

**VERULAM ASC**  
**(Affiliated to ASA East Region)**  
**verulam-asc.org.uk**

VASC 20

**New Members Handbook**

**Welcome to Verulam Swimming Club!**

We hope this information gives you and your parents a better idea of what to expect from being a member of our Club.

Verulam Amateur Swimming Club (ASC) is a Swim21 accredited St Albans based club with about 170 swimmers. Founded in 1980, and originally based at Bricket Wood Sports Centre, we run training sessions from Westminster Lodge and Marlborough School pools. We pride ourselves in being a competitive, but friendly club, which aims to give every swimmer the opportunity to compete at their own level. The Club organises a range of social activities such as a pizza night and golfing, as we believe it is important that swimmers enjoy being part of the Verulam ASC.

We have a strong team of fully licensed and qualified coaches and teachers who are dedicated to get the very best from our swimmers. The management and administration of Verulam ASC is carried out entirely by volunteers who freely give many hours of their time to help our members enjoy and improve swimming.

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

Based on your trial you will join one of our swimming groups (Pre-competitive/Juniors, Intermediates or Seniors). As you improve stamina and technique, progress can be made through the groups. We also have competitive squads for each of the groups, with their own dedicated training sessions.

**What will I need for training?**

Swimming costume or trunks (not swim shorts)

- Towel
- Goggles
- Swimming hat
- Fins
- Water bottle
- Pull buoy
- Kick board



**VERULAM ASC**  
**(Affiliated to ASA East Region)**  
**verulam-asc.org.uk**

VASC 20

You will find it useful to keep these in a mesh bag. Please mark all equipment with your name. Swimmers are asked to wear a swim hat and particularly swimmers with long hair are advised to wear a hat as hair can easily get trapped in the lane ropes. Please note that no glass bottles or food are allowed on poolside.

### **When can I train?**

Please see the training timetable. Swimmers can attend any of the sessions for their group. During school holiday time, we run a reduced timetable and during the summer we have a shut-down. Please see emails, notice board (upstairs at Westminster Lodge) or our website for further details. **Please always make sure there is a coach present before your children are left at the pool.** The coach could be delayed due to illness or traffic. We also ask that swimmers are collected from the pool rather than picked up in the car park in case of any unforeseen circumstances.

### **What sort of training will I get?**

The Club follows Sport England's Long Term Athletic Development (LTAD) programme. This is about laying a strong technical foundation for swimmers from the beginning and adding on stamina and strength. This helps build confidence and prevents swimmers peaking too early in their swimming career. Squad swimmers are also offered land training working on core muscle control and strength. We also guide swimmers about appropriate nutrition, hydration, recovery and other key aspects to developing as a strong sports person.

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

- Swimsuit or trunks
- Towel(s)
- Goggles
- Verulam club hat
- Verulam club shirt (called a T-bag)
- Warm clothing such as a sweatshirt and jogging trousers to wear on poolside between events.
- Clean flip-flops or other suitable foot wear to keep your feet warm between events.
- Water bottle with plenty of water and energy drinks.

When swimmers represent Verulam at a swimming gala we ask that you wear a club hat and T-bag. These, as well as club bags can be bought from our club shop. Please place an order through our website, [verulam-asc.org.uk](http://verulam-asc.org.uk), where there are also links to suggested swimming shop internet sites.



**VERULAM ASC**  
**(Affiliated to ASA East Region)**  
**verulam-asc.org.uk**

VASC 20

**What sort of competitive swimming is available?**

We believe that to get the best out of swimming, competitive events are essential. You are usually introduced to this at an internal time trial or gala – either at the Verulam Intra-club Gala or Club Championships. Both are held at Hemel Hempstead 25m pool. **Please bear in mind that spectators pay to watch at galas.**

**An Intra Club Gala** is held once a year and all swimmers are allocated to a team (killer whale, otter, tiger shark, or marlin) which they stay with during their time at the Club. As a team you swim against other members of the Club in individual and team events. These are excellent fun and everyone is guaranteed to fit in! We also run intra-club galas as time-trial events so that swimmers can gain times for events.

**Club Championships** are held over two nights in the autumn and you swim as an individual against other Club members in your age group. All swimmers are encouraged to enter to get the feel of a competitive gala and to get times for different strokes. (You have to be a member as of 31st August of the same year to take part.) These times are entered into a database and used as a guide for team selection. Cups, medals and certificates are awarded at the Presentation Disco in December.

