

## RAISING STANDARDS IN SCHOOL SWIMMING IN BUCKS 2016-2017



### FIRSTLY, WHAT DOES THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENT OF 25M ACTUALLY LOOK LIKE?

The words '**competently, confidently and proficiently**' are key in the minimum 25M requirement. Ask the question, 'Would pupils only just able to meet this requirement be able to swim to safety in other bodies of water? Have they the stamina and ability to keep themselves safe and swim a distance to shore if they drifted out on whilst body boarding for example?' The RNLI are pulling approx. 15 children in difficulty from water in the Devon/Cornwall area per week during the summer months.

A child swimming a minimum of this distance should look confident, show a recognisable stroke with fluency and should surely show consistency. Many swimming teachers reference pupils who have managed this on one occasion and then struggled on their second attempt. CONSISTENCY SHOULD BE A TERM CONSIDERED – at least 3/5 attempts should be with confidence and demonstrating the recognisable stroke.

**DID YOU KNOW:** In Iceland, the required standard for pupils to meet is 200M and they may not progress into the next year until they have met this. Many Scandinavian countries are following similar guidelines.

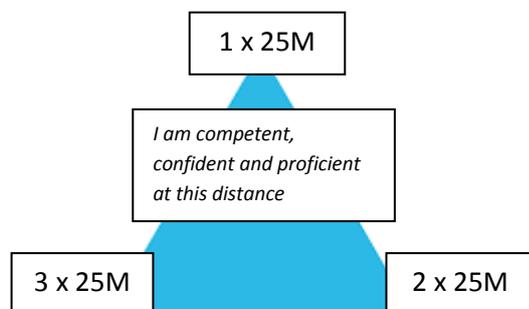
Let's not forget too that it is not just about swimming a minimum of 25m competently, confidently and proficiently. All pupils should also be taught to:

- use a range of strokes effectively [for example, front crawl, backstroke and breaststroke]
- perform safe self-rescue in different water-based situation

**The following initiatives aim to raise standards of School Swimming in Bucks:**

We would therefore encourage every school in Bucks to adopt one of the following:

**1. The Bucks 25M Triangle (pupils swim 25M once, twice, three times, demonstrating confidence, competence and proficiency)**



**2. Beat the Bucks 100 (pupils swim 100M and receive a downloadable certificate)**

**Additional information for schools to consider:**

Interestingly, PGL centres or similar activity centres, where many schools attend with KS2 pupils; Girl Guide/Cub/Scout activity camps request, **as a minimum, the ability to swim 50M confidently.**

**Swimming is a statutory part of National Curriculum PE. All pupils have the entitlement to receive a full Swimming Programme as part of this.** The advice from the ASA remains that pupils should receive 25 hours school swimming in Key Stage 1 or 2. Have pupils been given a comprehensive Water Safety Programme to equip them if they were to find themselves in different bodies of water? Your Leisure Providers will be familiar with Drowning Prevention Week materials and the Rookie Lifeguard Programme – this is an excellent way of teaching pupils about the SAFE Code, how to keep themselves safe and learn rescue skills. You may be aware that, of the many drownings in open water over the last couple of years, a good proportion of casualties were good swimmers, who did not keep themselves safe or were unaware of the dangers in unfamiliar bodies of water, in particular cold water shock. Without these skills, even our more able swimmers may put themselves at risk or not know how to perform safe self-rescue skills.

In essence, **Swimming is 'Wet PE'**. The question we are often asked is 'How can we challenge our more able swimmers?' Providing pupils with opportunities to learn mini polo skills and play mini polo games or develop and acquire synchronised swimming skills, performing sequences, is another way of meeting various strands of NC PE, whilst **challenging all ability levels**. The aims of National Curriculum PE include ensuring all pupils:

- Develop confidence to excel in a broad range of physical activities
- Are physically active for sustained periods of time
- Engage in competitive sports and activities
- Lead healthy, active lives.

These can be met very well in the water through individual and team challenges and the ability to evaluate, recognise success, compare performances and achieve personal bests. All abilities need these opportunities.

Other schemes to encourage pupils to become more competent, confident and proficient swimmers include:

- The school signing up for their pupils to take part in the 2017 ASA Swimathon
- Pupils undertake the RLSS Rookie Lifeguard Programme

**For further questions, please contact:**

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