

# Health & Safety Guidance Note



## SWIMMING AND HYDROTHERAPY POOL SAFETY

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# SWIMMING AND HYDROTHERAPY POOL SAFETY

## CONTENTS

	<b>PAGE NO.</b>
1. Introduction .....	3
2. Pool safety operating procedure.....	3
3. Risk assessment .....	5
4. Supervision.....	6
5. Staff pupil ratios.....	7
6. Hydrotherapy pools in SEN provision.....	8
7. Maintenance of the pool .....	10
8. Reporting accidents.....	11
9. First aid provision .....	11
10. Safety signs.....	12
11. Cleaning .....	12
12. Calling for assistance .....	12
13. Pool safety and equipment.....	12
14. Diving .....	13
15. Pool users' conduct.....	14
16. Hiring of the pool to other users .....	14
17. Training .....	15
18. Sources of further information .....	16
 <b>Appendices</b>	
1. Pupil conduct rules .....	17
2. Pool operating procedure .....	18
3. Example of a pool emergency procedure.....	21
 <b>Document History Grid .....</b>	 <b>24</b>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The information contained within this guidance note is to be read in conjunction with the generic RA26 Swimming and Hydrotherapy Pools risk assessment. Together, both documents are designed to aid staff in adopting appropriate health and safety managerial arrangements within their area of responsibility. The guidance in this document is for schools that have their own swimming or hydrotherapy pools.
- 1.2 *The Health and Safety at Work Act* places responsibilities on pool owners and users to take reasonable steps to ensure that swimming related activities are carried out safely. This includes ensuring that: equipment and plant are safe, there are safe systems of work and appropriate provision of information, instruction, training and supervision.
- 1.3 Swimming on educational visits at public pools or in open water is covered in the *'Outdoor Education, Visits and Off-site Activities Health & Safety Policy'*. In addition, the Association for Physical Education provides advice in *'Safe Practice in Physical Education and Sport'*, pages 205 and 210. Advice in this guidance note is informed by the HSE's *'Managing Health and safety in swimming pools'* guidance.

## 2. POOL SAFETY OPERATING PROCEDURES

- 2.1 A senior member of staff must be identified as the person responsible for the management of the pool and they must be provided with appropriate training. They should be fully aware of the current guidance concerning the operation of swimming pools.
- 2.2 The carrying out of regular risk assessments is central to effective pool management to ensure that risks are adequately identified, assessed and controlled. The RA26 Swimming and Hydrotherapy Pools risk assessment has been based on an assessment of some of the foreseeable risks inherent in swimming lessons. It identifies hazards intrinsic in this area as well as the control measures employed to reduce their potential for harm.

### **The Pool Safety Operating Procedure (PSOP)**

- 2.3 Establishments must draw up a written PSOP which consists of the Normal Operating Plan (NOP) and the Emergency Action Plan (EAP) for the pool, changing facilities and associated plant and equipment. Staff must have access to these documents. Appendix 2 gives a PSOP pro forma. The Pool Safety Operating Procedure should be displayed at the poolside.

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## The Normal Operating Plan

2.4 The NOP sets out the way a pool operates on a daily basis and includes details of the layout, equipment, manner of use, user group characteristics and any hazards or activity-related risk. The NOP should cover the pool, associated plant and changing facilities and equipment. Arrangements must be made for the following:

- Regular inspections of the water, plant and structure
- User behaviour rules
- Supervision arrangements for specialised activities
- Access arrangements to the pool area
- Competence and training of life guards
- Conditions of hire to external organisations

## The Emergency Action Plan

2.5 The EAP should give specific instructions on the action to be taken in the event of foreseeable emergencies such as:

- Overcrowding
- Lack of water clarity
- Disorderly behaviour
- Fire alarm procedures
- Bomb threats
- Power failure
- Lighting failure
- Structural failure
- Toxic gas emission
- Serious injury to a bather
- Discovery of a casualty in the water

2.6 The EAP should describe how to clear the water or evacuate the building. Appendix 4 gives a typical example of a pool emergency procedure. To ensure the effectiveness of emergency procedures, management should ensure:

- All staff are trained in such procedures
- Notices are displayed
- Exit doors, signs, fire-fighting equipment and call points are checked regularly
- Fire exit doors are operable without the aid of a key.

2.7 Managers/Headteachers should ensure the emergency action plan covers all parts of a lesson including split groups and lesson change over periods.

