

COACH AND COMMITTEE AGREEMENT

Club Support Guide

Introduction

The 'Coach and Committee Agreement' has been formulated as a template document following consultation with clubs across Ireland in early 2019. Facilitated workshops were held in each region with coaches and committee members working in peer groups to outline their role and support needs.



Club Day Attendance

	Committee	Coaches	Total
Ulster	24	17	41
Leinster	11	24	35
Connacht	12	17	29
Munster	7	15	22
Total	54	73	127
% of total	43%	57%	

Utilising the data collected from attendees at all regional club days a follow up survey was developed to further ascertain the needs and supports for coaches and committees. This survey was then circulated to all individuals within Swim Ireland clubs who held a role of coach or committee member.

Follow Up Survey

	Committee	Coaches	Total
Total	255	194	449
% of total	57%	43%	

As part of the survey respondents were provided with a list of responsibilities relating to their roles. These came directly from the feedback collated on the club days. They were then asked to rank these in order of what they felt were most important to their role. The responsibilities are reflected in the role templates provided for both coaches and committee members.

As part of the survey respondents were also requested to rank the support needs they felt were important to successfully undertake their role. Support needs were broken down into internal (within their club) and external (Swim Ireland, facilities etc.) This information provides the membership department within Swim Ireland, with useful information to tailor the support programme for clubs over the next two years.

This document is broken down into several sections

1. Guidance Document - What does a successful club look like?
2. Guidance Document - Effective Communication
3. Template - Role of the Coach
4. Template - Role of the Committee
5. Template - Coach and Committee Agreement

What does a successful club look like?

Develop and Live Club Ethos

- Know what type of club you want to be
- Know what the club can offer to your club members
- Develop and review the club ethos in line with the head coach's long-term strategic plan
- Ensure the club ethos is known to committee, coaches and club members
- Revisit the club ethos to ensure club decisions are taken in line with it

Athlete Centred Approach

- Create a safe environment by ensuring club safeguarding policies are in place and upheld
- Ensure the club is an enjoyable environment for all athletes

Strong Leadership

- Comes from Chairperson and Head Coach
- Role of Chairperson should be recruited from within the committee where possible
- Head coach and Chairperson should have a strong collaborative working relationship and communicate effectively and frequently

Committee and Coaching Team are Impartial and Transparent

- Decisions are made in the best interest of the club and club members and in line with club ethos
- Declare any conflict of interest and abstain from voting when the need arises
- All decisions should be documented and shared with club members through points of note

Clear Role Descriptions for Committee and Coaches

- Use Swim Ireland templates to adopt role descriptions for all coach and committee members
- Ensure that all committee members and coaches are aware of their duties and responsibilities and there is reporting and accountability in place

Effective and Active Committee

- Hold regular committee meetings with agreed action points, accurate minutes and points of note
- Follow up on action points between committee meetings
- Operate in line with club development and annual plans and use Swim Ireland resources
- Committee works as a unit not a group of individuals
- All members on the committee have a role with identified responsibilities

Understanding of Coaching Role

- Role descriptions for Head Coach and other coaches to be shared with club committee
- Ensure time is given at each committee meeting for Head Coach's report



What does a successful club look like? (Contd.)

Clear Squad/ Team Criteria and Structure

- Ensure squad structure and criteria is in place for each squad/ team
- Review structure and criteria on an annual basis
- Communicate squad/ team criteria to club members
- Follow up at regular intervals with athletes who do not meet squad/ team criteria

Good Governance

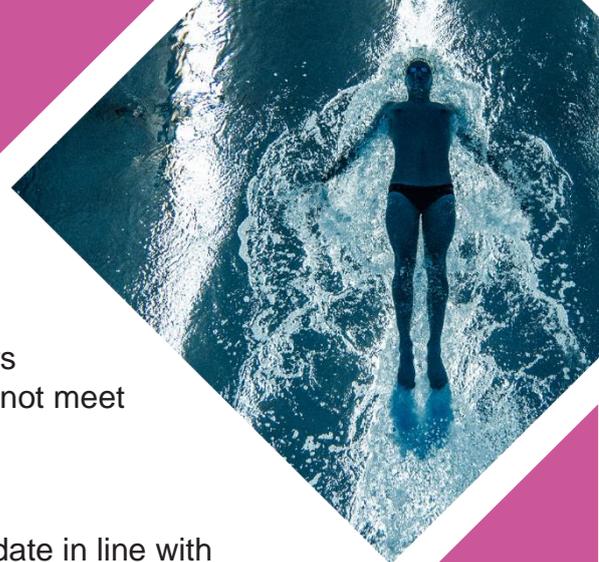
- All policies and procedures are in place and up to date in line with Swim Ireland requirements
- Operate within policies and procedures and ensure they are available to club members
- Policies and procedures are reviewed on an annual basis

