INTRODUCTION

The Tiger Sharks Swim Team began in the early 1990's with Lillian Bibeau serving as the first swim coach. The swim team was originally funded and administered as a Byron School District program, until school budgetary cuts in 2004. Fortunately, through the Byron School & Park District Intergovernmental Agreement, the swim team program became a Byron Park District administered program, and continues to serve as a foundation for the area’s High School swim teams.

Swimming is a lifetime sport full of opportunities – opportunities to meet new friends, win and lose gracefully, be part of a team, set attainable goals, learn about hard work and success, and develop positive physical traits. Swimming is a unique sport since it combines team spirit and success with individual accomplishments. Competitive swimming skills are measured by time standards. Lowering one’s times in an event makes that swimmer a winner, no matter what overall place they receive. Winning increases self-confidence and individual discipline to accomplish additional goals!

The Byron Tiger Sharks swim team under the administration of the Byron Park District strives to provide an environment for learning the values of hard work, commitment, self-discipline, leadership, sportsmanship, team spirit and self-esteem. We will try to provide all swimmers with appropriate training and qualified coaching based on age, ability and dedication. Hopefully with this information packet, you will become a knowledgeable and supportive parent of a successful Tiger Shark swimmer!

BTS MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

For a swimmer to become a member of the Byron Tiger Sharks (BTS) swim team, the following requirements must be met:

- Swimmers must meet minimum swimming requirements as set forth by the coaching staff.
- Swimmers and parent/guardians (if athlete is under age 18) must register and pay applicable registration fees for each swim session through the Byron Park District.
- Swimmers must be registered for the current year with USA Swimming. Swimmers transferring from another club within Illinois must pay a transfer fee. Please note that these fees also are payable to the Byron Park District.
- Swimmers and parent/guardians must have a signed copy of the Code of Conduct form on file at the Byron Park District. New signatures will be required at the a swimmer’s initial registration on the team and yearly at the beginning of each Spring session (April).
- All members and their parents/guardians are expected to help fundraise/volunteer at hosted swim meets and other fundraising events during the year.
- Members shall keep current on payment of all fees and register for swim meets by the stated deadlines. Swimmers will not be allowed in the water with outstanding balances unless all past and present fees are paid or prior arrangements have been made through the Byron Park District’s Aquatic Manager.
USA SWIMMING

The Tiger Sharks Age-Group swim team is affiliated with USA Swimming, which is a national governing body responsible for the conduct and administration of swimming in the United States. USA Swimming formulates the rules, implements the policies and procedures, conducts the national championships, disseminates safety and sports medicine information and selects athletes to represent the United States in international competition. USA Swimming is organized into an international division, national division, zones, and local swimming committees. Tiger Sharks is in the central zone and its local swimming committee is Illinois Swimming, Inc.

- **Swim Seasons:** USA Swimming divides the swim year into two seasons. The winter or “short course” season runs from early October to late March. The meets are typically held in a 25 yard pool. The summer or “long course” season runs from early April to mid-August. These meets are generally held in 50 meter pools (Olympic size).

**BTS PROGRAM SESSIONS**

The Byron Park District breaks the USA Swimming season into four sessions, as outlined below. Swimmers may join the team at any time, but the beginning of a session is the most ideal time to begin. The Byron Park District also offers the opportunity for your potential swimmer to attend a week of practices for FREE prior to joining the team. The only requirement is to sign a liability waiver (Free Trial Week Postcard) and give this form to the head coach.

- Fall Session: September – November
- Winter Session: December – February
- Spring Session: April & May
- Summer Session: June & July

**BTS ABILITY GROUPS & PRACTICES**

The Byron Tiger Sharks swim team is divided into two groups: Beginner and Advanced (Competitive) Group. The beginner group is designed for individuals new to the sport of competitive swimming or for those individuals who do not want to compete. Swimmers in the beginner group will be taught all four competitive swim strokes and be introduced to racing starts and turns. The main focus will be on stroke development, technique and endurance. Practices for this group are typically one hour in length. Swimmers in this group have the option of competing in swim meets and are highly encouraged to participate in home swim meets and conference swim meets. Your child’s coach will inform him/her when he/she is ready to move from the beginner group to the advanced group.

The advanced group is designed for those individuals who have the desire to advance competitively. Swimmers will continue to work on stroke technique, with the main focus on conditioning and competitive skills. Practices for this group are typically one and a half hours long with the option of dryland exercises prior to practice. Swimmers in this group are expected to participate in all home meets, conference meets, championship meets in which he/she qualifies and a minimum of one meet per month.

*When you register your child for each session, you should receive a Tiger Shark Practice & Meet calendar that will list practice dates & times, swim meet dates and swim meet registration deadlines. This calendar will also be posted on our website.*
PRACTICE CANCELLATIONS

From time to time, it may become necessary to cancel a daily practice due to weather, illness of the coach, etc. Whenever this becomes necessary, the Byron Park District will attempt to contact parents in at least one of the following ways: e-mail, phone calls, Facebook posting and/or Park District Hotline announcement (815-234-5491 x 900).

BTS PROGRAM FEES

There are several different fees that must be paid before your child(ren) can participate in Tiger Sharks. These fees are listed below. **Please note that all fees are paid to the Byron Park District.**

**Registration Fees:** Registration fees must be paid for each session your child swims (Fall, Winter, Spring & Summer). Pro-rated fees are only available for swimmers participating in school sports and missing the majority of the session.

**USS Insurance Fee:** This $62 fee must be paid each calendar year. Please note that if your child is registering for the first time in the fall, the fee covers Sept. 1st through December 31st of the following year. The USS fee registers the swimmer in the Illinois and United States Swimming Associations, which allows an individual to compete in swim meets. It also serves as insurance for swimmers when they are participating in swim meets and at practices. **All Tiger Shark Swim Team participants must pay this fee each calendar year, even if he/she is not competing in swim meets.**

**Meet Fees & Sign-up Procedures:** You select which meets and days you want to attend and register at the Byron Park District. The coaching staff enters all athletes into the meets and chooses what events the athlete will swim. The coaching staff also determines which swimmers will swim in relays. Typically, the coach will select the four swimmers with the fastest times in that event. Swim meet fees vary depending on the type of meet. Most conference swim meets are $5. Most USS swim meet fees range from $15-$20 per day. Championship meet fees vary depending on how many events a swimmer is competing.

