

**Kent County Council**

**Swimming Pool**  
**Emergency Action Plan**  
**For Headcorn Primary School**



This guidance is written in conjunction with Kent County Council's Safe Practice in School Swimming and Water Safety.

Approved by Head Teacher – May 2023

# **EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this procedure is to outline the action to be taken in the event of an emergency within the pool and poolside areas.

In schools where certain features or activities exist which present specific risks requiring action differing from that outlined in this procedure, the Head Teacher will include the process for dealing with emergency action in Appendix 1.

The Head Teacher will ensure staff are aware of their responsibilities in respect of this procedure.

## **2. RESPONSIBILITIES**

Responsibility for carrying out emergency action rests with swimming teachers and other pool staff.

The swimming teacher is responsible for controlling the incident / accident and for taking the decision to evacuate the pool.

## **3. PROCESS**

### **3.1 Raising Alarms**

The method of communication using a whistle is as follows:

- 1 Whistle Blast – attracts the attention of the pool users
- 2 Whistle Blasts – attracts the attention of other pool staff
- 3 Whistle Blasts – indicates that the lifeguard is about to take emergency action
- 1 Long Whistle Blast – attracts the attention of the pool users to prepare for an evacuation

Whistles will be used sparingly and will be followed by relevant verbal or visual instruction, e.g. hand signals. Consideration will be given, where possible, to the timeliness of the whistle in relation to the activities being carried out in order to ensure users, e.g. divers, are not unduly distracted.

### **3.2 Minor Emergencies**

Minor incidents or emergencies should not result in a life-threatening situation if handled properly. Examples of incidents of this nature include a bather slipping on poolside, a minor cut or bruise and a simple reaching rescue. Whilst these may be routine, they may result in increased risk of a more serious incident if proper processes are not followed.

In order to ensure an appropriate response, the teacher, on becoming aware of the incident will follow the process below:

- Notify other pool staff that they have to respond to an incident by blowing three whistles
- Other pool staff will move to cover area or request additional assistance if necessary
- A first aider will administer aid or provide appropriate assistance
- Casualty will be referred to appropriate location
- Accident / Incident Report completed as necessary

### **3.3 Major Emergencies**

A major emergency is where an incident occurs resulting in a serious injury or life-threatening situation. In most cases, more than one member of staff will be involved and in extreme situations, all members of the team will be required to provide support. The process for dealing with major emergencies is as follows:

- The swimming teacher will raise the alarm by using the pool alarm, blowing three whistles and/or use of hand signals.
- If the office has not been notified already, the nearest member of staff will notify of this emergency using the radio.
- The teacher will initiate rescue / first aid and remove casualty from the area.
- The support team members will cover the area vacated, assist the teacher and evacuate the pool if necessary.
- The teacher will ensure an ambulance is requested, supply specialist equipment and take control of the situation, including managing and assisting other bathers.

- A member of staff will be assigned to meet the ambulance crew to brief them and escort them to the scene of the incident.
- Responsibility is assigned to the ambulance crew once they start to treat the casualty.
- The teacher will ensure that safe levels of supervision are maintained for the duration of the incident and subsequent action.
- The teacher will ensure that all Accident / Incident Reports are completed and the necessary follow up action is taken.

Actions to be taken in the event of specific emergencies are detailed in 3.4 to 3.10 below.

### **3.4 Fire Evacuation**

The arrangements in place for raising the alarm are as follows:

- If a fire breaks out in the pool area then the school office must be contacted via the walkie-talkie to initiate an alarm. If for any reason the school office cannot be contacted, then the nearest break glass alarm points are in the main school hall (Bevan Building) or alternatively in the Keeler building overlooking the pool.
- On hearing the alarm, the member of staff in charge of the party must initiate evacuation to the Key Stage 2 playground.

Once the alarm has been raised those on poolside should blow their whistles as per the Normal Operating Procedures (NOP) and clear the pool as quickly as possible.

Everyone should be directed to the nearest emergency exit. A section of the fence, surrounding the pool, can be lifted out of its housing to allow direct access to the KS2 playground. Thermal blankets will be issued if necessary and will be brought to the assembly point by the nominated first aider present at the pool-side. Swimmers SHOULD NOT return to the changing area to collect belongings.

Once at the assembly point the person responsible for the pool will check all staff and pupils are present against the register and or signing in book.

