



## Thame Swimming Club Absence from Swimming Policy

### **Purpose**

This policy outlines the procedures for reporting absences, defines acceptable reasons for missing training sessions, and explains how attendance is monitored and its impact on swimmer progression within the club.

### **Notification of Absences**

1. Prolonged absences (exceeding two consecutive weeks) should be discussed directly with the Coach to ensure awareness and appropriate support upon return.

### **Attendance Expectations**

2. Swimmers are expected to attend all sessions offered to them in their group.
3. Attendance under 70% will be considered low and may impact progression between training groups, as outlined in the Training Group Movement Process Policy. For Groups 3, 3+ and 4, their attendance will be monitored by coaches.
4. For Group 3, 3+ (Performance) and Group 4 (County & District) swimmers, regular gala attendance is also expected (at least one in three available competitions).

### **Absence**

5. The club accepts there will be occasions due to Illness and Injury that swimmers will not be well enough to attend a training session. For serious illness or injury 1 week or more, please discuss with your coach, as this may require a more managed return and in some instances welfare.
6. Where holidays and schools' examinations may impact attendance, please discuss with your coach as a revised time table could be decided upon.
7. Participation in other sporting activities or competitions should be discussed with the Coach to ensure it does not adversely affect swimming attendance and progression.
8. Participation in club events which results in missed sessions will not affect attendance records, however if the training session runs in the AM and the event was in the PM, then the expectation is for the swimmer to attend training as normal. This is unlikely to happen frequently but again discuss with the coach if necessary to decide what's best for the swimmer.
9. You can contact the coach if required by emailing [headcoach@thameswimmingclub.co.uk](mailto:headcoach@thameswimmingclub.co.uk)

### **Attendance Monitoring**

Coaches will take a register at each training session.

Attendance records are maintained in Swim Manager and can be viewed in each swimmer's member record

- Attendance is calculated as a percentage of the group's available pool time
10. Review Periods
    - Bi-annual formal reviews: Attendance will be formally reviewed twice per year (typically January and July)
    - Ongoing monitoring: Coaches will monitor attendance continuously and may raise concerns at any time, in relation to the 70% attendance requirement pertaining to groups outlined above.

- Parents/guardians may be contacted if attendance falls and no explanation is offered. In some instances, the welfare team may also be advised by coaches of unexplained absences.

#### 11. Review Process

- Bi-annual reviews will assess attendance patterns and identify any concerns
- Coaches will consider extenuating circumstances and overall trends
- Swimmers with consistently low attendance (below 70%) in the relevant groups, may be contacted by coach and attendance will be monitored for 6 weeks. A further 6 weeks is then granted with an awareness of the impact of continued low attendance.

#### **Impact of Poor Attendance**

12. As outlined in the Training Group Movement Process Policy, attendance is a key criterion for group progression and retention.

13. Where attendance falls below 70% without extenuating circumstances:

- The coach will discuss concerns with the swimmer and parent(s)/guardian(s)
- A six-week improvement period will typically be granted and recorded.
- If attendance does not improve, the swimmer may be:
  - *Not considered for promotion to a higher group / potentially moved to a lower training group*
  - *Potentially asked to consider leaving the club to make way for other more committed swimmers to move up and for new swimmers to join*
- To ensure improvement a further 6 weeks will be monitored and advised to the swimmer and the parent(s)/guardian(s) before any of the above actions are implemented to give the swimmer as much opportunity as possible if required.

