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Teddington Torpedoes

Organisation Details

Description of activity

Wendy Dorgan runs Teddington Torpedoes at Teddington Pool which provides lessons especially for children with special needs. Most teaching is done on a one to one basis and all kinds of disabilities are catered for. The aim is to enable children to be safe in water so they and their families get more out of holidays and swimming. Large cubicles have been installed for easy changing. The scheme began with the enthusiasm of one teacher who has now trained several colleagues to work with disabled children.

The club meets every Wednesday and Friday evenings (during term time, where the children and young people improve their swimming skills in a fun, enjoyable and supervised environment.

There are 3 sessions, as follows:

Wednesdays 6-6:45 pm for beginner and intermediate swimmers aged 7-13 approx, each swimmer has 1:1 support in the water from a teenager or student age helper.

Wednesdays 6:45-7:30 pm for intermediate and advanced swimmers aged 13+, mainly teenagers and young adults, some swimmers have 1:1 support but the majority take part in swim training with lane coaches standing on the side.

Fridays 6:30-7:15 pm for beginner, intermediate and advanced swimmers: all age groups 7+, some with 1:1 support, others doing training. (mostly adults in this group, plus the younger swimmers who can't make Wednesdays.)

The cost ranges from £5 to £8.50 per week (paid termly), depending on the level of support the swimmer receives. The helpers come from local schools, colleges and universities. They are all keen swimmers and some have swim teacher qualifications. Many of them are siblings of swimmers or have come to us via Duke of Edinburgh, and in some cases the helpers are swimmers who have shown a talent for assisting their peers. We swim during term-time, usually 11-13 weeks per term.

They also offer weekly swim training supplemented by aqua fit, a bit of water polo, learning life-saving skills, practising jumps and dives into the water, etc. They take part in a disability gala at the Spectrum in Guildford twice a year, as well as occasional other galas on offer. They have links with the local scuba diving club who offer diving sessions every winter. Most summers they do a bit of kayaking at the Lensbury. Plus the annual discos are quite popular too!

The social side of the club is quite important, with helpers facilitating friendships between swimmers and coaches. They have never decided if we are a swimming club that socialises or a social club that swims! Although the group is mainly focused on improving swimming skills, stamina and fitness, we have a lot of fun along the way.

Wendy says: "The group has been going for 12 years now, and many of our swimmers have been with us from the early days. Hence there aren't many spaces available, but based on individual swimmers' abilities and needs, I do my best to fit in as many as we can. Ideally, I prefer it if swimmers can already do basic swimming as swimming club is not a replacement for a swimming lesson. I'm happy to talk to parents about their children's needs re swimming and point them in the right direction."

Contact Details

Contact Name

Wendy Dorgan

Telephone

020 8943 0796

Email Address

wendydorgan@hotmail.co.uk

Address Details

Venue Name

Teddington Pools and Fitness Centre

Address 1

14A Vicarage Road

Town

Teddington

Postcode

TW11 8EZ

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