### 3. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 It is the duty of pool operators to ensure risks are adequately identified, assessed and controlled. The generic RA26 Swimming and Hydrotherapy Pool risk assessment is available on the OSHENS website for adaptation. Staff pupil ratios should be based on the completion of a thorough risk assessment but as a minimum, there must be at least one responsible person permanently at the poolside that is able to affect a rescue and to carry out cardio-pulmonary resuscitation. Where there is only one lifeguard at the pool, there should be adequate means to summon assistance rapidly.
- 3.2 As part of the risk assessment, consideration must be given to people with disabilities. There must be sufficient helpers to provide support and lifeguarding. The RA26 must describe the supervision ratios.

#### **Pool users with medical conditions**

- 3.3 Pool users with serious medical problems will need an individual health care plan which explicitly describes how the medical condition will be handled whilst the pupil is in the pool.
- 3.4 Pool users with epilepsy must at all times be observed from the poolside and should work alongside a responsible person in the water when out of their depth. Shimmering water or flickering light may trigger an attack as may the increase in water pressure.
- 3.5 Pool users with ear infections or grommets should seek parental and medical permission before being allowed to swim as there may be a risk of permanent deafness.
- 3.6 Pupils who suffer excessively from the effects of water chemicals may wear swimming goggles. Any such goggles should be made of unbreakable plastic. Pupils should be taught to remove them by slipping them off the head rather than by stretching the retaining band. However, during the relatively short periods of time pupils are in the water, it should be unnecessary for goggles to be worn. Their use should therefore be discouraged unless there are exceptional circumstances.

#### 3.7 Pupils with Special Educational Needs

- Where swimming involves young people with special educational needs, the class size must be reduced to take account of the age, intelligence and experience of the pupils
- Shallow-depth learner pools are much easier to supervise

## 4. SUPERVISION

- 4.1 Whenever there are pupils in the water, a suitably qualified adult should be present at the poolside who is able to effect a rescue from the water and carry out cardiopulmonary resuscitation.
- 4.2 A minimum of two people on the poolside is common and good practice to cover eventualities in the teaching and safety aspects of swimming. Where only one adult is present, the risk assessment needs to indicate clearly why this ratio is acceptable and should highlight emergency arrangements.

### Lifeguards

- 4.3 The term 'lifeguard' should only be applied to someone who possesses the attributes, training and competence necessary to fulfil lifeguarding duties. Training for a lifeguard would include a qualification issued by an appropriate national body such as The Royal Life Saving Society or the Amateur Swimming Association.
- 4.4 It is essential that lifeguards understand their role and are given adequate training. He or she will also need to know and be trained in the details of the school's Normal Operating Procedure and the Emergency Action plan
- 4.5 The key functions of the lifeguard are to:
- Keep a close watch over the pool and the pool users
  - Be in position in the pool area prior to pupils or staff entering it
  - Communicate effectively with pool users and colleagues
  - Anticipate problem and prevent accident
  - Intervene to prevent behaviour which is unsafe
  - Identify emergencies quickly and take appropriate action
  - Effect a rescue from the water
  - Give immediate first aid to any casualty
- 4.6 Constant supervision by qualified lifeguards is compulsory if one or more of the following criteria are met:
- The pool has water deeper than 1.5 metres
  - The pool area is greater than 170 metres square
  - Diving from the side of the pool is allowed
  - There is poolside equipment or a feature posing additional risk
  - There are abrupt changes in depth
- 4.7 Lifeguards (including volunteers) will need to have the following attributes:
- Physically fit, good vision and hearing
  - Mentally alert and self-disciplined

- Strong, able and confident swimmer
- Up to date lifeguard training that is on-going
- Induction training before taking up their duties

### Spotters

- 4.8 The minimum training requirement for a spotter is that they are able to make a rescue from the pool and to carry out cardio-pulmonary resuscitation. A spotter, like a lifeguard, should be physically fit, have good vision and hearing, be mentally alert and self-disciplined. He or she will also need to know and be trained in the details of the school's Normal Operating Procedure and the Emergency Action plan.
- 4.9 The key functions of the spotter are to:
- Be in position in the pool area prior to pupils or staff entering it
  - To raise the alarm in the event of an emergency
  - To ensure they can see all pupils and the bottom of the pool at all times
  - To be in a position whereby they can scan the pool area in approximately 10 seconds
  - To count the number of pupils in the water regularly
  - To inform another member of staff before they leave the pool area and ensure that there is another spotter in place before leaving
  - To make themselves aware of the location of any alarm and lifesaving aids prior to others entering the pool area
- 4.10 Spotters and lifeguards cannot be included in the staff pupil ratio.

