



HEALTH & SAFETY

SWIMMING ARRANGEMENTS FOR LESSONS UNDER THE CONTROL OF TALBOT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introductions

This document sets out the duties of care during swimming lessons and extra-curricular sessions run by our school. These are work activities and within the scope of the Health and Safety Work Act 1974

Required documentation – Any school involved in the delivery of swimming must have written or be provided with three key documents:

- a. A Pool Safe Operating Procedure(PSOP)
- b. An Emergency Action Plan (EAP).
- c. A Risk Assessment for swimming.

A risk assessment must be carried out by the school in all cases even if they use another pool and employ coaches to deliver the swimming as it is the school that has a duty of care.

1. Pool Safe Operating Procedures (PSOP)

The school has an operating plan (PSOP) on how it intends to achieve compliance with relevant legislation and Codes of Safe Working Practice.

The (PSOP) covers:

- a. Details of the pool: dimensions and depth, features and equipment and a plan of the building. The plan of the building may include positions of pool alarms, fire alarms, emergency exit routes and any other relevant information.
- b. Potential risk: an appreciation of the main hazards and of users particularly at risk is required before safe operating procedures can be identified.
- c. Dealing with the public: arrangements for communicating safety messages to customers, customer care, poolside rules for the public and for lifeguards, controlling access.
- d. Lifeguards' duties and responsibilities and special supervision requirements for equipment, etc. lifeguard training; and numbers of lifeguards for particular activities.

- e. Systems of work: including lines of supervision and call-out procedures.
- f. Operational systems: controlling access to a pool intended to be out of use including the safe use of pool covers.
- g. Detailed work instructions: including pool cleaning procedures, safe setting up and checking of equipment, diving procedures and setting up of pool galas.
- h. First-aid supplies and training: including equipment required, its location, arrangements for checking it, first aiders, first-aid training and disposal of sharp objects.
- i. Details of alarm systems and any emergency equipment, maintenance arrangements: all alarm systems, and emergency equipment provided, including operation, location, action to be taken on hearing the alarm, testing arrangements and maintenance.
- j. Conditions of hire to outside organisations. (See point 13 for a checklist).

2. Emergency Action Plan

The Emergency Action Plan should cover the action to be taken in the event of an emergency, including who needs to do what when. For example, in the event of a pupil going unconscious in the water who affects the rescue? Who evacuates the rest of the swimmers? Who sends for the ambulance? etc. Consideration should be given to action to be taken in the event of a foreseeable emergency, for example:

- a. overcrowding
- b. disorderly behaviour (including violence to staff)
- c. lack of water clarity
- d. outbreak of fire (or sounding of the alarm to evacuate the building)
- e. bomb threat
- f. lighting failure
- g. emission of toxic gases
- h. serious injury to a bather
- i. discovery of a casualty in the water

The procedure should make it clear, if it becomes necessary, how to clear the water or evacuate the building. Just as fire drills are routinely practiced so should pool evacuations be practiced ensuring everyone is familiar with the safety protocols.

To ensure the effectiveness of emergency procedures, management should ensure

- a. all staff are adequately trained in such procedures

- b.** notices are displayed to advise the general public of the arrangements
- c.** exit doors, signs, firefighting equipment and break glass call points where provided, should be checked regularly to ensure they are kept free from obstruction
- d.** all fire exit doors are operable without the aid of a key at all times the premises are occupied.

3. Risk Assessment for Bathing Activities

(Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1992 reg 3).

A risk assessment should cover the following areas:

a. Hazards

- Drowning;
- Inadequate or inappropriate supervision;
- Prior health problems (e.g. heart trouble, impaired hearing or sight, epilepsy)
- Alcohol or food before swimming;
- Youth and inexperience (half of those who drown are under the age of 15);
- Weak or non-swimmers straying out of their depth;
- Unauthorised access to pools intended to be out of use;
- Diving into insufficient depth of water (leading to concussion, or injury to head or spine);
- Unruly behaviour and misuse of equipment;
- Unclear pool water, preventing casualties from being seen;
- Absence of, or inadequate response by, lifeguards in an emergency.

b. Who might be harmed

- Persons using the pool and pupils/students participating in swimming lessons and staff.

c. Is risk adequately controlled in the following areas:

- Supervision of lessons by trained adult supervisors
- Necessary training for adult supervisors
- Abilities of trained adult supervisors to enter water to effect rescue
- Swimmers with known medical conditions, including epilepsy, to be under direct supervision
- Prohibition of unsupervised swimming
- Prohibition of diving except as given.

d. Further action necessary

Distribution of the arrangements to all education establishments and managers of joint user pools.

