

MEMBER HANDBOOK

H₂O ACADEMY



This handbook is designed to help families have a successful term by providing information, guidelines, and policies.

Updated Sept. 2022

Welcome!

Thank you for choosing the H2O Academy! We are pleased to welcome your family to our program and aim to provide you with a positive experience. This handbook prepares you for your journey with us!

About H2O

The H2O Academy is an award-winning swim school for students' ages 4 months to adults in Winnipeg. We provide an innovative approach to swimming lessons through our proprietary AQUA-Lit™ Curriculum©. We create progressive results which are enhanced by small class sizes and a unique evaluation system based on an improvement scale rather than passing and failing. H2O represents faster results, better quality, and superior instruction and assessment methods compared with traditional swimming lessons. We are dedicated to creating confident and competent swimmers who are equipped to enjoy a lifetime of aquatic activities. As you read this handbook, you will learn how the H2O difference can work for your family!

Mission

To create confident, safe, and proficient swimmers in a positive learning environment through our purposeful program.

Vision

A world where people are as comfortable, confident, and efficient in the water as they are on land.

Guiding Principles

These provide the foundation for our programming at H2O... we believe in **WATER!**

- **Well-rounded:** Students practice meaningful and purposeful activities. It's about developing the confidence to safely enjoy all water environments.
- **Accountable:** Our AQUA-Lit™ Curriculum©, is progressive and builds upon skills. We believe in continual learning and growth, which is why we assess students on a proficiency scale rather than passing and failing.
- **Technical Proficiency:** Learning is achieved through appropriate, relevant, and sequential learning experiences. We teach good habits from the beginning and focus on correct development of the basics.
- **Enjoyable:** Our approach keeps students engaged and active the entire class. We use innovative equipment to encourage creativity and promote social acceptance while learning the **FUNDamentals** of swimming.
- **Relevant:** The needs of all students are addressed through high quality instruction that is relevant, current, and balanced to meet the developmental and age-appropriate needs.

The H2O Difference

Swimming is a life skill – unlike traditional swimming lessons, we focus on technical swimming skills and knowledge to create proficient, confident swimmers who exercise safe, responsible behaviour. We put the FUN back in swimming lessons! Students will have an easier time transitioning to sport, recreation, and/or lifeguarding.

Lifesaving

It is a common myth that you must achieve all the levels in the Red Cross Swim program or other traditional types of lessons (e.g., YMCA) to become a lifeguard. WRONG! The first step to becoming certified as a lifeguard in Canada is the Lifesaving Society's course called Bronze Medallion. The only prerequisites for Bronze Medallion are that you need to be 13 years of age. The H2O Academy prepares students with the technical skills to complete the pool requirements of the Bronze Medallion pool test (e.g., eggbeater, timed swims, retrievals, floating, kicking, strokes, etc.). The Bronze Medallion course will prepare those students with the lifesaving knowledge.

It's a Life Skill!

We develop physical literacy in the water movement environment, but what does this really mean? Physical literacy should be acquired in 4 activity environments – land, water, air, snow/ice. The water environment can be especially challenging as the “fear factor” adds another dimension to learning. Physical literacy can be described as the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities in and around the water for life. Developing physical literacy is the gateway to enjoying a lifetime of aquatic activities, whether it be in sport, recreation, leisure, arts and/or vocation!

Our programming is rooted in Canadian Sport for Life's (CS4L) Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) Framework which is a 7-stage pathway guiding an individual's experience in sport and physical activity from infancy through all phases of adulthood. The diagram demonstrates how a strong aquatic foundation empowers children to safely go down many different pathways in life – from competing as a high-performance athlete, to fearlessly snorkeling on vacation, to canoeing at the cabin, or becoming a police diver.



To Sport or not to Sport?

We will develop a strong foundation of basic skills and knowledge should your child choose to pursue sport. We work in partnership with aquatic sport affiliates to identify early talent and ensure seamless integration into speed swimming, diving, artistic swimming, or water polo by instilling good habits from the beginning. If your child doesn't choose sport, they will be able to safely enjoy and participate with confidence in recreational aquatic activities or continue with lifesaving education. We believe that it's not just about sports... it's about giving children and youth the opportunity to succeed – to live a happy, healthy, long life.

Classes

We offer classes for student's ages 4 months – adults. Our classes are progressive and skill-based; students build on skills which they eventually become proficient in, rather than being pushed through levels to collect badges. Visit www.h2oacademy.ca for class descriptions, details, and mandatory pre-requisites.