Planning

- Have a club development plan in place which is aligned to the Head Coach's strategic plan
- Implement an annual operational plan and budget
- Include succession and education planning within the club development plan

Youth Engagement

- Appoint Club Children's Officers who engage with athletes on a regular basis
- Include athletes in decisions which are relevant to them
- Engage with the Club Captains in Youth Sport initiative



Effective Communication

Committee Meetings

- Hold committee meetings every 4-6 weeks, ideally, setting a regular day or date works well, i.e. second Tuesday of every month
- Ensure cover is organised for the Head Coach if a committee meeting takes place during a training session
- Set agenda and circulate at least 5 days in advance
- Request reports from Head Coach, Treasurer, CCO etc. in advance of meeting and circulate to committee members
- Keep accurate minutes, agree actions with a deadline and appointed person accountable for each action.
- Agree points of note at committee meetings and issue to club members
- Club Secretary to follow up to check on progress of action points
- Ensure committee members come prepared to meetings (i.e. read circulated reports in advance)

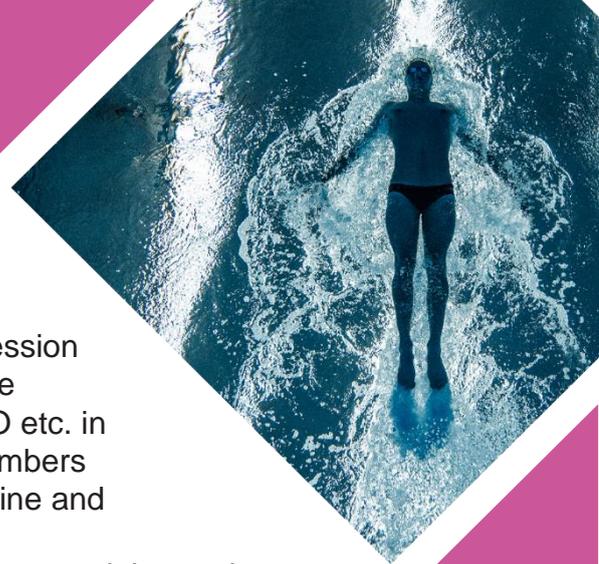
Design and Implement a Communications Strategy

- Set up and use club email addresses
- Set up automated response on emails to inform sender when they can expect a reply and respond within that timeframe (48 hours recommended)
- Consider how you communicate with members – email, WhatsApp, club phone etc.
- Agree frequency of communication to club members to ensure essential messages are delivered and read
- Ensure members are aware of methods of communication

Parent Education

- Host an information evening at the start of the season for new club members to explain the basics of how the club works, and expectations of club members (i.e. parent on duty, volunteering etc.)
- In conjunction with the Head Coach, organise additional information evenings as required to provide information on competitions, away trips, nutrition, role of parent/ carer etc.
- Provide additional training opportunities to parent/ carers interested in volunteering with the club

It is important to note that in most cases difficult situations that arise in clubs can be attributed to poor communication.



COACH AND COMMITTEE AGREEMENT

Template Documents

The following pages are template role descriptions for committees and coaches. These then come together to form the basis of the Coach and Committee Agreement. These templates can be adapted and edited to meet the needs of your club.

It is recommended that you consider carefully any items that you remove and seek agreement by both parties on additions.

Once the coaches and committee have reviewed and agreed the document, it should be signed by the Head Coach and club Chairperson on behalf of the club.

Upload the signed document to membership database as a club credential and then contact your Club Support Officer who will provide you with a certificate to display on your club noticeboard and/ or website.

We recommend that the agreement is reviewed every two years or in the event of a large change in committee or coaching personnel.

