



**MELLERS PRIMARY SCHOOL  
SCHOOL SWIMMING POLICY  
(Health and Safety)  
JANUARY 2017**

# SAFE PRACTICE IN SCHOOL SWIMMING

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Swimming is an important life skill. In addition it is a highly beneficial activity for acquiring an increased movement vocabulary and skills, for health, for enjoyment and as a threshold skill, giving access to many other water-based recreational activities. It is one of the few activities that people can enjoy all their life either on their own or with friends and family of the same or different ages, whether just for fun or competitively. We owe it to our youngsters to give them the best chance to learn to swim, as well and as early as possible.
- 1.2 Nonetheless, it is one of the few recreational or teaching activities which also carries with it the evident hazards of death through drowning or injury by brain damage through near drowning. The teaching and learning of swimming and water safety therefore requires the utmost care on the part of all concerned.
- 1.3 The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on safe practice in school swimming.
- 1.4 Each school whose pupils take part in swimming has a responsibility to ensure that it takes action to safeguard staff and pupils. It should be aware of:
- the Risk Assessment for the pool and session used
  - the Normal Operating Procedure (NOP)
  - the Emergency Action Plan (EAP)
  - conditions of hire - if relevant
  - pool rules
  - any special needs or medical conditions of pupils.
- 1.5 This document sets out the policies and procedures of Nottingham City Children's Services in relation to swimming pool safety. The Appendices contain model procedures and forms which must be made specific to each school pool.
- 1.6 References:

**All schools should have a copy of "Safe Practice in Physical Education and School Sport" BAALPE 2004 Edition**, details further guidance on safety issues including swimming; telephone 01384 - 813706/7

**"Safe Supervision" ISRM 2001**, £3.00 inc P & P, covers ratios of staff to pupils and the qualifications required for teachers and lifeguards; telephone 01509 - 226474

QCA website [www.nc.uk.net/safeswimming](http://www.nc.uk.net/safeswimming) may also be of help.

Refer also to the DfES & DCMS "Swimming Charter" - support for swimming as a strand of National PE, School Sport and Club Links Strategy (PESSCL)

## **2. RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **2.1 Nottingham City Council**

Nottingham City Council has responsibility for ensuring safety in swimming in schools where it is the employer. As part of this responsibility the City Council provides the safety policy, guidance and procedures for swimming, and ensures that its employees receive any necessary training to carry out their delegated tasks.

In Foundation and Voluntary Aided schools the Governing Body holds this responsibility.

### **2.2 School responsibility**

The Governing Body should ensure that a nominated member of staff is delegated the responsibility of swimming coordinator and applying the swimming pool safety policy and procedures in the school. This includes the monitoring and recording, for the pool and sessions used, of the

- appropriate risks assessments
- pool safety operation procedures (NOP & EAP)
- qualifications and training of staff and maintaining records
- any instructions issued to staff
- conditions of hire or arrangements for use of the pool.

### **2.3 Teaching staff**

Teachers have a duty of care that operates for any activity in which children are involved; teachers cannot transfer that duty of care to anyone else. The law has often described this responsibility as equivalent to the standard expected of a reasonable and careful parent. This applies to all activities within the school curriculum and to extra-curricular activities organised by the school during and outside school hours, whether on or off the school site.

In relation to swimming this means that:

- children are appropriately supervised when changing
- pupils are under control at all times
- a headcount is taken before, during and after sessions
- normal and emergency procedures are enforced
- teachers have an overview of the teaching of their children and the conduct of the class.

Primary school teachers should accompany their own class to swimming whenever possible, because of the special knowledge they have of their pupils.

Teaching staff who are teaching swimming should ideally hold a minimum qualification of ASA National Curriculum Training Programme Module 1.

#### 2.4 **Adults other than teachers**

Adults other than teachers (AOTTs) can be extremely helpful and may be absolutely essential, to support the delivery of swimming in school and in the extended curriculum, whether on or off site. They can:

- support and work beside teachers
- supervise changing
- administer first aid
- look after any unwell children or children who are not swimming.

#### 2.5 **Swimming instructors**

Swimming instructors will hold a relevant ASA or STA teaching qualification and are employed through the Department of Leisure & Community Services.

They have responsibility for ensuring the safe conduct of the class in the water and on poolside, in line with good practice and their training, which includes:

- planning, developing and monitoring the swimming programme
- preparing schemes of work appropriate to pupils' ages, abilities and interests
- co-operating with the class teacher to check numbers of pupils before, during and after each session
- identifying specific groups for each swimming session
- being familiar with the Normal Operating Procedure (NOP) & Emergency Action Plan (EAP) for the pool
- being familiar with the emergency equipment provided
- running emergency drills every term with each class taught
- working with the lifeguards on duty or, if there are no lifeguards, providing lifesaving and first aid skills on their own or with others
- entering the water and effecting a rescue if necessary.