Please note that if you fail to register for a swim meet by the deadline, but swim entries and fees have NOT been sent to the host swim team, you may still register and/or cancel (& receive refund/credit). However, once entries and fees have been mailed, NO additions or cancellations will be accepted.

ATHLETE HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE

In an effort to keep coaching staff well informed of athlete health history and/or conditions, Illinois Swimming has created a medical questionnaire. This form is available on the Byron Park District’s and Illinois Swimming websites. Please complete a questionnaire when initially registering your child for the swim team and give it to the Head Coach. Please keep this information updated with any new history or health condition.
EQUIPMENT

**Suits:** Swimmers can wear any suit to practices. Please note that females shall wear one piece suits, not two piece suits. Each fall, the BTS coaches pick a team suit for the “year” (Sept. – Aug.). Swimmers who plan on competing in swim meets are encouraged to purchase a team suit. Team suits shall only be worn at swim meets, not practice.

**Caps and Goggles:** Goggles are required for all swimmers at both practice and meets. Caps are recommended for girls and preferable for boys. BTS team caps will be available for purchase at the bpd office. In addition, once a year (fall), personalized caps can be ordered.

**Other:** The Byron Park District provides training equipment, including kickboards, pull buoys and fins. Other swimming related products, such as parkas, t-shirts, swim bags, etc. may be purchased. Occasionally, a swim team parent will organize a group order.

**Lockers:** During practice, the lockers in the HS Swimming pool locker room may be utilized. Please have your child lock his/her belongings in a locker to prevent against theft. Locks shall be removed at the end of each practice.

BASIC COMPETITIVE SWIMMING INFORMATION

**Competitive Events:** The four competitive strokes are freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke and butterfly. Events are held in all of the competitive strokes at varying distances depending on the age group of the swimmer. In addition, the individual medley (IM) events require the competitor to swim all four strokes in the following order: butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke and freestyle.

**Relays:** Other swimming events include relays, which are a group of four swimmers who either all swim freestyle (freestyle relay) or each swim one of the competitive strokes in the order of backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly and freestyle (medley relay). All relays are decided by the coaching staff including relay orders and participants.

**Age Classifications:** The typical age group classifications recognized by USA Swimming are 8-Under, 10-Under, 11-12, 13-14, and Senior. In addition, many swim meets offer Open events, where any age swimmer can swim in the event. Not all age group classifications are offered at every swim meet. The swimmer’s age on the first day of a meet will govern the swimmers age for the entire meet.

**Levels of Achievement:** Within each age group there are different nationally recognized levels of achievement based on times. All swimmers begin as “C” swimmers. As they improve, they advance from “C,” to “BB,” “B,” “A,” “AA,” “AAA,” and ultimately “AAAA”. The times required for each ability level are published each year by USA Swimming (www.usaswimming.org). This permits fair, yet challenging, competition on all levels.

In addition, Illinois Swimming has its own set of time standards, including ISI Regional Championship, ISI Age Group Championship (JO) and ISI Senior Championship time standards, which can be found on Illinois Swimming, Inc. website. (www.ilswim.org) In some cases, a swimmer may be in a different class in each stroke. An example: a “C” breaststroke time, a “B” freestyle time, and an “AA” backstroke time.
TYPES OF SWIM MEETS

There are several different categories of meets that Tiger Shark participants can attend, which are listed below. Previous meet locations have included the following: Byron, Morrison, Sterling, Freeport, Moline, Rock Island, Rockford, and various Chicago Suburbs. Some Championship meets are further away.

1. **USS Sanctioned Meets** – These are the most typical types of meets. They are sanctioned (approved) through US/IL Swimming and times are recorded in the USS database. Usually these meets offer each one of the competitive strokes in the two distances offered for each age group. Each swimmer is usually allowed to enter from 3-5 events per day.

2. **Conference Meets** – These sanctioned meets are held twice a year, typically at the end of January and mid-July. Only the teams in our swim conference participate in this meet. Stateline conference teams include Byron, Sterling, Freeport, Morrison and Rockford. Typically, all swimmers on the team will compete in Conference meets.

3. **Fun Meets** - Occasionally, Tiger Sharks will compete with one other team in a fun dual meet. These meets are typically unsanctioned and times are not recorded with Illinois Swimming. We have offered these types of meets in the summer against Rochelle and Genoa. They provide a great opportunity for swimmers in the beginner group to compete in a meet without being concerned about time standards or qualifications.

4. **USS Qualification Meets** - These sanctioned meets have some type of qualification time standard(s) that a swimmer must meet in order to enter the meet.

5. **Championship Meets** – These meets are sanctioned qualification meets, in which IL/US Swimming set the qualifying time standards. They are offered at the end of both long and short seasons (July/Aug & Feb/Mar). Championship meets include Regionals, Age Group Championships (JO’s), Senior Championships, Central Zones, Sectionals, and Nationals.

TRANSPORTATION AND LODGING FOR SWIM MEETS

Parents and/or guardians are responsible for the transportation to and from all swim meets. Parents and/or guardians are also responsible for lodging fees while attending swim meets. Many times, parents will car pool to the meets and stay in the same hotel. Speak with other parents or the swim team coach about transportation and lodging prior to swim meets.

BTS FUNDRAISING/VOLUNTEERING POLICY

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A requirement of participating on the Byron Tiger Sharks swim team is to help fundraise. Swim team registration fees cover coaches’ salaries/wages, but we still need funds to cover additional costs, such as equipment and coach travel to/from swim meets. Our main fundraisers include hosting swim meets and running the summer baseball/softball concession stand. We expect all families to participate in the fundraising activities available each season. Sign-up sheets and instructions will be available prior to each fundraiser. A “buy-out” option is available each session for families unable or unwilling to fundraise. Families selecting the “buy-out” option should pay this amount when registering their swimmer for each session. Please note that families who do NOT earn minimum points each year (Sept. – Aug.), yet have a swimmer who is actively participating on the team, will be billed an applicable “buy-out” fee that must be paid prior to participation for the next session/year.

