



# **Buckinghamshire Council**

**Safe Practice in School  
Swimming Policy & Guidance  
September 2021**

**DEVELOPED IN ASSOCIATION WITH**





## Foreword

**I would like to thank the following individuals for their contributions and support in updating this revised edition of the Buckinghamshire Safe Practice in School Swimming Policy and Guidance:**

Ali Arber	Adviser for Physical Education, LEAP
Ally Brewer	Lead Academy Coach, Maxwell Swimming Club
Allison Holley	Administrator for Swimming, Bucks School Swimming Partnership
Amanda Brigden	Assistant Headteacher, Aylesbury High School
Aaron Wanford	Headteacher, Green Ridge Primary Academy
Beeba Heskins	Commercial Product & Aquatics Manager, GLL
Becky Newman	Pool & Letting Supervisor, Alfriston School
Caron Owens	Health and Safety Team, Buckinghamshire Council
Carla Brown	Swimming Teacher, Risborough Springs
Cazz Colmer	Headteacher, Winslow CE Combined School
Chris Hawkes	Aquatic Activator, Stoke Mandeville Stadium
Georgie Boddy	Licensed Swim England Tutor & School Swimming Trainer, Bucks School Swimming Partnership
Helen Gow	Headteacher, Cedar Park School
Jane Stevens	School Swimming Trainer, Bucks School Swimming Partnership
Jo Kilgallon	Swimming Co-ordinator, Braywick Leisure Centre
Julia Mills	Swim Manager, Everyone Active, The Chiltern Pools
Katie Towner	Head of Learn to Swim, Swim England
Kevin Brooks	Head Coach, Wycombe & District Swimming Club
Kim Davis	Swimming Co-ordinator, Risborough Springs
Kirsty Hunter	Head of Girls PE, John Colet School
Lauren Parker-Lynn	Swimming Co-ordinator, Booker Park School
Lesley Byrne	PE Lead, Slated Row School, Milton Keynes

Lisa Govier	Swimming Teacher, Aqua Vale
Louise Richardson	Swimming Co-ordinator, Court Garden Leisure Complex
Nicky Matthews	Head of Academy, Wycombe & District Swimming Club & Swim School Coach, Godstowe School
Noel Horton	Head Coach, Maxwell Swimming Club
Michael Dunn	Operations Director at Royal Life Saving Society UK - RLSS UK
Mike Harwin	County Outdoor Educational Adviser, Buckinghamshire Council
Mike Shuff	Managing Director, Carlton Associates Ltd
Miranda Moslin	Swimming Teacher, Stoke Mandeville Stadium
Neil Bailey	Head of Swim School, Neil Bailey Swimming
Rob Lloyd	Training Manager, Vale Safety Training
Rory Finnegan	Health and Safety Adviser, Buckinghamshire Council
James Woodhouse	Water Safety Education Manager, RNLI (South East)
Sarah Wright	Contract Swim Lesson Manager, Aqua Vale & Swan Pool
Stephanie Reid	Swimming Tutor, Aqua Dragon Swim School
Sue Parker	Licensed Swim England Tutor
Wendy Zakrzewski	Swimming Manager, Wycombe Leisure Centre

*A. G. Carey*

**Mandy Carey**  
**Bucks School Swimming Adviser &**  
**Swim England Licensed Tutor**

# Contents

This document is Part 1 of the Bucks Safe Practice in School Swimming Policy and Guidance and is aimed at everyone involved with the School Swimming Programme in Bucks. This document is available to download on the BSSP [website](#).

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**Part 2 – Technical Guidance on the Management of Swimming Pools and Swimming Pool Plant on School Sites** is a separate document for Headteachers and Plant/Pool Managers with their own school pools and is available from the Health and Safety Team at Buckinghamshire Council or the BSSP [website](#).

# Glossary of Terms

<b>AfPE</b>	Association for Physical Education
<b>ASA</b>	Amateur Swimming Association, now renamed Swim England
<b>FINA</b>	Federation Internationale de Natation also known as International Swimming Federation - Swim England are affiliated to FINA
<b>ASA/NCTP</b>	National Curriculum Training Programme
<b>ASA/UKCC</b>	United Kingdom Coaching Certificate
<b>ATSPRA</b>	Aquatic Therapy Shallow Pool Rescue Award
<b>BC</b>	Buckinghamshire Council
<b>BSSP</b>	Bucks School Swimming Partnership
<b>CIMSPA</b>	Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity
<b>DBS</b>	Disclosure Barring Service
<b>DfES/CCPR</b>	Department for Education and Skills/Central Council for Physical Education
<b>EAP</b>	Emergency Action Plan
<b>EHO</b>	Environmental Health Officer
<b>HLTA</b>	Higher Level Teaching Assistant
<b>HSE</b>	Health & Safety Executive
<b>IOS</b>	Institute of Swimming
<b>ISPE</b>	Institute of Swimming Pool Engineers
<b>ISRM</b>	Institute of Sport and Recreation Management
<b>NC</b>	National Curriculum
<b>NCTP</b>	National Curriculum Training Programme
<b>NOP</b>	Normal Operating Procedure
<b>NPLQ</b>	National Pool Lifeguard Qualification
<b>NRASTC</b>	National Rescue Award for Swimming Teachers and Coaches
<b>OEAP</b>	Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel
<b>PSOP</b>	Pool Safety Operating Procedures
<b>PWMC</b>	Pool Water Maintenance Contractor
<b>PWTAG</b>	Pool Water Treatment Advisory Group

<b>QCF</b>	Qualification and Credit Framework
<b>RAPs</b>	Register of Aquatic Professionals
<b>RIDDOR</b>	Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013
<b>RLSS</b>	Royal Life Saving Society
<b>RLSS NWSMP</b>	RLSS National Water Safety Management Programme
<b>RNLI</b>	Royal National Lifeboat Institution
<b>SEND</b>	Special Educational Needs &/or Disabilities
<b>STA</b>	Swimming Teachers' Association
<b>STA/NaRS (PL)</b>	National Pool Lifeguard Certificate
<b>SE</b>	Swim England (is the only recognised national governing body for swimming in England)
<b>TA</b>	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.

**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 equivalent.

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

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

# Meet the BSSP Swimming Team

The BSSP Swimming Team are based at Aylesbury High School and can be contacted by telephoning 01296 388222 or by emailing [swimming@ahs.bucks.sch.uk](mailto:swimming@ahs.bucks.sch.uk).



Zoe Coll  
Swim England Licensed Tutor &  
**Bucks School Swimming Adviser**

Georgie Boddy  
Swim England Licensed Tutor &  
**Bucks School Swimming Trainer**



Jane Stevens  
**Bucks School Swimming Trainer**

Sharon Evans  
**Bucks School Swimming Administrator**

# Key to Boxes

 <p><b>STATUTORY</b> Information</p>	 <p><b>IMPORTANT</b> <b>Information</b></p>
 <p><b>KEY</b> Information</p>	 <p><b>USEFUL</b> Links</p>

# COVID-19 Considerations

For many children, particularly those living in more deprived areas, school may be the only opportunity they will have to learn how to swim and be safe in and around the water. Despite being on the national curriculum, around one in five children leave primary school unable to swim. This figure rises to almost half of children from the least affluent families. It is therefore incredibly important that children do not miss out on School Swimming and Water Safety lessons as a result of COVID-19 (taken from SE Return to School Swimming Guidance Dec 2020). Primary schools must liaise with secondary schools where pupils have missed these vital lessons. We urge secondary schools to provide some form of catch up for pupils who have been unable to meet the minimum national curriculum requirements for school swimming. BSSP are happy to offer support to schools where possible. As a minimum, schools should ensure that pupils understand key water safety messages, this can be done through dry side cross-curricular lessons. The RNLI, in collaboration with BSSP, have produced a really exciting resource with links to a range of easy to use activities. Please get in touch if you would like to use this - [swimming@ahs.bucks.sch.uk](mailto:swimming@ahs.bucks.sch.uk).

**Please follow the links below to find national guidance including risk assessment considerations, checklists for schools and national advice in light of COVID-19.**



**Guidance from Swim England (SE):** There is a wealth of information on the Swim England Website, including Guidelines for Swimming Lessons and for Operators; FAQ's; Top Tip Videos; example lessons plans plus more: <https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/pool-return-guidance-documents/>

Swim England COVID Learning Opportunity:  
<https://www.swimming.org/ios/returning-covid-19-training/>

**Guidance from Swimming Teachers' Association (STA):**  
<https://www.sta.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/STA-Covid-19-Swim-Schools-Re-Opening-Guidance-V20.2-1.pdf>

**Guidance from the Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS):**  
<https://www.rlss.org.uk/guidance-for-swimming-teachers-providing-supervision-for-swimming-lessons-during-covid-19>

**Pool Technical Notes issued by the Pool Water Treatment Advisory Group (PWTAG):**  
<https://www.bssp.org.uk/policy-documents/>

**COVID-19 Guidance for schools can be found on the Bucks School Swimming Partnership (BSSP) website:**  
<https://www.bssp.org.uk/policy-documents/>

# Summary

This document:

- sets out the policies and provides guidance on Safe Practice in School Swimming and Water Safety, whether at a school pool, hydrotherapy pool, public pool or during school visits. It aims to keep everyone involved in school swimming safe,
- includes the policies and procedures of Buckinghamshire Council (BC) and Bucks School Swimming Partnership (BSSP) based 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,
- reflects current working practices of the BSSP Swimming Team.



The appendices contain exemplar materials and greater detail on local and national guidance. **Part 2** (a separate document) contains **Technical Guidance on the Management of Swimming Pools and Swimming Pool Plant on School Site**.

**THIS POLICY IS FOR ALL BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL (BC) MAINTAINED SCHOOLS. IT IS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED THAT ACADEMIES, FOUNDATION AND VOLUNTARY AIDED SCHOOLS ALSO FOLLOW THE GUIDANCE WITHIN THE POLICY.**

Where schools use leisure provider pools, **partnership working is vital**, not only to keep pupils and staff safe, but also to ensure the inclusion of a breadth of aquatic opportunities, which meet the needs of all pupils.

# Introduction

The following policy has been revised and updated by Buckinghamshire Council (BC) and BSSP. It has been through wide consultation involving; the Bucks Swim Focus Group, Headteachers, leisure providers, swimming co-ordinators, Swim England (formerly ASA) and the Royal Lifesaving Society (RLSS), to provide a valuable and accurately informed working document. It is intended to inform and support the following:

- Headteachers,
- Governors,
- Teachers in charge of School Swimming and Water Safety within their school,
- Leisure providers,
- Swimming teachers,
- School staff accompanying pupils to their school swimming lessons.

Working in partnership will ensure a consistent joined up approach in the planning and delivery of safe, quality school swimming and water safety lessons.

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.'



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

# Key Changes

A number of changes and additions have been made to this Policy. Please see the table below for an overview of these and where to find them.

