



OTTERBURN PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY SWIMMING POLICY

Policy Location:	Reviewed:	Review Due:	Person Responsible:
Shared drive and school website. Copies can also be requested from the school office.	September 2026	September 2027	Alison Woodcock, Headteacher and all staff accompanying pupils to school swimming sessions. Governor Oversight: Sarah Mand, Chair of Governors

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1. Purpose

Otterburn Primary School & Nursery recognises swimming as an important part of the Physical Education curriculum and an essential life skill.

The school aims to ensure that pupils develop confidence, competence and water safety awareness through safe, inclusive and well-organised swimming provision.

This policy sets out the school's arrangements and expectations for curriculum swimming, including transport, supervision, changing, medical needs, menstruation, non-participation, jewellery, behaviour and individual arrangements.

2. Curriculum Swimming

Swimming and water safety form part of the National Curriculum for Physical Education at Key Stage 2.

Pupils should be taught to:

- swim competently, confidently and proficiently over a distance of at least 25 metres
- use a range of strokes effectively
- perform safe self-rescue in different water-based situations.

At Otterburn Primary School & Nursery, swimming provision may be offered to a wider group of pupils where this supports curriculum delivery, progression or individual need.

As swimming is part of the curriculum, pupils are expected to participate unless there is a medical, safety or other exceptional reason why they cannot do so.

3. Organisation of Swimming

Swimming sessions will take place at an approved swimming facility and will be supported by the relevant risk assessments and operating procedures.

The school will ensure that:

- appropriate risk assessments are in place and available to relevant staff
- staff are familiar with relevant emergency and safeguarding procedures
- appropriate supervision is maintained during travel, changing and swimming sessions
- relevant information about pupils' medical, SEND or additional needs is shared with appropriate staff and, where necessary, the swimming provider
- registers and emergency contact information are available
- pupils are placed in appropriate swimming groups according to their ability
- arrangements are reviewed where concerns or individual circumstances arise.

The swimming provider is responsible for ensuring that swimming teachers and lifeguards hold the qualifications and competencies required under its operating procedures and risk assessment.

School staff retain responsibility for pupils' safeguarding, behaviour and welfare throughout the visit and are responsible for pupil discipline.

4. Staffing, Supervision and Handover

The Headteacher will determine appropriate school staffing arrangements for swimming sessions, taking account of:

- pupil numbers and ages
- individual needs
- SEND and medical needs
- behaviour
- the swimming venue
- transport arrangements
- changing arrangements
- the relevant risk assessments.

School staff are responsible for pupils until they are handed over to the swimming teacher at the designated poolside handover point.

During the swimming lesson, swimming instruction and pool supervision will be provided in accordance with the swimming provider's procedures. School staff will remain available to support pupils' welfare, behaviour and additional needs.

At least one member of school staff will be available during the lesson to respond to issues which arise, including accompanying a pupil who needs to leave the poolside, for example to use the toilet.

Following the lesson, responsibility for the class will be handed back to school staff. School staff will then supervise pupils from poolside, through the changing arrangements and until they leave the building.

These arrangements reflect the provider's current throughcare procedures.

5. Volunteers and Parent Helpers

The school may use volunteers, including parent helpers, to support the safe organisation and supervision of swimming sessions.

All volunteers accompanying pupils to swimming must be approved by the school and will work under the direction of school staff. They must follow the school's Volunteer Policy, safeguarding procedures, confidentiality expectations and the relevant risk assessments and procedures for the swimming facility.

The school will determine the role of volunteers and any checks or safeguarding arrangements required in accordance with its usual procedures.

Volunteers must not take sole responsibility for decisions relating to pupils' medical needs, behaviour, safeguarding or individual arrangements. Any concerns should be referred promptly to a member of school staff.

6. Transport

Where transport is provided by the school, pupils will normally travel to and from swimming with the school group.

Pupils are expected to behave safely and sensibly while travelling and follow instructions from staff and the driver.

Toys and personal fidget or sensory items should not normally be brought onto school transport. Where a pupil requires a fidget or sensory aid as part of their identified SEND or additional needs, this should be agreed with school staff and should be a small, discreet item which can be used safely without distracting the pupil or others.

Gel-filled, liquid-filled or similar items which may burst, leak or create a mess should not be brought onto school transport.

Staff may ask a pupil to put an item away if it is being used inappropriately or is causing a distraction.

