

Covid-19-return-to-the-swimming-pool-guidance-document

Foreword

The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected the leisure industry, as such we are acting on advice from UK aquatic governing bodies to formulate detailed guidance based on the available information at this time. We will update this document as and when new information is available.

Purpose

This document is based on available information, and is shared as a guideline only in order to eliminate or minimise health and safety risks from COVID-19.

Disclaimer

- ❖ In producing this document Swim Now has gathered information from many reliable sources.
- ❖ We will use our own knowledge and best judgment and if in doubt liaise with the appropriate authorities.
- ❖ Using these best practices in no way guarantees that communicable diseases, including but not limited to COVID-19 will not be present in a facility; that people actively infected with communicable diseases might be present in the facility nor does implementation of these best practices guarantee that a person or persons will not contract COVID-19 or other communicable diseases from persons or contact within a facility.
- ❖ All plans will comply with “local” public health guidelines which at this time, vary across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- ❖ Swim Now is up to date with the latest information pertaining to COVID-19. 19th July 2020.
- ❖ Where we use the word ‘WE’ we are referring to Swim Now and the guidance we are providing to our teachers and clients only.
- ❖ Where the word ‘should’ is mentioned throughout the document, it means Swim Now is advising as a recommendation only but the decision will be with the client/teacher.

Resuming activity

- ❖ Swim Now operates out of a variety of swimming facilities which all have their own requirements equipment and changing facilities, most swimming pools will be different in size, design and depth, therefore a site specific approach is required.
- ❖ Swim Now will undertake risk assessments and provide them to each venue so that our procedures are understood and we can recommence swimming lessons as safely as possible. By doing this we ensure all parties are aware of the procedures and responsibilities.
- ❖ During risk assessment consultations, If anything arises that is different to our standard guidance, we will notify the relevant teacher and clients so they are aware.
- ❖ The key responsibilities are split between Swim Now, the venue provider, the teacher and the client.

The current requirements as stated by the Government are as follows:

- ❖ Social distancing must be observed throughout the whole process, from entry to the swimming pool facility, changing rooms, during the lessons, post swim changing and exiting the facility.
- ❖ All people must be 2 metres apart, excluding the same household members.
- ❖ Parents / guardians and swimmers or a member of their household with a cold, fever, anosmia or any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 are not to enter the swimming facility or attend swimming lessons. They should self-isolate for two weeks, therefore, are not permitted to attend swimming lessons for two weeks.
- ❖ Any swimmer / parent / guardian that has travelled overseas (some countries are now exempt) must self-isolate for 14 days and not attend swimming.
- ❖ Swim Now will complete detailed risk assessments, ensure all staff are trained on the risk assessment and new policy procedures to safeguard the safety of their employees and clients at all times.

For the official Government guidance which aligns with this document please visit:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/providers-of-gym-assroots-sport-and-gym-leisure-facilities#section-2-1>

COVID-19 and swimming pools, is it safe to resume activity?

Swim Now (Alistair) wrote an article on this subject:

<https://www.swimnow.co.uk/health-and-wellbeing/is-it-safe-to-swim-in-a-pool-during-covid-19/>

1. According to the scientific literature, there is no increased risk of contracting COVID-19 from swimming in chlorinated pools, and pool operators adhering to previously set guidelines will control risk from waterborne COVID-19.
2. Further, the US based Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suggests that there is no evidence that COVID-19 can be spread to people through water in pools but individuals need to continue to protect themselves and others both in and out of the water through following appropriate social distancing measures and good hand hygiene practices.
3. Our governing bodies recommend appointing someone to be your COVID-19 officer. As this is of high importance, this responsibility falls with the CEO. Our operations manager will assist by following government and health department updates so that we can stay up to date on the most recent information.

However...

4. We recognise that certain locations will be at different stages of opening before being fully operational. Conditions that exist on day one may be different three months later, with potential local lockdowns.
5. We also recognise that each UK member country will be in different stages of opening and may have different restrictions based on their situation. When using this guidance document, remember that not all these will apply to your location. We advise you to make use of the parts that are practical, effective and sustainable for your venue.