	What	Found where	Page No.
1	Changing Rooms (Safeguarding) - Further information for schools including guidance from NSPCC and facilities for transgender students	Supervision of Changing Rooms	1
2	Minor incidents and accidents - Clarification on reporting	First Aid Arrangements	4
3	NC swimming outcomes including Water Safety and the Water Safety Code - Greater detail and clarification	Introduction	5
4	National Rescue Award for Swimming Teachers and Coaches (NRASTC) LIGHT qualification – New addition and details	Lifeguarding qualifications	6
5	NC Self-rescue requirements and information about Water Safety Awards for schools	Teaching Self-Rescue and Water Safety	13
6	Open Water Swimming - Further guidance	Natural Water Bathing/Open Water Swimming	7
7	Partnership Agreement for schools and leisure providers to clarify standards, roles and responsibilities	School staff accompanying pupils to their school swimming and water safety lessons	8
8	Planning and implementing a School Swimming Programme - A checklist of actions for schools	Checklist of Requirements	0
9	Qualifications - Expiry of and details for renewal options	Keeping Qualifications up to date	2
10	Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS) Aquatic Therapy Shallow Tank Pool Rescue Award (ATSPRA)	Lifeguarding qualifications	11
11	School Processes - Checklist of requirements added	Checklist of requirements	12
12	SEND Course for staff working with SEND Pupils - Addition of a new National Curriculum Training Programme (NCTP) course	Teaching qualifications required for school staff	14
13	SEND and details of Inclusion 2020 - Additional guidance	Inclusion 2020	15
14	SEND - Information on the Swim England Inclusion Hub: <a href="https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/inclusion/">https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/inclusion/</a>	Swimmers with Special Educational Needs &/or Disabilities (SEND)	3

<b>15</b>	Staff accompanying pupils to swimming lessons - Clarification	Responsibilities	<b>16</b>
<b>16</b>	Staff working in the water with pupils - Guidance	Teaching in the water	<b>17</b>
<b>17</b>	Swim England NCTP courses - Updated overview of each course	SE NCTP certificate for teaching school swimming and water safety	<b>18</b>
<b>18</b>	Swimming as part of educational visits - removal of some content; addition of link to national guidance	Educational Visits	
<b>19</b>	Unprogrammed swimming sessions - Clarification	Lifeguarding Qualifications	<b>19</b>
<b>20</b>	Verrucas and swimming - Current advice	Pupils Swimming Attire	<b>20</b>

# Checklist of Requirements

<b>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</b>		<b>Tick Done</b>
<b>1</b>	Headteacher, lead Governor, teachers and TA's involved in school swimming to read Bucks Safe Practice in School Swimming Policy & Guidance 2021	
<b>2</b>	Identify pool to be used and ensure leisure provider is aware of policy requirements	
<b>3</b>	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	
<b>4</b>	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	
<b>5</b>	Ensure staff qualifications remain up to date, refresh training within a 5 year period	
<b>6</b>	Check with leisure provider to ensure that lifeguard certificates/qualifications are current and appropriate	
<b>7</b>	Schools with own pools to ensure lifeguard qualifications are relevant and up to date	
<b>8</b>	Before the school swimming programme commences, visit the pool for a Health and Safety Induction	
<b>9</b>	Agree and sign Partnership Agreement/Service Level Agreement	
<b>10</b>	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	
<b>11</b>	Request the leisure provider Insurance	
<b>12</b>	Complete a Trips and Visits Form	
<b>13</b>	Read and understand leisure provider Risk Assessment	
<b>14</b>	Develop own Risk Assessment for school swimming for each group	
<b>15</b>	Plan the school swimming programme with the leisure provider to ensure that inclusion of pupils with additional needs has been considered	
<b>16</b>	Implement the School Goggle Policy	
<b>17</b>	Send letter to parents to introduce programme and request information on pupil ability	
<b>18</b>	Ensure information on specific medical conditions is provided to the leisure provider and that medication will accompany pupil to school swimming lesson	
<b>19</b>	Identify assessment methods to demonstrate progress of pupils, consider which school swimming awards will be undertaken	
<b>20</b>	A dated register showing learning outcomes for pupils is available (in line with NC requirements)	
<b>21</b>	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 therefore 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. In particular, pupils should be taught to:

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

In November 2018, the National Swim Group published further guidance and clarity about what each of the above strands should look like. Swim England have produced some useful guidance for schools, which can be found on the following link: <https://www.swimming.org/schools/resource-pack/>.

## What do the outcomes mean?

### **1. Swim competently, confidently and proficiently over a distance of at least 25 metres**

*This means demonstrating:*

- *a continuous swim of more than 25 metres without touching the side of the pool or the pool floor without the use of swimming aids. Whenever possible, at least part of the swim should be completed in deep water, defined as greater than shoulder depth. This is because 'competence' and 'proficiency' cannot be assured if the swim takes place in shallow water only,*
- *the stroke, or strokes, are as strong at the end of the swim as at the start, and that the swim is completed without undue stress,*
- *the stroke or strokes are recognisable to an informed onlooker. Using an ineffective stroke and just managing to swim 25 metres does not meet the minimum requirement. Nor does it provide the skills necessary for pupils to be able to self-rescue if they get into difficulty. A competent, confident and proficient swim over a distance of more than 25 metres is the minimum requirement to meet the National Curriculum outcomes. It is hoped that a number of pupils will be able to swim significantly further, although evidence of this is not required for primary schools to officially record (although could be considered for parent and secondary school reporting).*

### **2. Use a range of strokes effectively**

*Pupils should be able to use a range of strokes and make choices about the strokes they use to achieve different outcomes and be certain of success. To do this they need to experience simultaneous and alternating strokes, on their front and back, and be able to adapt them for a range of purposes and intended outcomes. Examples of an intended outcome might be a swim of 50 metres, or using an effective leg kick to tread water successfully. Swimming strokes do not have to be perfect; the emphasis should be on effectively achieving the required aim rather than precision hand or feet movements.*

Other examples could be; using front crawl with face down and aquatic breathing to swim in a competitive race, use front crawl with head up to play water polo, using a front crawl-type leg kick in a vertical position to tread water.

### 3. Perform safe self-rescue in different water-based situations



*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:**

- always swim in a safe place,
- always swim with an adult,
- if you fall in: **float, breathe, relax,**
- if someone else is in trouble, call 999 or 112,
- **Shout, throw, never go.**

#### **Stop and Think:**

- water is always moving,
- the water is colder than you think,
- edges can be dangerous,
- there may be dangers under water.

#### **Stay Together:**

- never swim alone - stay close to a friend or family member (3 if possible, 1 to go for help, 1 to stay with person in difficulty),
- find a safe place to go - only swim in the sea where there is a lifeguard,
- plan your activity – check weather, tide times, get local advice and wear the right clothing for your activity.

#### **Float:**

- if you fall in, float until you feel calm,
- 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,
- keep warm if you can't swim to safety, using the Heat Escape Lessening Position (HELP) or huddle position.

#### **Call 999 or 112:**

- if you see someone else in trouble in the water call 999 or 112 or shout for help - **STAY SAFE,**
- never enter the water to save others,

- signal to casualty and look for something you can throw to help them float like a life ring or even a football could help,
- keep watch until help arrives.

To meet the three National Curriculum requirements for swimming and water safety, lessons should focus on developing some or all of the following skills and strokes in different water-related contexts:

- how to enter (entry with full submersion and re-surface; fall in ;step in entries),
- exit the water (climb out unassisted, without use of the steps),
- floatation,
- submerging,
- rotating from back to front and front to back and regaining an upright position,
- pushing and gliding and an understanding of streamlining,
- aquatic breathing,
- moving effectively and efficiently through the water using alternating and simultaneous strokes on front and back, such as front crawl, back crawl, breaststroke, also side stroke,
- swimming longer distances and for increasing amounts of time,
- using swimming skills and strokes for different purposes such as water polo and synchronised swimming,
- survival and self-rescue skills:
  - treading water,
  - maintain Heat Escape Lessening Position (HELP) and Huddle positions,
  - floating and resting in the water (to regulate breathing),
  - attracting attention by signalling for help (raising one arm and shouting),
  - sculling,
  - swimming in everyday clothing and with various buoyancy aids,
  - swim 15m out and then swim 15 m back.



*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.*

- 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.

*Teaching Swimming and Water Safety at Key Stage 1 or 2 - Water Safety Resource (produced by Swim England on behalf of the National Swim Group).*

For further information and to look at these documents in more detail, click on [School Swimming Guides](#).



*Around 190 people lose their lives at the UK and Irish coasts each year, and over half never even planned to enter the water.*

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:

- *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).



Both the Bucks School Swimming Partnership and Swim England have 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.



*When teaching lifesaving, pupils below 8 years of age should only be taught rescues from the poolside (e.g. shout & signal, throwing, reaching with a pole or similar items).*

*Pupils under 13 years of age should not be taught In-water contact rescues apart from when they are taught within a comprehensive Lifesaving Award programme where sufficient additional safety knowledge is learned. Pupils must also be competent, confident and proficient swimmers.*

*(Safe Practice in Physical Education School Sport and Physical Activity 2016 Edition 4.1.68)*



Advice on resource packs and awards for teaching lifesaving skills at the appropriate key stages in primary and secondary education is available from the RLSS UK <https://www.rlss.org.uk/pages/category/our-awards>

STA <https://www.sta.co.uk/school-swimming-academy/awards>

RNLI (Youth Education) <https://rnli.org/youth-education>

[Swim England](#)

# 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.



The Governing Body holds this responsibility in Academies, Foundation and Voluntary Aided schools.

## School Responsibility - Governors and Headteachers

**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. This will incorporate the proper operation of the school's own swimming facility or use of a third party pool. 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 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 'Governors Checklist' issued by BSSP every two years, see Appendix I,
- keeping current copies of the 'Conditions of Hire' and leisure provider insurance details within the School Swimming Folder,

- schools using pools other than their own 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 is maintained within the School Swimming Folder,
- Headteachers of schools with pools on their site attending the course entitled **Swimming Pool Awareness for Headteachers, Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA)** - this requires refreshing every 3 years.

## Teacher in Charge of School Swimming and Water Safety

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

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, assessments.

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). For Open Water Swimming, Swimming in the Sea, Use of Hotel Pools, see section on Educational Visits, page 75,
- undertake Risk Assessments (please refer to page 29 and Appendix A - C - Model 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 (schools may choose to use the following forms: *Swimming class registers including information on pupils with medical conditions and/additional needs; information for Leisure Providers - Appendix X*).

## 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.



Specialist swimming teachers should work with school staff to oversee the assessment of pupils against Award Criteria to identify those pupils unlikely to 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. Please refer to the section on Teaching Qualifications, see page 44.

**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.



*When public pools are used for school swimming, the duty of care remains with the school staff. Specialist swimming teachers may be employed to assist with the teaching of the lesson, but it is essential the school staff remain on poolside (the employer's responsibility is not displaced by the employment of the swimming teacher, e.g. the responsibility for the care of students cannot be delegated).*

*AfPE Safe Practice in PESSPA 2020*

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 a suitable and sufficient 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,
- 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/>

For an outdoor school pool which may have no landline or alarm, the school may include the use of walkie talkies in their NOP & EAP. These must be fully charged and manned responsibly at all times. Staff may have mobile phones as a backup (again, these must be fully charged with a reliable signal).



