



Whaddon Church of England School



Swimming Policy

“You are the light of the world, let your light shine.”

This policy was adopted and approved by the Governing Body: March 2026

The policy is to be reviewed by: November 2028

Introduction

Whaddon Church of England School have based this swimming policy on the policies and procedures of Buckinghamshire Council (BC) and Bucks School Swimming Partnership (BSSP) who, in turn base, it on current national guidance in relation to School Swimming and Water Safety lessons, swimming pool safety and educational visits, which may include water-based activities. It includes industry-wide updates from both the Association of Physical Education and Swim England (National Governing Body).

This policy provides guidance on Safe Practice in School Swimming and Water Safety. It aims to keep everyone involved in school swimming safe.

Swimming is a highly beneficial life-saving activity. It supports the acquisition and development of physical literacy, along with skills for health and enjoyment. As a threshold skill, it also gives access to many other water-based recreational activities. It is also incredibly good for your physical and mental health and wellbeing - it is the only activity you can do at any age and ability. Nevertheless, it also carries the risks of death through drowning or injury by brain damage through near drowning.

Therefore, the teaching of swimming must be about knowing what to do if someone gets into trouble in the water; or if a strong current takes your friend away from the edge; or you fall in when running by a river or canal. We have a responsibility to ensure that our pupils are taught basic water safety skills. Swimming is 'Wet Physical Education.' This can be educated in the classroom with supportive **FREE** resources from; the [RNLI](#), the [RLSS UK](#), [Swim Safe](#) and [Swim England \(Charter\)](#).



The teaching and learning of swimming and water safety therefore requires the utmost care on the part of all concerned.

Key to Boxes

	STATUTORY Information		IMPORTANT Information
	KEY Information	 	USEFUL Link

Checklist of Requirements

Checklist to be completed by the Headteacher and/or Teacher in charge of school swimming (when planning and/or implementing School Swimming Programme) – All Schools will need to complete the following actions		Tick Done
1	Headteacher, lead Governor, teachers and TA's involved in school swimming to read the School Swimming Policy and Bucks Safe Practice in School Swimming Policy & Guidance	
2	Identify pool to be used and ensure leisure provider is aware of policy requirements	
3	Obtain, read and understand the Pool's current NOP and EAP - all staff involved in school swimming to sign to show that they have read and understood these documents	
4	Train a minimum of 2 members of school staff, who will accompany the pupils to their school swimming lesson - ensure qualifications are relevant to the pool setting	
5	Ensure staff qualifications remain up to date, undertake CPD within a 5 year period	
6	Check with leisure provider to ensure that lifeguard certificates/qualifications are current and appropriate	
7	Before the school swimming programme commences, visit the pool for a Health and Safety Induction	
8	Agree and sign Partnership Agreement/Service Level Agreement	
9	If hiring a pool, ensure that the Hire Agreement has been read and signed by the Bursar and Headteacher and a copy of this is kept by the school	
10	Request the leisure provider Insurance	
11	Complete a Trips and Visits Form	
12	Read and understand leisure provider Risk Assessment	
13	Develop own Risk Assessment for school swimming for each group	
14	Plan the school swimming programme with the leisure provider to ensure that inclusion of pupils with additional needs has been considered	
15	Implement the School Goggle Policy	
16	Send letter to parents to introduce programme and request information on pupil ability	
17	Ensure information on specific medical conditions is provided to the Leisure Centre Swim Manager (and team) provider and that medication will accompany pupil to school swimming lesson	
18	Identify assessment methods to demonstrate progress of pupils, consider which school swimming awards will be undertaken	

19	A dated register (hard copy or electronic) detailing learning outcomes for pupils is available (in line with NC requirements)	
20	All documents are kept in the School Swimming Folder (hard copy or electronic) so that staff involved in school swimming can access these documents. The Governor in charge of School Swimming and Headteacher are aware of the above	

National Curriculum Swimming



Physical Education including Swimming is a National Curriculum Foundation Subject and thus STATUTORY. Parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from school swimming.

All schools must provide Swimming instruction in either Key Stage 1 and/or Key Stage 2. By the time a child is ready to leave primary school at the end of Year 6 they should be able to:

- **Perform safe self-rescue in different water based situations**
- **Swim competently, confidently and proficiently over a distance of at least 25m**
- **Use a range of strokes effectively, for example; front crawl, backstroke and breaststroke**

What do the outcomes mean?

1. Perform safe self-rescue in different water-based situations

Safe self-rescue is taught from the very first lesson; for example, safe entries and exits, being able to regain feet and roll from front to back to float. These skills support being a proficient swimmer and obtain the knowledge to stay safe in, on and around water. Safe self-rescue delivery supports with understanding the potential dangers of water and how to act responsibly when near different types of water (e.g. canal, river, lake, reservoir, sea); how to use self-rescue skills and when to use them if they unintentionally fall into the water or get into difficulty; and what to do if someone else gets into trouble in the water and who to call for help.

2. Swim competently, confidently and proficiently over a distance of at least 25 metres.

Students should demonstrate the ability to swim confidently 25m without touching the walls or floor, utilising a recognised stroke which is as strong and the end of the swim as it was at the start. Wherever possible, part of the swim should be swum in deep water. This is the minimum distance, and many students may be able to swim further.

3. Use a range of strokes effectively (to include front crawl, backstroke and breaststroke)

Students should be given the opportunity to swim alternating (front crawl and backstroke) and simultaneous (breaststroke) strokes demonstrating a minimum of two strokes for a distance of at least 10m per stroke. Students should be given the opportunity to select the most appropriate stroke or action for the required circumstance (e.g. trading water using breaststroke legs when signalling for help, swimming front crawl when racing, swimming back paddle when conserving energy).

Water Safety and the Minimum Standards for School Swimming

In September 2023, Swim England and the Swimming Teachers Association created a **nine-point plan** to provide clarity and consistency for the national curriculum guidelines around performing safe selfrescue in different water-based situations.

Whilst two of the national curriculum outcomes were clearly defined, arguably the most important, safe self-rescue, could be interpreted in different ways. The guidance clearly defines the outcomes that make up safe self-rescue. These components were included as they bring together the most common fatal accidental drowning scenarios and the skills required to survive.

The Department for Education has confirmed that there is no intention to alter the national curriculum requirements for school swimming.

The nine outcomes, which should be completed by students in sequence in full-reach depth water wearing light clothing are;

- Fall-in entry and recover to surface
- Float on the back with minimal movement for 60 seconds without floatation equipment
- Rotate from floating on the back to a vertical position
- Tread water for 30 seconds
- Whilst treading water, signal for help once, by extending one arm above the head and simultaneously shouting for help then returning the arm to the water to continue to tread water • Swim (without floatation equipment) 15m to a floating object, using a recognised personal survival stroke (head up, long arm front paddle or lifesaving backstroke)
- Retaining the floating object, take up the Heat Escape Lessening Position (HELP) for 30 seconds
- Form a Huddle position as a group for 30 seconds
- Swim 15m to exit the water unaided

The outcomes also include possible reasonable adjustments for shallow water and students with special educational needs and disabilities.

They should allow for a consistent set of clearly measurable skill-based outcomes that combine to enable a young person to survive an unexpected entry to cold water until rescue or self-extraction is possible.

The suggested skills can also be downloaded from Swim England's School Swimming and Water Safety Charter website. The Charter also provides a range of free-to-download resources including certificates, guidance, lesson plans, water safety assembly, videos and more.

Pupils should know the dangers of water and understand how to act responsibly when playing in or near different water environments.



Teaching Swimming and Water Safety at Key Stage 1 or 2 - A Guide for Primary Schools (produced by Swim England on behalf of the National Swim Group)

This includes understanding and adhering to the advice of national and local water safety sites, being able to use appropriate survival and self-rescue skills if they unintentionally fall in or get into difficulty

in the water, and knowing what to do if others get into difficulty. To ensure pupils fully understand this important area, 'water-based situations' should not only cover how an incident could occur, but also different types of water environments.

As part of NC Swimming, pupils should be taught the key water safety messages (age appropriate); including the Water Safety Code:

Key water safety messages:

- **Stop and Think:** always swim in a safe place
- **Stay Together:** always swim with an adult
- if you fall in: **Float**, breathe and relax
- **Call 999** or 112 if someone else is in trouble

Stop and Think:

Always swim in a safe place:

- Water is always moving, so be careful of currents and tides
- The water may be significantly colder than you are used to
- Edges can be slippery or could break up
- There may be hidden dangers underwater
- Plan your activity - check weather, tide times, get local advice and wear the right clothing for your activity

Stay Together:

Always swim with an adult:

- Never swim alone - stay within arm's reach of an adult
- If entering the water, make sure someone stays at the side to help in an emergency
- Always try and swim at a lifeguarded venue or beach

Float:

If you fall in, float:

- Stay calm
- Float on your back
- Signal for help, raising one hand in the air and shouting for help
- If you can, swim to safety or hold on to something that floats

Call 999:

If you see someone else in trouble in the water call 999

- Never enter the water to save others
- Tell them to float on their back
- Look for something that floats to throw them; for example; a life ring or a football
- Keep watch until help arrives



Swimming teachers and school staff need to be particularly aware of swimmers tiring when swimming in clothing due to the resistance the clothes present in the water.

A key teaching point for the Water Safety Code is "**Shout, throw, never go**". More information can be found [here](#).

- Water safety: knowledge and understanding of different water environments, how to stay safe when playing in and around water including recognising national swimming flags and warning signs and understanding national and local water safety advice,
- What to do if others get into difficulties: stay safe: shout, signal; throw, do not go into the water; raising the alarm 999,
- Play competitive games such as water polo and apply basic principles suitable for attacking and defending.

For further information and to look at these documents in more detail, click on [BSSP's Schemes of Work](#) and/or [Swim England Swimming Charter](#)



RNLI lifeboats across the UK and Ireland launched 9,192 times in 2023, saving 355 lives.

Therefore, pupils need to understand how water-based incidents occur such as:

- falling into water when playing on a footpath,
- falling out of a boat,
- swimming in clothes,
- becoming tired,
- sustaining an injury,
- being out of one's depth,
- hampered by weeds or underwater hazards,
- rough water or tides.

Pupils should understand where water-based incidents occur, i.e. the potential hazards of moving water and the impact of cold-water shock, in various bodies of water including:

- homes and gardens including ponds,
- swimming pools (develop an understanding of different types of pools),
- beaches,
- rivers,
- canals and reservoirs,
- quarries.

Pupils should understand and be able to explain:

- the differences between swimming in open water and a heated swimming pool,
- how strong swimmers can get into difficulties when the water is cold, unpredictable and deep,
- the differences between swimming indoors and outdoors,
- that getting in and out of open water is more difficult (in comparison to steps at a swimming pool),

- that you need to prepare differently for swimming outdoors; e.g. wearing a wetsuit and bright swimming hat,
- that the conditions of open water can quickly change dependent on the weather,
- that you may not be able to see under the water to spot potential hazards,
- the effects of cold water shock (and what happens if you are not prepared to swim in cold water).

AfPE Safe Practice in Physical Education, School Sport and Physical Activity, 2020



The National Curriculum Swimming and Water Safety Group expects schools to provide swimming provision until all their pupils meet the minimum standards for school swimming and water safety. This means that schools may need to look at Top Up Programmes (these are additional lessons to help pupils achieve these standards).

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Useful links ▶

The Bucks School Swimming Partnership has awards for pupils aimed at meeting and exceeding National Curriculum requirements for Water Safety. BSSP: [Swimming Awards](#) / Swim England: [Swim England Awards](#).

