



Swim Wales / Newtown Swimming Club guidance on adults and children sharing the same lane.

Swimming is a physical sport and like many physical activities there are inherent risks in taking part. Swim Wales is committed to ensuring that any risks to all participants are kept to an absolute minimum.

Swim Wales recognise that children and senior swimmers aged 18 and upwards may train together if they are of a like standard, However in order to safeguard children in our sport it is necessary to consider the issue of children and adults sharing lanes.

Whilst incidents within training sessions are fortunately few in number Swim Wales have identified problems arising from training activities and warm ups where adults and children swim in the same lane, including allegations of sexual and physical assault, intentional and accidental, during swimming training. Such situations have caused considerable concern and distress for the children and sometimes also for the adults concerned. Swim Wales has a duty to safeguard its members under the age of 18 alongside a duty of care to all its members and it is for this reason that Swim Wales does not recommend that adults and children should be lane sharing.

However Swim Wales recognise that in some situations it is not possible or appropriate for swimmers to train separately. This would include the developmental need of the 16 / 17 year age group to train alongside 19 / 20 year old adults and where lane availability is limited. Swim Wales consider that in such situations club officers and coaches must consider the risk involved and put procedures in place to ensure training activities are organised and concluded in as safe an environment as possible, minimising both the health and safety risks and any child welfare risk that these situations may pose.

When lane sharing is unavoidable coaches and clubs are required to conduct a thorough risk assessment of their training activities paying particular attention to the mix of swimmers in each lane and considering the following factors

1. Is there suitable lane supervision at club sessions involving children? (i.e. under 18s)
2. The age and sex of the swimmers in line with Swim Wales guidance below.
3. The relative sizes and abilities of the swimmers.
4. The individual swimmers lane discipline and precision of their strokes.
5. Introducing a lane etiquette guide e.g. re overtaking.
6. The presence of life guards.
7. The width of each training lane.

8. The number of swimmers in each lane.
9. Whether the session is open to spectators.
10. Ensure the club have an identified and publicised process by which concerns can be raised and an identified child Welfare Officer.

The above is not an exhaustive list but it provides clubs with a starting point for evaluating the risks to swimmers and the points they should be considering to ensure their training sessions are incident free.

Swim Wales Statement on adults and children sharing lanes in training

Swim Wales recommend that senior swimmers aged 18 and upwards and children should train in separate lanes.

Swim Wales recognise that children and senior swimmers aged 18 and upwards may train together in the same lane if they are of a like standard AND physical size but additional consideration to child safeguarding must be undertaken by the club. Swim Wales do not consider that children under 14 should share training lanes with adults.

Where separate lanes are impractical it is vital that the club adopt a critical appraisal of the swimmers in the water and complete a careful risk assessment to ensure that the sessions are incident free.

During competition warm ups involving senior swimmers and children under 14 promoters should make provision to allow different age groups to warm up at different times or allocate separate lanes to each age group.

N.B. The above guidance has been developed with information gained from studies of past ASA safeguarding cases. The 2nd edition of "In at the Deep End – a study of cases of child safeguarding in the ASA from 2004 to 2008" will be published in the future and will outline risks identified in swimming in all areas and the development of policy to protect and safeguard children in our sport.