However, carrying a mobile phone with a good signal and fully charged 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 ([See Appendix D](#)).

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.

### For School Pools

Schools with their own pools will need to draw up the NOP for their pool. This needs reviewing at least annually to ensure it is current, relevant and up to date.

School staff working in the pool must receive appropriate induction on the NOP, which must be recorded by the school, signed by the person delivering the induction and kept on file.

## Emergency Action Plan (EAP)

An Emergency Action Plan details roles and responsibilities in the event of an emergency ([See Appendix E](#)).

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.



**Schools with their own pools will need to draw up or review their own risk assessment as a basis for writing the EAP for their pool.**

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 (leisure provider/school pool/private school pool), 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. It is recommended that special schools have a spinal board on the poolside. Training can be provided by [Herts Handling Training Ltd](#).

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.*

*(AfPE Safe Practice in Physical Education, School Sport and Physical Activity 2016 Edition)*

AfPE Safe Practice in Physical Education, School Sport and Physical Activity (2020 Edition) have produced a very useful table, which outlines the aspects schools would expect to find within these documents:

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>NOPs</b> <b>Normal Operating Procedure</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>EAPs</b> <b>Emergency Action Plan</b></p>
<p>These are the day-to-day organisational systems based on risk assessment and would typically include information relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● pool design and depth (this should be clearly marked; ropes separating shallow from deep; two connected bottom outlet pipes; ladders/steps?; use of electrical equipment</li> <li>● temperature of the water – PWTAG recommend this should be between 29 degrees °C – 31 degrees °C for teaching pupils</li> <li>● potential areas of risk; clear signage; safe access onto poolside; steps and rails (entrapment risks?); glare and blind spots?</li> <li>● whistle drills and alarms; e.g: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One short blast - Calls for attention of pool users</li> <li>Two short blasts - Calls for the attention of a lifeguard or member of staff</li> <li>Three short blasts - Indicates a lifeguard taking emergency action</li> </ul> </li> <li>● arrangements for lessons</li> <li>● responsibility for safety</li> <li>● staffing levels and qualifications</li> <li>● supervision and pupil conduct</li> <li>● arrangements for pupils with particular needs (e.g. very young children, or those with SEND or medical conditions)</li> <li>● pools safety equipment</li> <li>● clothing and personal equipment</li> <li>● maximum numbers</li> <li>● first aid provision</li> <li>● water clarity (bottom of the pool should be seen at all depths at all times); glare - frequent movement by staff may be needed to maintain maximum visual awareness; glare may also trigger an adverse reaction in pupils with additional needs or medical conditions)</li> </ul>	<p>This should establish who assumes leadership in managing emergencies and the action to be taken in relation to such issues as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● serious injury to bather</li> <li>● dealing with casualties in the water</li> <li>● sudden overcrowding in a public pool</li> <li>● sudden lack of water clarity</li> <li>● disorderly behaviour</li> <li>● faecal fouling</li> <li>● vomit</li> <li>● blood contamination</li> <li>● emergency action due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fire alarm</li> <li>bomb threat</li> <li>power failure</li> <li>structural failure</li> <li>toxic-gas emission</li> <li>weather (thunder and lightning in outdoor pools) or glare from sunlight</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

# Risk Assessment



Useful links ▶

See Appendix A: Model Risk Assessment for a Public Pool  
See Appendix B: Model Risk Assessment for Indoor School Pools  
See Appendix C: Model Risk Assessment for Outdoor School Pools

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.

Swim England, Safe Supervision for Teaching and Coaching Swimming 2017 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.*

The school must 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 present should be updated and handed to the specialist swimming teacher for them to check before each lesson (see [Appendix X](#)).



Accompanying school staff are expected to undertake a dynamic risk assessment in situ each time they attend the pool. Staff should take action 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,
- weather 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

The school needs to make a judgement if the public pool is safe and appropriate for School Swimming. Where public pools are used regularly for swimming lessons, the school and leisure provider 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.



The Appendices at the back of this policy contain model procedures and forms, which must be made specific to each school and pool.

# 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 (see Appendix X - *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.



Useful links ▶

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.

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’.

The pupil may need to work alongside a responsible person in the water when they are out of their depth. Using a ‘buddy’ system with a pupil or helper in the water can provide non-intrusive supervision, which also avoids embarrassment on behalf of the pupil.

# First Aid Arrangements

All schools should 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 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). Appendix J is an example form, which schools may wish to use.

# 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 the site they are using 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,
- 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, although Swim England advise a risk assessment be undertaken before jumping is permitted to take place into water of less than 1.5m.



Swim England also provide guidance and resources to support the management of aquatic programmes:  
<https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/the-swim-england-facilities-team/>



\*Only Swim England Level 2 / STA Level 2 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, see page 59

# 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.



The AfPE Handbook provides guidance for school staff on considerations and teaching advice for working with pupils with specific conditions within PE and School Swimming.

<https://www.afpe.org.uk/physical-education/afpe-launch-new-2020-edition-of-safe-practice/>.

See also 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.

Physiotherapists should have completed a course in managing hydrotherapy activities.

A variety of skills are required stemming from an assessment of each pupil's individual requirements. For schools with hydrotherapy pools, at least two members of staff poolside should have undertaken a minimum of Swim England Support Teacher of School Swimming Certificate.

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



## **Adult : pupil ratio**

*This should not be determined in accordance with any swimming-specific written guidelines that may exist.*

*A safe ratio can only be determined by carefully examining individual pupil's abilities, medical profiles and EHCP's in conjunction with relevant medical staff. 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. These activity programmes usually involve multidisciplinary teaching by a group of professionals; for example swimming teacher; class teacher; learning support/care assistants and a physiotherapist.*

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

**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 Special schools will be much lower and individual Risk Assessments are key in determining these ratios.** 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. All ratios are broken down and explained on page 52.

# Hydrotherapy Pools

Water-based activity in hydrotherapy pools requires higher levels of supervision, often on a one to one basis in the water. Individual pupils' medical profiles and health care plans need to be examined, alongside relevant medical staff in order to arrive at safe ratios.

Hydrotherapy pools in Special Schools need to pay particular attention to the development of risk-management schemes for:

- moving and handling, which includes all aspects of lifting and carrying of pupils or transfers between equipment, such as in and out of wheelchairs,
- transporting pupils between changing rooms and the pool,
- entry and exit from the pool,
- dressing/undressing areas and support staff,
- emergency equipment and procedures for pupils with disabilities/spinal injuries,
- pool accessibility (i.e. ramps, hoists and changing facilities),
- increased Teacher : Pupil ratio,
- pool temperature may be set higher for disabled swimmers (e.g. 32 degrees C for Special needs school pools,
- assistant/helper in the water.

## Training Staff in Hydrotherapy Pools/Special School Pools

BSSP in conjunction with BC are able to offer courses aimed at school staff who support pupils with sensory and physical needs during their school swimming lessons. For more information contact [swimming@ahs.bucks.sch.uk](mailto:swimming@ahs.bucks.sch.uk).

School Teachers **supporting the delivery** of lessons to SEND pupils need to undertake training in either the *Swim England SEND School Swimming* or *Support Teacher of School Swimming*, see pages 44-46. They may then work under the guidance of a qualified Swim England Level 2 Swimming Teacher.

Staff working with individual pupils in the water will also need to be appropriately trained (again the SEND School Swimming Course is an appropriate qualification); they will also need to have handling expertise and sufficient knowledge of each individual pupil's physical and medical needs.



Ratios for Special Schools will be much lower and Individual Risk Assessments are key in determining these ratios.

Swim England recommends a ratio of 8:1 for qualified swimming teachers with 1:1 support in the water where the RA requires. Where school staff hold either the Support Teacher of School Swimming or Supporting Pupils with SEND during their School Swimming, a ratio of 3:1 is recommended as a minimum.

## Hoists

In school pools, staff must follow the manufacturer's instructions in the use of pool hoists, ensure they receive the appropriate training for its use before using it with a pupil and ensure it has a regular (as per the manufacturer's instructions) safety check.

Both at leisure provider pools and school pools, where the hoist uses a sling, the swimmer needs to provide their own sling appropriate to their weight, as this is a personal piece of equipment thus not shareable.

## Swim England SEND Course for School Staff

Overview of course (5-6 hours)	
1	Improve understanding of SEND and inclusion in the National Curriculum and Physical Education, specifically Swimming
2	Swimming and Water Safety in the National Curriculum and adaptations where required
3	Identify good practice in health and safety
4	Understand barriers to swimming and Identify strategies to overcome these for pupils with SEND
5	Identify methods of communication and resources to support pupils with SEND
6	Understand fundamental movement skills and core aquatic skills and the links between them
7	How to develop water confidence using core aquatic skills
8	How to introduce the swimming strokes

For more information, or to book the above course, please email [swimming@ahs.bucks.sch.uk](mailto:swimming@ahs.bucks.sch.uk).

## Lifeguarding in a Special School Hydrotherapy Pool

The lifeguarding qualification required for hydrotherapy pools is the RLSS Aquatic Therapy Shallow Pool Rescue Award (ATSPRA). Other scenarios are listed below:

SPECIAL SCHOOL POOL		
Situation	Lifeguarding Qualification Needed	Information
In a school pool with deep water ( <b>over 1.2m</b> ) during an <b>un-programmed</b> session	<b>Minimum qualification:</b> National Pool Lifeguard Qualification (NPLQ)	The pool's NOP should be referred to, as un-programmed sessions are often prohibited due to their unpredictable nature
<b>In a Special School pool or hydrotherapy pool with shallow water (less than 1.2m) during a programmed session</b>	<b>Royal Life Saving Society Aquatic Therapy Shallow Pool Rescue Award for Swimming</b>	This qualification is required for school staff working with pupils with additional physical needs. ATSPRA is a supervision and rescue qualification for therapists, teachers and support staff working on the poolside or in the water during activities such as aquatic therapy or therapeutic exercise/play
In a school pool with shallow water ( <b>less than 1.2m</b> ) during an <b>un-programmed</b> session (for example, if the pool is hired as an external booking)	<b>Minimum qualification:</b> National Pool Lifeguard Qualification (NPLQ)	Un-programmed school sessions are prohibited due to their unpredictable nature
<b>Please note:</b> The guidance above states the minimum provision required by Buckinghamshire Council and the Bucks School Swimming Partnership. In all circumstances, schools should also refer to the pool's NOP as more advanced qualifications may be needed after a risk assessment.		



School staff will be responsible for ensuring that they keep a record of their swimming qualification and where relevant, lifeguard qualification expiry dates, both individually and in the School Swimming Folder, and must undertake a one-day refresher course prior to expiry of the qualification. Lifeguards will only be able to work in a pool where they are qualified to the pool's maximum depth.