Teaching pupils Lifesaving Skills

In addition to the Water Safety School Swimming Programme, schools may decide to teach pupils lifesaving, i.e. as part of the Rookie Lifeguard Programme. This should only be covered once pupils have an understanding of, and have developed competence in, self-rescue skills as a requirement of National Curriculum Swimming.



In addition to National Curriculum School Swimming and Water Safety lessons, schools may wish to look at the Rookie Lifeguard Programme: visit; <https://www.rlss.org.uk/pages/category/rookie-lifeguard>

Advice on resource packs and awards for teaching lifesaving skills at the appropriate key stages in primary and secondary education is available from the following:

- RLSS UK- [RLSS UK Awards](#)
- STA [School Swimming Academy Awards](#)
- RNLI [Education Section](#)

Swim Safe, a water safety programme from Swim England and the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, can be utilised for continued learning. For more information about Swim Safe, visit; <https://swimsafe.org.uk>

Responsibilities

Overall Council Responsibility

Buckinghamshire Council has a responsibility for ensuring safety in swimming in all maintained schools. As part of this responsibility BC, working with BSSP, provides the Safe Practice in School Swimming Policy and Guidance.



BSSP provides guidance and support for school swimming and offers a variety of training, all of which equip schools for safe school swimming.

School Responsibility - Governors and Headteacher

The Governing Body must ensure that a nominated member of staff is delegated the responsibility of Teacher in Charge of School Swimming and Water Safety and applies the Safe Practice in School Swimming Policy and Guidance to all aspects of school swimming. Governors should meet with the Teacher in Charge of School Swimming and Water Safety to ensure the policy and procedures contained within this document are being applied. These include:

- Completing risk assessments – member of staff carries a copy of this with them, together with emergency contact numbers in the School Swimming Folder (with copy held centrally by Headteacher),
- Ensuring all staff accompanying pupils to school swimming have read and understood (by **annually signing and dating**) the current Normal Operating Procedure (NOP) and Emergency Action Plan (EAP),
- Ensuring staff accompanying school swimming are qualified to support the delivery of school swimming and water safety and comply with their school's Safeguarding Policy. Schools should be sending their own staff, who have been trained. Supply Teachers or trainees on placement should NOT accompany the school swimming lesson.
- Ensuring relevant training for school swimming is in place for staff,
- Understanding what school swimming qualifications allow staff to do and ensure staff are confident and competent to carry out their role in school swimming,

- Maintaining a central record of staff qualifications and training (in Swimming folder) – BSSP hold a central database for all staff trained. Where individuals hold qualifications gained from other providers, they must submit copies of certificates to the BSSP Swimming Team,
- Completing and returning the mandatory School Swimming Policy Checklist (previously referred to as 'The Governor Checklist') issued by BSSP every two years,
- Keeping current copies of the 'Conditions of Hire' and leisure provider insurance details within the School Swimming Folder,
- The school requesting the pool's Normal Operating Procedure (NOP) and Emergency Action Plan (EAP) and ensuring that accompanying school staff read these and sign to show an understanding of their responsibilities during the visit to the pool. These documents need to be kept in the School Swimming Folder Ensuring that all relevant and up to date medical and health information (including SEND) is maintained within the School Swimming Folder.

Duty of Care - School Responsibilities

Whether a school is delivering their own school swimming and water safety programme in a school pool or utilising an external swimming lesson provider to deliver at school or going off site to an external swimming pool, the school has a non-delegable duty of care to staff and students at all times during a school swimming water safety programme.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the industry lead bodies have combined to produce a specific health and safety guidance document for swimming pools entitled 'Health and safety in swimming pools' (HSG179).

The school has a responsibility to ensure due diligence is carried out when planning school swimming and water safety, to ensure that a safe and effective programme is delivered. This due diligence includes:

- Schools must ensure that the risk assessment and the pool safety operating procedure (PSOP) are sufficient to meet the school hire arrangements. Refer to HSG179
- Ensuring the swimming lesson provider's service level agreement is adequate for the school's requirements. It should stipulate the roles and responsibilities of school and external staff within the school swimming and water safety programme

Ensuring the qualification status of both school and external staff is adequate for lesson delivery. The Swim England Level 2 qualification is recommended for the delivery of school swimming lessons - www.swimming.org/ios/course-information/level-2-swimming-teacher/ - and supporting school staff to hold the National Curriculum Training Programme (NCTP) Support Teacher of School Swimming qualification - www.swimming.org/schools/school-swimming-training/

Reviewing staff:student ratios to ensure they are adequate based on the age, ability, understanding levels of students, facility design and any other relevant considerations.

Ensuring an adequate level of safe supervision for all students in the water (this can be lifeguarding). Further details relating to safe supervision qualifications can be found from the Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS UK) website. The National Rescue Award for Swimming Teachers and Coaches -

www.rlss.org.uk/national-rescue-award-for-swimming-teachers-coaches-nrastc - and the National Pool Lifeguard qualification - www.rlss.org.uk/national-pool-lifeguard-qualification - are potential supervision qualifications which should be confirmed within the risk assessment.

- Ensuring students are not permitted to access the poolside without adequate safe supervision in place on the poolside. Measures should be in place to stop uncontrolled access which should be identified within the risk assessment and adhered to; such as use of gates, shutters, signage and supervision.
- Ensuring that the pool operation has adequate training and knowledge to safely manage the pool plant and centre operations - www.swimming.org/io/ios-courses-for-pool-operators . Schools should ensure that industry guidance from the Pool Water Treatment Advisory Group (PWTAG) is adhered to either by the external provider or for the school pool - www.pwtag.org
- Ensuring the welfare of students is met, with intervention if welfare needs are not being met; for example, insufficient air or water temperature, inadequate cleanliness.

The Woodland versus Essex County Council (2013) case referred to a non-fatal drowning that resulted in life-changing injuries. The Supreme Court ruled that a public authority has liability in certain circumstances for the negligence of its independent contractors where students or vulnerable people are involved.

The school has a non-delegate duty of care. If students are being taken to a pool facility as part of the school curriculum, then it is the school's responsibility to undertake checks and ensure they are providing appropriate supervision. The case decision is of particular importance as it has effectively changed the law to make public authorities liable for any negligence of its independent contractors where the injured part is deemed to be a vulnerable person, such as a child.

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc. ACT 1974, an operator must protect the 'health, safety and welfare' at work of all their employees, as well as others on their premises, including temps, casual workers, the self-employed, clients, visitors and the general public.

In addition, the operator should follow guidance from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), HSG179 'Health and safety in swimming pools' as well as any industry guidance and best practice, which will help to protect those that use their facilities.

Operator requirements:

- Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, conduct risk-assessments for the facilities, activities, users and equipment
- Produce a written pool safety operating procedure (PSOP), containing the normal operating procedures (NOP) and emergency action plan (EAP) for the facilities
- Provide a robust service level agreement with clearly defined roles and responsibilities
- Provide schools with the appropriate risk assessment for the activities and facilities that the school will be involved in
- Provide the school with the facility-specific pool safety operating procedure (PSOP), highlighting sections that are relevant to the school
- The most significant operational hazard is the provision of **inadequate poolside supervision**.

Sufficient safe supervision should be provided from poolside as indicated in the risk assessment and PSOP. Both the operator and the school should agree that the level of safe supervision is adequate

afPE Safe Practice 2024

Teacher in Charge of School Swimming and Water Safety

This member of staff must maintain the School Swimming Folder which includes:

- An up to date copy of NOP and EAP for the pool used. This needs to be signed by all staff accompanying school swimming to show they have read and understand these documents,
- Risk assessment for each group,
- Registers, including medical conditions; additional needs; pupil ability and staff accompanying pupils,
- Up to date list of staff qualifications and training
- Signed copy of Pool Hire Agreement,
- School Swimming Programme,
- Printed copies of the online County Accident and reporting forms,
- [Schemes of work and assessment sheets](#)

They should also:

- Visit the pool before swimming programme commences to understand all relevant NOP/EAP aspects, risk assess & plan the programme with the specialist swimming teacher
- Complete Trips & Visits form (agreed by Headteacher)
- Undertake Risk Assessments, signed by all staff involved (including Headteacher). This will include written information on pupils with medical conditions and/or additional needs and **must** be shared with the specialist swimming teacher prior to the School Swimming and Water Safety programme commencing. This information needs to be updated where necessary
- Complete and share relevant documents with leisure providers (Swimming class registers including information on pupils with medical conditions and/additional needs; information for Leisure Providers)

Accompanying School Staff

School staff have overall **DUTY OF CARE** that applies for any activity in which pupils are involved and they cannot transfer their duty of care to anyone else. This applies to all activities within the school curriculum and extra-curricular activities organised by the school during and outside of school hours, whether on or off school premises.

School staff must:

- Hold relevant, up to date qualifications
- Be given a clear role and understand the limits of their role
- Be confident on poolside

- Communicate effectively and appropriately with each other and leisure provider staff on safety issues
- Be suitably dressed for their role
- Ensure pupils are appropriately supervised when changing
- Ensure pupils are under control at all times
- Take head counts before, during and after sessions. This should be recorded in the swimming registers
- Follow the pool's NOP and EAP; all staff on poolside should be aware of the emergency procedures of any external provision, ensuring that pupils are aware of what to do in the event of an emergency evacuation
- Hold responsibility for reporting on the progress of school swimming (through ongoing monitoring and guidance from leisure provider staff)
- Be aware of the additional needs or medical conditions of the pupils they are teaching so that correct measures/precautions can be put in place with guidance from the specialist swimming teacher

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Specialist swimming teachers should work with school staff to oversee the meet the minimum requirements for National Curriculum Swimming.

School staff must remain on poolside to provide an assisting role to support the school swimming lesson and as a minimum, must hold the Swim England Support Teacher of School Swimming Certificate.

School Teachers should accompany their own classes to their school swimming lessons whenever possible, as they know their pupils well. They should have an overview of the teaching of their pupils and the conduct of their class. There should be a nominated member of staff accompanying each group, who holds responsibility for:

- Progress of pupils
- Assessing confidence and competence of accompanying staff (with guidance from leisure provider staff)
- Enforcement of policies and procedures
- Sharing of procedures and standards to all school staff involved in the School Swimming and Water Safety lesson



The school has a responsibility to ensure due diligence is carried out when planning school swimming and water safety, to ensure that a safe and effective programme is delivered. This due diligence includes:

- Schools must ensure that the risk assessment and the pool safety operating procedure (POSOP) are sufficient to meet the school hire arrangements. Refer to HSG179
- Ensuring the swimming lesson provider's service level agreement is adequate for the school's requirements. It should stipulate the roles and responsibilities of school and external staff within the school swimming and water safety programme
- Ensuring the qualification status of both school and external staff is adequate for lesson delivery. The Swim England Level 2 qualification is recommended for the delivery of school swimming lessons and supporting staff to hold the National Curriculum Training Programme (NCTP) Support Teacher of School Swimming qualification.

AfPE Safe Practice in PESSPA 2024

Specialist swimming teachers also have a duty of care for the pupils directly in their control and for ensuring an appropriate School Swimming and Water Safety programme for the group. It is the responsibility of the school staff to monitor the progress of the pupils, regardless of who teaches them. Equally, the teaching programme needs to be agreed before the course and if necessary moderated during the course. Having a teacher standing on the side passively watching is a massive waste of talent and energy, which could otherwise benefit the class. Involvement, not simply lesson observation, not only reduces teacher pupil ratio, but also enhances the quality of experience for the pupils concerned.

