

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 document reflects the latest guidance from the UKSDMC and is designed to keep juniors as safe as possible 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, both above and below the surface, by an appropriate adult.
- Junior divers under 14 are limited to safety stop diving only (first BT envelope on SAA Buhlmann DeeP-Stop tables).
- Junior divers under 14 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.
- Club DOs should consider junior divers qualifying as SAA Snorkel Divers prior to commencing SCUBA training to increase in water confidence, stamina etc.
- Robust Risk Assessments should be in place to the satisfaction of the Club DO in respect of every dive involving junior divers, specifically considering the vulnerability of the junior to cold, effects of carrying equipment, emotional and physical wellbeing etc.
- Diving Officers must consider carefully the depths, number of dives, task loads and emotional pressure placed on junior divers and should constantly err on the side of caution (for example in relation to depths and number of dives), ensure they dive conservatively and do not push the boundaries of this guidance. DOs also retain the right to progress junior divers in their Club at a slower rate than permitted in this policy.
- The references to "most conservative tables available" should be read as SAA Buhlmann DeeP-Stop tables for SAA Club Dives.
- 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.

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 15 metres. Can qualify to SAA Open Water Diver. Limited to 2 dives per day maximum, must dive on most conservative tables available or most conservative setting on computer, and have at least 1 day off after 3 consecutive days diving
3. Age 14 -17. May qualify as SAA Dive Leader, depth restriction of 35m, may not lead divers of less than SAA Club Diver level and note restrictions regarding adult supervision. Must dive on most conservative tables available or most conservative setting on computer. Recommended to have 1 day off after 3 days diving. Can attend SAA Diver First Aid, SAA Chartwork and Navigation and SAA Basic Boat Handling courses. Can attend SAA Nitrox course on reaching 15 years old and SAA Diver Rescue course from 16 years.
4. Junior divers may not qualify as Instructors.
4. Age 18 – No further restrictions other than for adults.

These recommendations are to be regularly reviewed in consultation with the UK Sports Divers Medical Committee and the SAA's medical advisor.

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 robust 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 with Club Name: _____ ("the Club")

Club No.: _____ Child's name: _____

Child's address _____

Age / Date of Birth _____ Gender _____

Emergency Contact number _____

Parent/guardians name: _____

Please tick as appropriate;

- ☐ **I agree to my son/daughter ("my child"), 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 decompression illness, injury or death. I have discussed the ramifications of the potential for injury, or death, with the Club's Diving Officer and I accept that risk.**
- ☐ **I have read, and agree to, the terms and conditions overleaf.**

Parent/guardians signature: _____ Date: _____

Junior Divers – “Terms and Conditions”

In consideration of permitting my child named above to enrol and participate in scuba diving activities and any other related activities conducted by the Club named above I, for myself and on behalf of my child, and our personal representatives and all assigns, heirs, and next of kin hereby undertake, acknowledge, agree, declare and/or confirm that:

- (a) Scuba diving:
 - (i) is a potentially dangerous activity and involves the risk of serious injury and/or death and/or property damage;
 - (ii) with compressed air involves certain inherent risks and my child will be exposed to these risks and that decompression sickness, embolism or other hyperbaric injuries can occur which require treatment in a recompression chamber and that this activity may be conducted at a site that is remote, either by time or distance or both, from such a recompression chamber; and
 - (iii) is a physically strenuous activity and that my child will be exerting him/herself during this activity;
 - (b) my child is in a good state of health and fitness and I know of no reason concerned with his/her health and fitness why he/she should not be able safely to participate in scuba diving activities; and
 - (c) it is solely my responsibility to evaluate whether my child should participate in scuba diving activities and based upon my knowledge of the mental, physical and emotional abilities of my child, as well as his/her medical history; and
 - (d) I am the parent or legal guardian of the child named above and have full authority to sign this document and that I do not require the consent of any other party to do so.
2. I hereby personally assume all risks for any harm, injury or damage in connection with or that may befall my child while participating in the scuba diving activities and any other related activities, including all risks connected therewith, whether foreseen or unforeseen.
 3. I hereby release, waive and discharge the Club and the Sub-Aqua Association and any facility where this activity is conducted (if applicable) and their respective directors, officers, employees, members, instructors and agents from all liability to myself or my child, my and our personal representatives and all assigns, heirs and next of kin for any and all loss or damage, and any claim or demands now and forever arising out of or related to my child's participation and/or instruction in such scuba diving activities or any other related activities that may occur.
 4. As the parent or legal guardian of the child, I am signing this document on my own behalf and on behalf of my child and agree to be specifically bound to and by all of the terms and conditions set out in this document.
 5. I confirm that I have read and fully understand all terms set out in this document and that I am aware of its legal consequences and the waiver of rights provided therein. I have signed this declaration freely and voluntarily without any inducement, assurance, or guarantee being made to me and intend my signature to be a complete and unconditional release of all liability to the greatest extent allowed by law.
 6. This document shall be governed by English law and I submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the English courts.

Signature of parent _____

Date _____