

# The ASA School Swimming Guidance



**February 2007**

# **ASA Guidance For School Swimming**

## **Contents**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **2. RESPONSIBILITIES**

- School
- School Teaching Staff
- AOTTs
- Swimming Teachers
- Lifeguards
- Duty Of Care

### **3. TEACHER TO PUPIL RATIOS**

### **4. LIFEGUARD PROVISION**

### **5. QUALIFICATIONS**

- In school Pools
- In Public Pools
- UK Coaching Certificate

### **6. NATIONAL CURRICULUM**

- Pupils with Special Educational Needs

### **7. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- Normal Operating Procedures
- Emergency Action Plan
- Pool Rules
- Diving

### **8. CONDITIONS OF HIRE**

### **9. CHILD PROTECTION**

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The Amateur Swimming Association is the English national governing body for swimming, diving, water polo, open water and synchronised swimming.

It organises competition throughout England, establishes the laws of the sport and operates comprehensive certification and education programmes for teachers, coaches and officials as well as its renowned Learn To Swim Awards scheme.

The ASA supports 1,600 affiliated swimming clubs through a National/Regional/County structure.

**The ASA aims to ensure everybody has an opportunity to learn to swim.**

The ASA have been working closely with the delivers and supporters of school swimming for the a number of years delivering or assisting in the delivery of such programmes as National School Sport Strategy, P.E, School Sport and Club Links programme, National Curriculum Training Programme and Top Up Swimming. The ASA have developed resources for primary school teachers and courses to enhance their skills on the poolside in delivering swimming lessons within the school environment.

This document provides guidance on the safe practice and best practice in the delivery of school swimming

## 2. RESPONSIBILITIES

### School responsibility

The School should ensure that a nominated member of staff is delegated the responsibility of swimming co-ordinator and applying the swimming pool safety policy and procedures in the school. This will include the proper operation of the school's own swimming facility or use of a third party pool. It also includes monitoring and recording, for the pool and sessions used, of the

- Risks assessments
- Pool safety operation procedures (NOP & EAP)
- Monitoring of staff training and maintaining records of qualifications
- All Swimming related communications to staff
- Conditions of pool hire.

### 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. 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:

- Appropriate supervision of children when changing
- Control of pupils at all times
- Head counts are taken prior to and after every session
- Normal and emergency procedures are enforced

- Teachers have an overall observation of the teaching of their children and the conduct of the class.

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

### **Adults other than teachers**

Adults other than teachers (AOTTs) can be extremely helpful 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.

Teachers cannot transfer their duty of care to AOTTs but where AOTTs have swimming teaching qualifications they may be involved in the teaching of swimming. Higher Level Teaching Assistants who have the required specific competencies may replace a teacher who does not, so long as there is always another teacher present on poolside teaching with the group. The pool environment is more isolated than a classroom where they can more easily call upon qualified teacher support if required.

AOTTs should be vetted by the Criminal Records Bureau to work with children.

### **Qualified swimming teachers**

Swimming teachers will hold a relevant ASA level 2 teaching qualification and may be employed by a public pool or employed by a school to teach in their own pool. 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 in line with the National Curriculum elements
- Preparing schemes of work appropriate to pupils' ages, abilities and interests inline with the National Curriculum learning outcomes
- 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
- Enforcing emergency drills every term
- Working with the lifeguards on duty or, if there are no lifeguards, providing lifesaving and first aid skills on their own or with others
- Affect a rescue if necessary.

All Swimming Teachers must be vetted by the Criminal Records Bureau to work with children. They will organise non-specialist class teaching staff or/ AOTT and maintain their duty of care for the children. Ideally a level 2 swimming teacher should always be present when children are being taught swimming.

In small shallow water school pools the class teacher, trained to teach swimming (ASA National Curriculum Training course) may be the only teacher present and will take on

the responsibilities of the delivery of the lesson. They should not, however, work alone and should have appropriate lifeguard cover.

## **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 lifeguarding, rescue and first aid skills.

**In a school pool** this must be a teacher, the swimming teacher or an AOTT

**In a public pool** this must be a qualified pool lifeguard

**In a private pool** this must be a qualified lifeguard, a teacher, the swimming teacher or an AOTT.

The person responsible for lifeguarding, rescue and first aid will:

- Have knowledge of the NOP & EAP
- Be observant of the pool and pool users at all times
- Initiate any rescues or 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
- Assist in the running of emergency drills
- Secure the pool against unauthorised access when not in use
- Communicate clearly at all times with all users / teachers in the pool

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 lifeguarding 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 affect a rescue.

