

Aquatics Policy

Douglas Rochestown Educate Together National School (ETNS) stresses the importance of physical activity throughout the school day. Aquatics is a specialised area of Physical Education (PE) and, as such, this policy has been formulated to provide clarity regarding the curricular and organisational planning

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School Details:

Name: Douglas Rochestown Educate Together National School

Address: Carr's Hill, Douglas, Cork

Telephone: 021 489 0122 / 085 2428753

Email: info@dretns.ie

Roll Number: 20413N

Principal: Dr. Alan Sheehan

The school premises consist of the area within the school boundaries/fence at Carr's Hill. School start/end times are as follows:

Start Time:	End Time:
8.30 am	1.10 pm/2.10 pm

The school doors open at 8.20am. The school provides supervision of pupils within the school grounds only from 8.20am – 1.20pm for Junior and Senior Infants and from 8.20am – 2.20 pm for all other Classes. Please note that no responsibility is accepted for anyone in the areas outside the school fencing. Please also note that no responsibility is accepted for pupils arriving before 8.20am or for supervising pupils after 1.20pm/2.20pm.

General Information:

Douglas Rochestown ETNS is under the patronage of Educate Together. It is based on four key principles: Child-centered, Co-educational, Democratic and Equality-based.

Douglas Rochestown ETNS follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the Department of Education and Science, which may be amended from time to time, in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act (1998).

Introduction:

It is important to stress that this plan is not based solely on stroke development but has more emphasis on the elements of confidence building and water safety skill as emphasised in the

aquatics curriculum. Although the acquisition of swimming skills is obviously important, it is recognised that not all children may learn to swim despite the best efforts of the instructors. Thus it is vital that all children learn valuable life-preserving skills while maintaining an emphasis on fun and enjoyment.

Approaches and Methodologies

There is great scope for guided discovery in pool work as children build confidence and learn about their own buoyancy. There is a natural integration with aquatics and science but also with the SPHE curriculum. Some time will be given to opportunities for free play and structured games will also be an integral part of pool sessions.

Curriculum Planning:

Strand Units

Unlike the other strands of the PE curriculum, aquatics is not divided into content objectives for various class levels as many children in older classes may be beginners while some junior pupils may already be able to swim. This will allow for classes of different levels to attend the same session as children will be grouped according to their ability.

Hygiene

This topic also occurs in SPHE in the strand Myself strand unit Taking Care of my Body, however, there are particular aspects which are specific to taking children to a swimming pool. The pool work component of the aquatics programme affords many opportunities to explore elements of the SPHE curriculum in a real setting. These not only pertain to the importance of using the shower, toilet and footbath before getting into the water, but also to learning about packing the correct items for a swimming trip and taking care of those items when at the venue so as to successfully get dried and dressed afterwards. When at the pool children need to learn to put their outer clothes into their basket/bag first, working their way inwards, finishing with their towel on top.

Water Safety

This is of paramount importance in creating safe practice in and around water. It deals with the observation of pool rules, the recognition of the hazards of water and the identification of correct procedures to deal with hazards. There is again a natural integration with SPHE. Much of this work can be done in the classroom but is reinforced at the pool.

Water – safe entry and exit

The first visit to the pool may be a daunting prospect for many pupils. The swimming teacher will ensure that they learn to enter the water in a manner appropriate to their age, height and skill. Beginners will initially use the junior pool to develop their confidence in entering/exiting the water. They will also progress to using the ladder to enter backwards in the senior pool – children should be encouraged to use this method until they have built up enough confidence to turn and slip in or to jump in, as appropriate. Diving should only ever be attempted under instruction.

Buoyancy and Propulsion

This is primarily concerned with building confidence and competence and is the precursor to learning a swimming stroke. Much valuable learning occurs at the pool during organised games through which children learn about their own buoyancy.

Resources

At the swimming pool, simple items such as balls or rubber balls can be used to further explore the concepts learned in the classroom. It is important that children, particularly those gaining water-confidence have opportunities to play with a variety of floating and sinking objects, containers, sponges, hoops and balls in order to fully appreciate the properties of water.

As children's swimming skills increase the instructor should allow for opportunities to explore movement in water including floating, tumbling and shallow-diving.