Prior to their deployment to a poolside role, school staff should have the opportunity to express a lack of confidence or ability. **If staff lack confidence in the role, cannot swim or are reticent about being on poolside they should not accompany pupils to their school swimming lessons.**

The Specialist Swimming Teacher (e.g. leisure provider swimming teachers)

(Qualified to a minimum to Swim England Level 2 or STA equivalent) needs to:

- Understand their role in school swimming
- Work in partnership with the teacher in charge of school swimming and water safety and other school staff accompanying pupils swimming
- Liaise with lifeguards and other centre staff regarding the lessons
- Ensure an ongoing and dynamic risk assessment is undertaken for each group involved in swimming activities
- Be aware of the additional needs and medical conditions of the pupils in their class, risk assessing these within the context of the swimming environment
- Ensure the safe conduct of the class whilst the pupils are in the water and on the poolside,
- Enable pupils to have fun in and near water
- Prepare, plan and teach high quality school swimming and water safety lessons in partnership with the school appropriate to the pupils' age and ability – showing good understanding of National Curriculum requirements
- Have a knowledge and understanding of the school's behaviour policy, to award appropriate behaviour e.g. house points
- Work with school staff to oversee the assessment of pupils against selected award criteria

- Ensure appropriate numbers of fully qualified lifeguards are on poolside
- Understand their role and responsibility in the case of an emergency (understand the pool's NOP and EAP)

Mobile Phones

School staff should not be using or referring to their mobile phones during school swimming lessons, as this could compromise their ability to give their full attention to their pupils and the lesson taking place. Their primary responsibility is the safe supervision of their pupils. Please refer to <https://www.swimming.org/ios/course-information/mobile-devices-swimming-lessons/>

The only exception is use of phones with apps that monitor essential live medical information.



Carrying a fully charged mobile phone with a good signal may form part of the school's Risk Assessment for contacting emergency services or the school in the event of an incident or injury.

Normal Operating Procedure (NOP)

For some pupils, School Swimming and Water Safety could be their first experience of being in a swimming pool. It is important that they know and understand the rules of the pool, pool layout and the possible hazards of this new environment.

All school staff must have read and signed to show they understand the Normal Operating Procedure (NOP) for the pool being used for school swimming, to ensure that they are clear on their role and responsibilities during normal operations to maintain safety.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP)

An Emergency Action Plan details roles and responsibilities in the event of an emergency.

The Emergency Action Plan is the responsibility of a leisure provider when a third-party pool is being used. The responsibility for maintaining a safe swimming pool and building lies with the leisure provider when this is the case.

All staff must receive an induction on the EAP to ensure that they understand their role and responsibilities during an emergency. This must be recorded by the school, signed by the person delivering the training and kept on file.

Safety signs, including arrangements in the event of an emergency, need to be clearly visible in relevant areas of the pool area and pupils need to be made aware of these. School staff in conjunction with leisure provider staff, need to ensure that, for pupils for whom English is not their first language, those who are visually impaired or have difficulty in reading, understand all safety signs.

Regardless of the type of pool being used, all school classes should run emergency practice drills to evacuate the water and summon assistance during the first lesson of each term. These should then be carried out regularly afterwards in order that both staff and pupils recognise and understand emergency signals and procedures and know how to respond to them. Space (foil) blankets should be available near emergency exits.

Consideration needs to be given to:

- Pupils leaving the pool during an emergency with bare feet,
- Pupils with additional needs or physical disabilities.

Exit doors and signs, fire-fighting equipment and alarm points need to be checked regularly to ensure that they are working and accessible.

All fire doors must be able to open without the aid of a key at all times the pool is in use. These should be checked at the start of every lesson.

Safety equipment such as poles, throwing ropes or throw bags, first aid provision (such as emergency blanket) and emergency alarms need to be fit for purpose and sufficient in quantity. These need to be regularly checked, records kept and an initialled checklist available by the alarm. Equipment needs to be accessible and readily available when needed without creating additional hazards to pool users.

All pools must be equipped with an **alarm** or alternative backup in the event of an accident or incident to ensure support can be summoned quickly. If the pool has no alarm, there should be a landline phone on the poolside which is checked before each lesson. **Access to emergency services must be guaranteed at all times the pool is in use.** Mobile phones are only appropriate as a backup and signals and battery life must be checked on arrival at the pool prior to the lesson.

All pools need to have a clear procedure for removing **pupils with physical disabilities**. Where a pool has a spinal board/special recovery stretcher, staff should receive training in this.

A variety of teaching and flotation aids should be available. Equipment should:

- Conform to any British Standard,
- Be checked before the lesson to ensure it is safe to use,
- Be close at hand for ease of access during lesson but be kept tidily on poolside to minimise trip hazards,
- Be used appropriately to avoid over-reliance,
- **Not to be given to non-swimmers to allow them into water out of their ability depth,**
- Be appropriate and safe for the needs of pupils,
- Be correctly fitted or held according to the design and purpose of the aid.

Any electrical equipment on the poolside needs to be:

- Designed for use in an aquatic environment,
- Of low voltage or battery operated,
- Located so as not to create an additional hazard,
- Have current circuit breakers attached,
- Pat tested annually,
- Checked regularly.

No one in the water should handle any electrical equipment.

What to Expect from Your Pool Provider

Pool safety operating procedure (PSOP), consisting of normal operating procedure (NOP) and emergency action plan (EAP) should be known, applied and practised, as relevant, by all staff (school and pool) working in the lesson.

NOPs Normal Operating Procedure	EAPs Emergency Action Plan
<p>These are the day-to-day organisational systems based on risk assessment and would typically include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation chart – identifying lines of authority • Plan of the building (plans and layout) • Alarm systems (inc. location) • Emergency equipment (inc. location) • Details of the pool (e.g. dimensions, depth, pool signage) • Pool equipment and features • Maximum bather load / occupancy (per session/ pool, staff: student ratio) • Control of access / admission • Dealing with the public • Pool rules • Potential risk factors • Lifeguard responsibilities, duties and arrangements whistle drills and alarms; e.g: One short blast - Calls for attention of pool users Two short blasts – Calls for the attention of a lifeguard or member of staff Three short blasts – Indicates a lifeguard taking emergency action • Lifeguard positions, zones, rotations etc • Technology • Staff uniform • Safe systems of work (detailed instructions of task completed by employees) • Operational systems and work instructions (detailed instructions for the work you undertake) temperature of the water PWTAG recommend this should be between 29 and 31 degrees °C for teaching pupils • Dealing with contractors • Training and competency requirements of all staff (inc. lifeguards, participation) • First-aid provisions and training (equipment, employed, trained, qualifications, reporting) • Use of video and photo equipment • Condition of hire to outside organisations 	<p>This should establish the action that should be taken in emergency situations and who takes the action. Emergencies should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overcrowding • Disorderly behaviour (including violence to staff) • Lack of water clarity (turbidity) or chemical reading outside of parameters • Broken glass in the pool • Emission of toxic gases / chemicals • Outbreak of fire (or building evacuation) • Controlled or partial evacuation • Bomb threat / terrorism threat / discovery of suspicious packages • Lighting failure • Electrical failure • Structural failure • Serious injury to a swimming pool user • Weather conditions – weather that impacts safety (e.g. outdoor pools) • Discovery of a casualty in the water (including drowning) • Dealing with blood, vomit, urine and needles and sharps • Faecal release in the swimming pool • Lost, found or left child • First aid • Lift failure • Robbery or theft • Failure of technology • Accident, incident and follow-up action

Swimming pools are high-risk environments. School staff accompanying students, together with specialist swimming staff, should ensure that they know and implement the PSOP for the facility being used and are capable of carrying out their required role.

The PSOP will identify potential hazards and associated risks at the swimming pool in question and detail how to manage these.

The EAP will detail the methods for dealing with a variety of emergency situations and include evacuation arrangements and your school's role within the EAP.

It is essential that school staff using their own pool, hiring another school's swimming pool or other external pool understand their role in the emergency evacuation procedure.

Consideration needs to be given to the fact that, during an emergency evacuation, students will have bare feet, be wearing little clothing and may be outside for an extended period of time. Pool operators should make provision for these factors in their EAP.

The risk assessment applied to a swimming pool environment frequently highlights common hazardous design features that should then be identified in the PSOP together with methods for managing and reducing the risks they pose. Supporting school staff must be aware of the site-specific hazards and control measures.

afPE Safe Practice 2024

Risk Assessment

Each pool and each session, the pupils and the staff participating, will have unique features that make particular demands upon safety. Each pool and each session must therefore be dealt with individually and risk assessments produced to cover the activity. Whaddon Church of England School will follow the leisure centre pool risk assessment and produce a risk assessment for each class taking part in swimming lessons.

Swim England, Safe Supervision for Teaching and Coaching Swimming highlight six important factors, these are:

Pool design

The suitability of the general design of the pool area for teaching and coaching includes:

- Shape and blind spots including those resulting from the position of equipment
- Special water features such as sprays, inlets and wave machines
- Glare, reflection, lighting and noise

Depth

Its importance in relation to the ability and height of the pupils include:

- The depth and extent of shallow water areas
- The extent of deep water areas
- The pool floor profile, in particular sudden changes in depth

- The possibility of being able to segregate the shallow water area (e.g. roping off and using a boom)

Water quality

Two factors need to be considered:

- The temperature of the pool water (and the air) in respect of comfort - bearing in mind pupils' size, age and physical ability
- Clarity of the pool water.

Pool organisation

The arrangements of the lesson must be considered:

- Who has the responsibility for the pool
- Is there exclusivity of use?
- Is there shared use with other activities?
- If use is shared, what are the implications? (e.g. lifeguarding responsibilities),
- Nature of activities,
- Access/admission arrangements.

Staffing

The skills and experience of staff and the ratios of pupils to teachers/coaches are important therefore, consideration needs to be given to:

- The qualification and number of teachers, coaches and lifeguards required,
- The skill of teachers, coaches and lifeguards,
- The degree of support and help provided by appropriate helpers, including parents, school assistants and auxiliaries.

Pupils and ability

The factors to be considered include:

- The age of pupils
- The range of swimming ability. This should be known by the teacher or specialist swimming teacher and each new pupil should be checked at the first lesson, in shallow water
- The use of flotation aids
- The ability of pupils to comprehend instructions including their command of the language in which the lesson is taught
- Medical/additional needs.

Whaddon Church of England School will provide the specialist swimming teacher with a register, up to date medical information and any other relevant information (e.g. Additional Needs) about the pupils, at least one week before the swimming programme takes place.

The completed register of pupils who are present should be updated and handed to the specialist swimming teacher for them to check before each lesson.



Accompanying school staff are expected to undertake a dynamic risk assessment in situ each time they attend the pool. Staff should act to control any identified changes such as:

- Water quality and temperature,
- Integrity of pool enclosure/building,
- Availability and condition of rescue/emergency equipment,
- The age, range of ability and numbers of pupils in each class,
- The activities they will be undertaking,
- The qualifications of the people leading and supporting the session, • Known additional needs/medical conditions.

If in any doubt about the safety of the lesson, don't proceed. Ensure concerns are addressed and resolved with the leisure provider prior to pupils being allowed to swim.

Public Pools

Whaddon Church of England School will make a judgement if the public pool (Bletchley Leisure Centre pool) is safe and appropriate for School Swimming. The school and Bletchley Leisure Centre should arrange an induction course on the NOP and EAP to ensure that all accompanying School staff are clear about how the pool operates and the role they will have to play in an emergency, before the school swimming programme starts.

Schools whose pupils take part in swimming must be familiar with:

- Risk assessments for the pool,
- The Normal Operating Procedure (NOP),
- The Emergency Action Plan (EAP),
- Conditions of hire/hire agreement,
- Pool rules (usually found in NOP and displayed on poolside),
- Any special requirements or medical conditions of pupils.

Medical Information

The Headteacher should ensure that all relevant and up to date medical and health information is maintained within the School Swimming Folder.