## **DUTY OF CARE**

The delivery of a school swimming programme may involve a number of partners including school teachers, swimming teachers provided by the LEA and swimming teachers specifically 'bought in' by the school. Whilst issues related to delivery are transferable duty of care must remain the responsibility of the schoolteacher.

Where the school swimming programme is delivered by an external partner, the school has a responsibility to ensure that the designated person(s) is appropriately qualified in the aspects being taught. They must ensure that the programme is appropriate to the needs of the pupils and the school. An ongoing dialogue between both parties will help to ensure that this requirement is met.

Some schoolteachers may also hold recognised national qualifications and can, therefore, assume responsibility for all aspects of the programme.

More detailed information on Duty of Care can be found in: -

B.A.A.L.P.E. – Safe Practice in Physical Education

Severs, Whitlam and Woodhouse – Safety and Risk in Primary School Physical Education

### 3. TEACHER TO PUPIL RATIOS

- 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.
- Irrespective of the ratio there must always be at least 2 supervisors present on the poolside. 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:

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

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

#### **Children under the age of seven 12:1**

Irrespective of their swimming ability, group size should be restricted.

#### **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.

#### **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 01509 - 618700 or refer to the ISRM publication "Safe Supervision".

#### **Swimmers with disabilities 1-8 (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.

### 4. LIFEGUARD PROVISION

There is a statutory requirement for a 'lifeguard' to be available whenever a school swimming lesson is taking place. Ideally this will be a designated person with an appropriate nationally recognised lifeguard qualification. At the very least this should be a designated person trained to carry out a rescue and to effect cardio pulmonary resuscitation. The 'Management of Health and Safety in the Swimming Pool' states that in certain circumstances a swimming teacher can also be the 'lifeguard' for his/her group subject to holding the appropriate qualifications and or training. This only applies to 'programmed' swimming. Programmed activity is defined as;

- With a formal structure
- Disciplined

- Supervised or controlled
- Continuously monitored from the poolside

The minimum national qualification for the lifeguarding of a single group engaged in programmed activity is the National Rescue Award for Teachers and Coaches. Where the lifeguard function is being provided for a whole class the recommended national qualification is the RLSS Pool Lifeguard qualification.

### **RLSS National Rescue Award for Teachers and Coaches Course (NRATC)**

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.

### **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.

More Information from  
[www.lifesavers.org.uk](http://www.lifesavers.org.uk)

## **5. QUALIFICATIONS**

The head teacher has to ensure that any teacher responsible for the delivery of swimming and/or its associated disciplines is appropriately qualified to carry out this role effectively and safely.

**School teachers** – it is recognised that all qualified school teachers have a range of skills and experiences which enable them to deliver a variety of curriculum areas. However there are obvious health and safety issues inherent in the teaching of swimming and its associated disciplines and it is therefore recommended that where the school teacher has specific responsibility for a group or groups of swimmers the teacher should also hold an appropriate specialist qualification

Teachers, Teaching Assistants (TAs), Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs) and AOTTs who cannot swim should not teach swimming but have a pastoral role on poolside.

Ideally the best-qualified swimming teacher 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.

### **In School Pools**

#### **Swimming Teachers**

Teachers of swimming should hold as a minimum qualification:

- ASA LEVEL 2 Teacher Certificate or equivalent

- RLSS National Rescue Award For Teachers and Coaches obtained within the past 2 years.
- Where teaching specialist groups, additional qualifications may be required appropriate to the group, for example:
- ASA Teacher for Swimmers with Disabilities
- If supervising an un-programmed session the teacher must hold a current NPLQ.

Swimming teachers should keep their qualifications updated by attending a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) course every two years.

### **Class teachers / TAs and HLTAs**

Where a class teacher/ TAs and HLTAs is conducting a swimming lesson without a Level 2 Swimming teacher present, that teacher should

The class teacher / TAs and HLTAs should as a minimum hold:

- RLSS National Rescue Award For Teachers and Coaches obtained within the previous two years or have a qualified lifeguard present (NPLQ)
- Attended the ASA National Curriculum Training course

Class teachers / TAs and HLTAs should never teach swimming without at least one other person present to assist with first aid and rescues if necessary. The numbers and level of support will depend upon the circumstances.

