# Normal Operating Procedure

**for**

**Insert school name here**

**Insert date**

1. **Introduction**

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that users experience a safe, clean, warm and friendly pool environment. It provides details of all aspects of pool supervision and duties.

In addition to outlining processes relating to pool supervision, it includes rules, hazards and general information relating to the pool facilities.

This procedure is to be supplemented by site-specific information as follows:

Appendix 1 - Description of pool(s)

Appendix 2 - Plan(s) of the pool(s)

Appendix 3 - Site specific rules

Appendix 4 - Maximum bather loads / lifeguard requirements

Further information on the content of these appendices is contained within the relevant section of this procedure.

2. **Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of the Head teacher (or nominated manager / supervisor) to ensure that new staff are made fully aware of this procedure and how to implement it prior to commencing their poolside duties.

It is the responsibility of all pool staff / teachers to supervise the operation of the pool(s) in accordance with this procedure. Further responsibilities and key tasks are outlined below:

It is the responsibility of the Head teacher to ensure that there are sufficient resources on shift to enable full compliance with this procedure.

3. **Process**

3.1 **Pool details**

A description of the pools within the school is included in Appendix 1. This will outline details of the pools including numbers, dimensions, depths and any particular features including:

* booms
* floating floors

Any associated key risks and particular restrictions to these areas, e.g. access, will be detailed in the description. Further general details relating to pool features are included later in this procedure.

Plan(s) of the pool(s) will be included in Appendix 2. These will show all lifeguard stations, drown alarm points, observation chairs, observation zones, disabled hoists and other significant features. These plans (or separate plans included in Appendix 2) will also show the positions of rescue equipment. 3.2

**Poolside rescue equipment**

There will be a range of equipment on poolside for use in rescuing swimmers in difficulty. This equipment will be checked daily to ensure it is in its correct position and is fit for use. This will be recorded on the pool manager’s daily check sheet.

All pool staff must ensure they are familiar with the emergency rescue equipment, where it is situated and how to operate it prior to undertaking poolside duties. This equipment should remain in place until required for a rescue and will not be carried around poolside; particularly reach poles that have potential for causing an accident if not handled correctly.

The location of this equipment is shown in Appendix 2.

3.3 **Poolside panic alarms**

The locations of static poolside alarm points are detailed in Appendix 2.

There are two different types of alarm on poolside, which, if activated, require action from the staff on poolside duty. These are the pool/drown alarm and the fire alarm. Action to be taken on hearing these alarms will be outlined in the pool Emergency Action plan (EAP).

All staff will receive training on the use of the alarms as part of their induction.

Drown alarms will be tested on a daily basis and recorded on the pool manager’s daily check sheet.

3.4 **First aid rooms and supplies**

Pool staff must be aware of the location of the first aid room(s) and their contents before undertaking poolside duties.

The first aid rooms will be kept clean at all times.

First aid boxes will be located in various areas of the school, including the first aid room, and these locations will be listed in Appendix 2.

Checks of first aid boxes will be undertaken by a nominated member of staff to ensure sufficient stock is present.

3.5 **Qualifications of pool staff**

Please refer to Kent Council Councils Safe Practice in School Swimming and Water Safety Policy for the required qualifications of pool staff.

3.6 **Lifeguard training**

Please refer to Kent Council Councils Safe Practice in School Swimming and Water Safety Policy for the required qualifications of pool staff.

3.7 **Pool staff – key tasks / responsibilities**

Key tasks of the pool staff whilst on duty include:

* working as part of a team to ensure the safe supervision of the pool, communicating as necessary using appropriate whistle, hand signals or speech
* maintaining a concentrated observation of the pool and its bathers in order to anticipate any problems before they occur and identify any emergency quickly. It should be noted that some bathers in difficulty might shout and splash whist others give little indication of a problem but simply sink below the water. Concentrated vigilance is needed to detect genuine emergencies
* carrying out rescues and initiating other emergency action as required
* carrying out initial first aid to a bather in the event of an injury or any other emergency
* ensuring that all bathers are behaving in an orderly manner
* ensuring all poolside emergency equipment and first aid equipment is present and free from defects
* maintaining pool positions until relieved by a colleague. Positions must not be left unattended
* maintaining personal water fitness and knowledge through regular training

