

Water Safety



Water Safety

Purpose

To understand the dangers of water.

To take responsibility for the safety of oneself and others.

To know how to react in an emergency.

Entrance of Pupils

A thought provoking slideshow introducing the theme of 'Water Safety' or the pupils to enter assembly to (10 minutes)

Foreword From the Writer

As a headteacher, I personally experienced the drowning of two of my students on two separate occasions and in different schools.

Both of these terrible accidents were preventable.

It is so important to understand the simple rules and information about water safety to prevent other families and communities suffering such devastating losses.

This assembly is dedicated to the memory of Tom and Teya.

Introduction

On a warm day, there is little that is so inviting as messing about in water., after all, for decades, even centuries, holidays have been designed around the seaside, swimming pools, lakes and waterways.

Water can be so much fun, and splashing around, swimming, paddling or just cooling off is a lovely way to spend time.



This remains true so long as everyone is clear about the often hidden dangers of water and follows simple 'rules' for safety.

Deaths in Water

On average , there are 40-50 children who drown every year in the UK. Many more are injured and brain damaged for life.

Different bodies of water can present particular dangers to specific age groups

Babies and Toddlers

Babies and young children can drown in just 2 cm of water according to the Royal Life Saving Society UK. That means that sinks, toilets, baths, fountains, buckets, paddling pools and ditches are all potential dangers.

It can take as little as 20 seconds for a toddler to drown.



Older Children

For older children, teens and young adults, death is most likely to occur in natural bodies of water such as lakes, rivers and reservoirs. Drowning can occur within 60 seconds —this is extremely fast.

Adults

Adults are more likely to be drowned at sea. Statistics show that those who consider themselves strong swimmers are MORE likely to die because they take greater risks. Many drownings at sea are not from people swimming, rather from those who have been blown into the sea or capsized.



Bodies of Water and their Particular Dangers

Paddling Pools, Hot Tubs and Baths

Key Dangers

- Drowning is the second highest cause of accidental death in children under 5 in the UK. People most often report that they 'only went to answer the phone/door for a moment' not realising that a toddler can die in 20 seconds.
- Vulnerable older children and adults also need to be considered. Some deaths recorded are from people succumbing to an epileptic fit whilst in the bath.

Swimming Pools

Key Dangers

- Many injuries and deaths occur when families are on holiday and have access either to their own pool in a villa or a hotel /campsite pool.
- Parents can be less cautious because they believe a lifeguard is on site or because they have told the children not to go in the water without them.
- Hotel and complex pools are often very noisy, full of action and over crowded.
- Often a child in difficulty cannot make themselves noticed because they are under the water or cannot be heard above general noise.
- Statistics show that more drownings occur in swimming pools on the first and last days of a holiday as parents are distracted and less vigilant.

Rivers, Reservoirs and Quarries

Key Dangers

- The sudden and unexpected change in temperature of the water can lead to panic, shock and heart stopping.
- Currents under the water and particularly near inlets and pipes can be strong and are often invisible on the surface of the water.
- Rocks and obstructions like old machinery may lie beneath and people can be caught by them, tangled and held under or hurt themselves on the structures.
- Water may look deep but in fact be too shallow to dive into causing neck injuries and paralysis.
- Water may look clean, but algae forming in it may be very bad for the body
- Water near farmland may have seepage of sewage into it including such bacteria as E.coli.



Listen to Dr Sarah Jenkins explain about the dangers of reservoirs:

'The sun's shining, a beautiful day, you might think there's nothing better. You're out with your mates and you come across a reservoir and jump straight into that cool, refreshing water.

Well sadly you'd be wrong and you could be very dangerously wrong.

Because you're jumping straight into a reservoir and you're going straight into cold water, you can get something called shock response even if the temperature is as high as 25 degrees and going down to 15 degrees which you're going to have when you're going into a reservoir.

That literally means it's going to take your breath away. That stops you from being able to breathe normally and you automatically start to over-breathe or hyperventilate. This means, that very sadly, people breathe in water (into the lungs) because they can't stop themselves from having to breathe in within seconds and that means, of course, they start to drown.

Even if you survive that bit (and obviously lots of people do) there are actually more dangers in store, even in the first few minutes of being in cold water.

Because the water is very cold on your skin, your body automatically diverts all the blood away from your skin to try to keep all your vital organs inside warm. The problem with that is that firstly it can put extra strain on your heart and people can run into problems with abnormal heart rhythms which can be severe and sometimes even fatal, but you also find that your muscles don't work properly. They get uncoordinated because they're not getting enough oxygen going to them

Even if you're a really strong swimmer, a very, very small current could be enough to take you into real trouble. It could mean of course, that if your mates do try to come and rescue you, you can't hold on to what they're throwing to you because your muscles can't coordinate and that can mean that disaster can strike just when you think you're out of trouble.

