

Spectator Behaviour Policy

Spectators can play a vital role in sport by encouraging and supporting young people to get the most out of their participation. However inappropriate behaviour from spectators can intimidate young people and may have a lasting negative effect.

Promoting positive behaviour

Clubs and regions can encourage positive behaviour from spectators by promoting a safe environment for young people taking part in the sport. Behaviour that is aggressive or threatening or breaches the code of conduct by any member, their family, friends or other leaders is not tolerated in Swim Ireland.

We do not expect spectators to an event or training session to sign a code of conduct on entry however, there will be others present who are subject to Swim Ireland codes of conduct and rules and these individuals are responsible for ensuring the positive and safe environment for young people. They should encourage positive behaviour in others, challenge or report negative behaviours that they witness or experience.

Behaviours that are encouraged

- Behaviour within the code of conduct (publish this in event information or have on a noticeboard in a facility)
- An emphasis on fair and respectful behaviour towards all participants
- Understanding training develops skills and confidence, it is not always about being the fastest or the best
- Support for all athletes to appreciate their work and effort in participating

Behaviours not tolerated include

- Breaching the code of conduct
- Bad language
- Making racist, sexist, religious or other inappropriate comments to or about other people.
- Threatening behaviour or physical altercations between individuals
- Making fun or harassing other individuals
- Pressurising young people to participate or mocking their performances
- Substance abuse at Swim Ireland activities or events

Members and spectators

Members and spectators are encouraged to

- Help create a positive atmosphere
- Show respect for others spectating or involved in an event or activity
- Speak to anyone who behaves inappropriately to stop the behaviour or report the behaviour to the person in charge
- Call the authorities if you are concerned for anyone's safety or for your own.

Parental behaviour

Parents are encouraged to remember:

- Their child is a person first and an athlete second
- Young people should be encouraged in their sport, not ridiculed or berated for mistakes
- Not to criticise your own child or others
- Not to make a public spectacle of themselves
- You are your child's parent not their coach
- To support coaches, officials, other members helping out
- To be a role model for others, including other parents
- Be on time for training sessions and activities, both dropping off and picking up

- Use appropriate language when around young people
- Encourage the whole team or squad, not just your own child
- Provide unconditional love during successes and failures

Person in charge

The person in charge is the person responsible for the events, session, competition or other activity. For example, during a training session this would be the coach, during a competition this would be the referee.

Dealing with issues

Events and activities must be planned so those involved know what to do in the event of any issues arising. Issues should be dealt with quickly and without upset for others attending. Dealing with issues concerning spectators at an event should also be discussed with the facility to ensure the plan in place is understood by all involved.

All incidents of alleged bad behaviour should be reported to the person in charge and, if appropriate, investigated at the time. A complaint or a disciplinary report can be submitted to the relevant complaint and disciplinary committee or a disciplinary for further consideration.

The person in charge may ask for help from other officials or leaders who are aware of the process for dealing with issues of spectator behaviour. It may be necessary due to the seriousness of the reported or witnessed behaviour to report to a statutory authority. The facility manager should also be informed where the issue is considered serious and has been reported to the statutory authorities. Where an individual or individuals are asked to leave due to their behaviour or concerns of safety to others the person in charge should request the help of the facility staff.