They must be vetted by the Disclosure and Barring Service to be able to work with children.

They will organise class-teaching staff who maintain their duty of care for the children. Ideally a fully qualified instructor should always be present when children are being taught swimming.

Ideally the best qualified instructor should teach the least able pupils. However this will need to take into account the ability of all staff in the team to effect a rescue (if necessary) at the depth of water at which they are working.

## 2.6 Lifeguards

Pool operators have a responsibility for the safety of all who use their pools. Whenever children swim, there must be someone present with appropriate life guarding, rescue and first aid skills this must be a qualified pool lifeguard

The person responsible for life guarding, rescue and first aid will:

- be familiar with the pool NOP & EAP
- maintain constant observation of the pool and pool users
- carry out rescues and initiate any other emergency action required
- be able to effect a rescue from the bottom of the deepest part of the pool
- administer first aid
- prevent unsafe activities
- ensure that the pool is never left unsupervised whilst in use
- assist in the running of emergency drills
- secure the pool against unauthorised access when not in use
- communicate with children and/or teaching staff to achieve the above.

Lifeguards must work with class teachers and teachers of swimming. Lifeguard instructions for safe conduct in the pool should be followed at all times.

N.B. A teacher of swimming who is also responsible for life guarding should not work alone. Another person should assist with teaching a group of children or assist the teacher with a rescue and first aid, as well as looking after the rest of the children in the event of the teacher having to effect a rescue.

## 3. TEACHER TO PUPIL RATIOS

3.1 Each pool will have a designated maximum bather capacity appropriate to the size of the pool, which should be specified in the Normal Operating Procedure.

3.2 Pupil/teacher ratios must not exceed 20:1 and for the vast majority of cases in primary school swimming should be less than this. The following ratios are based upon safety considerations rather than teaching requirements:

### **Adult and baby groups 12:1**

One teacher to twelve pairs of adults and babies/toddlers under the age of five.

### **Non-swimmers and beginners 12:1**

Young children, normally primary school age, or adults being introduced to swimming who are unable to swim 10 metres unaided on back and front.

#### **Improving swimmers 20:1**

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 children are not out of their depth.

#### **Mixed ability groups 20:1**

Pupils with a range of ability (from improving to competent) where the least able and least confident are working well within their depth. Swimmers' techniques, stamina and deepwater experience should be considered.

#### **Competent swimmers 20:1**

Those swimmers who can swim at least 25 metres competently and unaided on front and back, and can tread water for 2 minutes.

#### **Competitive swimmers 30:1**

Training only with very competent swimmers.

#### **Specialist swimming activities - various**

For more information about the appropriate ratios for specialist activities refer to the ASA at Harold Fern House, Derby Square, Loughborough O1509 - 618700 or refer to the ISRM publication "Safe Supervision".

#### **Swimmers with disabilities 1 - 8:1 (with an appropriate number of helpers)**

Each situation must be considered individually as people with disabilities are not a homogeneous group. 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. There are national organisations for specific disabilities from which further guidance may be obtained. Individual risk assessments must be undertaken so that the teacher in charge of swimmers with disabilities can be aware of the particular needs of each child.

The Disability Discrimination Act ensures that disabled persons may not be treated less well than any other person. Policies and procedures or physical changes to the environment may need to be put in place for children with disabilities to swim.

**Observer ratio:** a minimum of one observer is required per standard pool. It is recommended that there be one observer per teaching group but where two groups are working alongside each other, or in areas clearly visible from one point, one observer may be adequate. In cases where there are three or more teaching groups in one pool, there must be at least two observers. Please be aware that an excessive number of observers can create problems if there is insufficient room on the poolside.

