



VOLUNTEER POLICY DOCUMENT

Initial Date Approved by the Swim Ireland Board: 16 June 2020

Reviewed and updated by Governance Committee October 2024

Introduction/

Swim Ireland recognise and greatly appreciate the valuable time and immense effort given by our volunteers which is vital to the effective running of our sport, with one of our core values to empower an effective culture with engaged staff and volunteers. Swim Ireland respects each volunteer, and works closely with volunteers in order to achieve our mission to foster and develop our sport both competitive and otherwise and to promote the development of physical and social qualities that come from swimming and associated sports.

This purpose of this Policy is to set out how the organisation aims to support volunteers on a practical level and to set out the expectations of volunteer behaviour. It does not constitute a binding contract. All members of Swim Ireland Clubs, including volunteers, are subject to Swim Ireland's rules and regulations.

Recruitment

Volunteers are recruited in a variety of ways, depending on the position. A formal recruitment process takes place in respect of certain positions, for example, vacancies on the Swim Ireland Board and National Committees are filled by way of the nomination's procedures outlined in the Swim Ireland Constitution. In such cases vacancies are advertised and an advertisement will include an outline of the skill set and qualification requirements and the time commitments involved. All National Committees are assigned a Swim Ireland Staff Liaison who is available to support the Committee and can provide further details on this. If you are not sure who the staff liaison is for the relevant Committee, please contact Swim Ireland directly.

Volunteers may also be recruited by asking individuals with skills or expertise to perform a specific role, for example maintaining a club's website. In all cases clubs and regions are required to follow the Recruitment Policy contained in the latest version of the [Swim Ireland Safeguarding Policy](#) for all appointments made within clubs containing U18 athletes.

There are some additional requirements for safeguarding purposes that require the rostering of individuals for certain duties to ensure the safety and well-being of athletes, e.g. a roster for a person on duty during training sessions.

All Volunteers and Members on National Committees must abide by Swim Ireland Codes of Conduct and operate in line with its terms of reference as set by the Board and as amended from time to time. Terms of Reference are available on the [Swim Ireland website](#) and are specific to the various National Committees supporting Swim Ireland.

All Affiliate Members shall ensure that correct recruitment procedures are followed in the appointment of teachers/coaches and leaders.

All Clubs shall ensure that correct recruitment procedures are followed in the appointment of teachers/coaches and leaders.

All team managers and coaches must have been successfully vetted and have completed the Swim Ireland/Sport Ireland/Sport NI basic awareness training (child welfare training) to be selected and/or work with Irish teams and swimmers.

As part of a recruitment process certain positions have been identified within the relevant legislation according to jurisdiction as relevant or regulated and therefore require an accepted vetting disclosure, either through the National Vetting Bureau or Access NI. No individual is permitted to take a relevant or regulated position without an accepted disclosure being obtained through Swim Ireland. Swim Ireland will endeavour to recruit the most competent individuals to fill vacant or new positions. Interview notes will be retained for a period of one year in accordance with legal requirements. Swim Ireland believes in equal opportunity in recruitment and volunteering practices without discrimination on the grounds of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, housing assistance payment, and membership of the Traveller community.

Training and Development

Swim Ireland acknowledges that there is a significant need within National Governing Bodies for volunteer learning and development support. It is recognised that volunteers operate at all levels, from local clubs up to regional and national level roles within an NGB.

All volunteers acting in the role of Coaches, and Officials must be licensed in accordance with Swim Ireland procedures and must complete relevant Swim Ireland training.

Certain role holders within Swim Ireland are required to undertake specific training relevant to their role prior to being appointed to that role e.g. Club Children's Officers are required to undertake specific Safeguarding training before allowing them to take up the position. Licenses are maintained by ensuring regular on-going professional development. Other role holders, for example Club Officers, are provided with ongoing training through attendance at seminars, forums, and conferences.

Safeguarding policies

Swim Ireland is fully committed to the safeguarding and well-being of all its Members and Volunteers. Every member and volunteer should always show respect and understanding for each other's rights, overall development, safety and welfare. They should conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of the organisation, and the guidance contained in the latest Swim Ireland Safeguarding Policies. The [Swim Ireland Safeguarding Policies](#) incorporate the relevant safeguarding guidance from Sport Ireland and Sport NI as well as recognising legislation of each jurisdiction pertaining to the protection of children and young people.

The Swim Ireland Safeguarding Policies contain the elements necessary to create a safe and protective environment for members and volunteers to operate to ensure the safety and well-being of children and young people in our sport. The appointment of an U18 volunteer would be assessed and matched against the specific volunteer role requirements. Volunteers in positions are also subject to renewing certain training and vetting requirements in order to maintain their roles, e.g. vetting and some safeguarding training is required to be updated every threeyears, some licenses have annual update requirements.

