

Monitoring Movement

All movements, transfers and dropouts must be recorded and notified to Swim Ireland through the membership system. Any trends or unusual movements should be monitored; these might indicate a developing issue or show an unusual movement of adults and/or young people between clubs.

Recording movements

If a young person's membership of Swim Ireland is not renewed there may be a reason for this. The young person should be contacted through their parents by the CCO to find out the reason for leaving or for moving clubs. This may be obvious, e.g. moving school or going to college, however it is important to ask as the young person has been a member of the club and part of the club community. It is also important for a club to know the reasons young people may leave or move on as this can help provide a better environment for young people. The young person has also contributed to the club on a personal level and this should be acknowledged.

The movement of adults between clubs should also be monitored, this can be achieved by using a proper recruitment process where previous or other current memberships will be stated. It is useful to obtain references from a previous or current club or region that the adult is involved with.

All dropouts, resignations or volunteers/staff that have been let go or any member that has had their membership revoked by a club or region must be notified to Swim Ireland.

Reasons for young people leaving

There are various reasons why young people leave or move out of a club, e.g. financial restraints, move away from the area, dislike the sport or the leaders. Some of these reasons are cause for concern and a club or region need to be aware of these, e.g. bullying, schoolwork, not feeling included in activities or competitions, not achieving their own goals within the sport, being shouted at, their friends left etc.

Harmful practices in sport such as over-training, high expectations or pressure can cause psychological stress, anxiety and burnout. This can show as sleep disturbance, irritability and a lack of energy. Young people will often show a change in behaviour, becoming frequently absent from their sport and/or showing signs of illness. The young person no longer has fun, becoming overwhelmed by the demands of the sport drops out of the sport altogether. The harmful practices may be as a result of the environment of the club or may be due to the pressure exerted by other factors; either way when a young person moves on it is important to find out the reason.

Creating the right environment

Leaders, coaches and parents are responsible for creating the right environment for young people to maximise their development in a sport and for achieving their goals.

Adults involved with young people should

- Never exert pressure on or have expectation for a young person to perform at a level beyond their capacity based on age or development – a young person's capability is best assessed by their coach in line with athlete development
- Ensure children are not over-trained or do not have demands placed on them to perform
- Allow a young person time to recover from an injury or illness; seeking medical advice will ensure the young person is fit to resume the activity
- Create an environment where young people feel safe
- Recognise weaker areas of a young person's ability and make sure these are not the main focus of training
- Encourage participation, without an over-emphasis on winning
- Ensure the use of sanctions is appropriate
- Recognise the benefits for young people who are supported, encouraged and included, and that criticism, use of inappropriate language or exclusion can cause psychological stress
- Encourage all performances and understand that disapproval can have a negative impact on a young person

A healthy environment and attitude to sport can be fostered in young people by ensuring their views are listened and heard, there is an emphasis on the development of their skills rather than winning and effort is rewarded whilst being allowed to participate in age appropriate activities.