

The Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School



Swimming Policy and Guidance 2019

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Introduction

The guidance below is written to support schools using either public swimming facilities or those owned by other schools. This is additional guidance to supplement the Local Authority PE & Sport guidance (which is in fact the AfPE safe practice in PE & Sport Document).

Schools owning and hiring their own pools have additional responsibilities and are advised to take note of the specific advice provided below. References are to AfPE Safe Practice in Physical Education 2012.

Legislation

Duty of care

- a) Everyone is required to take reasonable care in any situation to try to foresee that others are not harmed by their actions or omissions.
- b) All teachers must operate this duty when they have children in their care. This applies to all activities within the school curriculum, to extra-curricular activities during or outside normal school hours, whether on or away from school premises. **The duty of care for pupils involved in swimming remains at all times with the teacher.**
- c) Teachers with this legal responsibility must exercise the same duty of care, as would a reasonable parent in the school situation. In the case of pupils at recreational and sports centres with pools this overarching legal responsibility remains with the accompanying teachers and cannot be delegated to instructors or coaches acting on behalf of the teacher.

Risk Assessment

- a) Each school should carry out a risk assessment on the provision of swimming lessons or other pool activities. This should address issues relating to transport to and from the centre, teacher / pupil supervision ratios, supervision in changing rooms, poolside supervision, provision of lifeguards and any particular behavioural or medical needs of pupils.

Roles and Responsibilities

- The responsibility for teaching of swimming lies with the instructors at the poolside **and not the accompanying teachers / staff**
- Owners and operators of swimming pools must follow the general duties and responsibilities in the Health & Safety at Work act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety in the Work Place regulations 1992. They are obliged to take all reasonable and practicable measures to ensure teaching and coaching activities are conducted safely (Safe Supervision in Pools doc.)

The minimum requirement for swimming instructors is level 1, however they must be supervised by a level 2 instructor or above. A level 2 instructor can take up to a maximum of 20 children. For beginners this should be limited to 12 children. **This includes schools that employ their own instructors.**

Environment and equipment

- a) Where schools use public swimming facilities it is reasonable to expect that operators of the pool will provide a safe working environment for the lesson to take place. When pool closures due to unavoidable circumstances result in a school swimming session being cancelled the centre will endeavor to contact the school with as much notice as possible. Schools patience and understanding with this situation is appreciated;
- b) The centre is responsible for the provision of qualified staff to provide support and back up in the event of an incident / emergency and the provision and upkeep of all emergency equipment and alarm systems. They will also provide essential life saving cover;
- c) The employed swimming instructor will be responsible for ensuring that all pupils know the signals to be used for any communications required;
- d) The accompanying teachers will also need to know these signals and ensure that they know, and implement, the normal operating procedures and the emergency action plan for the facility being used;
- e) During an incident, first aid or fire evacuation for example, the centre staff will take charge of the situation and school staff should follow their instructions;
- f) Teachers have a duty to react to any unacceptable changes in the pool environment and to protect their pupils accordingly. Examples include:
 - Overcrowding by the public
 - Unruly / dangerous behaviour by other swimmers
 - Lack of poolside attendants / life saving cover
 - Lack of life belts and other essential emergency equipment
 - Poor water clarity / chemical balance.
- g) The teacher and/or instructor should be able to see all pupils throughout the lesson; the teacher / school staff should remain on the poolside to provide an assisting role.
- h) The teacher and/or instructor should not enter the water if this leaves no supervising adult on the side of the pool, except in emergencies;
- i) The teacher is responsible for registering or counting the pupils, both before and after the lesson;
- j) Each individual school must consider the issues of who accompanies the pupils to the pool and ensure that changing rooms are adequately, and appropriately, supervised. It is advisable that 1 male and 1 female member of staff are available from the school for supervision. If this is not feasible then schools using volunteers e.g. parents, must carry out their own risk assessment regarding the appropriate use of these volunteers to safeguard the welfare and safety of pupils, including carrying out a DBS check of adults other than teachers (AOTT) prior to their deployment by the school. It must be understood that voluntary helpers cannot be left in sole charge of young people and cannot act in loco parentis;
- k) The teacher is responsible for the discipline of pupils both in and out of the pool;
- l) In the event of a serious incident the accompanying teacher should contact the Headteacher who should inform the parents concerned and the Strategic Director for Children & Young People, and may wish to refer to the '**Managing the response to critical incidents in schools**' booklet for further guidance. Accidents should be reported in accordance with the Accident Incident Policy,

