

Garstang Amateur Swimming Club ~ Changing Room Policy

Duty of care to swimmers in changing facilities

What responsibility does the club have for swimmers in changing rooms before, during and after training or competition?

Under the Duty of Care to Safeguard Children the club have a responsibility for the wellbeing of children in the changing rooms. This does not mean the parents have no responsibility but parents are often not in the pool complex at the time when children are swimming and training to exercise their duty of care. For this reason the club must be clear to parents under what circumstances they require parents to remain at the pool throughout a session.

Garstang Amateur Swimming Club requires parents to remain at the pool when:

- Their child/children are young and require assistance in changing. This is generally at an age that is stipulated by the pool hirer, usually 7 or 8 years of age. This is 8 years of age in the case of Garstang pool.
- Their child/children have a disability or medical condition and may require additional help the club cannot provide.

Responsibility during a club session

The issue of club responsibility during training when a swimmer uses the toilets or changing room. While a child is training she/he remains under the responsibility, under the duty of care, of the person who is teaching/coaching him at that time on behalf of the club. If a swimmer goes out of the pool area, the coach/teacher should be aware of this. If she/he fails to return in a reasonable time, or appears upset upon leaving the poolside the coach/teacher should request a suitable club official to ensure that he/she is all right. It is best practice for two persons to look for the swimmer (the second person could be a senior swimmer or another parent).

Changing Room Policy

If a complaint is received that an incident has occurred in the changing room between a swimmer and any other person the club has a duty to act upon that concern and investigate appropriately. If the incident involves a person not associated with the club, the pool manager should be made aware and consideration given as to whether the statutory agencies need informing.

Information for parents regarding changing facilities

The following are brought to the attention of parents:

- Changing facilities at venues may be shared by both club members and members of the general public.
- The type of changing rooms at venues may be different i.e. separate for male and female or changing villages.
- Parents should not be in the changing room while their swimmers are changing, unless the swimmer is of an age where help is required from parents or the swimmer requires additional specific assistance. This is generally at an age that is stipulated by the pool hirer, usually 7 or 8 years of age. In such circumstances the parent must be the same gender as the child, unless the facility has family changing facilities or is a "mixed changing village".
- A requirement for appropriate behaviour in changing rooms is part of the swimmers code of conduct.
- Where club events involve other clubs the meet organisers will advise all parents and competitors (via the meet information) if the facilities are likely to be open to the general public at any time during the meet.

NB The ASA do not advise adults supervise changing facilities as that places them and the children at risk of harm and allegation.

Responsibility after a session is completed

The ASA view is that each affiliated club has a duty of reasonable care to swimmers, which extends to an awareness on the part of the club that their junior members have been collected, in so far as is possible, at the conclusion of a session, i.e. that a swimmer is not left unsupervised if a parent is late. This has to be age appropriate, i.e. the ASA Wavepower 2009/11 notes a 17 year old is capable of getting themselves home, but a 12 year old is not. However, at times when changing rooms are also accessible to non-club members for public swimming lanes it would be extreme to expect the club to search the changing areas in case a junior club member was there. In this case best practice is for all junior members and their parents to be aware that if children are not collected by a parent, then they should make that known to a coach or the club Welfare Officer and for this individual to ensure that the club member is supervised appropriately until a parent arrives or the parent communicates alternative arrangements. If a parent fails to collect a child the club will follow the procedure outlined in the "ASA Policy on Guidance on Late Collection of Children".

Information based on Wavepower 2009 - 2011 (May 09)