14. Allowances can be made for extenuating circumstances, if there is a discussion with the coaches, including:

- Prolonged illness or injury
- School examination periods
- Other circumstances at the discretion of the coaching team and/or welfare if required

#### **Extended Absences**

15. Absences of Less Than Three Months

- All membership and training fees remain due for the full three-month period
- The swimmer's place in their group will be held
- No refunds will be provided

#### **Absences of More Than Three Months**

- Training fees will be waived from the start of the fourth month
- A holding fee of £8.00 per month must continue to be paid by standing order to cover membership and Swim England fees.
- Parents/guardians should maintain regular communication with the Head Coach regarding return plans

#### **Returning from Extended Absence**

- Swimmers should contact the Coach before returning
- A gradual return to training may be recommended, particularly after injury
- Assessment may be required to determine appropriate training group placement
- For Group 3 and 4 swimmers, stamina and technique will be reassessed upon return

#### **Lapsed Membership and Re-joining**

16. If membership lapses (payments cease without prior arrangement), and the swimmer wishes to re-join:

- The swimmer must join the waiting list if no spaces are available
- Re-trialling may be required, as determined by the Head Coach
- A re-joining fee may apply if re-joining more than three months after resignation, amounting to the cost for any Swim England or other direct expenses incurred by the club to process the rejoining. Priority for available spaces will be given to existing club members awaiting progression.

#### **Dispute Resolution and Mediation**

17. Open Communication

- The club encourages open and constructive dialogue between coaches and parents/guardians regarding attendance matters
- All parties should approach discussions with the best interests of the swimmer as the primary focus

18. Initial Discussion

- If a parent/guardian disagrees with a coach's assessment or application of this policy, they should refer to the feedback, concerns and complaints processes page on the club website and email the secretary, who will pass to the Chair and delegate as appropriate for the circumstances.
- The coach will explain the rationale for their decision, with reference to attendance records and the criteria outlined in this policy

19. Head Coach Involvement

- If the matter cannot be resolved through direct discussion with the coach, the parent/guardian may request a meeting with the Head Coach alongside a committee member.
- The Head Coach will review the case, including:
  - Attendance records and patterns
  - Documentation of extenuating circumstances
  - Communications between coach and parent/guardian
  - Application of policy criteria

20. Committee Mediation

- If agreement still cannot be reached, either party may request mediation through the Club Committee
- A mediation meeting will be arranged, typically involving:
  - The parent/guardian
  - The relevant coach

- The Head Coach
- A designated Committee member (independent of the coaching team)
- The mediation process will aim to:
  - Ensure all perspectives are heard
  - Review all relevant evidence objectively
  - Consider any extenuating circumstances
  - Reach a fair and reasonable resolution

#### **Committee Decision**

- Following mediation, if consensus cannot be reached, the Club Committee will make a final decision based on:
  - The evidence presented
  - The policy guidelines
  - The principle of fairness to all club members
  - What is in the best interest of the swimmer
- The Committee's decision will be communicated in writing to all parties within 14 days
- The Committee's decision will be final

#### **21. Documentation**

- All stages of the dispute resolution process will be documented
- Records will be kept confidentially and stored in accordance with data protection requirements

#### **22. Continued Participation**

- During the dispute resolution process, the swimmer should continue to attend training as normal, unless otherwise agreed
- All parties are expected to maintain professional and respectful conduct throughout the process

#### **Communication and Support**

23. The club is committed to supporting swimmers who may be struggling with attendance due to competing commitments or personal circumstances.
24. Parents/guardians are encouraged to communicate openly with coaches about attendance challenges.
25. The committee may exercise discretion in individual cases, particularly where circumstances are exceptional or beyond the swimmer's control.
26. Any concerns about this policy or its application should be raised with the Head Coach or Club Committee.

#### **No Refund Policy**

27. Thame Swimming Club is unable to refund any membership or training fees once these have been paid, except where required by law.

#### **Policy Review**

28. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Club Committee and Head Coach.
29. Any changes will be communicated to all club members via email and updated on the club website at [www.thameswimmingclub.co.uk](http://www.thameswimmingclub.co.uk).

The Thame Swimming Club Committee will consider the individual circumstances relating to periods of absence and may use discretion in applying the above guidelines.

For any questions regarding this policy, please contact:  
[headcoach@thameswimmingclub.co.uk](mailto:headcoach@thameswimmingclub.co.uk)