

**Claregalway Educate Together N.S.
Aquatics Policy**

Version	Date First Ratified/Amended by BOM	Date Reviewed by BOM
V1.0	07.02.24	

Introduction

This whole school policy for Aquatics was formulated by the staff of Claregalway Educate Together N.S. in November 2023. This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Whole School Plan for Physical Education.

Rationale

The school has regard to both the physical and mental development of each of its pupils. Being able to swim is an invaluable life skill that will support the child's safety around water throughout their lifetime. Believing that a healthy body promotes a healthy mind, the school arranges for a 7 week course of swimming instruction with Coral Leisure in Tuam for each of its students in 2nd and 3rd class during the school year.

Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School

The Aquatics Policy reflects the overall ethos of the school. Claregalway Educate Together N.S. is one of a number of equality-based schools throughout the country under the patronage of Educate Together.

Aims and Objectives

We aim through this plan, drawn up in accordance with the Primary School Curriculum, to set out our approach to Swimming, as an aspect of the Aquatics strand of the curriculum (Appendix 1)

The Swimming Policy aims:

- To comply with the requirements of the Primary Curriculum in aquatics.
- To ensure Child Safeguarding and the dignity of children in a vulnerable situation.
- To provide clarity of rules, responsibilities and procedures.

School Procedures

- Swimming in Claregalway Educate Together is co-ordinated by the Assistant Principal. The swimming coordinator liaises with the swimming facility and the bus company to set up the programme of lessons. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to inform the swimming teacher of any necessary details i.e. special needs, medical conditions.
- Each pupil will attend a block of swimming lessons annually in **2nd and 3rd class**.
- The swimming pool is reserved for forty minutes once a week during the first term; generally November and December.
- Parents/Guardians will receive a standard letter providing information on school swimming before their child starts their swimming term. (Appendix 2)
- All students must have a signed permission slip on Aladdin in order to participate in swimming lessons. Failure to provide this signed permission slip means that the child cannot participate.

- Attendance at this course fulfills the Aquatics Module of the PE Curriculum as laid down by the Department of Education. Parents defray the cost of the course and also that of the transport to and from the pool. Inability to pay will not preclude a pupil from participating fully in swimming lessons.
- In the best interest of the child, it is the duty of parents/guardians to inform the class teacher with regard to any health condition that may affect the child in the pool.
- It is compulsory for all children to participate in aquatics lessons as part of the Primary Curriculum. Should a child be unable to attend aquatics, due to a medical condition, a letter from the child's doctor must be sent to the school requesting exemption and stating the reason why.
- Should a child be unable to attend one lesson due to ill health or any other reason, this must be communicated to the class teacher by parents of the student and they will remain at school. Arrangements for supervision in this instance will be made on a case by case basis.
- Students from 2nd and 3rd classes attend the term's lessons together and are accompanied by and supervised by class teachers plus an additional staff member on the way to and from the pool.
- Staff will view the lessons at the edge of the pool and will be available to the children should such access be required i.e. injury, illness etc. Children will be supervised going to the toilet.
- Swim teachers are responsible for allocating the children to the different levels of swimming, spread out over various sections of the pools.

Health and Safety

- The Health and Safety Guidelines outlined by the pool authorities will be strictly adhered to. Students are required to behave at all times in a manner that ensures the safety of all involved in school swimming. Students must endeavour to obey the instructor's orders at all times and comply with the School Code of Behaviour.
- Best practice in relation to the supervision, instruction and child protection procedures as outlined by the Irish Sports Council, Swim Ireland, National Safety Council and the School Child Protection Policy will be adhered to at all times.
- A child with Special Educational Needs who has been assigned access to an SNA will be assisted by an SNA where necessary and appropriate.
- SNAs are not required to enter the water with the child. It is the responsibility of the instructor, be it an individual or group instructor to teach the student with special needs. It is the decision of the swimming instructor whether or not the pupil is capable of being in a group swimming situation or an individual one. This depends on the ability of the individual child in the water.
- Large male/female school changing rooms will be used exclusively by Claregalway Educate Together during lessons. Parents will not have access to these changing rooms but school staff will be available to help should there be a need.

Autism Classes

- Students who are ready for swimming lessons in Coral Leisure will join their respective mainstream class. This decision will be made by the child's teacher in consultation with mainstream class teachers, parents and principal. Staff availability to support and supervise students during these lessons will be a key consideration.
- Students in Le Chéile who are not yet ready to access swimming lessons with their mainstream class will access swimming lessons yearly with the staff in Le Chéile. The aim of the swimming lessons is to develop each pupil's confidence in water so that they can enjoy the experience and develop their swimming ability.
- Transition Year students from Coláiste Bhaile Chláir assist students in the water as many students may be out of their depth or not confident in the water. Standard school vetting procedures apply.
- It may sometimes be necessary for staff to enter the water to ensure the safety of some students. All other staff will remain poolside to supervise staff and students in the water.

