



What you need to know about buoyancy aids

“Approved floatation devices”

Approved floatation devices are those that comply with BSN 13138 part 1 - Buoyant Aids for Swimming Instruction.

This standard lays down the various tests that any floatation device must pass before it is approved including buoyancy and strength. It warns that armbands should be worn under competent supervision and should be worn on the upper arm only. Approved armbands are endorsed with the European Standard EN 13138-1:2003.

What constitutes an approved floatation device that we accept at our pools

Floatation devices accepted in our pool

Armbands

Good training aid, ensure that you have the correct size for your child, this will reduce the likelihood of them slipping off and will provide the correct buoyancy for your child.

Arm discs

Helpful aid, as the swimmer progresses, the number of discs can be reduced. Ensure that they are fitted and not loose.

Swim jackets and belts

Contain floats and are helpful in giving children confidence in water whilst learning to swim. A buoyancy jacket also offers an extra layer of warmth to the child. Some have removable floats so that the level of flotation can be decreased as the child's swimming ability increases. Ensure that your child is wearing the correct size as the amount of buoyancy in each aid will vary according to size.

BS EN 13138:2003 is the number of the British standard for buoyant aids for swimming instruction, look for this number on any flotation aid that you buy. The aid should also carry the following warnings:

"Use only under competent supervision"

"Will not protect against drowning"

"To be worn on upper arm only"
(for armbands)

These warnings emphasise the fact that you should not rely on flotation devices as a substitute for supervision. Children can remove jackets and armbands and slip into the water very quickly.

Floatation devices **NOT** accepted in our pool or only with 1:1 direct supervision

Rings

They require a child to hold onto them for support and are only suitable for children that have some swimming ability. Generally these are used as toys to encourage water confidence and their use should be directly supervised.

Swim seats for very young children

Like bath seats, these can engender false confidence in the supervisor. They still require constant supervision as they can tip over, or the child may wriggle out of them. Do not leave a child unsupervised in such a seat.

Pool Noodles

They require a child to hold onto them for support and are only suitable for children that have some swimming ability. Generally these are used to encourage water confidence and their use should be directly supervised.