It is a requirement that all relevant medical conditions are documented on each school's swimming register and Risk Assessment. Specialist swimming teachers and accompanying school staff must be made aware of all medical information one week prior to that pupil swimming, (Swimming class registers including information on pupils with medical conditions and/additional needs - information for leisure providers). This will need updating when necessary.

If a pupil experiences a new medical condition during a school swimming lesson, this must be documented in writing by the Teacher in Charge of School Swimming and the Risk Assessment amended accordingly.

School staff should discuss the condition with the Parent/Guardian/Carer of the pupil and review whether the pupil is able to continue swimming. This will ensure that safe procedures can be put in place before the pupil participates in the next swimming lesson.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION
It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that all medication (including inhalers) is accessible at all times on poolside. All medication should be placed in a watertight container.



A pupil should not be allowed to swim if their medication is not available on the poolside.

Please refer to the Department of Health:

- [Guidance on the use of inhalers in schools'](#)
- ['Guidance on the Use of Adrenaline Auto-Injectors in Schools'](#)

Written permission from parents may be required prior to allowing a pupil with a particular medical condition to participate in the School Swimming programme. The school may need to seek help from outside organisations to understand how aquatic activities may affect the pupil. Any concerns surrounding this, please contact swimming@ahs.bucks.sch.uk

The requirements for pupils with **Epilepsy** may vary depending on whether an effective medication management regime is in place, the effectiveness of this in controlling the onset of episodes and whether the pupil has a history of episodes whilst swimming. For pupils with Epilepsy, an assigned member of staff will need to be given the role of a 'spotter'. ***This member of staff needs to be familiar with the pupils' triggers and medical support plan.***

N.B. This member of staff does not count within staffing ratios on poolside, their dedicated role is to be a spotter of that particular pupil and written into the risk assessment.

First Aid Arrangements

Whaddon Church of England School will ensure they have procedures in place for First Aid, including travel to, from and at the pool.

In the event of an emergency evacuation, emergency blankets should be available for all and clearly labelled. In public pools, this is the responsibility of the pool operator/leisure provider.

In addition to lifeguard provision, there must be a member of staff with an appropriate First Aid qualification on site at all times when the pool is in use. In public pools, this is the responsibility of the pool operator/leisure provider.



Schools are responsible for reporting all minor incidents themselves when they get back to school. Most schools will keep on-line records so may wish to take copies of the County AssessNet form to the pool and then transfer this information. Leisure providers will also have their own procedures for recording and reporting accidents.

Accidents/Incidents should be reported to BC via the AssessNet system and if warranted it may require reporting to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) under the Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR).

Pool Rules

A copy of the pool rules will be found in the site's NOP. Rules will vary from pool to pool, so it is important that school staff read and understand the NOP for Bletchley Leisure Centre, before the first session.

The pool rules should be displayed and explained to all pupils before their first school swimming lesson. Pupils should be reminded at the start of each term and ideally coincide with the emergency procedures when being tested (i.e. alarms). The following are examples of standard pool rules. It is by no means a comprehensive list:

- Pupils must not enter onto poolside unless a lifeguard/lifesaver is present and instructed to do so
- Pupils must not leave the pool without permission, nor return without reporting to the person in charge
- Pupils must remain away from the pool edge until instructed to approach the water
- Pupils must walk, not run on poolside
- Pupils must respond immediately to all instructions
- All those on poolside must understand and respond appropriately to pool emergency procedures for stopping activity and evacuating the pool
- Report any unacceptable, unsafe behaviour that may compromise safety
- No food to be consumed on poolside, including sweets and gum
- No shouting

- No jumping or diving unless instructed to do so*
- Removing, or making safe, all jewellery
- No outdoor shoes on poolside
- Swim caps must be worn and other hygiene procedures for the pool followed
- Report any illness
- Medication, that may be required, should be on the poolside

*The pool's NOP should be checked before jumping in is allowed, as water may be too shallow. Pool depth needs to be at least 1m.



Useful links

Swim England also provide guidance and resources to support the management of aquatic programmes: [Swim England Facilities Team](#)

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Only some Swim England Level 2 / STA Level 2 Certificate Swimming Teachers are qualified to teach diving (individuals will need to check if their qualification allows them to do this as some do not)

Refer to the section on Diving – Shallow Entry Racing Dives for further clarification.

Swim England has revised the depth of the pool for a racing start - **it is now a minimum of 1.35m**. More information can be found here - [Swim England Racing Starts](#)

Swimmers with Special Education Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)

The Equality Act ensures that disabled persons may not be treated less well than any other person. Policies and procedures or physical changes to the environment (reasonable adjustments) may need to be put into place to ensure pupils with disabilities are able to learn to swim. However, there remains the caveat that justifiable actions for the protection of an individual's life or health and safety override the duty to include.



Useful links

See the Swim England Inclusion Hub:
<https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/inclusion/>

Adults in the water are only able to supervise the swimmer they are assisting and should not be counted in the supervision ratios, although they do count in the bather load (thus pool capacity).

Lifeguarding/pool watching duties must be carried out by qualified staff on the side of the pool.

Staff supporting pupils in the water should work with experienced staff. This induction can take place within or between schools.



Adult : pupil ratio

"... a safe staff:student ratio can only be determined by carefully examining individual pupil's abilities, medical profiles and EHCP's in conjunction with relevant medical staff *and should not be determined solely in accordance with any swimming-specific written guidelines that may exist*. For example, specialist knowledge is required when planning for pupils who are nil-by-mouth or require thickened drinks. These pupils should never take any pool water into their mouths due to the risk of secondary drowning.

(Association for Physical Education, AfPE, 'Safe Practice in Physical Education, School Sport and Physical Activity'2024)

As a guide, **Swim England recommends a ratio of 8:1 for qualified swimming teachers for high quality provision, with 1:1 support in the water where the RA requires.** Ratios for SEND schools will be much lower and individual Risk Assessments are key in determining these ratios ([Swim England Safe Supervision](#)). For school staff who have attended either the Support Teacher of School Swimming or 'Supporting Pupils within SEND during their School Swimming courses, a ratio of 3:1 is recommended as a guide.

Diversity and Inclusion

Swim England provided a range of tools and resources to help schools, lesson providers and pool operators make sure their swimming programmes are fully inclusive. Despite the programme finishing, these should still be helpful to schools and can be found on the BSSP website and available here - [Swim England Inclusion Hub](#)

As well as the PE and Sport Premium for primary schools, which provides funds to support schools in delivering inclusive sport, the Government provides helpful guides and policy documents for organisations who work with pupils who have SEND and/or high needs. The [SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 years](#) also provides helpful advice.

Swim England have now launched a CPD for all staff working with pupils with additional needs during their school swimming lessons. Please contact swimming@ahs.bucks.sch.uk for further information and to book onto this course with the Bucks School Swimming Partnership.



Further additional information can be found at;

- Swim England: [SEND School Swimming guidance documents](#)
- [Swim England Inclusion Guidance](#)
- [Swim England EAL - Learn to Swim Flashcard](#)
- Halliwick: www.halliwick.org

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School Staff Accompanying Pupils to their School Swimming and Water Safety Lesson

For all school swimming and water safety lessons, **at least 2 members of school appointed staff**, who know the pupils, should accompany the class to the swimming pool. **At least one of these should be the class teacher.** Primary School Teachers should accompany their own class to swimming, whenever possible, as they know their pupils in a unique way. There should always be someone on the poolside who knows the specific medical or additional needs of the pupils.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

To clarify; in addition to trained specialist swimming teachers, there should be two members of school staff on poolside who are suitably qualified, confident and competent. Staff must hold, as a minimum, the Swim England Support Teacher of School Swimming Certificate.

“Teachers and TAs should not just observe in lessons which are being outsourced – they should be active participants in the lesson and contribute to helping pupils achieve curriculum goals.”
Ofsted’s PE Research Review for Teachers and Leaders (Physical Education) March 2022

All school staff accompanying pupils to swimming lessons should:

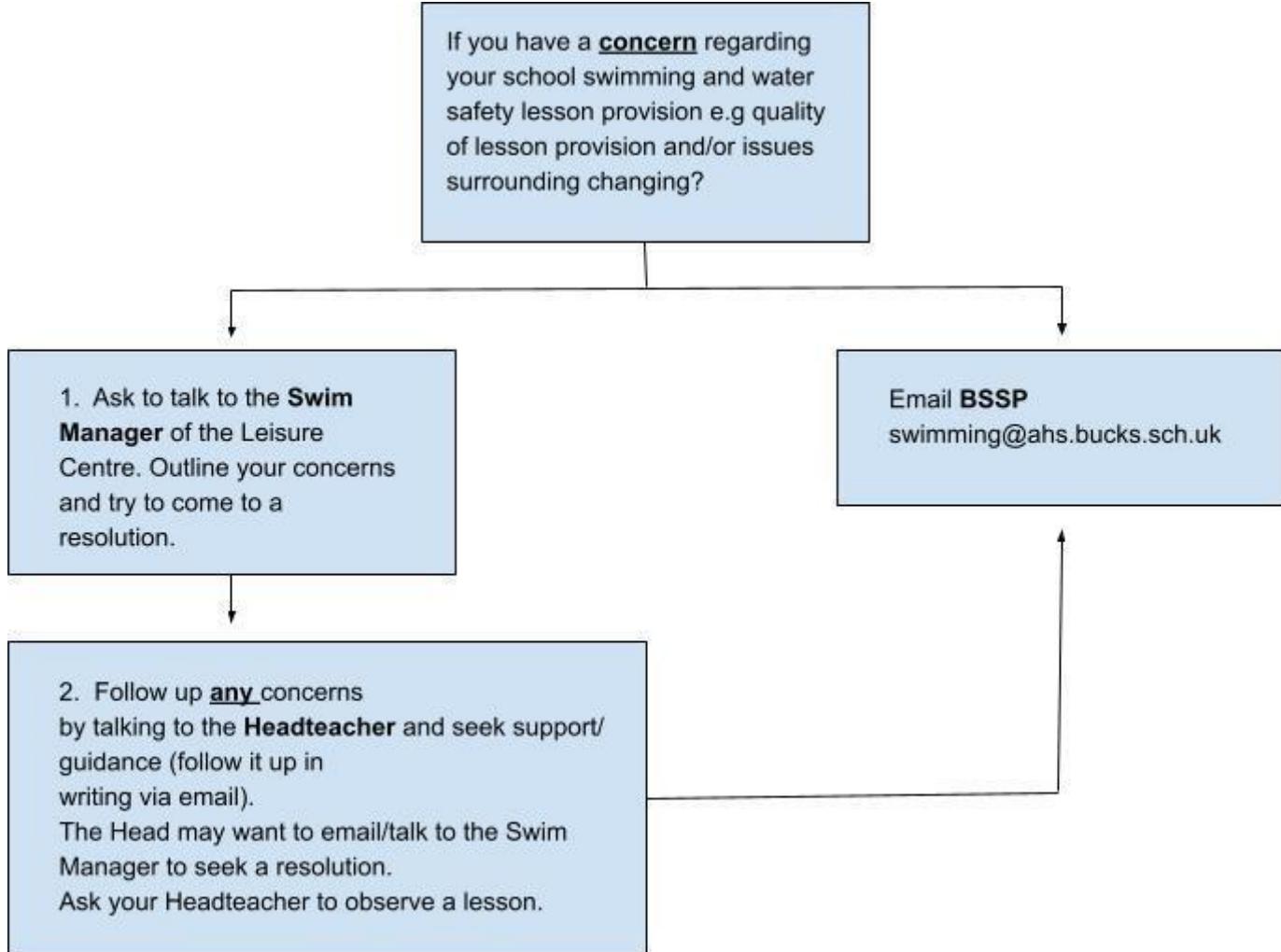
- Understand what their qualification enables them to do
- Ensure that their qualifications are kept up to date and are refreshed when required,
- Make it clear what standard of swimmer they are confident to teach
- Understand the limits of the role
- Be confident on poolside
- Demonstrate good knowledge and be able to communicate this clearly to the pupils
- Follow their school behaviour policy, ensuring good discipline of the pupils
- 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 (NOPs) and Emergency Action Plan (EAP)
- Be suitably dressed for the role they are to play in the lesson
- Adapt their approach to suit the needs of different pupils
- Ensure they maintain a good teaching position at all times - this often means having to move frequently to overcome anything that makes visibility difficult (e.g. glare, shadow, sunlight)
- Not enter the water without leaving a lifeguard/lifesaver and a qualified member of school staff on the poolside
- Not exceed the recommended teacher: pupil ratio arrived at through a risk assessment of each group
- Maintain good relationships with the pool operators and aquatics teachers, ensuring that communication is effective in ways that benefit the pupils, and their roles and responsibilities regarding water safety cover remain clear and understood

(Based on Safe Practice: in Physical Education, School Sport and Physical Activity 2020 Edition)



Accompanying school staff need to work in partnership with specialist swimming teachers. The Partnership Agreement helps them to do this.

