



Water Safety

and PSHE Education

Professionals' Pack

2023

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Introduction

This pack aims to support education providers to deliver quality PSHE education around water safety through identifying the curriculum links within the PSHE Associations' Spiral Curriculum and the Department for Education's statutory guidance and developing staff's confidence and competence on the subject matter to support them to facilitate PSHE education on this topic within their own setting.

The Department for Education's statutory guidance states that:

- Pupils can also put knowledge into practice as they develop the capacity to make sound decisions when facing risks, challenges and complex contexts.
- Schools should show flexibility to respond to local public health and community issues to meet the needs of pupils
- Should be addressed sensitively and clearly

Children and young people need to be taught to manage risks, make safer choices and recognise when pressure from others threatens their personal safety and wellbeing.



Safe Learning Environment

A safe learning environment enables children and young people to feel comfortable to share their ideas without attracting negative feedback. It avoids possible distress and prevents disclosures in a public setting and enables professionals to manage conversations on sensitive issues confidently.

We have created a guidance document to support professionals to create this safe in their own setting.



No. 01 – Ground Rules

Create in collaboration with the group . As the facilitator role model the agreed ground rules.



No. 02 – Collaborate with DSL

Let them know when the session is being delivered to ensure the correct support is in place should any disclosures be made.



No. 03 – Staff Confidence

Check Staff confidence levels. If anyone is in panic zone it is not safe or appropriate for them or the participants to teach on the topic. This pack should help professionals to move from panic zone to learning or comfort zone



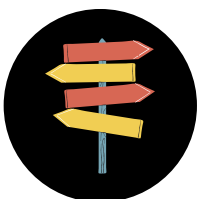
No. 04 Learning Techniques

Use scenarios and stories to help participants engage with the topic. Refer to the third person rather than you e.g. what could this character do?, or people of about your age....



No. 05 – Difficult Questions

Questions are an important part of learning. Sometimes a child or young person will ask a difficult question. As with all questions the first thing is to value the question whilst either allowing time to consider an appropriate answer or to deflect an inappropriate question.



No. 06 – Signposting

It is absolutely essential, that included in the lesson, is information about different organisations and people that can provide support both within the organisation and outside of it.

A more detailed version of this page is available by emailing either Natalie or Ellie

Best Practice Principles

Do not use scare/fear or guilt tactics

It is a common misconception that if a child or young person is shocked or scared by what they see in images, videos used in sessions, they will avoid the behaviour in the future.

Whilst young people will often say that they like 'hard-hitting' material and that it engages them more effectively, in fact when experienced in a safe setting (in this case a classroom or youth space), shocking images become exciting (in a similar way to watching a horror film or riding a rollercoaster) and this excitement response can block the desired learning. Equally, for anyone who has previously been affected by something similar, it can re-traumatise them or they can block the message as it is too close for comfort, which again prevents the intended learning. It also presents a scenario which is more likely to make young people think 'that won't ever happen to me' than the desired 'that could be me' response.

The adolescent brain is still developing which means that the perception of messaging and how they react to them is different to our experiences as adults. Furthermore, because their brains are still developing, they often live "in the moment;" when an unhealthy situation arises, they'll make decisions based on what they're feeling then and there, instead of making a reasoned, logical decision.

The pre-frontal cortex or critical thinking/reasoning part of the brain is the last section to develop.

You can find out more about the teenage brain [here](#).

Young people should be informed of risks in a balance and measured way through an approach that supports them to make informed, healthy, safe decisions and empower them to believe they can act on "good choices."

Top Tips:

- Evidence shows that shock and scare tactics just don't work.
- Check resources (including external agencies) for images or scenes that might be shocking, harrowing or scary for the age group – remember that children and young people will have a much lower threshold for what might worry them.
- Remember the purpose of the session is to educate not entertain. Just because young people might watch scary films in their own time, does not mean using similar films within PSHE Education will promote learning.
- Make sure there is a range of examples, case studies and consequences, most of which do not focus on the most dramatic or extreme outcomes.