# Inclusion

Inclusion 2020 was an exciting initiative, inspired by the 2020 Paralympic Games, funded by the Department for Education (DfE) and delivered by the Youth Sport Trust. Its aim was to increase and improve opportunities for young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to participate in school sport.

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.

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](mailto:swimming@ahs.bucks.sch.uk) for further information and to book onto this course with the Bucks School Swimming Partnership.



## See the following website links:

- Swim England: [SEND School Swimming guidance documents](#)
- Swim England [Inclusion Guidance](#)
- Halliwick: [www.halliwick.org](http://www.halliwick.org)

# 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 (this applies to both school pools and leisure provider pools). 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.



**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.**

Please refer to the section on Teaching Qualifications, page 44 along with the overview of the Swim England National Curriculum Training Programme for teaching School Swimming on page 45.

This is in accordance with both Swim England recommendations and the Association for Physical Education (AfPE) who state: *'Where specialist swimming teachers are employed to lead the lesson, it is strongly recommended that **school staff remain on poolside** to provide an assisting role.'*

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 2016 Edition)*

Accompanying school staff need to work in partnership with specialist swimming teachers. The [Partnership Agreement \(Appendix Z1\)](#) helps them to do this.

**IMPORTANT  
INFORMATION**

For schools with their own pools, **it is highly recommended that staff also undertake the Swim England Teacher of School Swimming, which completes the Swim England National Curriculum Training Programme.**

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:

- COVID-19,
- 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. Also, refer to the section on Safeguarding see page 66. 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.

Accompanying school staff, who are not involved in teaching swimming under the guidance of a specialist swimming teacher, should nonetheless be positioned such that they are able to support the swimming teacher in the control of pupils and observation of their group. They should, however, ensure that they do not obstruct those working on poolside, their position must be specified in the NOP.

Care needs to be taken that there are not excessive numbers of adults on the poolside, but that all staff accompanying the pupils swimming are alert and supportive to the qualified swimming teacher.

# Teaching in the Water

It is recognised that in some circumstances the pool operator or teacher/provider 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, it may be practicable to supervise up to 6 learners, 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 (latest version due out shortly).



**There should always be qualified school staff on the poolside with an overview of the group and the lifeguard should be on the side of the pool.**

## Supporting pupils in the water

Supporting pupils through physical contact can be helpful to their progress and, depending on the situation, it might be appropriate to support pupils by their hands, shoulders or head. 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. Pupils should always be 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. The school should work with parents and the pupil to understand the best method of support (if for example, the pupil has swimming lessons outside of school and is supported in the water). This should be identified within the Risk Assessment and agreed with all (including the head teacher) prior to the School Swimming Programme commencing.

**IMPORTANT  
INFORMATION**

When you do use manual support, it is important that you make sure that:

- It is only provided when necessary and only for as long as it is required,
- Pupils are handled with empathy,
- The member of staff in the water has checked that pupils are happy to be supported, discussions take place about how they will be supported,
- School staff are aware of potential safeguarding implications and ensure that, for example, their hands are appropriately positioned and in full view at all times,
- The swimming teacher should keep his/her hands in view whenever possible,
- The member of school staff in the water should be easily recognisable by, for example, 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. The table below explains the requirements:

Minimum requirements	Qualification
For all staff accompanying their pupils school swimming at a <u>leisure provider pool</u>	Swim England Support Teacher of School Swimming <i>(Formerly ASA NCTP Fundamentals of School Swimming)</i>
For staff teaching swimming at their <u>own shallow tank pool</u> without a Swim England Level 2 or equivalent	Swim England Support Teacher of School Swimming <i>(Formerly ASA NCTP Fundamentals of School Swimming)</i>
Highly recommended for staff teaching swimming at their <u>own shallow tank pool</u> without a Swim England Level 2 or equivalent	Swim England Teacher of School Swimming <i>(Formerly ASA NCTP Aquatic Skills of School Swimming)</i>
For Secondary PE teachers teaching in a school pool deeper than 1.2m with a qualified Swim England Level 2 or equivalent	Swim England Secondary Teacher of School Swimming <i>(Formerly ASA NCTP Secondary Aquatic Skills of School Swimming)</i>
For Staff teaching swimming in hydrotherapy pools at Special Schools or as part of SEND Swimming need training	<b>(New) Supporting pupils with SEND during School Swimming</b> or Swim England Support Teacher of School Swimming
<b>Swim England recommend completion of both Support Teacher and Teacher of School Swimming courses. (Please note: the Secondary Teacher of School Swimming course (aimed at PE teachers) is a combined 1 day course with pre-course reading</b>	



For further information and course flyers, please visit the [BSSP website](#).



The holder of Swim England Support Teacher of School Swimming may work under the guidance of a specialist swimming teacher see page 52 to actively support and assist.

The holder of Swim England 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 (NCTP)

## Certificate for Teaching School Swimming

**The table below explains the Swim England Course content and overview**

<b>PRIMARY CPD</b>	
<b>Support Teacher of School Swimming (6 hour course)</b>	
The course includes practical elements. Candidates must be confident in water and able to swim 25m	
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
<b>Teacher of School Swimming (Day long course with some pre-course reading)</b>	
The course includes an Observation of Candidates teaching pupils (or if this is not possible, each other)	
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
<b>SECONDARY CPD</b>	
<b>Secondary Teacher of School Swimming</b>	
Combined course - 15 hours: pre-course reading and 1 day course. The course includes an Observation of Candidates teaching pupils (or if this is not possible, each other)	
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	Development of water confidence using the core aquatic skills
6	Introduction to the swimming strokes
7	Skills appropriate to those working at the improver and more advanced level (drills)
8	Technical aspects related to the four strokes – i.e. stroke analysis
9	Faults and causes and progressive practices to bring about improvement
10	Key skills for school swimming that meet National Curriculum attainment targets for KS3/4 PE (including Water Polo and Synchronised Swimming)
11	Key considerations when developing a Swimming lesson plan

12	Creation of session plans for the delivery of swimming lessons and delivery of these
13	Key aspects of communication in relation to delivery – feedback, questioning and skill development
14	Reviewing the effectiveness of planning and delivery to improve participant progression
<b>CPD FOR SPECIAL SCHOOLS - Swim Supporting pupils with SEND during School Swimming (5-6 hour course)</b>	
1	Improve understanding of SEND and inclusion in the National Curriculum and Physical Education, specifically Swimming
2	Swimming and Water Safety in the National Curriculum and adaptations where required
3	Identify good practice in health and safety
4	Understand barriers to swimming and Identify strategies to overcome these for pupils with SEND
5	Identify methods of communication and resources to support pupils with SEND
6	Understand fundamental movement skills and core aquatic skills and the links between them
7	How to develop water confidence using core aquatic skills
8	How to introduce the swimming strokes

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).



For details on all of the above courses, or to book a place, please contact BSSP via email - [swimming@ahs.bucks.sch.uk](mailto:swimming@ahs.bucks.sch.uk).



Swim England advise that school staff should refresh or upskill their training within a 5 year period. Please see page 45 for the recommended pathway of training.

# Course Names and Equivalents

Since its release, the National Curriculum Training Programme has undergone progressive change in both content and name. The table below may be helpful to school staff to check existing qualifications:

Date of review	Qualification title		
2008 ↓	ASA Module 1 NCTP	ASA Module 2 NCTP	
2014 ↓	ASA Fundamentals of School Swimming	ASA Aquatic Skills of School Swimming	
2018 ↓	Swim England Support Teacher of School Swimming	Swim England Teacher of School Swimming (Primary or Secondary option)	
2020	Swim England Support Teacher of School Swimming	Swim England Teacher of School Swimming (Primary or Secondary option)	Swim England Supporting pupils with SEND during School Swimming - <b>New Adapted course for Special Schools</b>

**Please note when referring to courses completed by your staff:**

## Done through Swim England

**Level 1 (30 hour course)**

**Level 2 (63 hour course)**

## Done through BSSP

**Stage 1 (8 hour course)** Swim England Support Teacher of School Swimming course (previously Fundamentals of School Swimming).

**Stage 2 (8 hour course + 2 hours pre-course reading)** Swim England Teacher of School Swimming course (previously Aquatic Skills of School Swimming).

# 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 qualifications 2018 (see previous table for equivalents)

School pool (shallower than 1.2m)		
Required Qualification for School Swimming	Who for?	What does this qualify me to do? / Additional Information
<p><b>Minimum</b> Swim England NCTP Support Teacher of School Swimming (6 hour course) delivered by Swim England Licenced BSSP staff.</p> <p><b>Please note: at least one member of staff on poolside will also need to hold the RLSS NRASTC/NRASTC LIGHT supervision and rescue qualification - this may also be one of the holders of Support Teacher of School Swimming (refer to Lifeguarding Qualifications section, p31)</b></p>	<p>At least 2 members of school staff (Teachers, HLTA's +TA's) must hold a current Swim England NCTP Support Teacher of School Swimming Course</p>	<p>This is the minimum requirement for school staff to deliver <u>school</u> based school swimming lessons providing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 2 members of swimming qualified staff are on poolside</li> <li>• The group should be no more than 20 pupils or the maximum bather capacity for the pool (found in NOP)</li> <li>• <b>It is strongly recommended that schools with their own pools also qualify their staff to Teacher of Swimming, which fully completes the Swim England NCTP.</b></li> </ul>
Primary School Staff using a private school pool or leisure provider pool (deeper than 1.2m)		
<p>At least 1 Swim England Level 2 Certificate for Teaching Aquatics or STA Level 2 Certificate in Swimming Teaching</p> <p>They must be <u>supported</u> 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</p> <p><b>(please refer to Lifeguarding Section, page 55. for required lifeguarding qualifications)</b></p>	<p>School or leisure provider staff</p> <p>School staff (teachers, HLTA's + TA's)</p>	<p>Work with an absolute upper limit of 20:1 - see Swim England guidance on ratios for qualified specialist swimming teachers</p> <p>Swim England Support Teacher of School Swimming qualified staff work with a ratio 3:1 pupils working under the guidance of a Level 2 qualified specialist swimming teacher who is working under Swim England recommended ratios (this ratio will be dependent on Risk Assessment; e.g. competency and confidence as agreed by the leisure provider).</p>

**Special School Staff or those working with pupils with additional needs in their own hydrotherapy pool or a leisure provider pool**

<p>At least 1 Swim England Level 2 Certificate for Teaching Aquatics or STA Level 2 Certificate in Swimming Teaching</p> <p>They must be <u>supported</u> by a minimum of 2 members of school staff trained to a minimum level of Support Teacher of School Swimming (6 hour course) <b>or Swim England</b> 'Supporting pupils with SEND during School Swimming' delivered by Swim England Licenced BSSP staff</p> <p><b>(please refer to Lifeguarding Section, page 55 for required lifeguarding qualifications)</b></p>	<p>Qualified school staff or external qualified swimming teachers</p> <p>School staff (teachers, HLTA's + TA's)</p>	<p><b>For qualified swimming teachers: 8:1 with 1:1</b> support in the water where required</p> <p>Ratios for Special Schools will be much lower and Individual Risk Assessments are key in determining these ratios. Where school staff hold either the Support Teacher of School Swimming or Supporting Pupils with SEND during their school swimming a ratio of 3:1 is recommended as a minimum. Support may need to be 1:1.</p>
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**Secondary School PE teachers with a pool (deeper than 1.2m)**

<p>Secondary PE Degree PGCE or Equivalent <b>with:</b></p> <p>Minimum requirement Teacher of School Swimming Secondary Course (15 hour course - pre-reading plus one day course) delivered by Swim England Licenced BSSP staff</p> <p><b>(please refer to Lifeguarding Section, page 55 for required lifeguarding qualifications)</b></p>	<p>Alongside Swim England Level 2 qualified swimming teacher</p> <p>Alongside another Swim England Teacher of School Swimming qualified PE Teacher</p>	<p>Must adhere to Swim England Ratio guidelines i.e. absolute upper limit <b>20:1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 2 qualified members of staff should be on poolside</li> </ul>
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**Considerations - The Risk Assessment is paramount and should be used to determine safe ratios.** Where Primary Schools, using leisure provider pools, qualify their staff in the Swim England Teacher of School Swimming, the ratio moves from 3:1 pupils to 8:1 pupils, still working alongside a Level 2 qualified swimming teacher, who is working under the Swim England recommended ratios.



