

# POLICY STATEMENT

## ISRM risk assessment guidance for child admission policies

ISRM have reviewed their guidance on child admission policies following concerns expressed by the general public that it has become increasingly difficult for them to swim with their children because of restrictive policies in place in some pools.

### **MOST SWIMMING POOLS HAVE GOT IT RIGHT BUT A FEW ARE STRUGGLING.**

Guidance issued in 2002 has therefore been redrafted in 2005 to make it clearer to all pool operators that they need to:

- a) **Risk assess pools and different types of pool use by children.**
- b) **Seek to find ways to help children come to pools rather than turning them away.**

The 2005 guidance therefore recommends that pool operators take into account:

- **The design, layout and type of pool, type of session and activities.**
- **The swimming ability and maturity of the children and whether approved armbands are being worn by non-swimmers.**
- **The number, qualifications and experience of the staff on lifeguard duty.**

Our new guidelines move away from the concept of a standard pool and start from a premise that all pools will be different and that at different times they will have different policies in place.

We also assume that any non-swimming children who cannot stand up in the pool will be wearing armbands and will be restricted to a designated and controllable non-swimmers area. Under these circumstances or where children can swim and do not require armbands we believe that one adult may be able to safeguard, either up to:

- Three children aged 4-7. **OR**
- Two children under the age of eight, where one or both may be under the age of 4.

***N.B. Most children under the age of 4 will be out of their depth in a 900mm deep pool.***

Not all armbands are as safe as those manufactured to approved standards. Managers should advise customers only to use armbands that are kite marked or carry a BS EN number and may perhaps even offer a range for sale or loan.

Our previous guidance started from the more hazardous situation of children who cannot stand up in the pool being unable to swim and not wearing armbands. In our further considerations we now think that it is unlikely that these circumstances should apply unless parents wish to take their children into deep water or wish them not to wear armbands – for instance when encouraging them to develop their swimming skills. If this happens then one adult should be with each child aged 0–3 or can supervise two children aged 4–7.

**Where pools are satisfied that they have got it right - no further action is required!**

*This policy statement only represents a brief summary of this important new guidance. The full 32 page colour document is now available for purchase from ISRM, priced at £15.00 per copy, (VAT zero rated, plus P&P). It features:*

1. *An explanation of how the guidance relates to current health and safety legislation.*
2. *ISRM's detailed advice on conducting risk assessments in relation to child admissions.*
3. *Case studies showing how successful child admissions policies have been implemented across the UK in different types of pool.*
4. *Exemplar risk assessment form detailing 13 major hazards for young children in a swimming pool.*
5. *"Frequently asked questions" typically posed by parents.*
6. *Water safety guidance from RoSPA*

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