Best Practice Principles

Knowledge, Skills and Values

Topics explored in PSHE education, relate directly to a child's or young person's life, when they might find themselves in a tricky situation or "crunch" moment – and need to make a quick decision; for example, a child who is dared to run across the road by their friends, or a teenager who is being pressured to start a fire. They will need to recall learning from PSHE education at that moment to help them make a decision.

They will, of course, require knowledge e.g., of the legality (or not) of their actions. However, in order to make a safe decision in the moment, they will also need skills to negotiate with their peers to resist pressure from others, to exit the situation (if they choose to) and access appropriate help or support if necessary. They will need a strong sense of their own values, to make the right decision and the confidence to stick to it.

Knowledge on its own won't necessarily stop someone from trying things. In many cases young people end up in situations where they know what they are doing is "wrong", but they do it anyway, as they lack the essential skills or attributes to help them effectively manage the situation.

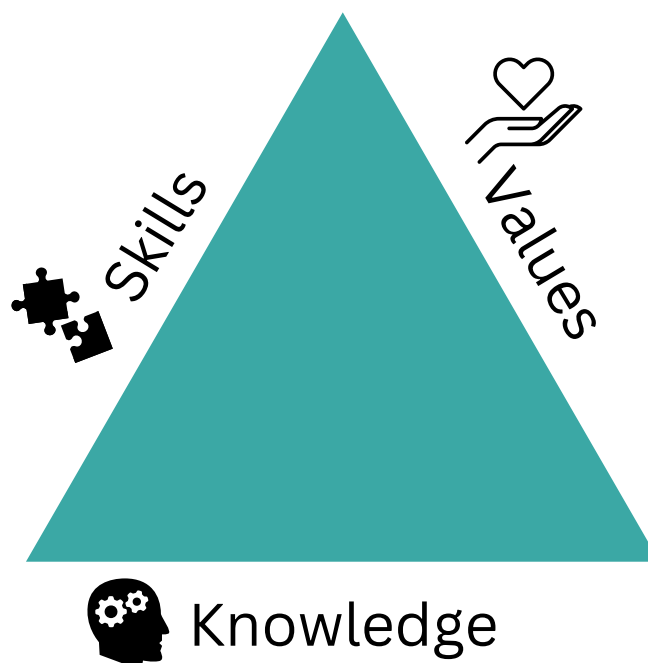
To ensure that sessions are balanced it is important to know the purpose of the activity and create a balanced session that increases or enables reflection on knowledge, skills and values.

The definition of each of these is:

Knowledge: gaining new information on a topic

Skills: gaining new skills on a topic

Values: reflecting on, and potentially altering, your own values in relation to a topic



Tips for Communication

Communication difficulties

Special provision should be put in place to support conversations with children, young people or adult learners who:

- have communication difficulties
- are too young
- are unable to communicate
- cannot or will not explain

You should refer to the child, young person or adult learner's behaviour plan and the information available from any assessments. This may include visual cues to help facilitate discussion, such as picture exchange communication cards.

Mencap has published further information on [communicating with people with learning difficulties](#).

The National Autistic Society has also published [tips to communicate more effectively with an autistic person](#).



Links to PSHE Curriculum

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The table below shows the learning opportunities from the relevant PSHE Association core themes which can be linked to water safety.

Primary

PSHE Association

Key Stage 2

H38.	how to predict, assess and manage risk in different situations
H41.	strategies for keeping safe in the local environment or unfamiliar places (rail, water, road) and firework safety; safe use of digital devices when out and about
H44.	how to respond and react in an emergency situation; how to identify situations that may require the emergency services; know how to contact them and what to say

SEND

PSHE Association

SSS1.	Enhancement: Evaluate ways of keeping safe in a variety of relevant situations and identify possible risks and hazards.
SSS3.	Foundation: Identify some behaviours that might be risky.