7. Collection from the Swimming Facility

In individual circumstances, the Headteacher may agree for a pupil to be collected directly from the swimming facility by a parent, carer or other authorised adult.

Such arrangements must:

- be agreed with the school in advance
- identify the adult who will collect the pupil
- include a clear handover from school staff
- comply with any requirements of the swimming facility
- not compromise the supervision or safety of other pupils.

Once a pupil has been formally handed over to the authorised adult, responsibility for the pupil passes to that adult.

An individual arrangement does not automatically establish an entitlement to the same arrangement on future occasions and may be reviewed or amended where circumstances change.

8. Medical Needs

Parents and carers are responsible for informing the school of any medical condition, injury, treatment or change in circumstances which may affect their child's ability to swim, travel or participate safely.

The school is responsible for ensuring that relevant medical and health information is communicated to the swimming provider where this is necessary for the safe participation and supervision of a pupil. This is specifically identified within the provider's risk assessment.

Relevant medication and healthcare arrangements will be managed in accordance with the school's Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy and any Individual Healthcare Plan in place.

School staff will take account of relevant medical information or advice provided by parents, healthcare professionals and the swimming facility.

Where there is uncertainty about whether participation or travel is safe, the school may seek further information before determining appropriate arrangements.

9. Temporary Medical Restrictions and Non-Participation

There may be occasions when a pupil is temporarily unable to enter the water because of illness, injury, medical treatment, medical advice or another health-related reason.

Parents and carers should inform the school as soon as possible and provide relevant information about the restriction.

Pupils who cannot swim but can travel

Where a pupil is unable to enter the water but is otherwise well enough to attend school and undertake the journey safely, they will normally accompany their class to the swimming facility.

They will remain appropriately supervised and may observe the swimming lesson or undertake another suitable activity where this can be accommodated safely.

This may include pupils who:

- have a temporary injury or wound which must be kept dry
- are recovering from a medical procedure or treatment
- have been advised temporarily not to swim
- are unable to participate because they do not have appropriate swimming kit
- are unable to meet a safety requirement, for example because jewellery cannot be removed
- are temporarily unable to participate for another health or welfare reason.

Being unable to enter the water does not mean that a pupil will remain at school or that a parent will be asked or permitted to collect them during the school day.

Where travel itself presents a medical difficulty

The school recognises that there is an important distinction between being unable to swim and being medically unable, or experiencing significant difficulty, to undertake the journey to or from the swimming facility.

A pupil may be well enough to attend school but have a medical condition, disability, injury or temporary health need which means that the school's usual transport arrangements cause significant difficulty or are not appropriate.

Parents and carers should inform the school where this is the case and provide relevant medical information or advice where appropriate.

The Headteacher will consider the pupil's individual circumstances and determine appropriate arrangements. These may include:

- reasonable adjustments to support the pupil to travel with the school group
- appropriate medication administered in accordance with school procedures
- travelling with the school group for one part of the journey with an agreed collection or transport arrangement for the other

- an individually agreed alternative transport arrangement
- remaining at school with appropriate supervision and suitable learning activities where travelling to the swimming facility is not reasonably appropriate
- other appropriate arrangements following discussion with parents and relevant professionals where necessary.

Any alternative arrangement must be agreed with the school in advance and must take account of safeguarding, supervision, staffing, the pupil's medical and educational needs and the safe operation of the swimming visit.

Individual arrangements will be reviewed as appropriate and do not automatically establish an entitlement to the same arrangement in future.

10. Menstruation

The school recognises that some pupils may not feel comfortable participating in swimming during their period. This will be managed sensitively and discreetly.

Pupils should be encouraged to speak privately to a member of staff if they are unable or do not feel comfortable taking part.

Where a pupil chooses not to swim because of menstruation, they will normally accompany the swimming group, remain appropriately supervised and observe the lesson.

Parents and carers are welcome to contact the school if there are any particular concerns or medical needs relating to their child's participation.

Pupils will not be questioned publicly or expected to discuss personal information in front of other pupils.

11. Jewellery and Earrings

In accordance with the risk assessment for school swimming, pupils are required to remove all jewellery, including earrings, before entering the water.

Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring that their child can comply with this requirement on swimming days. Where a pupil cannot remove their earrings independently, they should be removed at home before school.

School staff will not remove, replace or put earrings in for pupils.

