



Grangemouth Triathlon Club

Children and Adults Sharing Swimming Lanes

Grangemouth Triathlon Club has a duty to safeguard children under the age of 18 alongside a duty of care to all of its members and it is for this reason Grangemouth Triathlon Club adopts the British Triathlon policy that does not recommend that adults and children should be lane sharing. However, it is recognised that in some situations it is not possible or appropriate for athletes to train separately. The British Triathlon guidance is detailed below (*British Triathlon Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy, 2016. Page 12*)

Swimming is a physical sport and like many physical activities there are inherent risks in taking part. British Triathlon is committed to ensuring that any risks to all participants are kept to a minimum. British Triathlon recognise that children aged 14 to 18 and senior athletes aged 18 and upwards may train together if they are of a like standard and size. As long as appropriate safeguards are put in place and a risk assessment carried out.

In order to safeguard children in our sport it is necessary to consider the issue of children and adults sharing lanes whilst swimming training. British Triathlon have identified problems which could arise from training activities and warmups where adults and children swim in the same lane, including allegations of sexual and physical assault, intentional and accidental, during swimming training.

When lane sharing between senior and junior athletes who are over 14 is unavoidable the club and coaches should undertake a risk assessment to ensure training activities are organised and conducted in as safe an environment as possible, minimising both the health and safety risks and any child welfare risk that these situations may pose. The risk assessment should consider the training activities planned, taking into account the composition of the lane and the following factors:

- Is there suitable lane supervision at club sessions involving children? (i.e. Under 18s)
- The age and gender of the athletes in line with British Triathlon guidance below.
- The relative sizes and abilities of the athletes.
- The individual swimmer's lane discipline and precision of their strokes.
- Introducing a lane etiquette guide e.g. Re overtaking.
- The presence of lifeguards.
- The width of each training lane.
- The number of athletes in each lane.
- Whether the session is open to spectators.
- The club's process for raising concerns with their Child Welfare Officer

This is not an exhaustive list but provides a good baseline for clubs to start evaluating their sessions and ensure that sessions are incident free. British Triathlon do not consider that children under 14 should share training lanes with adults. Where separate lanes are impractical, it is vital that the club adopt a critical appraisal of the swimmers in the water and complete a careful risk assessment to ensure that the sessions are incident free. During competition warmups involving senior swimmers and children under 14, promoters should make provision to allow different age groups to warm up at different times or allocate separate lanes to each age group.