DfE Statutory Guidance:

By the end of Primary pupils will know:

FA1.	how to make a clear and efficient call to emergency services if necessary.
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PSHE Association

Key Stage 3

H30.	how to identify risk and manage personal safety in increasingly independent situations, including online
H31.	ways of assessing and reducing risk in relation to health, wellbeing and personal safety

Key Stage 4

H22.	ways to identify risk and manage personal safety in new social settings, workplaces, and environments, including online
H23.	strategies for identifying risky and emergency situations, including online; ways to manage these and get appropriate help, including where there may be legal consequences (e.g. drugs and alcohol, violent crime and gangs)

SEND

PSHE Association

SSS3.	Enhancement: Explain why, although we cannot prevent all accidents from happening, it is still important to still take steps to reduce and manage risk.
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NYA Youth Work Curriculum:

HW2.	Helping young people make informed choices about how they live, approach risk and take responsibility for their own behaviour in relation to thier lifestyle
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Useful Resources

Please check all resources are suitable for your settings and children before use

Water Safety

Videos:

[RLSS UK's Drowning Prevention Week animation](#)

[Lifeboats: Floating to Live](#)

[Don't Drink and Drown - #BeaMate](#)

[Staffordshire Police: Water Safety Video](#)

Lesson Plans:

[Canal & River Trust Explorers: Water Safety Learning Bundle](#)

which contains activities and resources to encourage children to do, watch, play, create and read as they learn about water safety.

[Staywise Free Activities](#)

Use the search engine to navigate resources by age and topic including [The Dangers of Frozen Water factsheet](#), wordsearches and crosswords.

[RNLI Water Safety Passport](#)

Suitable for ages 3-7, this resources supports children to be safe and have fun around water – collecting virtual stamps as they learn.

[RNLI Water Safety Lesson Plans](#)

Suitable for ages 7-9, this resource is a series of PSHE-based water safety sessions, designed to teach children the four main points of the Water Safety Code: Stop and Think; Stay Together; Float; Call 999. They can be combined and/or extended to suit the needs of the teacher.

[Red Cross Water Safety for Kids](#)

For parents/carers & your wider community:

[Royal Life Saving Society UK: Water Safety Booklet](#)

which contains in-depth water safety advice including advice for at home, on holiday, at the beach and for watersports and activities.

[Family Water Safety Advice](#)

RLSS UK resources for parents/carers including water safety at home, on holiday and at the beach.

DEVELOPING SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE



WATER SAFETY

Why is it important?

As children and young people begin to grow up and become more independent, it is important that they understand how to keep safe in the local environment, in a range of contexts. Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent and nearby areas are home to a number of open bodies of water, canals and rivers.

Teaching and learning about water safety, supports children and young people to identify some of the hazards, both seen and unseen and therefore more or less obvious, as the first step in recognising risk. By learning safety advice and guidance to mitigate against the risks, children and young people learn to manage risk in these contexts and therefore enjoy the local environment safely.

Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal

The Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal is a navigable narrow canal in Staffordshire and Worcestershire in the English Midlands. It is 46 miles long, linking the River Severn at Stourport in Worcestershire with the Trent and Mersey Canal.



Lakes in Staffordshire

- Aqualate Mere, Newport
- Belvide Reservoir, Brewood
- Blithfield Reservoir, Rugeley
- Chasewater, Burntwood
- Doxey Pool, Leek
- Knypersley Reservoir, Stoke-on-Trent
- Minster Pool, Lichfield
- Rudyard Lake, Leek
- Stowe Pool, Lichfield
- Swinfen Lake, Lichfield
- Tittesworth Reservoir, Leek
- Westport Lake, Stoke-on-Trent



It is important that PSHE reflects the needs of your local context and experiences of children and young people.

Are you familiar with local waters where they might visit?