Ideally Class Teachers should be present during the delivery of school swimming when school swimming is being delivered by TAs and/ or HLTAs

### **Adults other than teachers (AOTTs)**

Where an adult other than a teacher assists with swimming they should be given a clear understanding of what is expected of them. If expected to help with the teaching on poolside under the direction of the class teacher, they should be able to affect a rescue at the depth of water in the pool area in which they are working and to have some knowledge or understanding of the principles of teaching swimming. As a minimum they will have attended a course within the previous two years: such as ASA National Curriculum Training course

### **Lifeguards**

Lifeguards should hold a valid RLSS/ISRM National Pool Lifeguard Qualification (NPLQ) achieved within the previous two years and kept up to date through a regular monthly programme of training and practice.

### **In Public Pools**

It is expected that there would be a Level 2 swimming Teacher and that the role of the class teacher and other accompanying school staff will be to work under the direction of that person.

### **Swimming Teachers**

Teachers of swimming should hold as a minimum qualification:

- ASA LEVEL 2 Teacher Certificate or equivalent
- RLSS National Rescue Award For Teachers and Coaches or equivalent obtained within the previous 2 years.
- Attended the ASA National Curriculum Training course

Where teaching specialist groups additional qualifications may be required appropriate to the group, for example:

- ASA Teacher for Swimmers with Disabilities
- If supervising an un-programmed session the teacher must have an NPLQ.

### **Class teachers / TAs and HLTAs**

Where a lifeguard is on duty or the teacher is working under the direction of a Level 2 swimming teacher the class teacher should have swimming teacher training, Class Teachers will be expected to develop their skills with supplementary training leading to a formal basic swimming teaching qualification within two years of the initial training such as ASA National Curriculum Training course

All accompanying staff should have undergone an induction course, provided by the Pool Manager, on the NOP and EAP of the pool they are using and ensure that they are clear about the role they will be expected to play in an emergency.

### **Adults other than teachers (AOTTs)**

Where an adult other than a teacher assists with swimming they should be given a clear understanding of what is expected of them. If expected to help with the teaching on poolside under the direction of the specialist-swimming teacher, they should be able to affect a rescue at the depth of water in the pool area in which they are working and to have some knowledge or understanding of the principles of teaching swimming. As a minimum he/she should have

- Undergone the same induction course as that class teacher for the pool's NOP and EAP
- Attended an ASA National Curriculum Training course

### **Lifeguards**

Lifeguards should hold a valid RLSS/ISRM National Pool Lifeguard Qualification (NPLQ) achieved within the previous two years and kept up to date through a regular programme of training and practice.

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

ASA qualifications and courses are available at an introductory level for teachers wishing to gain a swimming teachers' award.

### **ASA National Curriculum Training Programme Module 1 (7 hours)**

*Designed to equip a qualified school teacher and AOTT to work under a specialist-swimming Teacher. An ASA Level 2 Teacher can also attend this course and gain CPD credits*

### **ASA National Curriculum Training Programme Module 2 (10 hours)**

*Tops up the Module 1 course and equips the teacher to teach without additional supervision - does not cover any rescue or lifesaving*

### **ASA Primary School Teacher Certificate for the Teaching of Swimming (17 Hours)**

*Covers both of the above*

- **ASA Assistant Teachers Course Level 1 (27½ hours)**

*To assist an ASA Teacher working with small groups*

- **ASA Teachers Certificate Level 2 (7 units 54½ hours)**

*Competent to organise a programme and organise others.*

### **[Amateur Swimming Association : SCHOOL SWIMMING](#)**

#### **The UK Coaching Certificate**

The UK Coaching Certificate (UKCC) is a nationally recognised standard for coach and teacher education spearheaded by sports coach UK. A world-leader in teacher and coach education, British Swimming is one of six sports to be involved in the first stage of the UKCC. UKCC qualifications will ultimately be offered from levels one to four in teaching swimming anticipated to start in **September 2007** and coaching across all four aquatic disciplines, which went live **1<sup>st</sup> January 2007**. A flexible framework allows teachers and coaches to transfer between disciplines, be assessed within their own environment and eventually learn online. A further distinction between teachers and coaches means individuals have the opportunity to pursue excellence within their chosen age group rather than having to progress to senior swimmers in order to further their careers.

