Supervision Policy

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Swim Ireland require that all aquatic activities involving children and young people must be supervised. An individual should avoid being alone with a child and it is the responsibility of adults to ensure adequate supervision is provided for any activities in accordance with best practice requirements as described in these procedures. For any activity the welfare and safety of the child must be put first.

General

Young people are left at the pool or training facility by parents/guardians who expect this to be a safe environment. Supervision must also be provided in line with this policy for away events where further requirements may be required – see specific policy for Travelling and Away Trip Policy .
A safe environment can only be created when everybody in the Club works together to put safeguards in place for everyone's protection. Parents/guardians must also understand that they have an important role in implementing safe practices for their children and be willing to help.

Supervision for activities

The following general details must be observed:
All leaders must make sure there is an adequate adult: child ratio. This will depend on the nature of the activity, the age of the participants and any special needs of the group; for example if children have never been away or have particular need requiring specific attention. Group sizes for training purposes will be determined by the qualification of the coach or teacher.
As a guide general supervision for groups requires a ratio of adults to children of 1:8 for under 12 years of age and a ratio 1:10 for participants over 12 years of age. There must always be at least two adults present for all activities.
For mixed gender groups of children there should be leaders of both genders available.
Leaders should avoid being alone with one young person, talking to a young person individually can be done in an open environment, in view of others.
Parents/guardians should be clearly informed of the times for the start and end of training sessions or competitions; the responsibility is with parents/guardians to ensure they are on time to either drop off or collect their children at the required time – this is included in the code of conduct. At least two leaders should remain until all participants have been collected.
The leader/coach must keep attendance records and a record of any incidents / injuries that occur.
Coaches and teachers must avoid working alone with young people; Clubs are required to organise a parent/supervisory rota to provide for supervision for all sessions.

Training sessions

There must be a pool/dry-land supervision rota for coaching and teaching activities. Providing a rota system for a parent/lifeguard/leader to supervise each teaching/coaching session for children reduces the risks to both children and adults and ensures someone is on hand for any emergency that might arise.

The following points must be observed:

- The rota must be organised in advanced and communicated to all involved – this can be via a Club website, noticeboard or accepted method used by the Club
- An individual on the rota is responsible for their own replacement in the event they cannot fulfil their obligation
- Contact details for all individuals on the rota should be available to coaching/teaching staff concerned (these details should be kept confidential and available for those that need them)

- The coach/teacher must be able to rely on the parent/supervisor being present, some sessions take place at more vulnerable times e.g. early morning pool sessions
- The parent/supervisor should arrive at a reasonable time before the session starts and must remain with any teaching/coaching staff until all the children are collected. The responsibility lies with the parent to be on time to collect their children in line with the codes of conduct.
- The parent/supervisor should have a full view and hearing of the pool area; this cannot be achieved by sitting high up in a stand or behind protective screens or glass. The parent/supervisor should not interfere with the coaching or teaching of the session. If the parent/supervisor has any concerns these should be brought to the Club Children's Officer or dealt with immediately if a child is in imminent danger.
- The Club should recognise the continuous need for supervision where children and over 18 participants are involved in a session; parents of over 18 athletes should be encouraged to stay involved (this can be difficult where an individual is in College and the parent is not present locally – in which case parents should be encouraged to help in other ways)

Duties of the supervisor

The supervisor must:

Ensure an attendance record for the session is kept – this can be kept with the coach and should be signed by the coach and supervisor

Take note of children leaving and returning to pool, e.g. a child should return to the pool after visiting the toilet

Allow the coach/teacher freedom to get on with the session – sometimes coaches or teachers need to feedback to individuals on one to one basis, this should be in open view

Take note of any problems that occur – refer child related issues to the Club Children's Officer/all other issues to Committee, usually the secretary

Have temporary access to children's contact details in cases of illness or emergency or in the event the session is cancelled

In cases of emergency, help the coach/teacher by being an extra adult to supervise children or to assist with a response to the emergency

Changing rooms

Parents/guardians should be made aware by the Club/Region/Swim Ireland that changing facilities may be shared by both Swim Ireland members and members of the general public; it therefore may not be possible to provide supervision in these areas. This must be communicated to all members taking part – whether for a training session, competition or any other activity. The parent/guardian should discuss these circumstances with their child ensuring their child is aware of who to talk to if any issues arise in unsupervised areas.

If the changing area is open to the public, parents can choose to remain with their child in the appropriate (gender dependant) changing area; usually facilities will only allow adult men in the male changing area and adult women in the female changing area. Where family or communal rooms are provided parents/guardians should check with the facility

Any supervision provided in a changing area must be by adults in pairs of the appropriate gender, i.e. only adult males can supervise male only changing areas and only adult females can supervise female only changing areas

Leaders should not have to enter the changing rooms unless part of the supervision rota. There may be circumstances where children need extra assistance or there is an issue, in which case supervision in pairs of the appropriate gender should be provided where this is a regular occurrence. In an emergency circumstance the safety and well-being of a child must be considered above all else.

For any event, training or competition the Club if the changing rooms are open to the public, e.g. Club use of the pool in a leisure facility with other activities using the changing areas. In these cases this must be clear to participants prior to the event.