Canal & River Safety

Many people enjoy visiting canals, rivers, lakes and reservoirs for leisure. Although rare, incidents and accidents sometimes happen. These can include: damage, vandalism or anti-social behaviour; collisions in the water or on towpaths or unauthorised swimming.

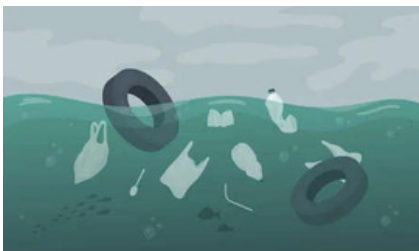
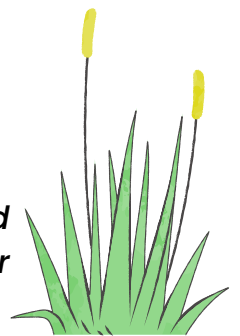
Children and young people may be considered most at risk in these environments which they might not be used to or could be unsupervised by an adult. It is important that they have opportunities to learn about the benefits and possible hazards regarding visits to waterways, for both their well-being and their safety.

The Canal and River Trust list the possible risks of getting in to water as:



Low temperatures, which can cause the body to go into cold shock and even hypothermia, drawing the blood away from your muscles to protect your organs. This can lead to drowning.

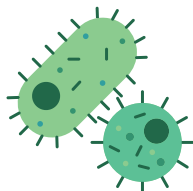
Reeds and other plant life, which can get tangled around limbs and keep you in the water



Litter, like shopping trolleys, which can trap your feet as well as cause injury



Waterborne diseases such as Leptospirosis (Weil's disease)



Depth perception - it could be much shallower than you expect it to be and cause serious harm if someone jumps in, as well as being much deeper than expected in other areas

Summer Safety

During hot weather, it can be tempting to get into the water, but it's important that children and young people can identify and manage the risks related to water.

The Royal Life Saving Society UK, provides advice about how to keep safe in the water, and run a national Drowning Prevention Week campaign annually.

Summer WATER SAFETY

When Summer hits it can be tempting to look for the nearest place to cool off.
Here are our top tips if you plan on going for a paddle:



**LOOK OUT
FOR LIFEGUARDS**



**IT'S COLDER
THAN IT LOOKS**



**DON'T GO
TOO FAR**



**IT'S STRONGER
THAN IT LOOKS**



BRING A FRIEND

www.rlss.org.uk



Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service provide this safety advice:

If you see another person or a pet in trouble in the water:

- Do not enter the water yourself.
- Raise the alarm or if you have a mobile phone call 999 and ask for the fire service. Try and give an exact location of where you are and look for signs or landmarks or use the What 3 Words app.
- If there is a lifebuoy or throwline nearby throw it to them. If not throw anything to them that will float.

If you fall into water by accident follow the float to live advice as follows:

- Fight your instinct to thrash around.
- Lean back, extend your arms and legs.
- If you need to, gently move them around to help you float.
- Float until you can control your breathing.
- Only then, call for help, swim to safety or continue floating until help arrives.

Winter Safety

The autumn and winter months can also bring rain and mud to towpaths and walkways around water, making surfaces very slippery. As the temperature drops further, there are some important potential hazards to be aware of.

All year round the shock of the cold water can really take your breath away and cause your muscles to cramp, making it very difficult for you to stay afloat.



*Click on the video to view
The Canal and River Trust's
advice on what to do if you
fall into the water.*



Remind children and young people of the advice if they see someone else in the water:

Don't get into the water, instead:

- Call the emergency services on **999** as soon possible
- Keep an eye on the person
- Keep talking to them, and stay near them
- If you can, throw line to them or use a tree branch to reach out to them

Falling through ice

In winter, children and pets are particularly at risk when tempted to play on the ice formed on open water, and adults can find themselves at risk in attempting to save them. Children and young people should be encouraged not to go onto the ice under any circumstances, The Royal Life Saving Society UK provide guidance on what to do if you fall through the ice or if you see someone who has.

