

### **APPENDIX 3**

#### **GUIDELINES ON SWIMMING TEACHING WHERE THE TEACHER IS IN THE WATER**

#### **Swimming Teachers Association (STA) - 2014**

It is preferable for the swimming teacher to conduct swimming lessons from the poolside; there are a number of reasons for this, including:

1. Safety – the swimming teacher is able to maintain full visual cover of all their learners from the poolside and thus be in a position to react quickly to any incidents that may arise.
2. Observation – the swimming teacher on the poolside is in a better position to analyse the learner's skills.
3. Teacher protection – due to their proximity to the learners, and the difficulty of seeing exactly where teachers have their hands; swimming teachers can be more vulnerable to accusations of abuse if they are teaching in the water.

Nevertheless STA recognise that teaching in the water can be very effective and beneficial to many learners. If teachers are teaching in the water then STA strongly recommend that a responsible person (swim school owner, centre/pool manager etc.) has suitable and sufficient risk assessments undertaken to determine the maximum number of learners that a single teacher can teach for each specific type of lesson (e.g. beginners, improvers, pre-school learners, adults etc.) while they are in the water.

STA recommend a maximum ratio of 6 learners to 1 swimming teacher. This recommendation must coincide with a risk assessment where the pool size, depth, shape and learner's age, ability and needs are taken into consideration as the ratio may need to be reduced to ensure safety and effective teaching.

It is an STA requirement that:

1. When swimming lessons are in progress, there must always be at least one person on duty on the poolside who is competent to respond. This can be the teacher provided they possess appropriate lifesaving competencies, which include rescue skills, CPR, and relevant aspects of the PSOP; this can be achieved by holding a current STA lifesaving or Lifeguard qualification. A swimming teacher in the water has an extremely limited view of the water and the learners. They should only teach in the water where there is suitable and sufficient cover on the poolside to watch the class as determined by the individual pools risk assessment.
2. All STA swimming teachers must have an approved and in-date pool rescue award.

To help with the risk assessment STA recommend that the following points are taken into consideration:

- What is the age of the learners? Will they be able to understand safety instructions given to them by the teacher?
- Do any of the learners have special needs/requirements and/or medical conditions e.g. hearing difficulties, visual impairments, learning difficulties, hidden conditions, physical disabilities etc?
  - Additional support and supervision may be required dependent upon the individual needs of the learner.
- Are there any site specific characteristics of the pool that may present special risks? E.g. sudden changes in depth, blind spots, specular reflection etc.
  - These may require more than one person qualified in pool rescue to be on duty on the poolside.
- How deep is the water?
  - Non-swimmers and younger learners will be safer in water of their own standing depth.
- What is the size and shape of the pool?
  - Small pools with fewer lessons are easier to supervise.
- How many lessons are taking place?
  - More lessons may require more than one pool rescuer on the poolside, due to higher risks with the increased numbers of learners to supervise, increased noise levels etc.
- How many poolside rescuers will there be?
  - Will one rescuer be overseeing one class or several? Supervising one class will give a greater degree of safety.
- What is the temperature of the water?
  - The warmer it is, the quicker the teacher will become de-hydrated.
  - The colder it is, then the teacher may need to be provided with some form of thermal protection (Personal Protective Equipment) i.e. wet suit.
  - Swimming Teachers may need to wear sun protection when teaching in an outdoor environment
- How long will the teacher remain in the water?
  - STA recommend that teachers should not teach in the water for longer than two consecutive hours before having at least a thirty minute break to allow themselves time to recover from the water temperature and pool humidity, to hydrate and refresh themselves and to allow their vocal cords to rest. It is also recommended that a teacher does not teach more than two two-hour blocks per day in the water.
- Is there a regular change of pool rescue cover?
  - This is to prevent the pool side rescuer from becoming fatigued and allowing them to remain vigilant and alert.

STA recommend that the following guidelines are also observed:

- The maximum depth of water in which a teacher can operate safely is when the water is at approximately the mid-chest line. Note: The swimming teacher in the water must be able to stand and walk freely and not be forced, by the depth of water, into a floating position.

- The teaching positions will be different when teaching in the water; the teacher must always position themselves so that they have the whole class under observation. Note: Particular attention must be paid when the swimming teacher is attending to an individual learner; the teacher must be aware of the safety of the rest of the class and this may necessitate the remainder of the class being on poolside.
- The parent/guardian should be informed that the swimming teacher will be in the water and advise them of the reasons and benefits to the learner.
- The parent/guardian should also be informed of the methods of manual support, if any, that will be used and obtain their consent to their use.
- The swimming teacher should only use methods of manual support that are appropriate to the age and ability of the learner.
- Prior to using manual support the teacher should inform the learner, explain the procedure and seek the learner's permission.
- Manual support should only be given when necessary and only for as long as it is required.
- The swimming teacher should keep his/her hands in view whenever possible.
- The swimming teacher should be easily recognisable as the instructor by, for example, wearing a 'Teacher' t-shirt.
- The swimming teacher should not infringe on the personal space of the learner and should be aware of familiarity that may come from learners