



CASTLEBAR EDUCATE TOGETHER
NATIONAL SCHOOL

Castlebar Educate Together National School

Swimming Policy

Introductory Statement

This whole school policy for swimming was formulated by the staff of Castlebar Educate Together National School in December 2023.

Rationale

Physical Education provides children with learning opportunities through the medium of movement and contributes to their overall development by helping them to lead full, active and healthy lives (PE curriculum, 1999, p.2). The purpose of this plan is to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents/carers and other relevant persons on the delivery of the pool-based aquatics strand of the Primary School Curriculum.

Relationship to the Characteristic Ethos of the School

The Swimming Policy reflects the overall ethos of the school. Castlebar Educate Together N.S. is one of a number of equality-based schools throughout the country. The representative organisation for these schools is 'Educate Together'. The schools operated by the member associations of Educate Together are fully recognised by the Irish Department of Education and Science and work under the same regulations and funding structures as other national schools. However, they have a distinct ethos or governing spirit. This has been defined in the following terms:

- Equality based i.e. all children having equal rights of access to the school, and children of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds being equally respected
- Co-educational and committed to encouraging all children to explore their full range of abilities and opportunities,
- Child centred in their approach to education
- Democratically run with active participation by parents in the daily life of the school, whilst positively affirming the professional role of the teachers (Source: Educate Together Charter)

The Swimming Policy recognises and endeavours to adopt the values that are set out in the ethos of the school for those at work in the school. It attempts to support and sustain a harmonious environment in which the potential of all staff is nurtured through the cooperation between staff, pupils, parents, board members and all other relevant parties.

Vision

We envisage that, in PE and in particular through the aquatics strand, that each child will be given the opportunity to develop their physical skills and competencies to their full potential, appropriate to their age and ability and in a safe and supportive environment.



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Aims

We aim through this plan, drawn up in accordance with the Primary School Curriculum, to set out our approach to Swimming, as an aspect of the Aquatics strand of the curriculum.

The Swimming Policy aims:

- To comply with the requirements of the Revised Curriculum in aquatics.
- To ensure Child Safeguarding and the dignity of children in a vulnerable situation.
- To provide clarity of rules and responsibilities.

Procedures and Guidelines

The following outlines the procedures and guidelines for swimming:

- Each pupil will have the opportunity to attend a term of 6 weeks of swimming lessons annually in 1st Class. However, due to class levels being in a multi-grade configuration in 2022/2023 both 1st and 2nd Class will attend swimming in 2023/2024.
- Costs incurred by hiring of pool, transport to and from pool and payment of instructors necessitate a charge being imposed on each pupil.
- All children attending swimming should wear clothing which they can manage themselves. Swimming togs may be worn under clothing coming to school. Each child must have a suitable bag to carry his/her swimming gear such as a sports bag or similar type of bag with a secure zip or other fastening.
- Generally, children who do not have additional needs will have sufficiently developed personal care skills to manage changing/dressing with ease. Children with additional needs and who have been granted access to an Additional Needs Assistant (ANA) will be assisted by the ANA.
- The ANA is not required to enter the water with the child. It is the responsibility of the instructor, be it an individual or group instructor to teach the pupil their swimming lessons.
- It is the responsibility of the swimming instructor to decide on what swimming group level each child should be swimming with. This is determined at the first week of the swimming lesson term. The class teacher does not determine what level each child should swim with.
- The school will endeavour to have two adults present in each changing room to supervise the children before and after the swimming lesson. There is a separate changing room for boys and girls, and these (as well as the swimming pool) are not open to the public during the school's swimming session. All adults present in the changing room must be Garda Vetted (teaching staff must be vetted by the Teaching Council, and ANAs and parent volunteers must be vetted by the school, through Educate Together National Office)
- All items brought to the pool should be clearly labelled with the child's name.
- Each child must have their own togs, towel, hair brush (if necessary) and swim cap, all of which should be marked.
- No toiletries (e.g. shampoo, shower gel, deodorant) are permitted. Hairdryers are not permitted.
- While in the pool, pupils must endeavour to obey the instructor's orders at all times and comply with the School Code of Behaviour.
- Children are required to comply with the School Code of Behaviour throughout any outing to the swimming pool.



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- Teachers must remain on the viewing deck during the lesson in order to supervise the overall group and pupils who may need to use the toilets during the lesson. If an accompanying adult with the school is accompanying a pupil to the toilet, there must still be at least 1 adult from the school (i.e. teacher/ANA) present on the viewing deck at all times.
- Pupils will be accompanied by and supervised by a teacher on the way to and from the pool. Pupils will travel by bus to the pool and the teacher will provide supervision before and after the swimming lesson.
- Parents/carers may watch their children at the swimming lessons and must remain on the viewing deck at all times (unless they are a Garda Vetted changing room assistant). This is subject to the swimming pool's protocols which are subject to change. Parents/carers and staff are not permitted to take photographs at the swimming pool.