For course outlines or to book onto courses, please contact Bucks School Swimming Partnership via [swimming@ahs.bucks.sch.uk](mailto:swimming@ahs.bucks.sch.uk) or call the BSSP Team on 01296 388222 extension 421.



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](mailto:swimming@ahs.bucks.sch.uk) to discuss options to ensure the pupils' safety at all times.

## 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	<u>Within 5 Year Renewal Period</u>	<u>Outside 5 Year Renewal Period</u>
<b>Support Teacher of School Swimming</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Progress on to Teacher of School Swimming</li> <li>2. Refresh Support Teacher of School Swimming - attend BSSP Refresher Course (2 hour twilight)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Undertake Support Teacher of School Swimming</li> </ol>
<b>Supporting pupils with SEND during School Swimming</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Progress on to Teacher of School Swimming</li> <li>2. Refresh 'Supporting pupils with SEND during School Swimming' - attend BSSP Refresher Course (2 hour twilight)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Undertake 'Supporting pupils with SEND during School Swimming'</li> <li>2. Undertake Support Teacher of School Swimming</li> </ol>
<b>Teacher of School Swimming</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Refresh Teacher of School Swimming - attend BSSP Refresher Course (2 hour twilight)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Undertake Teacher of School Swimming or Support Teacher of School Swimming to refresh knowledge</li> </ol>



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

**It is the school's responsibility to ensure that lifeguard qualifications are kept up to date.**

Please see section on Lifeguarding page 55 and refer to the RLSS for further information.

# Ratios for Swimming Teachers

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.

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

<p><b>Swimmers with disabilities - each situation must be considered individually.</b> Care must be taken to ensure that there are sufficient helpers in the water to provide a <b>1:1 ratio for those needing constant support</b>, and a sufficient number of other helpers to provide the degree of support required by the range of disabilities within the group.</p>	<p><b>8:1 with 1:1</b> support in the water where required</p>	<p><b>6:1 with 1:1</b> support in the water where required</p>
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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 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

Swim England recommend that school staff holding the Support Teacher of School Swimming work with a maximum of 3 pupils, again dependent on confidence, competence and risk assessments, under the guidance and supervision of the qualified Level 2 Swimming Teacher and within Swim England recommended ratios.

For Teacher of School Swimming qualified school staff, Swim England recommend that school staff work with a maximum of 8 pupils, again dependent on confidence, competence and risk assessments, alongside a qualified Level 2 Swimming Teacher and within the Swim England recommended ratios.



It is strongly recommended that schools with their own pools qualify their staff to Swim England Teacher of School Swimming, which fully completes both parts of the NCTP.

# 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.

Following the Risk Assessment, in a shallow tank pool, a minimum of one member of staff with the RLSS NRASTC/NRASTC LIGHT will be required, whilst in a pool over 1.2M, you must have two. In both cases, you will require staff with appropriate teaching qualifications (refer to above section).

If fully qualified (to Swim England Level 2), in a school pool over 1.2m where the NOP allows, a swimming teacher can also be responsible for lifeguarding/lifesaving if they hold an appropriate lifeguarding qualification, when assisted by an additional qualified person (e.g. Swim England Secondary Teacher of School Swimming) who also holds an appropriate lifeguarding qualification.



**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.**

**AfPE cite: 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

<b>PUBLIC POOL</b>	
<b>Situation</b>	<b>Lifeguarding Qualification Needed (This will usually be provided by the leisure provider)</b>
In a public pool, for <b>structured lessons e.g. School Swimming</b>	RLSS National Pool Lifeguard Qualification (NPLQ) or STA Pool Lifeguard Qualification <b>or</b>  RLSS National Rescue Award for Swimming Teachers and Coaches (NRASTC) <b>or</b>  RLSS National Rescue Award for Swimming Teachers and Coaches LIGHT (NRASTC)
<b>SCHOOL POOL</b>	
In a school pool with <b>deep water (over 1.2m)</b> during a <b>programmed</b> session	<b>Minimum qualification:</b> RLSS National Pool Lifeguard Qualification (NPLQ) <b>or</b>  RLSS Rescue Award for Swimming Teachers and Coaches (NRASTC) or STA Pool Lifeguard <b>or</b>  RLSS National Rescue Award for Swimming Teachers and Coaches LIGHT (NRASTC)
In a school pool with <b>deep water (over 1.2m)</b> during an <b>un-programmed</b> session; <b>(for example, if the pool is hired as an external booking)</b>	<b>Minimum qualification:</b> RLSS National Pool Lifeguard Qualification (NPLQ)
In a school pool with <b>shallow water (less than 1.2m)</b> during a <b>programmed</b> session	RLSS National Pool Lifeguard Qualification (NPLQ) <b>or</b>  RLSS National Rescue Award for Swimming Teachers and Coaches (NRASTC) <b>or</b>  RLSS National Rescue Award for Swimming Teachers and Coaches (NRASTC) LIGHT
In a school pool with <b>shallow water (less than 1.2m)</b> during an <b>un-programmed</b> session <b>(for example, if the pool is hired as an external booking)</b>	<b>Minimum qualification:</b> National Pool Lifeguard Qualification (NPLQ)

In a Special School pool or hydrotherapy pool with **shallow water (less than 1.2m)** during a **programmed** session

RLSS National Pool Lifeguard Qualification (NPLQ) **or**

RLSS Aquatic Therapy Shallow Pool Rescue Award for Swimming (ATSPRA)

### **NRASTC LIGHT**

NRASTC LIGHT is a supervision and rescue award for Swimming Teachers, coaches and/or instructors working during programmed activities, such as swimming lessons when lifeguard or First Aid backup is available to respond quickly in the event of an emergency. First Aid back up should be on poolside at all times.

It is suitable for teachers working in a wide range of swimming pools, including pools where the water is deeper than the teacher's standing depth. This award is only suitable when the facility has staff qualified as lifeguards or First Aiders that are available to respond quickly to a Swimming Teacher or coach in the event of an emergency.

**If lifeguard or First Aid backup is not available on poolside, the standard NRASTC should be used.**



**It is the school's responsibility to ensure that both NRASTC LIGHT and First Aid qualifications are current and in date. If either expire, the NRASTC LIGHT becomes invalid.**



Useful links ▶

For more information, please visit the Bucks School Swimming Partnership website: <https://www.bssp.org.uk/>

**Please note:** The guidance above states the minimum provision required by Buckinghamshire Council and the Bucks School Swimming Partnership. In all circumstances, schools should also refer to the pool's NOP as more advanced qualifications may be needed after a risk assessment.

School staff will be responsible for ensuring that they keep a record of their expiry dates, both individually and in the School Swimming Folder, and must undertake a one day refresher course **prior to expiry of the qualification.**



**Lifeguards will only be able to work in a pool where they are qualified to the pool's maximum depth.**



**Programmed activity is defined as:**

- **With a formal structure,**
- **Disciplined,**
- **Supervised or controlled.**

**UNPROGRAMMED SCHOOL SESSIONS, OWING TO THEIR UNPREDICTABLE NATURE, ARE PROHIBITED FOR SCHOOL SWIMMING.**

### **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. 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.

### **Schools using their own pools:**

A Health and Safety talk and drill should be run with every class (pupils and teachers) at every pool on the first lesson of each programme. 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.

# Diving – Shallow Entry Racing Dives

Diving must only be taught by an appropriately qualified Swimming Teacher with a diving specific qualification. At no point must anyone without this qualification be allowed to teach diving. Please note: **not all Swim England Level 2/STA Level 2** qualifications will include an appropriate qualification to teach diving.



**NB. All qualified Swimming Teachers (from both schools and leisure providers) must check with their qualifying body whether their qualification covers them to deliver diving.**



The definitive guidance document for diving into swimming pools is from the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMPSA) and titled, 'Diving into swimming pools and open water areas'.

Prior to any standing dives being taught from the poolside, pupils should have developed an appropriate level of confidence and competence in aquatic practices in the water and from a sitting or kneeling position on the poolside.

Typical progression from this is for pupils to learn to perform the jumps and simple plunge dives from standing on the poolside. As well as being taught the correct technique, the pupils should also learn when it is appropriate to use the dive.

Where diving forms part or all of a swimming lesson, the pool freeboard (the distance from the poolside to the water surface) should be less than 0.3M with a sufficient **forward clearance** (the horizontal distance at which the minimal depth of water is maintained) typically in excess of 7.5M.

The depth of a dive is affected by:

- the height from which the dive is made - more height can lead to a deeper dive,
- the angle of entry - a steeper entry can lead to a deeper dive,
- flight distance - a short flight can lead to a deeper dive,
- the strength and drive from the diver's legs - a strong dive can result in a deeper dive.

Diving should not be permitted in water less than 1.8m deep and/or with less than 7.6m forward clearance. However, the clearance will vary according to the height and the ability of the person undergoing instruction. Teachers should therefore take into account the clearance required. Staff should ensure dives are executed into the deeper end of the swimming pool as a matter of routine safety. Only shallow entry dives should be permitted.

Diving blocks and stages must conform to FINA/Swim England Regulations.