Stroke Development

Although often the focus of an aquatics syllabus, it can be seen from the strand units that actually learning to swim is just one small module in the whole programme. It must be recognised that not all children will achieve mastery over a stroke in a swimming module – or indeed over a longer period. Thus it is important that stroke acquisition not be the focus of the whole aquatics programme. It is hoped that on completion of the aquatics programme in Sixth Class, most children in Douglas Rochestown ETNS will be proficient in at least one swimming stroke.

Water-based Games

In order to keep an emphasis on fun and enjoyment in the aquatics strand children will participate in structured games for a portion of the programme.

Understanding and Appreciation

Most of the aspects of this strand unit will be addressed if the other strand units are covered. There may be opportunities during events such as Active Week, to highlight events such as High Diving or Synchronised Swimming with which children may not be familiar. As part of creating a PE-rich environment the school will draw attention to local swimming clubs and water safety lessons.

Record Keeping:

A weekly record will be kept in order to track behaviour or take note of minor incidents which may occur. Incidents will be documented in writing in the appropriate record book and if necessary, followed up when back in school.

Term:			Date:		
Details:	Hands to self	Following instructions	Moving with care	Dressing room safety	Respect for others

Details of more serious incidents or accidents should be recorded on the school accident report form.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs:

Children with special educational needs in mainstream classes who have been allocated access to a Special Needs Assistant will have the benefit of this assistance while at the pool. This may be of particular importance in ensuring that their bag contains all necessary items, in getting to and from the bus, getting changed, travelling from the changing rooms to the pool bank, and assisting the child when entering/exiting the pool. With the agreement of the pool management the SNA will be encouraged to stay on the pool bank if needed in order to help their pupil stay focussed on the lesson or to intervene if necessary to elucidate a point.

Equality:

All children in Douglas Rochestown ETNS are expected to attend swimming lessons.

Organisational Planning:

The swimming lessons will take place in the Leisureplex Swimming Facility, Bishopstown. Children will be transported to and from the swimming lessons by bus. Parents will be provided with an information letter prior to the commencement of lessons and indicate their consent to their child's participation (Appendix 1).

Swimming lessons will be offered each year to Second and Third Class pupils. The other classes will learn about water safety each year.

Role of the Class Teacher

Class teachers will accompany their classes on the bus to the pool and be present outside the changing rooms while children get ready for their lesson. There must always be a minimum of two staff members outside the changing rooms. It is advised that staff members entering the dressing room area for whatever reason do not do so alone.

Children are not permitted to leave the changing rooms until they have been called onto the pool bank by the instructor/teacher in charge. Teachers will remain poolside (or in viewing gallery) for the duration of the lesson. This is of use to the instructors particularly if there is an issue regarding behaviour or discipline with which it is more appropriate for the class teacher to deal. A note should be made of any behaviour deemed inappropriate which needs to be followed up upon return to school. Teachers should return outside the changing room before the children have left the pool bank in order to ensure their pupils' safety.

Code of Ethics

In line with the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport in Ireland it is the policy of the school to encourage children to enter into the aquatics programme. It is envisaged that one of the key messages of the PE curriculum, that of enjoyment, is underwritten in this syllabus.

Due to the nature of attire at the swimming pool, teachers may be in a position to identify sites of non-accidental injury normally covered. Any concerns regarding a child's safety should be handled following the guidelines from the Department of Health – in which case a record should be kept and

concerns should, at the earliest opportunity, be reported to the Designated Liaison Person (Alan Sheehan). Confidentiality is essential; please do not discuss concerns with your colleagues or others.

Equipment

It will be at the discretion of swimming pool to make a range of equipment available which will enhance the learning opportunities of the children.

Health and Safety

Due to the nature of the environment all areas of the pool may be wet and slippery. Children must WALK at all times while in the pool building.

Dress (see Appendix 2)

- Children should wear a tracksuit on swimming day.
- All pupils must wear a swimming hat.
- Goggles and flip-flops are optional.

Personal Items

- Teachers will not be responsible for taking care of items of personal items i.e. jewellery, money etc.
- Children are expected to place all their personal belongings including clothes, runners, watches etc. into their gear bag. It is advised that items of value such as watches should not be brought to the swimming pool.