Swim Now's Pre-Opening Responsibilities

In preparation to re-open, the key points to implement are as follows:

1. Appoint COVID-19 officer, responsible for staying up to date government recommendations and any associated changes. This responsibility involves, updating policy and procedures, staff training and client updates.
2. COVID-19 Officer Awareness Training CPD, which is available via this link:
<https://www.safetytrainingawards.co.uk/online-learning/miscellaneous-programmes/covid-19-officer-awareness-training/>
3. Update operating procedures to reflect the changes due to COVID-19.
4. Check our insurance policy complies with Government and industry guidelines.
5. Monitor and continually review risk assessments.
6. Update HR policies related to COVID-19 illness.
7. Make all clients aware of our policies and procedures relating to COVID-19.
8. Train all staff, in the form of COVID-19 zoom call & supporting documents.
9. All staff should be given information pertaining to COVID-19 guidance for themselves and clients. Note: CIMSPA have several, free illustrated resources that can be downloaded here:
<https://www.cimspa.co.uk/library-and-guidance/coronavirus---cimspa-briefings/reopen-sport-and-physical-activity-sector-facility-reopening-guidance>
10. Registration forms should be completed by all clients attending a lesson to enable prompt notification, in the case of anyone in close contact with an infected person.
11. All teachers, swimmers and parents should visit the 'self-screening bot' on the Swim Now website and answer the questions as accurately and honestly as possible.

Risk Assessments

Risk assessments will be continually reviewed and will be specific to our different services.

1. children's lessons
2. adult lessons
3. one to one lessons
4. two to one lessons

Key consideration when undertaking a risk assessment:

- ❖ The latest government advice (for each UK member country) and advice from industry experts on control measures.
- ❖ Current advice from the NHS.
- ❖ Current legal advice for swimming pools and swimming teaching.
- ❖ The risk to employees and or clients being exposed to COVID -19.
- ❖ Teachers, Parents, Guardians and Swimmers need to observe social distancing guidelines when in the water, poolside and changing room areas.
- ❖ Where possible teachers will teach from the poolside
- ❖ Parents and/or Guardians will be permitted to accompany a child to the lesson and in most cases will be advised to wait off poolside until the lesson is coming to an end.
- ❖ One adult will be permitted to enter the water with their child if the teacher feels this will aid the safety of the individual.

Venue responsibilities

A consultation is undertaken with the pool manager at each venue to confirm they have the responsibility for the following:

- ❖ Numbers permitted within the pool to ensure social distancing.
- ❖ Number of teachers operating within the swimming facility.
- ❖ Modifications to enable increased social distancing.
- ❖ Clearly marked entry and exit points.
- ❖ Hand washing and sanitising facilities.
- ❖ Regular cleaning and disinfecting consistent with government guidance with particular attention to high risk contact points such as door handles.
- ❖ Emergency evacuation plan with consideration for vulnerable staff and clients.
- ❖ Undertake risk assessments.
- ❖ If the facility needs to close for a 'deep clean' resulting from a COVID-19 infection the venue management will contact Swim Now to explain the procedure.
- ❖ The venue manager should engage the Swim Now teacher to complete any site specific training relating to the process they must follow if COVID-19 directly affects the swimming facility, including how areas may need to be cleaned and disinfected in the event of any contamination and other risk controls.

Entering and exiting the facility - Parents/Guardians and Swimmers.

- ❖ Social distancing needs to be maintained when entering and when exiting the swimming facility.
- ❖ One way entry/exit should be followed to restrict the amount of people entering and exiting at the same time.
- ❖ Appropriate signage should be in place around the facility.
- ❖ Where possible hand gel and sanitiser dispenser will be available to limit the spread on touchpoints around the building.
- ❖ Parents / guardians and swimmers should all arrive as close as possible to their lesson start time, they should not arrive too early to try and reduce the amount of people within the facility.
- ❖ Parents / guardians and swimmers should be encouraged to leave the facility after swimming, they should not congregate in the facility or changing areas after swimming.
- ❖ Use of the facility after the scheduled swimming lesson is temporarily suspended unless a specific appointment has been booked in accordance with the venue booking program.
- ❖ Only one parent / guardian per child should enter into the building.
- ❖ Swimmers arrive in their swimsuits.
- ❖ On arrival the reception may implement temperature checks.

