

Merton Schools' Swimming and Water Safety Charter

Working Document V1: Agreed 28.10.19

Aim

This Charter seeks to support Merton Primary Schools and the main operator for Merton's public swimming pools, Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) to ensure Merton students have the best opportunity to become confident and safe swimmers.

Our key priorities are for all our primary school students to be able to;

- be safe in and around water
- progress their swimming ability through an engaging, progressive and enjoyable swimming curriculum

Background

Merton School Sport Partnership set up a School Swimming Strategy Group in 2012 which consisted of Merton Head Teachers, MSSP Staff, Merton PE Coordinators and GLL Staff. The group was set up due to the low number of children recorded as being able to swim before they left primary school in the Borough (estimated at 31% of Primary School children being able to swim 25m when they left school in 2010/11).

The Group provided a forum for schools to communicate more effectively with GLL regarding swimming provision and worked to raise the profile of swimming across Merton Primary Schools and improve the outcomes for Merton students. This was addressed through:

- The addition of swimming development as a specific target within the MSSP Partnership Plan
- Including swimming as a question in the Merton School Sports Mark Award
- By the development of the new, oversubscribed Borough Swimming Gala
- The coordination of official Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) Teacher Training Modules
- The production and promotion of the guidance document which supported schools to optimise their swimming curriculum provision to improve progress for students.

Following on from this strategic group set up, MSSP have continued to meet regularly with GLL swim leads to further address the challenges and barriers faced within school swimming. Since September 2016 MSSP secured funding from the Wimbledon Foundation to coordinate and provide free Top Up Swimming for 10 schools per year in the more deprived areas of the borough until August 2021. This approach has so far proved a real success with students progressing much more in the smaller groups and through more intensive sessions than they had during their typical year of school swimming once a week.

Merton School Swimming Development Group

The continued meetings between MSSP and GLL have now led to the creation of the Merton School Swimming Development Group and this School Swimming and Water Safety Charter for Merton Primary Schools. The group welcomes the recent National Swim Group's 'Review of Curriculum Swimming and Water Safety Lessons' and the Recommendations that followed and have ensured that where appropriate these also tie into our agreement. We are also pleased that our Merton Pools are now using the new GLL Scheme of Work, which supports a more active and engaging lesson in the water and their new Assessment Criteria, which links well to the National Curriculum PE Swimming Programmes of Study for KS1/2 and to the Government's reporting requirements for the Primary PE and Sport Funding.

Objectives

To achieve our aims the Charter has set clear objectives which build upon the work of the Merton School Swimming Strategy Group and the national 'Recommendations to ensure all children leave primary school able to swim'. These objectives may be amended as the group see fit to best meet the current priorities of the Charter.

- Objective 1: **Improve and optimise school access to public swimming pools**
- Objective 2: **Ensure students make good progress and enjoy their curriculum swimming lessons and learn to be safe in and around the water**
- Objective 3: **Raise the profile of the importance of swimming and water safety with schools and parents**

Working Together

MSSP (on behalf of Merton Primary Schools), a nominated Merton Head Teacher and two representatives from GLL Regional Management team agree to work together as the Merton School Swimming Development Group to strive to achieve the aims of the charter.

Key Commitments and Actions of the Group

These may be added to or amended as the group sees fit and the Charter develops:

1. All representatives will meet at least biannually, as a minimum, to agree on development planning and actions to support our objectives.
2. GLL will provide annual data analysis of school's attainment in order for us to improve and better focus our planning.
3. We will agree to the roles of the School Staff and Swim Instructors within the lessons ensuring all parties are well informed and understand their contribution to the child's development.

4. We will provide an annual workshop for all school staff and instructors to induct them to their role and get the most from all adults supporting school swimming.
5. We will endeavour to seek funding to support children in more deprived areas to access the opportunities they need to meet our aims.
6. We will work together to ensure a good quality PE Swimming Curriculum is delivered and address any concerns around quality of provision.
7. We will provide annual training/information sharing opportunities for schools at the MSSP PE Coordinator Conference in September and a GLL Practical workshop for School staff in July.

Guidance for School Swimming

The PE National Curriculum in England (2014) states that all schools must provide swimming instruction either in key stage 1 or key stage 2 .