Communication Chain



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The names and dates of staff trained should be kept in the School Swimming Folder (BSSP holds the County Database for all trained staff). Where individuals hold qualifications gained from other providers, they **must** submit copies of certificates to the BSSP Swimming Team.

Swimming Teacher Position

The specialist swimming teacher and school staff in charge of the group should be **teaching from the side of the pool** where the whole group can be seen and from where feedback can be given on the performance of each pupil in the group.

There may be some circumstances in which it is appropriate for the school teacher or a classroom assistant to be in the water supporting individual pupils (as an additional person). This would be the exception rather than the rule and only following a careful risk assessment by the swimming teacher. It should include potential factors such as:

- Depth of water
- Pupil ability
- Use of aids
- Size of pool
- Number and age of pupils
- Lifeguarding arrangements



The teacher or member of staff in charge of a group must ensure that, at all times, they can see all the pupils and NEVER turn their back on a group, or position themselves so that pupils are behind them.

When teaching or instructing non-swimmers or weak swimmers in underwater swimming or activity the specialist swimming teacher of the group should be positioned on the poolside at the point nearest to that activity, but so that they can also see the rest of the class. When an additional person is in the water assisting, they must be aware of the NOP and School Safeguarding Policy. This will not compromise ratios on poolside.

If there is glare on the surface of the pool and the bottom of the pool cannot be clearly seen, it may be necessary to rope off the area or cover the window (indoor pool only) letting in the light. It may be that repositioning themselves will allow staff to see the bottom of the pool clearly. If this is still not possible, swimming should cease.

Teaching in the Water

It is recognised that in some circumstances the swimming teacher will have to assess the risk and may feel it is more appropriate to teach in the water. This practice should only be considered after carrying out a risk assessment giving careful consideration to all the following factors:

- Pool depth,
- Ability of learners,
- Age of learners,
- Use of flotation aids and lifesaving support,
- The teacher can clearly see all learners at all times and be close enough to provide appropriate manual support if required.

In this way, ratios may need to be reduced to ensure safety and effective teaching. Ratios above this should not be considered unless additional helpers are in the water.

For additional information, please see Swim England [Safe Supervision](#) and Swim England Guidance on Worker Health and Safety - [here](#)



In some cases, leisure centre staff hold both a swimming teaching qualification and a NRASTC, this is the only reason why there may not be a lifeguard on poolside.

If you are in any doubt, please speak to your leisure provider and Swim Manager. Alternatively, please email swimming@ahs.bucks.sch.uk

Supporting pupils in the water

Supporting pupils through physical contact can be helpful to their progress and, depending on the situation, can be beneficial to their confidence and understanding of swimming and water safety.

Further to this, the **school** should safeguard all by doing the following:

- The school must ensure that if a member of staff is supporting in the water that they are suitably qualified and has the relevant DBS checks
- The school should work with parents / carers / pupils to understand the best method of support (if for example, the pupil has swimming lessons outside of school and is supported in the water)
- The school should email the relevant pupils' parents / carers to gain consent, within this, explain that manual guidance might be used to support the pupil (s)
- To demonstrate appropriate safeguarding techniques it is best practice to keep hands where they can be seen at all times and offer support by using a flat, open palm, back of the hand or by using floatation/teaching equipment. Support should only be delivered using the following positions; hands, shoulders and head. Swimming equipment and / or aids are encouraged to facilitate this process.

- The pupils should always be treated with empathy and asked if they are happy for support using physical contact. If they say 'no', or are not comfortable with this teaching practice, you will need to find an alternative method of support.
- This should be identified within the **Risk Assessment** and agreed with all (including the Headteacher) prior to the School Swimming Programme commencing.
- In regard to ratios, with a member of staff supporting in the water, there must always be at least **two qualified members** of school staff present on the poolside during the swimming lesson.

Swim England Best Practice (Holds and Clothing)



The member of school staff in the water should be easily recognisable by, i.e. wearing a bright t-shirt,

The personal space of the learner should not be infringed - the member of school staff in the water should be aware of familiarity that may come from pupils.

Teaching Qualifications Required for School Staff

Staff accompanying pupils to their School Swimming lessons need to undertake training to ensure they are confident and competent on poolside.

For all staff who accompany their pupils swimming at a leisure provider pool will have completed a minimum of the Swim England Support Teacher of School Swimming qualification. **Swim England recommend completion of both Support Teacher and Teacher of School Swimming courses**



The holder of Swim England Stage 1; Support Teacher of School Swimming may work under the guidance of a specialist swimming teacher to actively support and assist.

The holder of Swim England Stage 2; Teacher of School Swimming will be qualified to plan & evaluate session plans in line with NC and teach independently within a school swim programme alongside at least one other at a shallow tank pool, 1.2m or below. However, at leisure provider pools, they will need to work alongside a qualified Level 2 Swimming Teacher.

Swim England National Curriculum Training Programme Certificate for Teaching School Swimming

PRIMARY CPD	
Stage 1: Support Teacher of School Swimming (6 hour course 6 CPD points)	
The course includes practical elements. Candidates must be confident in water and able to swim 25m Once completed the holder will be able to actively assist and support a more qualified teacher in line with the swimming lesson provider's risk assessment.	
1	Statutory requirements for swimming and water safety in the National Curriculum
2	Good practice with regard to health and safety in a school swimming programme
3	Roles, responsibilities and relationships related to the delivery of swimming in schools
4	Organisation of the learning environment
5	Physical literacy and its importance in PE and School Swimming
6	Developing water confidence using the core aquatic skills
7	Introduction to the swimming strokes
Stage 2: Teacher of School Swimming (9 hour course with pre-course preparation – 9 CPD points)	
The course includes an Observation of Candidates teaching pupils (or if this is not possible, each other)	
Once completed the holder will be qualified to plan and evaluate session plans, whether working towards, meeting or exceeding the national curriculum. They will be able to teach independently or support a specialist swimming teacher in a school swimming programme, in line with the swimming lesson providers risk assessment.	
1	Aquatic skills appropriate to those working at the improver level
2	Technical aspects related to the four strokes – i.e. stroke analysis
3	Faults and causes and progressive practices to bring about improvement
4	Key skills within the School Swimming and Water Safety Charter that meet National Curriculum attainment targets
5	Key considerations when developing a school swimming lesson plan
6	Creation of session plans for the delivery of swimming lessons - delivery of these
7	Key aspects of communication in relation to delivery – feedback, questioning and skill development
8	Reviewing the effectiveness of planning and delivery to improve participant progression

All candidates will receive invaluable resources, including the NCTP Learner Guide and National Curriculum Activity Cards. (Candidates will be registered with Swim England, recorded on the BSSP Database and will receive certificates).

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Swim England advises that school staff should refresh or upskill their training within a 5 year period.

School Swimming Teaching Scenarios

The table below shows the training requirements for school staff for a range of different school pools

Based on Swim England 2025

Primary School Staff using a private school pool or leisure provider pool (deeper than 1.2m)

At least 1 Swim England Level 2 Certificate for Teaching Aquatics or STA Level 2 Certificate in Swimming Teaching. They must be supported by a minimum of 2 members of school staff trained to a minimum level of Support Teacher of School Swimming (6 hour course) delivered by Swim England Licenced BSSP staff,	School or leisure provider staff School staff (teachers, HLTA's +TAs)	Work with an absolute upper limit of 20:1 - see Swim England Supervision Guidance Aug 2024 on ratios for qualified specialist swimming teachers. Ratios should be predetermined in the Risk Assessment. Support Teacher of School Swimming qualified staff to actively assist and support a more qualified teacher in line with the swimming pool and school's risk assessment. Teacher of School Swimming qualified to plan and evaluate session plans, whether working towards, meeting or exceeding the National Curriculum. They will be able to teach independently or support a specialist swimming teacher in a schools swimming programme, in line with the swimming lesson provider's risk assessment. (Swim England 2025)
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Considerations:

Schools, school swimming lesson providers and operators must fully risk assess their school swimming provision to identify the maximum ratios for a particular lesson. Ratios will change depending on the risks of the lesson. The risk assessment will take into account the level of safe supervision (lifeguard cover) the design of the facility, the age, ability and understanding levels of pupils, SEND considerations, the knowledge and experience of staff and any other considerations.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Schools using leisure providers **must work in partnership** to assist the qualified specialist swimming teachers, within the ratios outlined by Swim England (see above). Where Teachers and TAs/HLTA's are both involved in lessons, pupil - teacher ratios can be significantly reduced (low ratios are key for safety in swimming) within Swim England teacher pupil ratios.



Where school staff are absent or a school does not have 2 appropriately qualified members of staff to accompany the pupils to school swimming, they **must not** send supply staff or trainee teachers.

Please contact the Bucks School Swimming Partnership via swimming@ahs.bucks.sch.uk to discuss any alternative scenarios/ options to ensure the pupils' safety at all times, that may not have been mentioned above.

Keeping Qualifications up to date

As with all qualifications, it is strongly recommended that all staff keep themselves updated and upskilled. Swim England recommends a 5 year renewal for the above courses. One of the reasons for this is that Good Practice can change from time to time, e.g. recommended ratios; technicalities for swimming strokes etc. The options for school staff to update and upskill are set out below (in ranked order):

Course Title	Within 5 Year Renewal Period	Outside 5 Year Renewal Period
Stage 1 Support Teacher of School Swimming	Progress on to Stage 2; Teacher of School Swimming	Undertake Stage 1; Support Teacher of School Swimming
Supporting pupils with SEND during School Swimming	Progress on to Stage 2; Teacher of School Swimming	Undertake 'Supporting pupils with SEND during School Swimming'
Stage 2 Teacher of School Swimming	Undertake Stage 2; Teacher of School Swimming	Undertake Teacher of School Swimming or Support Teacher of School Swimming to refresh knowledge



All lifeguarding or lifesaving courses have a minimum 2 year revision requirement or the option to refresh training on a regular basis.

When using a school pool, it is the school's responsibility to ensure that lifeguard qualifications are kept up to date.

Ratios for Swimming Teachers

Swim England Safe Supervision Guidance

The building design of swimming pools vary greatly as do specific circumstances, thus each class will be very different. Therefore, definitive sets of ratios are not always appropriate.

For example, shallow-depth learner pools are much easier to supervise than large public pools where the presence of public swimmers can present problems. The starting point for any such policy should be the completion of a thorough Risk Assessment based on:

- Numbers of 'qualified staff'
- Numbers of 'non-qualified' adult helpers who are on poolside in a supervisory/spotting role, • Pupil ability
- The facility, including water depth and un-programmed activities taking place at the same time, • Pupil behaviour

- Pupils with additional needs and disabilities

Please talk to your leisure provider who should be happy to advise on the Risk Assessment

Teacher : Pupil ratios (not to be confused with bather capacity) will be found in the pool's NOP and will be based on risk assessments



Irrespective of the Teacher : Pupil ratio, there must always be at least 2 qualified members of school staff present on the poolside during the swimming lesson.

