



Nottinghamshire Schools' Swimming Service Duties for Observers at Swimming Pools

Observers are fundamental for ensuring safety during school swimming lessons. Schools must provide a minimum of two observers for each lesson, however, where there are large groups of children (e.g. over 40 pupils) or two teaching pools, then schools must provide one observer for each swimming group.

It is the Head Teacher's responsibility to ensure that people volunteering to be observers are physically able and competent. Observers must have an up to date DBS, Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Check or hold a List 99 Check whilst the school is working towards providing the full check in the near future. Head Teachers of secondary schools may nominate any responsible pupil aged 16 years old or more to act as an observer, provided that such duties are undertaken willingly, do not interfere with the pupil's studies and parental consent has been obtained.

Head Teachers must also ensure that:

1. People acting as observers in swimming sessions are provided with a warning horn as a means of drawing attention to a swimmer in difficulty. All schools should possess a minimum of two horns for this purpose, or more according to the number of observers on poolside. The warning horn should be issued to the observer before the swimming session starts. All observers should be fully aware of what is expected of them when they are on duty and are required to work under the direction of the Swimming Instructors/Lifeguards, who will advise them of their role in the case of an emergency. In particular:
 - o The observer must be present throughout the lesson and should be in position before the class enters the pool area and remain on poolside until all staff and children have vacated this area.
 - o Conditions in each pool are continually changing and observers must be prepared to move into the position which gives the maximum vision of the surface of the water and the bottom of the pool. The observer must particularly make allowances for any reflected glare on the surface of the water and the position of the Instructor/School Teacher.
 - o Before taking up duties, the observer should be familiar with all the filter points, grid areas and drainage channels located on the bottom of the pool.
 - o The observer should be instructed to sound the warning horn, if there is any doubt as to whether a swimmer is in difficulty or not.



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- Extra vigilance is required at swimming pools where two separate pool areas are in use. During an incident the Instructor may be required in the other pool, in which case the children must remain sitting out, under the observation of school staff and observers, whilst an assessment is made of the severity of the situation.
- 2. Observers should be familiar with the general emergency procedures to be adopted should a swimmer get into difficulty. They should be aware of the location of the drowning alarms and telephone.
- 3. Observers should ask the Instructors/Lifeguards if they are unsure of the roles and responsibilities.
- 4. Observers should be aware that their complete attention must be given to the task of observing the swimmers during the whole of the lesson.
- 5. The observers must be provided with written copies of the Observer Information Sheet *before* undertaking those duties for the first time.
- 6. For safety and hygiene reasons, observers must wear appropriate attire and footwear when observing at the poolside. Training shoes or flip flops are recommended.
- 7. Observers need to be aware of the potential to dehydrate due to the heat and humidity on poolside and therefore should ensure that they have a drink with them, which must be in a plastic bottle.

Please Note: Mobile phone use is strictly prohibited while undertaking observer duties.



I have read and understood the Duties for Observers information sheet produced by the Nottinghamshire Schools' Swimming Service:

Signed: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

Copy to be held at school.