#### **Importance of CPD**

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is key to ensuring we are providing the best possible education in swimming. CPD training will keep you up to date with the latest developments, ensure you meet the requirements of your professional body and will help your career progress.

As a National Governing Body, the ASA believe that it is good practice to have a licensed structure in place supported by quality assured CPD.

The ASA are also responsible for training and ongoing development associated with a licensing scheme, therefore seminars registered by the Institute of Swimming (IOS) in Category 1 have been through a quality assurance process to determine its accuracy and suitability for this purpose.

FULL DETAILS AVAILABLE ONLINE

### **[Amateur Swimming Association : SCHOOL SWIMMING](#)**

## 6.NATIONAL CURRICULUM

National Curriculum guidance is available on:

[The Standards Site: Swimming activities and water safety \(1\) Beginners nbsp nbsp \(non-swimmers and developing swimmers\)](#)

[The Standards Site: Swimming activities and water safety \(2\) Developing and competent swimmers](#)

[Qualifications and Curriculum Authority - Safe swimming](#)

### KEY STAGES 1 and 2

#### The Importance of Physical Education

- It develops pupils' physical competence and confidence, and their ability to use these to perform in a range of activities
- It promotes physical skilfulness, physical development and a knowledge of the body in action
- It provides opportunities for pupils to be creative, competitive and to face up to difficult challenges as individuals, in groups and in teams
- It promotes positive attitudes towards active and healthy lifestyles.
- Pupils learn how to think in different ways to suit a variety of creative, competitive and challenging activities.
- Pupils learn how to plan, perform and evaluate actions, ideas and performance to improve their quality and effectiveness.
- Through this process pupils discover their aptitude, abilities and preferences and make choices about how to get involved in lifelong physical activity.

#### PHYSICAL EDUCATION - KEY STAGE ONE

During **Key Stage 1** pupil's build on their natural enthusiasm for movement, using it to explore and learn about their world.

They start to work and play with other pupils in pairs, and small groups.

By watching, listening and experimenting, they develop their skills in movement and co-ordination, and enjoy expressing and testing themselves in a variety of situations.

#### **Note**

The general teaching requirement for health and safety applies in physical education.

#### Programme of Study

##### **Knowledge, skills and understanding**

Teaching should ensure that when evaluating and improving performance, connections are made between developing, selecting and applying skills, tactics and compositional ideas and fitness and health.

##### **Acquiring and developing skills**

Pupils should be taught to:

- Explore basic skills, actions and ideas with increasing understanding

- Remember and repeat simple skills and actions with increasing control and co-ordination

### **Selecting and applying skills, tactics and compositional ideas**

Pupils should be taught to:

- Explore how to choose and apply skills and actions in sequence and in combination
- Vary the way they perform skills by using simple tactics and movement phrases
- Apply rules and conventions for different activities

### **Evaluating and improving performance**

Pupils should be taught to:

- Describe what they have done
- Observe, describe and copy what others have done
- Use what they have learnt to improve the quality and control of their work

### **Knowledge and understanding of fitness and health**

Pupils should be taught:

- How important it is to be active
- To recognise and describe how their bodies feel during different activities

### **Breadth of Study**

*During the Key Stage, pupils should be taught the **knowledge, skills and understanding** through:*

- Dance activities
- Games activities
- Gymnastic activities

**Schools can also choose to teach swimming during Key Stage 1.**

### **Key Stage 1 - SWIMMING ACTIVITIES AND WATER SAFETY**

*The following are non-statutory guidelines:*

Pupils should be taught to:

- Move in water (eg: jump, walk, hop and swim, using swimming aids and support)
- Float and move with and without swimming aids
- Feel the buoyancy and support of water and swimming aids
- Propel themselves in water using different swimming aids, arm and leg actions and basic strokes.

### **PHYSICAL EDUCATION - KEY STAGE TWO**

During **Key Stage 2** pupils enjoy being active and using their creativity and imagination in physical activity.

They learn new skills, find out how to use them in different ways, and link them to make actions, phases and sequences of movement.