Symptoms

Symptoms of COVID-19 can range from mild illness to pneumonia. Some people will recover easily, and others may get very sick very quickly. People with coronavirus may experience symptoms such as:

- ❖ Fever
- ❖ Coughing
- ❖ Sore throat
- ❖ Shortness of breath
- ❖ Loss of taste or smell
- ❖ Temperature above 37.5°C
- ❖ Fatigue
- ❖ Unusual muscle aches and pains
- ❖ Diarrhoea.

NHS Test and Trace Service

Should there be a confirmed case of COVID-19:

- ❖ Swim Now will assist the NHS Test and Trace service by keeping a temporary record of clients and visitors for 21 days.
- ❖ Assist with NHS Test and Trace's data on each attendee (name, home phone number or mobile number, date and time of entries and exit will be recorded) so that each person can be contacted if there is a case of COVID-19.

Entering and exiting the swimming facility - Teachers and staff

- ❖ Swimming teachers to arrive for their shift in uniform.
- ❖ Essential kit and equipment can be brought to the venue to use in the lesson but minimal personal items.
- ❖ Breaks between appointments must be taken away from the poolside AND reception area.
- ❖ Current COVID-19 related government restrictions as they apply to everyone are anyone who has:
 - a. Travelled overseas in the past 14 days (to specific countries)
 - b. Been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days.
 - c. Shown symptoms or signs of COVID-19 (as above), the swimming teacher **MUST** go for a test and provide a copy of the result before returning to work.
- ❖ Swimming teachers **MUST NOT** attend a lesson until proof of full recovery has taken place.
- ❖ Swimming teachers / swim school staff must notify the head office that they will not be able to work prior to contacting any client.
- ❖ Everyone entering the pool area should use hand sanitiser or wash their hands and minimise touch points while maintaining 2m social distance rules.

Social Distancing in the Workplace

Social distancing will be maintained in the leisure facility wherever possible. Where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full in relation to teaching all the mitigating actions possible should be taken to reduce the risk of transmission between staff and clients.

Mitigating actions include:

- ❖ Further increasing the frequency of hand washing and surface cleaning.
- ❖ Keep the activity time involved as short as possible.
- ❖ Social distancing applies to all parts of an organisation, not just the place where people spend most of their time, but also entrances and exits, break rooms, canteens and similar settings.

For the purposes of 'client flow'

- ❖ Only have one parent / guardian to accompany the swimmer to their lesson.
- ❖ Swimmers are to arrive dressed for their lesson.
- ❖ Swimmers Parents / guardians to arrive within five minutes of the scheduled class time.
- ❖ If they arrive early, ask them to wait in a designated (inside or outside) area depending on the layout of the facility in accordance with 2m social distancing rules.
- ❖ Once swimmers enter the facility they should wait (with their parent / guardian) until called by name to enter the pool area.
- ❖ At the end of the lesson, a parent / guardian could return to the door that the swimmer entered the pool area to retrieve their child.

On the poolside (including observation area)

- ❖ Social distancing must be maintained on the poolside and the observation area, throughout the changeover of lessons and during swimming lessons.
- ❖ Parents / guardians must be made aware of this before attending lessons. To ensure social distancing, parents / guardians may not be permitted onto the poolside during lessons.
- ❖ Siblings of swimmers who are not within a swimming lesson are not permitted to attend poolside.

The Teaching Environment

The primary risks within the lesson environment are:

- ❖ Transmission of virus swimmer to swimmer.
- ❖ Transmission of virus swimmer to swimming teacher.
- ❖ Transmission of virus swimming teacher to swimmer.
- ❖ Transmission of virus from swimming aids to swimmer / swimming teacher.

Factors that exacerbate this risk are:

- ❖ Swimming teachers manually assisting swimmers to achieve drill / skill progression exposing themselves face to face with the swimmer.
- ❖ Swimming teachers continue to work while displaying symptoms that could in fact be the COVID-19 virus.
- ❖ Swimmers attending lessons while displaying symptoms that could in fact be the COVID-19 virus.
- ❖ A-symptomatic swimmers and / or swimming teachers spreading the COVID-19 virus through close contact.
- ❖ Swimmers coughing, sneezing, heavily breathing on or around others in the lesson possibly transmitting the COVID-19 virus.

