

Merton Schools' Swimming and Water Safety Charter

Working Document V2: Agreed 18.10.22

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 Borough Swimming Gala
- The promotion of school staff training to support swimming.
- 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 the GLL Aquatic Team to further address the challenges and barriers faced within school swimming. From September 2016 – July 2022 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. 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.

New Intensive Model

During the pandemic the local pools were closed which meant many children did not receive their school swimming lessons in the expected year group. When the pools reopened, GLL implemented their new intensive model. This model had proved successful with the Top Up Programme and prior to the pandemic,

was the preferred model to be delivered for all school swimming. Pupils that were soon to be leaving primary school were prioritised in the new allocation of school swimming slots. The GLL framework continues to focus on water safety and pupils achieving the national curriculum outcomes.

Merton School Swimming Development Group

In order to meet our aims around school swimming and water safety, the Merton School Swimming Development Group was set up. The Group welcomed the 2017 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 most current GLL Scheme of Work, which supports more active and engaging lessons 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 with parents**

Working Together

The Merton School Swimming Strategy Group consists of:

- Two representatives from GLL Local and Regional Management team
- One nominated Merton Head Teacher
- One representative (management level) from the Merton School Sport Partnership

This group work together voluntarily to try to achieve the aims of this Charter.

Contractual Information: *GLL are contracted by Merton Council to manage and run the Council Leisure Centres: Canons, Morden and Wimbledon. MSSP and the nominated Head Teacher/Merton Primary Schools have no authority over the Service Level Agreement and contractual obligations between LB Merton and GLL.*

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. MSSP will provide school census data to support GLL with their timetabling to meet the needs of all schools in the longer term and to consider those schools that should have priority over slots.
4. 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.
5. GLL will provide an annual update for all school staff and instructors to induct them to their role and get the most from all adults supporting school swimming.
6. GLL will provide anonymous attainment data for Merton state schools annually.
7. We will endeavour to seek funding and tailor our strategies to support children in more deprived areas to access the opportunities they need.
8. We will review and improve our approach to diversity across school swimming in order that all our stakeholders, both children and adults, and all their protected characteristics, feel better represented, consulted, safe, empowered and supported within the swimming programme.
9. We will work together to ensure a good quality PE Swimming Curriculum is delivered, in the best format possible, and address any concerns around quality of provision.
10. We will provide annual updates/information sharing opportunities for schools at the MSSP PE Coordinator Conference in September and links to other training opportunities for school staff.

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).'*

GLL's Current Intensive Programme in Merton

In Merton, the three pools; Canons, Morden and Wimbledon now all provide an intensive timetable to enable better progress and confidence for pupils.

- 10 x 1-hour lessons - Over a 2 week period
- Consistent Instructors
- Teacher pupil ratio 1:10
- Quicker progression / better attainment

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.

GLL offer the Top up as 5 x 1-hour sessions over one week.

Top up swimming needs to be completed as soon as possible after the standard lessons as progress is lost if the sessions are too far from the original course.

Students should be encouraged to continue to practise their swimming in the long term.

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>

With the available local pool space and schools' resources, GLL expect schools to have provided at least 10 hours of curriculum swimming before targeting pupils for 'Top Up Swimming' programmes. Top Up lessons for those children that haven't yet met the National Curriculum expectations could then be funded by the Primary PE and Sport Premium.

Role of School Teachers and Swimming Instructors within School Swim Lessons

The Group 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 your school swimming policy is in place. Consider the changing facilities and male/female staff, how children will be escorted to the pool side.
- 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: <https://mertonssp.org.uk/swimming/>)
- Ensure children are ready on time, quiet (it's hard to teach over any noise/echo in the pool) and well behaved.
- Meet and greet the instructor on poolside
- Inform the instructor of any children with additional educational needs or disabilities and discuss an individual teaching plan for those students in advance of the lessons. School needs to provide additional 1:1 support.
- 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.
- Celebrate the progress made by all children, even when they haven't met the NC expectations they will still have made the own progress.

Swimming Instructors

- Meet and greet school teachers on poolside.
- 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. Send link to certificates for all students.

Measuring Progress and Target Setting

Schools receive a copy of the students' progress and attainment results at the end of every intensive block of lessons.

Note: GLL will be providing attainment and progress data for 2021-22 in order for the group to be able to measure the impact on school swimming. Once received this section will be completed.

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. Schools may also complete evaluation forms at their Pool. GLL are exploring sending these out to all school users after each block of lessons.

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 Children and Families Hub (020 8545 4226) or the Police directly if they suspect imminent danger. MSSP's Safeguarding website page can be found here:

<https://mertonssp.org.uk/safeguarding-and-child-protection/>

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. Or contact the pool's Duty Manager if unable to approach the instructor directly.
- If schools feel they have not resolved the issue they should contact the Centre Manager as soon as possible after the incident and follow this up in writing.
- If the school would like MSSP or the Nominated Head Teacher for Swimming 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's 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

All documents can be downloaded on the Merton SSP website [here](#)

- Pre-Swimming Classroom Lesson for Children Sept 2019 Final.pdf
- BETTER School Swimming Levels Expected Standards (v2) Nov 19.pdf
- GLL School Swimming Prospectus.pdf
- GLL Primary Scheme of Work – 30min Lessons Oct 19.docx
- Curriculum Swimming and Water Safety – a guide for primary schools.pdf
- Curriculum Swimming and Water Safety – primary school support materials.pdf
- Swim England Curriculum Swimming and Water Safety Review Group Report 2017.pdf
- Merton Primary Schools' Swimming and Water Safety Charter Oct 2022
- Merton Schools Swimming Strategy V4 September 2012.pdf