They enjoy communicating, collaborating and competing with each other.

They develop an understanding of how to succeed in different activities and learn how to

evaluate and recognise their own success.

**Note**

The general teaching requirement for health and safety applies in physical education.

**Programme of Study**

**Knowledge, skills and understanding**

Teaching should ensure that when evaluating and improving performance, connections are made between developing, selecting and applying skills, tactics and compositional ideas and fitness and health.

**Acquiring and developing skills**

Pupils should be taught to:

- Consolidate their existing skills and gain new ones
- Perform actions and skills with more consistent control and quality

**Selecting and applying skills, tactics and compositional ideas**

Pupils should be taught to:

- Plan, use and adapt strategies, tactics and compositional ideas for individuals, pair, small-group and small-team activities
- Develop and use their knowledge of the principles behind the strategies, tactics and ideas to improve their effectiveness
- Apply rules and conventions for different activities

**Evaluating and improving performance**

Pupils should be taught to:

- Identify what makes a performance effective
- Suggest improvements based on this information

**Knowledge and understanding of fitness and health**

Pupils should be taught:

- How exercise affects the body in the short term
- To warm up and prepare appropriately for different activities
- Why physical activity is good for their health and well-being
- Why wearing appropriate clothing and being hygienic is good for their health and safety

**Breadth of Study**

*During the Key Stage, pupils should be taught the **knowledge, skills and understanding** through five areas of activity:*

- **Dance activities**
- **Games activities**
- **Gymnastic activities**

*and two activity areas from:*

- **Swimming activities and water safety**
- **Athletics activities**
- **Outdoor and adventurous activities**

**Swimming activities and water safety** must be chosen as one of those areas of activity unless pupils have completed the full Key Stage 2 teaching requirements in relation to swimming activities and water safety during Key Stage 1.

## **Key Stage 2 - SWIMMING ACTIVITIES AND WATER SAFETY**

### **Pupils should be taught to:**

- Pace themselves in floating and swimming challenges related to speed, distance and personal survival
- Swim unaided for a sustained period of time over a distance of at least 25m
- Use recognised arm and leg actions, lying on their front and back

Use a range of recognised strokes and personal survival skills (e.g.: backcrawl, back crawl, breaststroke, sculling, floating and surface diving)

There are three things that can improve each child's swimming experience whilst swimming with their school

- **Reducing Ratios**

There should be a maximum of 12 children with each level 2 teacher, but ideally this should be as low as possible for non-swimmers/ weak swimmers. Improver groups and beyond the ratios can be higher up to 20 children to each level 2 teacher

- **Improving Quality**

Each qualified swimming teacher should have a proven track record of teaching nervous/ beginners/ improvers and the ability to develop and apply skills and expertise to resolve a range of issues

- **Increasing Frequency**

It is agreed that the more intensive and regular the lessons are, the more likely it is that the outcome will be successful

Once a child has learnt to swim many other aquatic opportunities become available, Swimming is a life skill that every body should have the opportunity to learn.

They can join a swimming club and take part in other aquatic activities such as competitions, lifesaving, diving, synchronised swimming and water polo they can also participate with confidence in other water base activities for example canoeing sailing, rowing surfing and wind surfing and school trips that include water activities or visits near to water.

### **Pupils with Special Educational Needs**

Increasingly, children with special educational needs (including those with a statement of special educational needs) are being accommodated in mainstream schools. An awareness of some of the main issues associated with special educational needs will help the mainstream teacher of swimming.

Stimulating swimming lessons in a warm pool provides an ideal environment for learning. The aim of the swimming lesson should be to provide high quality learning in water to enable the swimmers to become as independent, self confident and skilful as possible. Alongside enjoyable and purposeful activity, teachers should be using each lesson to encourage socialisation and improved communication skills.

Teachers working with children with physical impairments should seek medical advice on the implications of their condition for the swimming programme. The school's SEN co-ordinator will have detailed information on their condition, which will normally be contained on the school's SEN register. Some children will also have individual education plans (IEPs) that specify learning targets and approaches.

Frequent repetition of activities will be beneficial and reassuring. Work at the pace of each individual. Pressurising swimmers to progress too quickly gains nothing.