In an effort to make sure that all families participate in fundraising/volunteering, a “point” system has been created. The Byron Park District currently tracks family points.

**Fall Session (Sept – Nov) Fundraiser: Hosting our Turkey Shoot Swim Meet**
This swim meet is held the weekend before Thanksgiving (Sat & Sun) and is our biggest fundraiser of the year. It requires A LOT of volunteer help and donations. Families participating in this fundraiser should earn a **minimum of 4 points** through the following options.

- Volunteer at the swim meet. Positions include timing, concessions, awards, announcer, admissions, heat prizes, deck runners, etc. Please refer to volunteer swim meet positions on pages 3 & 4. Please note that each position is available each session (AM & PM) on both Saturday & Sunday. **One point will be awarded per person per position per session**
- Donate concession food and supplies. A sign-up sheet listing needed supplies will be posted several weeks prior to the meet. **One point will be awarded per approximately $15 worth of donated supplies.**
- Gather food and cash donations from area businesses. **One point will be awarded per $50 worth of food or cash donations.**
- Concessions Organizer who works closely to the bpd Aquatics Manager to coordinate supplies, oversee concession workers & 50/50 raffle, make price signs and gather additional supplies as needed. **Four points will be awarded per day for this position.**
- Buy-out option $120

**Winter Session (Dec - Feb) Fundraiser: Hosting the Conference Championship Meet.** This meet is typically held the Saturday prior to Super Bowl Sunday. Once again, we need lots of volunteer help and donations to host a swim meet. Families participating in this fundraiser should earn a **minimum of 2 points** through the following options.

- Volunteer at the swim meet. Positions include timing, concessions, awards, announcer, admissions, heat prizes, deck runners, etc. Please refer to volunteer swim meet positions on pages 3 & 4. Please note that each position is available each session (AM & PM). **One point will be awarded per person per position per session**
• Donate concession food and supplies. A sign-up sheet listing needed supplies will be posted several weeks prior to the meet. **One point will be awarded per approximately $15 worth of donated supplies.**

• Concessions Organizer who works closely to the bpd Aquatics Manager to coordinate supplies, oversee concession workers & 50/50 raffle, make price signs and gather additional supplies as needed. **Four points will be awarded for this position.**

• Buy-out option $60

**Spring/Summer (April – July) Session Fundraiser: Operating the bpd summer baseball/softball outdoor concession stand.** This fundraiser is held Monday – Thursday evenings in June & July. The fundraiser's proceeds are split between the Tiger Sharks team and the High School swim team. The High school swim team is responsible for stocking the concession stand, handling the monies and operating the stand during Byron Fest weekend. Tiger Shark families are expected to operate the concession stand during the week. Families participating in this fundraiser should earn a **minimum of 2 points. Each night of volunteering earns a family 1 point.** If you sign-up to work a concession shift, but the games are cancelled due to rain, you still earn 0.5 points. A sign-up calendar will be available once all baseball & softball games have been scheduled.

• Buy-out option $60

**Year Round Fundraiser:** [www.igive.com](http://www.igive.com)
The website, igive is a way to earn money for a “cause”. Our cause is Byron Tiger Sharks. Installing and using the igive button when you order from various stores online, gives our team a certain % of each purchase. The igive company then distributes checks to each agency or “cause” four times per year. **Families participating in this fundraiser will earn .5 point for installing the igive button and another .5 points when you make at least one purchase per year utilizing the button. For every $30 earned per year for the team, families will receive another point.**

**Other Fundraisers:** Various other fundraising opportunities may arise during the year. Plus, parents can work together with the bpd Aquatic manager on other volunteer tasks, such as the ones listed below to earn additional points.

- Organizing a team clothing/suit/parka order
  - 1 point per team order
- Maintaining our team’s display case
  - 2 points per year
- Organizing a team social event (bowling, movie night, etc.)
  - 1 point per social event

**Incentive Awards**
Families have the option of earning more than the minimum amount of points (8) per year (Sept. – Aug) in order to earn the following incentive awards.

- 12 points – Free Latex BTS Cap
- 16 points – Free Silicone BTS Cap
- 20 points – One free swim meet day
BTS Host Swim Meet Volunteer Positions

**Admissions & Heat Sheet** – This adult individual is responsible for taking admission money and selling/distributing heat sheets each session. Admission is **not** charged for swimmers participating in the swim meet, individuals working/volunteering at the swim meet that current session or anyone under the age of 8 yrs. Only one individual is required for this position each meet session.

**Announcer** – This adult individual is responsible for announcing the events, swimmers in the events, and any other important announcements during the swim meet. Only one individual is required for this position each meet session. “On Deck Position”

**Awards** – This adult individual is responsible for applying labels to awards and placing awards in the appropriate team’s bag. Only one individual is required for this position each meet session. “On Deck Position”

**Heat Awards** – This individual is responsible for giving out a heat prize to the 1st place individual in every heat of an event. Only one individual (adult or child) is required for this position each meet session. “On Deck Position”

**Concession Organizer** – This adult individual is responsible for making sure we have enough donated food and other items and have enough concession workers. They are also responsible for creating menu signs and prices. Moreover, they must make sure those individuals working concessions are familiar with concession procedures, including but not limited to sanitary food preparation and distribution and money handling techniques. This individual must regularly check food supply and obtain additional supplies as needed. Ideally, one individual will be responsible for this position for the entire swim meet, not a different individual each session.

**Concession Workers** – Adult Individuals are needed to sell concession items, collect money and distribute/”cook” food. Two or three individuals are required for this position each meet session.