Instructional Arrangements

The following outlines the instructional arrangements for swimming:

- The school will organise the swimming programme for 1st class pupils. Relevant staff-class teacher, support teacher and ANA should meet in Term 1 of each school year to book this, to take place in Term 2/Term 3 of the school year. This will be dependent on the availability of the swimming pool.
- Instruction in the pool will be provided by qualified instructors in Lough Lannagh swimming pool.
- Parents/carers will receive a standard letter providing information on school swimming before their child starts their swimming term. (Appendix 1)
- All pupils must have a signed permission slip by a parent in order to participate in swimming lessons. Failure to provide this signed permission slip means that the child cannot participate.

Health and Safety

- Staff will follow the guidelines of our own Health & Safety and Child Safeguarding Statement 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 instructors and teachers orders at all times and comply with the School Code of Behaviour.
- The pool will be provided with information regarding any child with an Additional Educational Need, physical disability or medical diagnosis that may compromise their safety at swimming, eg. Epilepsy, diabetes. The relevant class teacher will inform the pool of any such cases.
- If any injury or accident occurs at the pool, the lifeguard on duty will attend to the injury. Any incident reports completed by the swimming pool staff will be copied and brought back to the school.
- Staff from the school who are supervising swimming are expected to communicate any concerns regarding health and safety of the pupils to the swimming pool staff and the school management.
- Pupils who require the support of arm-bands for swimming must bring their own, and parents must make school staff aware of this.
- While pool-based aquatics activities are being undertaken, the school will use discretionary time to facilitate this programme, in order to cover the time travelling to and from the swimming pool.



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- Insurance cover for pool-based aquatics activities is provided by the school's Insurance company (Allianz), who provide a letter of indemnity to the school/Lough Lannagh pool annually if required.

Success Criteria/Evaluating the policy

The criteria for evaluating the success of this policy will be:

- That the school community are clear about and are committed to the principles that are outlined in this policy and correct procedures are being implemented.
- That positive feedback from members of the school community (teachers, pupils, ANAs, parents) is received.
- That positive feedback from Lough Lannagh Swimming Pool is received.
- That the children are developing skills and progressing in relation to the aquatics strand of the PE curriculum.
- The maximum participation by all children

Implementation

(a) Roles and Responsibilities

The relevant class teachers are responsible for the implementation of this swimming policy, overseen by the Principal and the Board of Management.

(b) Timeframe

This policy will be implemented from the 2023-2024 school year.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in May 2028, when we will reflect meaningfully on how well the aquatics programme has been taught and received in the school. The policy will be reviewed at an earlier date should a need arise.

Ratification and Communication

The attention of all newly appointed staff will be drawn to these documents upon their appointment to the school by the Principal. This policy will be published on the school website and provided to the Parent-Teacher Association/Home-School Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and the Patron, if requested. Hard copies of this, and all school policies, are available at the school on request.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 14th December 2023.

Signed: _____ (Chairperson, BOM)

Signed: _____ (School Principal)

Date: 14th December 2023

Date of next review: May 2028



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Appendix 1: Swimming Letter Template

(insert date)

Dear Parent/Carer,

Swimming lessons will begin for X *(insert class level)* class pupils on *(insert date)*. There will be X *(insert number of lessons)* lessons in total. Pupils will travel by bus to Lough Lannagh swimming pool here in Castlebar. The lesson begins at *(insert time)* and lasts for 30 minutes.

We are asking children to come to school with their swimming togs on underneath their clothes. This will ensure there is no time wasted on arriving at the pool. Your child should bring a separate bag for wet togs, towels and hats, and should remember to pack underwear for after swimming.

Every child must wear a swimming hat in the pool so please ensure that they have one packed. They are also available for purchase at the swimming pool at a cost of €1.

The total cost of swimming lessons for the X week term is *(insert cost)*. This fee covers the lessons and the bus to and from the pool. Please send the fee to the school at your earliest convenience by transferring the above amount to: IBAN:

NB: You must include your child's name as the reference on this transfer.

Aquatics is an important strand on the Physical Education curriculum and we know the children will really enjoy it.

Swimming dates are as follows:

(insert dates)

Please return the consent form and the fee at your earliest convenience.

Kind regards,

Class Teachers

I _____ consent to my child _____

taking part in swimming lessons at Lough Lannagh swimming pool with CETNS.

Parent/Carer signature: _____ Date: _____