



Sydney Emeralds  
Synchro Club

# Parent Handbook Sydney Emeralds 2016

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Sydney Emeralds Synchronised Swimming Incorporated  
Registration Number: 128084935

## 1. What is Synchronized Swimming

Synchronized swimming, also known as ‘water ballet’ or ‘dancing in the water’ is a unique sport. It requires a combination of overall body strength and endurance, grace and beauty, split-second timing, flexibility, musical interpretation, stamina and artistic presentation.

The ultimate goal of every synchronized swimmer is to perform an original routine in one or more of the three main categories - solo, duet and team. While synchronized swimming is a relatively young sport in Australia, it has a long history, starting in the early 1900s, and is practiced and recognised in many countries around the world.

## 2. Club History

The Sydney Emeralds Synchronized Swimming Club was created in October 2007 by Myriam Glez and Katarina Hall. Originally starting only with 5 registered members, the Sydney Emeralds is currently the largest synchronized swimming club in New South Wales. Training sessions are held at various locations in Sydney.

Since October 2007, the club has grown rapidly and the Sydney Emeralds Swimmers have been competing at a great number of events locally nationally and internationally. Some of the highlights of the Sydney Emerald’s history are the Beijing 2008 Olympics.

The Sydney Emeralds’ objective is to develop synchronized swimming at every level from beginners to elite athletes, and at every age, from 4 years old to Masters Swimmers. We strive to provide our swimmers with the opportunity to achieve their personal best as individuals, athletes and team members in a club environment which values respect, dedication and sportsmanship. The Sydney Emeralds Coaching Team is very experienced having competed and coached at the highest level.

The Sydney Emeralds Synchronized Swimming Club is a non-profit organisation and is incorporated with the NSW Fair Trading Office.

## 3. Terms and Conditions

Sydney Emeralds Synchro Club reserve the right to change hours of operation, services offered and all fees and charges, at its sole discretion

and without prior notice to the Member. SESC will notify any such changes via our newsletter, website notice, mail/email or phone contact.

By reading this document, you acknowledge that you have been provided with a copy of the “Sydney Emeralds Synchro Club Terms and Conditions” and agree to be bound by and uphold its stated guidelines. The Terms and Conditions may be changed or updated by Sydney Emeralds Synchro Club’s sole discretion and without prior notice.

### **Payment Policy**

Sydney Emeralds Synchro Club requires full upfront payment prior to the commencement of a term block of training sessions (or a holiday camp). Bookings will only be confirmed once payment has been received.

We accept payment via Direct Bank Transfer, Cheque and Cash.

### **Missed Sessions Policy**

Any planned absences should be communicated to the coach well in advance. In line with industry best practice, we do not offer make-up lessons as they have proven to be less than ideal and at times disruptive to coaches and swimmers (unless a different arrangement has been made by the coach(es) and approved by the club’s executive committee). To ensure session quality remains at its highest, we strive to maintain continuity with coaches and swimmers throughout the term. We believe this is the best way to provide productive and effective training sessions for our swimmers, choosing quality over quantity.

If, however, a swimmer is absent for three consecutive weeks due to illness, credits will be placed on their file to be deducted from the following terms fees.

#### **In the case of illness, the following guidelines will apply:**

- Credits will only be considered for students who have incurred a prolonged illness, hospitalisation or in the event of lesson cancellation by Sydney Emeralds Synchro Club. Please note a medical certificate is required.
- Credits will only be considered for **three or more weeks of consecutive** absences from lessons.
- Any credit request must be received prior to the completion of the current enrolled term.
- Approved credits will be applied to the students file for future bookings.
- One credit equals 50% of the cost of the missed session.

- Credits are not redeemable for cash and not transferable from one family to another.
- All credits must be used within six months of approval by Sydney Emeralds Synchro Club.

### **Religious Holidays**

To receive a credit, members must notify SESC prior to the commencement of the term of any religious holidays during which their child will not be attending their lesson.

### **Public Holidays**

Sydney Emeralds Synchro Club does not conduct lessons on public holidays and will provide ample notice of such dates. If you are unsure of the dates please contact SESC.

## **4. Code of conduct**

### **Rules of synchronized swimming**

All the members are expected to abide by the Constitution, rules, regulations and other policies of Synchronized Swimming Australia (SSAI), including the Anti-Doping policy and Member Welfare Policy of Swimming Australia both of which are endorsed by Synchronized Swimming Australia. These are available by accessing the SSAI website [www.synchro.org.au](http://www.synchro.org.au) and following links and policies.

### **Parental Supervision**

It is a condition of entry to ANY SESC session that all students under the age of 12 must be accompanied by a parent or responsible guardian over the age of 16. Swimmers will not be accepted into sessions if a parent or guardian is not present. Swimmers must be collected by a parent or guardian at the conclusion of their session.