**Lane Timers** – Timers are responsible for tracking swim event times in each lane utilizing the automatic timing system in addition to a stop watch. Two timers per lane are needed each swim session. In addition, a Head timer, responsible for all other timers is required. “On Deck Position”

**Runners** – Runners are responsible for getting event time slips from the timers to the timing desk, posting event results and distributing award labels to the award table. They are also responsible for other errands as needed, such as giving DQ slips to coaches, copying heat sheets, etc. One to two adult runners are needed each session. An additional job of a Runner during 8 and under events is being in charge of the “bullpen”. The bullpen is a holding area for the 8 and under swimmers where they are lined up in proper lane order and walked to their lane assignments when their event is called. “On Deck Position”

**Timing Table (Administrative Judge)** – This is a newly created swim meet official position that also requires training through IL/USS Swimming. One individual is responsible for the operation of the automatic timing system during the swim meet (does not currently need to be certified). The other individual is responsible for entering the times into the Meet Manager computer system and printing meet event results. Both of these positions must be filled each meet session. “On Deck Position”
**BTS ELECTRONIC & SOCIAL MEDIA POLICIES**

Electronic communication includes but is not limited to the following: e-mails, texts, Facebook, Twitter and similar sites, blogs, and instant messaging. Currently, the Byron Park District has both a website, [www.byronparkdistrict.com](http://www.byronparkdistrict.com) and a Facebook page. In addition, Byron Tiger Sharks has their own Facebook page.

The Byron Park District will communicate with parents at various times via e-mail blasts. When your child becomes a member of the BTS team, the e-mail you provide the park district at registration will be added to this group e-mail list. You may request additional e-mail addresses to be added or removed from this list by contacting the Byron Park District’s Aquatics Manager.

All communications between a parent/guardian or athlete with a coach, other parent/guardian, or the Byron Park District must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities or involvements. The content and intent of all electronic communications must adhere to the USA Swimming Code of Conduct. For instance, electronic communication should NOT contain reference or relate to any drug or alcohol use; or sexually oriented conversation, language, activity or pictures.

Moreover, any electronic communications with swimmers should be Transparent, Accessible and Professional. Communication should not only be clear and direct, but also free of any hidden meanings, innuendos and expectations. All electronic communication between coaches and athletes shall be considered part of the Byron Park District’s records.

**BTS CODE OF CONDUCT**

In the interest of creating and maintaining a positive atmosphere for the Tiger Sharks swim team, the Byron Park District has implemented the following team rules and disciplinary code and procedures.

**Swimmer Expectations**

- Adhere to all USA Swimming and Illinois Swimming policies as detailed on their websites, as well as Byron Park District, Byron School District and Byron Tiger Sharks specific policies.

- Become members of USA Swimming’s local branch – Illinois Swimming within the first week of joining the team. (Register for the yearly USS fee/membership through the Byron Park District).

- Be respectful to others and their belongings. This includes but is not limited to coaches, teammates, fellow competitors, officials, Byron Park District staff, swim meet volunteers, swim team parents, and other patrons at the swimming pool.
  - Treat others, as you would like to be treated.
  - Cooperate with your coach, teammates and opponents.
  - No talking when others are talking; listen; answer respectfully when spoken to; follow directions/instructions.
  - Do not use inappropriate language or gestures.
  - Do not tamper with or hide other swimmer’s personal belongings.
  - Take good care of swimming pool equipment and property.
  - Follow the rules of a host pool when the team is at an away meet.
• Always be supportive and encourage your teammates through positive comments and through cheering for them during races.
  o Avoid any derogatory remarks concerning teammates, competitors, coaches, parents, etc. and avoid use of derogatory language based on gender, race or impairment.
  o Refrain from any/all hurtful behaviors, including but not limited to pinching, scratching, hitting, kicking, fighting, pushing, teasing, name calling or ignoring.
  o Never interfere with the progress of another swimmer during practice or meets.
  o Experienced swimmers shall help less experienced and younger swimmers at meets.

• Exhibit the generally recognized attributes of good sportsmanship towards teammates, competitors, and officials.
  o The decisions of officials are not to be questioned. If you disagree, have your coach approach the official in an appropriate manner.
  o Understand and exhibit proper lane etiquette during practice and meets (Circle swim, let faster swimmers go ahead of you, etc.).
  o Acknowledge all “good swims” whether it’s a teammate’s or a competitor’s
  o Be prepared to lose sometimes. Everyone wins and loses. Be a fair winner and good loser.
  o Swim for the “Fun of it” and not just to please parents and/or coaches.
  o Understand that swimmers are grouped in practice lanes based on individual speed, age, ability, number of other swimmers in the lane and coach’s decision. Lane assignment is not a status symbol. All individuals learn and progress at different speeds; are good at certain things and struggle at others. Encourage and support your teammates; congratulate them on their achievements.

• Do not engage in bullying in any way. Bullying refers to chronic, systematic acts of aggression inflicted with the intent of causing physical hurt or psychological distress to another when a real or perceived imbalance of power exists. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose. The four types of bullying are: verbal, social or relational, physical and cyber.
  o Swimmers should report any bullying behavior they experience or witness to their coach immediately

• Arrive to all practices and meets on time and be prepared to work hard. Attend as many practices as your schedule permits.
  o Bring all necessary equipment/supplies, wear appropriate swimwear and be responsible for your belongings.

• Represent the Byron Park District and Byron Tiger Sharks swim team positively by behaving respectfully at all team functions. Promote the Byron Tiger Sharks swim team by wearing BTS shirts, suits and caps.

• Do not use a cell phone, camera, or any other video device in locker rooms. Change into and out of swimwear only in the locker room or designated area.

• Abide by the BTS/IL/USA Swimming electronic and social media policies.

• Do not illegally consume or purchase alcohol, tobacco products or any illegal drugs or substances of any kind, or share prescribed medications while participating in activities as a registered member of Byron Tiger Sharks.