## 5 STAFF PUPIL RATIOS

- 5.1 In any pool, the staff pupil ratio should be such that it safely meets the risks imposed by the pool environment. Whatever the conditions, there must always be a supervisory presence able to meet any rescue and resuscitation needs which may arise among the pool users.
- 5.2 In accordance with the general duties and responsibilities placed upon them by the *Health and Safety at Work Act* and by the *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations*, owners/operators/occupiers of swimming pools are obliged to take all reasonable practicable measures to ensure teaching and coaching activities are conducted safely. This includes determining the maximum safe ratio of pupils to swimming instructors.
- 3.3 The ratio should be based on a risk assessment that includes: pupil numbers, behaviour, confidence, abilities and understanding; staff qualifications, expertise, confidence, discipline and control; the pool's design, space, depth and slope, equipment, operating procedures and emergency provision.

5.4 In the event of a hydrotherapy pool being used for SEN provision, the staff pupil ratio must be 1:1 unless the risk assessment permits a 1:2 ratio.

## 6. HYDROTHERAPY POOLS IN SEN PROVISION

6.1 There are a number of additional things to consider with the use of a hydrotherapy pool in an SEN environment. Decisions will need to be made about how to manage each individual pupil taking into consideration their medical condition, behaviour and understanding.

6.2 The school should have an individual hydrotherapy pool risk assessment for each child. This assessment should be done by the person in charge of the session - this would usually be the pupil's teacher. This individual pupil risk assessment should consider the individual child, his or her physical condition and any behavioural issues.

6.3 The risk assessment should happen before each hydrotherapy session as pupils' behaviour and medical conditions can change on a daily basis. It should also consider how a particular group of children may react to each other in the pool.

6.4 When risk assessing an individual child, consideration should be given to the following:

- Their medical needs
- Their swimming ability
- The support needed for entering the pool
- The swimming kit needed (swim nappy or continence swimwear)
- Whether they can support themselves in the pool
- What water temperature is needed
- Their behaviour
- The help needed for changing
- Whether floatation aids are required
- What their communication needs are
- The staff pupil ratio (nearly always this will be 1:1)

6.5 There should be a named session leader for each swimming session.

6.6 Any equipment (such as floatation aids) that is intended for use in a session should be the responsibility of the session leader to organise – that person should be responsible for setting up the equipment in advance of the session. The session leader may also be responsible for carrying out a visual safety check of the pool before the session, ensuring that the spotter is in place and must be familiar with all relevant documentation such as individual swimming programmes and PEEPS.

- 6.7 Due to the physical needs of the individuals using the pool, additional equipment, such as hoists, may need to be provided. Moving and handling plans must be written for the individual pupil and staff should be trained in the equipment's use in the pool area.
- 6.8 Due to the increased temperatures of the water, maintenance and water testing arrangements need to be more frequent than with normal swimming pools.

### **Lifeguard/spotter**

- 6.9 It is important to have a pool lifeguard/spotter present at all times whose sole duty it is to observe and to draw attention to any problems developing in the water. The pool spotter must not get involved with any other activities such as adjusting music levels or assisting with the session. The lifeguard or spotter must be in place before any children enter the pool area. The lifeguard/spotter cannot be included in the staff pupil ratio.

### **Staff pupil ratio**

- 6.10 The ratio of staff to pupils should not be determined using normal swimming ratios when considering SEN use of a hydrotherapy pool. The ratio of staff to pupils should be 1:1; a risk assessment must clarify why it might be acceptable to have a 1:2 ratio but there must always be a lifeguard/spotter on duty and that person is not to be included in the staff pupil ratio. At no times should a single adult coach/teacher be in the pool or pool area alone with a pupil.
- 6.11 Consideration will also have to be given over the supervision of the changing areas – pupils must not be allowed out of the changing area into the pool area until the lifeguard/spotter is in place.

