**Guidance for Swimmers, Parents, Coaches and Team Managers**

**Introduction**

We are delighted to be able to run our first Open Meet in over 21 months and we look forward to welcoming swimmers, coaches and volunteers to Inspire: Luton Sports Village.

Behind the scenes we are working hard with our pool operator to create as safe an environment as possible for us all. Our objective has been to make the gala feel as “normal” as possible so that swimmers can perform at their best. However we have had to make some amendments which are outlined below.

We would be very grateful if you could read this guidance and ensure that your swimmers understand what they mean and the importance of following them. By everyone following some basic guidelines we should ensure a safe and fun experience for all.

**No Spectators**

Unfortunately our pool operator has asked us to ensure that there are no spectators at this event. This is in an effort to reduce over-crowding and ensure that as many swimmers as possible have an opportunity to return to competition.

This means that parents and guardians will not be allowed onto the balcony nor anywhere else inside the Centre. The pool operator and Meet volunteers will be monitoring the entrances – please be considerate of them and accept this restriction with good grace. Also, may we remind you that car parking fees are applicable at the centre if you park for longer than 4 hours. Places you may wish to visit in the area Wardown Park and Museum (LU2 7HA), Stockwood Park and Discovery Centre (LU1 4LX), Whipsnade Zoom (LU6 2LF), Woodside Animal Farm (LU1 4DG), Towns of Hitchin, Harpenden and St Albans.

 **Technical Officials**

One way that you will be able to watch your swimmer compete is by volunteering to be a technical official. As always, these vital roles fall on the shoulders of a relatively small number of people. We require all clubs to provide a number of technical officials for this gala, but we will welcome all offers of help. If you are appropriately qualified (as a Level 3 this Meet only requires you to be a J1 in training) then please contact officials@teamluton.com.

**Non-technical volunteers**

Alternatively we would welcome a few more volunteers helping us in a non-technical capacity. If you would like to help then please email galas@teamluton.com.

**Vaccination and Testing**

Although we will not be requiring people attending this meet to present a COIVD pass, we would encourage everyone who is attending the gala and eligible for a vaccine to make the time to have at least one dose before the meet.

Whether or not you have been vaccinated we would ask everyone to take a lateral flow test on Friday 22 October and to stay at home and follow government guidance if you have tested positive. Similarly, if you are exhibiting symptoms of Coronavirus, we would ask you to withdraw from the meet. We are all excited to have a meet again but there will be other opportunities in future if you need to drop out.

**Face coverings**

We would ask that swimmers wear a face covering when they are moving around the centre and when going down to marshalling.

**Awards**

Medals will be available from the medal table situated on the balcony. We would ask that swimmers do not crowd around the table in anticipation of their medals but pick them up gradually throughout the day.

**Withdrawals**

One of the ways that we can make the meet run more smoothly and safely is to ensure that we swim with full heats and not waste time chasing up absent swimmers. We would therefore ask that swimmers withdraw If they are not intending to swim an event. Withdrawals should be notified to galas@teamluton.com as soon as possible and to their coach/team manager who will be there at the weekend.

**Prior to arrival**

As well as all of the normal things swimmers would take to an Open Meet we would ask that they bring the following:

* A number of face coverings. These must be worn when moving around the venue and they are likely to get wet so a change will be welcome
* A clear plastic bin bag to take the small elements of kit that they need on poolside for warm up or racing. Normal swim bags must be left on the balcony at all times
* Plenty of food and drink. Unfortunately the centre’s café is not currently open at weekends and we will not have access to the vending machines on site.

Swimmers should arrive beach ready for warm up. Those in the first event of each session may wish to be wearing their race costume to avoid panic and crowding at the end of warm up.

**Arriving at the venue and seating during the meet.**

Our pool operator has asked that no-one attending the meet enters the centre through the main entrance. Instead they ask that we use the double grey doors on the opposite side of the grass – see picture below where the green arrow indicates the location of the doors.

 

These doors will be manned by volunteers who will be checking the names of the adults we are expecting (either because they are a nominated coach or team manager, they are a technical official or a registered volunteer). As we are not allowing spectators at this event we would ask that you are kind to these volunteers and do not demand entry if you are not authorised to do so.

The grey doors will lead up some stairs directly to the pool balcony. The balcony’s seats will be segregated into club bubbles. As there are no spectators we would ask that all swimmers remain on the balcony when they are not actually swimming – there will be no seating on poolside at this Meet. Our preference is for coaches to also view the races from the balcony but, as long as their swimmers are appropriately supervised, one coach from each club can watch the races from poolside in a socially distanced manner.

Technical officials should also enter the venue through the same doors but go into the normal function room through the main double doors.

When anyone wants to leave the meet we would ask that they retrace their steps along the balcony to the staircase leading to the grey double doors. Please do not exit via the centre.

**Flow of individuals around building and pool hall**

During warm up swimmers and coaches should go down to poolside via the staircase at the far end of the balcony from the staircase that they used to come in. They must wear a face covering (unless they are medically exempt) and they should take any items that they need in a clear plastic bin bag. As a minimum they must be wearing appropriate poolside shoes and have a towel with them.



At the end of warm up swimmers should make their way back up to the seating area on the balcony where they should remain during the session apart from racing.

When returning to the pool-deck for racing swimmers need to be very quiet so as not to disturb swimmers on the blocks. The door onto poolside is going to be a pinch point and flow through it will be managed. It is important that swimmers leave enough time to walk around the pool, walk through marshalling and to the blocks. This door is also unavoidably close to the blocks and starting equipment – hence the request for complete quiet at this point.

Only clean and appropriate footwear to be worn on poolside,

Swimmers will then be marshalled around the edge of the pool following the flow indicated above by the green arrows. This will continue around both pool until they reach the blocks.

Swimmers should place all their belongings in the plastic bin bag and leave behind the blocks whilst racing.

After the race swimmers must dry themselves off and put on their shoes before going back upstairs. Once again we would ask that swimmers do this in complete silence so as not to disturb swimmers in following races.

There will be no swimdowns apart from after the long-distance events in Sessions 2 and 5**.**

Swimmers can use the changing rooms off the pool deck and the WCs off the balcony but we would ask that they do not huddle in groups to chat in there to avoid overcrowding.

There is plenty of grass outside the pool so if swimmers need fresh air then hopefully it won’t rain on the day and they can go out there.

**Warm Up**

Each club will be allocated a number of lanes for warm up and coaches should be on pool deck supervising them at this time. We have a handful of individual swimmers who are not coming as part of a club entry. These will also be allocated to a club lane and we’d ask that coaches kindly take these swimmers under their wing during warm up.

Details of the allocated warm up lanes will be provided in coaches packs on the day.

**Coaches / team managers**

The only coaches and team managers who will be allowed entrance to the venue will be those who have been named on the entry forms. They will be given a poolside pass to aid identification and this should be worn at all times. If clubs feel that they need more team managers to supervise their swimmers then they should contact galas@teamluton.com as soon as possible.

Coach passes will entitle coaches to refreshments throughout the day. Unfortunately the pool operator is not able to provide a hot lunch at this Meet so refreshments will consist of a packed lunch and afternoon tea.

Coaches are responsible for supervising warm up. They and team managers also need to supervise their swimmers throughout the day whilst they are on the balcony and away from their parents.