Children with an exceptional ability have entitlement to a lesson appropriate to this ability. If they are not challenged they may become bored. Exceptionally able children should work towards the key stage appropriate to their ability rather than their chronological age.

Lack of comprehension and poor mobility can cause organisational and safety problems. It is essential to have an adequate staffing ratio both in the changing rooms and in the pool. Swimmers with poor balance and co-ordination are at greater risk of slipping on wet surfaces whilst moving between the changing rooms and the pool. Be on the look out for epileptic seizures. Teachers should know how to recognise and cope with an epileptic fit in the water.

**To ensure the pool is suitable for children with SEN and specialised equipment (hoist, gradient steps, suitable changing facilities, etc) is available a risk assessment should be completed before any child with SEN attends school swimming.**

Particular religions or cultures may require special provision, most typically in the form of:

- Certain types of clothing
- Segregated sessions

Such requirements should be respected and, wherever possible, accommodated within the physical education curriculum and the school timetable. Schools should have a policy on multi-cultural issues of this kind, and there will be teachers who are able to give guidance. .

## **7. RISK ASSESSMENT**

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.

Risk management includes a five-step process

### **STEP 1**

#### **Identify the hazards**

First you need to work out how people could be harmed.

### **Step 2**

#### **Decide who might be harmed and how**

For each hazard you need to be clear about who might be harmed; it will help you identify the best way of managing the risk. That doesn't mean listing everyone by name but rather identifying groups of people

### **Step 3**

#### **Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions**

Having spotted the hazards, you then have to decide what to do about them. The law requires you to do everything 'reasonably practicable' to protect people from harm. You can work this out for yourself, but the easiest way is to compare what you are doing with good practice.

### **Step 4**

#### **Record your findings and implement them**

Putting the results of your risk assessment into practice will make a difference when looking after children and staff.

### **Step 5**

#### **Review your risk assessment and update if necessary**

It is essential that you review what you are doing on an ongoing basis. Every year or so review where you are, to make sure you are still improving, or at least not sliding back.

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf>

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

Schools with their own pools will need to draw up or review their own risk assessment as a basis for writing down the safe operating procedures for their pool. This will include the Normal Operating Procedure (NOP) to maintain safety and an Emergency Action Plan (EAP), detailing exactly what everyone does if an emergency occurs.

Schools using other people's pools 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.

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.

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.

For schools with pools - drawing up an NOP

- Draw a plan of the pool,
- List the key hazards
- Record communications methods:
- Rules of supervision:
- Systems of work and operational systems:
- Detailed work instructions:
- First aid supplies and training

- Details of alarm systems and other emergency equipment:
- Conditions of hire:

## **EMERGENCY ACTION PLANS**

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

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.

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.

Notices need to be displayed to advise pool users of the arrangements in the event of an emergency.

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.

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 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.

### **Teacher position**

In the situation where the teacher has responsibility for groups comprising more than two pupils the recommended teaching position is from the side of the pool as this provides the best position to oversee the whole group in terms of safety and to provide appropriate feedback on the performance of each person in the group.

This does not preclude a teacher being in the water to assist pupils either on a 1 to 1 or 1 to 2 basis or as an assistant to the class teacher. In fact, for groups of more than two pupils a fully qualified teacher on the poolside supported by an assistant in the water may be ideal.

It is recognised, however, that in some circumstances the teacher will have assessed the risk and may feel it is more appropriate to teach from within the water. For groups of more than two pupils this should only be considered after careful consideration of the

potential risk factors, which may result from the group being of varied ability. At all times the teacher must be able to clearly see all pupils and be close enough to provide physical support should this be required. It is recommended that a maximum of 4 pupils can be accommodated in this way unless additional helpers are available in the water.

An appropriately qualified swimming teacher operating from the poolside supported by in the water helpers may provide the most effective learning environment for those pupils in the early stages of learning to swim. Their position must be specified in the NOP:

### **Teacher clothing and equipment**

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 and appropriate to the possibility of having to go into the pool to rescue a child.

For outdoor pools a peaked hat and polarised sunglasses may be beneficial. If teaching for prolonged periods a suitable sunscreen should be worn bearing in mind the additional reflection of the sun's rays from the water.