All pools will have a designated maximum bather capacity appropriate to the size of the pool. This should be available in the pool's NOP. Class sizes will be calculated from both bather capacity and an appropriate Risk Assessment.

Occasionally, specialist swimming teachers will request a dedicated named person to provide additional support for an individual pupil who has particular health and safety need/s whilst swimming. Sometimes this person is referred to as a "spotter". If spotters are in the water, they become a participant and should be included in the numbers under the supervision of the specialist swimming teacher. They will be additional to the Swim England Teacher of School Swimming trained staff.

In exceptional circumstances, specialist swimming teachers may ask individual pupils to sit out of lessons until their health and safety in the water can be managed satisfactorily. A member of school accompanying staff is responsible for the safe supervision of any pupil asked to sit out of a lesson.

Additional school accompanying staff, swimming teacher assistants or support teachers, who may be in the water to aid a pupil, do not count towards the Teacher: Pupil ratio, but do count towards bather capacity numbers. They also need to be fully aware of their role and understand relevant aspects of both NOP and EAP.

Guidelines from Swim England for Teacher : Pupil Ratios

The ratios outlined below are guidelines set by Swim England for swimming teachers holding an ASA Level 2 Certificate for Teaching Swimming/Aquatics Qualification. These ratios should only be used for guidance when writing risk assessments. Normal Operating Procedures and Emergency Action Plans and other factors need to be taken into account, including:

- The competency and experience of the swimming teacher,
- Lifeguard provision (if the Teacher is also taking on the role of the Lifeguard),
- Design of the pool,
- Ability of the pupils.

The school Risk Assessment needs to consider ratio requirements and whether the safety of the session and quality of teaching would be enhanced by assigning additional staff to teach smaller groups or carry out monitoring roles such as head-counts or watching for signs of pupils tiring.

The following applies to Level 2 Swim England (or equivalent)

Swimming Teachers:



Please pay particular attention to the **bold** type sections below when writing your Risk Assessments and jointly planning with your leisure providers. **Also refer to the [Swim England Safe Supervision Guidance Aug 2024](#).**

Ability / age / activity	Baseline Learner / Teacher Ratios	Quality Delivery
Non Swimmers and beginners - young children , normally primary school age, being introduced to swimming who are unable to swim 10 metres unaided on back or front .	12:1	8:1
Pupils under the age of seven - Irrespective of their swimming ability, group size should be restricted.	12:1	8:1
Improving swimmers - Swimmers of a similar ability to each other who can swim at least 10 metres competently and unaided on their back and on their front . It is recommended that the lesson be confined to an area in which the pupils are not out of their depth .	20:1	12:1
Mixed ability groups - Pupils with a range of abilities (from improving to competent) where the least able and least confident are working well within their depth . Swimmers techniques, stamina and deep-water experience should be considered. They should not include beginners .	20:1	12:1
Competent swimmers - Those swimmers who can swim at least 25 metres competently and unaided on front and back, and can tread water for two minutes .	20:1	15:1
Swimmers with disabilities - each situation must be considered individually . Care must be taken to ensure that there are sufficient helpers in the water to provide a 1:1 ratio for those needing constant support , and a sufficient number of other helpers to provide the degree of support required by the range of disabilities within the group.	8:1 with 1:1 support in the water where required	6:1 with 1:1 support in the water where required

The absolute upper limit for a qualified Swim England Level 2 (or equivalent) Teacher in School Swimming is 20:1 (owing to the likely mixed ability of the group). It is emphasised that this will need to be lower depending on the Risk Assessment; e.g. age, ability, additional needs and where schools are taking pupils who are beginners or unable to swim 10m unaided on their front and back (see previous page).

For example, where schools are taking pupils who are beginners, unable to swim 10m unaided on their front or back, **which is often the reality**, the ratio becomes 12:1 (ideally a maximum of 8:1) and schools will therefore need to employ additional qualified swimming teachers to work safely within these ratios.

As an example, where schools take more than 20 pupils swimming; e.g. a class of 30 pupils, the above applies and they will require:

- A minimum of 2 Swim England Level 2 qualified swimming teachers, along with 2 Swim England Stage 1 Support Teacher of School Swimming qualified school staff (again, there may be a requirement to employ more qualified swimming teachers and/or bring more school staff (trained or as additional 'spotters'), dependent on Risk Assessment).

Leisure provider pools work within the above national governing body ratio guidelines. The Bucks Safe Practice in School Swimming Policy requires school staff with the Swim England Support Teacher of School Swimming Certificate to assist leisure provider qualified swimming teachers (whilst still working under the above ratios and the guidance of the Level 2 Swimming Teacher).

Ratios for School Staff

Stage 1; Support Teacher of School Swimming – once completed the holder will be able to actively assist and support a more qualified teacher. Candidates can then progress to the second training programme.

Stage 2; Teacher of School Swimming – once completed the holder will be qualified to plan and evaluate session plans in line with the national curriculum, and teach independently in a school swimming programme.

Lifeguarding Qualifications and Provision for School Swimming

Pool operators have a responsibility for the safety of all who use their pools. Whenever pupils swim, there must be someone present with appropriate lifeguarding/lifesaving, rescue and first aid skills.

It is the responsibility of the pool operator to ensure that there are enough lifeguards and that they are competent, effectively organised and diligent in their duties. This should be addressed in the risk assessment and also includes assessing whether hirers of pools have made effective and safe arrangements for supervision (HSG179, Health & Safety in Swimming Pools 2018).

There must always be at least 2 people on poolside whilst there are swimmers in the water. One of these supervisors must always have the responsibility for lifeguarding/lifesaving, rescue and resuscitation. They need to have a suitable lifeguarding qualification in accordance with the pool size, depth, NOP and Risk Assessment.



A swimming teacher who is also responsible for lifeguarding/lifesaving should not work alone. There must be at least one leisure provider lifeguard present at all times during planned school lessons. The risk assessment should inform the number of lifeguards required.

There should never be only one pair of 'qualified eyes' (e.g. a qualified Swim England Level 2 or equivalent Swimming Teacher or qualified lifeguard) on poolside. Whilst teachers have organisational and teaching experience, along with knowledge of their pupils, most will have 'unqualified eyes' in terms of spotting pupils in difficulty in the water. The swimming pool is a totally different environment from school settings. Therefore, if the Swimming Teacher is also the lifeguard, there should be an additional qualified Swimming teacher on poolside.

Lifeguards must never leave the poolside unattended and always secure the poolside against unauthorised access. They must remain alert and be facing the pool at all times. All lifeguards, lifesavers and supporting staff need to:

- Ensure they regularly practice and renew their lifesaving and water safety skills and keep qualifications up to date,
- Remain diligent and effectively organised throughout an aquatic session,
- Understand the pool NOP and EAP,
- Ensure clothing is appropriate to their role to enable prompt response without restriction in the event of an incident.

Lifeguarding Qualifications

PUBLIC POOL	
Situation	Lifeguarding Qualification Needed (This will usually be provided by the leisure provider)
In a public pool, for structured lessons e.g. School Swimming	RLSS National Pool Lifeguard Qualification (NPLQ) or STA Pool Lifeguard Qualification or RLSS National Rescue Award for Swimming Teachers and Coaches (NRASTC) or RLSS National Rescue Award for Swimming Teachers and Coaches LIGHT (NRASTC)

Schools using leisure provider pools:

A Health and Safety talk should be given to every class (pupils and teachers) at every pool on the first lesson of each term. This could be supported by a briefing at school on behaviour, expectations and pool rules prior to their attendance. Pupils should be reminded of these aspects regularly or when required, to ensure familiarity with the pool alarm and emergency procedures. If a pupil is absent for the briefing (or a new pupil joins the school) they must be given the brief before commencing swimming.

Religious and Cultural Issues within school swimming

A number of religious and cultural issues need consideration for school swimming such as:

- Wearing certain items of clothing and/or religious artefacts; e.g. Some faiths will have issues with unacceptable exposure of the body; pupils may be expected to wear religious adornments,
- Single or mixed gender groupings for school swimming,
- Religious/cultural festivals such as Ramadan, and the implications of these; e.g. Fasting during Ramadan may result in low energy levels; a risk of dehydration and lower concentration levels,
- Cultural expectations in PE and School Swimming,
- EAL pupils - ensuring understanding of all safety procedures and task requirements.

What should schools put in place?

- Hold ongoing discussions with local faith leaders and parents so they understand school policies around school swimming,
- Ensure that safe practice is followed but accommodate adjustments to swimming attire (e.g. allow long costumes or legging whilst ensuring clothing is not heavy or likely to flap),
- Provide acceptable levels of privacy to take into account any mixed-gender issues,
- Where required and if practical and feasible build single sex teaching into the swimming programme,
- Ensure EAL pupils are supported to ensure they understand key safety signals and phrases identified through the Risk Assessment such as 'STOP'; support staff can attract and maintain their attention in the event of an emergency; consider using a Buddy system.

Swimming Clothing and Equipment

Teacher Clothing and Equipment

School staff should change into suitable footwear to be able to move easily around the poolside and not bring outdoor dirt onto the pool surround on their feet.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION School staff should wear clothes suitable to the environment, humidity and temperature of the pool.

Teachers should all be equipped with a whistle and familiar with the standard signals used in most pools, to either use their whistle correctly or respond to a whistle communication from someone else.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION N.B. Schools should refer to their NOP/EAP for communication signals as these vary from pool to pool.



Whistle Drill

- One short blast - Calls for attention of pool users
- Two short blasts - Calls for the attention of a lifeguard or member of staff
- Three short blasts - Indicates a lifeguard taking emergency action

Pupils' Swimming Attire

Pupils should wear **appropriate** swimwear for swimming that conform to safety, cultural and teaching requirements. **Swimming hats must be worn and all jewellery removed.** Where pupils may not be able to remove earrings, these must be taped. Where the school accepts taping, the teacher supervising the group has the legal responsibility to ensure that the taping is fit for purpose. Body jewellery should be removed or taped to a safe standard.

Medical Aid wristbands can now be made of soft materials with velcro fastenings and these are considered acceptable. It is a parents' responsibility to check that there are no hard edges that may cause injury. If the medical bracelet is made of other materials it should be covered with tape, padding or a soft, sports-style wristband.

Fitness watches/wristbands should be removed for school swimming. Religious artefacts need to be removed or made safe. Health and safety law would usually take precedence over equality law because of the implication of the "safety of others" and the specific duty set out in the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. If, following discussions with parents and faith leaders, their removal becomes contentious, the activity and involvement of the wearer needs to be suitably modified to mitigate undue risk. AfPE Safe Practice in Physical Education, School Sport and Physical Activity 2020.

It is important that swimming clothing is relatively tight fitting in order to minimise the effect of drag that waterlogged clothing can create (as this is dangerous for weak swimmers). Also, loose fitting shorts can trap the hands or feet of other swimmers. Sensitivity is required to ensure the correct balance when cultural demands require looser fitting garments (working with leisure providers to accommodate needs) and the need to be able to see the movements that limbs and joints are making in the water to ensure appropriate learning.



(Improving Participation of Muslim Girls in Physical Education and School Sport, Shared Practical Guidance from Birmingham Schools, 2008; Chp2 & 3 Changing and Swimming Respectively). See [Appendix K](#).