The General Teaching Environment

Swimming teachers are working in close contact and may at times be within 2 metres of a swimmer, for example if teaching from within the water. Working in close contact increases the risk of a swimming teacher and swimmer being exposed to COVID-19.

Due to the variations in pool sizes, shapes, depths and the swimmer's abilities, swim teachers may be unable to apply one approach to all lessons or all pools they deliver within. Teachers will need to look at each lesson and the pool it operates from, review the considerations, risk assess and then apply the appropriate considerations for that pool.

Teachers must consider whether the task must be completed or could be adapted. If the task must be completed and the swimming teachers will be in close contact, a risk assessment must be undertaken to determine what control measures are reasonably practicable in the circumstances to eliminate or minimise health and safety risks from COVID-19. If in doubt, always refer to the Government's latest guidance on 'Working Safely During COVID-19 which quotes: "You must maintain social distancing in the workplace where possible".

Equipment

- ❖ Remove, where possible, kick boards and teaching equipment until safe to use again.
- ❖ Where equipment is used, clean all items after each use.
- ❖ Equipment is to be cleaned in a sanitising solution following government cleaning protocols.
- ❖ No sharing of equipment between swimmers - discontinue the loan of goggles and encourage everyone to bring their own equipment.

Hygiene

- ❖ Swimming teachers should have access to hand gel on the poolside so they can regularly use it along with baby wipes for hands, noses etc.
- ❖ Where possible, swimmers are to manage their own hygiene and self-care such as blowing their nose, putting their goggles on, putting a swimming hat on, to reduce the need for physical contact.

Lesson Planning

- ❖ Not all lessons present the same risk.
- ❖ Teachers should categorise their clients into low, medium, and high exposure risk levels and plan activities accordingly.
- ❖ Lesson plans should be modified to reduce face to face teaching within 2m.

There are 3 types of proximity ratings:

- ❖ Space proximity lessons include swimmers who can complete skills and drills without requiring assistance from the swimming teacher in the water is sufficient that appropriate social distancing from other swimmers is maintained.
- ❖ Moderate proximity lessons include swimmers who can be unassisted from a water confidence point of view, but the swimming teacher needs to manually manipulate the swimmer in the water to help them attain / improve their skill.
- ❖ Close proximity lessons such as non-swimmer or beginner lessons, requiring the swimming teacher to manually assist the swimmer move in and out of the prone position as well as manually assisting them through the water and / or baby and preschool lesson that require an adult to be in the water.

Reducing close contact

- ❖ When performing breathing activities, where possible, encourage swimmers to turn to the side to breathe, away from others. Swimmers should not be blowing out towards other swimmers or standing and blowing bubbles in close proximity to other swimmers.
- ❖ Keep young swimmers 2 metres apart whilst stationary in the pool whilst a swimmer briefly moves / transitions past another swimmer i.e. minimum 1 metre (3 feet) as per WHO social distancing recommendations.

Specific Swimming Lesson Delivery

Specific guidance related to baby and pre-school lessons:

- ❖ Adults may support a baby, toddler or preschooler on a one to one basis, but there must still be sufficient pool space in order for the pair to socially distance from other pool users.
- ❖ One baby with one parent / guardian accounts for 'one' person when considering social distancing measures.
- ❖ Entry and exit into the pool, if possible allow adults to carry their child safely out of the pool or the swimming teacher may need to hold the child, where possible reduce the physical contact.
- ❖ Adults should stop babies, toddlers and preschoolers putting the toys and equipment in their mouths at any point.
- ❖ Ensure equipment used has been disinfected after use.

Pre-School, Non-Swimmers and Beginner Lessons

- ❖ Variables for preschool, non-swimmers and beginner lessons may be depending on the age of the swimmer, pool depth and pool size.
- ❖ Teachers may consider whether manual support may be required from within the water.
- ❖ A swimmers ability to stand in the pool.
- ❖ Young swimmers may not understand or be able to maintain social distance.
- ❖ They may be able to safely hold onto the poolside / handrail, in between swims.
- ❖ Teaching aids and equipment provided within the lesson should be reduced where not required.
- ❖ For swimmers who are unable to stand, using buoyancy aids to provide more support if teaching from the poolside.
- ❖ The parent / guardian can be in the water with the swimmer, to offer support and ensure social distancing.