So it really is a no brainer. Reservoirs are not there to swim in. They may look enticing but it could be the last thing you do.'



Sea

The sea presents a whole additional set of dangers, many of which are not initially linked to swimming. Half the people who drowned in the sea in the UK had not gone to swim; they had been walking, sailing, fishing and have been dragged into the sea without expecting it.

Key Dangers

- Rip tides and currents can be incredibly strong
- Cold temperatures
- Inflatables taking people out to sea
- High winds blow people into the sea and create choppy wave conditions
- Jellyfish
- Unclean water full of sewage, waste and bacteria
- Marine debris including old structures eg rusty pier struts
- Swimming where there are no lifeguards
- Jumping/diving in from a height where you do not know the depth of the water or what is below the surface eg rocks
- Lightening
- Dehydration
- Sun



Watch the following reconstruction

(Caution– may be upsetting to anyone who has been linked with a drowning)

INSERT

One Last Breath—(Credit Wales on Line) 3 minutes



How to Keep Safe

DO	DO NOT
Supervise youngsters every minute	Nip out for a second to answer the phone, get a towel leaving a baby or
Learn to swim	Rely on being a good swimmer
Learn CPR	Rely on others to have first aid skills
Assume that there are invisible, strong currents	Assume that a calm surface means there is no current below
Fence ponds, pools etc fit alarms	Leave open water accessible
Obey warning signs	Do not ignore park rangers, life guards and other responsible adults
Fight your instinct and go for help	Do NOT dive in to help
Save energy by floating	Do not waste energy trying to swim inland if you aren't getting anywhere
Swim parallel to the shore and swim back to land at an angle if you have the energy and you can make progress	Don't fight the current and swim against it
Swim between the red and yellow flags	Don't ignore safety instructions
Do your research on tide times, weather conditions etc	Do not drink alcohol—it impairs judgement and you get colder quicker
Expect there to be broken machinery, pipes and other debris	Do not assume that water is deep enough to dive or jump in to
Do let people know where you are going and who you are with	Never swim alone
If fishing or sailing make sure you wear buoyancy aids	Do not assume that the weather will stay the same as when you set out
Assume that the water is contaminated even in a reservoir	Do not drink the water or bathe in contaminated water



Do not become another tragic death that could have been avoided.

Do not be responsible for the death of those trying to rescue you.

Let's Pray:

Dear God

For those who have lost their lives in drowning accidents.

Eternal rest give to them, O Lord

And let everlasting light shine upon them.

May they rest in peace.

Amen



Putting it into Practice

Hold a 'Water Safety Week' in your school or classroom.

Today, raise awareness by creating a poster to inform about the danger to babies and toddlers of being left near or in shallow water.

Exit of Pupils

A thought provoking slideshow introducing the theme of 'Water Safety' or the pupils to exit assembly to (10 minutes)



Collective Worship and Putting it into Practice for the Rest of the Week

Day 2

Dear God

For sailors.

May God watch over them and guide them towards safe harbours.

Amen

Hold a 'Water Safety Week' in your school or classroom.

Today, raise awareness by creating a poster to inform about the dangers of ponds, lakes and reservoirs.

Day 3

Dear God,

Help me to resist temptation, particularly if my friends and peers want to do something which may be dangerous.

Help me to speak my mind and stick to my views and in doing so, may others follow the example and be encouraged to steer clear of possible danger and remain in safety.

Amen

Hold a 'Water Safety Week' in your school or classroom.

Today, raise awareness by creating a poster to inform about the dangers of the sea.



Day 4

Dear God

We pray for those people who have dedicated their lives to the service of others.

We think of police, ambulance and under water recovery teams; the RNLI and volunteers who man lifeboats; air sea rescue and the many volunteers who look after our safety around water .

We thank them for their selfless dedication and service and pray that they remain safe in their work.

Amen

Today, design a poster campaign to teach about the 'dos and don'ts' involved in water safety.

Day 5

Dear God

Finally this week, we think of Tom and Teya. We pray for their eternal rest in your presence.

Please help their families, friends and communities to remember them with joy for the short lives they lived and let us pray that their untimely deaths save others.

Amen

Finally this week, see if you can mount a campaign to encourage young people to learn to swim and also to learn CPR. You might want to contact your local leisure centre and medical centre for support.



Where to go for more information:

United Utilities—www.unitedutilities.com

Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents—www.rospa.com

Royal Life Saving Society—www.riss.org.uk

Kids Health—www.kidshealth.org

National Water Safety—www.nationalwatersafety.org.uk

Water Safety Advice (Swimming Teachers Association)—www.sta.co.uk

Local Government Association—www.local.gov.uk

Canal River Trust - <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk>

Scottish Water—www.scottishwater.co.uk

Royal National Lifeboat Institute—<https://rnli.org>

www.riverandseasense.com

All counties have their own local advice websites