**Swimming Leagues.** As your swimming improves you may be selected for one of the Verulam teams competing in external leagues (Peanuts, Herts. or Arena Swimming Leagues).

**Open meets.** You may also enter an open meet. We attend Novice, Sprint and Long Distance open meets – some have qualifying times to enter. You will need to pay a fee to enter, but they are a good way of improving on your pb (personal best time) or for achieving a qualifying time, for example for BAGCATS.

**County Level.** Finally, stronger swimmers may qualify to enter County Age Groups (BAGCATS) and Championships. These are annual events where you swim against the fastest in Hertfordshire.

If you are selected for any of these events you will find your name on the team sheet on the notice board and/or contacted via email. **It is important that you and your parents read the notice board, website and emails as you need to confirm your availability for galas and keep up to date with competitive events, results and times from galas, extra training and social events.**

**How will I see my swimming improving?**

Over time, you will start to record faster personal best times (pbs) in a set event, such as 25m freestyle. We keep a database of times recorded during competition or organised time trials,



**VERULAM ASC**  
**(Affiliated to ASA East Region)**  
**verulam-asc.org.uk**

VASC 20

however, it is important for swimmers to try and also keep a record. In addition, Verulam ASC offers the ASA performance badges for all strokes. There are 4 levels of achievement - bronze, silver, gold and platinum. It's a great way for swimmers, regardless of age, to mark their improvement and to aim for the next level. You can then buy the badge and flash to sew onto your T-bag, and feel proud!

### **What are the fees?**

Subscriptions are £135 for six months and are collected in February and August and must be paid before the 1<sup>st</sup> March and 1<sup>st</sup> September. Annual ASA fees of £28.50 and an initial joining fee of £10 are also payable. This fee covers all training sessions. Please note that membership fees are not refundable. (The only exception to this rule is when you first join as we allow a three week grace period when you can decide to continue or not. If you decide not to rejoin, we will only keep the joining fee.) You can't swim if you haven't paid the fees as you are not covered by the Club insurances. You will also be asked to pay a re-joining fee.

### **Can parents come and watch?**

Parents, including those with younger children are very welcome and positively encouraged to come and watch the training sessions. If you are poolside, please do not wear outdoor shoes. You can wear poolside shoes, covers or bare feet. Please also note that food should not be consumed by the pool. Parents and other family members are also encouraged to support their children and the Club at galas. Any enthusiastic adult swimmers are also welcome to join us as Master swimmers – to train and compete. Please see the website for more information.

### **Can parents come and help out?**

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

### **What about safety rules?**

The Club recognises that safety is of paramount importance and does all it can to ensure the safety of swimmers in and out of the water. The following rules must be followed:

- Swimmers should never dive into the pool at the shallow end unless instructed to do so, as this can be dangerous. The only exception is a racing dive at the start of a gala.
- Swimmers should never run on poolside or other wet areas such as the changing rooms.
- Pushing other swimmers into the pool is forbidden.



**VERULAM ASC**  
**(Affiliated to ASA East Region)**  
**verulam-asc.org.uk**

VASC 20

- Swimmers must obey at all times the safety instructions of coaches, club officials or pool staff.
- Any swimmer who sees another swimmer in difficulty should report it immediately to a coach or lifeguard.

### **Discipline**

Swimmers are expected to respect their coaches and other swimmers, both in and out of the pool, and abide by the safety rules. If, for whatever reason, a coach believes a swimmer is not keeping to this or is exhibiting unacceptable behaviour they will be spoken to in the first incidence. However, if the behaviour continues, it will be brought to the attention of the Complaints Committee who will make firm recommendations on acceptable behaviour. It is expected that all swimmers will follow Verulam ASC's Code of Conduct. This can be viewed at our website, navigate through useful information, to club documents.

### **Social Activities**

The Club organises a number of social events during the year and hopes that as many families as possible will participate. Events are publicised on the notice board and circulated by e-mail and the website. In the past these have included a Christmas presentation disco, family barbecue and golfing.

### **Training Week**

As a special activity, Verulam has an annual training week in October half term. This is open to about 50 swimmers who will benefit most from this type of training. There is land training as well as swimming and of course leisure time! Coaches and parent helpers accompany the swimmers and everyone has a very enjoyable, if tiring, week.

### **Club AGM**

The Annual General Meeting is usually held in March. All parents and older swimmers are encouraged to attend to learn more about Verulam Swimming Club.

***Remember, SWIMMING IS FUN!***

