

School Swimming and Water Safety Guidance



1.0 INTRODUCTION

The government has included swimming and water safety in the national curriculum. This short guide is intended to support Oldham schools in the safe delivery of their School Swimming and water safety provision whether at a school pool, hydrotherapy pool, public pool or during school visits. It aims to keep everyone involved in School Swimming safe. It outlines requirements and signposts to the latest national guidance in relation to School Swimming and Water Safety lessons, swimming pool safety, and educational visits, which may include water-based activities.

1.1 Schools Swimming Service

The Oldham School Swimming Service offers dedicated swimming and aquatic activities as part of the National Curriculum and beyond. The service can provide guidance and support to schools so they can review their own practice and make informed decisions regarding the planning and implementation of their own School Swimming provision.

Oldham School Swimming Service also provides additional guidance around safeguarding which this document does not cover. For further information please contact Kim Humphrys on kim.humphrys@oldham.gov.uk, or katharine.harrison@oldham.gov.uk

1.2 Safety Guidance

Comprehensive guidance and advice around swimming and pool safety is available in '**Safe Practice in Physical Education, School Sport & Physical Activity**' published by the Association of Physical Education (formally BAALPE). All schools should hold a copy of this guidance which is available at: <https://www.afpe.org.uk/physical-education/safe-practice-in-physical-education-school-sport-physical-activity-2016/>

Swim England has also developed a '**Curriculum Swimming and Water Safety Resource Pack**' for all those involved in the delivery of curriculum swimming and water safety. This is available at: <https://www.swimming.org/schools/resource-pack/>

It is strongly recommended all schools follow the above guidance when considering the risks in delivering swimming activities.

1.3 School Owned Swimming Pools

Schools that have swimming pools should follow guidance on managing and operating swimming pools produced by the Health and Safety Executive. '**Health and safety in swimming pools HSG179**'. This is available at: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg179.htm>

Swimming pools in Oldham, which classes of pupils can attend, are located at: Oldham Leisure Centre, Chadderton Wellbeing Centre, Failsworth Sports Centre, Royton Leisure Centre and Saddleworth Pool & Leisure Centre.

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 range of aquatic opportunities, which meet the needs of all pupils.

2.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Employer

Staff and pupils should be safe in school and when undertaking out of school activities. The risk management to keep them safe should be proportionate to the nature of the activities. The employer is ultimately responsible for the health and safety of school staff and pupils (Oldham Council in all community schools, the Governing Body in foundation and voluntary aided schools and The Academy Trust in academy schools). The responsibility for day-to-day running of the school is delegated to the headteacher and governing body. In most cases, they are responsible for ensuring that risks are managed effectively - this includes curriculum associated risks, such as those risks arising from swimming.

2.2 The Governing Body and Headteacher

The governing body and headteacher should ensure there is a 'Swimming and Water Safety Policy' in place and a nominated member of staff is delegated the responsibility of 'Teacher in Charge of School Swimming and Water Safety'. An example policy can be found at Appendix A. The headteacher must ensure the swimming pool safety policy and procedures in the school are followed. This incorporates the proper operation of the school's own swimming facility or use of a third-party pool. Governors and headteachers 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 – An example risk assessment can be found at Appendix B. This should be regularly reviewed and kept in the School Swimming folder (with copy held centrally by Headteacher),
- Ensuring a current Normal Operating Procedure (NOP) and Emergency Action Plan (EAP) is in place for the pool to be used for School Swimming.
- Ensuring all staff accompanying pupils to School Swimming have read and understood the current Normal Operating Procedure (NOP) and Emergency Action Plan (EAP) for the relevant pool.
- 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
- 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 School Swimming folder)
- Keeping current copies of the 'Conditions of Hire' and Leisure Provider Insurance details within the School Swimming folder

2.3 Teacher in Charge of School Swimming and Water Safety

- Maintain School Swimming folder (see Governor and Headteachers section above),
- Visit the pool before swimming programme commences to understand all relevant NOP/EAP aspects and to risk assess and plan programme with the Specialist Swimming Teacher,
- Obtain written information on pupils with medical conditions and/or additional needs and share with 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 e.g. Swimming Class Registers & Student Information, including information on pupils with medical conditions and/or additional needs.