## **4. SUPERVISION OF CHANGING ROOMS**

4.1 Children should be supervised whilst changing:

- if children are using a mixed sex changing area with cubicles then a member of staff of either gender may supervise.
  - if using open-plan single-sex changing areas then only staff of the appropriate gender should enter the changing room, unless in an emergency.
  - if children under the age of seven are swimming, a mixed gender group may use an open-plan single-sex changing room, if schools do not have the staff (teachers and/or AOTTs) of the appropriate number or gender to supervise children in their own-sex changing room. In a public pool this will need to be notified to, and approved by, the pool management.
- 4.2 Teachers sometimes have to operate a remote supervision procedure when gender balance is not appropriate. This can only happen where the children are responsible enough and mature enough to take on significant personal responsibility whilst changing. In order to protect themselves, two members of staff should operate together when controlling by voice through doorways, or entering changing areas in an emergency.
- 4.3 Ideally children will change in separate “school changing areas” as it is not desirable for members of the public to share changing provision with school pupils. Pool operators should be asked, wherever possible, to make arrangements for separate areas or times to enable this to happen. Where this cannot be achieved appropriate supervision arrangements need to be agreed between the pool and school.
- 4.4 Where changing takes place in open plan public single sex changing rooms and the school is unable to provide staff of each gender, a specific arrangement must be made with the pool management to provide a suitable member of staff to patrol the changing area whilst children are present. This member of staff must have child protection training. To ensure that the allocated member of staff is not left alone with a single child all children must wait until everyone is together before moving off. All staff used to supervise changing rooms should be vetted by the Criminal Records Board (CRB).

## **5. LIFEGUARD PROVISION**

- 5.1 Someone must always have the responsibility for life guarding / rescue and resuscitation, and must be suitably trained and qualified. Ideally the lifeguard should be provided by the Department of Leisure & Community Services and therefore will hold a current National Pool Lifeguard Qualification\*.

If the school staff member is acting as lifeguard the minimum qualification they must hold is the Rescue Test for Teachers\*\*. The School Swimming Coordinator is responsible for ensuring this qualification is current.

### **\*National Pool Lifeguard Qualification**

This is a 38-hour RLSS / ISRM qualification designed to equip lifeguards to supervise public recreational swimming, to implement safe practice, to operate the EAP and perform first aid if required. To maintain their qualification the NPLQ qualified lifeguard must also undertake regular monthly ongoing training and skills practice.



### **\*\*RLSS Teachers Rescue Course**

This is a 12-hour RLSS / ASA training course which includes theory and practical work, and covers the competencies and skill that enable teachers / supervisors to deal with an emergency in a pool. A section is devoted to first aid and it has a validity of two years.

## **6. RECORDS**

- 6.1 The employer is responsible for ensuring all records of qualifications of those involved in the teaching of swimming are maintained, kept up to date and available for inspection if required.
- 6.2 Records of incidents and accidents that occur in the swimming pool or pool area should also be maintained and should be available for inspection. An annual review of these will assist with the review of the risks associated with school swimming.
- 6.3 Records of pupils achievement should be collected by the swimming instructor. Copies of these records must be sent to PE and School Sport Coordinator at College Street Centre at the end of each term.

## **7. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 Each pool and each session, the children and the staff participating will all have unique features that make particular demands upon safety. Each pool and each session must therefore be dealt with individually.

The Pool Manager should arrange an induction course on the NOP and EAP to ensure that all staff are clear about how the pool operates and the role they will have to play in an emergency.

7.1.1 The school swimming co-ordinator will:

- ensure the risk assessments for each session (7.2.b) have been carried out by the teacher in charge of the session.
- record staff training in the implementation of the NOP and EAP. It is important that arrangements are made for a practical induction whenever new staff attend at the pool. It is the responsibility of the school to inform the pool of any new staff attending.

### **7.2 Hydrotherapy pools**

Water-based activity in hydrotherapy pools requires higher levels of supervision, often on a one-to-one basis in the water. These are not deep-water pools and so, for teachers and physiotherapists, a basic rescue test is an appropriate qualification for life guarding the pool. Adults in the water are only able to supervise the swimmer they are assisting and should not be counted in the supervising ratios. The life guarding duties must be carried out by qualified people on the side of the pool.

Physiotherapists should have completed a course in managing hydrotherapy activities.

There are no national qualifications for teaching swimming activities to children who have severe learning difficulties. A variety of skills are required stemming from an assessment of each child's individual requirements. Schools with hydrotherapy pools should establish an apprenticeship programme for new teachers to work with experienced staff before they take full responsibility for swimming sessions. This induction can take place within or between schools.

### **7.3 Using pools on Educational Visits, Open Water and Swimming/Paddling in the sea.**

Please refer to the Children's Service Off-Site Visits Policy for information on swimming and paddling on educational visits.

### **7.4 Swimming attire**

7.4.1 It is the responsibility of the school to ensure girls wear a one-piece swimming costume and boys wear swimming trunks or swimming shorts that are above the knee. It is important that swimming clothing is relatively tight fitting so as to minimise the effect of drag that water logged clothing can create and should conform to safety, cultural and teaching requirements. Sensitivity is required to ensure:

- the correct balance when cultural demands require looser fitting garments
- the need to be able to see the movements that limbs and joints are making in the water to ensure appropriate learning

7.4.2 Pupils should not be excluded from swimming because of verrucae or similar foot infections.

7.4.3 Children who swim frequently or whose eyes are susceptible to irritation may request to use goggles for swimming. Parents should be informed of their responsibility to teach their child to put on and take off goggles in the correct and safe fashion.

