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## FAQ

### Polar Bears Competitive Youth Swim Team 2021

- **What is the program location?** Practices are scheduled in our pool at the Pittsfield branch, 292 North Street, Pittsfield. Some swim meets require travel.
- **What are the program dates?** September 13 - January 29, 2022
- **Is a membership required?** Yes, an active BFYMCA membership is required for the duration of the program.
- **Does my child need to tryout?** All new participants must try-out before registering.
- **How do I schedule a tryout?** Tryouts will be held in the Pittsfield branch pool on:
  - Sunday, August 29, 2021, 12:30-1:30 PM
  - Sunday, September 12, 2021, 12:30-1:30PM
- **Do I need to schedule a tryout time?** No all participants new and existing can come to try-outs. If the scheduled tryout days and times do not work for you, please contact the Welcome Center.
- **Are there cuts?** Everyone makes the team. Coaches will place swimmers in the appropriate division.
- **How will we receive updates and information as a team member?** Once you join the Polar Bears Competitive Youth Swim Team, the coaches and BFYMCA staff will share important news, updates, and information about meets on BFYMCA PolarBears.com. Also, be sure to include your primary email address and cell phone number during program registration.

**COVID-19:** State and Local guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are strictly enforced. The program is subject to change if lane restrictions are enforced by State & Local guidelines. Program size may need to be reduced following the allowed number of participants.

### Swim Levels

Swimmers are grouped using a two-tiered approach factoring age and ability.

**Cubs:** Ages 6-12 years old

- Focus:
  - Develop practice structure and workout rules
  - Introduce reading pace clock
  - Improving Kicking

**BERKSHIRE FAMILY YMCA:** [www.bfymca.org](http://www.bfymca.org)

**Pittsfield (Corporate Office):** 292 North Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201 **P:** 413-499-7650 **F (All Locations):** 888-965-0663  
**Northern Berkshire:** 22 Brickyard Court, North Adams, MA 01247 **P:** 413-663-6529  
**Bennington Recreation Center:** 655 Gage Street, Bennington, VT 05201 **P:** 802-442-1053

- Introduce and develop the four competitive strokes
- Learn basic swimming rules
- Develop leg endurance
- Improve stroke techniques with drills
- Learn competitive starts and turns
- Emphasis in on effort
- Emphasis on BFYMCA Core values
- Attendance:
  - 60 Minutes – 1 hour, 2/3 days/week, minimum 1 hour
- Basic Requirements:
  - 1x25 Freestyle or 1x25 Backstroke
  - 1x25 Flutter kick with kickboard
  - Tread water for 1 minute

**Juniors:** Ages 7-14 years old | Admission Requirements: Placed by Coach

- Focus:
  - Begin major aerobic development
  - Establish proficient and effective swimmers emphasizing good training habits
  - Continue leg strength
  - Master all drills
  - Encourage consistency in practice and attendance
  - Compete in all of the competitive strokes
  - Embrace a positive attitude in racing longer/distance events
  - Understand training toward championships
  - Promote greater time standard awareness
  - Emphasis on BFYMCA Core Values
- Attendance: Junior swimmers are encouraged to attend as many practices during the week as possible
  - 90 Minutes – 1 hour 30 Minutes, 4 days/week baseline

**Seniors:** Ages 12-18 years old | Admission Requirements: Placed by Coach

- Focus:
  - Maximize aerobic base
  - Participate in dry land training as given by coach
  - Demonstrate leadership skills, team pride and overall positive attitude
  - Emphasize the importance of negative splitting and distance swimming
  - Learn refine technique
  - Emphasis on BFYMCA Core Values
  - Mastering pacing and minimal drag
- Attendance:
  - 120 Minutes – 2 Hours, 5 days/week, attend 3-4 practices minimum

## **Practices:**

- All swimmers should arrive at the Y a few minutes before the start of their practice. This allows time for changing, using the restroom, and being ready to start practice promptly. Any swimmer under the age of 13 must be escorted by a parent or guardian through the Y facility entirely; this includes but is not limited to the locker rooms and to the pool. Please wait with your swimmer until a coach comes to start practice. **No swimmers are allowed into the pool until a coach is there and prompts for the start of practice.** We are also implementing a three-strike policy for all of our swimmers this year:
  1. Verbal Warning
  2. Out of the pool for 5 Minutes and conversation with coach to explain why.
  3. Out of the pool for the rest of practice
- If you wish to stay and watch, you may do so from the observation deck which is located off from the main lobby.
- Swimmers should be picked up shortly after the conclusion of their practice. Coaches have other responsibilities following practice and will not be supervising.