2.4 Accompanying School Staff

School staff have overall duty of care that applies for any activity in which children 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:

- 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 children are appropriately supervised when changing,
- ensure children are under control at all times,
- take head counts before, during and after sessions. This should be recorded in the swimming registers,
- enforce the NOP and EAP; all staff on poolside should be aware of the emergency procedures of any external provision, ensuring that children are aware of what to do in the event of an emergency evacuation,
- **remain on poolside to provide an assisting role to support the School Swimming Lesson (they must have undergone a minimum of a reach and rescue training course)**
- hold responsibility for reporting on the progress of School Swimming (through ongoing monitoring and guidance from Leisure Provider staff). Identify those pupils unlikely to meet the minimum requirements for National Curriculum Swimming,
- 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.

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

- 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 Aquatics Teachers may be employed to assist with the teaching of the lesson, but it is essential the school staff remain on poolside.

Specialist Aquatics 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 (with guidance from the Specialist Swimming Teacher), 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.

Staff should have the opportunity to express a lack of confidence or ability before being deployed in a poolside role. Staff should not be deployed in a poolside role however if they:

- Lack confidence in the role,
- Cannot swim,
- Are reticent about being on poolside.

2.5 The Specialist Swimming Teacher (e.g. Oldham Council / Leisure Provider Swimming Teachers)

(e.g. ASA/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 children swimming,
- 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 children in their class, risk assessing these within the context of the swimming environment,
- Ensure the safe conduct of the class whilst the children are in the water and on the poolside,
- Enable children 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,
- 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,
- Be able to organise a number of other staff (pool staff or School Swimming staff) so that the teaching groups are a 'best fit' for the standards and ability stages of the students,
- If in a leisure centre, liaise with the lifeguards and pool centre staff concerning the School Swimming session.

3.0 RISK MANAGEMENT

Schools providing swimming activities have a statutory duty to manage the risks. This would fall into two categories:

1. Providing swimming lessons/facilities – selection and use of an appropriate provider and use of competent staff
2. Operating a swimming pool – correct procedures to ensure water quality and safe operation

In both instances, the aim is to manage the risks to employees, pupils and others who may be affected by your activities (providing swimming). For swimming pool operators, this would include contractors, visitors and even trespassers.

In both instances a risk assessment must be in place. Trips to swimming pools must be planned in accordance with your school's arrangements for off-site visits. Special attention should be given to short notice trips, such as end of term reward trips. Schools are encouraged to take advantage of the opportunity to go swimming but suitable and sufficient risk assessment and proper arrangements during the trip (by school staff and the pool operator) must not be overlooked in the planning stages. An example risk assessment can be found at Appendix B

For swimming pool operator's comprehensive information on managing the operation of pools, HSG170 Managing health and safety in swimming pools, should be used. This document is available as a free download from the Health and Safety Executive and can be found here: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg179.htm>

All UK pool operators are also strongly advised to follow The Pool Water Treatment Advisory Group (PWTAG) Code of Practice. This provides pool operators with a structured plan for the technical operation of their pool. The code ensures that the technical operation of a pool meets quality standards that provide a healthy experience for swimmers using recognised and established practices, techniques, engineering and design. The code of practice can be downloaded for free here: <https://www.pwtag.org/code-of-practice/>

4.0 CLASS SIZES AND PUPIL /TEACHER RATIOS

The Association for Physical Education (afPE), maintains that staff to pupil ratios for any PE or sport activities, including Swimming, should be decided by risk assessment specific to the make-up and needs of a group, and the items identified in the Normal Operating Procedures (NOP) of the pool. This is unless the guidance is superseded by local policy and procedure from local authorities, governors or academy sponsors.

Schools where Oldham Council is the employer, (this includes; Community Schools, Community Special Schools, Voluntary Controlled Schools, Maintained Nursery Schools, Pupil Referral Units), must follow the below guidelines set out by the School Swimming Service – See 4.1 below. Academy Schools, Independent or Voluntary Aided schools can follow this guidance but should also check with their employer. Further guidance on ratios can be found at Appendix B.

4.1 Oldham Council Guidelines

KS1 – the maximum number of pupils per session should not exceed 30 with a minimum of 2 school staff assisting on poolside.

KS2 and above – the maximum number of pupils per session should not exceed 35 with a minimum of 2 school staff assisting on poolside.

Where children require 1:1 supervision due to a medical/physical condition, this must be carried out by an additional member of staff

N.B. Where there is only one member of staff assisting on the poolside, then the maximum number of pupils per lesson must be reduced to 20 (KS1) and 25 (KS2 and above).

