

St. Bernadette's School
Principal: Mr. J Haran
RN: 19592J



St. Bernadette's Swimming Policy

Aims/Purposes

- To enable pupils to acquire basic swimming skills while they are attending St. Bernadette's Special school.
- To comply with the requirements of the Revised Curriculum in aquatics.

Rationale

- The school has regard to both the physical and mental development of each of its pupils. Believing that a healthy body promotes a healthy mind, the school arranges for swimming instruction in the Aura Leisure Centre in Letterkenny Swimming pool for all classes, every 2nd week *if numbers increase, could change to every 3rd week
- Attendance at this fulfils the Aquatics Module of the PE Curriculum as laid down by the Department of Education and parents pay Euro 2 towards the cost and the school pays the remainder, buses are used to take the children to and from Swimming.
- All children are encouraged to participate in aquatics lessons as part of the National Curriculum. Should a child be unable to attend aquatics, due to a medical condition, a letter must be written to the class teacher/principal requesting exemption. Arrangements for supervision in this instance will be made on a case-by-case basis. Should a child be unable to attend one lesson due to ill health or any other reason, a letter must be given to the class teacher/principal, and he/she will travel with the class to the pool and remain under the supervision of the staff teacher in charge.
- Pupils will be accompanied by and supervised by a staff teacher and classroom SNAs on the way to the pool from the school. Pupils will travel by bus to the pool and the staff teacher and SNAs will provide supervision before and after the swimming lesson.
- In the female dressing room school staff supervise the children. One adult will not be supervising the children on their own at any time.
- In the male dressing room school staff supervise the children. One adult will not be supervising the children on their own at any time.

- Older children prefer to get changed in the individual changing rooms; staff members are always supervising the outside of the individual changing rooms.
- If a child needs to be changed in the disabled changing room – use of hoist or requires assistance in getting changed, 2 members of staff will be always with the student.
- If a child is sick or cannot partake in the swimming programme because of some medical reason, it is necessary that a written explanation is given to the class teacher/Principal to explain why. They must travel to the pool with their class and are supervised by the staff teacher in charge while the lesson is on.
- A walking club has been set up for pupils who do not take in their swimming gear or do not wish to take part in the swimming lesson, they will travel to the Swimming Pool with their class, and they will walk using the Aura facilities.
- It is not permitted for these children to stay in school, except in exceptional circumstances, as this is very disruptive to other classes. These rules apply to all children in our school without exemption.
- If exceptional circumstances occur, the child will be supervised in another teacher's classroom with work assigned to them by their own teacher. Which class they will go to is left to the discretion of the principal.

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 and Child Protection policies at all times.
- Pupils are required to behave at all times in a manner that ensures the safety of all involved in school swimming. Pupils must endeavour to obey the instructor's orders at all times and comply with the School Code of Behaviour.
- Teachers/SNAs should remain on the viewing deck during the lesson in order to supervise the overall group, pupils who are exempt from swimming and pupils who may need to use the toilets during the lesson.
- When children need to use the toilet, it is the school policy that they must seek their instructor's and teacher's permission before they leave the pool.

St. Bernadette's Swimming Policy SNA(s) Aiding Pupil(s) while in the water

- The SNA(s) in St. Bernadette's are required to assist the Special Needs pupils to enter and exit the pool and be available at all times during the swimming lesson to take the child from the swimming instructor if he/she are no longer taking part in the lesson.
- The SNA(s) are not required to instruct the children.
- In the event of an emergency or if a child needs assistance the SNAs/teacher are permitted to enter the water with the child.
- If the child is required to have an individual instructor, the cost of this falls on the parent/guardian or school. 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 if required enter the water with the special needs pupil.
- If a child has epilepsy, careful supervision is needed, the lifeguard on duty must also be informed of the child who has epilepsy. Armbands/life jackets can be worn by children with epilepsy. The epilepsy care plan must be known to the staff supervising the child.
- Advice from Epilepsy Ireland is as follows:

Close monitoring of someone who may have any kind of seizure in water is vital. Even in the briefest of seizures the swimmer may suddenly disappear below the surface. Flotation devices may help but they are not fool proof.

Once the SNA/teacher realises a seizure is starting they need to react quickly and keep the person's head supported and their face above water all the times during the seizure until the person can be safely removed from the water at the earliest opportunity. Medical attention is needed in the event of inhaling water or any concerns about breathing or recovery.

This policy was drawn up after consultation with the principal, deputy principal, SNAs, and school staff.

_____ of _____.

Signed: _____