Role of the Coach

1. Be aware of and uphold your club ethos
2. Read, sign and adhere to teacher/ coach code of conduct
3. Ensure the club is athlete centred

Planning (Head Coach)

- Responsible for the long-term strategic planning (4-year cycle aligned with the Olympic cycles)
- Responsible for reviewing of club squad/ team structure on an annual basis
- Responsible for producing the annual competition and training plan
- Responsible for session planning in all sessions where the Head Coach has direct oversight
- Liaise with Regional Pathway Development Coach for assistance and guidance where necessary and applicable

Planning (All Coaches)

- Responsible for producing monthly and/or weekly plans
- Responsible for session planning where the coach has direct oversight

Teaching/ Coaching (All Coaches)

- Wear club kit/ uniform when teaching/ coaching
- Arrive early for each session
- In advance of session starting, brief any assistant coaches who will be coaching with you and under your direction
- Prepare athletes for the session ahead (dry land/ briefing)
- Provide guidance, corrections and feedback throughout session
- Stay on deck until all athletes have left the pool
- If you are unable to attend your session, ensure that cover has been arranged in advance

Competitions (Head Coach)

- Present competition plan to the coaching team in advance of the season starting
- Make recommendations to the coaching team on what competitions each squad need to attend for their development and agree in advance the purpose of each competition

Competitions (All Coaches)

- Direct and sign off event entries for athletes
- Agree who will attend each competition and the level/ number of coaches required
- Agree in advance the role of each coach at the competition



Role of the Coach (Contd.)

Motivate (All Coaches)

- Set SMART goals with athletes at the start of each season and agree check in times during the year
- Encourage athletes to analyse their own performance and provide you with feedback. Support them with agreeing changes
- Provide constructive feedback. Rather than telling an athlete what they did wrong, ask them what they could do better
- When an athlete does a great job, tell them!

Communication (Head Coach)

- Prepare a coach report and attend committee meetings
- Prepare and present coach report at club AGM

Communication (All Coaches)

- Be aware of body language, language, tone of voice and facial expressions when speaking
- Where possible speak to athletes as a group at the start and end of each session (briefing/ de-brief)
- Hold and attend coaches' meetings at regular intervals during the season (3-4 times per year)
- Hold athlete/ parent information sessions/ meetings as required during the season
- Maintain coach email addresses for Head Coach and lead squad coaches. Reply to emails within 48 hours. Recommendation – set an auto reply on email accounts.
- Where a parent/ carer wishes to speak with a coach set an agreed time and place to discuss (i.e. not poolside during a session)
- Seek support from committee if needed to manage difficult conversations with athletes/ parents/ carers.

Create and Maintain a Safe Environment (All Coaches)

- Ensure your Swim Ireland license, safeguarding and vetting are always in date
- Complete a risk assessment prior to each session (i.e. lane ropes, backstroke flags, water polo goals, diving boards, pool clarity etc.)
- Maintain a safe environment throughout a training session/ competition
- Recognise any changes of behaviour in an athlete (i.e. when they have become angry, overly tired, lacking confidence) and have a check in conversation
- Report safeguarding concerns to the club children's officer and keep a record
- Manage athlete behaviour and complete disciplinary report where an athlete breaches a rule or code of conduct



Role of the Coach (Contd.)

Mentor Coaches (Head Coach)

Mentoring is a long-term relationship focusing on the group and development of the mentee
Consider how you mentor teachers/coaches in your club

Goal setting –the personal and professional development goals of your teachers/coaches and how can you assist them in achieving their goals

Attend and observe training sessions that the mentee is delivering

Have self-evaluation/reflection forms for mentees to complete

Set up informal check in meetings at regular intervals during the season

At your teacher/coach meetings set some time aside for teacher/coach development, pick a relevant topic to discuss or demonstrations to work on

Allow and acknowledge that mistakes can happen, provide support so teacher/coach can learn from it

Liaise with Regional Pathway Development Coach for assistance and guidance where necessary and applicable

Develop Athlete Life Skills (All Coaches)

Consider your role as a coach and what the life skills are that you can impart on a young person in your club.

- Goal setting and achievement, and dealing with disappointment
- Encouraging and supporting athletes who may benefit from development opportunities outside of the club
- Timekeeping
- Working and supporting a team
- Body awareness and confidence
- Exercise as a lifestyle choice
- Social skills



Role of the Committee

1. Be aware of and uphold your club ethos
2. Read, sign and adhere to committee Code of Conduct
3. Ensure the club is athlete centred

Administration

- Maintain an up to date membership database throughout season
- Ensure the club meets affiliation requirements and deadlines
- Meet GDPR requirements for safe storage, retention and destruction of materials containing personal data
- Manage new member joining process and ensure it is clear and transparent
- Have a process to manage waiting lists
- Submit competition entries as advised by Head Coach or appointed coach

Governance

- Be aware of and uphold the club ethos
- Adopt Swim Ireland policies and procedures and review periodically
- Ensure the club constitution is up to date and in line with Swim Ireland requirements
- Ensure the club handbook is up to date and reviewed periodically
- Have a Complaints and Disciplinary committee in place
- Resolve any conflict or disagreements in a timely manner or escalate to the Complaints and Disciplinary process as required
- Unite as one and always maintain confidentiality