*Where fitted, diving blocks should always be placed at the deepest end of the swimming pool.*

*Where diving provision is made in a main pool rather than a diving pit, the designated diving area should be clearly defined and other swimmers discouraged or prohibited from entering that area. Pupils should check the diving area is clear before commencing any dive.*

*Good class organisation and discipline are paramount in diving activities. To ensure safe practice, staff and pupils need to be fully aware of the additional safety implications for diving, over and above those for general aquatic activities. These include the following:*

- *divers should not wear goggles,*
- *toes should be curled over the pool edge for each dive,*
- *dives should be performed from a stationary position,*
- *arms should be extended beyond the head, with hands clasped for safe entry,*
- *prolonged underwater swimming after a dive should be discouraged.*

*Pupils should be thoroughly familiar with the water space and environment in which they learn to dive. Diving should never take place in unknown waters.*

*To avoid the risk of collisions during simultaneous dives, there should be:*

- *sufficient pool space,*
- *sufficient forward clearance,*
- *no underwater obstructions,*
- *clearly understood exit routes from the entry area on resurfacing from a dive.*

*Care should be taken with a feet-first entry from a jump as this can cause damage to the ankles, arches of the feet or lower spine if the bottom is struck with force when water is shallow. Safe feet-first entry can be achieved by considering the:*

- *extent of knee bend,*
- *water depth,*
- *freeboard height,*
- *size and weight of the student.*

*Competitive shallow entry dives should be taught in water of no less than 1.8 metres in depth. When pupils have achieved the standard of the Swim England Competitive Start Awards and can execute a competitive shallow dive consistently, they may progress to performing such a dive in water of no less than 0.9 meters in depth.*

*Any student commencing a swimming race with a plunge-dive entry should be checked for their competency to do so safely, especially when the entry is from the starting block. It is not recommended that raised blocks are used for school swimming instruction, unless the school has a very highly developed programme taught by suitably qualified instructors.*

*Vertical poolside dives and diving from a board should not form part of mainstream school swimming.*

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

# School Swimming Galas

Schools involved in School Swimming Gala's should adhere to both AfPE guidance and the following documents:

- *'Risk Management Considerations for Centrally Organised Sports Events'* **Appendix M.**
- *'Considerations for those involved in Primary School Swimming Galas'* **Appendix N.**

These documents include guidance on safety aspects in planning and involvement in the event, including risk assessments. **Appendix O** also contains an example Bucks Swimming Gala Risk Assessment.

## Other Swimming Related Activities

### Triathlon

Triathlon (combining swimming, cycling and running) has grown in popularity in recent years. Pupils can be introduced to the activity through school events, and can compete from as young as eight years old. Refer to the [British Triathlon](#) website for clear rules and regulations to be followed during all three aspects of triathlon.

### Open Water Swimming

Please see Section on Natural Water Bathing / Open Water Swimming see page 77.

# 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.



School staff should wear clothes suitable to the environment, humidity and temperature of the pool and appropriate to the possibility of having to go into the pool to rescue a pupil.

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.



### 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



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

## Pupils' Swimming Attire

Pupils should wear appropriate costumes 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 verrucae.

# 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), or for single short races in galas. 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.

The decision to allow swimming goggles during lessons is down to the school's PE Policy and communication with the School Swimming Provider. Pupils with medical eye conditions may need to be allowed to wear goggles. There may be particular situations, such as in hydrotherapy pools where the higher temperature may affect chemical balance and may cause eye irritation but this should be managed through water treatment strategies rather than recourse to goggles.

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.

Parents are responsible for requesting permission for goggles to be worn and schools are responsible for collecting and recording such requests. **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 e.g. water polo. Goggles must not be worn when learning to dive.** For some swimmers where speed and competence increases, 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. An example letter can be found in [Appendix G](#).



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 County Council. A school using a pool, other than their own, 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.

**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 Asessnet.

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.

## 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 ▶

The NSPCC have produced a Factsheet for Schools titled '[Getting Changed for PE](#)' that includes School Swimming (March 2018).

## 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.*

*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. Trans students should be able to use the facilities of their preferred gender. If a pupil or young person is not comfortable in using these facilities, then an accessible toilet/changing area should be provided.*

*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 RA 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).*

# Conditions of Hire to Outside Organisations

Pool Operators cannot delegate responsibility or accountability, for what happens in their pools. Therefore, if a school pool is hired to an outside organisation, it is the responsibility of the school who will need to ensure that the outside organisation will use the pool in a safe manner. (See [Appendix H1](#)).

*Where a school hire their pool to user groups, those groups become responsible for the safety of participants, except where any injury results from negligence on the part of the employer, for example a failure to maintain the pool to an appropriate standard. The hirer, whether that is the employer or the Governing Board, will also be liable if the hiring agreement states that the premises are safe for a specific purpose that turns out not to be the case.*

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

*Every pool operator is responsible for the health and safety of employees, pool users and other people on the premises. The Health and Safety at Work Act, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations and others place general obligations on pool operators.*

## HSE Health and Safety in Swimming Pools 2018

The school (hirer) will need to set up a contract of hire for the pool user. The responsibility of the pool owner/operator is to ensure that the pool is in a safe condition and fit for purpose and that the hirer acts in a safe and responsible manner. The pool owner/operator may request the hirer's Risk Assessment of their activities with the additional pool safety operating procedure (PSOP) for the activity.

The Health and Safety Executive regulations require that all facilities and managed operations produce a written Risk Assessment. This forms the basis of the written NOP and EAP. Any school hiring another school's pool must understand their role in the EAP. Where 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, including safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults (See [Appendix H3](#)). The mechanism for this is initially the agreement to hire and any conditions of hire imposed by the organisation. Hire conditions will be based on provisions made in the NOP and EAP for the pool.

The agreement to hire should be reviewed at regular intervals - whenever dates and times are confirmed, these should be recorded in a signed agreement between the two parties. **The hirers should also be given an up to date copy of the relevant NOP and EAP for the facility** and any special conditions of hire, which might apply to their session. A qualified RLSS NPLQ, NRASTC or NRASTC LIGHT Qualified Lifeguard must be present **regardless of pool depth. They must be competent and confident in their role and ensure that their training is up to date and renewed regularly for the pool they will be working in.** The following applies:

- a programmed session requires RLSS NPLQ, NRASTC or NRASTC LIGHT qualification (this must be based on risk assessment),
- an un-programmed session requires NPLQ Lifeguard qualification.

## 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,
- the activity for which the pool is to be hired (to inform the Risk Assessment),
- numbers participating,
- age,

- swimming ability,
- specific agreement on the respective responsibilities of the hirer and the pool operator to include:
  - Number of Swimming Teachers and qualifications (certificates should be seen),
  - Number of lifeguards, qualifications and level of provision (again, certificates should be seen),
  - Qualifications of First Aiders (certificates should be seen),
  - School Child Protection Policy,
  - Other staffing and roles,
  - Ratios for programmed and unprogrammed sessions (refer to pool's NOP as un-programmed sessions are often prohibited due to their unpredictable nature. This should certainly be the case for school swimming. In addition, young children require close supervision in the water by an adult; 4 years and under in a ratio of 1:1; 8 years and under in a ratio no more than 2:1).
- details of responsibilities 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),
- the responsibility of the hirer to ensure that safety advice and specific rules for swimmers are enforced,
- a signature from the hirer to confirm that they have received, read and understood the NOP & EAP,
- a protocol for Safeguarding Procedures. All persons working with pupils must have an up to date DBS and this needs to be shown with the hire agreement,
- appropriate third party public liability insurance to the value of £10 million.

An individual form should be completed for each group hiring the pool, as ratios/equipment/ability etc may be different for each.

Where schools do not hire pools but use them on a pay for pupil per head basis, it is recommended that schools put in place a reverse procedure confirming their use to the pool in writing and asking the pool for details of the NOP & EAP, conditions of hire and respective responsibilities.

# 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).

**IMPORTANT  
INFORMATION**

All school pools must be equipped with an effective measure of summoning support in the event of an accident or incident including a backup method, such as landline phone, mobile phones/walkie-talkies (providing strong signals and fully charged).

**Therefore, it is necessary for all schools to complete a thorough risk assessment to find the most appropriate method of raising the alarm for their pool.**

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.

**IMPORTANT  
INFORMATION**

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

# School Pool Management

## Pool Managers

The **Pool Technical Operating Procedure (PTOP)** will specify all the technical issues of the operation of the pool. This will include, but not be restricted to:

- cleaning protocols,
- chemical dosing procedures and levels,
- backwashing protocols,
- emergency actions for chemical spillages and mixes,
- filtration protocols.

Headteachers of schools with pools on their site must attend the course entitled **Swimming Pool Awareness for Headteachers (offered by the PALM Academy and delivered by Carlton Associates Ltd)** - this requires refreshing every 3 years.

It is strongly advised that there are 2 persons qualified to run the pool so there is backup in an emergency and absence.

Persons designated with responsibility for the management of the operation of the pool should be qualified to manage staff involved in operating the pool and should be authorised to control the use of the pool. BC can advise on appropriate courses.

The monitoring of pool plant operation is included in the annual H&S compliance report to the Director of Children's Services. Advice on pool plant operation is available from BC (see Contacts).

Refer to [Part 2](#), **BC Technical Guidance on The Management of Swimming Pools and Swimming Pool Plant on School Sites**.

## Pool Plant Operation

### For school pools:

The person setting up the safe systems of work in the pool should be trained and aware of both pool plant safety and pool operational safety. These functions and body of knowledge may be split between two persons. It is recommended that schools combine the role of Pool Manager and Pool Plant Operator.

### Pool plant operators:

Pool plant operators must attend the PALM Academy Small Pool Operators Certificate (PWTAG accredited pool plant qualification):

<https://www.pwtag.org/pool-training-qualifications/>

This is a two day course covering:

- what the plant operator needs to know to keep the pool water reasonably free from the risk of infection spreading, to
- keeping the water clear so that pool users can be seen under the water, and
- how to operate a simple school pool plant safely and effectively.

This qualification is valid for three years and can be updated by attending a one-day Refresher (or an equivalent qualification that meets the PWTAG training syllabus).

### **In Public pools/Non-school pools:**

Standards should be to the PWTAG Swimming Pool Technical Operator standard, (PALM Academy Swimming Pool Technical Operator Certificate, or equivalent). This qualification has a three year life and can be re-validated by a one day refresher course.

If there is any concern with regard to pool safety (including the clarity and quality of the pool water), schools must report this to the manager of the pool.

Public pools are normally checked by the Local Environmental Health Officers. Pools in private houses are not checked, therefore they are only suitable for domestic use by family and friends and should not be used by schools.

Refer to Part 2, BC Technical Guidance on The Management of Swimming Pools and Swimming Pool Plant on School Sites.

## **Monitoring**



Schools should contact **Carlton Associates Ltd**, prior to opening, to inspect school seasonal pools and hydrotherapy/non-seasonal pools termly. Contact details can be found on page 84.

Aspects for compliance include the following:

- training and competence,
- written safe operating procedures,
- Risk Assessments, including Cryptosporidium (see Appendix W),
- site safety,
- signage,
- chemical safety,
- flow meter and
- water testing regime.

Where fully compliant with BC requirements, the establishment/setting will be given a written report confirming that the pool can be used. This may include recommendations for action. An unsatisfactory report may require a second visit to verify improvements before the pool can be used.

To ensure that pools are being operated correctly, an agreed water quality monitoring and testing regime is organised using a competent contractor, for example Kingfisher.

