

PREVENTION OF CIRCULATION OF INDECENT IMAGES

Dear Swimmers and Parents

It has been brought to the notice of the County Swimming Association (LASA) that there is an increasing number of incidents nationally where swimmers may be compromising themselves, and fellow swimmers, in the taking and sharing of indecent images of themselves / others. These are often taken either covertly, in shared changing villages or changing rooms, or by the encouragement by other swimmers to share such images, often with requests / demands made away from the Club environment, including on Social Media.

Swim England and LASA's policy is clear on such incidents, and as they constitute criminal sexual offences, where 'aggravated' these matters are always reported for police investigation. Usually where alleged taken covertly, or with coercion etc, this would result in a Swim England / Club Temporary Suspension.

Worst case scenario is that caution / conviction for such offences, also carries longer term consequences, including being required to register as a Registered Sex Offender etc. It can also show up on subsequent DBS applications, and impact future employment. Of particular concern is that it can have devastating effects on those who suffer such images being taken, or shared, commonly including non-participation, withdrawal from social groups, friends, and positive online activity, as well as having greater psychological effects.

Whilst there is absolutely no desire to criminalise younger swimmers, Swim England are rightly under a duty to have incidents such as these investigated by police, and share information about any such concerns with MASH (Multi-agency safeguarding Teams) or Children's Services.

Your Club should be committed to preventing any such incidents, and in line with Swim England (who are doing the same thing Nationally) should be reviewing (alongside facility providers / pool management) the options to prevent such occurrences. Often that may be a segregation of males / females in an approximately 12 to 16 year old age group in changing villages. If you have any concerns re the above please do not hesitate to speak to your Club Welfare Officer.

In addition, with a number of Open Meets looming, and where Changing villages are in existence, we would remind swimmers to keep themselves safe, by adhering to Club's Changing Room Policy, and not use any device which is capable of taking any images, whilst in Changing Rooms.

Full details are available from Swim England Changing Room Policy and Child Abuse Image Policy and Section 2 of the Wavepower Toolbox p65 - 69 refers;

<http://www.swimming.org/library/documents/files/1205/download>

Kind regards

Ursula Beck
LASA County Welfare Officer