### **Cleaning Regime**

- 6.12 This should include the:
- normal cleaning regime for entrance, showering, changing areas and cleaning regime for immediately around the pool. Pool sides should be cleaned daily with pool water. Entire area around pool should be cleaned weekly using solution containing 200mg/L of free chlorine (this solution can also clean after contamination with faeces/blood/vomit)
  - algal slime cleaning
  - annual emptying and cleaning of pool (de-scaling, grouting, stained tiles, walls and floors can be dealt with then)

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## 7 MAINTENANCE OF THE POOL

- 7.1 Staff that carry out day-to-day maintenance and water treatment procedures must be suitably trained and qualified as swimming pool plant operators; this will ensure they are capable of dealing with the majority of minor problems as they arise. For scheduled maintenance and formal inspections, the establishment should set up a maintenance contract with a specialist contractor who can carry out inspections and respond to problems as they arise.

### Electrical Safety

- 7.2 The *British Standard 7671: Requirements For Electrical Installations* requires that swimming pool fixed electrical systems must be inspected annually by a competent person. RCDs should be in a damp proof enclosure, protected against damage, checked daily by operating the test button and tested every three months by an electrician. The pump and other equipment should be inspected every day – this would mainly be a check that everything looks and sounds as though it is running properly.
- 7.3 Self-dosing plant should be inspected every 6 months by a contractor.

### Water Quality

- 7.4 In order to protect pool users from the risk of infection, high water quality must be maintained at all times. Establishments must ensure that the water treatment system is appropriately maintained. The testing of the pool water should be a routine part of the duties of a pool operator. Records of tests must be maintained and may be requested in the event of an accident and/or incident occurring.
- 7.5 Filters must be maintained in good condition by frequent backwashing and regular inspection. The frequency of backwashing will depend on the individual pool's systems and the amount of bathers using the pool. If the pressure levels are rising then this could mean that backwashing needs to be done.
- 7.6 The clarity of the swimming pool water must be maintained to a level that will ensure that the bottom of the pool is always visible from any position on the poolside. It is recommended that the water is completely replaced every year. Once the pool is re-filled, dose and allow 2 to 3 days for the system to settle.
- 7.7 The pool water should be kept clean and debris removed. A weekly clean is advisable and this should be recorded.
- 7.8 Hand dosing chemicals into a pool must not be carried out when bathers are in the pool, nor should bathers be allowed into the pool until all substances

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have been fully dissolved and dispersed. The pool should not be used within 1 hour of hand dosing.

### Temperatures

- 7.9 High water temperatures, whilst popular with bathers, often cause difficulties in regard to increased micro-organism production, which lead to the need to increase the pool's chemical disinfectant levels. The temperature of the water should be between 28–29° C to enable young people to be comfortable and not become unduly cold. The indoor swimming pool air temperature should be 1°C higher than the water temperature.

### Chemicals

- 7.10 *Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations*: these regulations cover the use, storage and handling of chemicals and they must be observed. This includes the need to follow manufacturer's instructions and have suitable risk assessments in place. These COSHH risk assessments must be guided by the information in the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) that must be provided upon request by the chemical manufacturer/supplier. Further information on this subject can be sought from the HSA0010 COSHH Safety Guidance Note.
- 7.11 Adequate storage should be provided that is dry and secure and ensures good separation of chemicals with no storage above head height. Stock levels of chemicals should be limited to ensure that large quantities are not stored and to prevent deterioration.
- 7.12 Operators must be provided with and wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) – gloves, eye protection, etc as specified in the COSHH risk assessment.

## 8. REPORTING ACCIDENTS

- 8.1 All accidents need reporting and investigating. This also includes accidents that occur when in use by a third party. After an accident the risk assessment should be reviewed.

## 9. FIRST AID PROVISION

- 9.1 First aid provision must be made available for all pool users; this includes individuals who hire the pool for private use. First aid supplies should be stored in a location available to all pool users. These must be checked and replenished at regular intervals

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## 10. SAFETY SIGNS

- 10.1 There is a requirement to provide safety signs in and around the pool area. This is particularly important where there are sudden changes in depth, where, for example, areas are unsafe to dive.

## 11. CLEANING

- 11.1 Pool areas and changing rooms need to be kept tidy and with a high standard of cleanliness. The choice of cleaning agent must be compatible with the pool water chemistry, e.g. general purpose cleaning chemicals must not be used on pool surrounds.

