

SYC Little Seagulls Handbook 2017

1. Purpose of Little Seagulls
 - a. Socially, the goal of LITTLE Seagulls is to introduce children to their first yacht club friends, who they will grow up swimming and sailing with! It's a great opportunity for parents to get to know one another as well.
 - b. Athletically, the goal is to teach children water safety, how to swim, and prepare them to be members of Team Seagulls. (By contrast, Team Seagulls swimmers are expected to be able to swim comfortably across the SYC pool (25 yards), and be interested in participating in swim meets.)
 - c. Little Seagulls will practice floating, gliding, front/side breathing, kicking, arm strokes, jumping, and diving. They will learn the basics of freestyle and backstroke and build up stamina swimming across the pool.
 - d. Please note: our Little Seagull group lessons, which are only once a week, are not intended to be and should not be the only swimming instruction that your children receive as they are learning to swim. We strongly suggest that children have individual instruction. (See Section 12 below.)
2. Qualifications for Little Seagulls
 - a. Must be a child or grandchild of SYC member.
 - b. Must be age 2-6* as of June 1, 2017.
 - i. Little Seagulls "inherit" the June 1 cutoff date from Team Seagulls, which follows the Greater New Orleans Country Club Swim League (GNOCCSL) age cutoff date.
 - ii. Please note there is overlap in the ages for Little Seagulls (ages 2-6) and Team Seagulls (3-18). Parents of young swimmers are encouraged to review the qualifications for both and if you have questions, please contact Brady Cunningham at swimteam@southernyachtclub.org or (504) 400-7004.
 - c. Must be comfortable in the pool and demonstrate breath control at the first Little Seagulls session on Saturday morning, June 3. See below for safety statement about breath control.
 - d. May not be both Team Seagull and Little Seagull.
3. Safety Statement about Breath Control
 - a. An essential skill in learning how to swim is breath control. If your child is able to hold his or her breath underwater for at least 5 seconds, they will be ready to get the most out of Little Seagulls. Everyone is encouraged to register for Little Seagulls now, and between now and the first Saturday in June when Little Seagulls sessions begin, please work with your children toward this goal. We suggest practicing in the bathtub, swim lessons, and even check out youtube for videos that show kids doing this – it can be motivational for them.
 - b. For safety reasons, only children who are able to demonstrate (at the first Little Seagulls session on Saturday morning, June 3) that they can hold their breath underwater for at least 5 seconds will be allowed in the "big" pool for Little Seagulls lessons. Please don't be discouraged if your child can't do this yet. You are MORE than welcome and

HEARTILY encouraged to come to the club on Saturday mornings in June and July during Little Seagull practices (8:30-10:30am) and play on the playground, on the lawn, and in the baby pool, practice bubble blowing, head submersion, and other pre-swimming skills. Children and parents can spend time and get to know other Seagull families, without actually being a “Little Seagull” just yet. During these times, have fun in the baby pool. The big pool will be for Little Seagulls lessons only.

4. Registration

- a. GOOGLE DOC - Fill out this Google Doc form - one per child.
- b. TEAM SNAP (The app that we use for our roster, practice info, and all group texts/emails). Once you're confirmed for the 8:30 or 9:30 session, we'll provide information on how to get Teamsnap.
- c. Registration opened on March . Through April 1, returning Little Seagulls and siblings of Team Seagulls have priority registration. On April 2, we will email EVERYONE who is registered so far to confirm who's in which session.
- d. Questions regarding registration, please contact Brady Cunningham at swimteam@southernyachtclub.org or (504) 400-7004.

5. Junior Activities Open House

- a. Come to SYC on April 2 from 3-5pm for the Junior Activities Open House, to learn more about Little Seagulls, Team Seagulls, and our many youth sailing programs!
- b. We will have some Seagull apparel/gear available for sale. And Team Seagulls may try on bathing suits so they can be sure to order the appropriate size. For more info on Apparel, see section X.