What to do if you fall through the ice:

- Keep calm and shout for 'help'
- Spread your arms across the surface of the ice in front of you
- If the ice is strong enough, kick your legs to slide onto the ice
- Lie flat and pull yourself towards the bank
- If the ice breaks, work your way to the bank—breaking the ice in front of you anyway
- If you cannot climb out, wait for help and keep as still as possible. Preserve heat by pressing your arms by your side and keep your legs together. Keep your head clear of the water
- Once you are safe, go to hospital immediately for a check up

What to do if you see someone fall through the ice:

- Shout for assistance and phone the emergency services – call 999 or 112
- Do not walk or climb onto the ice to attempt a rescue
- Shout to the casualty to 'keep still' and offer reassurance to keep them calm
- Try and reach them from the bank using a rope, pole, tree branch, clothing tied together or anything else which can extend your reach
- When reaching from the bank, lie down to avoid being pulled onto the ice
- If you cannot reach them, slide something which floats, such as a plastic bottle or football, across the ice for them to hold onto to stay afloat whilst help is on the way
- If the casualty is too far away, do not attempt to rescue them. Wait for the emergency services while calming and reassuring the casualty

What to do after the casualty has been rescued from the ice:

- Make sure the ambulance is on its way
- Lay the casualty flat, check for normal breathing and begin resuscitation if necessary
- Prevent them from getting colder by covering them with warm clothing, blankets etc.
- Get them out of the cold under cover or create some shelter around them
- Until the casualty is in a warm place, do not undress them
- Do not rub their skin, do not apply hot water bottles and do not give an alcoholic drink
- Keep them wrapped up so they warm up gradually



10 Drowning Facts

47% OF ACCIDENTAL DROWNINGS occur between May and August.

Only 30% of parents surveyed said they were 'very confident' that their child knows how to stay safe in and around water.

83% of those who drown accidentally in the UK are male.

Only 51% of Black children in the UK can swim, compared to 73% for White British children

59% of UK accidental drownings occur at inland water sites.

Around two thirds of UK adults surveyed have never had any formal training or education in water safety.

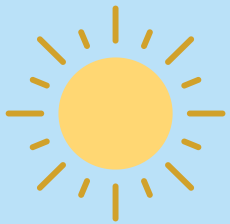
47% of those who lost their life to accidental drowning in the UK never intended to be in the water.

An average of **312 UK and Irish Citizens** lose their life to accidental drowning each year.

In our analysis, **73% of accidental UK drownings occurred in the absence of professional supervision,** such as a RLSS UK qualified lifeguard

Alcohol and/or drugs are a factor in **32% of all UK accidental drownings.**

**Drowning is preventable.
Even one drowning is one too many.**



More than 85 British Nationals drowned abroad in 2021.

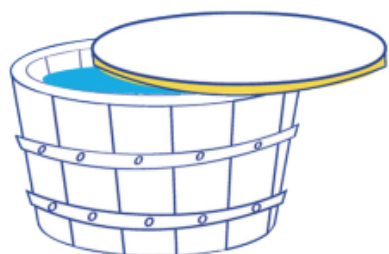
In the last 5 years, 50% of children aged 7 and under who accidentally drowned did so at home.

In the last 5 years, 30% of accidental drownings in the UK occurred at the Beach, shore or coast.

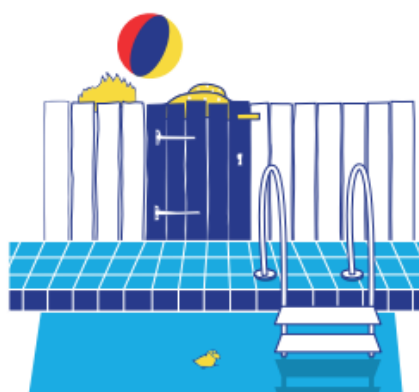
UK swimming pool drownings account for 1% of all accidental drownings.

