

Aquatics (Swimming) Policy

Aims

- o To enable pupils to acquire basic swimming skills while they are at Ardagh NS
- o To promote children's enjoyment, understanding & appreciation of aquatics
- o To comply with the requirements of the Revised Curriculum in aquatics.
- o To provide clarity of rules, routines and responsibilities.

Rationale

Our school values both the physical and psychological development of each child. Believing that a healthy body promotes a healthy mind, the school arranges for a 6-week course of swimming lessons in the Ballina swimming pool for pupils from 1st to 6th class during the school year.

Procedures and Guidelines

- Each pupil will have the opportunity to attend a term of six weeks of swimming lessons annually from 1st to 6th Class.
- Parents will cover the cost of the course and also that of the transport to and from the pool.
- All children attending swimming should wear clothing which they can manage themselves. Swimming togs may be worn under clothing coming to school.
- Each child must have a suitable bag to carry his/her swimming gear such as a sports bag or similar type of bag with a secure zip or other fastening.
- Generally, children who do not have special needs will have sufficiently developed personal care skills to manage changing/dressing with ease.
- Children with special needs and who have been granted access to a Special Needs Assistant (SNA) will be assisted by the SNA. Where direct assistance is needed to change into swimming gear, specific parental consent must be received in writing.
- As per our Child Protection Policy, where assistance is needed for changing, this will be done in the communal area and with the consent of parents. Under no circumstances will members of staff/volunteers be expected to or allowed to dress/undress a child unsupervised in a cubicle/private area. In such situations where privacy is required, the parents/guardians of the child will be asked to assist the child. Parents must assist their own child only and not assist other children.
- Where assistance is required for changing, two adults must be present in the communal changing room.
- The SNA is 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 special need pupil their swimming lessons.

- Two adults will be present outside the dressing room to supervise the children before and after the swimming lesson.
- The class will wait until the dressing rooms are empty of patrons before entering.
- The Pool instructors will be asked to hold back other patrons from entering the changing rooms once pupils are there.

- Patrons will be asked not to enter the changing rooms for the next session until our pupils have vacated the changing rooms
- It is the responsibility of the swimming instructor to decide on what swimming group level each child should be swimming with. This is determined at the first week of the swimming lesson term. The class teacher does not determine what level each child should swim with.
- All items brought to the pool should be clearly labelled with the child's name.
- Each child must have their own togs, towel, goggles, hairbrush (if necessary) and swimming hat, all of which should be marked.
- While in the pool, pupils must endeavour to always follow the instructor's orders and comply with the School Code of Behaviour.
- Children are required to comply with the School Code of Behaviour throughout any outing to the swimming pool.
- Teachers will remain on the viewing deck during the lesson to supervise the overall group and pupils who may need to use the toilets during the lesson. Where possible pupils will use the single cubicle public toilet beside the viewing deck.
- Pupils will be accompanied by and supervised by a teacher on the way to and from the pool. Pupils will travel by bus to the pool and the teacher will provide supervision before and after the swimming lesson.
- Should a child be unable to attend one lesson due to ill health or any other reason, a letter must be given to the class teacher, and he/she will travel with the class to the pool and remain under the supervision of the class teacher for the duration of the lesson.
- There is not enough time to fully dry children's hair with a hair dryer. Therefore, it is recommended that a silicone hat should be worn and pupils with long hair should wear their hair tied up for the day.

Instructional Arrangements

- ❖ The school will organise the swimming programme for all classes from 1st to 6th Class.
- ❖ Instruction in the pool will be provided by qualified instructors.

Health and Safety

- ★ Staff will follow the guidelines of our own Health & Safety and Child Safeguarding Statement policies at all times.
- ★ Pupils are required to behave at all times in a manner that ensures the safety of

- all involved in school swimming and comply with the School Code of Behaviour.
- ★ Parents/guardians will receive a standard letter providing information on school swimming before their child starts their swimming term.
 - ★ All pupils must have a signed permission slip by a parent in order to participate in swimming lessons. Failure to provide this signed permission slip means that the child cannot participate.
 - ★ The pool will be provided with information regarding any child with a Special Educational Needs, or medical diagnosis that may compromise their safety at swimming, eg. Epilepsy, diabetes.
 - ★ If any injury or accident occurs at the pool. The lifeguard on duty will attend to the injury. Any incident reports completed by the swimming pool staff will be copied and brought back to the school.
 - ★ School staff will stand in the foyer outside the dressing rooms and to supervise from the slightly ajar door of the shared changing rooms from where s/he will be able to hear the children.
 - ★ Pupils may also choose to use individual changing cubicles if they wish (within the communal changing room).
 - ★ Staff from the school who are supervising swimming will communicate any concerns regarding health and safety of the pupils to the swimming pool staff and the school management.

Success Criteria

Our Swimming Policy will be seen to be working well when:

- The school community are clear about and are committed to the principles that are outlined in this policy and correct procedures are being implemented.
- Positive feedback from members of the school community (teachers, pupils, SNAs, parents) is received.
- Positive feedback from Ballina Swimming Pool is received.

Roles and Responsibilities

o The Board of Management, Principal, teachers, SNAs have both a role and a responsibility in successfully implementing this policy.

o The policy will be monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis.

Timeframe & Review

Progress made during the school year will be reviewed informally at ISM and Staff meetings. This plan will be reviewed after three years.

Ratification and Communication

This plan was ratified by the BOM on February 11th 2026

Signed/Date

Fr. Munnely (Chariperson)

Rev. Pat Munnely

11-2-2026

The plan was communicated to teachers and implemented in classes from February 2026 It will be available for the wider school community on our school website.