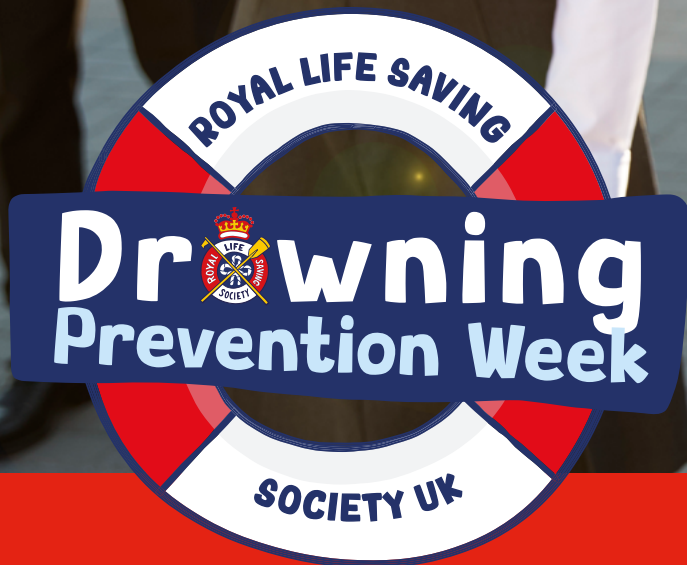




ROYAL
LIFE SAVING
SOCIETY UK



WATER SAFETY

Secondary Resource and Information Booklet for Educators

CONTENTS

When carrying out any of the following activities, please follow your normal school safety and risk assessment process for all the water safety activities

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES - All the resources have been designed so that any adult can deliver each session with no need for previous knowledge or additional training.

If you would like support in delivering any of the resources, please email education@rlss.org.uk

Suitable for assemblies or as a classroom activity:

LEAD ACTIVITIES

DROWNING - IT'S UP TO YOU

4 - 7

This assembly or classroom activity is an interactive presentation and facilitated discussion. It presents a wide range of safety information to students, and asks them to think about and discuss how they make decisions about their own safety.



SPREAD THE WATER SAFETY MESSAGE

8 - 9

At this time of year, it is important that everyone is reminded of the simple ways to stay safe around water. Use this activity to reinforce your pupils learning, and make sure that they take the messages home with them.



Suitable for Tutor Group and RSE (PSHE) sessions:

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

WITNESS STATEMENT

10 - 11

This exercise involves pupils working through a witness statement developed from a real drowning incident. Pupils then discuss the incident to understand what factors can lead to teen drownings.



ORIENTEERING HAZARD HUNT

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Pupils put their orientation skills to the test as they seek out hazard awareness and water safety information located around the school grounds.



DROWNING

- IT'S UP
TO YOU

LESSON PLAN

ACTIVITY SUMMARY

This interactive presentation and facilitated discussion is designed for delivery to a school class of approximately 30 pupils, however it can also be used for different sized groups including as an assembly.

The video demonstrates the most essential drowning prevention messages for the secondary school age range. The facilitated conversation provides students with the opportunity to engage with and explore the subject of drowning and water safety further, and to discuss their perception of risk and risk-taking behaviour with their peers.

AGE AND LEVEL

The activity can be adapted for pupils of all ages and abilities.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Develop understanding of the scale and causes of drowning.
- Develop understanding of the danger of cold water, and jumping in from cliffs, bridges, quarries and docks.
- Develop understanding of how 'those who are left behind' are affected by drowning.
- Explore the decision-making required to enjoy water safely.

PREPARATION

1. Download the 'Drowning – It's Up to You' video provided with this booklet.
2. Preview the video to ensure that it is suitable for all of your pupils (please consider if any pupils have suffered a drowning experience through a family member or friend).
3. Use the video presentation to facilitate the discussion activities provided in the Delivery Guide.

HOW TO LEAD THIS ACTIVITY

1. Prepare the group by explaining how the presentation will work. Check if any students may already have had a bad experience with drowning, who may not wish to take part in some aspects of the activity. Warn the students that section 3 shows real-life incidents (including a dislocated ankle) which they may not wish to watch.
2. Play the video, pausing at the end of each section when the pause sign appears on the screen. Facilitate the conversation with the pupils using the questions provided as prompts. Encourage the students to discuss and share their thoughts about drowning as much as they can.