### **Before the Session**

Please have your daughter dressed and ready to start the session 5-minutes before their scheduled session time- this includes getting changed. Swimmers should be at poolside/in the gym by the scheduled session commencement time.

### **During the Session**

If parents remain at the pool during the session (which SESC encourages in case of emergency), we ask that parents remain in the seated areas provided to allow our coaches the space to conduct the training session. SESC's responsibility for your daughter starts at the commencement of the session and finishes when the session is over. Parents will be responsible for their children at all other times (unless otherwise advised or arranged in advance). We require swimmers to have goggles and caps during sessions (unless otherwise advised by the coach).

### **End of lesson**

When parents need to consult with the coach, this should be done at the end of the session or at some other mutually agreed time.

## **5. Privacy Policy**

In accordance with the Privacy Act 2001 all information collected and stored on the Sydney Emeralds Synchro Club's database will only be used for the purpose, nature and duration of the program. Synchronized Swimming Australia and Sydney Emeralds Synchro Club reserves the right to use and disclose to related and relevant bodies any details information that may be necessary to implement the rules, regulations and policies.

## **6. Program and Training Structure**

The Sydney Emeralds Synchronized Swimming Club strives to provide an opportunity to practice and excel at the sport to all swimmers of all ages at various levels in two programs: recreational and competitive.

### **a. Recreational Program**

This program offers girls and women of all ages to learn the basics of the sport. During the training sessions, recreational swimmers will practice synchro skills, learn basic routines and develop an understanding of the synchro theory. Coaches follow an international and accredited synchro training program based on the Star Levels, teaching skills of increasing difficulty, incorporating these into basic routines accompanied by music.

The categories are:

- Beginners - Lil Mermaids
- Intermediate
- Advance recreational - Teens
- Adult recreational

Requirements: To attend a training session once a week or more.

Opportunities: Depending on level and age of the swimmers:

- Swimmers can participate in the end of term and other displays.
- Compete at local inter-club, Star level/Division B competitions, or
- Join the Competitive program.

## b. Competitive Program

This program offers girls an opportunity to advance their synchro skills, to swim advanced routines and aim for competing nationally and internationally.

Swimmers compete by age group according to rules of FINA (Federation Internationale de la Natation), international governing body, and SSAI (Synchronized Swimming Australia), the Australian national governing body. All Age Group competitors remain qualified from 1st January to the following 31st December at the age they are at the close of day (12 midnight) on 31st December of the year of the competition.

The age groups are:

- 12 & under
- 13 - 15
- Junior (16 - 18)
- Open (18+)

Requirements: To attend the required number of training sessions a week as determined by the coaching team.

Opportunities: To compete at the State and National level and, if certain results are achieved and approved by SSAI, also internationally.

### *i. Skill testing*

In Australia, every girl in competitive program striving to compete at national and international level must undergo monthly skills testing conducted by the state coaches if not specified otherwise (ie Australian Selectors may wish to conduct some of the testing). The Skills test was developed by SSAI in order to increase overall skills of Australian competitors and to match skills of swimmers wanting to compete internationally to the international competition standard. The test consists of 3 elements: land fitness and flexibility, speed swimming and synchro skills.

## *ii. Required Equipment*

Sydney Emeralds swimmers need the following for a regular training session, unless advised otherwise:

- Full piece costumes for training (club practice costume preferred)
- Goggles
- Club bathing cap to protect hair and to keep hair out of the eyes
- Minimum two nose clips
- Water bottle
- Thongs for pool deck and change rooms
- Towels

### **For dry-land training:**

At competitions, additional equipment is required. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Club practice costume for training at competitions
- Plain black costume and white bathing cap for figures competitions
- Competition costumes and hair pieces
- All standard training equipment & Club uniform

## *iii. Competitions*

### **Figures**

Figures are the foundation of synchronized swimming and are the basis of any routine. They are a combination of basic positions joined together by transitional movements. During competition, figures are performed in front of a panel of judges who mark the figure out of ten points. Scores for figures represent 50% of the total score for an event i.e. individual marks for the figures are combined with the scores for the routine to arrive at the overall championship score of a routine. Both individual (figures) and routine performance (solo, duet, team) are thus recognized in the final score.

### **Routines**

A routine is performed as a team, combo, duet, or solo. Team traditionally consists of eight swimmers. A combo, as the name implies, is a combination of a solo, a duet, and team performances all in one routine. Combos are performed by minimum seven to maximum ten swimmers.

Like figures, routines are marked on a ten-point scale by two panels of judges for both technical merit and artistic impression. Again, the scoring system is quite complex but in a simplified way the technical merit judges look at execution, synchronization, and degree of difficulty, with execution

weighted the most heavily. Ideally, higher marks are given to a routine where swimmers execute difficult elements that are well performed. For artistic impression judges evaluate choreography, musical interpretation and overall presentation.