Action Plan, Revised Oct 2022

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
<p>a) Review booking demand and programming for 2023 / 2024 – agreed following process to be implemented if HT reps agree on 20th Oct.</p> <p>NR to prepare academic year timetable for 2023-24 base on 12 – 3pm time slot each week day in all three pools. Schools would get one hour slots 12-1, 1-2 or 2 – 3 for their 10 consecutive weekdays. NR to devise a google form to ask schools for their priorities before Christmas break. NR and RM to analyse outcomes of the forms and decide best slots for schools for 2023-24 based on the following priorities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Distance from pool and how they have to travel to and from pool 2. Need for the children – those that are less likely to have swum with parents or had lessons out of school. Schools that find it harder to get parents to support travel etc. 3. Preference for each school and best times to suit their curriculum and school programmes. 4. Merton state schools to get priority booking over non Merton or independent schools 5. Schools will target one year group with top up if needed for a one week block as an option. <p>Calculated that in year 5 last year there were 2187 children in Merton schools and slots available at GLL pools allowed for 4,860 children to swim in one academic year. NR and RM will then work with GLL to allocate slots to schools. Schools will be offered their slot by GLL in Jan/Feb and will have at least 3 weeks to confirm they would like to reserve the slot (by the end of March).</p> <p>If schools do not want to accept the allocated slot they would have to wait until all reservations are confirmed at the end of March then contact the centres directly for any other available slots. This would be the same if they wanted to add an additional year group to their booking as well. GLL will send contracts/invoices out to the schools 3 weeks before the sessions begin (this is to avoid them becoming debtors on the GLL finance system).</p>	All	March 2023	
<p>b) Ensure consistent approach from GLL management across all pools with regards to assessment data, certificates, engagement of school staff during lessons.</p>	GLL	Ongoing - Evaluations	

<p>c) GLL review safeguarding protocols at each Pool site. Including entry, changing rooms, contact with the public, whistleblowing and GDPR. Ensure all information is passed onto schools to help with their own RA.</p> <p><i>Still some concerns that Canons school users have to walk through public changing rooms. Difficult if only one gender of staff with group. GLL to speak to Canons and risk assess options. Potential to go through the gender of changing rooms that the members of staff are. If female then all students go through the female changing room together with school staff checking that's ok with anyone in there getting changed. Schools need this info as part of their booking information so they can include in their own risk assessment. A child could hurt themselves or come into contact with an unknown adult if walking through a changing room without any staff present.</i></p>	GLL	Dec 2022 and ongoing	
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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) Reinforce - 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	May 2023	
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. Evaluations previously developed (prior to pandemic), need to be utilised again by GLL and given to staff/children to complete at the end of each block. Feedback can contribute to the group's planning.	GLL	May 2023 and ongoing	
d) Ensure standards of teaching meet GLL and Ofsted 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	Ongoing – all instructors observed at least once per year	

<p>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.</p>	<p>GLL</p>	<p>TBC</p>	<p><i>Original target from 2019 not yet completed.</i></p>
<p>f) Develop additional training and information sharing opportunities for schools at the MSSP PE Coordinator Conference in September/July. Provide links to Swim England training opportunities via PE Coordinators. Swimming training for teachers Develop Your School Swimming Teachers cpd@swimenglandqualifications.com</p>	<p>GLL / MSSP</p>	<p>Bi annually Ongoing</p>	
<p>g) Data for each pool will be collated, all schools and MSSP to receive assessment data around progress at the end of each term and that this is used to review and improve the overall programme and the lessons. All Merton data to be consolidated by GLL for the purpose of the Charter to support improvement of programme.</p> <p><i>Attainment data from July 2022 was taken from the Merton School Sports Mark Award but not as accurate as that which GLL would have access to for each school. It would be good to have something from pre covid to compare the results to if GLL can also provide this? Data on the number of children that reach 25m, water safety and a range of strokes but also the progress made by all children regardless of their starting point would be useful.</i></p>	<p>GLL</p>	<p>Annually</p>	
<p>h) Encourage schools to identify those children that have made less progress and require targeted Top Up Swimming to guarantee their safety and progress</p>	<p>MSSP GLL</p>	<p>Annually</p>	
<p>i) As part of MSSP’s review of all areas, with input and guidance from GLL, review our approach to diversity across school swimming in order that all our stakeholders, both children and adults, that have protected characteristics, feel better represented, consulted, safe, empowered and supported within the swimming programme. Actions to be added to this plan once review has begun.</p>	<p>MSSP GLL</p>	<p>Begin review Jan 2023 - Ongoing</p>	

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 guidance documentation from GLL, NGBs 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	May 23 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 and more affordable than Morden pool.	MSSP	Annually	
d) GLL to consider options/timetable spaces for schools to use the pool for Intra School Aqua Festivals where students can take part in fun water competitions as part of their school programme. This may help re-engage students who completed their swim programme in previous year/s at school.	GLL	TBC	
e) Promote GLL swimming community programme to all schools and secure funding to support low income households.	GLL	Before each school holiday break	
f) Promote GLL "Water Safety Week" to schools and MSSP.	GLL	Annually in June	
g) Engage with schools to promote out of school opportunities for children.	GLL	Before each school holiday break	

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	
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