**3.8 Poolside rules for pool staff**

Any site-specific staff rules, including those required for each lifeguard position if applicable, will be outlined in Appendix 3, however, the following rules apply to all pools:

* staff must not stand together talking on poolside unless it is absolutely necessary and is relevant to the task. This particularly applies during a rotation or changeover
* drinking is permitted on poolside from plastic drinking bottles only. Eating is not permitted on poolside
* equipment should be stored after use e.g. inflatables, swimming lesson equipment, pool reach poles

**3.9 Communication on poolside**

The method of communication using a whistle is as follows:

* 1 whistle blast – attracts the attention of the pool users
* 2 whistle blasts – attracts the attention of other pool staff
* 3 whistle blasts – indicates that the lifeguard is about to take emergency action
* 1 long whistle blast – attracts the attention of the pool users to prepare for an evacuation

Whistles will be used sparingly and will be followed by relevant verbal or visual instruction, e.g. hand signals. Consideration will be given, where possible, to the timeliness of the whistle in relation to the activities being carried out in order to ensure users, e.g. divers, are not unduly distracted.

Handheld radios and intercom systems should also be used as necessary. Radios and intercom systems will only be used for essential communication. Where appropriate, rules for use of these items will be documented.

**3.10 Potential risk factors**

A number of hazards exist in swimming pools and therefore pool staff will be alert and vigilant at all times when on duty. Hazards may generally be divided into 4 categories:

* people hazard – those that are created by the bathers in the pool
* activity hazards – those relating to the manner in which activities are undertaken
* lifeguard hazards – those created by staff in the building
* physical hazards – those relating to the design and structure of the pool.

Details of these, along with known key hazards surrounding pools are outlined below:

The following have been factors in serious injuries and fatalities in swimming pools in the UK:

• prior health problems e.g. asthma, epilepsy, etc.  
• youth and inexperience (half of those who drown are 15 or under)

• alcohol, drugs or food before swimming

• unauthorised access to pools intended to be out of use

• weak or non-swimmers straying out of their depth

• diving into insufficient depth of water (leading to concussion or injury to head, neck or spine)

• unruly behaviour and misuse of equipment

• unclear pool water, preventing casualties from being seen

• absence of, or inadequate response, by pool staff in an emergency

**People hazards**

Wherever possible, it is desirable to observe bathers before they enter the water. This can identify users who may be considered to be a particular risk, i.e.,

• bathers under the influence of alcohol or drugs

• bathers in poor health

• the young

• those who appear nervous

• children with disabilities / special needs

Once bathers have entered the pool, it becomes much more difficult to spot potential problems. Those who need to be carefully observed, in addition to the above, include:

• non / weak swimmers

• swimmers wearing armbands or using other buoyancy aids including floats, inflatables etc.

• show-offs / boisterous swimmers

• scum channel / handrail and lane rope crawlers

**Activity hazards**

Pool staff must be aware that accidents can happen as a result of seemingly harmless pool games or high-spirited activity. In certain cases, pool staff will use their skill and judgement to change the activity pattern, thus reducing the risk.

Certain activities must be stopped:

• acrobatics

• bombing

• bullying

• diving (unless in designated areas)

• fighting

• misuse of equipment

• pushing

• running

• tag games

**Lifeguard hazards:**

Lifeguards should act as role models to bathers, especially the younger users of the pool. Therefore, the manner in which pool staff behave on poolside can have a significant effect on the standards of bather behaviour.

The positioning of the pool staff can seriously affect their capability to observe the water and may affect their ability to remain vigilant. Staff must l therefore remain in close proximity to their designated position, should not, unless absolutely necessary, talk to other lifeguards supervising the pool, and will not leave their position unless cover is available.

**Physical pool hazards**

Site specific hazards, which have been identified following risk assessment, will be listed in Appendix 1, and on the pool plan, e.g. blind spots and areas affected by glare. Certain hazards, however, may be common to a number of pools and these include:

* exits from changing rooms leading directly onto poolside adjacent to deep water areas
* entrapment dangers from inlets, outlets and other grills
* diving pools and boards
* awareness of pool water depths in different areas

3.11 **General poolside rules for bathers**

It is essential that the behaviour of pupils does not detract from the enjoyment of others or represent a risk. Notices will be displayed around poolside to outline rules to the users. Specific safety signs, e.g. depth signs and various “do not” signs will be necessary. Pool staff will also communicate rules verbally to bathers as necessary.

