

Supervision

Swim Ireland require that all aquatic activities involving young people must be supervised appropriately with the required number of adults to children ratio. 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. Young people should expect to participate in their sport in a safe environment. For any activity the welfare and safety of young people must be put first.

Safe activities

The following must be observed:

- At least two adults must be present for all activities; this can include the person on duty where relevant
- Clubs are required to organise a duty rota to provide an accompanying adult for all sessions.
- The adult: child ratio for any activities must be within the general guide or in accordance with the qualification of the coach/teacher.

A general guide for groups (with at least two adults present):

o Adult to children under 12 years of age = 1:8

o Adult to children over 12 years of age = 1:10

The ratio may also depend on type of activity, age of the participants and any special needs of the group; for example, if children have never been away or require specific attention.

- Training group sizes are determined by the qualification of the coach or teacher.
- For mixed gender groups of children there should be leaders of both genders available.
- Leaders should avoid being or working 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 or injuries that occur.

Changing rooms

Changing facilities may be shared by Swim Ireland members and members of the general public and therefore may not be possible to provide supervision in these areas. Parents and young people must be aware of the changing facilities before taking part, whether for a training session, competition or any other activity. The parent should discuss the changing facilities available and ensure that any young person is aware of who to talk to if any issues arise in unsupervised areas.

Facilities may have requirements for parents attending changing areas with their children; generally, this means may only attend in the changing area of their gender, i.e. adult men in the male changing area and adult women in the female changing area. Where family or communal rooms are provided parents should check with the facility before use.

Any supervision of 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. Supervision provided by leaders appointed by a club or region must be vetted and attend safeguarding training as this role comes under the remit of a relevant activity. Leaders should not enter changing rooms unless part of a supervision rota. In emergency circumstances the safety and well-being of a child must be considered above all else.

Supervising away trips or activities

Groups travelling away overnight or longer must ensure that they have adequate numbers and gender of adults to supervise the group of young people during the trip or activity. For all away trips or activities any person in charge, supervising or involved in training/teaching must meet the Swim Ireland safeguarding requirements i.e. attended approved safeguarding training, vetted, qualified for the role and be a member of Swim Ireland. Further details can be found in the separate Away Trips Policy.

Lost child

If a young person goes missing during an activity or trip the following procedure for action should be followed:

1. The responsible person should take control and formulate a plan to ensure any action and search is carried out thoroughly and carefully.
2. The remaining group of young people must be adequately supervised, and their safety must not be compromised.
3. The parents of the missing child must be informed if they are present; if not present an appropriate person should be asked to contact them.
4. Additional responsible adults available or on the trip should be directed to conduct a search and report back to the one person in control.
5. Areas to be searched should start with the place the child was last seen; and each place should be searched thoroughly. All persons involved in the search must report back to the responsible person at specific times and what has been done must be clearly recorded.
6. The responsible person should compile as much information about the missing child, e.g. physical description, clothing worn, and the last known place the child was seen and by whom. This will be important if the Garda/PSNI are involved.
7. Report the missing child to the Garda/PSNI if the child has not been located within 30 minutes, even if all the search teams have not reported back.
8. If the Garda/PSNI are involved direction must be taken from them for further action.