6. Approach to Little Seagulls

- a. Primarily: FUN WITH FRIENDS! – This goes for kids as well as parents!!
- b. Also: Improve swimming. No matter where your children are now and what skills they have, we will work on improving. We also recognize that your children may have progressed (or regressed) since you filled out his/her skills on the Little Seagulls online registration form. The coaches will get to know your children and their skills and will instruct them accordingly.
- c. Swim safety. Cannot overstate the importance of water safety. Our Little Seagulls program will emphasize not only safety from the perspective of “learning to swim” within the pool gates – it will also touch on rules/awareness to help your children understand the importance of safety on the grounds of SYC.
- d. Feedback mechanisms – 2017 is year three for our SYC Little Seagulls program and is evolving to meet member needs. If you have comments, concerns, questions, suggestions, please contact Brady Cunningham, cbmcunningham@yahoo.com, 504-400-7004. Thank you!

7. Sessions/practices

- a. Little Seagulls practices will be held on Saturday mornings in June and July 2017.
- b. Two sessions: Session 1 will be from 8:30-9:30am and Session 2 will be from 9:30-10:30am. After registration, you will be notified by email which session you are in.
- c. Children in Session 1 may not come to Session 2 and vice versa.

- d. Maximum 15 swimmers per session.
 - e. We plan to schedule Little Seagull play/swim dates at other times.
 - f. Lessons will be one hour, with activities & instruction both in and out of the pool.
 - g. In 2017, July 4th does not affect our lessons. We will have lessons on July 1 and July 8, which are the Saturdays before and after.
8. Fees
- a. Little Seagulls fee per child is \$150 (includes \$50 non-refundable deposit). Fees include, but are not limited to, lessons/coaching, team t-shirt, medal/certificate, and child's dinner at the Seagulls Awards Banquet. Fees are taxed at 9%.
 - b. The full Little Seagulls charge will appear on your statement for the month of June.
 - c. For planning and staffing reasons, the Little Seagull charge cannot be pro-rated.
9. Little Seagulls Leaders
- a. Seagull Parent Coordinator: Brady Cunningham.
 - i. Brady – husband Scott, children Robert (age 9, Team Seagull 2012-17) and Watts (age 5, Little Seagull 2015-16, Team Seagull 2017)
 - ii. If anyone is interested in potentially taking over the program from Brady in 2018, please let her know!
 - b. Coaches
 - i. Mallory Abadie (returning Team Seagulls Assistant Head Coach and Little Seagulls coach)
 - ii. Brett Dipuma (returning Team and Little Seagulls coach)
 - iii. Abbi Muller (Team and Little Seagulls coach)
 - iv. Shelby Vasquez (Little Seagulls coach)
 - c. Committees – Parent volunteers... You make it happen! You make it fun!
 - i. Awards committee – I will help order medals and print out certificates that are awarded to the children at the end of the season.
 - ii. Social committee – I will help plan Little Seagull swim/play dates (outside of our Saturday morning sessions), and I'll encourage Little Seagull families to get together for family-oriented events at the club.
 - iii. Apparel committee – The TEAM Seagulls apparel committee handles all merchandising/ordering/inventory, and we simply need a couple LITTLE Seagull "liaisons" who will hand out tshirts (included in registration fee) to Little Seagull families at Little Seagull practices and answer questions Little Seagull families may have about ordering Seagull swimsuits/merchandise.
 - iv. TeamSnap Gurus – TeamSnap is the app we use for our roster, scheduling, and communications. It's not hard to use, but I'd be happy to show other parents some tricks and tips.
 - v. Photographers – I'll take photos at Little Seagull practices. (Incidentally, we make a REALLY big deal when a child is finally able to swim across the pool unassisted for the very first time. I'm talking MAJOR kodak moment!) Also, each year the teenager Team Seagull swimmers create a very popular video – a slideshow set to music, which is played at the end-of-season Awards Banquet.

We need someone to gather/provide them photos to ensure Little Seagulls have their time in the limelight!

- vi. TellTale – Speaking of immortalizing our kids on screen, let’s do the same in print! We need volunteers to write an article for the June/July TellTale about the fun we have in Little Seagulls!
- vii. Substitute coach – I’d be happy to bring my bathing suit to Little Seagulls practices and, in the event of an absent coach, lend a hand with the children.
- viii. Parent Lead 2018 – I’m interested learning what it takes to share/take Brady’s place NEXT summer 2018.