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:

- **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
- **One long blast** calls for the pool to be cleared

### **Safety Equipment**

- 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.
- There should be a long pole at either side of the pool to reach and rescue anyone in difficulties without getting into the water. Adequate buoyancy aids and first aid equipment, including a blanket should be immediately to hand.
- Pool depths should be clearly marked on the walls of the pool and teachers should explain their significance to pupils, especially beginners.
- In school open-air pools this could be a painted depth line on the fence so that children can stand next to it to see where the water will come up to when they get in.
- All signs should be compliant with the Safety Signs and Signals Regulations.
- A pool divider, usually a rope, should normally be positioned to separate deep from shallow water when non-swimmers are present.
- 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.

### **First Aid Arrangements**

All schools should make or check the arrangements for first aid.

## **In school pools**

There should be a qualified first aider (First Aid at Work) available within call at all times that the pool is in use. This can be a member of school staff or, when hired out to an outside group, the group must be required to provide a first aider.

## **In public and other pools**

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. 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. Accidents where a pupil is hospitalized should be reported under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR)

## **Swimming Attire**

Pupils should wear appropriate costumes for swimming that conform to safety, cultural and teaching requirements. It is important that swimming clothing is relatively tight fitting so as to minimise the effect of drag that water logged clothing can create. 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

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.

## **Pool Rules**

- Never leave the poolside unattended
- Always secure poolside against unauthorised access when it is not staffed
- 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

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.

## **DIVING**

Additional care is required when teaching swimmers to dive.

This activity needs to be carefully managed.

- The Teaching of a racing dive should only be undertaken by a level 2 teachers

- The Teaching of racing dives shall not be permitted in less than 1.5 metres of water depth or with less than 7.6m forward clearance
- Only shallow entry dives should be permitted
- Diving blocks and stages must conform to Federation International de Natation Amateur (FINA) /ASA regulations"

## **8. CONDITIONS OF HIRE**

Pool operators cannot delegate responsibility for what happens in their pools, therefore if a school pool is hired to an outside organisation the school will need to ensure that the outside organisation will use the pool in a safe manner. Equally if a school hires a pool from someone else that organisation will need to make sure that the school is supported in the safe use of the pool.

Conditions of hire should include:

- The name and address of the organisation hiring the pool
- The name and address of the pool being hired
- The name of the hirer's representative (the responsible person - first point of contact) and contact details
- Details of who is to be responsible for what in the event of an emergency (Normally it is the operator of the pool who is responsible for building related problems and the hirer for emergencies associated with the activities of the group)
- Any safety advice to be given to swimmers and any specific rules that should be enforced
- A signature from the hirer that they have received and read copies of the NOP & EAP
- Appropriate third party liability insurance.

## **9. CHILD PROTECTION**

Most schools will have well-established procedures related to child protection. However, consideration must be given to how these procedures may need to be adapted when pupils are taken away from the school for curriculum or extra curricular activities. In the context of swimming this may include the use of public facilities and possibly shared changing facilities. The Child Protection in Sport Unit provides the following advice: -

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

The purpose of this guidance is to help safeguard the welfare of children using sport and recreation facilities through clarifying the roles and responsibilities of both the local education authorities and sports service providers. Whilst child protection incidents occurring during school use of facilities are extremely rare there is growing recognition that schools and local authorities need to develop arrangements to promote the safety and welfare of children.

The principle that should underpin local arrangements should be that local education authorities and sports service providers work in partnership to safeguard children and young people. With the implementation of section 175 of the Education Act 2002 LEAs and schools will be required to have in place arrangements for ensuring that their functions are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Swimming is an activity that regularly occurs as part of a school PE programme, particularly at primary school level and should be addressed within the safeguarding arrangements.

The DCMS 'Swimming Charter' launched in Jan 2004 reinforces the principle of working in partnership and the role everyone working with children and young people has in safeguarding their welfare.

The Charter recommends that suitable policies are in place for swimming pools, appropriate vetting and clearance practices are in place and that suitable supervision procedures are in place in changing areas.

The CPSU document 'Standards for Safeguarding Children in Sport<sup>1</sup>' relates to the prevention and minimisation of risk and provides guidance on the measures that helps minimise the possibility of children being abused in sport and leisure. This is based on the recognition that some people pose a risk to children and young people and will use sport and leisure opportunities to gain access to them. It is possible to minimise the risks and to prevent abuse by putting safeguards in place and one way is to ensure that activities are planned to ensure children are appropriately and adequately supervised at all times.

