

## **Advice on Swimming and Hydrotherapy during the School Day**

Swimming for pupils with special educational needs falls into four categories:-

1. Curriculum swimming
2. Hydrotherapy
3. Parent/Guardian arranged swimming
4. Swimming agreed by the Local Authority for a child with a Statement of SEN as an alternative to Physical Education (PE) lessons

### **Curriculum swimming**

This is swimming arranged by the school for whole classes or groups (usually years 5/6), is part of the curriculum and meets all of the Authority's requirements for risk assessment etc. ***Legal responsibility lies with the school and Local Authority.***

### **Hydrotherapy**

This is a course of specific therapy arranged by the National Health Service (NHS) as part of the pupil's Health Plan. The NHS will arrange for and fund the sessions, and transport and will deliver the therapy. They will also undertake the risk assessment and write a personal handling plan. If the child has a teaching assistant (TA) the Authority is happy for the TA to accompany the pupil as escort. ***Legal responsibility lies with the Health Authority.***

### **Parentally arranged swimming**

If a parent/guardian of a child arranges for swimming sessions during the school day this counts as an unauthorised absence. For a child with a Statement of Special Educational need (SEN), both the school and the SEN section (through the Operational Panel) must agree that it would be a beneficial learning experience and that it is not detrimental to the pupil to miss part of the curriculum during the swimming session. It then becomes an authorised absence. The parents or guardians must take total responsibility for transporting the child and managing them through the session. For health and safety and legal reasons teaching assistants must not accompany the child. ***Legal responsibility lies with the parent/guardian.***

### **Swimming agreed by the Local Authority for a child with a Statement of SEN as an alternative to P.E.**

In exceptional circumstances, for example where a child's physical disability is such that no meaningful inclusion\* can be achieved during a PE lesson, swimming sessions might be agreed as an alternative. If a school feels that this is so, advice should be sought from the Support Service for Physical Impairment (SSPI) who will

help with differentiation and inclusion in PE. If the SSPI specialist teacher agrees that swimming is an acceptable alternative to PE (usually in consultation with health colleagues) this should be raised through the annual review of the Statement of SEN as a change in need which can be met through a change in provision, namely swimming sessions. In this instance, TAs may accompany the child once all Health and Safety and Moving and Handling checks have been undertaken.

If a child or children attend swimming sessions agreed by the LA, other than those already outlined above, the sessions count as “Out of School Learning Activities” and must be referred to the Local Authority’s *‘Health and Safety Section Visits Team’* for clearance. Sessions and transport might be funded through application to the Authority’s Resources Panel. This would be the only instance where either sessions or transport would be funded by the Authority. ***Legal responsibility lies with the Local Authority.***

*\* The test of ‘meaningful’ can be made by asking the following questions:*

- Is the pupil unable to access an appropriately differentiated PE curriculum alongside their peers?*
- When the lessons are appropriately differentiated is the pupil unable to demonstrate progress / the development of skill at their own level?*
- Is the child unable to benefit from social inclusion in PE?*

#### Recreational Swimming outside the School Day

The Authority recognises the great social and health benefits to be gained through recreational swimming and would encourage this for all children outside the school day.