

The SAA advises Clubs that they can, if they so desire, accept junior members and train them according to the SAA programme.

This policy on junior divers balances the need for the SAA to provide guidance for Clubs, whilst acknowledging the fact that each Club is independent.

The welfare of the young, and other vulnerable groups, is a central part of the SAA's policy. There is little research available into the effects of depth and pressure on young, developing bodies in respect of propensity to DCI, PFOs, effects on bone development, vision development etc. This guidance is designed to reflect all this, and to keep juniors as safe as is reasonable whilst still allowing meaningful training.

The SAA suggests that all Dive Leaders diving with junior members should be SAA Diver Rescue qualified and CRB checked. All SAA Instructors are encouraged to be CRB checked, and all Club officers are reminded they are able to utilise the free CRB checking service for their Instructors and other appropriate members.

However, it is the sole responsibility of the Club to determine whether an individual is an appropriately qualified adult and/ or whether to follow the SAA's suggestions regarding CRB checks and / or having the SAA Diver Rescue qualification. It is recommended that the Club's decision making process should be recorded in the appropriate risk assessment.

If junior members are accepted and trained:-

- The written permission of the parents must be obtained
- The Club DO should exercise their discretion and judgement as to whether the junior member is suitable for diver training.
- The junior member must be big enough, strong enough, and fit enough to handle the diving equipment with safety and to pass the tests, including the medical aspects.
- The junior member should be supervised at all times by an appropriate adult.
- Junior divers are limited to safety stop diving only (first BT envelope on DeeP-Stop tables).
- All junior divers should have a day off after 3 consecutive days diving.
- Young people are more prone to cold than adults, so the DO should consider water temperature when determining dive times, and ensure that adequate and appropriate thermal protection is used by the junior diver both in, and above, the water.
- Junior divers under the age of 16 years should dive with their parent / guardian, or with a suitably qualified person specifically approved by the junior diver's parent / guardian, as recommended by the Club DO.
- Junior divers aged 16 years, or over, may dive with any suitably qualified Dive Leader – i.e. the Dive Leader does not need to be specifically approved by the parent.
- Club DOs should consider junior divers qualifying as SAA Snorkel Divers prior to commencing SCUBA training to increase in water confidence, stamina etc.
- Skills course coordinators have the right to not accept a junior onto the course, or take the junior off the course, if, in their opinion, that junior is not able to safely complete all aspects

of the course. In that case the coordinator may retain a reasonable proportion of the course fee to cover legitimate expenses.

- On reaching the age of 18 a member is no longer a "junior".

Training can commence at 10 years old for SCUBA providing the following recommendations are adhered to.

1. Age 10 to 11. Can participate in try-dives. Snorkel and scuba training in pool only. Depth restriction of 3 metres.
2. Age 12 – 13. SCUBA training with a depth restriction of 10 metres. Can qualify to Open Water Diver. Limited to 1 dive per day maximum, and at least 1 day off after 3 consecutive days diving.
3. Age 14 -15. Depth restriction of 20 metres. Limited to 1 dive per day maximum, and at least 1 day off after 3 consecutive days diving. Can attend SAA Diver First Aid, SAA Chartwork and Navigation and SAA Basic Boat Handling courses (Please ensure that your boat is insured for young cox'ns). Can attend SAA Basic Nitrox course on reaching 15 years old.
4. Age 16 – 17. Depth restriction of 25 metres. Limited to 2 dives per day maximum, and at least 1 day off after 3 consecutive days diving. Can qualify to Club Diver. Can attend SAA Diver Rescue course (but course coordinators need to make plain the effects of the 2 dives per day limit on the controlled buoyant lift assessment).
5. Age 18 – No further restrictions other than for adults.

These recommendations are to be reviewed from time to time along with the UK Sports Divers Medical Committee.

Junior divers can apply for a CMAS card at the age of 14 yrs once they have reached the appropriate diving grade.

Clubs who have junior members must comply with the SAA's Child Protection Policy in section 7 of the Club Guidance Manual and carry out a risk assessment in relation to junior divers. In Scotland - must comply with relevant child legislation. At present there is no charge for CRB checks. These can be arranged by contacting SAA Head Office.

Parental consent to training:-

Club No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Club Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Members name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/guardians name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please tick as appropriate;

**I agree to my son/daughter, aged under 18 years old, undertaking training in SCUBA diving. I also agree to the conditions mentioned above.**

**I understand that SCUBA diving is a physical sport conducted in an alien environment, and that, despite all policies and guidelines being adhered to, there is still a risk of injury, including decompression illness. I have discussed the ramifications of the potential for injury with the Club's Diving Officer and I accept that risk.**

Parent/guardians signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_