• Any inappropriate sexual conduct or advance or other inappropriate oral, written, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature will not be tolerated.
Parent/Guardian Expectations

- Help your swimmer(s) understand and adhere to the Athlete Code of Conduct
- Keep informed by regularly checking email, the BTS website page and bulletin boards for Byron Park District/Byron Tiger Sharks news and information.
- Register your swimmer(s) by the stated deadline for swim sessions and meets. Bring your swimmer(s) to practices and meets at the time specified and notify the coach if your swimmer(s) can no longer attend a meet.
- Keep current on payment of all fees
- Be an active part of the Byron Tiger Sharks Swim Team by volunteering at BTS sponsored meets, participating in other fundraising for the team, and attending any scheduled parent meetings.
  - Please refer to the Fundraising information packet for more information.
- Act in a sportsmanlike and respectful manner towards members of the team, their family members, fellow competitors, coaches, Park District staff, meet volunteers, and officials.
  - Do not use inappropriate language or gestures
  - Avoid the use of derogatory language based on gender, race or impairment
  - Refrain from any/all hurtful behaviors including name calling, criticism, exclusion, teasing, ignoring, etc.
  - Be supportive of all swimmers and their achievements. Acknowledge “good swims” whether it’s your swimmer’s, a teammate’s or a competitor’s.
  - Do not criticize your swimmer(s) in front of others, but reserve constructive criticism for more private moments.
- Experienced swim family members shall help less experienced/new swim families understand the sport of swimming.
- Set a good example by your own conduct, behavior, manners and attire. Children learn best by example.
- Support and promote the team by wearing BTS team apparel at team functions.
- Encourage your swimmer(s) to participate and perform to the best of their ability. Do not force them to participate if they are not interested. Remember that children are involved in a sport for their enjoyment, not yours.
- Communicate with coaching staff only at an appropriate time, not during practice. Express any concerns or frustrations in an appropriate manner that does not cause a scene in front of the swimmers. If you feel that your concern is not addressed by a coach, please contact the Byron Park District Aquatics Manager, then the Park District's Executive Director, and finally the Byron Park District Board of Commissioners.
- Do not use a cell phone, camera, or any other video device in locker rooms.
- Abide by the BTS/IL/USA Swimming electronic and social media policies.
- Follow the USA Swimming rule that states, “No parents are allowed on pool deck at any time during practices or meets, unless it is in an official/swim meet volunteer capacity.”
- Any inappropriate sexual conduct or advance or other inappropriate oral, written, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature will not be tolerated.
Disciplinary Procedures
If a swimmer or parent/guardian is in violation with the above Code of Conduct, discipline will be handled in the following manner. Each disciplinary step is determined by the specific infraction and therefore is on a case-by-case scenario.

First Offense – Warning to swimmer(s) or parent/guardian about their behavior and explanation of WHY behavior is unacceptable. Recommended discipline will be determined by the coaching staff. Possible discipline includes but not limited to: sincere apology, push-ups, extra laps, clean-up duties, and/or time out of practice.

Second Offense – A second warning will be given to the swimmer(s) or parent/guardian. Recommended discipline will be determined by the coaching staff and could include parent/guardian notification (if swimmer), Byron Park District administrative staff notification, and/or immediate removal from current practice, meet or swimming area.

Third Offense – The coach will notify Byron Park District staff and discipline will be determined by the coaching staff and Byron Park District administrative staff. Possible discipline could include suspension from practices or meets for a length of time as warranted by the situation. No refunds for time missed will be issued.

Additional Offenses – Additional offenses will be discussed between the coaching staff and the Byron Park District administrative staff. Discipline could include a formal investigation into the matter, additional suspension from practices or meets, and/or dismissal from the team for the remainder of the season or indefinitely, if merited. No refunds will be issued.

NOTE: There is a sign-off sheet acknowledging that you have read and agree to abide by this code of conduct. In order for swimmers to participate in any BTS activities, including practice, this sheet MUST be signed by both swimmer and parent/guardian and returned to the bpd office at a swimmer’s initial registration on the swim team and each year at the beginning of the spring session in April.

ADDRESSING CODE OF CONDUCT MISBEHAVIOR
Every effort should be made to bring a complaint of misbehavior to the attention of the appropriate individual as soon as possible to make sure that memories are fresh and behavior can be accurately recalled and addressed in a timely manner. Please speak with an assistant coach or the head coach first. If you do not feel that the situation was addressed, contact the Byron Park District's Aquatic Manager, then the Executive Director and finally the Board of Commissioners.

Once a complaint has been formally submitted, the following steps will be performed.
- Staff will speak with all involved members separately and try to get the facts from these individuals along with witnesses. Staff shall listen without blaming or labeling.
- If staff determines that an individual violated the Code of Conduct, then the disciplinary steps listed above will take effect and a Code of Conduct Disciplinary form shall be completed by the staff member handling the complaint. The Code of Conduct Disciplinary form will be kept on record at the Byron Park District.

Please note that each complaint is dealt with on a case-by-case basis and many minor violations may be able to be resolved without a formal complaint and disciplinary form as long as involved parties work together and establish open communication along with a plan of action for change.
WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM WITH THE COACH

One of the traditional swim team communication gaps is that some parents seem to feel more comfortable in discussing their disagreements over coaching philosophy with other parents rather than taking them directly to the coach. Not only is the problem never resolved that way, but in fact this approach often results in new problems being created.

Listed below are some guidelines for a parent raising some difficult issues with a coach:

• Try to keep foremost in your mind that you and the coach have the best interests of your child at heart. If you trust that the coach’s goals match yours, even though his/her approach may be different, you are more likely to enjoy good rapport and a constructive dialogue.

• Listen to the coach. Generally, coaches are very patient with the progress of young swimmers. DO NOT misinterpret a coach’s patience as non-caring or incompetence. Parents who want to push their children cannot understand the coach who seems to be holding the children back. In reality, most coaches see the larger view of the child’s swimming career and are planning a long and steady road of progressively more difficult tasks to continue to improve. Coaches do not have all the answers, but they make it their livelihood to keep children in the program for the long term.

• Keep in mind that the coach must balance your perspective of what is best for your child with the needs of the team or a training group that can range in size from 10-100 members. On occasion, an individual child's interest may need to be subordinate to the interests of the group, but in the long run the benefits of membership in the group compensate for occasional short-term inconvenience.

• If your child swims for an assistant coach, always discuss the matter first with that coach, following the same guidelines and preconceptions noted above. If the assistant coach cannot satisfactorily resolve your concern, then ask that the head coach join the dialogue as a third party.