In particular, pupils should be taught to:

- Swim competently, confidently and proficiently over a distance of at least 25 metres
- Use a range of strokes effectively [for example, front crawl, backstroke and breaststroke]
- Perform safe self-rescue in different water-based situations

The National Swim Group have developed a Guide for Primary Schools which has been published by Swim England. This document can be found on our website [HERE](#) and provides schools with a comprehensive guide for teaching Swimming and Water Safety at KS 1 or 2. Below are some key elements taken from the Guide which may help Merton schools to consider the best format for their school swimming programme.

'Across the country more pupils swim in Years 3, 4, and 5 than any other year group. Some schools provide additional swimming lessons for those pupils who, towards the end of Year 6, have yet to meet the national curriculum requirements in full ('Top-up swimming').

...While there is no set number of lessons that should form a curriculum swimming and water safety programme, it is important that sufficient time is given to ensure all pupils meet, or exceed, the full national curriculum requirements. A number of different models are used (see below), and factors such as pupils' abilities, timetable and resources may impact on the decision.

Programme models

- *The same pupils could attend weekly sessions for a full academic year.*
- *Pupils from one year group could attend for half a year and then again in the next academic year.*
- *Pupils could swim during the same term in each of the three consecutive years.*
- *Intensive programmes with daily lessons have been found to work well, particularly for pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 who are in danger of not meeting the national curriculum requirements (these vary from 10-15 days).'*

Top Up Swimming

Top Up Swimming is recommended for those children who were unable to achieve the NC requirements at the end of their standard school swimming lessons. This is to target those children specifically and may be an intensive programme (i.e. daily) or weekly depending on the school's preference and pool availability.

Primary PE and Sport Premium Funding

'Schools must use the funding to make additional and sustainable improvements to the quality of their physical education (PE), physical activity and sport...

...The premium can be used to fund the professional development and training that is available to schools to train staff to support high quality swimming and water safety lessons for their pupils.

The premium may also be used to provide additional top-up swimming lessons to pupils who have not been able to meet the 3 national curriculum requirements for swimming and water safety - after the delivery of core swimming and water safety lessons.

Schools are required to publish information on the percentage of their pupils in year 6 who met each of the 3 swimming and water safety national curriculum requirements.'

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pe-and-sport-premium-for-primary-schools>

MSSP have consulted with Swim England and GLL to consider the expectations for a standard school swimming programme. As part of this charter we would generally expect schools to have provided at least 36 lessons (30 mins each) to a student before considering the lessons as additional 'Top Up lessons' which could then be funded by the PE and Sport Premium.

Role of School Teachers and Swimming Instructors within School Swim Lessons

Both MSSP and GLL believe that the swim instructors and school teachers can make a real difference to the progress made by students during their lessons. As such we would recommend that all swim instructors and teachers/school staff involved in the lessons follow the guidance below and work together to make optimum use of the time that the children have for their lesson.

School Teachers / Staff

- Ensure a swimming risk assessment has been carried out and our school swimming policy is in place.
- Where possible, undertake training to support school swimming lessons.
- Prepare the children by delivering the classroom pre swim lesson as provided by GLL and MSSP (available to download from our website: <http://www.mertonssp.org.uk/schools/sports-coaching/swimming>).
- Ensure children are ready on time, quiet and well behaved.
- Meet and greet the instructor.
- Inform the instructor of any children with additional educational needs or disabilities.
- Take on board briefing and learning objectives/teaching points for the lesson.
- Support by taking the register alongside instructor.
- Manage behaviour throughout.

- Provide support to instructor, encourage children and reinforce instructors coaching points positioning yourself at key points around the pool area during the lesson. *Try not to change coaching points or make up your own. Allow session to run as instructor has directed.*
- It's not a requirement, but if you do feel confident to, you may wish to support students from within the water if the instructor agrees it will benefit very nervous children. *GLL can provide training on this to ensure safeguarding protocols are met.*
- Ask the instructor to highlight the progress that children are making or those particularly struggling and note this on the register. Provide additional support and encouragement to those children that are less confident and/or are making slower progress.
- Ask if you can support by working on anything in the classroom in preparation for next session
- Ensure the lesson is positive and active. If you have any constructive feedback for the instructor, please pass this on.
- Complete an evaluation form for the Pool Manager to support the improvement and development of GLL school swimming lessons.
- Ensure all attainment data is passed on to your PE coordinator. Consider Top Up Swimming lessons for those children who haven't met the NC expectations at the end of their standard school swimming programme.