It is recognised that there are a number of risks specific to the changing room ranging from health and safety to supervision ratios. The purpose of this guidance is to identify and promote best practice and to minimise these risks.

The presence of unsupervised children, particularly in open changing or shower areas, can cause concern for facility staff and members of the public.

Sport and recreation facilities may provide an environment within which adults who are motivated to harm children may choose to act. Therefore, providing proper supervision at the time a child is most vulnerable is important.

It is recommended that LEAs, schools and sport and recreation service providers have in place the following practices and procedures relating to changing.

- Where possible separate school changing areas should be made available. It is not appropriate for members of the public to share the same changing facilities as those used by school swimmers. Facility providers wherever possible should make arrangements for separate changing areas or changing times to be made available for school swimming sessions where a pool is used by members of the public at the same time. Where this is not possible appropriate supervision arrangements should be agreed between the pool and school.
- Design of the changing rooms should be considered in detail, and in many instances the redesign of changing rooms is the only solution to minimising risk. Changing villages should be designed with three elements: an all female section, an all male section and a buffer in between for family changing. Separate changing rooms for

schools and groups should still be provided in addition to the village changing area. Two sets of showers should also be provided – one for pre-swim hygiene available for use by either sex en route to the pool, and single stall private showers within separate toilet areas for each sex, for post swim showers.

- Within facilities providing ‘village’ changing accommodation or equipped with group or family changing, a responsible adult should undertake the supervision of the changing area. Group or family changing areas may be mixed and may require male and female supervision.
- Club/school changing rooms should be included in the changing area and must be both securable and readily supervised by the responsible adult in charge of the class.

More detailed advice about the design of changing rooms is currently being drawn up by ISRM in order to minimise the risk to children.

- Where single sex changing facilities are provided, a responsible adult of the same sex accompanying the children should undertake the supervision of the changing area.
- The swimming pool provider should have in place a child protection protocol that identifies the relationship between the LEAs child protection procedures, and the pool’s procedures for child protection.
- The swimming pool provider should appoint a designated person with responsibility for child protection that should liaise with the school-designated teacher in the event of a concern about a child.
- The swimming pool provider should have in place a child protection policy and procedure that clearly identifies what steps should be taken in the event of a concern about a child being raised
- The swimming pool provider should publicise to the school and public users which member of staff within the facility concerns about a child should be reported to.

ISRM produces a manual titled ‘Child Protection Procedures for Sport and Recreation Centres’ which provides further information and guidance about child protection.

ISRM organises training courses entitled ‘Fit and Safe’, about child protection for people working in sport.

ISRM produces a document titled ‘Safe Supervision for teaching and coaching swimming’ which provides further advice about the safe supervision of swimmers and has been agreed by all the relevant swimming organizations including the ASA and the RLSS (UK).

For more information please contact:

[cpsu@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:cpsu@nspcc.org.uk)

### **Footnotes**

1 The Standards for Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport were developed by the Child Protection in Sport Unit and adopted by Sport England in 2002. Copies of the Standards are available from [www.thecpsu.org.uk](http://www.thecpsu.org.uk)

2 A responsible adult may be provided by either the school or leisure facility provider. The responsible adult must have been assessed for their suitability to work with children, including obtaining a CRB Disclosure, and have received appropriate information on what to do if they have a concern about a child.

3 The designated person should have undertaken appropriate training in child protection and in the local area child protection procedures.

Additional information related specifically to child protection issues in swimming can be found on the ASA web-site under the heading of Wave Power – Child Welfare in Swimming, Procedures and Guidelines

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## **SUPPORT WEBSITES**

Amateur Swimming Association (National Governing Body for Swimming)  
[www.britishswimming.org](http://www.britishswimming.org)

RLSS (Royal Lifesaving Society)  
[www.lifesavers.org.uk](http://www.lifesavers.org.uk)

ISRM (Institute of Sport and Recreation Management)  
[www.isrm.co.uk](http://www.isrm.co.uk)

This site is home to the QCA/DfES schemes of work  
[www.standards,dfes.gov.uk/schemes](http://www.standards,dfes.gov.uk/schemes)

### **Further questions please email**

[Schoolswimming@swimming.org](mailto:Schoolswimming@swimming.org)