Improver and Advanced Lessons Improver and advanced swimmers

- ❖ Swimmers may be older and understand how to stay apart from other swimmers,
- ❖ Markers on the poolside such as floats / pull buoys or toys to indicate where each swimmer should be and swim back to.
- ❖ When swimming in lanes, swimmers swim a length, climb out and walk to the starting point to maintain social distancing.
- ❖ Asking swimmers to bring their own equipment to the lesson where possible.

Protection for Swimming Teachers

- ❖ COVID-19 is a respiratory illness. It is spread between people who are in close contact and through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks.
- ❖ It is possible to get COVID-19 by touching a surface with the virus and then touching your face.
- ❖ There are several strategies for protecting swimming teachers. Swim Now will adhere to guidance, risk levels and safe work requirements. Implement control measures to eliminate or minimise the spread of COVID-19 and ensure the health and safety of their workers and others, a requirement under The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
- ❖ Swimming teachers should be assigned one zone in the pool to work / stay in for their entire shift.
- ❖ Lesson plans should be adjusted to deter face to face contact and assist with social distancing guidelines.
- ❖ Breath control skills should be performed with swimmers blowing to the side.
- ❖ Swimming teachers should maintain a side on teaching position, so they are not directly facing the swimmer.
- ❖ Swimming teacher to swimmer ratios are modified to reflect how many people can be allowed in the facility / building at one time.

Swim Teachers - PPE and Face Coverings

- ❖ Managing the risk of COVID-19 in the workplace involves social distancing, hygiene, NOT through the use of PPE.
- ❖ When managing the risk of COVID-19, additional PPE beyond what you would USUALLY wear is NOT beneficial.
- ❖ The government guidance states that “Workplaces should not encourage the precautionary use of extra PPE to protect against COVID-19 outside clinical settings or when responding to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19.”
- ❖ Where you are already using PPE in your work activity to protect against non-COVID-19 risks, you should continue to do so, i.e. as a first aider.
- ❖ The government guidance also states: “It is important to know that the evidence of the benefit of using a face covering to protect others is weak and the effect is likely to be small, therefore face coverings are NOT a replacement for the other ways of managing risk, including minimising time spent in contact, and increasing hand and surface washing.
- ❖ Wearing a face covering is optional and is not required by law, including in the workplace. If you choose to wear one, it is important to use face coverings properly and wash your hands before putting them on and taking them off.
- ❖ For swimming teachers, the wearing of a face covering may inhibit communication with swimmers who rely on lip reading, facial expressions and clear sound.

Lifesaving and First Aid Provision

The preservation of human life will always take priority over social distancing. Therefore, if a swimmer is in difficulty, the lifesaver must respond quickly and where required. Lifesavers and first aiders have a duty of care to preserve human life, therefore, if required lifesavers and first aiders will still perform CPR. For further guidance on COVID-19 CPR protocols from the UK Resuscitation Council.

<https://www.resus.org.uk/media/statements/resuscitation-council-uk-statements-on-COVID-19-coronavirus-cpr-and-resuscitation/covid-community/>

Conclusion

- ❖ Swim Now will stay up to date with official government guidance
- ❖ Appoint a COVID-19 Officer
- ❖ Conduct a risk assessment and plan for reducing contact
- ❖ Give advice that encourages coming to the pool ready to swim and showering before and after at home
- ❖ Determine a plan for use and disinfection of teaching equipment and toys
- ❖ Determine how any health screening of employees and / or swimmers will be conducted, and develop an enforcement plan and protocols for known or suspected COVID-1
- ❖ Train swimming teachers and office staff on COVID-19 awareness, employee safe workplace practices for handwashing, staying home if ill and reporting illness
- ❖ Create a training plan to update all staff on new policies, procedures and methods of class delivery
- ❖ Communicate and consult with clients.