

Safe Sport Framework FAQs

1. Is the Safe Sport Framework adding more to our responsibilities?

No. This work is already an integral part of work for Swimming Australia. The new Framework has been developed to align with best practice in safeguarding Children and Young People today and aims to ensure that the ways in which we do things are more effective.

2. Who is it applicable to?

Everyone. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and the Framework has been developed to support any individual involved in Swimming Australia's services, programs, events and activities, setting the expectations as to behavioural guidelines and avenues to raise a complaint. This includes but is not exhaustive to staff, volunteers, Board / committee members, coaches, clubs, officials, parents, guardians, carers, families, participants, contractors, consultants and associates.

3. Why the change? Are we doing something wrong?

No. More research and evidence is now available to us around Child Abuse, which has been utilised to develop best practice standards for us. Swimming Australia is in a very privileged position, where every day, parents around the nation entrust our Clubs, coaches and administrators to keep their children safe from harm. We play a very powerful role in sport and the greater community and therefore we are ensuring we are leading the way to safeguarding Children and Young People.

Importantly, the new Framework not only safeguards Children and Young People but everyone involved in our sport, for example, staff, volunteers, coaches, officials, parents and families as well as our organisation and our brand. The Framework makes clear what is expected of everyone and provides the tools and support needed to do so.

4. What if we lose volunteers because it is too much for them to do?

The Framework is not adding more responsibility to workload, rather strengthening policies and systems to safeguard Children and Young People. Volunteers have the same responsibility to safeguard Children and Young People as paid staff, and any other person involved in Swimming Australia activities, programs, events or services.

5. How do I raise awareness with parents?

Emphasise Swimming Australia's/the Club's commitment to safeguarding their own Children and Young People. Keep the focus on the facts – the Framework reflects best practice policy and procedures in safeguarding Children and Young People - a positive for all in our Sport.

6. Will this mean that we can't touch children at all?

With swimming, on occasions there may be the need to have appropriate physical contact with a Child or Young Person. Any physical contact with Children and Young People must be appropriate to the delivery of Swimming Australia and its Clubs services, events, programs or activities, such as when fitting sporting equipment like goggles and appropriately correcting technique and based on the needs of the Child or Young Person (such as to assist or comfort a distressed young person) rather than on the needs of adult. Asking the Child/Young Person before making physical contact with them and explaining what you will do and why you are doing it is important.

7. As a coach on pooldeck, can I physically comfort a young person who is upset or can I congratulate a member who has done well by shaking their hand?

The answer to all the above is yes but always in a reasonable and appropriate manner. Be mindful that to comfort a Child or Young Person who is upset, it is not always necessary or appropriate to place an arm around them. Sitting down and listening to them, can show concern for their situation. Often Children and Young People do get distressed if they compete and feel they have done a 'bad swim' and sometimes a coach can assist just by being positive. For example, by saying "the start and your turns were good, and we can improve in training next week on the stroke issues." You can certainly shake the hand of a member who has done well. This is often seen by a Child and Young Person as high praise from the coach.

8. What should I do if an athlete is injured and clothing must be removed to treat the injury?

Only people who are qualified in administering first aid or treating sports injuries should attempt to treat an injury. You should avoid treating injuries out of sight of others. Other things to consider include:

- the comfort level and dignity of the athlete/participant should always be the priority
- only uncover the injured area, or drape the athlete/participant's private parts
- always report injuries and treatment to parents, and document an incident fully.

9. As a coach I am friends with many of the families whose children I coach and we all socialise together outside of my role of coaching. Our children have grown up together. Can I no longer socialise with them?

You can socialise with your friends and their children. The rules are not intended to limit appropriate social interactions between coaches and children and their families. They are intended to limit the opportunities available to Persons in Positions of Authority to use their position to create opportunities to spend time alone with Children and Young People and to develop inappropriate relationships with them. If you have an existing personal relationship with children and their families, you do need to be mindful of how this might impact on your professional relationship with the Child or Young Person as their coach. It is best to be open with your club about any existing relationships.