### **3.5 Discovery of a Casualty in the Water**

The first response to a casualty in the water will be to consider performing a rescue by reaching with a pole or rope. Whenever possible, hand to hand contact will be

avoided until the casualty is under control and the possibility of being pulled into the water is reduced.

The pool will only be evacuated if necessary.

The teacher will only enter the water to affect a rescue if other alternatives will not work.

If entry into the pool is necessary, the process to be applied is as follows:

- Attract the attention of another teacher/assistant and additional support by using the pool alarm and/or blowing the whistle loudly three times
- If the poolside drown alarm (horn) has not been activated or alarm raised, the nearest member of staff to the alarm will activate/initiate it
- If the teacher is carrying a radio, it will be placed on poolside prior to entry if possible
- The teacher will enter the water in a safe manner, recover the casualty and land them at the nearest suitable landing point
- The teacher(s) will follow resuscitation protocols (CPR) in accordance with NPLQ and/or first aid training. These will be followed until the ambulance crew take over.

### **3.6 Serious Injury to a Bather**

#### General

The process for dealing with major emergencies as detailed in Section 3.3 will be followed in the event that a member of the pool staff notices a bather with a serious injury. The teacher(s) will follow first aid/resuscitation protocols in accordance with NPLQ or first aid training. These will be followed until the ambulance crew takes over. In cases of serious injury, unconsciousness or suspected broken bones, patients will not be moved until first aid has been given.

#### Head Injuries

All head injuries will be treated as serious injuries and teachers will follow first aid/resuscitation protocols in accordance with their NPLQ or first aid training. In addition to following the major emergency process outlined in Section 3.3, the following action will be taken:

- Casualties with face / head injuries will NOT be allowed to return to the pool.

- An ambulance will be called if the injury appears serious. If the injury appears less serious, the casualty will be made to dress and will be supervised by a responsible person whilst doing so.
- If there is any doubt as to the severity of the injury an ambulance will be called as there is possibility of delayed concussion/loss of consciousness occurring.

### Aquatic Spinal Injury

All suspected spinal injuries will be treated as serious injuries and teachers will follow rescue / resuscitation protocols in accordance with their training. In addition to following the major emergency process outlined in Section 3.3, the following action will be taken:

- On entering the water, the lifeguard must shout, "***Lifeguard entering the water, suspected spinal***"
  - All other pool users will be carefully directed away from the casualty in order not to disturb the water or the casualty. Once away from the casualty all bathers must clear the pool and will be directed away from the incident.
- A minimum of 4 trained staff is required to recover a casualty using a spinal board.
- A relative of the casualty will be informed of the incident.

### **3.7 Disorderly Behaviour**

It should be noted that incidents of this nature within the pool or around poolside may detract the attention of pool staff away from their primary duties of pool supervision and teaching. Assistance from other staff will be requested as soon as the teacher feels their attention is being drawn away from their primary duties.

### **3.8 Lack of Water Clarity**

It is vital that all teachers and assistants can clearly see the bottom of the pool in order that a bather can be seen in the event of an emergency. The following process will be followed in the event of poor water clarity:

- If the pool water becomes cloudy, the member of staff or company responsible for swimming pool maintenance will be informed immediately.
- A water test will be undertaken and plant will be checked for correct functioning. Appropriate remedial action will be undertaken.
- The remedial action is not possible or is not effective soon enough; the member of staff or company responsible for swimming pool maintenance and the swimming teacher will determine if it is safe for the pool to remain open.
- Bathers will only be allowed back in the pool once the water quality has improved sufficiently to enable staff to clearly view the pool bottom and a satisfactory chemical balance has been confirmed.

### **3.09 Dealing with Blood, Vomit and Faeces**

In the event that blood, vomit and faeces are discovered in the pool or on poolside, the following procedure will be applied:

#### **Blood**

- If substantial amounts of blood are spilled into the pool, it will be temporarily cleared of people to allow the pollution to disperse and any infectious particles within it to be neutralised by the disinfectant in the water.

**When clearing blood, the correct personal protective equipment, i.e. disposable gloves must be worn.**

- Spillages of blood on poolside will be contained, covered in paper towels to enable the towels to soak up the blood and wiped up immediately. Blood will not be washed into the pool or poolside drains. Soiled towels will be disposed of properly in clinical waste bins, e.g. nappy bins. The area will then be disinfected.

#### **Vomit**

- If substantial amounts of vomit are spilled into the pool the affected pool will be closed to bathers in order to allow for its removal.

