimmer independence. Post-race feedback from coaches helps swimmers reflect on their performance and set future goals.



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### **Disqualifications**

Disqualifications (DQs) are a learning opportunity. They often result from technical errors, such as incorrect turns or stroke techniques. Coaches will review the reasons for a DQ with swimmers, helping them refine their skills. Parents should use DQs as moments to encourage perseverance and resilience.

### **Away Meets / Training Camps**

Gators aims to travel as a team for away meets or camps, with staff including a team manager, chaperones, and coaches. When resources are limited, parents may be called on to assist. Parents are encouraged to attend outside galas, as they help with essential roles like timekeeping and officiating.

### **Team Equipment**

Team spirit is boosted through uniformity. Official Gators team kits can be ordered from the DMSS office, ensuring swimmers represent the club consistently at all events.

### **Code of Conduct**

All members are expected to uphold the highest standards of behavior, including:

- Treating teammates, officials, and opponents with respect.
- Complying with club policies and event rules.
- Demonstrating honesty, integrity, and commitment in all interactions. Any violations, such as substance use or discriminatory behavior, will result in disciplinary action. Adhering to these principles ensures a safe and supportive environment for all.

### **Conclusion**

The Gators Swim Club is more than a team—it's a community dedicated to excellence in and out of the pool. By working together as swimmers, parents, and coaches, we can achieve personal growth, team success, and cherished memories. Let's make this season an incredible experience for everyone involved.