Schools with pools should take specific advice from the School Swimming service on class sizes, bearing in mind the design, size, pupil ability and needs, together with other poolside considerations such as lifeguard provision.

Where swimming teachers are provided by Oldham Council, they oversee the session and have responsibility for the swimming lesson. Class teachers/school staff members must always accompany their pupils on the pool side, their role is to supervise any non-swimming activity and ensure pupil safety in emergency situations. The school staff member should therefore be fully aware of emergency procedures at that pool area.

In public pools, where this is managed by Oldham Community Leisure (OCL), lifeguarding duties are only carried out by OCL personnel when other members of the public are in the pool.

5.0 QUALIFICATIONS

Any swimming teacher provided by Oldham Council must hold a S.T.A Pool Lifeguard qualification (this is the minimum life-saving and resuscitation qualification required). They must also be assisted by the class teacher/school staff member (with or without a life-saving qualification).

At no time should pupils be allowed in the water without a qualified life-saver being present. If, for any reason, this person should have to leave the pool side, pupils must not remain in the water. Irrespective of the number of teachers in the water, there must always be at least one adult on the pool side.

All school staff/volunteers who assist on poolside are required to complete a 'Reach and

Rescue' course. The aim of the course is to ensure school staff are able to recognise potential emergency situations and to react appropriately in the initial stages. Attendees will not be expected to take on the role of lifeguard or carry out rescues in the water.

The swimming service operates a number of these courses throughout the year. For further details contact Kim Humphrys on 0161 770 4051 or kim.humphrys@oldham.gov.uk

5.0 MEDICAL CONDITIONS AND DISABILITIES/SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

It is essential that all staff concerned, including the Specialist Swimming Teacher, are fully aware of the pupils' disabilities and their needs to ensure an effective, safe programme is implemented. In some cases it may be necessary to seek medical approval before a child attends swimming lessons. School staff should ensure that all relevant details are recorded on the register at the pool

Where a child has severe or multiple disabilities, the Headteacher should consult with the Specialist Swimming Teacher prior to the lessons to discuss any special requirements regarding transport and accessibility at the pool.

The pupil/teacher ratio may need to be adjusted where a child with a severe disability is included in the mainstream class. Whilst it is recognised that it may be necessary for members of staff to support and assist these children in the water, it is essential that at least two members of staff remain on poolside throughout the lesson to support the swimming teacher.

Where there are a large number of children with disabilities/special educational needs the class size may need to be reduced and/or ratio of staff to pupils increased.

Pupils suffering from epilepsy will require an additional responsible adult acting as a spotter on the poolside or supporting them in the water if necessary. The spotter should not be asked to undertake additional tasks during the session. Pupils with epilepsy should not swim underwater or dive. Shimmering water or flickering light may trigger an attack and careful consideration should therefore be given to the wearing of distinctive coloured caps for ease of identification whilst in the swimming situation.

Inhalers should also be taken to the pool for all children requiring them.

6.0 SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Supervision

The swimming teacher and school staff member should always be able to see every pupil. Where pools have a large expanse of water surface, glare may be a problem and should be considered. The pool side staff should make sure they are able to see the bottom of the pool and from their vantage point, staff should be able to direct any rescue procedure. The pool side adult should only enter the water in an emergency, as in doing so, there is no adult to control the children from the pool side.

It is useful to encourage pupils to know when and how to communicate to the school staff member at poolside when things go wrong. Safety precautions should include a warning by whistle to effect emergency clearance of the pool. The pupils should be asked on occasion to demonstrate that they fully understand the emergency procedures.

Counting the pupils before and after a lesson is essential. Any Schools that operate a pool onsite must ensure access to the pool when not in use is restricted. A thorough search of the pool and changing areas prior to locking the doors should be completed after every swimming session.

Adequate life-saving equipment, buoyancy aids and first aid equipment, must be immediately

available in the pool area. Shallow and deep water should be clearly indicated on the pool side walls and teachers/staff members should explain their significance, especially to beginners. Pupils should not be allowed to run on the pool surrounds.

