

Statutory guidance

National curriculum in England: physical education programmes of study

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Swimming and water safety

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

Pupils currently are expected to complete three elements by the time they leave Year Six – be able to swim competently, confidently and proficiently over a distance of 25 metres, using a range of strokes effectively and perform safe self-rescue in different water-based situations.

While two of the outcomes are clearly defined, arguably the most important factor around self-rescue can be interpreted in different ways.

Swim England and the STA has worked together to publish a number of skills to provide clarity and consistency for teachers and parents and ensure the desired protective effect is met.

The nine suggested outcomes, which should be completed by pupils in sequence in full reach depth water, are:

1. Fall-in entry and recover to surface
2. Float on the back with minimal movement for 60 seconds without floatation equipment
3. Rotate from floating on the back to a vertical position
4. Tread water for 30 seconds
5. Whilst treading water, signal for help once, by extending one arm above the head and simultaneously shouting for help then returning the arm to the water to continue to tread water
6. Swim (without floatation equipment) 15m to a floating object, using a recognised personal survival stroke (head up long arm front paddle or lifesaving backstroke)
7. Retaining the floating object take up the heat escape lessening position/posture for 30 seconds
8. Form a huddle position as a group for 30 seconds
9. Swim 15m to exit the water unaided

The outcomes also include possible reasonable adjustments for shallow water and physical impairments.