



Academic Year 26/27

To: Parents enquiring about the use of swimming goggles

Dear Parent/Carer

This letter includes some relevant safety information. Consent must be giving by parents wishing to authorise the school to allow their son or daughter to wear swimming goggles during school swimming lessons.

We are advised that although swimming goggles look harmless, they have been found to carry considerable risks. A small percentage of casual swimmers find the water in swimming baths to be irritant due to chlorination, nitrogenous content, aniline dyes and general detritus, but the hazard to themselves and to others of wearing goggles is probably far greater than the protection provided by wearing the goggles. We are advised that little medical benefit accrues from the use of goggles and we therefore advise parents and children not to use them other than in exceptional circumstances.

Speed swimmers who undertake frequent, long periods of training and are exposed to excessive water friction may need to protect their conjunctivae. However, most children don't need this kind of protection during the normal short length of a swimming lesson.

Please read the following information before authorising the school to allow your son/daughter to wear goggles.

Yours sincerely

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Use of swimming goggles during swimming lessons Guidelines for parents/guardians

The advantages of wearing swimming goggles during prolonged swimming activity, to reduce or prevent eye irritation, to improve vision through the water and for medical reasons, are well recognised and supported by the ISRM (Institute of Sport and Recreation Management) and ASA (Amateur Swimming Association). However, if the pool water is maintained in good condition, it should not be necessary to wear goggles if bathers are likely to be in the water for only short periods of time such as swimming lessons for beginners.

The Use of goggles is not without its downsides:

- Many swimming teachers have a concern, supported by much of the literature on the teaching of swimming, that goggles should not be worn when children are being taught to swim. It is considered that part of the learning to swim experience is for a child to be able to deal with splashing in the face and the ability to open their eyes whilst the face is immersed and swim underwater with confidence. Certainly these attributes would improve the child's ability to cope in a water related incident in a canal, pond or river.
- Further concern relates to the goggles themselves, there is a history of eye accidents firstly as a result of goggles being made of glass or breakable plastics and secondly during the putting on and taking off of goggles. There is a British Standard for the manufacture of goggles and the standard includes the requirements that the packaging of goggles should contain instructions regarding the putting on and removal and the possibility of an accident occurring if the correct procedures are not followed.
- Lastly not all goggles provide a watertight fit and in a teaching situation with small children, concentration and lesson time may be lost in trying to obtain a fit which leaks as little as possible.

It is difficult to provide guidelines to meet all situations but the ISRM/ASA advice is as follows:

- There are good reason why swimming goggles should not be worn during swimming lessons, children and their parents/guardians should be informed of these and children encouraged to take part in lessons without the use of goggles.
- It is recognised that for some children, however medical or associated reasons necessitate the wearing of swimming goggles in order to participate and in these cases parents/guardians should:
 - Only purchase goggles that meet British Standards.
 - Ensure the goggles fit the child correctly
 - Ensure the child has received adequate instructions prior to participation as to the fitting and adjustment of goggles
 - Be aware that teachers will not be responsible for fitting of goggles to the children.

British Standard BS5883 (1996) 'Specification for surface swimming goggles' gives further detailed information in this area.

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