Dear Parents

**School Swimming and Covid-19**

Bucks School Swimming Partnership who work closely with Buckinghamshire Council, Swim England, RNLI, RLSS and local Leisure Providers/Swim Schools on School Swimminghave put together some guidance for parents to answer some of the most frequent questions regarding returning to School Swimming next term (or beyond). With indoor pools allowed to begin reopening from 25 July, many national organisations (and local, including the Bucks School Swimming Partnership) have been busy putting together guidance for schools (and all users) about what the Return to the Pool should look like. Leisure Providers/Swim Schools have been asked to work in partnership with the schools to outline an agreement and suitable approach for the delivery of school swimming lessons. This should be in line with all national guidance -

(<https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/pool-return-guidance-documents/>).

Firstly, on the issue of the pool water, the Pool Water Treatment Advisory Group (PWTAG) is the recognised body for Swimming Water Quality Standards in the UK, and they have advised operators that they should ensure their pool is operating within the guidance detailed in PWTAG Technical Notes which can be found at <https://www.pwtag.org/>. UK swimming pools are commonly disinfected with chlorine (as a primary disinfectant) with a secondary disinfection method in the form of UV light. This enables the pool operator to state with confidence that Covid-19 should not be transmissible through the swimming pool water if the pool is operated in line with this guidance and that of PWTAG.

Other key Risk Assessment factors which have been taken from the national guidance include:

* Providers should have a dedicated officer(s) responsible for Covid-19 considerations, making sure they are up to date with central or local government recommendations. This person should be aware of the rules and guidance set out by the facility and will ensure that schools receive up to date information and guidance,
* Providers have been asked to implement a checklist of actions their workforce need to complete to ensure they are Covid-19 compliant and ready to deliver (most are following the guidance within the linked documents),
* The centre/pool will have social distancing procedures in line with government advice,
* Teachers should adhere to government guidance on social distancing. The delivery approach by teaching staff should be from poolside to support current social distancing guidance,
* Children and School Staff will be kept in small consistent groups and different groups will be kept away from each other,
* Specific staffing rotas will be in place so that wherever possible, teaching staff are always working with the same person/people,
* Adapted Risk Assessments - Each Provider will share these with schools - schools have also been sent example Risk Assessments based on national guidance documents,
* Sufficient time being planned for a new appropriate cleaning schedule and to allow time for one group to disperse and the next to arrive,
* Different entry and exit points to avoid clustering - most Leisure Providers have or are in the process of putting together guidance/interactive videos on the journey to and through the changing rooms on to poolside, so participants know what to expect,
* Equipment should be cleaned in-between use. Submerging equipment in adequately disinfected swimming pool water will reduce the risk of transmission of enveloped viruses,
* Pupils will not share equipment - it is likely that they will be allocated a float per learner at the start of the lesson,
* There will be no loaning of goggles, hats and equipment. Please ensure that your child has the correct equipment for their swimming lesson,
* Please teach your child how to put on their swimming hat and goggles independently as Leisure Provider Staff may not be able to do this,
* Please talk to your child about how they are feeling about returning to School Swimming - explain to them that things may be different. The school will be talking to the pupils about the changes that have been put in place,
* Children returning to the pool for the first time after a prolonged period of time will need to recap the areas of water safety as a priority area of delivery. Both swimming pool safety rules and water safety information will be covered in the first lesson back.

For pupils who are not achieving National Curriculum standards, we are considering Top up swimming lessons. We are delighted to hear that the PE and Sport Premium grant funding continues next academic year for all schools, which may enable us to do this. We will also look at other options such as working with Leisure Providers to consider how they may be able to integrate school swimmers into Learn to Swim Programmes.

We hope the above is helpful to reassure you about your child’s return to School Swimming. If you have any questions, please contact us in the first instance. We can then work with Bucks School Swimming Partnership and our School Swimming Provider to address any queries or concerns to ensure that your child feels comfortable about their return to School Swimming and they can enjoy being in the water once again.

**Swimming is a critical life skill, which your child potentially will not get at their secondary school. Unless we give them the opportunity in their primary school to learn this life saving skill, they could very well never get the opportunity again until they reach adulthood and learn to swim themselves.**

Yours faithfully,