4. Responsibilities

There is broadly a distinction between:

(1) care during the conduct of the lesson, including poolside supervision. This remains at all times with teaching staff controlling the lesson, and;

(2) the duty to provide a safe pool environment and water condition, which lies with the pool operator. This is the school's responsibility as it is our pool (or another school if they use the pool of another school), or outside agency.

These responsibilities need to be properly recognised where schools use pools provided under Joint Use Agreements. In these instances, teaching staff are responsible for their pupils at all times and they are responsible for seeing that adequate pool side supervision (life guards) is provided for the lesson.

5. Qualifications of Teacher and Adult Supervisors

1. It is recommended that the teacher responsible for swimming holds the Amateur Swimming Association Teacher's Certificate or the County Swimming Certificate.

2. At all times one adult, trained to the required lifesaving standard, must be present on the poolside who is responsible for poolside supervision. (See next section).

3. For non-curriculum use (Community Use) the minimum standard is a qualified lifeguard who has a valid "Pool Lifeguard" Certificate (see point 2 c. below). They must also have a thorough knowledge of the Pool Safety Operating Procedure for that pool.

6. Poolside Supervision

Please see separate PSOP for the minimum standard of competent poolside supervision.

1. The absolute maximum ratio of swimmers per adult supervisor is 20:1. Larger groups must have additional adult supervisors present on the poolside e.g. 21 pupils require 2 adults. However, the ratio of adults to pupils may need to be higher depending on the age and ability of the pupils and where beginners are involved 12:1 is recommended as the maximum ratio.

Where other helpers are used in the water by the teacher in charge, for example to give tuition or assist non swimmers, then they must be additional to the adult trained supervisor(s) i.e. they do not count towards the adult: pupil ratio.

2. The teacher in charge of the lesson must be able to account for all swimmers, for example by making a head count immediately before and after the lesson. They must also check the pool bottom before leaving the poolside.

3. All adult supervisors must know any 'in-house' procedures or restrictions in effect for the pool they use, i.e. the PSOP and EAP and know: -

- location of nearest available telephone
- identity of trained first aiders
- location of first aid box, resuscitation aids
- location of rescue aids, ropes, poles, buoyancy aids.

4. Teachers remain responsible for their charges at all times, including when they are in the changing room.

5. Unsupervised swimming, that is swimming when no lifeguards are present, is not to be allowed, whether for pupils or staff.

6. Where pools are 1m deep or less and have a surface area of 170 sq. m. or less, the person supervising does not require a valid lifeguard qualification although it is strongly recommended. They must however be able to carry out CPR if required.

7. Instruction for pupils and their behaviour

1. The class should know any emergency signal and have practiced the action they are to take e.g. use of whistle (or other signal provided at the pool) to clear the pool;

2. The recognised use of whistles at Talbot's pool is as follows:

- one whistle - stop and listen
- two whistles - climb out of the pool and sit on the side of the pool by the patio door.
- three whistles – FIRE (exit the building as instructed by staff by nearest fire exit)

3. Pupils should know that they are to obey instructions given to them by supervising adults, and how to react on emergency instructions. Warnings against running or other irresponsible behaviour should be given and repeated as needed.

8. Diving

Diving is forbidden at the Talbot Primary School pool.

9. Medical Considerations

Epilepsy

1. Particular care should be exercised in the case of known sufferers.

2. The prior written permission of parents should be sought.

3. They should stay in shallow water unless working with a strong swimmer who can hold their head above water if a fit occurs. An adult supervisor should keep the pupil under continuous observation.

Individual Disabled Pupils and any with Medical Conditions

1. Disabled is not a precise term. Any person who needs more supervision than that provided in a normal lesson must be individually considered. For example, those with conditions such as epilepsy, asthma, heart condition, diabetes, physical handicap or severely disturbed children.

2. In swimming lessons for disabled pupils the normal practice is for trained helpers to be in the water with the pupils on a 1:1 ratio where possible. The teacher responsible for the teaching of swimming can then direct activities from the poolside.

3. Should any lack of help or other special circumstances make it necessary for the teacher to be in the water with the pupil then there must be a trained person supervising on the poolside who is capable of assisting any person who may get into difficulty in the water.