**Practice Schedules May Change:** BFYMCA is here to serve the community. For several years both Taconic High School and Wahconah High School swim teams utilize the Y during December and January and a bit into the month of February. Please be prepared that practice times could change. Swim team members are expected to abide by the code of conduct at all times.

## **Meets:**

- Competitive swim meets foster the growth of each swimmer. Generally, meets are held on Saturdays and Sundays. Championships for those that qualify are usually Thursday-Sunday and there is an additional fee for the season extension.
- Please sign up for meets using the process requested by the head coach. It's crucial to sign up by the posted date to allow coaches time to enter names and submit rosters. Not signing up by the requested date may prohibit the swimmer from participating in the meet.
- The cost to participate in a meet is in addition to the program fee.
- Please participate in as many meets as possible!
- Swimmers are expected to arrive at the meet at least 15 minutes before the start of warm-ups. The coaching staff and the host team must know who is in attendance and submit scratches if necessary.
- Swimmers should also come prepared with goggles, team cap, suit and towels. It is recommended to pack an extra set of goggles.
- Meets last approximately 3-4 hours.

- At meets, parents need to be supportive of their swimmer and other swimmers. It is solely the coaching staff's job to coach your swimmer. The coaching staff will analyze and critique swims.
- At meets, parents are not allowed on deck as observers. Parents allowed on deck are volunteering as timers, coaches, bench parents, or officials.
- Swimmers may visit their parents in the stands with the permission of the coaching staff.

### **Swim Wear**

- The Polar Bears do have a uniform competition swim suit and swim cap that will need to be purchased. Sizing and ordering are done through the parents group. Payment must be made in advance of the order.
  - Polar Bears Swim Team Gear
    - <https://www.swimoutlet.com/collections/bfymca>
- Practice suits must be appropriate for competitive swimming. Customized suits with sayings or designs must be family appropriate.

### **Locker Rooms and Bathroom Breaks**

- There is no BFYMCA Staff supervision or coach supervision in Locker rooms. Supervision of a child under the age of 13 in the locker rooms and the facility is the responsibility of the child's parent or guardian. Allowing a child aged 13-17 to use the locker rooms on their own is at the discretion of the parents. A family changing room and restroom are available to use. A shower is available at the pool for rinsing off is mandatory before entering the pool. Soap, shampoos and conditioners are not allowed in the aquatics area.
- A swimmer that needs to use the restroom during practice will inform the coach. If the swimmer is over 13 Yrs. Old then he or she may proceed to the restroom on their own and should immediately return to the aquatics area. The closest restroom is in the family changing room. A swimmer who is under the age of 13 Yrs. Old cannot go unescorted to use the restroom. If the child's parents are unavailable, the coach will ask the team for bathroom breaks and escort the group to the bathroom using the Family changing room. If your child has a regular need for the bathroom ½ way through practice, please inform the coach and plan on checking with your swimmer about bathroom needs.

### **Polar Bear Member Responsibilities:**

- Fundraising:
  - As a team we will participate in fundraisers. All swimmers are asked to participate. Fundraisers will be determined by the Parents Group, Senior swimmers, and coaching staff.
- To help the YMCA Polar Bears become as successful as possible, we expect you will volunteer your time, talent and treasure. There are many ways to

assist the team from assisting coaches, to concessions, training as a official, timers, sponsorship, assisting with the computer setup, and much more. If you are unsure how to assist, please speak with a coach or a Parent Group leader. Without your help and involvement, the swim team cannot continue and flourish.

### **Being a Polar Bear Parent:**

- Parents contribute to the success experienced by the child and the team. Parents serve as role models and their children value their attitudes. Be aware of this and serve as positive role models at all times. Please show good sportsmanship at all time towards coaches, officials, opponents and teammates.
  - Polar Bear parents or family members are expected to volunteer in some capacity to assist the team.
  - From a practical standpoint, over-emphasis on speed, times and achievements will eventually end in frustration. As parents, ask yourselves:
    - Did the child learn to swim with more skill? Is he or she both stronger and safer in the water?
    - Did the child learn initiative, wanting to come to the pool and practice without having to be constantly pushed or prodded by parents and coaches?
    - Did the child benefit from the competitive experience? Is he/she learning how to handle winning and losing?
    - Did the child learn more patience in overcoming obstacles, setbacks, and problems?
- Friendships and character are important. BFYMCA strives to instill values of Responsibility, Honesty, Respect, and Caring.
- If you ever have a problem with something at a practice or meet, please see your swimmer's coach first. If the issue is not resolved to your satisfaction, please see the head coach. Please confront the issue with the coach privately after practice or by phone.