And also [Appendix L](#) - (Comment on Meeting the Needs of Muslim Pupils in State Schools: Information and Guidance for Schools,' British Muslim Council, 2008, AfPE, Chapter 3, pages 30, 31 and 38).

Pupils should not be excluded from school swimming because of verrucae, as learning to swim is statutory in the National Curriculum and helps prevent death from drowning. Swim England advice includes discouraging the use of devices such as plastic socks to protect the feet, as with elasticated knee bandages, the socks have limited value other than to attract attention. They advise the use of a waterproof plaster to be sufficient to cover the verruca during lessons. Alternatively, over the counter treatments e.g. Bazuka provide a layer of protection over the verruca. Further information from Swim England can be found [here](#).



Swimming hats have been developed to be more inclusive i.e. having a 'loose fit' design. Information about these can be found [here](#).

Please note there may be other providers and sellers of this type of hat.

Guidance on Goggles

Association for Physical Education and Swim England Guidance

While swimming goggles may make a pupil feel comfortable in the pool while they are learning to swim, if they accidentally end up in water it is unlikely they will be wearing them. It is vital that pupils are comfortable swimming with or without goggles so they don't panic in an unexpected situation.

Goggles are not normally recommended for school swimming lessons, where swimmers have poor control in the water (beginners). The pupil's attention can be compromised by the need to adjust and replace goggles. However, goggles can be helpful in assisting pupils learn to swim by making them feel more comfortable and can help them to develop their aquatic breathing skills. Any club swimmers or pupils training regularly will usually wear goggles to protect them from exposing their eyes to the effect of the chemicals in the water for long periods of time.

At Whaddon Church of England School, we encourage pupils to wear goggles during swimming lessons.

Any deviation from the guidelines should be noted in the risk assessment for the activity. Knowledge about individual pupil's needs remains critical in determining the wearing of goggles.

The Swimming Teacher will ultimately decide whether the wearing of goggles is appropriate for the activity undertaken. Pupils should be asked to remove their goggles for self-rescue and water-based games. Goggles must not be worn when learning to dive. For some swimmers where speed and competence increase, there may be a need to wear goggles. Club swimmers for example will benefit from the use of goggles due to the longer daily exposure to chlorine. Pupils who are very short sighted may need to wear prescription goggles.

The Swimming Teacher for the group is responsible for determining whether any pupil wearing goggles is using them safely and for a positive purpose. If they are not, then the pupil should be asked to remove the goggles. Ill-fitting goggles may mist up or fill up with water, thus affecting visibility. **School staff should not fit or adjust a pupil's goggles.**

Parents should be informed of their responsibility to **teach their pupil to put on and take off goggles in the correct and safe fashion** (slipping them off the head and not by stretching the retaining band away from the face as wet plastic is slippery and can cause injury to the eye area). This information should be included in the school's Risk Assessment.



Swimming goggles, if used, should be made of unbreakable plastic or rubber and should conform to British Standard (BS 5883:1996). This requires the packaging to contain instructions regarding safely putting on and removing goggles.

An incorrect chemical balance in the pool can cause eye irritation, therefore if pupils complain of this, the pool operator needs to be informed.

Safeguarding

Each school will have their own Child Protection Procedures and so too should the pool. It is important that the pool procedures relate to those of the Buckinghamshire Council. A school using a pool, should establish a working agreement identifying the relationship between their respective procedures. This should include how any concerns raised will be progressed, recorded and addressed by school staff and leisure provider staff. Staff and pupils should behave and conduct themselves in accordance with their school's policy when using the centre. School staff should know who their Designated Safeguarding Lead is both at school and at the leisure provider facility.

The school should assure themselves that the leisure provider has followed a safer recruitment process. All persons working with pupils frequently and/or intensively or who are working in "regulated activity" must have a relevant DBS Check and that any other relevant safeguarding vetting checks have been undertaken. This should be shown with the hire agreement if these are not school or BC staff.

When supervising pupils changing or assisting them with their swimming, pool and school staff and adults other than teachers should avoid physical contact with pupils unless it is to:

- develop an essential swimming skill or technique
- treat an injury
- prevent an injury
- meet the requirement of the activity (e.g. Lifesaving)
- lift or manually support a pupil with disabilities
- assist with a personal care task which the pupil or young person cannot undertake by themselves

In these circumstances, the adult should explain the reason for the physical contact with the pupil. Unless the situation is an emergency, the adult should ask the pupil for permission. If pupils have disabilities, they and their carers need to be involved in deciding what assistance should be offered, the pupil should be treated with dignity and respect. Management of a pupil with disabilities participating in swimming activities should form part of the school's risk assessment for the activity and plan of care for the pupil. This should be agreed with the pupil and parent/carer prior to the commencement of the School Swimming programme.

If staff are in the water, they need to wear a t-shirt to cover swimwear.



'When manual support is being provided, care must be taken to avoid embarrassment to the teacher or the pupil. Where manual support is provided, other adults and pupils should be in attendance.'

NCTP Learner Guide

The protocols Swim England suggest include the need to:

- Ensure there is a system included within the Pool's NOP/EAP whereby the parent or guardian of the pupil gives permission for the teacher to handle the pupils for the purposes of supporting them in the water or manipulating limbs to convey correct stroke techniques (this could be through the parental swimming permission form)
- Ensure that any handling of pupils is done within clear sight of other persons
- Always explain to the pupil that you are now going to hold him/her and why, to avoid embarrassment
- Support pupils in such a way that the swimming teachers' hands can be seen by the spectators,
- Ensure a pupil is not supported by their torso
- Support swimmers by holding their hands, head or feet. Swimming equipment / aids to be encouraged

Additionally, teachers should NEVER teach or coach a swimmer alone.

Where pupils sustain an injury and any First Aid is administered the incident must be reported to the pupil's parent/carer by school staff as soon as possible. School staff must take responsibility for recording the details of the incident, including actions taken to safeguard the pupil and a record retained in line with school policy. Accidents and incidents which occur should also be recorded by pool staff on their forms for their records and further reported to Buckinghamshire Council via the Assessnet.

In the event of a pupil needing to be taken to hospital for treatment, a representative from the school, known to the pupil, should always accompany the pupil. If this leaves the school group short of staff at the pool, then the school should be informed to seek additional staffing for the group. The parent/carer of the pupil should be informed as soon as possible.

All adults in a position of trust (teachers, volunteers, and staff) should avoid placing themselves at risk by being alone with a pupil and should ensure that wherever possible, there are other responsible persons around and that they are in public view.

The school must be aware of all viewing areas or public areas which may overlook the pool. Consideration needs to be given to the use of mobile phones in these areas; school staff need to remain vigilant at all times and report any concerning behaviour to the designated Safeguarding Lead both at the centre and school.

Volunteers in School Swimming

The school and **Headteacher** must be aware of **all** adults supporting in a voluntary capacity in the delivery of school swimming sessions.

The following criteria must be sought prior to any volunteer(s) assisting with the delivery of your school swimming and water safety programme:

1. Does your school receive any additional support for school swimming i.e. a volunteer with swimming teaching qualifications?
2. Has this volunteer attended Safeguarding training within your school?

N.B. There needs to be documented evidence of this i.e. Safeguarding Certificate.

3. Do you hold copies of their qualifications (Swim England / ASA or STA teaching/ coaching) within your School Swimming folder?
4. What is the date of the qualification, Swim England states that some form of CPD must be fulfilled every 5 years.
5. Is the additional volunteer included in the risk assessment for that particular class? **N.B. This risk assessment should also consider the guidance from KCSiE paras 305-308.**
6. Has the school completed a DBS check on the volunteer? Is this in the Swimming Folder? **N.B. If this volunteer is being overseen by the school, then their details should be added to the single central record (KCSiE para 273) accompanied by full references as well.**
7. Are parents/carers informed about any additional support?

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

A **written** agreement needs to be in place with the volunteer(s) to ensure that best practice has been adhered to in regards to Safer Recruitment and your school's Safeguarding Policy.

Supervision of Changing Rooms

Parents/guardians should be informed of changing arrangements.

It is the responsibility of the accompanying school staff to provide appropriate supervision whilst the pupils are changing. Only staff of the appropriate gender should enter the changing room, where possible, unless in an emergency. Using members of the opposite gender to supervise mixed-gender groups in separate changing rooms is acceptable unless there are significant elements of relative intimate contact that may affect the dignity, comfort and confidence of either pupils or staff. A mixed gender group may use an open plan, single sex changing area if the pupils are under the age of seven and with agreement from pool management. Discuss changing options with your leisure provider. Where pool staff are able to assist with supervision of changing rooms, this arrangement with the pool management needs to be assured and consistent. This may include, for example, pupils using dry side changing facilities; disabled changing areas (where appropriate) or signs on changing room doors requesting members of the public change in cubicles.

There should never be a situation where a member of staff is alone with a pupil. Should this incident arise, this must be reported on return to school. All of the pupils should remain together in a group. Care should be taken in changing rooms to ensure that the appropriate ratios and gender of staff are present to supervise pupils and that pupils are safeguarded from members of the public.

Where additional help is required, owing to a pupil having additional needs, a second adult must be present and both the pupil and parent/carer's consent must be sought.



Useful links ▶

Safeguarding considerations for changing rooms (NSPCC, April 2024),
[click here.](#)

Changing Arrangements for School Swimming

As with all changing associated with PE activities, school staff need to ensure this process is effective, safe and inclusive.

As school swimming and water safety lessons are often delivered in a facility with members of the public present there are additional considerations:

- It is not always feasible for schools to have exclusive use of larger facilities and in these instances dual use of the facility may be required
- Site visits prior to the first swimming lessons should take place so that supporting school staff are aware of where they are required to take students and where any higher-risk areas are
- School staff should be aware of where the toilets, shower areas and changing areas are located and who will be responsible for supervising students in those areas
- Separate changing rooms or a zone if the changing area is a changing village should be identified and clearly signed as school use only
- Other control measures may be in place such as screens or alternative methods of accessing the pool or changing area, possibly arranged with the pool operator

afPE Safe Practice 2024

Facilities for Transgender Students

It is always best to ask the student involved what changing space will work best for them. This may be male changing, female changing or the unisex accessible toilet. Teachers also need to be prepared for the possibility that where they choose to change may vary from lesson to lesson or week to week. Schools are advised to consider each situation uniquely and sensitively. Staff should speak openly and honestly about participation in school swimming and how potentially difficult situations can be overcome.

Participating in physical education is important to the physical and mental well-being of students. A young trans person has the same right to access physical education as their peers and to take part in competitive sports.

Toilets and changing facilities are often deemed the most sensitive of all the issues for transgender students, and there is much debate around the inclusion of trans young people in gender-segregated facilities. Concerns usually stem from a worry that young trans people may find themselves in a vulnerable position and may be subject to transphobic bullying or unwanted attention that has the potential to escalate to something more serious such as physical or emotional harm. Equally, young trans people want to be able to "pass" as their true gender and want to be seen and treated as such.

It is sensible to rename these facilities so that there is less stigma attached for any student who may need to use these toilets. Recommended names for these toilets include unisex accessible toilet, larger toilet, and toilet and changing facility. This ensures that the school respects the dignity of trans students and others using the toilet while ensuring their safety.

Changing facilities need to be managed safely and sensibly. In general, schools can apply the same guidelines as they do for toilets. It is advisable to conduct a Risk Assessment and, where appropriate, provide facilities that ensure privacy and safety.

(Association for Physical Education, AfPE, 'Safe Practice in Physical Education, School Sport and Physical Activity'2020).

Safety Equipment

Safety equipment such as poles, throw ropes or throw bags and first aid provision (including emergency blankets) must be readily available and sufficient in quantity, regularly checked and positioned when needed without creating additional hazards to pool users. Special School pools will have different equipment such as tracking hoists, boards and buoys.