6.2 Emergency Procedures

In the event of an emergency, it is necessary for all teachers/school staff members involved with swimming supervision to have knowledge of the following:

- location of the drown alarm where fitted;
- the procedure for raising an alarm to summon assistance (including an ambulance);
- location of the life-saving pole and knowledge of how to use it effectively to assist a pupil in difficulty; and
- whilst the swimming teacher is dealing with a child in difficulty, the school staff member should undertake the evacuation of the pool before providing additional assistance to the swimming teacher when required.

The Specialist Swimming Teacher / swimming staff member with a life-saving qualification will have additional knowledge of resuscitation and rescue technique and should take charge of the situation.

In order that safety arrangements during swimming lessons are clearly understood, you must ensure that all members of staff who accompany pupils to swimming pools are familiar with these measures. It is recommended at the commencement of each academic year every group of pupils must be taken through the emergency procedures.

When swimming activities take place in School Swimming pools (pool belonging to the school), pupils must always be supervised by qualified adults. It is strongly recommended that school staff responsible for the safety of a programmed session (e.g. swimming lesson) hold a current swimming pool lifesaving award, such as the National Rescue Award for Swimming Teachers and Coaches.

6.3 Clothing for School Swimming

Clothing for schools swimming should be relatively tight fitting, allowing freedom for body and limb movement, whilst minimising the effect of drag in the water. Swimming caps should be worn, particularly over long hair, to avoid obscuring vision, and to reduce hair becoming trapped in filters and grilles. As with all PE lessons, jewellery should be removed.

The Amateur Swimming Association recommends goggles are only worn in instances where the child is known to suffer from an adverse reaction to chemicals in the pool.

7.0 FURTHER GUIDANCE

Comprehensive guidance and advice for schools is available in '**Safe Practice in Physical Education, School Sport & Physical Activity**' published by the Association of Physical Education (formally BAALPE). This is available at:

<https://www.afpe.org.uk/physical-education/safe-practice-in-physical-education-school-sport-physical-activity-2016/>

Swim England has also developed a '**Curriculum Swimming and Water Safety Resource Pack**' for all those involved in the delivery of curriculum swimming and water safety. This is available at:

<https://www.swimming.org/schools/resource-pack/>

Guidance on managing and operating swimming pools '**Health and safety in swimming pools HSG179**' is available at:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg179.htm>

The Pool Water Treatment Advisory Group (PWTAG) Code of Practice can be downloaded for free here: <https://www.pwtag.org/code-of-practice/>

The Oldham School Swimming Service provide guidance and advice on all School Swimming related issues. For further information please contact Kim Humphrys on kim.humphrys@oldham.gov.uk, or amanda.newman@oldham.gov.uk

Health and safety advice is also available from the Health and Safety Team on Heathandsafetyteam@oldham.gov.uk

APPENDIX A

Swimming and Water Safety Policy

Why we provide swimming lessons at Oldham Primary School

To meet the requirements of the National Curriculum;
To develop the personal and social development of children and their health and well-being;
To promote a valuable life skill

How we will organise swimming at Oldham Primary School

Swimming at Oldham Primary School is time tabled in the [ENTER TERM]
Children, therefore, have the opportunity to develop and improve their swimming throughout the primary phase.

Swimming lessons last approximately [INSERT LENGTH OF LESSON] and count as one of the classes' weekly PE lesson.

Children are transported to [INSERT RELEVANT POOL] by the nominated school transport provider.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body and Headteacher

The governing body and headteacher will ensure there is a nominated member of staff who is delegated the responsibility of 'Teacher in Charge of School Swimming and Water Safety'. The headteacher will ensure the swimming pool safety policy and procedures in the school are followed. This incorporates the proper operation of the school's own swimming facility or use of a third-party pool [DELETE AS APPROPRIATE].

Governors and headteachers will 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 for school swimming. These will be regularly reviewed and kept in the School Swimming folder (with copy held centrally by Headteacher),
- Ensure a current Normal Operating Procedure (NOP) and Emergency Action Plan (EAP) is in place for the pool to be used for School Swimming.
- Ensure all staff accompanying pupils to School Swimming have read and understood the current Normal Operating Procedure (NOP) and Emergency Action Plan (EAP) for the relevant pool.
- Ensure staff accompanying School Swimming are qualified to support the delivery of School Swimming and Water Safety and comply with the school's Safeguarding Policy
- Ensure relevant training for School Swimming is in place for staff
- Understand 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 School Swimming folder)

- Keeping current copies of the 'Conditions of Hire' and Leisure Provider Insurance details within the School Swimming folder

Teacher in Charge of School Swimming and Water Safety

- Maintain School Swimming folder (see Governor and Headteachers section above),
- Visit the pool before swimming programme commences to understand all relevant NOP/EAP aspects and to risk assess and plan programme with the Specialist Swimming Teacher,
- Obtain written information on pupils with medical conditions and/or additional needs and share with 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 e.g. Swimming Class Registers & Student Information, including information on pupils with medical conditions and/or additional needs.

