

Guidance for School Swimming

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Swimming 25 metres is a **minimum** not a maximum standard

Swimming and water safety are **statutory** activities at Key Stage 2

Learning to swim opens up a whole new world of **opportunity**

Swimming as part of a **healthy** lifestyle

Essential **life and life saving - skill**

Introduction

The aim of this guide is to help support you with your school swimming programme.

Swimming is not only a healthy activity, but acts as an essential life and lifesaving skill. Unless completed at Key Stage 1, swimming and water safety is statutory at Key Stage 2 and is designed to ensure children are able to swim unaided over a distance of at least 25 metres.

In order to meet the statutory requirement, the following aims have been identified:

- To provide a safe and caring environment for pupils to learn to swim;
- To teach pupils to appreciate what is good practice in and around water in relation to the safety of themselves and others;
- To develop pupils confidence in water activities;
- To develop each pupil's full swimming potential.

The Key elements of a quality swimming programme are:

- Booking the pool
- Swimming teacher
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Scheme of work
- Class organisation
- Transport
- School staff

These can be viewed separately, but many successful swimming schemes coordinate the elements together.

Risk Management Process

The school is responsible for undertaking a periodic risk assessment of their swimming provision and review this on a regular basis. This should be carried out jointly between the accompanying staff, the swimming instructor and the provider, if appropriate.

The three key factors which impact on planning are:

- The **PEOPLE** involved in a swimming activity
- The **CONTEXT** in which the activity takes place
- The **ORGANISATION** of the activity

This model can be viewed in poster form on page 11.

School Swimming and Disability Discrimination

A school must not discriminate unlawfully against a disabled pupil or child in relation to any activity, including school swimming.

Definition of Disability

A person is disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010 if they have:

- a physical or mental impairment
- which has an adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities
- and the effect is substantial and long term

NB There is no need for a person to have a specific, medically-diagnosed cause for their impairment – what matters is the effect of the impairment not the cause.

The Duty Not to Discriminate

Under the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, unlawful discrimination is defined as:

- Direct discrimination (where someone is treated less favourably **because of their disability**)
- Indirect discrimination (where the application of a policy or practice particularly disadvantages people with a disability)
- Discrimination arising from a disability (where someone is treated unfavourably **because of a reason connected with their disability**)
- A failure to make reasonable adjustments.

Disadvantage

Schools must ensure that when included in swimming a disabled pupil is not placed at a disadvantage. The school must take account of a number of factors, including:

- the time and effort that might need to be expended by a disabled child;
- the indignity, inconvenience or discomfort a disabled child might suffer;
- the loss of opportunity, or the diminished progress, that a disabled child may make in
- comparison with his or her peers who are not disabled.

Example:

A school with a physically disabled pupil fails to negotiate appropriate transport with a specialist lift for the journey. This causes the pupil to have to be lifted onto the bus and also to negotiate their way down the bus. This is likely to cause the disabled pupil to lose some dignity and also to exert additional effort so putting the pupil at a disadvantage. This may be unlawful.

Planning

The most important element of planning school swimming is to ensure that a school can demonstrate that it has taken all reasonable steps and undertaken reasonable adjustments to try and ensure that the swimming experience is fully accessible to pupils with disabilities.

Communicating with the parents/carers of a disabled child at an early point in the planning stage will help to ensure that the school has as much relevant and helpful information as possible. An open and continuing dialogue with them as to the difficulties and challenges identified by the school may lead to alternative solutions being suggested by the parents/carers, which will enable the school to consider all possible adjustments to enable full participation by the child.

The PEOPLE involved in a swimming activity

An understanding of the term **duty of care** is needed and good practice in swimming as in all other areas of physical education and school sport should reflect safe practice. This involves risk management.

The law imposes on those involved in physical education a duty of care to:

- Identify foreseeable risks that may result in injury
- Take reasonably practicable steps to reduce the risk to an acceptable level

The duty of care for pupils involved in swimming remains at all times with school staff.

Specialist swimming teachers may be employed by the pool providers to assist with swimming lessons. Where their role is to lead the lesson, it is essential the school staff remain on poolside to provide an assisting role.

It is necessary for school staff and specialist swimming teachers to enjoy a good working relationship, with excellent communication to ensure a there is a safe environment with clear shared aims.

School staff have the responsibility for monitoring progress of pupils regardless of who directs the sessions.

Safety of Pupils - Shared understanding between swimming teacher and school staff are key for:

- Arrival and Departure
- Changing Rooms
- Class Management on Poolside

The CONTEXT in which the activity takes place

Pool / Facility should have:

- Pool depths and potential hazards clearly signposted.
- Working areas designated and clearly marked.
- Appropriate safe changing space.
- A range of accessible rescue aids.
- A pool divider positioned to mark shallow and deep water.
- Water clarity to ensure the bottom of pool is visible at all depths.
- Entrance doors to school pools locked when not in use.