10. First day of Little Seagulls – Saturday, June 3

- a. Families meet and greet. Coaches and kids get to know one another. The coaches will “play” with the kids in the pool to get an understanding of their skills (including the breath control requirement) and group them with other children accordingly.
- b. Please go to TeamSnap and mark your availability for this date (and other dates too). Please make every effort to come to this first practice so we can get off on the right foot together.
- c. Progress throughout the season - We understand that, on the weekdays between our Saturday sessions, your children will be swimming with you, with other instructors, and/or at camp. The coaches will keep up with their progress and tailor their instruction appropriately. Depending on how things go as the weeks go by through June and July, the children might swim in groups with different children and different coaches. Please stay in communication with the coaches about how things are going.

11. Practices – Guidelines and what to expect. Arrival, the lesson itself, and departure.

- a. Arrival
 - i. Please arrive early. Please budget plenty of time in advance to account for parking-to-pool transition, potty time, sunscreen, moods, etc. Starting right when your session begins at 8:30 or 9:30 will ensure that your child has the FULL hour to be with friends and coaches. It is also very important to the coaches, because late arrivals disrupt the flow of lessons.
 - ii. At the start of the lesson, the children will go with coaches, and the parents will go to the balcony/grill/workout room/tiki bar area to hang out or get some work done. If your child is uncomfortable separating at first, please allow the coaches to comfort them and get them used to the situation. All our coaches have plenty of experience teaching/nannying/babysitting and look forward to building a trusting and fun relationship with your children.
- b. Lesson
 - i. Intros/ice breakers – The coaches will begin the session with a song, game, ice breaker, etc. They will also talk about SYC/pool rules, water safety principles, etc.
 - ii. Stretching/warm-up – Coaches will also lead stretching, warm-up games, and on-land physical activity designed to prepare for/enhance in-water swimming skills.

- iii. In-pool instruction/games – Coaches will lead swimming lessons in the big pool.
 - iv. Parent-coach discussion – The lesson will conclude with a few minutes for parents to confer with coaches about their children’s experience. Keep in mind that after the 8:30 session, the 9:30 session will be starting. And after the 9:30 session, the 10:30 Team Seagulls practice will be starting. The coaches will need to turn their attention to those children. If you’d like to have an extended discussion with the coaches, please feel free to contact them at another time.
- c. Departure
- i. When your lesson is over, please leave the pool deck area. We have approximately 30 Little Seagulls and 100 Team Seagulls. It will be crowded and chaotic around the pool, and leaving the pool deck when your lesson is over will help with logistics.

12. Individual swim lessons

- a. Our Little Seagull group lessons, which are only once a week, are not intended to be and should not be the only swimming instruction that your children receive as they are learning to swim. We strongly suggest that children have individual lessons. This may take the form of:
 - i. Lessons from parents. Some children love to swim with their parents. Others not so much. Either way, please research information and videos online; seek advice of coaches; consider pursuing certifications in water safety and swim instruction; etc.
 - ii. Lessons from Little Seagull coaches. Please use contact information on TeamSnap to reach out to Little Seagull coaches to arrange for private lessons. As members, you are welcome to use the SYC club for private lessons with Little Seagull coaches, but you must be present on the pool deck during those lessons.
 - iii. Lessons offsite with outside companies/instructors.
- b. If you are interested in teaching your own children how to swim, please check out the information and videos at uswim.com. This online resource is designed to teach parents how to teach their children to swim. Little Seagull instructors, though they all have experience working with children and have their own tricks/techniques, their approach will be a lot like uswim.com.

13. Weather

- a. Little Seagull lessons will not be cancelled due to weather. If it happens to be raining/storming, the coaches will still have practice. They will do on-land activities and games that relate to swimming and promote friendships.
- b. If the weather is so bad that the yacht club is actually inaccessible (e.g., flooding at the turn by the pump station), we will send email/text via TeamSnap to cancel lessons.

