

Mobile Phone Policy – Autumn 2022

**Guidance for Swimmers, Parents and staff**

As part of our commitment to safeguarding and in order to adhere to Swim England guidance, all within Gateshead and Whickham Amateur Swimming Club (GAW) must adhere to the following rules regarding smartphones, tablets and other handheld devices.

Our club recognises that smartphones, tablets and other handheld devices contain a variety of functions that can be misused, that can cause harm, distress, upset and legal issues. Therefore it is vital we establish and maintain rules concerning the following:

**Mobile Free Areas:**

These are ‘mobile free’ areas within the club setting where mobile phones **must not be used under any circumstances**. These areas are considered to be the areas where swimmers and the GAW community are most vulnerable.

**Changing Rooms** -this extends to away meets

**Showers**- this extends to away meets

**Toilets**- this extends to away meets

**Poolside** – for away meets, use is at the discretion of coaches and/or in line with the policy of the host club/venue.

There is a zero-tolerance policy in place with regard to use of mobile phones by any individual in these areas.

In order to prevent photographs being taken or phone misuse in these areas, we recommend that phones are switched off and kept in bags until swimmers or staff exit changing room areas. It is also recommended that children under the age of 11 leave mobile phones with an adult at the poolside.

**Guidance for Coaches and Teachers on phoning, texting or emailing a young person**

Coaches and teachers should not personally hold the mobile phone numbers or email addresses belonging to Junior members of the club unless they would otherwise do so e.g. because they are a family member.

Coaches can hold phone numbers and email addresses of members’ parents with their consent, in order to get messages to their swimmers.  It is then the responsibility of the parent to inform the swimmer of the message.

In some circumstances, it may be necessary for coaches, team managers or chaperones to have mobile phone contact details of the swimmers for safeguarding reasons, for example if they are away at camp.  In such circumstances, the individual should be DBS checked, have undertaken the appropriate safeguarding training and have the consent of each swimmer’s parent or guardian to temporarily hold that information for the purpose of the event.  The member’s phone number should be deleted after the event

Coaches should not take or make calls whilst supervising young members in a teaching or training session.  It is permissible for a coach to make or take a call during an event provided they are not the sole supervisor of the swimmers.

**Guidance for Coaches aged 18 to 21**

It is recognised that many young coaches aged 18 to 21 will have been members of the club themselves before becoming a coach, and will still be friends with younger members.   It is therefore plausible that they will have the personal contact details for these members.  Swim England accepts it would be inappropriate to require young coaches to remove the details of those members from their contact lists.

**Therefore, in such cases:**

If a coach aged 18 to 21 has phone or email details of swimmers aged between 16 and 17 prior to undertaking the role of the coach, GAW does not expect them to remove those members from their contact list.

However, the coach is advised to inform the welfare officer and the head coach.

The head coach should make every effort to ensure the coach is not the primary coach for those specified young persons, except on an occasional basis.

**Inappropriate Use Within the Club Setting:**

Members, parents and staff using vulgar, derogatory or obscene language while using a mobile phone will face disciplinary actions as sanctioned by the Club.

Using a mobile phone or electronic devise to engage in personal attacks, harass other people, post private information about others, taking/sending photos or objectionable images, and phone calls will face disciplinary action as sanctioned by the Club, and may be reported to the police.

In order to create a culture at our club where safeguarding is at the heart of what we do, we ask parents and supporters to refrain from taking photographs and videos that contain the images of children while they are poolside or swimming unless they can guarantee that no swimmer or individual other than their own child is in the picture.

For further information on all safeguarding issues, please refer to Swim England child /vulnerable adult safeguarding procedures and policies at [*www.swimming.org/swimengland/wavepower-child-safeguarding-for-clubs*](http://www.swimming.org/swimengland/wavepower-child-safeguarding-for-clubs)