Aqua-Lit™ Curriculum©

Our proprietary curriculum, AQUA-Lit™, is rooted in physical literacy, an international concept which the Canadian Government has endorsed as part of its Canadian Sport Policy. AQUA-Lit™ ensures progressive, balanced programming, and supports a holistic approach to learning. It puts the FUN back into learning to swim, and ensures students learn correct technique and terminology from the beginning without forming bad habits! We use props, SwimFins, and have low student to teacher ratios to create a fun and engaging environment!

AQUA-Lit™ Certified Teachers

Our staff are all certified in the AQUA-Lit™ Teacher Training Program. Teachers are assigned to classes but may be absent on occasion due to exams, holidays, coaching, etc. Don't worry... our weekly evaluations are like a medical chart in that any teacher will be able to read it and know exactly where a student is in their progress and current abilities (even if they've never worked with them before!). This ensures that the students continue to progress even though they may have a new teacher, and that when the teacher returns, they are aware of what happened while they were away!

Schedule

Classes are offered year-round:

- Fall (September – December, 12 weeks)
- Winter (January – March, 11-12 weeks)
- Spring (April – June, 12 weeks)
- Summer (July & August, 8 weeks over the summer at our facility and at H2O @ Home!)

We are constantly working to better accommodate the demand for more classes. Our schedule is released for viewing at least one week prior to the start of each term. Visit www.h2oacademy.ca for the most recent version of the schedule.

Pre-requisites

Some classes have prerequisites (see class descriptions on www.h2oacademy.ca/classes for details). H2O reserves the right to remove students from the class if they do not meet the prerequisites due to class management and safety reasons. A credit or a refund will be awarded in addition to a \$25 refund processing fee. If it's your first-time swimming with H2O, the student will register for the Splash class of their age group. For returning students, their class recommendations will advise which class they should register into next term. Please use our [Class Assessment Tool](#) to determine which class is best suited to your child's needs.

Evaluations

Please note that we do not hand out paper report cards or certificates at the end of each term as our online Uplifter evaluations are completely paperless! You can easily access all student evaluations and class recommendations through your Uplifter account.

The 4-point scale evaluation system in our AQUA-Lit™ Curriculum© is based on 3 pillars of physical literacy (listening & understanding, physical competence and confidence & motivation). The 4 points stand for:

- 4 = proficient
- 3 = competent
- 2 = emerging
- 1 = initial

We have a very robust skill tree and you'll be able to see all the skill progressions within that tree. The skills your student is working on during each class will show an evaluation point of 1-4. These evaluations are published for parents to view near the end of each term and can be found on your Uplifter account under *Students* -> *click child's name* -> *Evaluations* -> *select a skill to view the evaluations*. You can select current evaluations or class recommendations.

Class recommendations should be used when registering your child for another term of lessons. The message board will show individualized notes from your students' teacher. The Benchmarks tab will show any completed SHARK benchmarks your child has achieved.

For more detailed information about how to read and interpret your student's evaluations, please see our Student Evaluations-Member Guide [here!](#)

Attendance

Give yourself ample time to get ready for lessons as the feeling of being rushed can give students anxiety or cause them to be agitated. If you are unable to attend a class, please email admin@h2oacademy.ca or phone at 204-306-3502. Please refer to the policy section on page 8 for more information.

Class Cancellations

If for some reason a class must be cancelled (e.g., stormy weather, pool fouling, etc.), we will contact all families that are affected via e-mail or phone call. If the class cannot be rescheduled, we will provide a credit for that class which can be used on future classes or merchandise and never expires.

COVID-19

We believe that everyone deserves to have an incredible swimming experience in a fun and safe environment. We will be continuously updating our safety measures to be in line with government and health regulations. Please visit www.h2oacademy.ca/covid19 for all our detailed COVID-19 policies and procedures.

Attire

The following items are **mandatory** to participate in class:

- ✓ **Bathing suit:** all students are required to wear a bathing suit in the pool. Parents can wear any bathing suit that they feel comfortable in. Please keep in mind that babies/toddlers like to pull at straps and suits when deciding what suit you'd like to wear.
- ✓ **Swim diaper:** mandatory for babies and toddlers. They can either be disposable or non-disposable. We recommend that babies also wear a bathing suit over their swim diaper.
- ✓ **Hair tie:** students with long hair and/or bangs must tie their hair back if they choose not to wear a swim cap.
- ✓ **Towel:** we do not have extra towels at our facility so please remember to bring one each class.