Swimming Instructors

- Meet and greet school teachers.
- Provide brief explanation of lesson plan and learning objectives/teaching points.
- Ask teachers to take register with you.
- Find out from the teacher if there are any children with additional educational needs or disabilities and if there are any strategies used at school to better support their development.
- Ask teachers to support behaviour management as well as encouraging throughout the lesson.
- Highlighting best places to be positioned on poolside to support students with encouragement and feedback regarding key teaching points.
- Work together at the end to note down progress against the register and identify those students that may need extra feedback and support to progress.
- Let the teacher know if anything can be worked on in the classroom in preparation for the next lesson.
- Ensure lesson is positive and active. If you have any constructive feedback for the school teacher, please pass this on.
- Ensure all attainment data is completed and passed on to school. Promote Top Up Swimming lessons for those children who haven't met the NC expectations at the end of their standard school swimming programme.

Measuring Progress and Target Setting

Once we have data from the 2018/19 school swimming attainments we will review this to help inform any future targets. Results from the Merton School Sports Mark Survey and Top Up Swimming Programme will also be included in this section and reviewed.

Compliments, Concerns and Complaints

It is vital that all parties are quick to raise any concerns regarding both the school swimming provision and schools internal management of this service. By dealing with concerns or complaints quickly we will avoid escalation and resolve issues.

Safeguarding Concerns

If at any point the concern relates to a Child Protection (CP) issue, schools or GLL should follow their own CP procedures and may at any time contact the MASH team (020 8545 4226) or the Police directly if they suspect imminent danger.

The general concern and complaints process for Schools and GLL should be as follows:

School has concern or complaint about swimming programme

- If appropriate speak to the instructor directly and considerately when children are not present (unless imminent danger). This should be followed up in writing.
- Alternatively contact the Pool's Swim Lead.
- If schools feel they have not resolved the issue they should contact the Centre Manager or the Community Manager Sport Manager, currently Tony Brown Tony.Brown@GLL.ORG
- If the school would like MSSP to support this process through the Merton School Swimming Development Group they are welcome to copy in or contact Nicola Ryan, Director MSSP ryann@harrismerton.org.uk or Ro Maybury, Head Teacher, Abbotsbury Primary School, headteacher@abbotsbury.merton.sch.uk.
- If it is still not dealt with effectively, schools should go through GLL complaints process <https://www.better.org.uk/contactus>
- The contract to manage Merton Pools is agreed by Leisure Services at LB Merton, they may also be contacted if an issue is not resolved after this stage. <https://www.merton.gov.uk/council-and-local-democracy/complaints-compliments-and-comments>

GLL Instructor or Pool Manager has concern or complaint about the school's internal management of this service or pupil behaviour

- If appropriate speak to the school staff directly and considerately when children are not present (unless imminent danger). This should be followed up in writing.
- Alternatively contact the Head Teacher of the school.
- If GLL staff feel they have not resolved the issue they may follow the school's complaints procedure which will be available on their website.
- If GLL staff would like MSSP to support this process through the Merton School Swimming Development Group they are welcome to copy in or contact Nicola Ryan, Director MSSP

ryann@harrismerton.org.uk or Rowena Maybury, Head Teacher, Abbotsbury Primary School,
headteacher@abbotsbury.merton.sch.uk

Useful Documents with Guidance for Schools

[MSSP Pre Swimming Classroom Lesson for Children](#)

[Swim England Curriculum Swimming and Water Safety Review Group Report 2017](#)

[GLL Expected Levels of Attainment \(inc Purple\)](#)

[GLL Schools Prospectus](#)

[GLL Primary School Scheme of Work](#)

[Teaching Swimming and Water Safety at KS 1 or 2 – A Guide for Primary Schools. National Swim Group and Swim England](#)

[Teaching Swimming and Water Safety at KS 1 or 2 – Primary School Support Materials. National Swim Group and Swim England](#)

Action Plan

As actions are completed they may be added to the charter as an agreed commitment/action in the longer term.