Earrings must not be covered with tape as an alternative to removal.

Where a pupil is unable to participate because jewellery cannot be removed, they will normally accompany the swimming group and remain appropriately supervised, unless an alternative arrangement has been agreed by the Headteacher.

Being unable to swim because of jewellery does not automatically mean that a pupil will remain at school or be collected during the school day.

12. Swimming Clothing and Equipment

Parents and carers will be informed of the clothing and equipment pupils require for swimming.

Pupils should bring:

- appropriate swimwear
- a towel
- any other equipment specified by the school or swimming facility.

Any requirements relating to swimming hats, goggles or other equipment will be communicated to families.

Goggles may be used where permitted within the school's swimming arrangements. Parents should inform the school of any relevant medical or safety considerations.

Pupils should not bring unnecessary valuables to swimming sessions.

13. Changing Arrangements and Safeguarding

Pupils will be appropriately supervised while using the changing facilities, with staff maintaining appropriate oversight while respecting pupils' privacy and dignity.

Pupils will be expected to change as independently as is appropriate for their age and individual needs.

Where individual changing cubicles are available, staff may arrange or allocate these to pupils where they consider this appropriate, taking account of pupils' age, privacy, dignity, individual needs and the practical arrangements at the swimming facility. Pupils who require an individual cubicle for privacy, dignity, medical, SEND, welfare or other identified needs will be supported to use one where available. Arrangements will be made by school staff in liaison with the swimming facility as necessary.

Staff will ensure that pupils behave appropriately in the changing areas and that no pupil is left without appropriate supervision.

Where a pupil requires additional support with changing because of SEND, a medical condition or another identified need, appropriate arrangements will be agreed with parents or carers where necessary.

Any safeguarding or welfare concerns arising during swimming or changing will be managed in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as appropriate.

14. SEND and Additional Needs

The school is committed to ensuring that pupils with SEND and additional needs can participate in swimming wherever reasonably possible.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered in consultation with pupils, parents, staff, swimming instructors and relevant professionals where appropriate.

These may include:

- additional adult support
- adapted teaching
- alternative changing arrangements
- support with communication
- adjustments to transport
- individual risk assessment
- consideration of sensory, physical, emotional or behavioural needs.

The provider's risk assessment specifically identifies the need for additional assistance where required for pupils with disabilities or learning difficulties.

A pupil will not be excluded from swimming solely because they have SEND or additional needs.

15. Travel Sickness

Parents and carers should inform the school where a pupil experiences significant travel sickness.

Where medication is required, this must be managed in accordance with the school's procedures for administering medicines.

Travel sickness will be considered according to the individual circumstances of the pupil. The fact that a pupil experiences travel sickness does not automatically mean that they will be unable to travel to swimming. Equally, where travel sickness is significant, the school will consider whether reasonable adjustments or an individual arrangement may be appropriate.

Possible arrangements may include:

- appropriate travel sickness medication
- reasonable adjustments to seating or other travel arrangements where practicable
- travelling to the swimming facility with the school group but being collected by a parent or authorised adult following the lesson
- another individually agreed transport arrangement
- where the journey itself continues to cause significant difficulty despite reasonable adjustments, remaining at school with appropriate supervision and alternative curriculum provision.

Where difficulties are significant or ongoing, the school may ask parents and carers to seek appropriate medical advice or evidence so that the pupil's needs and any reasonable adjustments can be properly considered.

Arrangements will be determined by the Headteacher, agreed with parents where appropriate and kept under review. They must not compromise the pupil's safety, safeguarding arrangements or the appropriate supervision of other pupils.

16. Behaviour

The school's Behaviour Policy applies throughout swimming provision, including transport, changing, waiting periods and time spent at the swimming facility.

Pupils must follow instructions given by school staff, swimming instructors, transport staff and swimming facility staff.

Swimming presents particular safety considerations and unsafe behaviour will therefore be addressed immediately.

The swimming provider's risk assessment identifies pupil discipline as the responsibility of the school.

Where a pupil's behaviour presents a significant or continuing risk, the school may consider:

- additional supervision
- reasonable adjustments
- an individual risk assessment
- discussion with parents
- advice from relevant professionals.

Any decision about participation will take account of the pupil's individual needs and the safety of the pupil and others.