## **8. NORMAL OPERATING PROCEDURE (NOP)**

8.1 Schools will need to be aware of the NOP in order to ensure that they do what is expected of them to keep themselves and others safe, and aware of the EAP to know what to do in an emergency.

8.2 Staff will need to be trained to follow the safety rules included in these procedures and should practice emergency procedures at the start of each term with the children in their classes.

8.3 Training in the NOP and EAP should be recorded by the school, signed by the person giving the training and records kept for a period of at least one year.

### **8.4 Teacher position**

8.4.1 The swimming teacher 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.

- 8.4.2 There may be some circumstances in which it is appropriate for the teacher or a classroom assistant to be in the water supporting individual children, but this would be the exception rather than the rule and only following a careful risk assessment of all the potential factors at play (depth of water, pupil ability, use of flotation aids, size of pool, number and age of pupils, life guarding arrangements).
- 8.4.3 The teacher or assistant 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.
- 8.4.4 When teaching or instructing non-swimmers or weak swimmers in surface diving or underwater swimming the teacher of the group should be positioned on poolside at the point nearest to that activity, but so that they can also see the rest of the class.
- 8.4.5 If there is glare on the pool surface and the bottom of the pool cannot be clearly seen the teacher / lifeguard should position themselves so that the light does not bounce back into their eyes as glare
- 8.4.6 Adults with a pastoral role and are not involved in teaching swimming should none the less be positioned such that they are able to support the swimming instructor in the control of children but not so as to be in the way of those working on poolside.

## **8.5 Teacher clothing and equipment**

- 8.5.1 Teachers should change into suitable footwear to be able to move easily around poolside and not bring outdoor dirt onto the pool surround on their feet. They should wear clothes suitable to the humidity and temperatures of the pool.

## **8.6 Safety Equipment**

- 8.6.1 All pools must be equipped with a means of raising an alarm and summoning support in the event of an accident or incident. Ideally this will be an emergency button which activates a siren or a telephone giving direct contact with the emergency services.
- 8.6.2 There should be a long pole at either side of the pool to reach and rescue anyone in difficulties without getting into the water.
- 8.6.3 Adequate buoyancy aids and first aid equipment, including a blanket should be immediately to hand.
- 8.6.4 Pool depths should be clearly marked on the walls of the pool and teachers should explain their significance to pupils, especially beginners.
- 8.6.5 All signs should be compliant with the Safety Signs and Signals Regulations.
- 8.6.6 A pool divider, usually a rope, should normally be positioned to separate deep from shallow water when non-swimmers are present.

- 8.6.7 All pools should be able to be locked off and isolated to prevent unauthorised access when not manned. Failure to achieve this is a major cause of accidents in school and private pools.

## **8.7 First Aid Arrangements**

- 8.7.1 All schools should make or check the arrangements for first aid. It is the responsibility of the pool operator to ensure that there is a first aider on site or to ensure that the school provides their own first aider.
- 8.7.2 In the event of an accident occurring which requires first aid, this must be recorded on the accident form of the pool being used and the school should request a copy for their own records.
- 8.7.3 Accidents where a pupil is hospitalised should be reported under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR)

## **9. EMERGENCY ACTION PLANS**

- 9.1 An Emergency Action Plan details what everyone should do in the event of a reasonably foreseeable emergency. This might include:
- overcrowding
  - disorderly behaviour
  - assault
  - lack of water clarity
  - fire
  - bomb threat
  - structural failure
  - emission of toxic gases
  - serious injury to swimmer
  - discovery of a casualty in the pool
- 9.2 The procedure should explain how to clear the pool and/or evacuate the building / site, the roles of all the staff involved, how to call for help and what help to give to the people involved.
- 9.3 All staff likely to be involved in this procedure and all outside user group leaders who may be affected need to be trained to ensure their effectiveness in an emergency. This explains the need for all user groups to be aware of the EAP and in a public pool this is an excellent reason for running evacuation drills when the public are using facilities.
- 9.4 Notices need to be displayed to advise pool users of the arrangements in the event of an emergency.
- 9.5 All school classes should run practice drills during the first lessons of each term in order that both staff and pupils recognise the alarm signal and know how to respond to it.
- 9.6 Exit doors and signs, fire fighting equipment and alarm points need to be checked regularly to ensure that they are working and accessible

- 9.7 All fire doors must be operable without the aid of a key at all times the pool is in use. These should be checked at the start of every day.