The following items are **optional**:

- ✓ Goggles (not necessary for baby/toddler classes)
- ✓ Swim cap (not necessary for baby/toddler classes)
- ✓ Deck shoes – standard flip flops that are clean and have not been worn outside. **Outdoor shoes are not allowed in the facility past the vestibule.**

**** All H2O families receive a 20% discount off all products (excluding triathlon wet suits) at Swimming Matters located at 1389 Grant Avenue. They can also fit your child for goggles at no charge. You must mention at check-out that you are a member of the H2O Academy to receive the discount.*

Prescription Goggles

If a student wears glasses, you may want to consider prescription goggles. You can also inquire about this at Swimming Matters.

Parent/Guest Viewing

Guests are invited to watch classes from our viewing lounge. Viewing classes from the pool deck is **not** permitted due to safety reasons, unless there is an extenuating circumstance which has been discussed with H2O staff.

Equipment

We provide all equipment needed for classes held in our facility and at H2O @ home including SwimFins, noodles, boards, flippers, etc. If you'd like your own SwimFin you can purchase these online through your Uplifter account or in person at our facility.

Change Rooms

Our facility has family style changerooms! Our universal locker-room is designed to accommodate people all genders. The washrooms are all single stall locked doors and there are private lockable changing stalls. It allows parents to bring children of all genders into the common room and still have a private cubicle. Please note we're unable to accommodate blow drying hair within our facility at this time.

Lockers

Our facility has half and quarter size lockers for parents to use if they choose. Be sure to bring your own lock if you wish to use one. These lockers are for use only while in the facility, please do not leave items locked in lockers overnight. Parents can also have their bags with them while they sit and watch classes from the viewing lounge.

Showers

Our facility has Rinse & Go showers conveniently located on the pool deck for easy use after exiting the pool. Please keep your shower time to a minimum and refrain from using any soaps or shampoos as these can disrupt our pool's PH balance. There is no nudity allowed as the showers are located on the open pool deck. Nudity is only allowed in the private universal change rooms.

Behaviour

All families must abide by the facility and pool rules at the H2O Academy. At H2O we take safety very seriously. By following some simple guidelines, we make our environment and classes' safe. At H2O we discuss these general rules with the students before each class and hope that parents can follow and reinforce them:

1. Always walk on deck (no running!)
2. Never swim alone, always make sure a teacher or adult you trust is with you
3. Only jump when the teacher says it's safe
4. Always listen to the teacher
5. Keep your hands to yourselves
6. We never say, "I can't" and we try everything once ("I can do it" cheer) – that's how we learn!

Discipline Protocol

Staff are to conduct themselves in a friendly, respectful way, however they will follow our discipline protocol if necessary:

1. **First warning:** if a student isn't listening or is misbehaving, they will receive a stern warning. Staff must be clear that the student is receiving a warning, and that if this behaviour continues, they will get a timeout (e.g., "Sally, you are not listening, this is a warning, if you do that again we'll have to go into timeout").
2. **Short Timeout:** if after the first warning the student continues to not listen or misbehave, they will receive a short timeout. They must completely exit the water and sit on the pool deck for 15 seconds – 1 minute.

3. **Long Timeout:** if after the short timeout the student continues to not listen or misbehave, they will receive a longer timeout. They must completely exit the water for more than 1 minute.
4. **Excused:** if after the long timeout the student continues to not listen or misbehave, they will be excused from class and must exit the water.

If steps 2 or higher are exercised, then staff will communicate exactly what happened with the parent immediately after class. Note: if a student exhibits any sort of physical violence (e.g., pinching, slapping, hitting, punching, etc.) staff may jump to step 3 of the discipline protocol as physical violence is not tolerated.

Baby + Toddler Parented Classes

Arriving to class

Our teachers work closely with parents to help baby/toddlers acclimate to the water in a positive, welcoming environment. Once parents and student are both changed into their swimsuits (reminder: swim diapers are mandatory for all babies/toddlers), make your way onto the pool deck, hang towels on the hooks to the right, use the rinse and go showers and wait on the pool deck. It's nice and warm on deck and allows student time to look around and take in the new pool surroundings. Once it's time for class your teacher will come introduce themselves and everyone will enter the water together. Please do not enter the water prior to teacher's instruction.

1 Adult + 1 Baby/Toddler in water

Families can rotate weekly which adult is in the water with the student during class. We've had parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles join in for a class. Please note it needs to be the same adult in the water for the 30 min duration of the class, adults are not able to switch out during a single class. Other guests are welcome to watch the class from the viewing lounge.

