

October 2021

Swimming Policy

Aims/Purposes

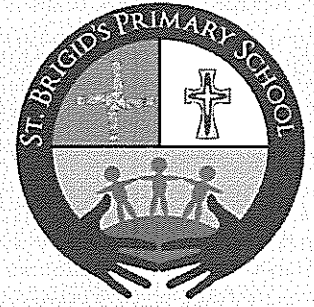
- To enable pupils to acquire basic swimming skills while they are at St Brigid's Primary School
- To comply with the requirements of the Revised Curriculum in the PE Strand, Aquatics.
- To address the risk of harm during swimming lessons as identified in the school's Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment
- To safeguard staff members' integrity relating to Child Protection matters.

Rationale

The school has regard to both the physical and mental development of its pupils. Believing that a healthy body promotes a healthy mind, the school arranges for a six week course of swimming instruction for students from 2nd to 6th class during the school year.

Procedures Guidelines

- Each pupil will attend a 5/6 week session in a swimming pool annually from 2nd – 6th class, from March to June.
- The swimming pool at Athlone Regional Sports Centre is reserved for 2 six-week blocks, usually on Monday morning.
- Costs incurred by hiring of pool, and payment of instructors necessitate a charge of €30 being imposed on each pupil. Inability to pay will not preclude a pupil from participating fully in swimming classes. Funding for transport will be applied for annually to Rural Local Link to help defray the costs.
- The Principal and Secretary will organize the swimming programme for all classes from second to sixth class
- It is recommended that all children in the relevant classes participate in the swimming lessons as it is part of the school curriculum. Children who are unwell on an occasional day will be allowed stay in another classroom and read, catch up on work etc. A written note from parents should be sent to the school requesting exemption and stating the reason why.
- Instruction in the pool will generally be provided by 3 coaches per session, therefore 3 levelled groups will be arranged.
- Children should wear their tracksuits on swimming days. Parents are asked to ensure all items are labelled with child's name. Time is limited so children are not encouraged to bring shampoo and shower gel to the pool and are encouraged to quickly rinse after their lessons. There is not enough time to fully dry children's hair with a hair dryer. Therefore, it is recommended that a silicone hat should be worn and girls with long hair should wear their hair tied up for the day.



Travel and Supervision Arrangements

Pupils will be accompanied by and supervised by relevant class teachers on the way to the pool from the school. In the case of split classes where not all children are going to swimming lessons (ie. 1st/2nd class split), alternative arrangements will be made involving SET. Where a child has access to SNA support for a specific care need, the SNA will accompany the child. Where the care needs requires medication to be administered in case of episode eg Epilepsy, the SNA will take responsibility for same. Teachers/SNAs will provide supervision before and after the swimming lessons.

Special Needs Pupils

SNAs will give assistance and support to the Special Needs pupils before and after swimming lessons. They will also be available at all times during the swimming lesson to take the child from the swimming instructor if she is no longer taking part in the lesson. Any such actions will be based on Care Needs of the pupil and form part of the Pupils Personal Care Plan.

SNAs are not required to enter the water with the child. They do not have sufficient training to do so. It is the responsibility of the instructor, be it an individual or group instructor to teach the special needs pupil their swimming lessons. It is the decision of the swimming pool whether or not the pupil is capable of being in a group swimming situation or an individual one. This depends on the ability of the individual child in the water. If the child is required to have an individual instructor the cost is incurred by the parent/guardian. This decision may be reached before or after the child's first lesson in the pool.

In relation to school tours, where classes are visiting a swimming pool or a water area e.g. an adventure park the same procedures apply. SNAs are not required to enter the water with the special needs pupil. If the parent/guardian feels that their child needs individual assistance in the water, a staff member from the given establishment may be employed and the cost of same is incurred by the parent/guardian of the child.

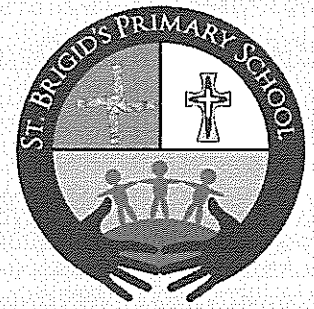
Health and Safety

Best practice in relation to the supervision, instruction and child protection procedures as outlined by the Irish Sports Council, Swim Ireland and the National Safety Council will be adhered to at all times.

Staff will follow the guidelines of our own Health & Safety Statement and Child Protection Policy at all times. One adult will not be supervising the children on their own at any time.

Pupils are required to behave at all times in a manner that ensures the safety of all involved in school swimming. Pupils must obey the instructor's orders at all times and comply with the school's Code of Behaviour Policy and the pool's Health and Safety Guidelines.

ST. BRIGID'S PRIMARY SCHOOL



Children must be able to dry and dress themselves as teachers are unable to assist any child under Child protection laws. Parents are welcome to come to the lessons to dress their own child only, where the child is unable to do so.

2nd – 6th class consists of girls only. A dressing room designated solely to St Brigid's is requested from the Sports Centre. Female teachers will supervise with at least 2 present at all times – This may be within the dressing room or outside with the children who are dressed for going home. A male teacher will supervise outside the dressing room only.

Teachers should remain on the viewing deck during the lesson in order to supervise the overall group and be available to pupils who may need to use the toilets or need their attention during the lesson.

Parents/guardians will receive a standard letter providing information on school swimming before their child starts their swimming term. A consent note, granting permission for a child to participate in swimming must be returned to the class teacher prior to the start of the swimming term.

Where a parent/guardian has a health concern regarding their child's participation in swimming, professional advice must be sought before the child participates in the swimming lesson.

In the best interest of the child, it is the duty of parents/guardians to inform the class teacher and/ or Principal with regard to any health condition that may affect the child in the pool. This information will be held in confidence and provided on a need to know basis to the swimming instructors.

Deodorants etc. must not be brought to the pool as the dressing rooms are confined spaces. Food and drink, jewelry, mobile phones and money should not be brought to swimming lessons. Children are not allowed to use the vending machines.

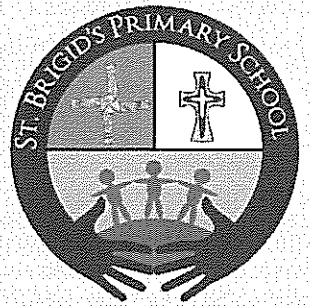
No video, film or photographs may be taken of children at swimming Pool.

Vetting of Coaches will be sought from Athlone Regional Sports Centre prior to commencement of lessons.

Any incident or injury which occurs will be recorded in the School's Accident Report Folder, following normal procedures.

The Health and Safety Guidelines outlined by the pool authorities will be strictly adhered to. Swimming hats must be worn at all times.

ST. BRIGID'S PRIMARY SCHOOL



Child Protection:

If during swimming lessons, a staff member observes something which raises child protection concerns, the incident should be reported to the DLP or Deputy DLP, as appropriate.

Roles and Responsibilities:

All relevant staff, under the leadership of the Principal participates in the implementation of an effective Swimming Policy.

Success Criteria:

The school evaluates the success of the policy through:

- a) Participation and progress in the curriculum by pupils
- b) Safe and effective care of all pupils in our school
- c) Feedback from relevant parents/guardians and from pupils themselves

Ratification & Communication:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in October 2021. It has been communicated to all staff and the parent body. It is available for the wider school community on our school website.

Signed: Kenn Duffy (Chairperson Board of Management)

Date: 4 / 10 / 21

Monitoring / Evaluation / Review:

Policy will be reviewed bi-annually as part of scheduled Policy Review or at other times if deemed necessary.