

July 2023

Young people urged to stay safe around open water after latest tragedies

Dear Headteacher,

There has been a stark increase in the number of tragedies in and around water amongst young people, and we must work together to prevent more deaths.

Four people under 20 died in accidental drownings in Wales in 2022 – the highest number since comparable data became available from the National Water Safety Forum’s Water Incident Database (WAID) in 2015. In total, there were 22 deaths in Wales from accidental drowning in 2022 across inland and coastal locations, and we have already seen a number of drowning fatalities this year.

We at Swim Wales, the RNLI and Water Safety Wales, would like your support in raising further awareness of our water safety messages to children and young people on the importance of staying safe around the coast and inland waterways like rivers, lakes and reservoirs during the summer period.

One drowning is too many. We would urge your teaching staff to reiterate our four simple live saving tips to children and young people to help them stay safe around open water.



**BEFORE YOU ENTER THE WATER
REMEMBER!**

STOP AND THINK
Is it a safe place to swim and do you know the dangers?

STAY TOGETHER
Always go with someone else

FLOAT
If you get into trouble in the water, float to live until you feel calm

CALL 999 OR 112
If you see someone else in trouble in the water



diogelwch dŵr
Cymru
water safety
Wales



SWIM WALES
NOFIO CYMRU



Lifeboats

Resources

Please find attached a Water Smart handout on the key water safety messages that we ask you to share with your students and their parents / carers.

There is also a bank of free education activities linked to the Curriculum for Wales. The StayWiseCymru website is easy to use – just select an age group, subject, or theme, and you will find a collection of resources to keep students busy. Find it now at www.staywisecymru.co.uk.

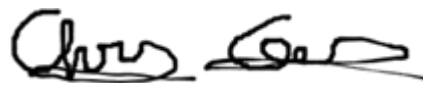
Water Safety Wales are kindly requesting your support in signposting these resources before the end of school term via your school website and social media.

Yours in swimming and water safety,



Fergus Feeney

Chief Executive, Swim Wales



Chris Cousens

Water Safety Lead, RNLI
Chair, Water Safety Wales

Supporting Data:

The latest figures from the Water Incident Database (WAID), which is maintained by the National Water Safety Forum, highlight drowning trends from 2022.

Key accidental drowning death WAID insights for Wales include:

- There were **22** accidental fatalities
- **91%** of accidental fatalities were male
- **Males age 10 -19** were the highest group for accidental fatalities
- **50%** of accidental drowning deaths happened at the coast and **50%** at inland waterways
- Recreational activities accounted for **72%** of accidental fatalities
- **28%** of people had no intention to enter the water, such as those walking, with causes including slips, trips and falls, being cut off by the tide, or swept in by waves.
- **46%** of the drowning deaths in Wales happened in the months of June, July and August.