

# **Wicklow Swimming Club Event Plan-COVID-19**

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## 1. Background

Wicklow Swimming Club is the largest and one of the oldest swimming clubs in Ireland. Each year it organises sea swimming events during the months of June, July, and August. Events generally take place on Sunday mornings between 09.30hrs and 13.00hrs, and on Wednesday evenings between 19.00hrs and 20.30hrs. The Sunday morning event will typically consist of ;

- a. Junior Sprints
- b. Junior Challenge
- c. Intermediate Race
- d. Youths Race, and
- e. Senior Race

The Wednesday evening event will typically consist of

- a. An intermediate OR Youths race, and
- b. Senior Race

Events generally take place in Wicklow Harbours, Wicklow Bay, and the River Vartry. Traditionally the area around the entrance to the Old Pier has been the assembly point for the events , and this area has also served as the changing/dressing area for participants.

**\*\* Please note the race committee and lead Covid officer may at short notice cancel or postpone an event if they feel it is not possible to run the race in adherence of public health guidelines.**

## 2. Prior to the race:

Swimmers (all categories) must complete a return to water declaration prior to the commencement of the season. To register in the race swimmers must complete the 'Covid 19 Self Report Screening Form' (Appendix A). If a swimmer registers for the senior race but subsequently cannot participate he/she must notify the race recorders by texting 086 804 2341. This can be done at any time up to the commencement time of the event.

A map of the course will be emailed to all Senior Swimmers on the eve of the event and this will also be posted on the Club's Facebook page. The map will include the start and finish points, the location of buoys, and the direction the race will follow.

Prior to the commencement of the season each Senior Swimmer will be allocated to swimming groups (pods) of 15 persons to ensure compliance with Covid 19 regulations. This allocation will be based on swimming ability. Swimmers will remain part of the same group (Pod) for the entirety of the season.

A swimmer will be appointed group in each group in order to assist with the smooth running of events and to ensure that the his/her group adheres to social distancing guidelines. If any group leader is not attending an event he/she should appoint a leader to the group to cover the absence. Group Leaders need to complete the online Covid training course. Similarly all parents must complete this course prior to the commencement of the season.

A List of those registered to participate in each race will be generated for the Race Recording Team.

The designated volunteers will remove all necessary buoys and other equipment from the Club's shed and proceed to set out the various courses. The volunteers should adhere to social distancing guidelines and wear face masks. A hand sanitiser will be provided at the entrance to the shed.

The Club Walkie Talkies will be numbered and allocated to the designated volunteers for the duration of the season. Plastic bags will be provided for the return of the walkies talkies at the end of each event to enable them to be charged.

### **3.Issuing of Handicaps and payment of race fees**

In an effort to maximise social distancing during races all Senior races will be run under the sealed handicap format. This will also reduce social contact which would normally take place during the normal race registration and issuing of handicaps process. Exceptionally for the 2021 season race fees will not be charged.

### **4.Arrival at the race area**

In so far as is practicable swimmers should park in the Council car park on the Murrough. Also in so far as is practicable swimmers should change into their swim wear at their car prior to coming to the event area. Swimmers who have walked or cycled to the event must ensure that they change in an area which is 2 metres from other persons.

Swimmers should arrive at the start area as near as possible to the scheduled start time of the event and no earlier than 5 minutes before the start time. Please note inline with government guidance spectators are not permitted.

### **5. Senior Race Start**

Swimmers should not congregate at the start point until the Senior Handicapper announces the commencement of the race. The Group leaders will take up their relative positions for the start. Group 1( The fastest swimmers) will line up in the water at the shore. Group 2 will line up on the shore and each subsequent group will line up behind with 2 metres between each line. The group leaders will oversee the distancing aspect in conjunction with the Club's Covid 19 Officer. The 'clicker' clock will commence with group 1. Each subsequent group will then enter the water as quickly as possible. Handicaps will be adjusted to take account of the advantage the earlier groups have. Once all swimmers are in the water the distance between swimmers will steadily increase and social distancing will, accordingly, improve.

### **6. Safety Guidelines**

All Races will continue to be governed by the Rules, regulations, and Health and Safety statement of WSC.

### **7.Additional Covid 19 Safety Guidelines**

In the event a swimmer needs to utilise a rescue boat/board

Safety crews should:

- a. Wear gloves and face shields/masks/ and use the hand sanitisers provided in the safety bags
- b. Use the throw ropes to bring the swimmer to the side of the boat
- c. Have a stock of masks on the boat for swimmers to wear

- d. Follow PHECC advice in relation to first aid and CPR if required

Where possible swimmers should:

- a. Follow the directions of the lifeguard/boat crew
- b. Remain faced away from the rescuer (until such a time as they can put on a mask)
- c. Remain at an arms length from the rescuer (until such a time as they can put on a mask) – the rescue may involve the use of equipment such as a throw rope or Jacobs Cradle.

**8.Race end procedure**

Races will continue to be recorded in the usual WSC manner. The recorded finishers will be compared to the registration list by the Race Recorders to ensure that all swimmers are present and accounted for.

If swimmers are taken from the water during the race the Boat assistant will notify the Covid 19 Officer who in turn will inform the Race Recorders.

Once swimmers have finished the race they should exit the water immediately and leave the swim area. They should return to their cars to change . Those who travel to the event on foot or bike must again ensure that they change in an area which is at least 2 metres form other competitors.

**9.After the Event**

Buoys and other club equipment will be returned to storage in the Club’s shed. The volunteers should ensure to practice social distancing and wear face masks

Each Boat Crew will assume responsibility for the custody, upkeep, and cleaning of their own safety bag for the duration of the season. Supplies to replenish the bags will be held by the Club’s Covid 19 Officer.

The results of the races will be posted on the Club’s Website.

**10. Presentation of cups and prizes:**

Club presentations will not take place on the pier this season and this is to ensure that there are no gatherings which would impact our ability to social distance in line with government guidelines.

**11. Timeline of events**

Time	Action	Maximum Number of Members in attendance	Comment
9.30am	Walking of Course to check for Hazards etc by Senior Handicapper	10	
10am	Junior Sprints and Junior Challenge	50	As many Junior Swimmers as possible should leave the area once their races have finished
11am	Intermediate race	50	As many Intermediate

			Swimmers as possible should leave the area once their races have finished
11.30am	Youth Race	70	As many Youths Swimmers as possible should leave the area once their races have finished
11.55	Senior Race	150	The Majority of members will have entered the water by 12noon and they will disperse quickly at the end of the race.
12.45	Event ends	0	Any members remaining on the beach area do so as members of the public