The following are general poolside rules and apply to all pools. Should any additional site-specific rules apply, these will be included in Appendix 3.

• no acrobatics in or around the poolside

• no bombing – this can be dangerous to other bathers

• no diving – varying water depths make it dangerous to dive, except in organised sessions in the diving pool

• no ducking – this is dangerous as it can cause panic and alarm

• no face masks, flippers, snorkels, or swim paddles. These are inappropriate as glass can be broken; flippers and paddles have sharp edges and can cut other bathers

• no food or drink on poolside

• no petting – this can be embarrassing to other bathers

• no prams or pushchairs on poolside

• no photography – do not allow people to film or take photography either from poolside or the balcony unless prior permission has been granted from the Head teacher as well as the pool manager

• recognised swimwear must be worn at all times – T-shirts may be allowed if agreed beforehand. there may be a need for sensitivity to the religious and cultural needs of some ethnic groups

• no running – this is dangerous as the floor is wet and therefore is likely to present a slip hazard

• no shouting or unnecessary distracting of the pool staff

**3.12 Maximum bather loads/lifeguard ratios**

Maximum bather loads will be determined for following a risk assessment. The HSE document – Managing Health and Safety in Swimming Pools 4th edition will be used as a guide.

When determining the bather loads and numbers of staff available to supervise / lifeguard, consideration will be given to the various sessions programmed, e.g. swimming lessons and the degree of supervision required for each and not just to the pool size. In addition, the maximum load may be influenced by the type of bather, e.g. large numbers of children may require more supervision than the same number of adult bathers.

The maximum bather loads for the pool(s) within the school are shown in Appendix 4, along with the lifeguard requirements for various sessions.

**3.13 Poolside positions**

Lifeguard stations are shown on the plan at Appendix 2.

**3.14 Controlling access onto poolside**

Access to poolside when the pool is not is use will be prevented through the use of physical barriers or supervision. Particular care will be taken when pool covers are in use.

Any site-specific controls to prevent access to pool areas will be outlined in Appendix 1.

**3.15 Pool water quality**

Pool water testing will be carried out by nominated, trained staff, in order to ensure the quality of the water is within parameters recommended by the Pool Water Treatment Advisory Group.

Any irregularities in the results will be reported immediately to the technical staff or other designated swimming pool maintenance manager who can then take appropriate action.

These tests will be recorded on the pool managers daily check sheet and records retained on site.  
  
**3.16 Accidents / injuries**

Due to the nature of activities taking place within the school, accidents will happen, which will result in injuries to either public or staff. The majority of these will be minor accidents and may be treated on site without referring the person to hospital. For minor accidents treatment will be given at either the scene of the accident or in a first aid room.

Accidents will be recorded on KCC’s accident/incident report form (HS157) and those reportable to the HSE will be recorded on form F2508 Reporting of Injuries and Dangerous Occurrence forms (RIDDOR). The accident/incident may require investigation using KCC’s accident/investigation form (HS160).

**4. References**

Appendix 1 Description of pool(s)

Appendix 2 Plan(s) of the pool(s)

Appendix 3 Site specific rules

Appendix 4 Maximum bather loads / Lifeguard requirements

Procedure - pool emergency action

Poolside rules

HSE - Managing Health & Safety in Swimming Pools

**Appendix 1**

To consist of description of pools, including dimensions, depths, features, key hazards & risks, restrictions etc. (Sections 3.1, 3.12 and 3.17 refer)

**Appendix 2**

To consist of plan(s) of the pool(s), including lifeguard stations, lifeguard rotation, drown alarm points, position of rescue equipment, location of first aid equipment etc. (Sections 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.9 & 3.15 refer)

**Appendix 3**

To consist of site-specific poolside rules, bather rules etc. (Sections 3.8 & 3.13 refer)

**Appendix 4**

To consist of maximum bather loads / lifeguard requirements for various sessions (Sections 3.14 & 3.26 refer)