- Staff assist pupils in the dressing room before and after swimming. This will be provided in an open and communal area. The level of assistance depends on the needs of individual pupils. Staff observe the school policy on Intimate Care and use the opportunity for practical training of pupils in personal care.
- Conditions which may preclude pupils from participating in the swimming programme may include;
 1. Pupils who are not bowel trained
 2. Pupils whose behaviour may endanger themselves or others.

Roles and Responsibilities

- The Assistant Principal will coordinate and monitor implementation and regular review of the Aquatics/Swimming policy overseen by the Principal
- Parents and teachers will encourage children to participate in swimming lessons and therefore contribute to the holistic development of the child.
- The Board of Management will ensure the Aquatics/Swimming policy is up to date and adhered to.

Timeframe

This policy will be implemented for the 2024-2025 school year.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in two years, when we will reflect meaningfully on how well the aquatics programme has been taught and received in the school.

Ratification and Communication

The attention of all newly appointed staff will be drawn to these documents upon their appointment to the school by the NQT/Droichead mentor. This policy will be published on the school website and provided to Parents Together. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and the Patron, if requested. Hard copies of this, and all school policies, are available at the school on request. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on ____



Signed: (Chairperson, BOM)

APPENDIX ONE

Strand unit: Hygiene

The child should be enabled to

- Appreciate the importance of hygiene when using the pool - using the footbath, shower and toilet, keeping the pool area clean

Strand unit: Water Safety

The child should be enabled to

- observe the rules of the local pool
- recognise hazards of water - depth, currents, tides, weather conditions, pollution, hypothermia
- identify correct procedure for dealing with hazards practising personal survival skills (e.g. safe entries, HELP, huddle, treading water) summoning assistance in an emergency while maintaining own safety, demonstrating on land or in the pool environment a reaching and throwing rescue.

Strand unit: Entry to and Exit from Water

The child should be enabled to

- enter the water
- using the steps or ladder by sitting
- turning and slipping into the water
- by stepping in from the poolside
- by stepping in and placing the face in the water with comfort: blowing bubbles while the mouth is in the water picking up lightweight objects from the bottom of the pool with the eyes open looking at a partner under water
- by jumping into the water, by diving in: surface or plunge dive (sitting, crouching, standing)
- climb out of the water using steps getting out with support going directly onto the side.

Strand unit: Buoyancy and propulsion

The child should be enabled to

- walk in shallow water walking making patterns walking to a rhythm, changing direction on a heavy beat negotiating a person or obstacle
- jump, side-step or run across the pool relay races: children jump or side-step or run across the pool
- observe that some objects float and others sink blowing, nosing or heading objects (ball, toy, ducks) around floating objects
- practise balance, rotation and recovery exercises with and without float
- explore use of arms and legs to travel in water; kicking like a frog, playing Simon Says game, where activities are matched to abilities, practising sculling in prone or supine position, head first, feet first chasing games (e.g. What Time Is It, Mr Shark? Crows and Cranes)
- glide forward or backwards along the surface in a stretched position
- glide to the bottom of the pool

Strand unit: Stroke development

The child should be enabled to

- develop a selection of swimming strokes front crawl, backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly

Strand unit: Water-based games

The child should be enabled to

- participate in pair and group play

Strand unit: Understanding and Appreciation of Aquatics

The child should be enabled to

- understand basic hygiene procedures
- appreciate the dangers of water
- understand how to stay safe in water
- develop an increased understanding of flotation
- develop an appreciation of the freedom of movement in water
- extend knowledge of swimming strokes
- discuss a wide range of aquatic activities water polo, synchronised swimming, lifesaving
- become aware of local organisations and clubs that promote aquatics.

APPENDIX TWO

Sample Consent Form

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

2nd and 3rd Classes will be having their first swimming session of the year on **Thursday November 9th at 10.00am.**

They will have seven sessions in total; Nov 7, Nov 14, Nov 21, Nov 28, Dec 5, Dec 12, Dec 19

All classes and travel will take place within school time.

Some points to note

- Please send in some **extra lunch** as children are often hungrier than usual after swimming.
- Please pack a **towel, goggles, swim-suit and a hat.** The pool operates a strict no hat, no swim policy.
- **Silicone swimming caps** are the best hats to use as they really help to keep hair dry.
- The swimming bus will leave school **promptly at 9.20** so please ensure you are on time on Thursdays as the bus cannot wait.
- If you live near the pool and plan to meet us there please let your class teacher know.

Permission slip and e-payment link for ____ will issue through Aladdin soon.

In preparation for the swimming lessons, it is a good time for your child to practice the following skills at home:

- dress /undress independently including swimming suits and hats
- fold clothes and towels
- place socks inside shoes
- dry themselves after a bath or shower
- dry wet hair with a towel
- tie shoelaces

Best wishes,

Class Teachers