4. Further guidance on a range of medical issues is given in “Safe Practice in PE” by BAALPE.

10. School Pools

School pools will be maintained in good order and all defects must be reported to the Site Manager as soon as is practicable.

1. Headteachers should ensure that the following items of equipment are always available to persons using the pool:

- (i) A variety of reaching aids e.g. reaching poles including one long safety pole;
- (ii) at least one rope with buoyancy aids attached, e.g. one or two inflated rubber rings;
- (iii) a properly stocked first aid box;
- (iv) an adequate supply of teaching aids (buoyancy aids);
- (v) dividing ropes to retain groups of children in depth suitable to their swimming ability.

A school telephone, or mobile phone must be accessible when the pool is being used.

2. In pools where the depth of water varies this should be clearly indicated and children made aware of the varying depths.

3. When not in use all access doors, gates and windows affording entrance should be securely locked.

11. THE LESSON – ORGANISATION AND PRECAUTIONS

Changing for swimming should be supervised so that it is orderly, and children should be taught to arrange their clothes tidily so that they do not fall onto a wet floor. The teacher should ensure that children remove all forms of jewellery (rings, St Christopher’s, name discs, etc).

Before entering the pool-side children should be taught a routine of using: -

- (a) their handkerchiefs/tissues
- (b) the wc
- (c) the shower (where available)

Children with open sores or foot infections of any kind should be excluded from the swimming lesson. This requires an inspection before the lesson begins. Any swimmer with verrucae, in whatever stage of treatment, must have the verrucae effectively covered. Treatment is not considered effective until the part affected is completely free of all traces of the plantar wart.

On the poolside clean suitable footwear should be worn – or none at all.

It is the teacher’s responsibility to ensure that children: -

- (a) WALK not run on wet surfaces (they are slippery and it is not worth risking a cracked skull);
- (b) ENTER the water only when told;
- (c) LEAVE the water when told;
- (d) are under such control that any possibility of horse-play is obviated;
- (e) OBSERVE and OBEY signals and instructions immediately. (If a whistle is used it should be used very infrequently – the voice and hand movements are far more effective in obtaining attention and control in normal teaching situations.)

The teacher should also develop the habit of taking the following precautionary measures:-

- (a) count the number of pupils before they enter the water;
- (b) continually examine the pool bottom when the pupils are in the water;
- (c) count the number of pupils after they have left the water at the end of the lesson;
- (d) check the pool bottom when the class has left the water.

At the appropriate stages of “learning to swim” the teacher must ensure that the children are taught and given ample practice in the following elements of personal safety of watermanship: -

- (a) regaining a standing position in shallow water from both prone and supine positions;
- (b) floating in various positions;
- (c) turning from front to back in various ways;
- (d) treading water;
- (e) safe methods of entry into shallow water and water of unknown depths;
- (f) any method of using the limbs to produce movement in the water.

Simple life-saving practices could be taught to the more competent swimmers.

12. Use of school pool by other groups

Groups, e.g. staff, using the pool on a private basis outside normal school hours or during the holidays are responsible for the safety of all persons authorised and un-authorised who may be using the pool while the pool is in their charge. It would therefore be prudent for staff to ensure that all necessary precautions are taken, e.g. compliance with current codes of safe working practice, to ensure the safety of all those persons who may use the pool while they – the other swimming school are in charge. They should therefore ensure that poolside supervisors and persons in charge of water quality are suitably qualified.

The school is responsible for the safety of the structure of the pool and its immediate surroundings. They will not be responsible for the water quality or levels of supervision required by the current Code of Safe Working Practice relating to Safety in Swimming Pools.

13. Hire of pool to outside organisations:

A checklist of points for inclusion in contracts

The formal hire of the school pool to outside organisations should be by contract, the details of which should include the following:

- a. Information on number participating and their swimming skills

- b.** Name, address and telephone number of hirer's representative(s) who will be in charge of the group.
- c.** Numbers and skills / qualifications of lifeguards to be present during the session; and whether these will be provided by the hirer or by the pool operator (the school)
- d.** Hirer to be given copies of normal and emergency operating procedures, and to sign to the effect that these have been read and understood.
- e.** Specific agreement on the respective responsibilities of the pool operator and the hirer for action in any emergency. A distinction needs to be drawn between:
 - 1.** emergencies arising from the activities of the group using the pool;
 - 2.** other emergencies (structural or power failure)
- f.** Any rules of behaviour to be enforced during the session.
- g.** Any advice on safety to be given to participants, e.g. on avoiding alcohol and food immediately before swimming.

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