Protected Disclosures

The Protected Disclosures (Amendment) Act 2022 applies to all volunteers. The policy protects workers, associated workers and volunteers from retaliation if they speak up about wrongdoing in the workplace, provided that the disclosure is made with reasonable belief of malpractice or impropriety. Swim Ireland takes this extremely seriously; no employee or volunteer who raises a whistleblowing concern will suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a concern. Swim Ireland will not tolerate the harassment or victimisation of anyone who raises a genuine concern. However, it is recognised that someone may have good reasons to prefer to raise a genuine concern in confidence under this Policy. If a volunteer asks for their identity to be protected, by keeping their confidence, Swim Ireland will make every effort to treat all disclosures in a confidential and sensitive manner.

Health and safety

Members and Volunteers must abide by the Health & Safety Statement and rules of Swim Ireland. This includes health and safety at events. All events run by Clubs and Regions are run in accordance with these National Guidelines.

The [Swim Ireland Rule Book](#) specifies that all accidents must be reported to Swim Ireland as soon as possible after the event (and not later than one week from the date of the event) with a full report presented.

Expense Reimbursement Policy

The work of volunteers is vital to the effective running of the organisation and in that regard, Swim Ireland will always endeavour to ensure that volunteers are not out of pocket in fulfilling a role at National level, in line with the Swim Ireland Volunteers Finance and Administration Policy Document. Each province sets out their respective policies and reimbursement guidelines, and the level of reimbursement is subject and specific to the role. These practices are outlined when a volunteer assumes a role.

All Club Committees must ensure that written records are kept of all teaching, coaching and other staff (such as sports science and medical support staff) involved in the Club whether they are acting on a voluntary basis or paid by the Clubs.

All Volunteer expenses must be claimed on the official Swim Ireland expense claim form which will be updated and circulated to volunteers from time to time. These claim forms must be signed and dated by the volunteer. Other relevant details, such as the place and date of the event attended, must also be detailed on the form in accordance with the Swim Ireland Expenses Policy.

Complaints procedure

It is the right of a Volunteer to make a Complaint where standards of care, treatment and practice are perceived to fall short of what is acceptable and should be expected. Likewise, it is the right of Swim Ireland Clubs, Members, Regional and/or National Bodies to take Disciplinary Action against a Volunteer and others outlined in the [Swim Ireland Complaints and Disciplinary Rules](#) for misconduct that has been committed by a volunteer. All complaints must be dealt with in accordance with the relevant complaints and disciplinary procedures outlined in the Swim Ireland Rule Book. Any of the following non-exhaustive matters will be dealt with under these Rules and in accordance with the procedures unless otherwise indicated:

Offences

Breaches of these Rules

Breaches of the Swim Ireland Memorandum and Articles of Association

Breaches of Swim Ireland Rule Book

Breaches of Swim Ireland Code of Conduct for Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures*, as amended from time to time; or

Breaches of other Swim Ireland policies and regulations in existence

Communications

Only designated Swim Ireland persons shall speak on behalf of Swim Ireland on any matter and in particular with regard to child welfare or protection matters, anti-doping and legal matters. Written permission must be sought by Affiliates who wish to present themselves as affiliated with Swim Ireland on websites and social media platforms.

Data Protection

Volunteers as well as Clubs, Regions and Members must be aware of how they collect, store and use the personal information of other members and must comply with the requirements of General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Swim Ireland including the Retention Policy principles. Swim Ireland employees must also adhere to best practice in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Acts (2016), In relation to processing personal data, including volunteers, keeping this secret, confidential and secure, as well as care not to disclose such data to any other person, unless authorised. Swim Ireland Data Protection GDPR Privacy Notice can be viewed in the Policy Library on the [Swim Ireland website](#).

Media and Photography

Swim Ireland is committed to respecting the privacy of all volunteers, members, and clubs. The Swim Ireland Data Protection Privacy Notice explains how the organisation may use the personal information collected before, during and after membership and/or any relationship with the organisation as a Volunteer.

This Privacy Notice explains how Swim Ireland complies with the law on data protection, what an individual's rights are and, for the purposes of data protection, that Swim Ireland will be the controller of any personal information.

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Social Media and Photography are valuable tools to record volunteering activities. Please refer to the Swim Ireland 'Media and Photography' section and 'Privacy Notice' outlined the [Swim Ireland Rule Book](#). This is a set of guidelines to clarify expectations if using social media whilst remaining respectful to the organisation, staff, other volunteers, and clients. There are also rules regarding taking and using images of young people in the Swim Ireland Safeguarding Policies, these can be found in the Filming and Photography Policy and the Social Media Policy and are available on the [Swim Ireland website](#).

This Policy will be reviewed in line with review period for all Swim Ireland Policy and Procedure documents which is three years from date of approval.