Equipment:

- Suitable clothing and appropriate footwear should be worn.
- Pupils should wear appropriate swimwear. School staff are advised to liaise with relevant community leaders about special clothing requirements in relation to cultural or religious reasons. If pupils are wearing clothing other than usual swimwear, they should be restricted to shallow water until they have shown they are able to swim competently.
- All personal effects should be removed or made safe. Pupils with hair long enough to impair vision should have it secured with a hair band or a swimming cap.
- Goggles should only be used in exceptional circumstances when chemicals in the water may have an adverse effect on pupil's eyes. Pupils should be taught to remove them correctly not stretching the retaining band.

When swimming at competition level, and during the long, regular training sessions required to reach this, 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. In contrast to this, within short curriculum swimming lessons (typically 20 to 25 minutes water time) for beginners, or for single, short races in school galas, goggles are not considered to be necessary in most cases.

As with the management of all risk in physical education and school sport, all aspects of the situation should be taken into consideration before the school along with the provider (if lessons are taken externally) makes a decision on how to proceed.

- Rescue aids should be readily accessible.

- A range of appropriate teaching equipment should be available.

In local leisure centres the accompanying member of school staff should also be aware of:

- Emergency Action Plan (EAP) for the pool and (NOP) Normal Operating Procedures.
- How pupils are identified by school staff.
- Emergency signal and to communicate this to the pupils.
- Communicate the action pupils should take following the emergency signal.
- Action to be taken in emergency situations by pupils, school staff and pool staff.
- Reporting procedure for accidents.
- What their role is on poolside.
- How changing is supervised when members of the public share access with the pool and no group change is available.
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Emergency Procedures

Procedures should include:

- Whistle drill, fire alarm and evacuation procedures should be explained to pupils and accompanying staff at the beginning of each term.
- All staff accompanying pupils to school swimming lessons being aware of the whistle procedure used by lifeguards and Swimming Teachers at their particular pool.
- All accompanying school staff:
 - having a clear role,
 - confident on poolside,
 - communicating with the other adults on safety issues,
 - and being suitably dressed for the role they are to play in the lesson.

Supervision

Where possible, separate school changing areas should be made available. Where this is not possible, changing times different to the public should be attempted. Zoning of changing rooms through use of roped areas and screening alongside signage alerting the public to school group usage. Whatever the circumstances, changing rooms should be adequately supervised. The school maintains responsibility for this matter at all times.

The ORGANISATION of the activity

Preparation:

- Undertake a joint risk assessment based on the **People Context Organisation** model.
- Have a system in place for identifying children at risk. Information and arrangements must be understood by all supervising adults.
- Any medications should be on hand and easily accessible.
- Ensure that the Emergency Action Plan (EAP) is shared and understood by all involved.
- All staff should carry a whistle.

Planning and teaching:

- A shared Scheme of Work (SoW) that meets the needs of all pupils.
- Provide appropriate supervision in the changing areas and on pool side. The adult / pupil ratio will be determined through the joint risk assessment.
- The class teacher is accountable for the overall learning outcomes of the pupils. Assessment and recording procedures should be in place to communicate information effectively.
- The competence of all pupils should be assessed at the beginning of the unit of work.
- Group sizes should reflect the competence of pupils. When determining the supervision ratios consideration should be given to age, size, ability and any specific needs of the group.
- Non-swimmers remain in designated shallow water area unless taught via deep water method using sufficient and appropriate buoyancy aids.
- All pupils should remain in view at all times.
- Diving should only take place as part of a planned programme and where the water depth meets specified requirements.

Religious and Cultural Issues

Swimming is a statutory requirement of the National Curriculum. Consultation with pupils, parents, community and swimming providers may be required to ensure all pupils participate.

Swimwear should enable the wearer to swim safely and should respect modesty particularly in puberty.

Swimwear which meets religious requirements can be worn providing it does not jeopardise the swimmer's safety.

Recommended clothing;

- Boys- trunks or swimming shorts. Above the knee, tight fitting lycra swimming shorts are also acceptable;
- Girls- a one piece swimming costume. A leotard and footless tights or full body suit is also acceptable;

The onset of puberty is especially important for girls. Some schools start swimming lessons as early as possible to ensure that National Curriculum requirements can be fulfilled. School need to be sensitive to such issues as:

- Private changing facilities
- Individual showering/ partly clothed showering
- Single sex-swimming lessons
- Exclusive use of pool and viewing areas
- Appropriate gender of swimming instructors

All jewellery, with the exception of religious artefacts which can be made safe, should be removed because of the potential for injury to wearer and other children.