#### *iiiv. Team Selection*

Synchronized swimming is essentially a team sport. The purpose of team selection is to match swimmers of similar skill level on the same team. Competitive swimmers must be part of a team. Selection will consist of an evaluation of the following attributes:

- Attitude of the swimmer
- Attendance of the training sessions and commitment to the sport
- Swimming and fitness ability (strength, endurance, power, technique)
- Synchro ability (figure positions, transitions, routine skills)
- Flexibility

#### *v.Extra Routines*

An extra routine is a solo, duet, or combo in which a swimmer participates usually over and above her team's normal training time. These optional routines are allocated depending on:

- The skills level of the swimmer
- Attitude and maturity
- Attendance
- In the case of a duet, the swimmers require similar levels of skill and commitment, and they should work well together.

Determination of the swimmers who are the most likely candidates for extra routines will be at the discretion of the Head Coach. Music, choreography and commencement of training for extra routines is determined yearly by the coaching team.

If the Coach feels that there is a lack of commitment on the part of the swimmer(s), or if other problems have arisen, the Coach may decide not to pursue the extra routine.

#### *vi. Skills Development and Training*

The ultimate goal of every synchronized swimmer, performing and competing with a routine, is a physically difficult task. It can be easily comparable to swimming a 400m Individual Medley sprint holding the breath

for up to half the time, adding a minimum of 10 frog jumps, 10 push ups and 10 sit ups at the end of every lap. Therefore a great range of physical skills are required.

In order to develop these, a lot of planning goes into training sessions designed to ensure girls are developing all the above skills necessary for them to swim and execute a routine well. Each individual training session or part of a session always focuses on one or a number of the above skills. In general, training sessions include dry-land and in- water components.

### *A. Dry-Land Training Flexibility Training*

Proper stretching prevents injury and increases flexibility. Flexibility is extremely important as synchronized swimming demands many intricate positions and movements. Many positions are not possible without good hip, back, and shoulder flexibility

Stretching can be done individually and requires as little as 15 minutes per day for good maintenance. Stretching for up to 30 minutes per day can bring marked improvement in all areas of flexibility in a short period of time. The land flexibility sessions which are part of the weekly training program are often not sufficient to ensure proper flexibility development or to ensure adequate flexibility maintenance. The sessions aim to teach girls the appropriate stretches, correct their technique so that they do not hurt themselves and monitor their improvement.

Swimmers are encouraged to stretch as much as possible on their own. The difference between a swimmer who stretches and one who does not is very significant in the pool.

### *B. Fitness and Strength Training*

Another large part of land training is devoted to fitness and muscle strength development. A synchronized swimmers goal in training is to achieve maximum strength, tone, and flexibility with the least amount of weight.

As pool time is always very limited, it is reserved for training that can only be done in the water. It is proven and clearly visible in synchronized swimming that the combination of dry-land strength, stretching, and conditioning exercises bring optimal fitness levels more efficiently than relying only on training in the water. Moreover, balancing strength-building exercises with stretching builds flexibility and helps prevent injury.

### C. Land Drills

Routine land drill is essential in synchronized swimming. It reinforces the movements in the pool to commit them to memory and to enhance synchronization. Land drill includes determining counts, setting patterns, clarifying position presentation, and practicing movements out of the pool. Swimmers are encouraged to do land drill independently, outside of normal practice time.

### D. Swimming Training

As previously mentioned, swimming a synchronized swimming routine is a physically difficult task and requires advanced swimming abilities, well developed breath-control and great deal of endurance and stamina. Much of the conditioning for synchronized swimming involves speed- swimming drills, including laps of freestyle, butterfly, backstroke, and breaststroke and various exercises to develop breath-control. These drills are designed not only to increase strength and endurance, but also to increase the pool coverage and speed with which the swimmer can move through the water during their routine, all things that judges are looking for in routines.

### E. Synchro Technique Drills

Each training session, swimmers spend a significant time focusing on synchro drills in a pattern, on their own or by completing laps of synchronized swimming elements. These are to improve girls' technique of sculling, positions and transitions; all of which are critical for proper execution of figures and routines in general.

### F. Routine Training

In order to achieve perfect synchronization of swimmers amongst themselves and with the music, training of the routines with music or without, accompanied only with tapping or counting, is necessary.

Throughout the year, the season calendar of competitions and other events has a great impact on the individual training sessions/whole term focus. The Coaching Team develops the calendar at the start of every season (i.e. July) and the calendar guides the term and session planning throughout the year. Therefore, each term often differs in its focus and intensity that some of the skills and training components are targeted. For example, at the beginning of the season, trainings focus intensive technique enhancement, figures, and improvement of fitness, endurance and swimming ability. Later during the season, new routines are being choreographed or existing ones refined while continuously enhancing girl's technical skills and fitness level.