14. Registration and TeamSnap

- a. Registration: To register for Little Seagulls, you log on to the SYC Website as a member, click the link to register, and fill out the online form. (For questions about registration, please contact Brady Cunningham at swimteam@southernyachtclub.org or (504) 400-7004.)

- i. 2017 Registration is on a first-come first-served basis, with returning Little Seagulls and siblings of Team Seagulls having priority for a few weeks prior to the Junior Activities Open House.
 - ii. Registration will remain open through the start of Little Seagulls, with a waiting list, if necessary.
 - b. TeamSnap: After registering, you'll be sent an email inviting you to join TeamSnap. TeamSnap is the app we use to manage our team roster, schedule, rsvps to practices, group emails/texts, etc.
 - i. You might find it easier to navigate TeamSnap on a laptop first, then use the app on your phone/device thereafter.
 - ii. Here's your initial to-do list for using TeamSnap.
 1. Update the ROSTER tab (swimmer profile).
 2. Upload PHOTOS so coaches can put faces with names.
 3. Fill in the AVAILABILITY tab (rsvps for practices).
 4. We will use TeamSnap for ALL group texts and emails. If necessary, please add users (spouse, family members, sitters) so that more than one person can access your TeamSnap account and/or receive group texts and emails. You can also configure it so that, if you have more than one Little Seagull, you don't get duplicate announcements.
 5. If you like, export/subscribe to the schedule so it appears automatically on your phone/device.
 - c. Some of you are on TeamSnap because you were Little Seagulls last year, BUT remember you still have to register using the online form on the SYC Website.
 - d. If you have any questions about TeamSnap, please confer with other parents, and/or contact the TeamSnap support. The fee that SYC pays to use TeamSnap includes this customer support – and they are really helpful.
15. Other items:
- a. Play dates – In addition to our Saturday lessons, we are scheduling informal swim/playdates on the two Wednesday afternoons in June when the Team Seagulls are away at swim meets. (TBD). Little Seagull coaches won't be there, because a few of them double as Team Seagull coaches and will be away at the meets themselves. But these playdates will be on the TeamSnap calendar, so mark your availability on TeamSnap if you plan to go, and have fun free time with other Little Seagull families!
 - b. Saturdays in June vs. Saturdays in July – Little Seagull practices in June will be followed immediately by Team Seagull practices and an influx of bigger kids in the pool at 10:30. This may sound chaotic, but it's a good time to head up to the snack bar balcony with your Little Seagulls and watch. They can watch the big kids and see where they'll be in a year or two. Now, July is another story. In July Team Seagulls is over, so you can plan to stay and play and have lunch in a less crowded atmosphere.
 - c. Little Seagull Expo on last day of practice – July 29. The coaches are planning an end-of-season exposition where the children will show off their skills and perhaps have a mini

swim meet! Please save the date and spread the word to grandparents and friends who might want to come cheer them on.

- d. Seagulls Awards Banquet Sunday, July 30. Little Seagull recognition will occur first, so you can duck out early if you like and put your young ones to bed.
 - e. Recommended attire
 - i. A Seagulls t-shirt is included in your registration fee. These will be distributed the first or second Saturday of practice.
 - ii. Bathing suits for boys – make sure they are not too big or baggy. And make sure if they have a string that they are tied.
 - iii. Bathing suits for girls – no bikinis please – a one piece is best.
 - iv. You may purchase a Team Seagulls bathing suit if you like, but this is not required.
 - v. Rash guards are encouraged.
 - vi. Please tie long hair back in ponytail.
 - vii. Goggles – you want a brand/style that has:
 - 1. UV protection
 - 2. Anti fog
 - 3. Tinted or mirrored (it is VERY bright outdoors, esp when looking straight up in the sky when they're learning to float on back)
 - 4. Either split strap or double strap. Single straps tend to slip off.
 - 5. Some families recommend Speedo, TYR, and FINIS.
16. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions for this Handbook or anything SYC Seagull related, please contact Brady Cunningham, cbmcunningham@yahoo.com, 504-400-7004. Thank you!