Microbiological testing is carried out at the following frequencies:

1. non-seasonal pools – every month,
2. seasonal pools – every month during the operating season, with the first being taken prior to opening. Please note that a satisfactory microbiological report must be received before a seasonal pool reopens after the summer holiday period,
3. hydrotherapy pools – weekly testing.

## Pool closures

If, following the issue of any Pool Service Report, the establishment/setting is advised to close the pool based on unsatisfactory water chemistry, the report must be signed on behalf of the establishment/setting by a senior manager acknowledging the need for closure.

The bacteriological samples have to be sent away for analysis; the establishment/setting will be informed immediately of unsatisfactory results by telephone/email and of satisfactory results by post.

Following closure for any reason, it will be the establishment/setting's responsibility to arrange for remedial measures to be taken for further testing and analysis of the pool water chemistry, by a competent contractor and to obtain satisfactory results before the pool can be put back into use. The Health & Safety Team (see Contacts) must be informed of the results. See Part 2, Technical Guidance on the Management of Swimming Pools and Swimming Pool Plant on School Sites, for further information.

## Records

It is important that adequate records are kept of all tests carried out. Records must be kept for a minimum of 5 years.

## Routine Maintenance

Daily running of the pool and related plant will be the responsibility of the Pool Operators. Support is available for Pool Operators from Carlton Associates Ltd and the County Health and Safety Team (see Contacts). These details should be held for routine support and emergency call outs (this service by the PWMC [Pool Water Maintenance Contractor] is one that the school has to pay for directly).

In view of the large variety of equipment installed for the filtration and chlorination of swimming pools, these notes are intended for general guidance only. Pool Operators should refer to manufacturer's instructions for the specific information relative to their particular plant or, if in doubt, should contact PWMC.

Pool Operators should ensure that all safety fittings, such as pool steps, handrails, etc. and also diving boards and other equipment, are secure, in good repair and have non-slip surfaces, and that broken or missing grids to water outlets at the bottom of pools are replaced immediately. Pool surrounds (whatever the surface) should be slip resistant, flat and without any trip hazards to prevent injury to bathers feet. Where there are cracked paving slabs these should be replaced immediately.

## Records – Swimming

Records of all qualifications of those involved in the teaching of school swimming and water safety must be maintained, kept up to date and available for inspection if required.

The person responsible for this is the Teacher in Charge of School Swimming. These records will be kept in the School Swimming Folder and will be looked at as part of the Health and Safety Team Audit programme.

## Accidents, Incidents and Near Misses

Records of incidents and accidents that occur in the swimming pool or pool area must be maintained and be available for inspection if required. An annual review of these records will assist with the review of the risks associated with school swimming and water safety.

# Educational Visits

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 for the management of outdoor learning, off-site visits and learning outside the classroom.](#)

## Lifeguarding Qualifications

The following National Awards/Lifeguarding Qualifications apply:

For free swimming activity:

- a valid RLSS UK National Pool Lifeguard Qualification (NPLQ), or equivalent in the country visited - see **Royal Life Saving Society**

For structured or programmed activity:

- a valid RLSS UK National Pool Lifeguard Qualification (NPLQ), or equivalent in the country visited, see **Royal Life Saving Society** OR
- a valid RLSS UK National Rescue Award for Swimming Teachers and Coaches (NRASTC) or equivalent, see **National Rescue Award for Swimming Teachers Coaches (providing the pool Risk Assessment allows this qualification)** OR
- a valid RLSS UK National Rescue Award for Swimming Teachers and Coaches (NRASTC) LIGHT, see **National Rescue Award for Swimming Teachers Coaches LIGHT (providing the pool Risk Assessment allows this qualification)**.

The role of the Lifeguard is to:

- directly supervise the pool and the pool users, exercising appropriate levels of control. (Note: the lifeguard should remain on the poolside at all times except in the case of an emergency),
- brief pool users in advance regarding rules (e.g. no diving, running, etc.),
- communicate effectively with pool user,
- anticipate problems and prevent accidents,
- intervene to prevent behaviour which is unsafe,
- carry out an emergency rescue if required,
- give immediate first aid to any casualty.

Where there is a very small group (Swim England recommend no more than 6 and even this needs to be risk assessed), all engaged in the same activity, it may be possible to supervise from within the water. In all other cases supervision should be led from the poolside.

Where the pool is deep enough to create any possibility of the need to carry out a 'swimming' rescue of a casualty, it is essential that someone in the group has **assessed current competence** to do this and is designated as lifeguard (current and appropriate qualification). This is likely to be the case where the water depth exceeds 1.5m. Lifeguarding must be that person's sole activity – they must not be involved in the pool activity, or responsible for the wider supervision of anyone not swimming.

The designated lifeguard could be an appropriately qualified young person but in this case, a member of the Visit Leadership Team must retain responsibility for overall supervision at the poolside to guarantee appropriate levels of behaviour.

## Jumping and Diving

Jumping and diving into water creates additional safety and management issues and should be allowed only in the context of a well organised, planned and structured session; risk assessed; appropriately lifeguarded and using staff with appropriate teaching qualifications. Please refer to page 59 Diving – Shallow Entry Racing Dives.

If jumping and diving is allowed, Visit Leaders should comply with any Pool Safety Operating Procedures (PSOP) and pool notices about diving but may need to strengthen these arrangements depending on their group and the risk assessment.

Advice from HSE is that the requirements for allowing shallow diving are:

- 1.5m minimum depth of water,
- 7.6m minimum forward clearance or 'run out',
- 0.38m maximum freeboard (pool surround above water height),
- there must be no swimmers in the area of entry,
- divers should not wear goggles,
- for recreational and un-programmed swimming, only flat racing dives should be permitted (unless in a deep water diving pool),
- divers' footing must be secure at the edge of the pool (standing dives, toes over the edge - not running dives),
- prolonged underwater swimming after a dive is discouraged.

The following types of water entry should be prohibited during a recreational swimming session:

- running dives/jumps,
- backward dives,
- dives without hands in front of head,
- indiscriminate diving,
- somersault entries,
- 'bombing'.

# Natural Water Bathing / Open Water Swimming

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



Please refer to the National Guidance for the Management of Outdoor Learning Offsite Visits and the Learning Outside the Classroom:

- [Natural Water Bathing](#) (please note that some information may be repeated)

For the purpose of this guidance, "Natural Water Bathing" is defined as "swimming or paddling, in a river, canal, sea or lake".

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: Information on the Management of open water swimming events can be found at <https://www.swimming.org/library/213>. As with any activity, the leader must be absolutely clear that there are no significant risks.

**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.**

As with other activities, planning should consider the **SAGE** (Staff, Activity, Group, Environment) variables.

The Visit Leader should 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:

- that the temperature of open water is usually significantly lower than the temperature of a swimming pool,
- that they should proceed and enter the water with caution,
- the boundaries of the area where they are swimming - these are manageable and contained and that they should not venture outside of these,
- 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.

## Staff

There must be sufficient staff to supervise the planned activity, and they must be appropriately competent and qualified to do so. Depending on the nature of the event, this may involve the need for open water qualified lifeguards.

The provision of safety boats, rescue equipment, provision of facilities to treat hypothermia, the presence of emergency services and changing accommodation all need careful consideration.

Appropriate competence means being able to deal with the worst-case scenario in the chosen environment. For example, when paddling or cooling off in contained shallow waters, or at a beach when the sea is calm and there is no risk of anyone getting out of their depth or encountering currents or underwater hazards, this may simply mean being alert and having a suitable first aid qualification. When close to or entering a swiftly flowing stream or river, a leader must have experience and skills in white water safety and rescue.

When it is possible for someone to get out of their depth, then 'in-water' lifesaving skills will be required. In the last two cases, competence should be verified by a relevant qualification, or by evidence of sufficient training and experience assessed by a competent technical adviser.

A leader supervising pupils swimming out of their depth and beyond reach from the bank/shore, will generally need to be a competent qualified life saver, and apply rigorous boundary conditions.



The Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS) has published a National Water Safety Management Programme (NWSMP), which can help leaders to develop the competence they need. Details are available at <https://rlss.org.uk/professional-qualifications/nwsmp/>.

## Activity

Natural Water Bathing can encompass a wide variety of activities, from paddling or sitting chatting in shallow water at the edge of a lake or sea, bodysurfing in the sea in waist/chest-deep water, to swimming well out of one's depth.

Clearly, the risks to be managed will differ across this range of activities, but it is important to recognise that the risks involved in any use of natural water should be carefully assessed.

It can be useful to consider four levels of activity:

1. being by water with no intention of going in, but with the possibility that someone might (either accidentally or intentionally),
2. going into shallow water - paddling, wading etc,
3. going into deep water,
4. water activities such as canoeing or surfing, or diving or jumping into water such as from sea cliffs or in a gorge.

**Level 1** is covered by document 7i "[Group Safety at Water Margins](#)" in this Guidance. Levels 2 and 3 are within the definition of Natural Water Bathing, covered by this guidance.

**Levels 1, 2 and 3** are covered by different modules of the [RLSS National Water Safety Management Programme \(NWSMP\)](#).

**Level 4** activities should be regarded as specialist adventure activities and managed accordingly. Leaders should be assessed as specifically competent to lead these activities. See document 7a "[Adventure Activities](#)". **Parental consent should be obtained for activities in Levels 3 and 4.**

## Group

The activity chosen and the supervision required should be determined by the nature of the group and the individuals within it. Factors include:

- number of participants,
- age and physical ability,
- swimming ability,
- behaviour,
- ability and willingness to understand and follow instructions.

## Environment

Any proposed venue should be thoroughly assessed for suitability and hazards, including:

- availability of any lifeguard service,
- flagged areas for swimming,
- toilet/changing facilities,
- Entry and exit points to and from the water,
- depth, temperature and clarity of the water,
- the nature of the sea/river/lake bed, e.g. weeds, sharp rocks, quicksand, underwater debris, steeply shelving, uneven or unstable,
- the presence of any weirs and associated undertow,
- water quality/pollution,
- prevailing weather conditions,
- wave/surf conditions, including the possibility of dumping waves or undertows,
- any currents, particularly the possibility of tidal or rip currents,
- tides (be aware that depths and related hazards may change quickly as the tide rises or falls),
- lines of sight - can every participant be clearly seen? Can leaders see each other?
- useful markers for designating the limits of the area to be used,
- other water users,
- local advice from, for example, a lifeguard, coastguard, harbourmaster, police or tourist information office,
- other hazards (e.g. country-specific marine hazards such as jellyfish and weaver fish in the UK),
- the quality of the water (extent of pollution).

Any hazards that might affect the activity, and any arrangements put in place to mitigate the risks that they pose, should be communicated clearly to participants and staff as necessary. These might include:

- boundaries,
- specific hazards to avoid,
- clothing to be worn (e.g. footwear; wetsuits),
- equipment to be used (e.g. lifejackets; rescue equipment).