17. Pupils Who Forget Swimming Kit

Parents, carers and pupils are expected to ensure that appropriate swimming kit is brought to school on swimming days.

Where a pupil forgets their kit, staff will consider whether the situation can reasonably be resolved before the session.

Repeated failure to bring swimming kit will be discussed with parents as this may prevent the pupil from accessing an important part of the curriculum.

A pupil who is unable to swim because they do not have appropriate kit will normally accompany the group and remain appropriately supervised.

18. Individual Arrangements

There may be circumstances in which an individual arrangement is required because of a pupil's medical, SEND, welfare or other identified needs.

The Headteacher will determine whether an individual arrangement is appropriate, taking account of:

- the pupil's health, welfare and dignity
- information and medical advice available to the school
- the pupil's views, where appropriate
- parental views
- reasonable adjustments
- available staffing and supervision
- transport arrangements
- the requirements of the swimming facility
- the safety and educational needs of the pupil and wider group.

Where a need is ongoing, arrangements may be recorded within an Individual Healthcare Plan, individual risk assessment or other appropriate school documentation.

Individual arrangements will be reviewed as necessary and may be amended where circumstances change.

19. Emergency Procedures and Incidents

School staff will familiarise themselves with the emergency procedures of the swimming facility.

The provider's risk assessment confirms that an Emergency Action Plan is in place for circumstances including pool incidents, fire, power failure and other emergencies.

In the event of an accident or emergency, school staff will follow:

- the swimming facility's emergency procedures
- instructions given by swimming facility staff
- the school's first aid procedures
- procedures for contacting parents and carers
- safeguarding procedures where relevant.

Accidents, injuries, safeguarding concerns and significant incidents will be recorded in accordance with school procedures.

Where emergency medical treatment is required, the welfare of the pupil will take priority and parents or carers will be contacted as soon as reasonably practicable.

20. Communication with Parents and Carers

The school will provide parents and carers with relevant information about swimming arrangements, including dates, times, equipment requirements and important safety requirements.

Parents and carers are expected to:

- provide accurate and up-to-date medical information
- inform school promptly of injuries, treatment or circumstances affecting participation or travel
- ensure pupils have appropriate swimming kit
- ensure jewellery is removed in accordance with the school's swimming arrangements
- ensure agreed medication arrangements are in place
- communicate with the school where there are concerns about swimming or travel.

Parents should contact the school where an individual arrangement may be required rather than assuming that alternative transport, collection or supervision arrangements can be made.

21. Equality, Dignity and Inclusion

Swimming provision will be organised in accordance with the school's equality duties and commitment to inclusion.

The school will consider reasonable adjustments and individual circumstances to enable pupils to access swimming safely and with dignity.

Where cultural, religious, medical or additional needs affect swimming arrangements, parents and carers are encouraged to discuss these with the school so that appropriate arrangements can be considered.

Pupils' privacy and dignity will be respected, particularly in relation to changing, menstruation, medical conditions and personal care.

22. Responsibilities

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- ensuring appropriate swimming arrangements and risk assessments are in place
- determining school staffing and supervision arrangements
- considering individual circumstances and exceptional arrangements
- ensuring relevant policies and procedures are followed
- ensuring arrangements are reviewed where concerns arise.

School staff are responsible for:

- supervising pupils appropriately
- following relevant risk assessments and venue procedures
- ensuring pupils are safely handed over to and received back from swimming teaching staff
- providing relevant pupil information
- supporting pupils' behaviour, welfare and safeguarding
- respecting pupils' privacy and dignity
- reporting accidents, incidents or concerns.

Parents and carers are responsible for:

- providing accurate medical and emergency information
- informing school of circumstances affecting their child's participation or ability to travel
- ensuring their child has the required clothing and equipment
- ensuring jewellery can be removed for swimming
- supporting the school's safety requirements
- ensuring agreed medication arrangements are in place
- discussing requested individual arrangements with the school.

23. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner where:

- national, local authority or provider guidance changes
- swimming provision or the venue changes
- an accident or incident identifies a need for review
- the school's or provider's risk assessment identifies additional measures
- experience indicates that procedures require clarification.

Individual arrangements may be reviewed at any point where the school considers this necessary to maintain pupils' safety, welfare, dignity or access to education.

The current Places Leisure School Swimming Risk Assessment was reviewed in August 2026, is applicable from 1 September 2026 and is due for review in August 2027.