VIDEO PRESENTATION	OPTIONAL FACILITATED ACTIVITY (AT THE END OF EACH SECTION)
Section 1 – Introduction This section includes: • The scale of drowning in the UK and Ireland • The location of drownings • Definition of ‘inland water sites’ • That 80% of people who drown are male.	Why do people drown? Ask the group to come up with ideas and scenarios of what types of activities may lead to drowning. The aim is to develop a discussion and get the group thinking about the topic, so there are no right or wrong answers. • What sort of situations result in people being in the water? • Why would someone who can swim drown? • Why do you think so many more males drown than females?
Section 2 – Cold Water This section includes: • The need to make decisions about your own safety before entering water. • The hidden dangers of cold water • The affect cold water has on your body, and how this can lead to drowning.	Cold Water Hold a discussion based around the following questions: • Who has been so cold that they haven’t been able to use their hands properly, like trying to put a key in a lock or tying their shoelaces after a PE lesson outside on a really cold day? What did it feel like? • If that feeling spread to your arms and legs, how do you think that would feel (emotionally and physically) if you were trying to use them to stay at the surface of the water? • If you were in the water, whether intentionally or even if you just fell in, and these effects started happening to you, how would you try to get out? Think about what could happen if you try to get out too quickly and splash water around your mouth whilst you are hyperventilating (breathing is out of control). Come up with an action sequence that you would follow if you found yourself in this situation. Guide the students’ conversations towards something like: • Keep your mouth clear of the water, try to control your breathing. • Once your breathing is under reasonable control, get out as soon as you can. • If you can’t get out, keep calling for help and try to keep warm. Extra information for the students: If you are stuck in the water, you can reduce the amount of heat you lose by keeping your arms against your sides and holding your legs tightly against each other.

VIDEO PRESENTATION	OPTIONAL FACILITATED ACTIVITY (AT THE END OF EACH SECTION)
Section 3 – Tombstoning and Jumping In This section includes: • The danger of injury from tombstoning and jumping in • Real-life examples of young people making poor decisions and facing the consequences • How the emergency services may not be able to access all water sites.	Tombstoning and Jumping In Hold a discussion based around the following questions: • Why do you think people go jumping into the water from cliffs, bridges, quarries and docks? <i>Along with ‘fun’, ‘to cool off’ and all of the other positive reasons that pupils come up with, also guide them towards discussing peer pressure.</i> • Who can remember what one of the first effects on your body cold water is, and how might that cause a problem if you are still under the water after jumping in when that reaction happens? <i>If needed, guide the students towards discussing what would happen if someone started gasping for breath whilst they were still under the water, or splashing at the surface.</i> • If you were with a group of friends and someone suggested going jumping in the water somewhere, what do you think you would say to your friends? • Do you think that you have the skills to rescue and resuscitate a friend if they started drowning?
Section 4 – Who’s Left Behind? This section includes: • Time to reflect that when taking a risk, you also risk the future of your family and friends.	Who’s Left Behind? Hold a discussion based around the following questions: • How do you think you would feel if you were swimming with one of your friends (somewhere you shouldn’t be), and one of them drowned? • You’re not expected to answer this out loud, but think about what effect drowning would have on your family and friends.
Section 5 – Safe Doesn’t Mean Boring This section includes: • Time to reflect that when taking a risk, you also risk the future of your family and friends.	Safe Doesn’t Mean Boring • Discuss any final thoughts with the students, and thank them for taking part in the discussions.



SPREAD THE **WATER SAFETY** MESSAGE

Each year around 307 people drown, on average that's one person every 29 hours. The number of people drowning significantly increases through the summer months. Those most at risk are teenaged and young adult males, meaning that it is critical for your pupils and their parents to receive the drowning prevention messages.

The work that you do with your pupils in school will give them a foundation of water safety knowledge which they will be able to draw on for the rest of their lives, however we are also asking you to help us to reach your pupils' families and other members of your community who are at risk this summer. Please help us to reach as many people in your community as possible with our drowning prevention messages by including 'take home' activities for your pupils, and by sharing our messages through your school newsletter and social media channels.

PUPIL ACTIVITY – Taking The Message Home

Please include in your water safety lesson an activity that will enable every child to take a key water safety message home with them to share with their family and friends. Suggested activities include:

- Creating a social media post to share the information they have learnt through the activities in this booklet with their whole online community.
- Create an artistic poster or performance to share the drowning prevention messages.
- Older pupils create a drowning prevention lesson or assembly to deliver to younger pupils, their families, and at school open evenings.
- A creative writing exercise to include the drowning prevention messages.
- Homework activities that engage parents in helping their children to research drowning prevention messages, significant water related events, or stories of aquatic survival.

