

# Educational Visits

## Open Water Policy



### Background

This policy is aimed at ensuring that all pupils on off-site school trips can safely access water.

There are four types of open water: sea, lakes, reservoirs and rivers.

The assumption is that a school party will want to swim at unforeseen times and that going to lifeguarded beaches is not always possible.

This guidance covers only the sea and rivers, at this point the school does not support pupils swimming in lakes and reservoirs, unless these have designated swimming areas.

### General protocols

1. Prior to the trip leaving, the parents of each pupil will inform the school of:
  - Their child's swimming ability
  - Any health issues
  - Whether they give their consent to enter water as per this policy
2. Written consents for each pupil, plus their health & emergency contact information, to be provided by way of the Parental Consent form which is to be taken on the trip.
3. The Teacher in Charge will ensure that they have:
  - Mobile phone with signal, credit and charged battery
  - Whistle
  - First Aid kit
  - Throw line - when appropriate

### Sea

1. No surfing or body boarding will be allowed under this policy.
2. If possible the group should head for an area with a lifeguard.
3. On arriving at a potential swimming area, the teacher shall do the following, prior to allowing pupils' entry into the water:
  - Obtain local knowledge covering such matters as:
    - tides, rip tides & currents, winds, depth, temperature.
    - flora, fauna hazards, e.g. seaweed, jellyfish etc.
    - cleanliness, litter, sewage etc.
4. Once the teacher has satisfied themselves that the above matters mean it is safe to enter the water, they shall then ensure the following:
  - Define the area that the pupils may use
  - Have at least two adults closely supervising those in the water
  - Swimmers not to go out of their depth, i.e. when standing on the ground, the water will not be higher than their chest.
  - Swimmers to always be in sight and hailing distance of the adults.

## **Rivers**

This covers open stretches of water with good visibility, good entry and exit points, no dangerous rocks or tree roots and not flowing fast enough to carry a person downstream: a calm water situation.

Prior to allowing pupils to enter water, the teacher shall:

1. Obtain local knowledge on matters such as cleanliness, weed, unexpected depths or any other factors.
2. Teacher defines the stretch of water that may be entered, particularly considering a safe place to exit the water downstream of the swimming area.
3. Have at least two adults closely supervising.
4. Swimmers not to go out of their depth, i.e. when standing on the ground, the water will not be higher than their chest.
5. Swimmers to always be in sight and within hailing distance of the adults.

**END**