Communication

- Put in place a communication strategy for the club and operate effective committee meetings
- Set up and maintain club email addresses for Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, CCO and any other role that will be contacting club members/Region/Swim Ireland, and respond in a timely manner
- Ensure the club is represented at Swim Ireland/Regional meetings and training and report back to the club at committee meeting
- Agree points of note at committee meetings and issue to club members within 1 week of meeting
- Provide support to coaches in their communications with club members

Finance

- Prepare an annual budget taking in to account club development plan goals for that year, competition plan and club training requirements
- Review monthly statement of accounts at committee meetings and take appropriate action
- Recruit a fundraising committee to plan and organise fundraising events during the season
- Source and apply for grants and funding available to the club
- Pay bills on time to ensure club has a good credit rating
- Set and review club membership fees on an annual basis to ensure club costs are covered



Role of the Committee (Contd.)

1. Be aware of and uphold your club ethos
2. Read, sign and adhere to committee Code of Conduct
3. Ensure the club is athlete centred

Club Development and Planning (in line with Head Coach's Long-Term Strategic Plan)

- Appoint a committee member with responsibility for Clubmark/club development
- Aim to achieve Clubmark award within 1 year of starting the journey and complete annual review once achieved
- Put a 3 to 5 year development plan in place in consultation with coaching team and club members

Ensure Clubmark/club development is a standing item on committee meeting agenda

- Implement an annual operational plan from your development plan
- Review and update development plan on an annual basis

Create and Maintain a Safe Environment

- Meet with and maintain the club affiliation and safeguarding requirements throughout the season
- Adopt and review safeguarding risk assessment and child safeguarding statement
- Each committee member is personally responsible for updating their vetting and safeguarding to ensure there is no break in cover
- Issue a parent on duty roster on a monthly basis in advance to club members.
- Monitor the sign in sheet for parent on duty and follow up on no-shows
- Appoint at least one Club Children's Officer

Training and Education

- Appoint an Education Officer to your club committee
- Work closely with the Head Coach to identify training needs for teachers/coaches
- Work closely with the committee to identify training needs for the committee and club members
- Include ongoing training and education in your club development plan
- Have an annual plan and budget for training and education
- Where possible, and suitable, organise courses in-house
- Liaise with Club Support Officer/Regional Development Officer/Regional Pathway Development Coach for assistance and guidance



Coach and Committee Agreement

(insert club name) have read and understood the Role of the Coach and Role of the Committee.

We agree that the following areas of collaboration will benefit our club and we will work together to ensure that the best interests of our athletes and the club are always upheld. We will operate within our agreed and defined roles.

Coach – refers to all coaches/ teachers in the club

Committee – refers to club management committee as a collective

Club Ethos

- We will agree and uphold the club ethos in everything we do for (insert club)

Creating and Maintaining a Safe and Enjoyable Club Environment

- We will operate in line with our club constitution, which will be reviewed annually and kept up to date with Swim Ireland requirements.
- We will operate in line with Swim Ireland policies and procedures
- We will hold the safeguarding of our athletes central to everything we do within the club.

Communication

- We will operate in line with our communications strategy to ensure we can effectively communicate with our members
- We will attend meetings prepared and present relevant reports
- We will hold effective meetings within the club
- We will communicate with each other in a respectful manner and respond to queries in a timely fashion.
- Where a grievance or conflict arises, we will endeavour to resolve this informally and directly in a confidential manner. Where we cannot resolve the matter informally, we will operate within the Swim Ireland Complaints and Disciplinary procedures

Decision Making

- The club management committee, including the Head Coach, are responsible for making decisions in line with the ethos and best interest of the club.
- We will support all decisions made by the club management committee
- We will allow a set amount of time for matters discussed and voted on
- We will respect the views and input of all individuals in the decision-making process
- Confidentiality will always be maintained by all

Planning

- We will agree the annual training and competition plan in advance of each season in line with the club development plan and budget
- We will prepare an annual budget to support the club Development Plan and Annual Operation Plan
- We will have an up to date club Development Plan and Annual Operation Plan
- We will have a succession plan in place for all roles within the club

Coach and Committee Agreement (Contd.)

Trust

- We will have confidence in each other to fulfil our roles. To ensure this is maintained we will have the following in place:
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for everyone holding a role in the club
- Succession planning in place for all roles
- A documented induction process for new coaches and committee members
- Mentoring plan for coaches
- Education and Training Plan for the club

We confirm that this agreement has been read and agreed upon by the all coaches and committee members within (insert club)

Signed:

Head Coach

Chairperson

Date: