



Section A: Clear vs. Unspoken Boundaries

Mini-lesson objectives

- Show that personal comfort can differ, but minimum safety lines must be clear and shared.
- Move from “everyone just knows” to explicit, team-wide norms.
- Emphasize that unspoken consent does not count.

Key teaching points

- Some boundaries are personal.
Comfort with hugs, teasing, or certain locker-room behaviors can vary based on swimmer, family, culture, and past experience. It is okay for swimmers to have different comfort levels.
 - Other boundaries must be universal.
On every team, no matter the culture, there should be clear lines:
 - No sexualized comments about bodies or swimsuits.
 - No secret one-on-one meetings or car rides.
 - No pressure to accept touch or “go along with it.”
 - No punishment, eye-rolling, or loss of opportunities for saying no.
 - Unspoken norms leave some swimmers least protected.
When the “rules” are just “how we do things here,” newer, younger, or marginalized swimmers are most likely to misunderstand expectations or be pushed past their comfort. That is why teams must say their safety rules out loud, write them down, and repeat them often.
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Section B: What Is a “Normal” Boundary in Swimming?

Mini-lesson objectives

- Describe what healthy, typical boundaries look like in a swim setting.
- Contrast healthy coaching behaviors with red-flag situations.

Healthy or “normal” boundaries

- **Hands-on stroke correction is explained, visible, and optional.**
A coach says what they will do first (“I’m going to tap your shoulder to show where to



rotate”), does it where others can see, and respects a swimmer who refuses or asks for another option.

- **Changing and showering practices protect privacy.**

No photos or filming in locker rooms or showers, no mocking of bodies, and clear separation between youth and adult spaces. Swimmers are allowed to use towels, changing ponchos, or stalls.

- **Communication follows team channels and appropriate times.**

Coaches use team apps, group chats, or email rather than secret or flirty private messages. Late-night, one-on-one DMs with minors are not part of normal coaching.

Red-flag boundary crossings

- Sexual, body-shaming, or “joking” comments about bodies, swimsuits, or development.
- Requests or pressure to be alone with a coach, ride alone, or keep interactions secret.
- Touch that is not clearly related to coaching, is hidden from view, or focuses on private areas.

Section C: Rules to Be Put in Place

Mini-lesson objectives

- Turn ideas about boundaries into concrete, written team rules.
- Show that rules support, rather than replace, everyday judgment.

Sample swim-team rules

1. **Explained and optional contact**
 - Coaches explain any physical contact in advance and get a clear yes.
 - Swimmers can refuse or ask for a different method without losing playing time or respect.
2. **Observable, interruptible one-on-one time**
 - One-on-one meetings happen only in spaces that are open, visible, and easy for others to enter.
 - Doors stay open or windows uncovered so interactions can be seen.
3. **Locker-room and shower safety**
 - No photos or videos in locker rooms or showers.
 - The team states consequences for violations ahead of time and actually follows them.
4. **Safe communication channels**
 - Team information is shared through agreed platforms (team app, email, group text).



- Private social-media connections between coaches and minors are limited, monitored, or moved to public channels.
5. **Clear reporting pathways**
- Every swimmer and parent receives simple, written information about how to raise a concern, who to talk to, and what steps will follow.
 - The process is designed to protect the swimmer from retaliation.
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Section D: What Is Real Consent?

Mini-lesson objectives

- Define real consent in a sport context.
- Explain how power and pressure can make a “yes” not truly free.

Core classroom definition

Real consent is a **clear, informed, and freely given “yes”** from a person who understands what is happening, has real options, and knows they can change their mind at any time.

Key teaching points for swimming

- **Consent is specific.**
Agreeing to one type of touch (for example, a shoulder tap to show rotation) does *not* mean agreeing to other types of touch or any personal comments.
- **Consent must be free of pressure.**
Statements like “serious swimmers don’t say no to this” or “if you refuse, you might lose your spot” remove real choice. A “yes” given under threat, guilt, or pressure is not true consent.
- **Power differences matter.**
Coaches control training plans, playing time, recommendations, and opportunities. Because of that power, athletes may say “yes” out of fear, obligation, or hope for advancement. Adults have the extra responsibility to guard that power and never use it to push past boundaries.
- **Silence is not consent.**
Freezing, staying quiet, nervous laughter, or going along because “everyone else is” do not equal a clear “yes.” The absence of “no” is not enough.
- **Consent can be withdrawn.**
A swimmer can change their mind at any point—even during an interaction they previously agreed to. When someone says “stop,” “wait,” or “I’m not okay with this anymore,” the interaction must end immediately, without punishment.