- The vomit will be removed from the water using a scoop and placed in a bucket, the contents of which will be flushed down the toilet.
- A minimum of “**three turnover periods**” of the affected pool will elapse to ensure the removal of any bacteria.
- Prior to the pool re-opening a water quality test to ensure that chlorine levels and TDS levels are within the agreed parameters and a visual inspection will be carried out.
- When clearing vomit, the correct personal protective equipment, i.e. disposable gloves must be worn.
- Spillages of vomit on poolside will be contained, covered in paper towels to enable the towels to soak up the vomit as much as possible and wiped up immediately. Vomit will not be washed into the pool or poolside drains. Soiled towels will be disposed of properly in clinical waste bins, e.g. nappy bins. The area will then be disinfected.
- Any equipment that has been used to scoop up the vomit must be thoroughly disinfected before it is stored away.

### Diarrhoea

- If diarrhoea is discovered in the pool, the affected pool will be closed immediately, in order to allow for its removal.
- The procedure for removing diarrhoea will be the same as for removing vomit. However, a minimum of “**six turnover periods**” to the affected pool will elapse to ensure the removal of bacteria.

Prior to the pool re-opening a water quality test to ensure that chlorine levels and TDS levels are within the agreed parameters and a visual inspection will be carried out.

### Solid Stools

- If a solid stool is reported to be in the pool, it must be immediately retrieved from the pool using a scoop. The stool will be placed into a bucket and flushed down the toilet.
- The decision to close the pool for a short period, e.g. to maintain customer care standards, rests with the Duty Manager.



- A careful visual check will be undertaken to ensure that no particles remain and a water test carried out to ensure that the quality of water is within defined parameters.
- Any equipment that has been used to scoop up the stool must be thoroughly disinfected before it is stored away.

# **EMERGENCY ACTION PLANS**

## **Emergency Procedures**

- All routines and relevant notices should be brought to the attention of pupils when they first visit the pool and should be re-emphasised on subsequent visits.
- Emergency procedures to clear the pool should be practised during the first swimming session and then at regular intervals.

## **Potential Emergencies**

The greatest risk is from a child suffering an accident and possibly becoming unconscious in the water. If this occurs, the following procedure should be followed.

- The staff leader should move all other children to the side or out of the pool of the pool
- The emergency signal to clear the pool is one long loud blast on the whistle.
- Staff should facilitate a rescue, using whatever equipment and methods are deemed necessary.
- Once the child is safely removed from the pool, appropriate first aid, including CPR, may be administered and help should be summoned.
- If an ambulance is required, staff will use their mobile to call 999, or if the signal fails, they will contact the Office Staff, School Business Manager or Premises Manager on the walkie-talkie, who will use the landline to call an ambulance.
- Staff may also use the air horn to attract help.
- As soon as possible, the remainder of the class should be removed to the changing rooms.
- The injured child will be removed from the swimming pool area in whatever way is necessary, given their injuries.

## **Epileptic Fit**

Should a child suffer an epileptic fit whilst in the pool, a staff member should enter the water and support the child, holding their face clear of the water, until the fit ends. They should not attempt to remove the child from the water. Once the fit has finished, the child should be removed from the pool and appropriate first aid administered.

The remainder of the class should be made to exit the pool and enter the changing rooms as soon as is possible.

## **Asthma Attack**

Every class teacher should ensure that they bring their children's inhalers to the pool when swimming, just as they should when conducting any PE activity. If a child suffers an asthma attack, they should be removed from the pool, take their inhaler and then treated as normal. Help should be summoned from the school office.

## **Human Waste**

If there is evidence of human waste in the water, the pool must be vacated immediately. The pool will then be treated fully, as described in section 3.09.

## **Fire Alarm**

If the fire alarm sounds, the staff member must act in an appropriate manner.

- They should evacuate the pool.
- They must gather the children and complete a roll call.
- They must then send the children to put on their shoes and towels, and to collect their clothes.
- They should contact the secretary on the walkie-talkie to determine where the fire is located, which muster point to join and to confirm that the class members are all accounted for.

## **Storm**

If a storm should gather the children must be removed from the pool, in case of a lightning strike.

## **Recording Incidents**

Any accident, 'near-miss', or health and safety issue must be brought to the attention of the School Business Manager and Premises Manager immediately. There is a record book in the school office and this must be completed, whenever such an incident occurs and the details shared with the School Business Manager and Premises Manager.