Water Wobbles

Children between 8-24 months generally go through a rapid developmental stage as they are learning to sit, crawl, communicate and explore their independence. These milestones are common, but during this time the pool environment can sometimes become overwhelming, and babies/toddlers often develop a temporary aversion to water, known widely as the Water Wobbles. For a brief time, babies/toddlers can become irritable and upset in the water unless constantly held and cuddled. Don't worry, this phase is completely normal and generally only lasts a few weeks or less. The best thing to do is continue with swimming as routine and repetition help babies become acclimated to water. Remember to relax (you're not alone in this!), have fun, don't push students too hard too fast, swim often and don't give up! The water wobbles will soon pass, and your child will be back to smiling and splashing, enjoying their time in the water.

Strollers and Car Seats

The parking lot is close to our front door and our facility is small, so we recommend that you bring your baby into the facility either carrying them in your arms or in a car seat. We have ample storage for car seats in the locker room. Please do not bring strollers inside facility as we do not have storage for them, and they track a lot of dirt into the facility.

Breastfeeding

It is a parent's right to nurse their child whenever, wherever. Although breastfeeding is not allowed while physically in the pool or on the pool deck based on current health regulations, our facility is equipped with more suitable options for nursing parents. If you'd like to nurse your baby during class time, please fully exit the pool with baby and use one of our universal private changerooms which have benches for your comfort.

The viewer's lounge is also an option to breastfeed if both parent and baby aren't in wet bathing suits as our viewing lounge is a dry space.

Underwater Baby Videos

As part of the Baby Splash tuition all babies receive a professionally filmed underwater souvenir video which will be emailed to you via a Dropbox link within 2 days of your filming date. Baby videos are generally filmed during the last class of each term. An e-mail will be sent to parents a head of time confirming filming date.

There will be one pre-scheduled make-up filming day per term in case you can't attend your final class. Please email admin@h2oacademy.ca to book your make-up time slot.

Age-based Un-parented Classes (3+)

Arriving to Class

When your student is changed and ready for class, you can bring them on to the pool deck. Hang up your towel on one of the hooks, and ensure your student rinses off in our Rinse & Go showers before entering the pool; this keeps our water nice and clean! Once your student has rinsed off, please guide them to squares in the corner of the pool deck to sit and wait for their teacher. It's nice and warm on deck and allows student time to look around and take in the new pool surroundings. At the start of class time, the teacher will come out and introduce themselves before going over the rules with their students. At this time, parents can head on over to the viewing lounge to watch the class!

Policies

Privacy Policy

Our privacy policy is simple. We don't give or sell anyone's information to anyone else, and we don't keep any credit card information on file. That's as easy as it can get!

Make-up Class Policy

We understand that things come up, but unfortunately, we are not able to offer make-up classes at this time. Repetition is a key aspect of physical literacy, so we encourage families to attend all classes. We also encourage families to find opportunities to swim outside of their lessons, either at the lake, backyard pools, recreational pools etc. - the more opportunities, the better!

Cancellation/Refund Policy

For cancellations/refunds related to COVID-19, please refer to our COVID-19 information page at www.h2oacademy.ca/covid19.

We completely understand having to pay for one or two missed classes can be irritating, but our costs remain the same whether everyone is present or not. Therefore, H2O Academy is under no obligation to refund or transfer your money if you can't attend part, or all, of classes.

You may cancel your class registration or apply a credit to your account up to 7 days prior to your first day of classes for a full refund and no cancellation fee. Any cancellation less than 7 days before the first lesson will be charged a \$25 cancellation fee. If the term has started, families will receive a prorated refund for the classes not yet passed in addition to the cancellation fee. If payment has not been received 7 days prior to the first class, H2O reserves the right to cancel your spot and you will be notified.

SwimFins can be fully refunded, exchanged, or applied as a credit to your account if it is in original condition with unopened packaging and returned within 14 days of purchase. The baby videos are part of the class cost and are non-refundable regardless of attendance as we are still paying a professional videographer to attend filming days.

Contact Information

We believe communication is key at H2O! If you have any questions or concerns, please let us know by way of any method below.

Phone Number	Email	Website	Facility Address
204-306-3502	admin@h2oacademy.ca	www.h2oacademy.ca	200-400 Fort Whyte Way Oak Bluff, MB R4G 0B1

Stay Connected!

Stay up to date with the latest H2O updates by following us on social media! Feel free to share photos of your swimmer with us by tagging H2O, we can also repost them on our social media!

Happy with your H2O Experience? Let us know! Please share your thoughts and experience on Google review, Facebook, other social media and/or our website!