



*Pre-swim Information*

# Merchant Taylors

## Open-water Swimming

2021

*Sponsored by:*

**ZONE3** 



## Dear Swimmer,

We are looking forward to welcoming you to Merchant Taylors Lake.

**BEFORE WE GO INTO THE OTHER DETAILS PLEASE NOTE THAT MERCHANT TAYLORS IS A PRIVATE VENUE AND THERE IS NO ACCESS TO THE SITE OUTSIDE OF THE BOOKED SESSION**

Our sessions have been very popular and it is important that everyone observes our safety and social distancing guidelines in order for us to keep you, your fellow swimmers and our staff, safe both in and out of the water.

With the season starting earlier, it is likely that the water temperature will be less than 11 degrees. Swimming in cold water brings an additional level of risk and should always be approached with caution. Please familiarise yourself with the **Cold Water Facts and Advice** on the final page.

## Location, Travel and Parking

### Address:

Merchant Taylors' Senior School  
Sandy Lodge  
Northwood  
Middlesex  
HA6 2HT

### Getting there:

<https://www.mtsn.org.uk/contact-us/getting-here/maps/>

### Arriving at the venue

If you arrive outside of school hours, the main gate may be locked. The gate code is included in your booking confirmation email. Please bring thin gloves or bring your own hand sanitiser with you to use before and after using the key pad.

Please note that there is no pedestrian access other than through the main gates to the Car Park

### Parking

On arrival, please follow the ATW parking signs to reach the car park. Please make use

of the full car park area and maintain a minimum of 2m social distancing when getting ready.

Only park in marked bays, if the bottom car park is full, please use the overflow car parks higher up the drive.

### Session times

Your booking is valid for swimming any time during the session. Registration will not open until 10 minutes before the advertised swim time. Please remain in your cars until this time.

How long you remain in the water is up to you. We suggest that unless you are looking to swim for the full length of the session, you avoid turning up at the start, as this is likely to be the busiest time at registration.

10 minutes before the end of the session, the water safety team will start to guide swimmers to return to the swim exit



### **Health**

Please do not attend the venue if you have Covid-19 symptoms, or have been in recent contact with anyone who has contracted the illness.

### **Ability**

This activity is not suitable for weak or unconfident swimmers. This applies to juniors and adults alike. If you are in any doubt about your ability you should not take part.

### **Toilets**

Toilets are available in the OMT building next to the car park. Note that the indoor changing rooms are currently out-of-bounds due to COVID19.

### **Pre-swim Changing**

Please arrive on site ready changed, change at your car or use a changing poncho/pod outside. You must be self-sufficient in putting on your wetsuit as no help can be given other than by members of your household.

### **To arrive at the water**

The entrance to the lake area will be signposted from the car park. Please observe 2metre queuing protocols at the registration desk and while preparing to swim.

### **Registration**

We request that you wear a face mask while registering to protect both yourself and our registration team.

You have been prebooked on to this session and you will be asked for your name to confirm your booking before entering the water, no ID is required.

You will be asked for your car registration

number (or description of your bike) which acts as an additional safety check for missing swimmers.

### **Loyalty Cards**

This year we have a loyalty card system in operation – at registration you will receive a stamp on the card each time you swim. When your card is complete (10 stamps) you can redeem it for a free swim (no need to book in). You can pick up new loyalty cards at registration. We will also be trialling a new 'virtual loyalty card' courtesy of BadJupiter.com, for those who would rather go paperless.

### **Kitdrop area**

At lakeside there will be gazebos for you to leave a small bag and belongings under. While we would consider the area to be safe, please do not leave any valuables in your bag. We cannot accept any responsibility for lost items. Car keys can be left with the team lead at the lake entrance, if required.