## 12. CALLING FOR ASSISTANCE

- 12.1 In addition to the PSOP's section on emergencies, each pool must have a system which will enable assistance to be called should there be an emergency in the pool or pool area. This can be by means of an alarm that sounds in the pool or other areas where staff are available to deal with the emergency. (The alarm must be visual for those with a hearing impairment). If the pool is used out of normal hours, access to a telephone should also be available to pool hirers.

## 13. POOL SAFETY AND EQUIPMENT

- 13.1 Adequate lifesaving, buoyancy aids and first aid equipment, including a blanket, must be immediately to hand. Rescue poles must be within easy reach.
- 13.2 There should be access to a telephone giving direct contact from the pool to the emergency services.
- 13.3 Pool depths must be clearly indicated on the walls and instructors should explain their significance, especially to beginners. All signs must conform to the appropriate British Standard/British Standard European Norm.
- 13.4 A pool divider, usually a rope, should normally be positioned for delineating shallow from deep water whenever non-swimmers are present.
- 13.5 A pool must not be used unless and until the water is sufficiently clear to enable the bottom to be visible at all depths. The doors to a pool must be locked when the pool is not in use.
- 13.6 There are now special recovery stretchers which can more easily meet the need of recovering patients, especially where such patients may have suffered head and neck injury. The use of this equipment requires specialist training.

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## 14. DIVING

14.1 Diving can be dangerous; to avoid serious injuries there are safety measures which need to be observed:

- The area for formal diving must be clearly designated and controlled
- While diving is in progress no other swimmers must be allowed in or through the area
- Appropriate warning signs and notices must be clearly displayed and should be regularly drawn to the attention of pool users
- Diving sessions must be supervised by a teacher or coach who is thoroughly familiar with modern practice and suitably qualified
- Pool user numbers must be low enough to allow the teacher/coach to watch all the divers
- Pool users should be thoroughly familiar with the water space and environment in which they learn to dive. Diving must never take place in unknown waters
- Pool users should be allowed sufficient pool space in which to practise, with no underwater obstructions, to ensure that the risk of collisions during simultaneous dives are avoided
- The water must be deep enough to avoid any possible danger of contact with the pool bottom. A shallow entry-racing dive must only be practiced by advanced swimmers and take place under supervision into water at least 1.5 metres deep
- It is recommended that novice divers be taught to dive in water of at least 1.8 metres depth. (The Amateur Swimming Association advocates that in teaching an adult or child to dive, the water depth must be at least their full standing height plus arms and fingers extended).
- Vertical plain header diving must only be taught in a diving pool by a qualified, specialist coach
- Pool users must be regularly advised to exercise great care when diving into water of 1.5 metres depth and then only to use a shallow entry dive which they have been taught and are able to consistently perform. Pool signs must clearly indicate those areas which are appropriate for diving
- Prolonged underwater swimming following a dive must be discouraged (5 metres maximum)
- Raised starting blocks for racing dives must only be used by capable swimmers after receiving instruction on the techniques and with the approval of the coach. They must only be used in deep water

14.2 Care must be taken with feet-first entry jumping which may cause damage to the arches of the feet from striking the pool bottom with force in shallow water. Generally, entry into water less than 1.5 metres in depth is best done from a sitting position on the side of the pool.

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## 15. POOL USERS' CONDUCT

- 15.1 The conduct of pool users is of obvious importance. The accepted procedures together with their underlying reasons should be fully explained to all participants including what they should do if they see someone in difficulty. Jewellery must be removed or made safe. The chewing of sweets or gum during a lesson must never be allowed and long hair must be tied back.
- 15.2 Pool users must not be permitted to run on the pool surrounds and emergency procedures to clear the pool must be practised at regular intervals and must be effected by means of a specified signal, both audible and visual.
- 15.3 Pool users should be encouraged to look for, and to report, unseemly or unacceptable behaviour, especially when safety is comprised. Appendix 1 provides a Code of Conduct.