## 10. POOL RULES

- 10.1 The pool rules should be explained to all pupils before their first swimming lesson. Pupils should be reminded at the start of each term, ideally when the emergency procedures are tested and checked with pupils.

- never go onto poolside until a member of staff is present
- do not enter the water until instructed to do so
- no running on poolside
- no chewing gum or eating sweets or other food on poolside
- no shouting or whistling
- no jumping in or diving in, except under instruction
- no pushing others in
- no holding others under the water or deliberately splashing them
- no jewellery to be worn
- no outdoor shoes on poolside
- swim caps to be worn if requested
- to leave the pool on one long blast of the whistle
- all instructions from staff to be obeyed promptly

- 10.2 There may also be rules for lifeguards to follow to ensure that they remain vigilant at all times. Where appropriate\* these techniques should also be practiced by school staff in supporting qualified lifeguards.

- never leave the poolside unattended\*
- always secure poolside against unauthorised access when it is not manned\*
- never turn their backs on the pool or engage in any behaviour which results in not watching the pool when on lifeguard duty\*
- divide the area up into zones and use techniques to constantly scan the area, counting heads, watching out for vulnerable or weak swimmers\*
- keep alert, move position every five minutes or so - sit, stand, patrol
- rotate off poolside at least once in every hour and a half.

## **11. DIVING**

- 11.1 Additional hazards are created when swimmers are allowed to dive into the pool. These need to be carefully managed.
- no diving shall be permitted in less than 1.8 metres of water depth or with less than 7.6m forward clearance
  - only very flat horizontal dives should be permitted
  - diving blocks and stages must conform to Fédération Internationale de Natation (FINA) /ASA regulations. However, these should not normal be used as they require specialist teaching and are subject to prior arrangement with the pool.

## **12. CHILD PROTECTION**

- 12.1 The LEA and the school will have their own child protection procedures and so too should the pool. It is important that the pool procedures relates to those of the LEA. Each school and pool being used by the school should establish a protocol identifying the relationship between their respective procedures.
- 12.2 Each pool should have a designated person with responsibility for child protection who should liaise with the designated teacher in the event of a concern about a child. The name of this person at the pool should be publicised to school and public users in order that concerns can be reported to them.
- 12.3 All persons with sole supervision of children should have a CRB Disclosure.
- 12.4 Care should be taken in changing rooms to ensure that the appropriate ratios and gender of staff are present to supervise children and that children are safeguarded from members of the public.
- 12.5 When supervising children changing or assisting them with their swimming, pool and school staff and AOTTs should avoid physical contact with children unless it is:
- essential to develop a swimming skill or technique
  - to treat an injury
  - to prevent an injury
  - to meet the requirement of the activity (e.g. Lifesaving)
  - to lift or manually support a child with disabilities

In these circumstances the adult should explain the reason for the physical contact to the child. Unless the situation is an emergency the adult should ask the child for permission. If children have disabilities they and their carers need to be involved in

deciding what assistance should be offered and the child should be treated with dignity and respect.

- 12.6 Where children sustain an injury and any first aid is administered the parents/carers should be informed as soon as possible. Details should be recorded and retained by the school. Accidents and incidents which occur at a public pool should also be recorded by pool staff on their forms for their records.
- 12.7 In the event of a child needing to be taken to hospital for treatment, a representative from the school should always accompany the child. 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 child should be informed as soon as possible.
- 12.8 Staff and AOTTs should avoid placing themselves at risk by being alone with a child and should ensure that wherever possible there are other responsible persons around and that they are in public view.

<b>CONTACTS</b>		
	PE, Sport & Swimming Coordinator – Children’s Services	0115 9476202

<b>WEBSITES</b>	
Amateur Swimming Association	<a href="http://www.britishswimming.org">www.britishswimming.org</a>
QCA lesson ideas	<a href="http://www.nc.uk.net/safeswimming">www.nc.uk.net/safeswimming</a>
Royal Life Saving Society	<a href="http://www.lifesavers.org.uk">www.lifesavers.org.uk</a>
Institute of Sport and Recreation Management	<a href="http://www.isrm.co.uk">www.isrm.co.uk</a>

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION ON SWIMMING TEACHING QUALIFICATIONS**

[www.britishswimming.org](http://www.britishswimming.org)

[www.sta.co.uk](http://www.sta.co.uk)

Approved by the governing body:

24<sup>th</sup> January 2017