This activity will reinforce your pupils learning, and make sure that they take the messages home with them.

SCHOOL NEWSLETTER & WEBSITE / SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGING

Please include this brief article in your school newsletter or as a feature on your website:

As we approach the end of the summer term, it is important to us to make sure that all of our pupils have an enjoyable, but most of all safe summer holiday.

Every year around 307 people drown, on average that's one person every 29hrs, and drowning significantly increases during the summer holiday period, with teenaged and young adult males being most at risk.

To help our pupils to make good decisions about their own safety in the holidays many of our pupils have been learning about drowning prevention, and the RLSS UK, the drowning prevention charity, have asked us to share these important water safety tips with you to help you and your family to stay safe this summer:

1. Make sure your children know how to swim and basic water safety skills.

The holidays are a great time to have some catch up lessons or join a Rookie Lifeguard or lifeguards, or lifeguards trained to UK standards. If possible, only swim where there are lifeguards. Keep children under constant supervision, it only takes a few seconds to drown, and the lifeguards have a lot more people to supervise than you do.

2. Lakes, quarries, rivers and reservoirs

These water sites claim many lives during the summer months, largely due to the water temperatures remaining very cold once you are slightly away from the edge. Never swim at these locations unless it is part of a regulated outdoor activity.

3. Follow the Water Safety Code

Whenever you are around water:

- **Stop and Think** - look for the dangers, always read the signs
- **Stay Together** - never swim alone, always go with friends and family

In an Emergency:

- **Call 999** or 112 and shout for help
- **Float** - if you fall in or become tired - stay calm, float on your back and call for help. Throw something that floats to somebody that has fallen in.

Have fun, and a very safe summer holiday.



WITNESS STATEMENT

EDUCATOR VERSION

ACTIVITY SUMMARY

Students use the witness statement as a source to inform the facilitated discussion, which is led by the teacher using the discussion points provided. The statement can also be used as source material for creative writing or drama activities.

AGE AND LEVEL

The activity can be adapted for pupils of all ages and abilities.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Learn how quickly water can become fatal.
- Reflect on the emotional stress of losing a friend, and apply this into future decision making around risk taking behaviour.
- Understand the correct actions to take in an emergency, and how panic can delay or interfere with your decision making.

PREPARATION

Download and print copies of the Witness Statement (student version) for the class.

ACTIVITY

1. Individually, in groups, or as a whole class, students work through the witness statement as a literacy or oracy exercise.
2. The activity leader uses the questions provided in the Educator Version of the statement (overleaf) to facilitate discussion about the drowning event

DISCUSSION

1. How much attention do you think the friends gave to the potential dangers of going into the pool, and what are the risks and dangers that they should have considered?
2. Why do you think they called Dave's dad rather than calling 999?
3. How was the location of where they chose to swim responsible for the delayed arrival of the emergency services?
4. How do you think the friends felt when they couldn't find Dave? How would you have felt?
5. It can be difficult to disagree with a group of friends, especially if you disagree with a popular idea.

If you were one of the friends in the statement, how would you have discouraged everyone from swimming in the unsafe pool in an isolated location?

The following statement is based on the facts of a real drowning. The names of the friends have been changed to protect their identities.

Witness Name: Edward Brown

Incident: Death of David Johnson
(drowning suspected)

Other Information: Edward Brown is a friend of David Johnson and was with him at the time of the incident.

Statement: We all met up at Dave's house at about 11.00 or 11.30, and we didn't really have anything to do so we went into town to just waste a bit of time there for a while. We were in town till about 2.00, and after we had something to eat, we decided to go and pick up our bikes so we could head out to the Old Mill Path to go on the mud ramps that are there. So, we all split up to get our bikes and met back up at the start of the path, so it was probably around 3.00 by then.

It takes about 30 minutes to ride up the path as far as the ramps, and there were loads of people walking up there because it was a good day, so it took a while to get past them all on the path.

After we'd been on the ramps for a while it was so hot we were ready to head back into town for a drink, but Dave said we should go for a swim on the way back, in the pools that are at the top of the path where the stream is a bit deeper.

So, we all jumped in and everyone was fine and having a laugh, and then one of the boys, Ben, I think it was said, where's Dave? We all thought it was a joke,

I thought he was holding his breath under the water, and when he didn't come up, we even started looking behind trees for him. We didn't believe that he was in the water because he was fine just a minute ago.

