

12th June 2020

Corvid-19 Update

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Before we start I am going to say this letter may be quite large. However, I make no apologies for this—I've always said we will be open and honest with everybody and want that to continue now. Therefore, if you are in a rush you may wish to come back later!

Firstly, I hope you are all well and managing with the current lock-down guidance. I certainly never saw that day where we'd lose a full term's worth of lessons for a virus! I am very pleased to say that although we have some staff who are currently shielding, we are all safe and well and surviving what is the 'new norm'!

I am aware it has been a long time since we've been able to update you about the lessons so now that we have **some** guidance and clarity I thought I'd bring you up to speed. We are of the understanding that more guidance is due for release on Monday.

Before I do that, however, I have a few thank-yous to make. This is to the handful of parents who have messaged, emailed or called and asked us to not refund back the money for missed sessions in March, or, some of the fees for this term. As we've said previously all our staff are furloughed meaning they are all being paid. While the Government does give us the money for this keeping the scheme running (i.e. paying our accountants/insurance etc.) as well as the upcoming reductions in furlough pay means we are going through quite a bit of cash at present. We are also having to spend lots to make sure everybody will be safe when we restart our lessons. Sadly, other than the furlough scheme we do not qualify for any government grants at all—we are one of those businesses who has 'slipped through' due to owning no premises. So, once again, from me, thank you from the bottom of my heart. My faith in humanity has been restored!

At present we know that pools are unable to open, by law, until the 5th of July at the earliest. Although we are not planning on opening then due to the fact it would mean only 2 weeks of lessons before closure for the summer while working towards this date we have started to receive provisional guidance from the Swimming Teachers Association (STA) and Royal Lifesaving Society around reopening. We have started using this to put together our 'Corvid-19 Safety plans' in place so that we are in a position to go to our insurers and say "we are ready to open". Some guidance is still missing and not due out until the 15th of June from SwimEngland. Once we get this we can put the final plans together and start, hopefully, moving forward.

We have put together a very short survey to ask what people's initial views and thoughts are around reopening and to try and gauge any concerns or worries you have. This is available at <http://iatde.co.uk/survey> and should take less than a minute to complete. This survey will close on **21st June 2020**. All results will be shared in our Facebook group.

The Current Term (i.e. April to July 2020)

- As I said above, we've decided to cancel this term—it doesn't seem worthwhile to run a lesson or two before stopping for the summer. This means there will be no further direct debits taken for this term (the May and June ones have been cancelled) ALL money taken for lessons, including credits from March, is available to view online at <http://portal.inatthedepend.com> (unless you requested we do not apply it).
- All money will be rolled over to the Sept. 2020 term once we re-start. We will contact everybody directly with more information around that as we've not yet decided on a definitive start date
- If you are on direct debit the earliest payment we will take will be August 2020 if you have any fees outstanding;
- We have not yet worked out how many weeks the Sept. term will run for. However, most people will likely owe a small balance towards this term due to it being the longest term we run (15 weeks as an example in 2019 compared to 12 weeks for January and April 2020)
 - Just to be clear most people on direct debit will owe some money as only 50% of fees were claimed for the April term. However, all current balances can be seen via the Portal as detailed above.

Thoughts for the Sept. 2020 Term

Based on the guidance we currently have we are considering the following:

- Introducing hand-cleaning stations
- Making groups smaller to help with social distancing
- Introducing one-way systems in to and out of the changing facilities
- Allowing siblings to swim together in the same groups even if they are not necessarily of the same ability to try and reduce contacts between families
- Staff are going to be provided with their own 'grab bags' of essentials so that they do not need to share
- Increased cleaning and disinfectant of floats/armbands etc.
- Giving parents the option to purchase a child's own equipment (armbands/TurtlePacks etc.)
- "Sneeze barriers" available for staff at enrolment desks.

Towelling Robes

As part of our risk assessments for staff, we identified that changing was a big area where we are going to struggle to manage social distancing. To help reduce the social distancing risks to staff we are purchasing them towelling robes. These are intended to be large enough that you simply put them on over the top of your swimming costume and go home in. We have managed to source some for our staff at highly discounted rates that are amazing. They are huge and superb quality... So much so the large one even fits me (Mark!) ... And anybody who has met me knows that's not easy to do ;o)

The brand we have chosen is RedRobes as they are intended to be used outdoors for open water swimming (in lakes, lochs etc.) and so really help keep the wind out. We trialed out these on our Facebook group and were amazed at the uptake!

We firmly believe that if even a handful of people used these within each session it would reduce the crowds within changing rooms dramatically.

These robes are available now at our online shop for at least a 15% discount to going direct.

We must order in batches of 10 and our first order will be going in on the 10th of July—so if you would like to get one as part of this initial deal please make sure you order before then.

Facebook

If you didn't already know we do have a small Facebook group available for swimmers and their parents or guardians only. Here you can ask questions and we can remind you about things as they happen. We will also give the results of our survey out here. If you are on Facebook why not join over at www.facebook.com/groups/iatde?

Don't panic if you are not on Facebook we also replicate everything to our main website: www.inatthedepend.com.

And finally...

Once again thank you to everybody—this pandemic has just shown us what an amazing set of people we deal with. From the people giving money to us to make sure we can trade to those who just keep sending messages making sure we are OK you are all amazing and we cannot wait to be back in the pool soon!

As always though we realise this is a very stressful and confusing time for many and we do not want to add to that. Should you have any questions, thoughts, comments or even ideas around this or offers of help for us as a business etc. please do not hesitate to contact us. We are more than willing to chat through the contents of this letter with you as well as our re-opening plans once they are in place.

If this is something you'd like to do please drop us a message via Facebook chat, an email to admin@inatthedepend.com or on phone to 0800 8403084. Due to home schooling (!) replies are taking time, but we will get back to everybody as soon as possible!

Yours sincerely,

Mark, Kim and the whole team.