### 15.4 Younger Children

- Infants and young primary aged children are best taught in shallow beginner pools, with the availability of appropriate aids to floatation and some in-water adult support
- Great care should be taken when teaching very young non-swimmers who are unable to touch the bottom of the shallow end of a pool. They should wear appropriate floatation aids and adult or parent in-water support is essential
- Adult helpers must be CRB checked

## 16. HIRING OF THE POOL TO OTHER USERS

- 16.1 Before hiring out its pool to other organisations, establishments need to be fully aware of their legal obligations and responsibilities towards anyone that may use their pool. Careful consideration of additional running and maintenance costs will also need to be included. The school will need to ensure that the hiring organisation is fully aware of the following:
- The PSOP, including the emergency action plan
  - Information on maximum numbers
  - Supervision and life guarding requirements which must be at the same or higher level as the school's requirements
  - Specific agreement on the respective responsibilities of the pool operator and the hirer for action in any emergency. A distinction will need to be made between emergencies arising out of the activities of the group using the pool and other emergencies such as structural or power failures. Responsibility for the latter remains with the pool operator who will, therefore, need to have competent staff in attendance during the hire session.

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16.2 The school needs to be aware of:

- The name of the person nominated by the hirer that will be in charge
- Information on numbers participating and their swimming skills
- The qualifications of the individuals
- The insurance provision
- The scope, nature and intended use of the pool. e.g. private function, swimming lessons, etc.

16.3 Where schools are hiring out, it may be necessary to provide training to those hirers. Checks should be made by the school to ensure that the hirer is complying with the PSOP. Details of documentation, training provided and checks should be recorded.

## 17. TRAINING

17.1 Under the *Management of Health and Safety in the Workplace Regulations* pool operators will need to assess the capabilities of their staff and ensure that they are adequately trained for the duties they carry out. Training records, including in-house training, must be kept by the school. Records should include the names of those involved in the training, what they did, including use of the equipment and the length of the training sessions.

17.2 The duty of care for pupils involved in swimming remains with the school staff, it is their responsibility to monitor the progress of the pupils regardless of who directs the session. Specialist swimming teachers may be employed by a school – where the specialist's role is to lead the lesson, it is essential that school staff remain on poolside.

17.3 The teaching and lifesaving awards of the Amateur Swimming Association, the Swimming Teachers' Association and the Royal Life Saving Society are desirable qualifications for swimming teachers but it should be remembered that these may not indicate up to date competence in lifesaving and teaching unless retaken from time to time.

17.4 Where school staff are responsible for the safety of a programmed session, it is essential that they have, as a minimum a current swimming pool lifesaving award such as the Rescue Award for Swimming Teachers and Coaches. Those responsible for the supervision of a swimming pool during un-programmed sessions are recommended to provide a current national recognised pool lifeguard qualification such as the RLSS National Pool Lifeguard qualification or National Rescue Standard Pool Lifeguard qualification.

17.5 The senior management team/headteacher is responsible for monitoring staff and ensuring that they are fulfilling their roles.

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## 18. SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

- 18.1 Further related information can be found via the 'Document Library' on the Devon Health & Safety Service's OSHENS website or by telephone on 01392 382027. These documents can also be accessed through 'The Source'.
- 18.2 Further information can also be obtained from the *document 'Safe Practice in Physical Education and School Sports'*, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition (2012) which is published by the Association for Physical Education (AfPE).
- 18.3 Further information on pool safety management can be found in the Health and Safety Executive guidance document HSG179, '*Managing Health and Safety in Swimming Pools*', ISBN 97807176 26861.
- 18.4 Information on swimming in open water is also available from Babcock LDP's '*Safe Practice in Swimming Activities*'.

## APPENDIX ONE

### SWIMMING – PUPIL CONDUCT

#### Hygiene

- Pupils should maintain a high standard of hygiene at all times
- Long hair must be tied back or a swimming cap used
- All jewellery must be removed
- The chewing of sweets or gum is not allowed
- Pupils should be encouraged to clean their shoes before entering the changing area
- Pupils should use the toilet and shower before going into the pool
- Pupils should not swim if they have any of the following:
  - Infectious diseases
  - Open wounds
  - Coughs, cold and related infections
  - Sore eyes
  - Ear infections

#### Pool Courtesy Code

Pupils should be taught to consider other pool users. Such consideration extends to:

- Arriving at and leaving the facility
- Entries and exits to the pool area
- Shared use of the pool
- Shared use of clothes hanging facilities
- Intrusion into other users 'space'
- An awareness of acceptable noise levels
- Avoiding interference with other users that may effect their enjoyment