Reach poles should be kept on both sides of the pool and should be long enough to reach over half of the width of the pool, location being clearly indicated. (Very large poles can be difficult to manage – there may not be enough room to use them effectively, ensure poles can be managed safely).

Other safety considerations include:

- Pool depths should be marked clearly around the pool and all signs should be compliant with the Health & Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996. In pools with a sudden change in depth, there should be a pool profile on display,
- A pool divider (usually a rope) should be positioned to separate deep and shallow water when weak/non-swimmers are present,
- Pupils with physical disabilities, where a hoist may not be the quickest form of exit in an emergency. Schools may need a spinal board for this purpose.

Educational Visits

Approval via EVOLVE is required (tick 'adventurous' as a visit type)

All swimming activities and venues including hotel pools (UK and abroad) must be identified within the visit planning and itinerary and lifeguarding arrangements checked in advance.

LA approval is not required for a Lifeguarded Swimming Pool.

For guidance for using swimming pools during off-site visits please refer to the [National Guidance document](#)

Natural Water Bathing / Open Water Swimming

Natural Water Bathing should always be a robustly **structured** activity. Where open water swimming is planned for pupils, either as part of a residential experience during curriculum time or outside of normal school hours, parents should be fully informed. Guidance documents on Open Water Swimming are available from Swim England and the RLSS UK: Information on the Management of open water swimming events can be found [here](#).

As with any activity, the leader must be absolutely clear that there are no significant risks. Planning should consider the **SAGE** (Staff, Activity, Group, Environment) variables.

The Visit Leader must undertake a risk assessment in consultation with agencies that have local knowledge of the venue. This should include reliable weather information and will need to be continually reviewed to ensure the suitability of progressing with plans.

The risk assessment needs to consider all of the above SAGE variables in order to decide upon appropriate safe supervision level and plan, before the activity takes place. This plan should be communicated to all staff and participants.

Pupils should be briefed and understand:

- The [Water Safety Code](#) and strategies to manage [Cold Water Shock](#)
- Why they should proceed and enter the water with [caution](#)
- [Boundaries](#) of the area where they are swimming - these are manageable and contained and that they should not venture outside of these in adherence to [British Beach Flag Signs](#) (please note if travelling abroad that these are checked before briefing)
- The need to remain in [shallow water](#) if they are a weak swimmer, so they are able to put their feet on the bottom and stand up
- Any other [hazards](#) have identified on the Risk Assessment in relation to being in the water,



Please refer to the [National Guidance for the Management of Outdoor Learning Off Site Visits and the Learning Outside the Classroom](#):

1. [Natural Water Bathing](#)
2. [Swimming Pools](#) (use during educational, off-site visits)
3. [Group Safety at Water Margins](#)



Please note that schools wishing to partake in any outdoor water based activity must follow the National Guidance, which can be found [here](#).

The pleas of young people to be allowed to bathe (e.g. because it is hot weather) must never be allowed to override the leader's judgement of the situation.

Further Considerations

School staff and trip leaders need to ensure that they are aware of the risks of diseases found in urban rivers canals and lakes, the most prevalent being Leptospirosis or 'Weil's Disease'. Symptoms can include a high temperature; chills; headaches; loss of appetite; muscle pain; irritation of the eyes; a rash. These symptoms can develop between 2 and 30 days after exposure. If untreated, the disease can cause organ failure becoming life threatening. The infection can be caught by swallowing water or by getting into the bloodstream through a cut or graze. Pupils need to be told therefore to avoid swallowing water where possible and to cover any cuts or grazes with a plaster.

Glossary of Terms

AfPE	Association for Physical Education
AGP's	Above Ground Domestic Temporary Pools (AGP's) (commonly referred to as "Pop-up Pools")
ASA	Amateur Swimming Association, now renamed Swim England
FINA	Federation Internationale de Natation also known as International Swimming Federation - Swim England are affiliated to FINA
NCTP	National Curriculum Training Programme
UKCC	United Kingdom Coaching Certificate
ATSPRA	Aquatic Therapy Shallow Pool Rescue Award
BC	Buckinghamshire Council
BSSP	Bucks School Swimming Partnership
CIMSPA	Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity
DBS	Disclosure Barring Service

DfES/CCPR	Department for Education and Skills/Central Council for Physical Education
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EAP	Emergency Action Plan
EHO	Environmental Health Officer
HLTA	Higher Level Teaching Assistant
HSE	Health & Safety Executive
IOS	Institute of Swimming
ISPE	Institute of Swimming Pool Engineers
ISRM	Institute of Sport and Recreation Management
NC	National Curriculum
NCTP	National Curriculum Training Programme
NOP	Normal Operating Procedure
NPLQ	National Pool Lifeguard Qualification
NRASTC	National Rescue Award for Swimming Teachers and Coaches
OEAP	Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel
PSOP	Pool Safety Operating Procedures
PWMC	Pool Water Maintenance Contractor
PWTAG	Pool Water Treatment Advisory Group
QCF	Qualification and Credit Framework
RAPs	Register of Aquatic Professionals
RIDDOR	Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013
RLSS UK	Royal Life Saving Society
RLSS UK	RLSS UK National Water Safety Management Programme
NWSMP	
RNLI	Royal National Lifeboat Institution
SEND	Special Educational Needs &/or Disabilities
STA	Swimming Teachers' Association
STA/NaRS (PL)	National Pool Lifeguard Certificate
SE	Swim England (the national governing body for swimming in England)
TA	Teaching Assistant

Definitions

Teachers in charge of School Swimming and Water Safety within their school: The named teacher or member of staff responsible for coordinating swimming arrangements for their school.

Accompanying School staff: These are the adults employed by the school or volunteers chosen to accompany the pupils to their swimming lesson.

Leisure providers: This refers to staff in pools coordinating and providing School Swimming and Water Safety who are employed by the leisure facility (staff and management).

Specialist Swimming Teacher: The individual in charge of the School Swimming and Water Safety lesson, as a minimum, qualified to Swim England (ASA) Level 2 or STA Level 2 Certificate in Teaching Swimming.

Swimming Teacher Assistants: Individuals that can work under the supervision of a specialist swimming teacher, qualified to Swim England (ASA) UKCC Level 1 or STA Level 2 Award in Teaching Swimming.

Lifeguard: The individual responsible for lifeguarding; intervention, rescue and resuscitation of swimmers in difficulty.

References

1	All schools with their own pools should have a copy of HSG 179 'Managing Health and Safety in Swimming Pools' 4th Edition, Published 2018, which they can purchase from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) , or also available to download free from: www.hse.gov.uk
2	Swim England A Guide for Primary Schools
3	Swim England Safe Supervision
4	The Association for Physical Education, Safe Practice in Physical Education and Sport. 10th ed. 2020: Association for Physical Education; ISBN: 978-1-909012-47-9 since replaced by the 2024 version https://www.afpe.org.uk/page/Safe_Practice_in_PESSPA

Organisations

1	Association for Physical Education (AfPE)
2	British Swimming Coaches Association
3	British Triathlon
4	Chartered Institute for The Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA)
5	Government Safety Advice on Water Sports and Coastal Activities
6	HSE Managing Health and Safety in Swimming Pools
7	Improving Participation of Muslim Girls in Physical Education and School Sport, Shared Practice Guidance from Birmingham Schools, 2008 (Appendix K)
8	Institute Of Swimming
9	Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA)
10	NSPCC (Changing Rooms)
11	Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS UK)
12	Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA)
13	Scottish Swimming
14	Sport England Affordable Swimming Pools
15	Swim Ireland
16	<p>Swimming.org [Shallow Dives, Ramadan]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swim England School Swimming and Water Safety Charter • Curriculum Swimming and Water Safety Resource Pack • Swim England and the RNLI 'Swim Safe' Programme
17	Swimming Teachers Association
18	Swim Wales
19	Water Safety Education Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS UK)

Governing Bodies for Specific Water Based Outdoor and Adventure Activities

1	British Canoeing _____
2	British Caving Association _____
3	British Mountaineering Council _____
4	British Rowing _____
5	Canoe Wales _____
6	HSE AALA (2015) "Coasteering" (Note 6.20) _____
7	HSE AALA (2016) "Combined Water Rock Activities - A Safety Checklist" (Note 6.06) _____
8	International Coasteering Federation _____
9	National School Sailing Association _____
10	Rafting: OEAP; HSE/AALA (2015) " Improvised Raft Building " (Note 6.08): RYA: rya.org.uk _____
11	Royal Yachting Association (RYA) _____
12	RYA Scotland _____
13	RYA Windsurfing _____
14	Scottish Canoe Association _____

15	Surfing GB _____
16	Surf Life Saving Association of Great Britain _____
17	Welsh Yachting Association _____

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Appendices

Appendices marked ⁽¹⁾ relate particularly to Part 1: Bucks Safe Practice in School Swimming Policy

Appendices marked ⁽²⁾ relate particularly to Part 2: Technical Guidance on the Management of Swimming Pools and Swimming Pool Plant on School Sites

Appendix A	Model Risk Assessment for a Public Pool ⁽¹⁾
Appendix B	Model Risk Assessment for Indoor School Pools ^(1/2)
Appendix C1	Model Risk Assessment for Outdoor School Pools ^(1/2)
Appendix C2	Buckinghamshire Council Temporary School Pool (Pop-Up Pool) Swimming Policy <small>(1/2)</small>
Appendix D	Model Normal Operating Procedure (NOP) ^(1/2)
Appendix E	Model Emergency Action Plan (EAP) ^(1/2)
Appendix F1	Changing Rooms for School Swimming – Guidance Notes March 2019 ⁽¹⁾
Appendix F2	AfPE Changing Areas in PE ⁽¹⁾
Appendix F3	NSPCC Getting Changed for PE ⁽¹⁾
Appendix G	Example Goggles letter from school to parents ⁽¹⁾
Appendix H1	Condition for the Hire of School Pools ^(1/2)
Appendix H2	Application for Hire of School Pools ^(1/2)
Appendix H3	Additional Requirements for Hire by Vulnerable Groups ^(1/2)
Appendix I	School Swimming Checklist (sent out every two years) ⁽¹⁾
Appendix J	Example School Accident Report Form ⁽¹⁾
Appendix K	Improving Participation of Muslim Girls in Physical Education and School Sport; Shared Practical Guidance from Birmingham Schools 2008 ⁽¹⁾

Appendix L	Comment on Meeting the Needs of Muslim pupils in state schools: Information and Guidance for Schools, AfP
	(1) E
Appendix M	Risk Management Considerations for Centrally Organised Events ⁽¹⁾
Appendix N	Consideration for those Involved in Primary School Swimming Galas ⁽¹⁾
Appendix O	Example Risk Assessment for Swimming Galas ⁽¹⁾
Appendix P	Model Chemical Spillage Procedures ⁽²⁾
Appendix Q	Pool Water Log Sheet ⁽²⁾
Appendix R	Model Operating Instructions for a Trichlorinator ⁽²⁾
Appendix S	Health Protection Agency Pool Investigation Checklist ⁽²⁾

Appendix T	Induction Training Grid for Public and School Pools ⁽¹⁾
Appendix U	Pre-commissioning and Decommissioning Procedures and Winter Maintenance ⁽²⁾
Appendix V	Swimming Pool Contractors and Equipment Suppliers ⁽²⁾
Appendix W	Generic Cryptosporidium Risk Assessment ⁽²⁾
Appendix X	Swimming Class Register including information on pupils with medical conditions and/additional needs; Information for leisure providers ⁽¹⁾
Appendix Y	Waterborne Infections ⁽²⁾
Appendix Z1	Partnership Agreement ⁽¹⁾
Appendix Z2	Partnership Agreement (Letter & Form to Parents) ⁽¹⁾