### **Emergency Evacuation**

In the unlikely event of an emergency (eg risk of lightning or a serious injury to a swimmer), our lake team will call for an evacuation of the lake. This will take the form of a loud horn being sounded repeatedly from the bank, and whistles being sounded by the water safety team. If you hear either of these please leave the water at the closest point (this may be the boat slipways halfway down the lake, rather than the normal exit area) and return to the kit reclaim area so we can sign you out of the water.

### **Courteous Swimming**

We are proud to welcome a diverse range of swimmers to our lake, from first-time open-water swimmers, to World Champion triathletes and GB squad swimmers. As a result, you may find swimmers travelling at very different speeds to you.

If you are a fast swimmer, please ensure that you sight regularly and give swimmers you are catching up a wide berth. All swimmers must wear brightly coloured swim hats to make you visible to both the safety team and also other swimmers. If you do accidentally bump in to another swimmer (we've all done it!), acknowledge the accident and take a line to the next buoy that will move you apart (anyone found to be swimming over other athletes will be reprimanded and if repeated will be banned....it is not acceptable behaviour).

If you enjoy a relaxing swim in the lake, please take a wide line around the lake and especially around the corners, leave the inside line for the faster swimmers. If you are waiting for other swimmers to catch up, do not hang around the swim buoys, this can result in dangerous collisions. Its a big lake, with lots of room, please ensure that everyone enjoys a pleasant swimming experience.

### **Swim Exit and Changing**

Please exit the water promptly and provide your name to the lake staff at the swim exit. If you exit the water at any other point around the lake, you must notify the lake staff so they can sign you out of the water, or they will be looking for you.

Retrieve your bag from the baggage area. There will be a male and female changing tent at lakeside. We recommend getting out of wet clothes as quickly as possible and putting on warm layers (see cold-water advice below)

### **Non Swimmers**

We prefer you to attend this session alone, unless you are accompanying an Under 12 in the water. However, there is a maximum of one non-swimmer allowed per group. We ask that non-swimmers move away from the swim entrance/exit. There are areas alongside the lake where you can watch the activity in a socially-distanced way. We suggest you bring a portable seat to make yourself comfortable.

### **Dogs**

Dogs must not be brought onto the site.

### **Walking/Running**

As this is a private venue, it is not possible to walk/run around the lake, the playing fields or the school. If you wish to walk/run – please exit via the main entrance and plan a route from there.

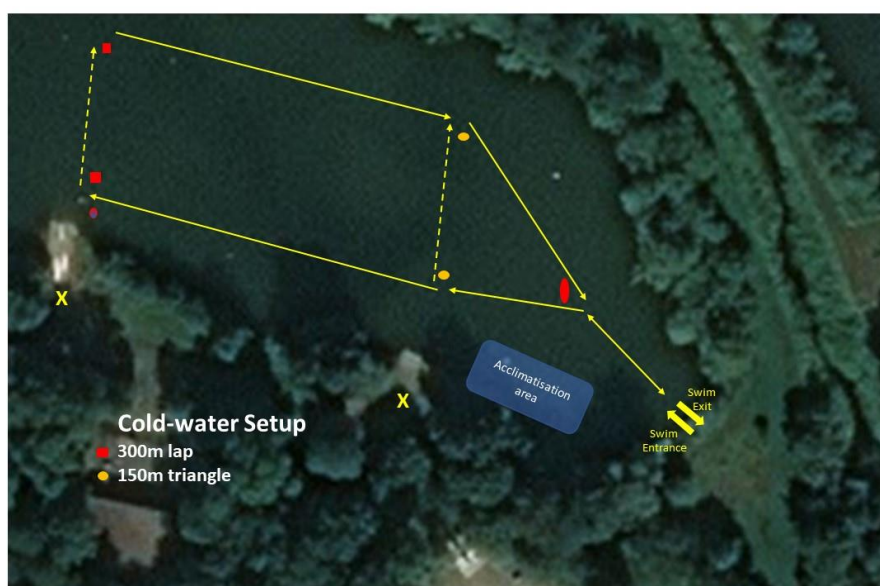
### **Refreshments**

Coffee, tea and soft drinks are available at every session from a barista van. Occasionally we will have homemade muffins and cakes available from "Classy Bakes" and other food caterers. Only contactless payments can be taken - no cash purchases.