## APPENDIX TWO

### POOL OPERATING PROCEDURE

<b>Name of premises</b>	Date of review of this plan
<b>Normal Operating Plan</b>	
<b>Name of Senior Manager responsible for pool operation</b>	
<i>Draw or attach details of the layout of pool. Include dimensions, depths, features and equipment. Include positions of pool alarms, fire alarms, emergency exit routes</i>	
<i>Describe below the potential risks of the pool; ie: main hazards and of users particularly at risk. Look at circulation areas around pool, changes in floor level, abrasive walls, sharp corners, power sockets, low level radiators/heating pipes, glazing, signs (eg: water depth), slippery floor, uneven, sharp or raised floors; excessive pool tank gradients; abrupt changes of water depth; grille openings; excessive suction; poor tile condition, poor definition at pool edge, design of access ladders</i>	
<i>Describe below lifeguards' duties and responsibilities; ie: special supervision requirements for equipment; training and number of lifeguards for particular activities</i>	
<i>Describe below systems of work, eg: supervision responsibilities, maintenance responsibilities, call out procedures</i>	
<i>Describe below the operational systems, eg: control of access to the pool, safe use of pool covers</i>	
<i>Detail below the working instructions: eg: pool cleaning procedures, safe setting up and checking of equipment, bathing load, cleaning of equipment. Include all water treatment processes and the person responsible for them. Detail what happens in the event of staff absence</i>	

<i>Detail first aid provision: eg: first aid training, equipment and its location</i>
<i>Detail alarm systems and emergency equipment and their maintenance arrangements. Include, in detail, the procedure for emergency evacuation of the pool.</i>
<i>Detail below the conditions of hire to outside organisations. This should include information on numbers participating and their swimming skills, name of person who will be in charge of group, numbers/skills of lifeguards. Hirer must be given normal and emergency operating procedures; advice on safety eg no alcohol or food immediately before swimming. Please note that injury or damage to people or property during school holidays will <b>not</b> be covered by DCC's public liability insurance.</i>
<b>Emergency Action Plan</b>
<i>Detail below the specific instructions for the following:</i>
<i>Overcrowding: What are the maximum numbers of children allowed in the pool? Who will check numbers? Who does a headcount?</i>
<i>Disorderly behaviour: When are pupils told about behaviour rules? Who is in charge of discipline? Conduct rules on wall?</i>
<i>Lack of water clarity: Have staff been trained to recognise when there is a lack of water clarity? Who is informed and how is it rectified? What is the school's procedure?</i>
<i>Outbreak of fire or alarm sounding: detail the emergency evacuation procedure; describe who is responsible for what.</i>
<i>Lighting failure: may not be an issue for outside pools used in day time only. Indoor pools – is there emergency lighting?</i>
<i>Structural failure: evacuation procedure; building inspection regime</i>
<i>Emission of toxic gases: evacuation procedure; coordination with emergency services including informing them of hazardous substances</i>
<i>Serious injury to a bather: How will you get someone seriously injured out of the pool? How do you get help? Who calls the emergency services?</i>
<i>Discovery of a casualty in the water: Who calls the emergency services? How do you notify senior management?</i>
<i>Contamination by faeces/vomit or blood: What is the immediate response and how do you remove the contamination?</i>

Procedure in the event of a cardiac arrest: *How do you get first aid help quickly? Are there individual health care plans?*

Procedure in the event of an epileptic fit: *How do you get first aid help quickly? Are there individual health care plans?*

The above document is based on the advice given in the HSG179 Managing Health and Safety in Swimming Pools (ISBN 0-7176-2686-5). This is not law but is considered best practice and it is strongly recommended that schools follow these guidelines.

## **APPENDIX THREE**

### **EXAMPLE OF POOL EMERGENCY PROCEDURE**

#### **1. Duty of Care**

- 1.1 The swimming instructor has a duty of care for the group whilst in the pool; they must be qualified to make a water rescue if required.
- 1.2 The establishment, as providers of the pool, have an overall responsibility in ensuring the safety of all users.
- 1.3 Clearly in the event of an emergency situation, teamwork and communication are vital between each of the parties. The use of a whistle in such situations is crucial.

#### **2. Emergency Procedures**

##### 2.1 Use of whistle.

- 2.1.1 One whistle blast: to be used for general control of all swimmers. The single blast will alert students under instruction to stand still or make their way to the side.
- 2.1.2 Two whistle blasts: to be used to attract the attention of the lifeguard or other helpers.
- 2.1.3 Three whistle blasts: to be used to signal an emergency situation and that a water rescue will be effected. The triple blast will alert students under instruction to evacuate the pool and sit near the wall, away from the water's edge.
- 2.1.4 This emergency drill must be practised during the first lesson on each term and should be reinforced verbally throughout the term.
- 2.1.5 All accompanying staff must have a working whistle available and be conversant in its use.