Medical Considerations

Pupils with the following conditions should be made known to staff and if required bring medication with them. In general these children will benefit from the non-weight bearing exercise opportunity that swimming will afford them.

- Arthritis
- Asthma
- Diabetes
- Epilepsy
- Recent Injuries
- Post-operative Conditions
- Some children will be excluded from swimming until medical advice has been sought

regarding: e.g.

Eye or ear infections

Open Wounds

Infectious Diseases (such as Chicken Pox)

Severe coughs or colds

It is expected that the child's parents or guardian will provide a note of explanation excusing the child from a particular lesson or lessons.

Important

Children are NOT permitted to use aerosol or sprays of any kind.

Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting

While teachers are not expected to teach swimming per se, it is envisaged that teachers will take the opportunity to back-up the work done in the pool by using appropriate lessons from the SPHE curriculum.

Staff Development:

INTO summer courses throughout the country offer opportunities for teachers to improve their own swimming skills and to organise a school aquatics programme. Teachers have the option to partake in these courses.

Ratification and Review

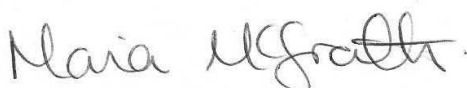
The policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 24th April 2017.

The policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on 29th August 2018.

The policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on 21st November 2018.

The policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on 29th September 2021.

Signed:



(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Communication:

The policy has been made available to school personnel via the school website (www.dretns.ie). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and the patron (Educate Together) if requested.

Appendix 1 Sample Information Letter to Parents/Guardians

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We are pleased to advise that swimming lessons for First and Second Class will begin on Wednesday 26th of April and will run up to and including Wednesday 21st of June, a total of nine lessons (every Wednesday). They will be held in Leisureworld, Bishopstown and classes will be for 45 minutes beginning at 11.30 am. The children will be supervised at all times by their class teachers. There will be three swimming instructors present to guide the children, which will facilitate a wide range of abilities.

We have organised for a bus to bring the pupils to and from Leisureworld every week. The breakdown of costs is as follows:

Pool Rental	-	€ 900
3 instructors	-	€ 810
Bus	-	€1,260

Total Cost	-	€2,970
Total cost per child	-	€65

(46 children)

We would be obliged if you could send in payment along with the consent form in a labelled envelope by Friday 7th of April. You may of course also pay in instalments. If any parent wishes to discuss payment, please do not hesitate to contact me.

It would be a great help if you could prepare your child in advance by teaching them to dry themselves fully after bath/shower time at home and ensure that they are able to dress themselves correctly. Please see the reverse of this letter for information regarding the children's clothing and swimming bag. If your child is absent from a swimming lesson, please inform the school via email or phone call as usual.

Le dea-ghuí,
Dr. Alan Sheehan
Principal

I/We consent to our child _____, participating in swimming lessons and travelling to and from these lessons by bus.

Signed: _____
Print Name: _____
Date: _____

Signed: _____
Print Name: _____
Date: _____

Appendix 2 Clothing and Swimming Bag

Clothing

The child should be able to dress and undress themselves independently. Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to practise these skills in the weeks and months ahead of the commencement of swimming lessons. **Parents/guardians are asked to ensure that all items are labelled with their child's name.**

Clothing to be worn on 'swimming day':

- **Tracksuit/Leggings (elasticated waist – no buttons or zips)**
- **Tracksuit top or similar (loose and easy to remove)**
- **Velcro runners (if laced, please ensure that your child can tie them independently)**
- **Socks**
- **Swimming togs or underwear**
- **Coats are weather dependent**
- **No Jewellery/watches, etc.**

If the child is wearing swimming costume when coming to school, please ensure that underwear is included in the change bag. Also, please ensure that your child can easily use the toilet whilst wearing the swimming costume under their clothes before the lesson.

Swimming Bag

Please ensure that the swimming bag can accommodate all wet gear easily and that your child can pack this bag themselves. **No toiletries are permitted.**

The swimming bag must contain:

- **Togs or underwear (depending on what they are wearing when they arrive at school)**
- **Swimming hat**
- **Towel**
- **Plastic bag for wet gear**

Further recommended items include:

- **Swimming socks**
- **'Turbie Towel' for wet hair**
- **Goggles**