- m) In any pool the pupil / teacher ratio should be that it safely meets the varying risks imposed by the pool environment. A ratio of 1:15 is deemed reasonable but, as specific situations will vary, each school must carry out their own risk assessment to determine the maximum safe ratio of pupils to swimming teachers in collaboration with the instructor. It is advised that the maximum ratio does not exceed 1:20. For beginners this should be limited to 12 children.
- n) All adults accompanying students to aquatics lessons should:
- Have a clear role
 - Understand the limits of the role
 - Be confident on the poolside
 - Communicate with other adults on safety issues
 - Have the necessary discipline and control standards
 - Regularly carry out head counts during, as well as at the beginning and end of, sessions
 - Know, understand and be able to apply the pool normal operating procedures and emergency action plan
 - Be suitably dressed for the role they are to play in the lesson

Teachers should not be deployed to aquatics responsibilities who:

- Lack confidence in the role
- Cannot swim
- Are reticent about being on the poolside

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If there are pupils with special educational needs within the group then the ratio should be reduced. A suitable ratio may also be dependent upon travel arrangements to the pool.

- a) Goggles or masks should only be allowed in school swimming lessons with the permission of the school;
- b) In the rare instance where an individual has particularly sensitive eyes or wears lenses, the school should require a parental letter stating that the pupil has particular needs to warrant the use of goggles. Such a letter would have the status of simply being informative and not constitute any form of indemnity should injury arise later through the misuse of goggles. Additional medical certification is costly and should not be sought as this information is likely to have been previously recorded in the child's records;
- c) When swimming at competition level, and during long, regular training sessions, swimming goggles are an important item of the swimmer's equipment. They can help to maintain the required body position and help improve vision through the water;
- d) In contrast to this, within short curriculum swimming lessons (typically 20 – 25 minutes water time) for beginners and those improving their swimming, goggles are not considered to be necessary in most cases, however goggles can help to maintain the required body position and help improve vision through the water. Pupils learning to swim or improving their ability often do not swim in straight lines, become close together and clash heads or hit each other with arms whilst swimming, causing possibly more severe eye injuries;
- e) If the water time greatly exceeds 25 minutes then schools should consider whether the use of goggles is deemed necessary and state so in their swimming policy;
- f) In cases where the use of goggles may be permitted, the reasons for the decision should be fully explained in the risk assessment;
- g) Dependency on goggles for underwater swimming is not a factor in being judged to be safe in water, neither are goggles designed for such activity as the pressure cannot be relieved;

- h) Where goggles are used, they should be made of unbreakable plastic or rubber materials and pupils should be taught to remove them by slipping off the head and not by stretching the retaining band, as wet plastic is slippery and may cause injury to the eye area. Where goggles are not properly fitted they may mist up and adversely affect visibility. The instructor's advice on approved types of goggles should be sought for children who have been advised to wear them for medical reasons only;
- i) Given the potential injury, the adult responsible for the group should have the prerogative to require the pupil to remove the goggles for reason of safety if the pupil constantly adjusts or removes and replaces them. The adult / teacher is not responsible for fitting or adjusting a child's goggles; and
- j) Parents and carers should be informed when they request the wearing of goggles because of their child's particular need, the adult in charge retains the prerogative to require the removal of the goggles for reasons of safety.

Swimwear – pupils should wear appropriate swimwear in line with the facility policy i.e. costumes / trunks or shorts designed for the purpose of swimming.

Instruction

- k) The responsibility for the teaching of swimming lies with the instructors at the poolside.
- l) The teacher is responsible for ensuring that the lesson content delivered by the instructor is appropriate for the age and ability of the children and is compliant with national curriculum requirements for the key stage concerned.
- m) Teachers/accompanying staff may only assist with the teaching of swimming if they are confident to do so and:
 - 1) If they hold a swimming teachers qualification (minimum ASA Level 1 Teachers or National Curriculum module) and have recent hands on delivery and experience. Evidence of which must be provided to the Swimming Development Manager and a school swimming agreement must be signed prior to any assistance.
 - 2) Only in collaboration with, and in agreement with, the instructor, who will remain in charge of delivering the swimming lesson.
 - 3) In the case where a qualified teacher is supporting instruction within the criteria above, they should not be asked work within individual swimmers away from the main group
- 4) **Pupils with special educational or medical needs**
 - a) Where swimming involves young people with special educational needs the class size should be reduced to take account of the age, ability and experience of the pupils. For individual pupils with specific difficulties a risk assessment must be undertaken and a plan / procedure in place to deal with any eventuality.
 - b) Teachers in charge of pupils with special educational needs must:
 - i) know the nature of the child's learning problem, disability, emotional or behavioural disorder
 - ii) be aware of any constraints on physical activities as a result of the disability or regime of medication
 - iii) be able to provide the necessary emergency treatment if physical activity exacerbates the problem
 - c) Pupils with serious medical problems need clearance through the written permission of parents before they can be allowed to participate in school swimming programmes.