Enjoying water safely at home

We often relate water safety to that of large, open bodies of water in nature but it's important to consider water that children and young people are around the most - in the home.



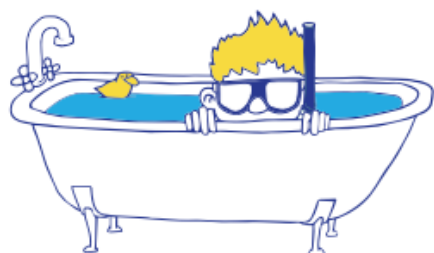
Always cover hot tubs and water tanks.



Always use self-closing gates, fences and locks around ponds and pools.



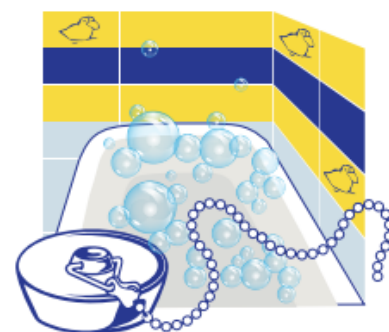
Always empty your paddling pool.



Always supervise bathtime.



Always keep the bathroom door shut.



Always pull out the plug.

Alcohol & Water Safety ¹⁹

Alcohol consumption can significantly increase the risk of drowning because:

- It impairs judgement – Alcohol distorts the perception of risk and one’s abilities
- It can Increase risk-taking behaviour – Alcohol removes inhibitions
- It reduces coordination. Alcohol numbs the senses, particularly sight, sound and touch leading to unsteadiness and inability to climb or swim making it hard to get out of trouble
- It impairs reaction time – Alcohol is a depressant, reducing the rate the brain processes information. In water emergencies, where response times are vital, it can prove the difference between life and death
- Hypothermia – In cold situations, the body will attempt to draw blood away from the limbs and to the vital organs to prevent heat loss. Alcohol, however, prevents this and therefore increases the chance of hypothermia

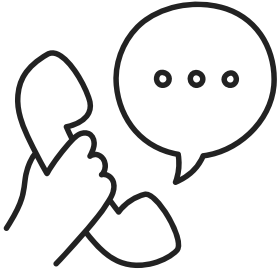


Don't Drink and Drown is the Royal Life Saving Society UK's national campaign that encourages smart decision making whilst being drunk around water.

It particularly targets individuals to be responsible for their friends if they have had too much to drink; helping them to return home safely.

Research indicates that among those aged 16-25 who lost their lives to accidental drowning, 45% had alcohol and/or drugs in their bloodstream.

Useful Contacts:



If you would like more information or support about Water Safety please contact:

If a person or animal/pet gets into trouble in the water, always call 999 and ask for the Fire Service.

Canal & River Trust

www.canalrivertrust.org.uk

0303 040 4040

Royal Life Saving Society UK

www.rlss.org.uk

info@rlss.org.uk

0300 323 0096

If a referral to Children's Social Care is required, please contact:

Staffordshire:

Staffordshire Children's Advice Service – 0300 111 8007

Monday – Thursday 8.30am – 5pm and Friday 8.30–4.30pm

Out of Hours – 0345 604 2886 / 07815 492613

Stoke:

CHAD – 01782 235 100

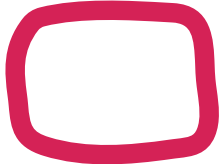
Monday – Thursday 8.30am – 5pm and Friday 8.30–4.30pm

Out of Hours – 01782 234 234

Further Reading:



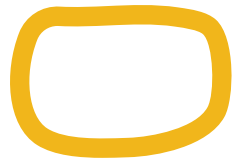
[RLSS UK Water Safety booklet](#)



[ROSPA Water Safety Code](#)



[Canal & River Trust: Water Safety for children](#)



[RNLI: Water Safety Advice And Tips - Know The Risks](#)



PSHE
Education
STOKE-ON-TRENT
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