

Outdoor Swimming

The fine weather, along with the inevitable enthusiasm to get outside in the current circumstances, has led to a number of children, often with their families swimming in local rivers, Fens and lakes .

We would like therefore to share some reminders to everybody, shared with us by Ian Roberts (CCC Specialist Adviser for PE and National Strategic Adviser for PE & School Sport).

If you decide to swim in open water, then you should carefully consider the following factors because there is a big difference between swimming in a pool and swimming outdoors

- *Make sure you have permission to swim at your chosen spot.*
- *Look out for safety signs!*
- *If a sign says “no swimming” and/or “danger” don’t swim there. When there are signs, they are there for a reason.*
- *Avoid weirs, locks and other structures. These can create underwater currents that can pull even strong swimmers underwater.*
- *Have entry and exit points that are accessible by everybody. You need to be able to enter and exit the water slowly in a safe way. (The majority of accidental drownings involving children occur within 2m of safety, where the child could not get out!). Avoid jumping into the water.*
- *Children should never swim, or indeed be near open water without parental supervision.*

- *Never turn your back on the water, and indeed the people swimming in it!*
- *Think about the water quality – is the water potentially polluted (e.g. looks dirty, is a strange colour or smells) or has any pipes running into it. Don't swim in stagnant water.*
- *When swimming outdoors, cover cuts and abrasions, however minor, with sticking plasters. Don't swim if you have deep cuts.*
- *Think about water temperature and the weather. Avoid swimming in strong winds, and where there is a big difference between air and water temperature.*
- *Be aware of currents. A strong current can easily prevent you reaching where you want to swim, or it could pull you away from your planned exit point.*
- *Make sure you have access to your towel and warm clothing quickly upon exiting the water.*
- *If anyone feels ill seek medical advice by calling 111 – including rashes for up to three weeks after being in the water. Highlight that you have been swimming in open water and tell the operator the location that you swam in.*
- *Ensure you take all your belongings and leave the location as you found it. Take any litter with you and dispose when back at home.*