



## Membership Engagement – New Members Guide for Clubs

### PURPOSE

The purpose of the Membership Engagement - New Members initiative for new Optimist Club members is to foster a welcoming and inclusive environment that ensures each new Optimist member feels valued, supported, and empowered. This guide aims to provide structured orientation, resources, and mentorship that encourages active participation, personal development, and a strong sense of belonging within the Optimist community.

By engaging new Optimist members early on, we seek to cultivate long-term commitment and leadership that aligns with the Optimist International mission: “By providing hope and positive vision, Optimists bring out the best in youth, our communities, and ourselves.”

### OBJECTIVES

By following these steps, Optimist Clubs can ensure that new members feel welcome, informed, and actively engaged in the club’s activities, building a strong foundation for their continued involvement.

## 1. Warm Welcome & Personal Connection

Host a formal yet friendly new member induction to make new members feel special. During the induction, the new member and their sponsor should stand at the front of the

room. The member leading the induction should read the script from the **New Member Induction and Promise** resource provided by Optimist International.

The inducting member should ask the new member(s) to raise their right hand and follow the ***“If you agree, please respond with ‘I do’*** part of the script, pausing after each line to allow the new member(s) to respond.

Some Optimist Clubs choose to have the entire club recite the promise with the new member as a way to reaffirm their own commitment.

Once the promise is completed, the club should applaud. If the group is small, each member may shake the new member’s hand or hug if they have permission and congratulate them personally.

## 2. Provide a New Member Packet

Optimist International has rolled out a new process for distributing New Member items. This includes clear guidelines for club leaders on ordering and distributing pins, as well as updated resources like a New Member Certificate template.

When a new member is added, they will automatically receive a "Welcome New Member Magazine" via email. This magazine includes the Optimist International Presidential New Member Letter along with information about various opportunities that might interest the new member.

Additionally, an email will be sent to the Club President and Club Secretary containing the following attachments: a Creed, the Purposes,

our Core Value Statement, and a Member Certificate. All of these documents are formatted to print on 8.5 x 11 certificate paper, and the Member Certificate will be personalized with the new member's name.

Each club can order New Member pins from Optimist International through an order form available [at this link]. The number of pins provided will be based on how many new members your club has brought in over the past two years, and additional pins can be ordered as needed—at no cost to the club.

Please note that while you are welcome to place your order, new member pins have been slow to arrive. It may take a few weeks before they can be delivered. Sponsor recognition pins, however, will continue to be mailed directly from Optimist International.

When presenting the Member Certificate, ensure it is framed or placed in a paper certificate holder. Framing adds value and shows the new member that their membership is truly appreciated, rather than simply handing out a printout of their name.

Clubs can include additional items in the new member packet, such as a Club Roster or Social Media Information. However, be mindful not to overwhelm the new member with too much information at once.

Additionally, you may want to share the excitement of welcoming a new member by posting about them on your club's social media or featuring them in your club newsletter. However, please check with the new member first before posting, as there may be personal circumstances or preferences that need to be respected.

### 3. Assign a Mentor

Pair each new member with an experienced club member (someone other than their original sponsor) to help them get to know additional members and feel more connected. This mentor can serve as a guide, answering questions, introducing them to other members, and helping them get involved.

### 4. Encourage Immediate Involvement

Encourage new members to participate in club activities or events soon after joining to strengthen their connection to the club. One tool that can help identify a new member's interests is the **Member Interest Finder**.

However, remember that building personal connections through conversations is often more effective than relying solely on forms. While forms are helpful, they can sometimes feel impersonal and may not foster the same level of engagement that a conversation can.

Give new members a small task or committee role early on to help them contribute without feeling overwhelmed. Also, seek their input on club activities, showing that their ideas and opinions are valued.

Introduce them to online training resources available through the **Optimist Institute**, which they can access at their own convenience.

If a new member misses a meeting, reach out to them in their preferred communication style (phone, email, or text) and check in with them. Missing one meeting can sometimes lead to missing more meetings which could

cause the member to lose connection with the club. A simple check-in can make them feel valued and encourage their continued participation.

## 5. Incorporate Feedback

Create opportunities for new members to provide feedback on their experience, which can help the club improve its engagement strategies. This feedback process could be facilitated through regular communication with their mentor.

Additionally, Optimist Clubs should conduct an annual C.A.R.E. (Celebrate, Address, Recognize, Excel) program. The C.A.R.E. program is designed to celebrate achievements, resolve issues, and strengthen membership. It ensures that everyone in the club feels heard and has a role in the club's direction.

## CONCLUSION

By following these steps, Optimist Clubs can ensure that new members feel welcome, informed, and actively engaged in the club's activities, creating a strong foundation for their continued involvement.

## RESOURCES MENTIONED

- **New Member Induction and Promise**  
[https://www.optimist.org/documents/new\\_member\\_induction\\_and\\_promise.pdf](https://www.optimist.org/documents/new_member_induction_and_promise.pdf)
- **Member Certificate**  
[https://www.optimist.org/documents/Member\\_Certificate.pdf](https://www.optimist.org/documents/Member_Certificate.pdf)
- **Member Interest Finder**  
[https://www.optimist.org/forms/member\\_interest\\_finder.pdf](https://www.optimist.org/forms/member_interest_finder.pdf)
- **Optimist Institute**  
<https://optimist.tovuti.io/>