### **Post-swim**

It is important for you to return to your car and begin your journey home as soon as is practicably possible. Please note the impact that cold-water can have on driving capability (see below) – stay safe!

## Lake Layout – Autumn/Winter/Spring



### Water temperature

One final note, and probably the one that is most important to many, is the water temperature.....we will be taking the temperature at the start of each session and displaying it clearly at registration, as well as posting on our website.

The session will still take place if it's raining.

The layout pictured above will be setup for our initial sessions, however the decision to open up additional loops will be at the discretion of the safety team dependent upon the water temperature and conditions. Your safety is our priority.

We are proud to partner with Zone3, a leading brand in outdoor swimming and triathlon gear offering everything you may need, from wetsuits to neoprene accessories to goggles and tow floats.

Visit the [Zone3 shop](#) with this special link, and use discount code **EP-ATW21** at checkout, for an exclusive 20% discount off all your open-water kit needs (please note this discount is not valid on sale or custom products).

Wetsuits and tow floats are recommended but not compulsory, however a brightly coloured swim hat is. We'll be selling our famous 'Eat my bubbles' hats at lakeside.

We are confident that if these guidelines are followed that everyone will have a safe and enjoyable swim session.

We look forward to welcoming you down at Merchant Taylors' Lake.

*Swim well, swim happy and don't eat bubbles (if you do..... it probably means you're too close to someone!)*

## Cold Water – Facts and Advice

***Swimming in cold water should always be approached with care.***

**Swimming in cold water puts additional pressure on the cardio-vascular system.**

- If you have any known medical conditions or a family history of cardio-vascular conditions **OR** if you have previously experienced difficulties after swimming in cold water refer to your GP before participating

**When you are cold your thinking and mobility are impaired.**

- Always check that you know where and how to exit before entering the water

**When you first get into cold water you will experience the cold shock response – initial gasp, rapid breathing, increase heart rate and blood pressure. During this time it is difficult to coordinate swimming and breathing.**

- Always acclimatise to the water temperature before attempting to swim.
- Keep your head above water as you acclimatise. NOTE: Wetsuits do not remove the cold shock response as they fill with water when you get in. The benefit kicks in when the layer of water trapped between the skin and the wetsuit warms up.
- You may experience excruciating “ice-cream head” pain when first putting your head in the water as the cold sensitive nerves in the face and palate go into shock.
- Going in to very cold water (typically less than 11°C) can cause numbness and pain, particularly in the extremities, such as the hands and feet. Neoprene socks and gloves can help protect your hands and feet.

**As you get colder you can experience mental confusion, slurred speech and poor movement coordination.**

- Never set time or distance goals for staying in the water. Get out if you are not comfortable.
- If you think begin to feel the above effects of mild hypothermia, one trick is to count to 10 and then back to one, over and over again. If you lose your train of thought or lose count, it is definitely time to exit the water and get help because you are slowly losing your mental capacity.
- Always follow the instructions of the safety team and get out if they ask you to – they have your best interests at heart. When you get out of the water you will continue to cool for approximately 20 to 30 minutes.

**Re-warming takes time.**

- Be prepared for re-warming: bring dry warm clothes including hat, gloves and thick socks. We will have a tent with a blanket and chair at lakeside reserved for those who are struggling to re-warm.
- Have a warm drink to help warm up your core temperature.
- Re-warm gradually – don’t worry if you shiver, shivering is good.
- Don’t jump into a hot shower or bath (not that we have one at the lake).
- **Do not attempt to drive or ride a bike until you have re-warmed.** If you need to leave before you have re-warmed bring a non-swimming supporter who can give you a lift.