Accompanying School Staff

School staff must:

- 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 children are appropriately supervised when changing,
- ensure children are under control at all times,
- take head counts before, during and after sessions. This should be recorded in the swimming registers,
- enforce the NOP and EAP; all staff on poolside should be aware of the emergency procedures of any external provision, Ensure that children are aware of what to do in the event of an emergency evacuation,
- **remain on poolside to provide an assisting role to support the School Swimming Lesson (they must have undergone a minimum of a reach and rescue training course)**
- hold responsibility for reporting on the progress of School Swimming (through ongoing monitoring and guidance from Leisure Provider staff). Identify those pupils unlikely to meet the minimum requirements for National Curriculum Swimming,
- 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.

The Specialist Swimming Teacher (e.g. Oldham Council / Leisure Provider Swimming Teachers)

The Specialist Swimming Teacher must:

- 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 children swimming,
- 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 children in their class, risk assessing these within the context of the swimming environment,
- Ensure the safe conduct of the class whilst the children are in the water and on the poolside,
- Enable children 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,
- 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,
- Be able to organise a number of other staff (pool staff or School Swimming staff) so that the teaching groups are a 'best fit' for the standards and ability stages of the students,
- If in a leisure centre, liaise with the lifeguards and pool centre staff concerning the School Swimming session.

Risk Management

The school will follow the guidance set out in 'Safe Practice in Physical Education, School Sport & Physical Activity' published by the Association of Physical Education (formally BAALPE).

All staff involved with swimming provision will have read the relevant AfPE guidance.

Teacher to pupil ratios

Each pool will have a designated maximum bather capacity appropriate to the size of the pool which should be specified in the NOP.

Irrespective of the ratio there must always be at least 2 supervisors present on the poolside. Pupil/teacher ratios must not exceed 20:1 and for the vast majority of cases in primary school swimming will be less than this.

Medical Conditions

The school must be informed of any pupil medical conditions, which may affect the child's performance during the lessons. Certain serious conditions will require medical clearance prior to the pupil taking part. If a pupil suffers from asthma, it is essential their inhaler is with them at the pool.

Behaviour

The swimming pool is a place of work and should be treated as a classroom with the same rules regarding behaviour. This will be enforced by the school teacher.

Attendance

All parents **must** ensure that their children attend all allocated lessons. As swimming is a statutory part of the National Curriculum. Parents do not have the right to withdraw their children from this statutory element of the National Curriculum, unless the child has an EHCP (Education Health Care Plan).

Older children are encouraged to be independent in terms of organising their swimming kits. Children who forget their swimming kits or cannot participate in the lesson for any reason will be required to attend and observe the lessons from the side of the pool. This is in line with the other aspects of the PE curriculum delivery.

Parents of children returning from an illness that would prevent them from swimming for a short period of time **must** provide the school with medical evidence of the illness in order that they may be excused from the lesson. Should a child not be able to swim for an extended period of time, a Doctor's letter **must** be provided.

Swimming Kit

Boys: trunks or swim shorts. Shorts must have a lining and be no longer than mid-thigh. Long baggy shorts can cause drag resistance and in certain circumstances are unsafe.

Girls: 1-piece costumes. Close fitting leotards and footless tights may also be worn where normal swimwear is not appropriate for religious/cultural reasons. Burka swimsuit is acceptable but it must be tight fitting and hood removed.

All jewelry, religious artefacts and symbols must be removed because of the potential danger to the wearer and other users. The only exception to this rule is a medic alert bracelet, which can be covered by a sweatband.

No earrings will be permitted during school swimming lessons.

Goggles are not needed for everyday swimming. It should be remembered that in the event of your child being involved in a hazardous water situation it is extremely unlikely that he/she would be wearing goggles. It is highly desirable therefore that your child learns to swim without being dependent on goggles.