## Managing the activity

*Before allowing anyone to enter the water, precautions should be taken to check:*

- *for easy entry and exit points,*
- *for underwater obstructions,*
- *the depth of the water,*
- *the temperature of the water,*
- *the extent of weed,*

- *the composition of the bottom,*
- *the likelihood of hazardous rubbish,*
- *for any possible effects of currents, tidal flow, wave height or wind-chill factor,*
- *that water traffic is not impinging on safety.*

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

Wherever reasonably practicable, Visit Leaders should seek out recognised bathing areas that have qualified lifeguard cover, flagged swimming areas, etc. Even then, they should be aware that young people might mingle with members of the public and be lost to view. In Natural Water Bathing, young people should always be in sight and within reasonable reach of those supervising them.

It is essential that leaders always know how many young people are in the water and where they are. A number of young people on educational visits have drowned in shallow water because leaders did not keep track of where they were.

Each leader supervising a few pupils will often be more effective than several leaders supervising a larger number. A one-to-one buddy system amongst pupils can be very effective.

Leaders should:

- ascertain the level of the participants' swimming ability, if necessary by asking for them to demonstrate this under close supervision, monitor their ability to cope with the conditions,
- monitor for signs of swimmer fatigue, discomfort or fear,
- ensure the activity is suitable for the group, including any with special needs or disabilities,
- at the venue look out for warning signs or flags: normally a red flag means it is unsafe to swim; yellow flags mean that lifeguards are on patrol in the area between the flags; a black and white flag means it is an area used by surfers and not suitable for swimming. There may also be signs warning of specific hazards,
- brief the group about the limits of the bathing area, ensure pupils remain within the set boundaries,
- consider marking the bathing area themselves, for example with a rope, buoys or improvised flags or markers on the shore,
- adopt and explain signals of communication and recall,
- carry out regular and frequent head counts,
- have clear roles within the supervision plan – at least one supervisor should always stay out of the water for better surveillance, even where lifeguards are on duty,
- take up a best position from which to exercise a constant vigilance,
- divide supervision between staff who are in the water and looking landward towards the group, and staff who stay on land and watch the group from that vantage point,
- give the participants their full, undivided attention,
- be prepared to act immediately if a participant appears to be in difficulties,
- be aware that a participant in difficulty may not wave or shout – all of their energies could be focussed on trying to keep afloat,
- follow the advice or directions of an official lifeguard,
- avoid swimming themselves - unless it is to help a person in distress,
- avoid joining in with the group's water-based games if it will distract from supervising their particular group of pupils (sometimes such activity may actually enhance supervision),
- monitor pupils for signs that they are cold and ensure they leave the water if they display signs they are getting cold, especially if toes and fingers look blue or feel numb (this could suggest the onset of hypothermia); monitor signs of adverse effects caused by sun, wind, tide, sea state, current or weather conditions (wetsuits are highly recommended).



Everyone should know:

- that many young people who drown are strong swimmers,
- that sudden immersion in cold water can be very dangerous.

## Use of throw-lines

Throw-lines in the hands of a trained and competent leader can have a significant impact on reducing the risk of drowning. However, they can create a false sense of security in the hands of someone who is not well practised in their use, and training with this rescue tool needs to be undertaken.

## Water Based Outdoor and Adventure Activities

For all water based outdoor and adventure activities, the following need to be considered for the Risk Assessment:

- at least one member of the party holds a current and relevant lifesaving and first aid certificate
- for specific water based activities; e.g. Canoeing, paddle sports, group leaders should hold a governing body of sport qualification specific to the specific craft and environment
- knowledge of local water conditions (e.g. tide times, effects of wind on tide and sea states; flooding risk)
- accurate weather forecast
- pupils need to be dressed and provided with adequate clothing and equipment including activity specific footwear
- wetsuits, helmets and buoyancy aids should be worn, even in shallow water

For activity specific guidance, refer to each governing body's website see page 83.

## 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.

## 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 <a href="#">Health and Safety Executive (HSE)</a> , or also available to download free from: <a href="http://www.hse.gov.uk">www.hse.gov.uk</a>
2	Swim England <a href="#">Guidelines for School Swimming</a>
3	Swim England Safe Supervision for Teaching and Coaching Swimming - <a href="#">Definition of Supervision</a>
4	Swim England <a href="#">Safe Supervision of Programmed Swimming Sessions 2017</a>
5	The Association for Physical Education, Safe Practice in Physical Education and Sport. 10th ed. 2020: Association for Physical Education; ISBN: <a href="#">978-1-909012-47-9</a>
6	The Association for Physical Education, Safe Practice in Physical Education and Sport. 9th ed. 2016: Association for Physical Education; ISBN: 978-1-909012-35-6 (superseded above)

## Organisations

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

## Governing Bodies for Specific Water Based Outdoor and Adventure Activities

1	<a href="#">British Canoeing</a>
2	<a href="#">British Caving Association</a>
3	<a href="#">British Mountaineering Council</a>
4	<a href="#">British Rowing</a>
5	<a href="#">Canoe Wales</a>
6	<a href="#">HSE AALA (2015) "Coasteering" (Note 6.20)</a>
7	<a href="#">HSE AALA (2016) "Combined Water Rock Activities - A Safety Checklist" (Note 6.06)</a>
8	<a href="#">International Coasteering Federation</a>
9	<a href="#">National School Sailing Association</a>
10	<a href="#">Rafting: OEAP</a> ; HSE/AALA (2015) " <a href="#">Improvised Raft Building</a> " (Note 6.08); RYA: <a href="http://rya.org.uk">rya.org.uk</a>
11	<a href="#">Royal Yachting Association</a> (RYA)
12	<a href="#">RYA Scotland</a>
13	<a href="#">RYA Windsurfing</a>
14	<a href="#">Scottish Canoe Association</a>
15	<a href="#">Surfing GB</a>
16	<a href="#">Surf Life Saving Association of Great Britain</a>
17	<a href="#">Welsh Yachting Association</a>

## For further Information and Advice:

Specialist	Email and/or web addresses	
Zoe Coll BC & BSSP Adviser & Swim England Licensed Tutor	<a href="mailto:zcoll@ahs.bucks.sch.uk">zcoll@ahs.bucks.sch.uk</a>	01296 388222
Allison Holley BSSP Administrator	<a href="mailto:swimming@ahs.bucks.sch.uk">swimming@ahs.bucks.sch.uk</a>	01296 388222
BC Education Safeguarding Advisory Service	<a href="mailto:secure-esasduty@buckinghamshire.gov.uk">secure-esasduty@buckinghamshire.gov.uk</a>	01296 387981
Biological Monitoring Kingfisher Environmental	<a href="mailto:Info@kingfisher-es.co.uk">Info@kingfisher-es.co.uk</a>	01920 871700
Herts Handling Training Ltd – Manual Handling Training for pupils with disabilities	<a href="mailto:info@hertshandling.co.uk">info@hertshandling.co.uk</a>	01582 730701
Mike Harwin BC Outdoor Education Adviser	<a href="mailto:mike.harwin@buckinghamshire.gov.uk">mike.harwin@buckinghamshire.gov.uk</a>	07890 395028
Mike Shuff, Director Training Pool Plant Management Carlton Associates Ltd	<a href="mailto:enquiries@carltonassociates.co.uk">enquiries@carltonassociates.co.uk</a>	0121 706 0084 07710 206945
Katie Towner Head of Learn to Swim Swim England	<a href="mailto:katie.towner@swimming.org">katie.towner@swimming.org</a>	01509 618700

# Appendices

**Appendices marked <sup>(1)</sup> relate particularly to Part 1: Bucks Safe Practice in School Swimming Policy**

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

<b>Appendix A</b>	Model Risk Assessment for a Public Pool <sup>(1)</sup>
<b>Appendix B</b>	Model Risk Assessment for Indoor School Pools <sup>(1/2)</sup>
<b>Appendix C</b>	Model Risk Assessment for Outdoor School Pools <sup>(1/2)</sup>
<b>Appendix D</b>	Model Normal Operating Procedure (NOP) <sup>(1/2)</sup>
<b>Appendix E</b>	Model Emergency Action Plan (EAP) <sup>(1/2)</sup>
<b>Appendix F1</b>	Changing Rooms for School Swimming – Guidance Notes March 2019 <sup>(1)</sup>
<b>Appendix F2</b>	AfPE Changing Areas in PE <sup>(1)</sup>
<b>Appendix F3</b>	NSPCC Getting Changed for PE <sup>(1)</sup>
<b>Appendix G</b>	Example Goggles letter from school to parents <sup>(1)</sup>
<b>Appendix H1</b>	Condition for the Hire of School Pools <sup>(1/2)</sup>
<b>Appendix H2</b>	Application for Hire of School Pools <sup>(1/2)</sup>
<b>Appendix H3</b>	Additional Requirements for Hire by Vulnerable Groups <sup>(1/2)</sup>
<b>Appendix I</b>	Governor Checklist (sent out every two years) <sup>(1)</sup>
<b>Appendix J</b>	Example School Accident Report Form <sup>(1)</sup>
<b>Appendix K</b>	Improving Participation of Muslim Girls in Physical Education and School Sport; Shared Practical Guidance from Birmingham Schools 2008 <sup>(1)</sup>
<b>Appendix L</b>	Comment on Meeting the Needs of Muslim pupils in state schools: Information and Guidance for Schools, AfPE <sup>(1)</sup>
<b>Appendix M</b>	Risk Management Considerations for Centrally Organised Events <sup>(1)</sup>
<b>Appendix N</b>	Consideration for those Involved in Primary School Swimming Galas <sup>(1)</sup>
<b>Appendix O</b>	Example Risk Assessment for Swimming Galas <sup>(1)</sup>
<b>Appendix P</b>	Model Chemical Spillage Procedures <sup>(2)</sup>
<b>Appendix Q</b>	Pool Water Log Sheet <sup>(2)</sup>
<b>Appendix R</b>	Model Operating Instructions for a Trichlorinator <sup>(2)</sup>
<b>Appendix S</b>	Health Protection Agency Pool Investigation Checklist <sup>(2)</sup>
<b>Appendix T</b>	Induction Training Grid for Public and School Pools <sup>(1)</sup>
<b>Appendix U</b>	Pre-commissioning and Decommissioning Procedures and Winter Maintenance <sup>(2)</sup>

<b>Appendix V</b>	Swimming Pool Contractors and Equipment Suppliers <sup>(2)</sup>
<b>Appendix W</b>	Generic Cryptosporidium Risk Assessment <sup>(2)</sup>
<b>Appendix X</b>	Swimming Class Register including information on pupils with medical conditions and/additional needs; Information for leisure providers <sup>(1)</sup>
<b>Appendix Y</b>	Waterborne Infections
<b>Appendix Z1</b>	Partnership Agreement <sup>(1)</sup>
<b>Appendix Z2</b>	Partnership Agreement (Letter to Parents) <sup>(1)</sup>
<b>Appendix Z3</b>	Parental School Swimming Information Form <sup>(1)</sup>