• If another parent uses you as a sounding board for complaints about the coach’s performance or policies, listen empathetically, but encourage the other parent to speak directly to the coach. He/she is the only one who can resolve the problem.

“TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR SWIMMING PARENTS”

By Rose Snyder

(Adapted from Ed Clendaniel’s “Ten Commandments for Little League Parents)

1. Thou shalt not impose your ambitions on thy child.
   Remember that swimming is your child’s activity. Improvements and progress occur at different rates for each individual. Don’t judge your child’s progress based on what you think they should be doing. The nice thing about swimming is that every person can strive to do their personal best.

2. Thou shalt be supportive no matter what.
   There is only one question to ask your child: “Did you have fun?” If meets and practices are not fun, your child should not be forced to participate.
3. **Thou shalt not coach your child.**
   You have taken your child to a professional coach; do not undermine that coach by trying to coach your child on the side. Your job is to support, love, and hug your child no matter what. The coach is responsible for the technical part of the job. You should not offer advice on technique or race strategy. That is not your area. This will only serve to confuse your child and prevent that swimmer/coach bond from forming.

4. **Thou shalt only have positive things to say at a swimming meet.**
   If you are going to show up at a swimming meet, you should cheer and applaud, but never criticize your child or the coach.

5. **Thou shalt acknowledge thy child’s fears.**
   A first swimming meet, 500 free or 200 IM can be a stressful situation. It is totally appropriate for your child to be scared. Don’t yell or belittle, just assure your child that the coach would not have suggested the event if your child was not ready to compete in it.

6. **Thou shalt not criticize the officials.**
   If you do not have the time or the desire to volunteer as an official, don’t criticize those who are doing the best they can.

7. **Honor thy child’s coach.**
   The bond between coach and swimmer is a special one, and one that contributes to your child’s success as well as fun. Do not criticize the coach in the presence of your child; it will only serve to hurt your child’s swimming.

8. **Thou shalt not jump from team to team.**
   The water isn’t necessarily bluer at the other team’s pool. Every team has its own internal problems, even teams that build champions. Children who switch from team to team are often ostracized for a long, long time by the teammates they leave behind. Often times swimmers who do switch teams never do better than they did before they sought the bluer water.

9. **Thy child shalt have goals besides winning.**
   Giving an honest effort regardless of what the outcome is, is much more important than winning. One Olympian said, “My goal was to set a world record. Well, I did that, but someone else did it too, just a little faster than I did. I achieved my goal and I lost. This does not make me a failure, in fact, I am very proud of that swim.”

10. **Thou shalt not expect thy child to become an Olympian.**
    There are 225,000 athletes in United States Swimming. There are only 52 spots available for the Olympic Team every four years. Your child’s odds of becoming an Olympian are 1 in about 4,300. Swimming is much more than just the Olympics. Ask your coach why he coaches. Chances are, he was not an Olympian, but still got enough out of swimming that he wants to pass that love for the sport on to others. Swimming teaches self-discipline and sportsmanship; it builds self-esteem and fitness; it provides lifelong friendships and much more. Most Olympians will tell you that these intangibles far outweigh any medal they may have won. Swimming builds good people and you should be happy your child wants to participate.
Q: My child likes swimming, but I don’t know if he/she is ready for the swim team. What should I do?
A: The Byron Park District offers a “Free Trial” week available for new swimmers at any time. Stop by the office to receive a Free Trial week postcard. Sign the form and then give the coach the postcard at the first practice you attend. Practice calendars are available at the Park District office or online. Keep in mind that the other swimmers on the team have been practicing for a while and your child is just starting – stroke form and endurance will come with practice. Moreover, each Fall we offer an Introduction to Swim Team program designed to introduce children to the sport of swimming and prepare them for the team.

Q: I don’t know anything about competitive swimming. Where can I find information?
A: Go to www.usaswimming.org. Click on the Member Resources button and then Parents. This website is loaded with good information including swimming 101 about strokes, competition, swim meet basics, and equipment. Plus there’s information about understanding coaches, training, etc.

Q: What group should I register my child for?
A: The groups are based on skill and commitment level. Register for the Beginner group if your child is new to the sport of competitive swimming. Swimmers in the Advanced group should have learned all four competitive swim strokes and have the endurance and skill to practice longer (1.5 hours). In addition, the Advanced group swimmers are expected to compete in swim meets. The coach will also be able to tell you what group your child should be swimming in.

Q: My child is older (i.e. 11 yrs.) but new to the sport of competitive swimming. Should I still register for the Beginner Group? Will he/she be practicing with younger swimmers?
A: Yes, you should still register your child for the Beginner group and plan on them practicing for 1 hour. However, due to your child’s age, the coach may place your child in a lane with swimmers of a similar age. Make sure your child understands that he/she should ask questions if they do not understand something.

Q: Can my child join the team at any time or do I have to wait for a new swim session?
A: Your child can start swimming at any time. Contact Carrie at the Byron Park District for a pro-rated session fee.

Q: My child can’t make practice every day of the week. Will that be a problem?
A: Practices are offered 4-5 times a week, but your child does not have to attend every practice. For Beginner group swimmers, we recommend a minimum of 2-3 practices per week. For Advanced group swimmers, we recommend a minimum of 3-4 practices per week, plus at least 2 dry land practices (held 45 min. prior to water workouts).

Q: My child is involved in many sports throughout the year. Does he/she have to swim year-round?
A: No, you may select and register for different sessions (Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer). In addition, you may contact Carrie at the Byron Park District for reduced student athlete rates, which allow swimmers to attend an average of 1 practice per week.
Q: What equipment does my child need for swim practice?
A: Swimsuit and goggles are required. Swim caps, for females, are also required. Females wear one piece suits and males typically wear jammer style suits. Suits, goggles, and swim caps can be purchased at any sporting store or on-line. The Park District office usually sells BTS swim team caps also.

Q: Does my child have to wear a certain swimsuit to practice or meets?
A: Swimmers can wear any suit to practice. For swim meets, we offer a team suit each year, but you are not required to purchase a team suit. However, if you do purchase a team suit, we suggest that your child has a separate suit for practice, since swimsuits do not last a long time with repeated wear in the chlorine.