Goggles may cause injuries even resulting in blindness if a child is knocked on the goggles when swimming or diving or putting them on and removing them. Goggles do not keep all water out of the eyes. Goggles often steam up for the first few minutes after putting them on. School swimming lessons usually last for about 30 minutes. The children swim in large numbers and sometimes in crowded conditions. Beginners do not always have full control of arm and leg movements. These factors may increase the possibility of being hit on the goggles. Goggles are held in place by tight elastic and are made of hard plastic.

The use of goggles is advisable only when there is excessive reaction to the chemicals in the water and where the swimmer is involved in lengthy training sessions. In these cases, goggles may reduce the effect of contact of the eyes with the water. If goggles are used, they should not be made of glass or breakable plastic. It is recommended that such goggles be purchased from a recognised sports equipment retailer or from local leisure centres. Your child will need to be taught how to put on and remove the goggles and how to empty the water out safely.

The swimming teacher will assess the child's ability in the water after completion of the water safety and personal survival assessment. It will then be up the discretion of the swimming teacher.

Goggles should only be worn if the child has a medical condition that would affect their ability in the water, or as above.

APPENDIX C - MAKING DECISIONS REGARDING RATIOS - FACTORS TO CONSIDER

It is very important that schools check with their employer that these suggested ratios meet with their requirements or those of their insurers. Where the requirement differs, schools must abide by the employer's terms.

Pupils

Age - Dependent on the size of the school, or for logistical reasons it may be necessary to take a number of different year groups in the pool at one time

Ability - This should be assessed at the start of each group of lessons (e.g. half term), to aim to make accurate groupings

Familiarity (or lack of) with venue - Pupils, particularly younger ones, may be overwhelmed initially if they are not familiar with the venue

Standard of behaviour - Staff should be familiar with the group and mindful of how different groupings will support better and safer learning

Level of confidence - Staff need to be watching carefully, as this can change from week to week, and between activities

Special education needs - Any specific programmes should have been discussed and designed before arriving at the pool. Arrangements for monitoring in or out of the water need to be in place

Specific physical needs - As above. Any additional requirements should be ascertained before reaching the poolside

Staff

Teaching experience - New teachers may still be learning about organising groups in the classroom and practical settings can provide additional concerns and anxieties

Experience of teaching swimming - Even if the teacher is experienced in the classroom, the swimming pool environment presents additional challenges

Familiarity with the pupils - In some schools one teacher with a qualification to teach swimming may teach all groups. Where this happens, it is important that they become familiar with pupils' names, needs, behaviour etc.. Knowing the pupil's names helps with discipline and control within a lesson

Qualifications - Subject knowledge gained through qualifications and awards is key to helping teachers feel more prepared and confident to teach. Planning and preparing using this knowledge contributes to a safe learning environment

Level of confidence - This arises from experience, level of qualification, knowledge of the pupils, and familiarity with the environment. Confident teachers will help pupils to feel at ease, and be able to benefit from their learning in this environment

Having considered these and any other influencing items, staff to pupil ratios can be decided, and are likely to be different for each group.

APPENDIX D - HIRE OF POOL TO OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS: CHECKLIST FOR CONTRACTS

It is essential that communication between schools and the pool provider is on-going, and constant. The points below provide suggestions to include in a hirer's agreement, but should be supplemented by other information applicable to the school and their circumstances:

- Pupil information: e.g. numbers participating, their swimming abilities at start of period of learning, SEND details, medical needs
- Name of hirer's representative(s) who will be the link with the school coordinator
- Number, skills/qualifications of lifeguards and qualified instructors to be present during the sessions. Clarify those the provider will make available, and those who will come from the school/hirer. Include contingency arrangements to cover absence/ill-health etc.
- Hirer to be given copies of normal and emergency operating procedures, and to sign to the effect that these have been read, understood and communicated
- Respective responsibilities of the pool operator and the hirer for action in any emergency. A distinction needs to be drawn between:
 - Emergencies arising from the activities of the group using the pool
 - Other emergencies (structural or power failures, etc.)
- Responsibility for the latter will remain with the pool operator who will therefore need to have competent staff in attendance (i.e. on site during the hire session)
- Code of conduct to be enforced during the session by all parties
- Exchange of risk assessments
- Confirmation that a member of school staff will remain on the poolside at all times

Revisions and amendments of School Swimming Guidance made by Katharine Harrison (school swimming service manager) -September 2025.