10. Does this mean that people are more likely to make allegations?

What comes with raising awareness is a responsibility to do something about what you're aware of. This doesn't automatically mean that people are more likely to make allegations but where there is a concern, we expect people to report it.

11. Will I be expected to investigate an allegation?

No. You are not expected to become a child protection expert. You are expected to have an awareness of the issues of Child Abuse and exploitation, understand what is expected of you with regards to your own behaviour and to understand your responsibility to report any concerns.

12. What if I don't have enough information to prove the allegation?

It is not your job to investigate Child Abuse. You do not have to prove that the abuse / breach of the Codes of Conduct is happening. You must report a child protection concern if you form a "reasonable belief" that it is occurring or is at risk of occurring.

13. What if the Child or Young Person involved won't share information with me as they are afraid?

It is not your responsibility to investigate, however sensitively record as much information as they will share, trying to capture their name, age, who was involved and their age, what happened, when and where it happened and what they would like to happen next. Reassure them that you are there to help them and the information will be handled confidentiality.

14. I've received a complaint and I know the person in which the complaint has been made against, what should I do?

This would be classed as a conflict of interest and you must declare this and remove the conflict (yourself). Seek out another appropriate person in a position of authority to take over managing the complaint.

15. Conflict of interest - we are a small club where everyone knows each other and so there isn't anyone else to ask to manage the complaint.

In Australia, every sport has designated Member Protection Information Officers. If appropriate, consider finding another MPIO from another sport in the local area. If you do not know of any, contact your [Member Protection Information Officer \(MPIO\) State Government contact](#).

16. How should you initially approach someone in a position of power in a Club who you feel may be operating outside the Safe Sport Framework?

The key is to reaffirm the policies and standards contained in the Codes of Conduct and check that they understand them. It may be that in this situation you require the support of someone outside of the immediate Club, for example, your District or Regional Association or Officer. Be clear about the nature of your concerns and be specific about the way someone may be in breach of the Safe Sport Framework. Make a record of your concern and discussions.

17. What do I do if I find I am inadvertently left alone with a Child or Young Person?

Firstly, don't panic. You are now the only person available who can ensure the wellbeing of that child, so although the guidance says 'avoid situations in which you are alone with a Child or

Young Person, in this scenario, to absent yourself could potentially put that Child or Young Person at risk. You should therefore ensure the wellbeing of the Child or Young Person, as that should always be the first and foremost consideration. In this case, that means you should wait with that Child or Young Person until the parent arrives, and use your mobile to inform another Person in a Position of Authority of the situation, for example, your manager, a coach or committee member. If you don't have the parent's phone number, the Child or Young Person may be able to provide this, or, if they are old enough to have their own mobile phone, they can contact the parent themselves. Take sensible precautions while waiting with the Child or Young Person. Talk only about swimming-related matters and if you are in a public place with other users, for example a leisure centre, wait for the parent in a public area. If you are at a venue that has no other users, wait in an area that is open and light and where the parent can clearly see you when they arrive.

18. If a parent fails to arrive, it is getting late and I cannot contact them by phone what should I do?

In such circumstances, it may be necessary for you to consider transporting that Child or Young Person home. If other adults are present, ask one to accompany you and the Child or Young Person in the car to their home. If not, ensure you tell another Person in a Position of Authority of the action you are taking by phone, letting them know the route and estimated arrival time. Make sure you know where you are going before you set off to return the Child or Young Person safely home. Inform the Member Protection Information Officer or appropriate Person in a Position of Authority and ask they speak to the parent the following day to make sure that everything was OK.

19. We use private sports facilities for swimming and have no control over the changing room arrangement. There are no separate spaces for coaches to change – what should I do?

Speak with the facility provider to seek alternative arrangements and should this not be possible, one strategy would be to change before everyone arrives and after they leave.

20. Some parents and I have noticed that another parent is talking inappropriately to their child, being negative, aggressive and pushy. The child does not seem bothered by this and others confirm this is normal for them as a family. What should I do?

If the behaviour is in breach of the Code of Conduct, you have an obligation to report it. Given that other parents have also noticed, it is affecting others within the swimming community and must be reported.