**St. Joseph’s Special School,**

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**Chairperson of the Board of Management: Audrey Pidgeon**

**Principal: Sarah McGinley**

# Timetable for Review

As necessary

**Swimming policy**

Date of Issue: **April 2015 Review 2020**

**Introduction**

This policy was developed by a committee comprised of two teachers, the school nurse, two parent representatives and the Chairperson of the Board of Management. It should be read in conjunction with the policy on Child Protection, the Health and Safety Statement, the policy on Intimate Care and the whole school plan for PE.

**Rationale**

The school recognises the significant impact of regular swimming activities on the physical and cognitive development of the pupils. For this reason weekly lessons are arranged from October to the end of May.

**Aims**

The aim of the swimming lessons is to develop pupil’s confidence in water so that they can enjoy the experience and develop their swimming ability, thereby giving them access to activities which improve physical fitness and social skills.

**Objectives**

* To outline clear guidelines for the entire school community on procedures and responsibilities in relation to swimming.
* To comply with the requirements of the aquatics strand of the PE curriculum.
* To enable pupils to acquire basic swimming skills.
* To enable pupils to compete in swimming events.
* To enable pupils to experience the therapeutic effects of water activities.
* To develop independence in personal care
* To develop skills needed to use public facilities.

**Procedures**

Pupils attend swimming lessons in Leisureland every Friday starting at the end of September and continuing to the end of May. The pool is reserved from 11.00 -11.45. Pupils and staff are transported to the pool on a Bus Eireann coach and on the school bus. Buses depart the school at 10.20 and return at 12.15.

Costs incurred by hiring the pool and transport to and from the pool necessitate a charge being imposed on each pupil. All pupils wear the school tracksuit and bring a suitable bag to carry gear which consists of a towel, togs, swimming cap, hairbrush and shampoo. All items need to be clearly labelled with the pupil’s name. Pupils who do not bring in swimming gear do not go to the pool.

Qualified swimming teachers deliver the lessons. The swimming teachers assess the individual ability of pupils and in consultation with teaching staff assign them to the appropriate section of the pool.

In general the majority of pupils are out of their depth in the water as this assists the acquisition of swimming skills. This necessitates a high level of support in the water which is provided by Transition Year students from Coláiste Iognáid.

**Supervision procedures**

Pupils are supervised by the class teachers and SNAs on the bus and in the dressing rooms. St. Joseph’s staff supervise from the pool or poolside while lessons are underway. Particular attention is focused on pupils with certain health conditions or behaviour issues. Particular coloured hats can be used to assist the identification of these pupils while in the pool if required.

Staff assist pupils in the dressing room before and after swimming. 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.

The TY students are supervised by the St Joseph’s teacher in charge of the Coláiste Iognaíd Social Outreach programme. A roll is taken each day before they are assigned to their swimming partner. The students have two induction meetings in advance of the commencement of the swimming programme where they are informed of their responsibilities and procedures before during and after lessons. A teacher from Coláiste Iognaíd liaises with the school in relation to the programme on a regular basis

Alternative activities in the school are organised for pupils who for any reason do not go swimming.

**Health and Safety**

The school recognises that there is always a level of risk in relation to swimming. The following points aim to reduce this risk to an acceptable level and ensure best practice in relation to the health and safety of all students:

* Parents/guardians will sign an annual consent form for swimming.
* It is the duty of parents to inform the class teacher with regard to any health issue which may affect the pupil in the pool. This includes any changes relating to health or medication.
* Pupils are required to behave in a manner that ensures the safety of all involved in school swimming.

Conditions which may preclude pupils from participating in the swimming programme include;

* Temporary conditions such as colds, skin rash, open wound, menstruation
* Pupils who are not bowel trained
* Pupils with unstable epilepsy. These students require a relaxed, quiet swimming time to reduce their risk of seizures. This cannot be provided due to the numbers, including other primary schools, attending swimming at Leisureland. Therefore, pupils with unstable epilepsy should be seizure free for 12 months before commencing/recommencing swimming.
* Pupils whose behaviour may endanger themselves or others.
* The class teacher in consultation with the school nurse will make a decision on the suitability of any pupil to go swimming on a particular Friday.

**Review:** This policy will be reviewed as necessary

**Ratified by the Board of Management**

**Chairperson: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Principal\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**