

July 2026

Young people urged to stay safe around open water as hot weather continues

Dear Headteacher,

Across the UK, recent hot weather has already been linked to a high number of water-related deaths, many involving children and young people. With further warm weather anticipated over the summer period, Water Safety Wales would like your support in raising awareness of key water safety messages with children, young people and families before the summer holidays, particularly around the coast and inland waterways including rivers, lakes and reservoirs.

One drowning is too many. Please ask teaching staff to reiterate these simple life-saving messages to learners and families. Knowing what to do can save a life.

Key Messages

- There has already been a high number of water-related deaths across the UK during recent hot weather, and further warm weather is anticipated. Drowning risk increases significantly during periods of hot weather, including when air temperatures reach or exceed 25°C.
- Please remind learners never to jump into open water from bridges, piers, rocks or ledges. Cold water, hidden hazards, changing depths and currents can quickly lead to difficulty, even for confident swimmers.

Always follow the **Water Safety Code** when in, on or around water.

- **Stop and Think** – take time to assess your surroundings and look for dangers.
- **Stay Together** – when around water always go with friends or family and swim at a lifeguarded venue.
- **Float** – if you find yourself in trouble in the water.
- **Call 999** – in an emergency, do not enter the water.

Children and young people should be actively supervised around open water. Friends can help by staying together, but they should not be expected to act as lifeguards or enter the water to rescue someone.

If you find yourself in trouble in the water, **float to live**:

- Tilt your head back with your ears submerged.
- Try to relax and breathe normally while you move your hands to help you stay afloat.
- It's OK if your legs sink, we all float differently.
- Once the effects of the cold water shock pass, shout for help.

If you see someone else in trouble in the water this summer, remember **Phone, Float, Throw:**

- **Phone** 999 to get help
- Tell the person in the water to stay calm and **float** on their back
- **Throw** rescue equipment to help them until the emergency services arrive

Resources

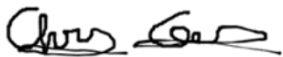
Please share this letter with parents and guardians before the summer holidays.

Please also share the accompanying social media post or water safety graphics on your school channels.

Water Safety Wales has free bilingual education resources available to download from the [Water Safety Wales](#) website. These resources are designed to support schools to deliver age-appropriate water safety messages in line with the Curriculum for Wales, and include practitioner materials, activities and supporting content that can be used in lessons, assemblies, wellbeing work and wider safety education.

We encourage teachers to explore the resources and download the materials most relevant to their setting and learners. The package covers themes including recognising risk, making safe decisions around water, the Water Safety Code, cold water shock, Float to Live, and what to do in an emergency.

Yours sincerely,



Chris Cousens

Chair, Water Safety Wales

Supporting Data:

The latest figures from the Water Incident Database (WAID), maintained by the National Water Safety Forum, highlight the continued need for prevention activity in Wales. WAID figures for 2025 should be treated as developing data, as some cases remain unclassified while further information, including coroner outcomes, is awaited.

- In 2025, WAID recorded 52 water-related fatalities in Wales.
- At the time of publication, 12 deaths had been confirmed as accidental water-related fatalities.
- A significant number of cases remained not recorded or not yet formally classified, which means the final breakdown may change as the data matures.
- Historical WAID data continues to show that men and boys are overrepresented in accidental drowning fatalities, and that risk increases during warmer months and periods of hot weather.
- Recent incidents and member reports have also highlighted the importance of messages around supervision, jumping into water, cold water shock, offshore winds, inflatables and paddleboards.
- Water safety messages should apply to both inland waters, such as rivers, lakes, canals, reservoirs and quarries, and coastal waters, including beaches, harbours and tidal locations.
- In 2024, independent research projects from the Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS UK) and Bournemouth University both concluded that significantly more people lose their lives to accidental drowning in the UK during periods of hot weather. The data indicates that, when air temperatures reach or exceed 25°C, there is a fivefold increase in accidental drowning risk when compared to days with an average temperature of 10°C. Analysis also shows three times as many accidental drowning fatalities occur on days when air temperatures reach 25°C or more, compared with the seasonal average.