



Learning to swim and water safety

A guide for parents, guardians and carers



Swimming and your child

By the time your child leaves primary school, they should be able to swim a minimum distance of 25 metres unaided. This is the National Curriculum Key Stage 2 attainment level, yet an astonishing number of children leave school unable to meet this standard.

As well as being good for your child's health, swimming is a skill that could ultimately save their life. Drowning is the third most common cause of accidental death in children, and therefore it is absolutely vital that every child has the opportunity to learn to swim and gain core knowledge regarding water safety.

Swimming and water safety within the National Curriculum

The standard of swimming 25 metres is a **minimum** requirement and a child who can just swim 25 metres will still be exposed to danger in water in the wrong circumstances. Pupils should be encouraged to practice their swimming to improve their basic skills and become a more competent swimmer.



What children should be taught at Key Stage 1 and 2

Swimming and water safety remains a statutory element of the National Curriculum.

The statutory requirement is for all pupils to achieve a **minimum** standard of swimming ability before they finish Key Stage 2 (end of Year 6). The National Curriculum programme of study for swimming and water safety is detailed below:

Key Stage 1 (5-7 years of age)

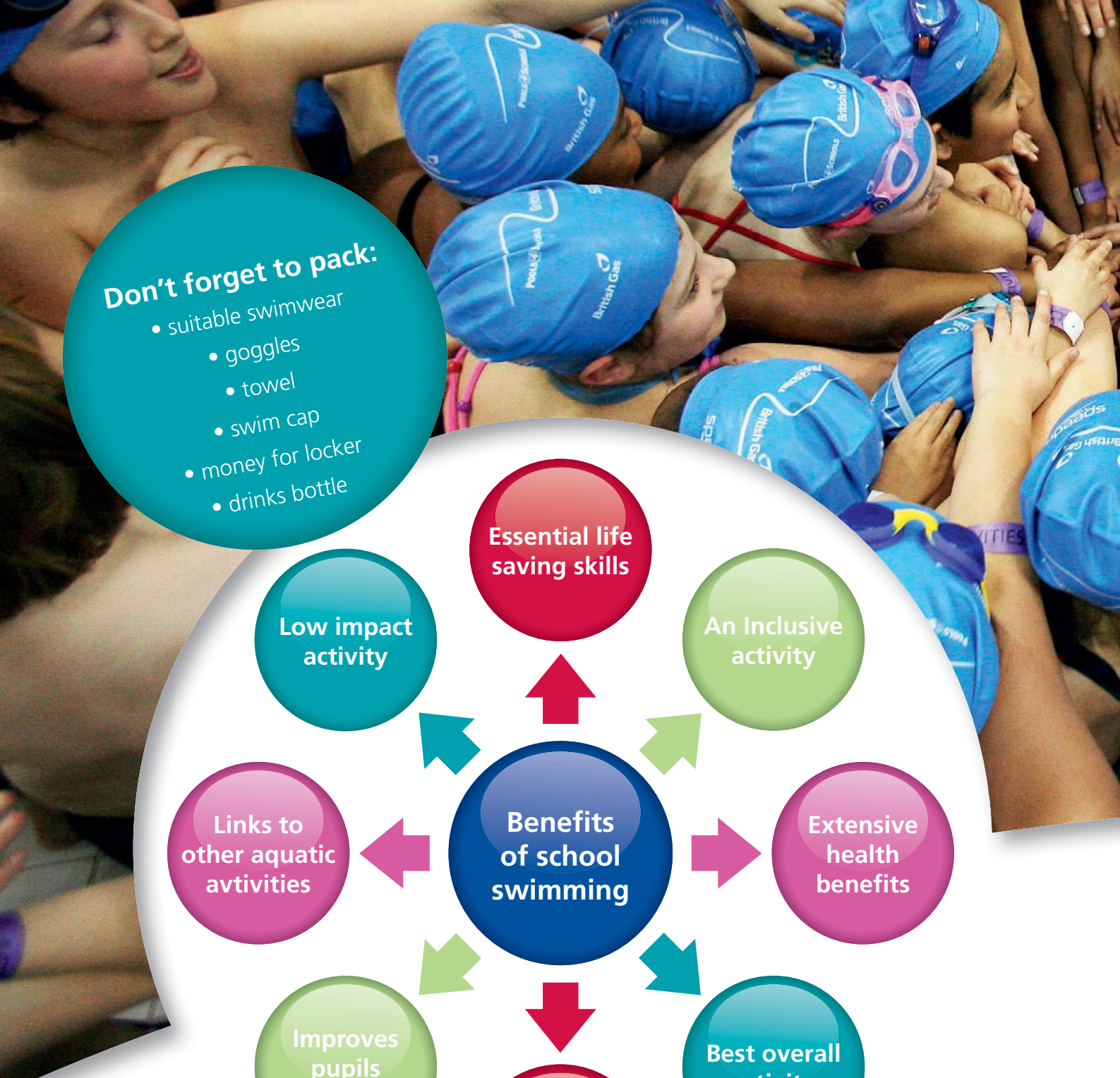
If schools choose to teach swimming at Key Stage 1, pupils should be taught to:

- move in the pool (for example, jump, walk, hop, and spin, using swimming aids and/or support)
- float and move with and without swimming aids; and
- propel themselves in water using different swimming aids, arms and leg actions and basic strokes.

Key Stage 2 (7-11 years old)

During the course of Key Stage 2, pupils should be taught to:

- pace themselves in floating and swimming challenges related to speed, distance and personal survival;
- swim unaided for a sustained period of time over a distance of at least 25m;
- use recognised arm and leg actions, lying on their front and back; and
- use a range of recognised strokes and personal survival skills (for example, front crawl, backstroke, sculling, floating and surface diving).



Don't forget to pack:

- suitable swimwear
- goggles
- towel
- swim cap
- money for locker
- drinks bottle



School swimming lessons for primary school pupils are statutory and the diagram above illustrates the importance of school swimming.

Once your child has learnt to swim, they have the opportunity to join a local swimming club and take part in other aquatic activities such as diving, lifesaving, synchronised swimming and water polo.

They can also take part in other water based pursuits such as sailing, canoeing and surfing.

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's access to swimming lessons at school please contact the school directly or contact your ASA regional team for more information. A full list of regional office numbers is on the back of this booklet.



What you can do to help

As a parent, guardian or carer you can play a vital role in encouraging your child to swim and learn about water safety, survival and lifesaving. There are a range of ways that you can help your child learn to swim and be confident in and around the water.

Swimming lessons at school

- Find out details of your child's school swimming programme:
 - Is it a quality programme, following the National Curriculum outcomes or does it follow the British Gas ASA Learn to Swim Framework?
 - Do all teachers hold an ASA Level 2 Teaching Aquatics or equivalent qualification?
 - Does your child receive at least 24 hours of swimming lessons?

Swimming lessons at a local pool

- Sign your child up for additional swimming lessons at a local facility:
 - You should always try to ensure that lessons follow the British Gas ASA Learn to Swim Framework.
 - The Framework was developed to take children through from their first splash to full competence in the water. The plan teaches your child using fun and games so they enjoy learning to swim.
 - Your child will go through different stages where they will learn basic skills such as how to enter and exit the water safely, through to more advanced techniques such as how to breathe in the water and perform different strokes.
 - The Kellogg's Awards Scheme rewards your child for their achievements. You can purchase certificates and badges to track their progress and motivate them onto the next level.

Swimming as a family

- Visit a swimming pool regularly to add to your child's swimming experience.
- Go swimming as a family or with a group of friends to ensure that swimming is a fun, enjoyable and social activity.



What if my child has disabilities or special needs?

- Swimming lessons provide all children with vital skills to help with survival and this is no different for children with a disability or special educational needs. Lessons also provide a lot of pleasure as swimming is a great leveller and can help them have fun in a non-competitive environment. In fact, research has shown that swimming is the favourite sport of many disabled children and adults alike.
- Check that your school is prepared in advance and that they have considered any additional support that may be required at the pool such as a wheelchair, hoist and additional staff. For example, they may be able to provide a specially trained teacher or have additional staff available in the pool or on poolside.
- As well as taking part in school swimming you may wish to consider additional lessons. Contact your local pool as many offer both integrated and disability specific swim sessions.



Contact us

For more information on school swimming please contact your ASA regional team:

ASA East Midlands

01509 618 692

ASA East

01638 552 451

ASA London

07799 476160

ASA North East

01325 481260

ASA North West

07770 856 599

ASA South East

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ASA South West

01823 666792

ASA West Midlands

01527 517 508

Email: schoolswimming@swimming.org

Website: www.swimming.org

Further information:

The ASA

www.swimming.org

The Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS)

www.lifesavers.org.uk

Department for Children, Schools & Families (DCSF)

www.dcsf.gov.uk

Qualifications & Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA)

www.qcda.gov.uk

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)

www.rosipa.com

Association for Physical Education (AfPE)

www.afpe.org.uk

The Institute of Sport & Recreation Management (ISRM)

www.isrm.co.uk

National Water Safety Forum

www.nationalwatersafety.org.uk

British Gas Swimfit

www.swimfit.com

The ASA

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