##### 2.2 Roles during emergency situations (i.e. on giving or hearing a triple whistle blast).

###### 2.2.1 Specialist Swimming Teacher

On seeing any incident within the swimming area:

- A. Give triple whistle blast to indicate an emergency situation
- B. Instigate an immediate pool rescue

On hearing the signal:

- A. Go to the incident immediately (in the swimming area only) and either assist with the rescue from poolside or instigate a water rescue

## 2.2.2 Teaching Assistants (i.e. teachers/helpers)

- On seeing any incident within the swimming area:
- A. Give triple whistle blast to indicate an emergency situation and point clearly to the swimmer in difficulty
  - B. Use reach pole to effect a rescue if applicable
  - C. Upon commencement of a water rescue by others, clear the pool of all students and sit them down, away from the water's edge and against the wall
- On hearing the signal:
- A. Evacuate all students from the pool and sit them down, away from the water's edge

## 2.2.3 Pool Staff (Main Pool)

- On seeing any incident:
- A. Give triple whistle blast to indicate emergency situation
  - B. Press pool alarm to summon further assistance
  - C. Instigate or assist immediate pool rescue
- On hearing the signal:
- A. Press pool alarm to summon further assistance
  - B. Go to the incident immediately and either assist with the rescue from poolside or instigate a water rescue

## 3. Casualty Management

- 3.1 Under normal circumstances the management of the casualty, once removed from the water, will be the responsibility of the establishment staff. The specialist swimming teacher should, however, remain with the casualty to assist and support.
- 3.2 If the casualty is conscious, remove to the first aid room and treat for shock.
- 3.3 If the casualty is unconscious but breathing and pulse present, place in the recovery position and continually monitor vital signs.
- 3.4 If the casualty is unconscious with no sign of breathing or pulse, commence resuscitation immediately.

3.4 If it is deemed unnecessary to contact the emergency services, the student will be released into the care of the school who will make the necessary arrangements to return to the school or contact the parents.

#### **4. Contacting Emergency Services**

4.1 On hearing the pool alarm, the responsible person will go immediately to the pool side to see if an ambulance is required and if so make the 999 call.

#### **5. Incident Management**

5.1 The overall management and co-ordination of the incident will be the responsibility of the responsible person.

#### **6. Reporting Procedure**

6.1 An incident report will be completed for all pool rescues, no matter how minor, by the responsible person.

6.2 In the event of a serious incident (either hospitalisation or fatality) the incident must be thoroughly investigated.

The Principal will:

- A. Contact the Devon Health & Safety Service who will decide whether to contact the Health and Safety Executive.
- B. Contact the Chair of the employing body.
- D. Collect names, addresses and telephone contacts.  
(No details of the incident should be released to anyone).

Under no circumstances should any statement be made about the incident to any third party other than that required for the emergency services.

## Document History

Document Date	Summary of change	Contact	Implementation Date	Review Date
October 2008	Original Guidance Note	Devon H&S Service 01392 382027	October 2008	August 2009
September 2009	Minor typographical changes	Devon H&S Service 01392 382027	September 2009	August 2010
September 2010	Links to LDP documents; reference to HSG179; clarification of rules for use of goggles	Devon H&S Service 01392 382027	September 2010	August 2011
September 2011	Minor textual changes. Risk Assessments moved to separate document	Devon H&S Service 01392 382027	September 2011	August 2013
September 2012	New PSOP, removal of link to LDP, minor textual changes, inclusion of 1 year fixed electrical inspection	Devon H&S Service 01392 382027	October 2012	August 2014
September 2013	Minor textual changes, more detail on lifeguards and volunteers	Devon H&S Service 01392 382027	September 2013	September 2015
September 2015	Minor textual changes, more detail on IHCP; wording amendments to bring in line with DCC policy	Devon H&S Service 01392 382027	September 2015	August 2017
September 2016	References to the Wellbeing@Work Service removed; change in policy that spotters and lifeguards cannot be included in staff pupil ratios; hydrotherapy pools for SEN use must have 1:1 ratio; more information on pool operating procedures and maintenance of equipment.	Devon H&S Service 01392 382027	September 2016	August 2017