SAFE PRACTICE FOR SWIMMING

SCHOOL STAFF / SUPPORT STAFF / POOL STAFF / SWIMMING TEACHERS NEED TO:

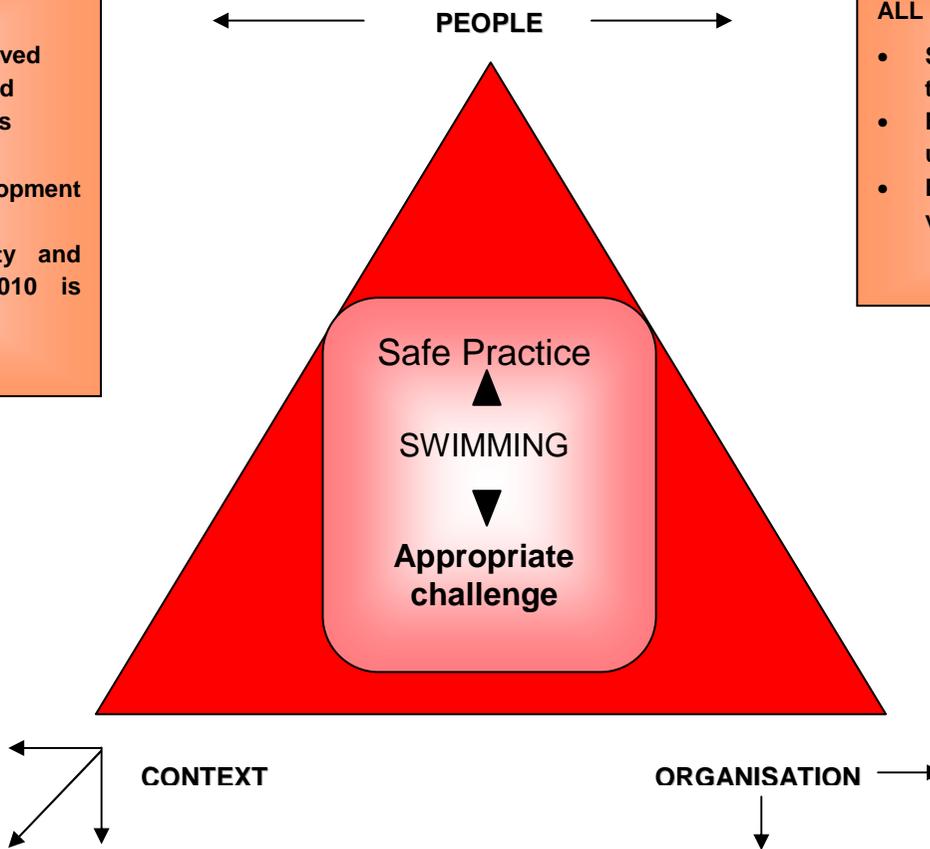
- Maintain effective communication with all involved
- Be suitably confident, qualified and experienced
- Know and understand roles and responsibilities
- Have a sound knowledge of pupils
- Have access to professional development opportunities
- Ensure that the law relating to disability and discrimination within the Equality Act 2010 is followed

POOL / FACILITY:

- Pool depths and potential hazards should be clearly signposted
- Designated clearly marked working area
- Appropriate safe changing space
- Range of accessible rescue aids
- Water clarity to see bottom of pool at all times

EQUIPMENT:

- Swimwear should be appropriate
- Personal effects removed or made safe
- Goggles only worn in exceptional circumstances. In this instance pupils should be taught to put them on and remove them safely
- Rescue aids readily accessible
- Adequate range and amount of appropriate teaching equipment to be readily accessible



ALL PUPILS SHOULD:

- Share in assessment and management of risk at their own level of understanding
- Be informed about standard procedures and understand the reasons for them
- Be made aware of signs and notices on the first visit and reminded throughout the programme

PREPARATION REQUIRES:

- Joint risk assessment based on people context organisation model to determine appropriate ratio
- A system in place to identify children at risk
- Medications on hand
- Emergency Action Plan shared and understood by all involved
- All staff to carry a whistle

PROCEDURES SHOULD INVOLVE:

- Regular communication between school, pool and swimming teacher
- Joint Risk Assessment
- Emergency Action Plan (EAP)
- Emergency procedures, signals and equipment known and understood by everyone involved
- Registration and head count of group before and following session
- Awareness of Normal Operating Procedures (NOP)

PLANNING AND TEACHING:

- Shared Scheme of Work (SOW) that meets the needs of all pupils
- Appropriate supervision should always be provided in changing areas and on pool side
- Assessment and recording procedures should be clearly understood by all
- Group sizes should reflect the competence of pupils
- All pupils should remain in view at all times
- Diving should only take place as part of a planned programme and where the water depth meets specified requirements

Contact:

ALL initial queries regarding Swimming issues should be made to:

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