Q: Can my child keep his/her stuff in a locked locker?
A: Your child may utilize the HS Swimming Pool Locker rooms during practice, but only HS Swimmers are allowed to keep their items in a locked locker overnight. To prevent against theft, it is highly recommended to lock your locker during practice.

Q: The chlorine ruins my child’s swimsuit and turns their blond hair green. What can I do?
A: Make sure that your child wets his/her swimsuit and hair in the shower before getting into the pool. The suit and hair will absorb the regular water instead of the chlorine water. Putting conditioner in your hair before swimming and using a swim cap also helps. There are also special shampoos and conditioners available that remove chlorine, such as Ultra swim.

Q: My child joined the team to swim with a friend. Why does the coach never put them in the same lane?
A: Lanes are broken down into skill levels and swimmer speed within each level. In addition, the coach designs different work-outs for each group (Beg. vs Adv.). Typically, lanes 1 and 2 are beginner swimmers, and lanes 3 – 6 are advanced swimmers. However, lane assignments may change due to the amount of swimmers at each practice.

Q: Why do I have to pay a USA Swimming membership fee?
A: Our team is a member of the United States Swim Association and Illinois Swimming Association. This membership provides swimmers the opportunity to compete in time qualifying USS sanctioned swim meets. All members of our team are required to become members of USA and Illinois Swimming. Membership fees are currently $60 per swimmer each calendar year. Membership for NEW swimmers joining the team each fall is extended to include the rest of the current year and the next year.

Q: Is my child required to swim in meets?
A: Since competition and swim meets are part of being on a competitive swim team, the Byron Park District strongly recommends that your child attend at least one swim meet each session. For Beginner group swimmers, we suggest competing in the Turkey Shoot meet (November), and the Conference Swim Meets (Feb. & July). Advanced group swimmers are required to compete in the Turkey Shoot meet, Conference Swim Meets, any Championship meet he/she qualifies, and an average of one meet per month.

Q: How do I know if my child is ready to compete in swim meets?
A: The swim coach will try to have every child ready to compete in swim meets by the suggested Turkey Shoot and/or Conference swim meets. The coach will notify parents if he feels that your child is NOT ready for the above meets. If you or your child has concerns about competing, please speak with the swim coach.
Q: If my child doesn’t plan on competing, do I still have to pay the USA Swimming membership fee?
A: Yes, since our team is a member, all team members are required to be members whether they compete or not. Moreover, membership also provides swimmers with tertiary medical insurance coverage during both practice and meets.

Q: Does my child have to swim every day of the meet?
A: No, you can select which day(s) your child attends a swim meet when registering for the meet.

Q: Will my child be competing against swimmers of the same age?
A: Typically meet events are divided into the following age groups: 8 and under; 10 and under; 11-12; 13-14; and senior or open. Age is based on your child’s age on the first day of the swim meet.

Q: My child is young and new to swimming. Will he/she have to swim long distances in swim meets?
A: Event lengths are typically 25, 50, 100, 200, 400, 500, and 1 mile (1650 yds). Not all lengths are offered at each meet for each stroke. Usually, 8 and 10 and under events are shorter (25, 50, 100).

Q: What is an IM event?
A: IM stands for individual medley, in which the swimmer swims all four competitive strokes. The swimmer begins with the butterfly, then changes after one-fourth of the race to backstroke, then breaststroke and finally freestyle.

Q: I heard another parent talk about long and short course seasons. What does this mean?
A: USA Swimming divides the year into two seasons. The short or “winter” course runs September – March and competition occurs in 25 yard or 25 meter pools. The long or “summer” course runs April – July and competition occurs in 50 meter pools (if available). At the end of each season (March & August), there is championship meets in which a child has to qualify by achieving a certain time standard.

Q: How do I find out more information about a particular swim meet?
A: Look for the appropriate meet packet on our website www.byronparkdistrict.com or the Illinois Swimming website, www.ilswim.org. Meet packets list the meet dates, events, warm-up and meet start times, admission fees, awards, and some also list hotel information.

Q: On the Tiger Sharks practice and meet calendar, it lists that certain ages swim in the AM and certain ages swim in the PM. Can you be more specific?
A: Refer to the swim meet packet for exact times. Typically morning sessions begin warm-ups at 7 am. Afternoon session warm-ups vary on when the morning session ends, but usually begin no earlier than 11 am. You will need to arrive before warm-ups begin.

Q: Are there different types of swim meets?
A: Yes, there are several categories of meets including USS swim meets, conference meets, and championship meets. All swim meets are run through the governing bodies of USA swimming and Illinois swimming. Most USS swim meets do not have any type of qualification time standard, so any swimmer can compete in the meet. However, swimmers must obtain a certain qualifying time to compete in championship meets. Illinois state championship meets include Regionals, Age Group (JO), and Seniors. Additional championship meets include Zones (central), Sectionals (Midwest region) and Nationals. In addition, our local swimming conference usually offers a conference championship meet every February and July. Our conference includes Byron, Rockford, Freeport, Sterling, and Morrison. There are no qualification times for our conference meet and all swimmers are encouraged to swim in these meets.
Q: How do I register for swim meets?
A: You register for swim meets through the Byron Park District office or through our online registration. You will need to notify us what meet and what days you want to register for. Fees must be paid at the time of registration. Please register before the deadline date found on the practice and meet calendar.

Q: Why are the meet deadlines set so early in comparison to the meet date?
A: Lots of procedures go into registering for a meet. Typically, the host team accepts entries from other teams within a three week window: One month prior to the meet to one week before the meet. Some meets fill-up, so outside teams want to get their entries into the host team as soon as possible. The first step of meet registration is for parents to register their child for the swim meet through the Byron Park District. After the meet deadline has passed, the list of swimmers each day is then given to the swim coach. The swim coach uses special swimming software (Hy-tek) to enter swimmers into events. The swim coach then gives this information back to the Park District and e-mails the host team the information. Once entries are accepted by the host team, the Park District mails a check to the host team, which covers entry, relay and swimmer fees. Lastly, a week before the meet is held, the host team e-mails Illinois swimming and they make sure everyone swimming in the meet is registered as a USA swimming member.