Objective 1. Improve and optimise school access to public swimming pools			
Action	By Whom	By When	Outcome
a) Survey Head Teachers to ascertain current and future demand and need for Merton School lessons across all pools. If required, undertake a mapping exercise across all pools to consider current provision for Merton state schools to include how schools are selected, year groups, size of groups, ability of students etc. Also survey HTs to consider the need for more intensive approach for school swimming (not just for Top Up but as a new approach).	GLL to discuss at HT Mtg 21 st Nov 19	June 2020	
b) Agree best way to ensure pool slots are filled whilst ensuring the schools that need the lessons the most are prioritised when planning the timetable.	GLL	June 2020	
c) Improve two way communication between Schools and GLL to support booking process and ensure consistency across all pools. Copy MSSP into correspondence so they can support the Pool Managers and Schools if required. <i>Note that letters for following year usually sent 2nd week of April – (CC NR In) and usually around a 3% price increase.</i>	GLL / MSSP	April 2020	
d) Ensure consistent approach from GLL management across all pools with regards to assessment data, certificates, engagement of school staff during lessons.	GLL	Ongoing	
e) Promote best practice to schools in terms of timetabling options based on their school needs – See Swim England Primary School Resource and GLL Prospectus as per Charter. MSSP to promote this annually at PE Conference (Sept) and with GLL via annual workshop (Summer Term)	MSSP	Dec 2019 Ongoing	

Objective 2: Ensure students make good progress and enjoy their curriculum swimming lessons and learn to be safe in and around the water

Action	By Whom	By When	Outcome
a) Ask HTs to support the agreement of the 'Role of school staff' within Swimming lessons. GLL to provide feedback to School HT for any school staff that may need more support or encouragement to be more actively involved in the lesson.	RM, MSSP	Ongoing	
b) Ensure GLL staff are actively engaging school staff to support the lesson. Ask Schools to provide feedback to GLL if they are not approached by GLL instructor to have an active role within the lesson. GLL to provide ongoing training and support for Instructors to ensure they feel confident to take on this role and to oversee its effectiveness within lessons and report back to group.	GLL	Ongoing	
c) Ensure lessons are fun and engaging for all students with maximum time spent in the water, utilising a games based approach to swimming as recommended by Swim England and the new GLL SoW. To develop evaluation forms for schools by Dec 2019 (staff and children) to complete at the end of each 6 lesson block.	GLL (NR will provide example evaluation to use)	Ongoing – Review first use of evaluations at Feb half term	
d) Ensure standards of teaching meet National Curriculum expectations and are effectively monitored/observed to ensure quality control across all pools. All instructors to have a least one lesson observation per year by GLL.	GLL	July 2020	
e) Develop resources to support instructors and teachers with swimming technique and learning objectives. Develop picture cards for stroke coaching points – to support all learners (in particular for those children with different communication needs) and the supporting school staff.	GLL	July 2020	
f) Develop additional training and information sharing opportunities for schools at the MSSP PE Coordinator Conference in September and a GLL Practical workshop for School staff in July. Provide links to Swim England training opportunities via Pe Coordinators.	MSSP GLL	Sept & July Annually	
g) Ensure schools and MSSP receive assessment data around progress half termly and that this is used to review and improve the overall programme and the lessons. All data to be consolidated by GLL for the purpose of the Charter to support improvement of programme.	GLL		
h) Encourage schools to identify those children that have made less progress and require targeted Top Up Swimming to guarantee their safety and progress	MSSP GLL	Ongoing via charter, communications and training	

Objective 3: Raise the profile of the importance of swimming and water safety with schools and parents			
Action	By Whom	By When	Outcome
a) Promote new guidance documentation from GLL, Swim England and the National School Swim Group to schools to support them in their approach to school swimming. Add links to MSSP website and promote via communications to schools and PE Conference.	MSSP	Dec 19 and annually	
b) Utilise MSSP Conferences and MSSM to promote importance of swimming and recommendations. Meet with PE Co 1-2-1 to look at how their programme is working and outcomes and if anything could be developed. Use the MSSM award to reward schools for actively promoting the importance of swimming and water safety to students and parents.	MSSP	Annually	
c) Continue to deliver and publicise the Schools' Gala. Consider options for a gala venue with spectator viewing option.	MSSP	Annually	
d) GLL to consider options/timetable spaces for schools to use pool for Intra School Aqua Festivals where students can take part in fun water competitions as part of their school programme. This may help reengage students who completed their swim programme in previous year/s at school.	GLL	July 2020	
e) Promote GLL swimming community programme to all schools and secure funding to support low income households.	GLL	TBC	
f) Promote GLL "Water Safety Week" to schools and MSSP.	GLL	Annually DATE TBC	
g) Engage with local clubs to promote out of school opportunities for children.	GLL	Dec 2019 then annually	
h) Utilise the Top Up Programme to target parents of less able swimmers with guidance on importance of swimming and water safety. Provide promotional leaflets for children to take home.	GLL	At end of each Top Up block	