Then we saw that his t-shirt, phone, and trainers were still by his bike and thought he must still be in the water. I just felt sick, but we all jumped in and started feeling around for him. It's only just over your head in one area, and most of the pool is really shallow, like you touch the floor when you jump in so it's not deep, not deep enough to drown, or disappear.

When we couldn't find him, everyone started shouting, "where is he", "what do we do" and stuff. Ben knows the passcode for Dave's phone, so he got out and used it to phone Dave's dad. He just said, "he's gone, we can't find him, we were in the pool at the top of the Old Mill Path, and he's gone". The Ben said, "he just hung up", what do we do now?

Then his dad phoned back and said he had called an ambulance and he was coming too, but we had keep looking for him because it takes ages to get to the top of the path. So, we all jumped in again but we knew that we had already checked everywhere because it's so small.

We were all sat on the ground when his dad arrived on Dave's brother's bike. He could hardly breathe, he smokes a lot and it's up hill all the way, and he was crazy, shouting "where is he?", and he jumped straight in and started coughing on the water himself because he was so out of breath.

We jumped back in again, because we couldn't leave him looking on his own, but we knew Dave wasn't there, we just felt horrible, like we had to do something, but we knew it was pointless.

After ages the ambulance and police turned up on foot, they must have parked all the way at the top car park and walked down. They started looking after us, we were shivering by then but why weren't they looking for Dave? They said that the Fire Service and a Dive Team would have to look for him.

Dave's dad was like a total wreck, crying, shouting, shivering. I think he was sick too. They took him to the ambulance first, and then us, there were other ambulances for us, so I didn't see him again. Is he alright? Have you found Dave? I can't think of anything else to say, it's just the worst thing ever. It took ages for the ambulance to come, they couldn't get up the path.

END OF STATEMENT

Witness Signature:

Additional Notes: David Johnson's body was recovered from an overflow pipe running from the pool to the stream by the Police Dive Team at 8.30pm. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

Drowning is suspected pending the Coroner's report.

ORIENTEERING

HAZARD HUNT

ACTIVITY SUMMARY

Students use a map of the school grounds to find 8 Hazard Cards placed around the school grounds, and learn more about the hazards. This is a great outdoor or indoor activity.

AGE AND LEVEL

The activity can be adapted for pupils of all ages and abilities.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Learn about water-based hazards and personal safety skills.
- Develop and improve map reading skills (and ICT skills when completed using interactive maps)
- Develop problem solving skills.
- Develop teamwork and communication

PREPARATION

1. Print the Hazard Cards and answer sheets from the Drowning Prevention Week resource area.
2. Position them around the school grounds (or inside the school hall)
3. Create a map of the school grounds with the locations of the Hazard Cards marked onto the map. Maps are normally created by teachers, however using the idea below it may be a valuable learning activity for one group of students to create a map for another group of students to use:
 - Use a standard map of the school grounds.
 - Use an art and design class to create new maps, hand drawn or computer designed.
 - Use free mapping software to create interactive maps that can be used on tablet devices and/or phones.



ACTIVITY - Working in groups or individually, the pupils must locate the hazards, gather the information about the hazards, and crack the code to reveal the hidden water safety message.



ALWAYS FOLLOW THE WATER SAFETY CODE



Whenever you are around water:

STOP AND THINK STAY TOGETHER

Take time to assess your surroundings.

Look for the dangers and always research local signs and advice.



When around water always go with friends or family.

Swim at a lifeguarded venue.



In an emergency:

CALL 999

If you are at the coast, call 999 and ask for the Coastguard.

Don't enter the water to rescue.



FLOAT

Fall in or become tired - stay calm, float on your back and call for help.

Throw something that floats to somebody that has fallen in.



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Enjoy Water **Safely** | **Free From Drowning**



Learn more about
water safety.

Scan the QR code

WANT TO DELIVER MORE WATER SAFETY TO YOUR STUDENTS?

Check out RLSS UK's water safety education programme called Water Smart Schools.

Water Smart Schools offers:

- full alignment with the curriculum (including the new September 2026 RSHE update for English state-maintained schools).
- tried-and-tested, adaptable lesson plans and resources.
- cross-curricular opportunities within your existing planning frameworks.
- free CPD session to upskill your staff in administering the programme.
- three levels of accreditation award certificates after completion of appropriate programme sections.

To register for the Water Smart Schools programme, please visit: www.rlss.org.uk/water-smart-schools



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Enjoy Water **Safely**
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