

Responsible Adult Overseeing a Club Session: Re: When a Swim Wales, Club Lead Coach is under 18 years of age

A responsible adult is defined as someone within the club who holds a recognised position e.g. Team Manager, Welfare Officer, Committee Member etc.

The designated “responsible adult” must be a Swim Wales Member, hold a Swim Wales DBS and a valid Swim Wales recognised safeguard qualification. In addition, all emergency contact details for the swimmers should be at hand, in case the relevant parent/guardian needs to be contacted.

Any coaches under the age of 18 years of age, must also hold a Swim Wales Coach Membership, DBS and a valid UK Coaching Safeguard Qualification (<https://www.ukcoaching.org/courses/safeguarding-and-protecting-children-for-young-coaches/>)

Many sports provide opportunities for under 18’s to coach, officiate or organise events for other children, including achieving qualifications and awards. These positive opportunities allow young people to develop skills, experience and confidence but should not mean that clubs should depend on them to take full responsibility for managing a group of swimmers.

Swim coaches, who are under the age of 18 years, should only be responsible for the delivery of the session, whilst under the direct supervision of the appointed responsible adult.

To effectively oversee a club session, a responsible adult should ensure a safe and inclusive environment, following guidelines for supervision ratios, and adhering to child protection policies, while also promoting positive coaching practices and participant well-being.

It is important for clubs to remember when planning and delivery sessions, a appointed adult must be present to adequately supervise all participants and manage any incidents that may arise.

Clubs should always plan accordingly and coaches must feel confident in raising concerns if they find themselves placed in a position where they are expected to lead a session.

The “responsible adult” should be familiar with and adhere to the Swim Wales safeguarding policies and procedures and also how to report any concerns about the welfare of a child, ensuring that non-action is never an option. <https://www.swimwales.org/download-key-documents/>

The appointed “responsible adult” must make themselves familiar with the relevant facility’s (that they are using) Normal Operating Procedures and Emergency Action Plans e.g. fire and pool alarm.

They should also have access to the club risk assessments (including first aid) which should take into account identification and mitigation of potential hazards – please refer to Swim Wales, Club Documents <https://www.swimwales.org/download-key-documents/>

All clubs should create a positive and inclusive environment where all participants feel valued and encouraged to participate, with a focus on the enjoyment and development of participants, rather than solely on winning or achieving.

The “responsible adult” should maintain open communication with parents/guardians, informing them of any concerns about their child's welfare, and discussing the potential impact of the program.

For any queries, please contact Aquatic Development aquaticdevelopment@swimwales.org