This information should be conveyed to the Swimming Development Manager in written format along with a copy of the schools risk assessment for that pupil so that all information is shared and plans / procedures agreed and understood by everyone.

Specific safety factors:

- Pupils with epilepsy should at all times be observed from the poolside and should work alongside a responsible person in the water when out of their depth. Shimmering water or flickering light may trigger an attack.
- Children must not be strapped in wheelchairs whilst at the side of the pool, or left unattended whilst in the pool area.
- Asthma: swimming is beneficial but endurance work should be avoided. Inhalers should be taken with the pupil.
- Cardiac conditions: special consideration should be given to the temperature of the water and safety aspects and procedures in cases where children become exhausted.
- Eczema: some children will be sensitive to chlorinated water; discussion with parents should take place prior to participation.
- Visual impairment: children who wear spectacles should be made aware of the geography of the pool e.g. Depth, points of entry and exit, rails. The use of prescription goggles could assist during the lesson.
- In most cases swimming is a beneficial activity for pupils with special educational needs given due regard to their safety and capabilities.

Schools with their own swimming pools

- When the pool is being used by their own pupils, the school is responsible for ensuring that the provision of lifeguards is sufficient for the risks involved. A risk assessment should be carried out based on the following considerations:
 - The number of pupils using the pool
 - The depth of water
 - The age and ability of swimmers
 - Any behavioural or medical needs specific to pupils
 - Water clarity
- Where other schools use the pool, the school owning the pool should have a written contract with schools wishing to hire the pool. This should include a condition of hire placing a responsibility on the visiting school to ensure adequate lifesaving cover.

The school owning the pool is responsible for ensuring that a risk assessment has been carried out on the pool environment and measures put in place to minimise risk. The school is also responsible for ensuring that the water quality meets the standards set by the Institute of Sports and Recreation Management (ISRM). All pool

operators (including caretakers, site maintenance officers or site managers) must hold a certificate of training in pool management, which has been accredited by the ISRM. Arrangements must in place to raise any issues of concern.

Schools using other schools' swimming pools

- Where a school uses another school's swimming pool, the hiring school is responsible for ensuring that they have provided suitable and sufficient lifeguard cover for their own pupils (see previous section). Lifeguards must be suitably and sufficiently trained to the standards required by The Royal Life Saving Society, Swim England or the Swimming Teachers' Association.

Definitions:

Instructor – the qualified swimming teacher employed by the pool owner / operator

Teacher - the school staff with responsibility for the pupils

Review and Evaluation

In order to ensure that this guideline continues to be effective and applicable to the Council, the program will be reviewed biennially by Health & Safety and relevant stakeholders. Conditions which might warrant a review of the policy on a more frequent basis would include:

- Changes to legislation;
- Employee concern.

Following completion of any review, the program will be revised and/or updated in order to correct any deficiencies. Any changes to the program will be consulted through the relevant stakeholders.

Version Control and Change History

Version Control	Date Released	Date Effective	Amendment
1	Dec 2009	Dec 2009	Policy Created
2	Jan 2010	Apr 1 st - 2010	Major formatting changes. Document number and version control added.
3	Feb 2012	Feb 2012	Guidance amended on advice from Gill McGough, Gill Bennett & Margaret Musson

4	Aug 2012	Aug 2012	Guidance reviewed by Gill McGough. Changes made to Environment/Equipment (g) and (n).
5	Aug 2015	Aug 2015	Guidance reviewed by Gill McGough. Changes made to Environment/Equipment (g) and (n).
6	Jul 2018	Aug 2018 Oct 2018	Guidance reviewed by Gemma Haining. Sent to Lynn Pennington-Ramsden. To be taken to Schools H & S group, Oct 2018.
1	Oct 2018	Oct 2018	Changed to a guideline document 43.1 after consultation with the Schools H & S Group, Oct 2018.