Q: I forgot to register for a swim meet and it’s after the deadline. Can my child still swim in the meet?
A: If entries have not been sent to the host team, the Park District can still accept registrations.

Q: I registered for a swim meet and now my child cannot attend the meet. What should I do?
A: If it is still before the meet registration deadline, you can contact the Park District and receive a credit for the meet. If it’s after the meet deadline and entries have been submitted to the host team, you will have to forfeit any money paid for the swim meet. Remember to notify the coach that your child cannot attend the meet, so the coach will not be expecting you to attend.

Q: Do I have to fill-out the entry form at the end of the meet packet?
A: No, meet packets are posted on our website for information only. The entry registration form at the end of the meet packet is completed by the Byron Park District for the entire team and sent to the host team with our entry fees.

Q: Do I select what events my child swims in at meets?
A: No, the coach will select the events appropriate for your child. Depending on the meet and your child’s skill level, your child will be registered for 2 – 5 events per day.

Q: How do I know what events the coach assigned for my child?
A: Once the team’s meet entries are accepted by the host team, the Park District will e-mail parents a list of events and which swimmers are registered for which events.

Q: Why does the Park District charge fees to swim in meets?
A: Swim meet fees help the Park District cover the fees the team is charged to compete in a meet. Usually the fees to compete in a meet in Illinois are $3-$5 per event, plus $2 per swimmer. In addition it is $7+ for each relay. In order to simplify registration procedures, have knowledge of who wants to swim what day and to allow the coach to assign appropriate events, the Park District set-up flat fees for each day of swim meets. This flat fee for USS meets is $10 for Friday and $20 for each Saturday and Sunday. Conference meets are $5/day. Any money received beyond event and swimmer charges is used to cover relay events and help offset the coach’s travel expenses.
Q: Does the team take a bus to swim meets?
A: No, parents are responsible for all travel expenses to attend a swim meet. Sometimes, families will car pool. Speak with other parents at practice about carpooling.

Q: What does my child need to bring to a swim meet?
A: Him/Herself, a positive attitude, swimsuit, goggles and towel. Swimmers usually have quite a bit of waiting time between events, so an extra towel, sweatshirt, etc. is helpful to stay warm. An extra set of goggles are always helpful, just in case. Also bring plenty of snacks, drinks and something to keep your child entertained between events. Most swim meets offer concessions where food and drink can be purchased. Lastly, bring a sharpie marker – see next question.

Q: What should my child and I be doing when we arrive at a swim meet?
A: The first thing you should do is find the positive check-in sheet. This sheet lists all of the registered swimmer’s names by team. Your child should highlight his/her name indicating that they are present. If you do not highlight your child’s name before the host team closes positive check-in (usually 20 minutes after warm-ups begin), your child will be scratched from all events and not allowed to swim. Next, you should find your child’s coach. Lastly, sometime before the meet begins, your child should have the events and their corresponding event number written on their arms or legs with a sharpie. Heat and lane information should be added once that information is available. Parents can help their child with the above procedures. Usually, host teams charge admission for parents and other members of the audience, so make sure you bring money. Moreover, once positive check-in is complete, the host team will print out heat or “psych” sheets. There is usually a small fee for a copy of these sheets also.

Q: How can I find the exact time my child swam in his/her event?
A: Results are usually posted somewhere in the facility once all heats have been completed.

Q: My child keeps getting disqualified (DQ) in the events he/she swims, why?
A: DQs are usually a result of technical rules violations. They include but are not limited to:
   - **Freestyle**: Walking on the bottom, pulling on the lane rope, not touching the wall on a turn, or not completing the distance.
   - **Backstroke**: Pulling or kicking into the wall once a swimmer has turned passed the vertical onto the breast. Turning onto the breast before touching the wall with the hand at the finish of the race.
   - **Breaststroke**: An illegal kick such as flutter (freestyle), dolphin (butterfly), or scissors (side stroke); not on the breast; alternating movements of the arms; taking two arm strokes or two leg kicks while the head is under water; touching with only one hand at the turns or finish.
   - **Butterfly**: Alternating movements of the arms or legs; pushing the arms forward under instead of over the water surface (underwater recovery); a breaststroke style of kick; touching with only one hand at the turns or finish.

Q: My child swam really well at a meet and won many awards. When do we receive the awards?
A: Awards are usually gathered for a team and given to the coach at the end of the meet. The coach will give the awards to the swimmers at a later time.

Q: What is my child’s USA Swimming ID?
A: Your child’s ID is what Illinois and USA Swimming uses to track individuals’ meet entries and times. It is created by your child’s birthdate (MM/DD/YY) followed by the first three letters of their legal first name, their middle initial and first four letters of their last name.
Q: How can I keep track of my child’s swim times?
A: Log onto www.usaswimming.org and sign-up for a “DECK PASS”.

Q: Where do I find the championship meet qualification times?

Q: I already pay a lot for my child to participate on the team, why do I need to volunteer & fundraise too?
A: Operating a club swim team involves lots of expenses, including coach salary, coach travel expenses, assistant or aide wages, coach memberships and training fees, Illinois swimming fees, USA Swimming fees, and equipment fees to name a few. Unfortunately, the registration/participation fees do not cover all of the expenses, so parents are also required to volunteer and fundraise.
Byron Tiger Sharks
Swim Team
Code of Conduct
Signature Form

Swimmer: I, _____________________________ have received a copy of Byron Tiger Sharks’ Code of Conduct. I have read and agree to act in accordance with the Code of Conduct expectations and guidelines. I understand the consequences of not following the Code of Conduct.

_________________________________________ Date: __________________

Parent/Guardian(s): I/we _____________________________ have received a copy of Byron Tiger Sharks’ Code of Conduct. I have read and agree to act in accordance with the Code of Conduct expectations and guidelines. I understand the consequences that will occur as a result of my child or myself/ourselves not following the Code of Conduct.

_________________________________________ Date: __________________

_________________________________________ Date: __________________

Byron Park District office Use Only

Date received Signature Form: ________________ Staff Initials: ________