



NEW GUIDANCE

STEP 4 – CHANGES IN ENGLAND

6th July 2021.
Version 1



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When England moves to Step 4 of the roadmap (provisional date of 19th July to be confirmed on 12th July), STA, as a governing body for swimming, will be withdrawing the [guidance set-out back in May 2020](#) for swim schools and leisure pool operators in England.

In line with the Government's stance, STA will be moving away from the pool reopening guidance recommended in May 2020, and instead will be advising STA members and partner swim school businesses on how they can work to protect themselves and their customers, and help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and mitigate the risk of a resurgence.

Here is the latest information (5th July 2021) published by the Government in preparation for Step 4, and a summary of what this will mean for swimming lessons in public and private pools (indoor and outdoor) in England if the easing of restrictions goes ahead as planned.

At Step 4:	What this means for Swimming Lessons in public and private pools
All remaining limits on social contact (currently 6 people or 2 households indoors, or 30 people outdoors) will be removed and there will be no more restrictions on how many people can meet in any setting, indoors or outdoors.	All limits in relation to participation numbers / the number of people permitted into a swim school at any one time / the number of spectators allowed will all be lifted – indoor and outdoor.
COVID-status certification will not be required in law as a condition of entry for visitors to any setting.	<p>Organisations (Swim Schools) are already able to ask visitors for proof of COVID-status, as long as they meet existing legal obligations including under equality law.</p> <p>The Government will be providing a way for individuals to easily demonstrate their COVID-status*, if a swim school chooses to independently mandate this. This can be achieved by a visitor providing evidence of completing a full vaccine course, a recent negative test, or proof of natural immunity – through the NHS COVID Pass on the NHS app.</p> <p>For swim schools that hire pools in schools, hotels etc., please seek guidance on the protocols the owner of the pool will be following.</p>

At Step 4:	What this means for Swimming Lessons in public and private pools
<p>The legal requirements to wear a face covering will be lifted in all settings. To help reduce the spread of COVID-19, published guidance will advise that wearing a face covering will reduce your risk and the risk to others, where you come into contact with people you don't normally meet in enclosed and crowded spaces.</p>	<p>To help reduce the spread of COVID-19, published guidance will advise that wearing a face covering will reduce your risk and the risk to others, where you come into contact with people you don't normally meet in enclosed and crowded spaces.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION: Swim schools to re-assess (and risk assess) if the wearing of face coverings in public areas is required – based on the population and layout of public areas / heavy traffic areas in your swim school.</p> <p>For swim schools that hire pools in schools, hotels etc., please seek guidance on the protocols the owner of the pool will be following.</p>
<p>Social distancing rules (2 metres or 1 metre with additional mitigations) will be lifted.</p>	<p>Class sizes can return to pre-COVID levels in line with STA's Code of Practice.</p> <p>Teaching in the water, if the swim school chooses, can also return without the need for social distancing measures, in line with STA's Code of Practice.</p> <p>Singing in baby swimming classes can resume.</p> <p>However, the Government do advise that you should continue to consider the risks of close contact with others in relation to the clinically extremely vulnerable or not yet fully vaccinated.</p>
<p>'Working Safely' guidance* will be updated to provide examples of sensible precautions that employers can take to reduce risk in their workplaces.</p>	<p>Employers should take account of this guidance in preparing the risk assessments they are already required to make under pre-pandemic health and safety rules.</p>

At Step 4:	What this means for Swimming Lessons in public and private pools
<p>Hygiene – Businesses will be encouraged to ask staff and customers to clean their hands regularly and clean surfaces that people touch regularly. The Government will provide guidance* on how businesses can reduce unnecessary contact in the workplace, where it is practical.</p>	<p>STA highly recommends swim schools continue to encourage staff and customers to clean their hands regularly, and that they continue to clean surfaces and shared pool equipment in line with pre-Step 4 COVID guidance.</p> <p>Pool Operators will also still be encouraged to consider the supply of fresh air to indoor spaces. Carbon dioxide (CO2) monitors could be used to help identify where a space is poorly ventilated with businesses encouraged to take steps to improve ventilation if CO2 readings are consistently high.</p>
<p>Businesses will be encouraged to display QR codes for customers to check in using the NHS COVID-19 app, to support NHS Test and Trace, although it will no longer be a legal requirement.</p>	<p>This is only a recommendation, not a legal requirement.</p>
<p>Self-isolation / attendance for workers and customers who feel unwell</p>	<p>Businesses must not require a self-isolating worker to come to work, and should have policies in place that ensure workers and customers who feel unwell do not attend the Swim School.</p>
<p>Self-isolation for those fully vaccinated and the under 18s: the Government announced (6th July) that people who have been fully vaccinated and those under 18 years who are close contacts of a positive case are exempt from the requirement to self-isolate from 16th August. If someone gets their second dose just before or just after 16th August, they will have to wait for two weeks to build up the maximum protection in order to be exempt.</p>	<p>NOTE: Anyone who tests positive will still need to self-isolate regardless of their vaccination status.</p>

The Government has made it clear, that lifting restrictions does not mean that the risks from COVID-19 have disappeared. Instead, they say “it marks a new phase in the Government’s response to the pandemic during which people need to manage the risks to themselves and others as the country learns to live with the virus”. They also set out how the following behaviours are beneficial:

1. Meeting in well-ventilated areas where possible, such as outdoors or indoors with windows open.
2. Wearing a face covering where you come into contact with people you don’t normally meet in enclosed and crowded spaces.
3. Washing your hands with soap and water or using hand sanitiser regularly throughout the day.
4. Covering your nose and mouth when you cough and sneeze.
5. Staying at home if unwell, to reduce the risk of passing on other illnesses onto friends, family, colleagues, and others in your community.
6. Considering individual risks, such as clinical vulnerabilities and vaccination status.

Ultimately, when the Government activates Step 4, swimming lessons in England can return to pre-COVID codes of practice. However, some swim schools may choose to continue some of the current COVID protocols, even though they are no longer legally enforceable – that will be down to the individual Swim School to decide and risk assess. It will also be important to respect and be considerate of those who may wish to take a more cautious approach as restrictions are lifted.

Further information on ‘COVID-19 Response: Summer 2021’ is available at <https://www.gov.uk/Government/publications/covid-19-response-summer-2021-roadmap/covid-19-response-summer-2021>

Where further updates are expected as marked above with *, STA will continue to update members and swim school partners.