

ST. LUKE'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL



Church Lane
Lowton
Warrington
WA3 2PW

☎ 01942 201140
Fax 01942 205048
web www.saintlukes.wigan.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mr S Hardaker e-mail enquiries@admin.saintlukes.wigan.sch.uk

'Following in God's way, Learning day by day, Working with one another, Caring for each other'

Pond Safety Policy

Date of Policy: 2023

Review Date: Annually

Our pond is part of our Forest School area at the front of the school play area. The area is fenced with a lockable gate. Children will only have access to the pond with a member of staff.

Children with access to adult support must be accompanied by an adult at all times, including small group work activities.

For all pond activities, staff must complete a Risk Assessment and ensure that the needs of all the children are supported and can access the areas safely and implement reasonably practicable measures to ensure an acceptable level of safety. All staff must read the emergency action plan prior to any activity (see appendix A).

When considering safety issues, and in particular the risk of drowning in a school pond, there are a number of factors to assess.

What are the hazards?

- Unsupervised access to the pond, particularly by younger children.
- The water as a drowning hazard.
- Water quality and associated health hazards such as leptospirosis and the effects of blue-green algae.
- Interaction of the water with features such as steep banks, silt, and overhanging branches.
- The prevention of slips, trips and falls should be considered, and hygiene issues such as the small risk of Weil's disease and other water borne causes of ill health.

Who might be harmed?

- Young children, particularly under fives
- Teenagers (peer pressure often leads to risk taking)
- Staff and lone workers
- Children with special needs
- Members of the local community
- The elderly

Evaluate the Level of Risk

Decide whether existing precautions are sufficient, or whether more can be done. Assess factors such as function, location, depth, edge gradients, supervision, user groups, information provision, effects of weather i.e. ice.

Methods of Risk Control

Every pond and every school will be different, therefore overall guidance cannot be given, and this is why individual site-based risk assessments are required. However, in most circumstances, the following will apply:

- Access should be controlled and the pond effectively closed when not in use.
- Children should be supervised – the ratio of adults to children should be such that each adult can easily supervise those they are responsible for.
- During the activity try to ensure that those children with cuts on their hands cover them with a suitable covering or wear suitable gloves, avoid ingestion of water and ensure that all children wash their hands after the activity, especially before eating.
- Edges that are open for access for pond dipping should be gently sloping, or flat and well defined. Where access is not required, or where the edge is steep, a protective barrier either in the form of marginal aquatic vegetation or fencing may be required.
- Clear signage should be used at the access points to the pond.
- Children and adults should wear appropriate footwear.
- For ponds, which are too deep for an adult to perform a wading rescue, suitable rescue equipment such as a reach pole, or a throw line should be provided.
- Any adult acting in a supervisory role should have read the operating policy and the emergency action plan. Training should include the opportunity to use rescue equipment. Ideally they should be aware of how to implement first aid.

Design

- The pond will be designed so that the edges of the pond do not exceed 1 in 3 gradient from the shallow to the deepest zone. The deepest part of the pond is in the centre.
- The depth of the water will be kept as shallow as possible and will not exceed the following depth for Primary Schools of 1000mm.
- The edge of the pond is overlapped by decking so that children can kneel to study the pond. Children must be supervised and must not climb up the bank to approach the pond.
- Staff must ensure that any tripping hazards have been eliminated before children access the pond area.
- A suitable and safe means of access will be provided through a locked gate.
- Portable electrical equipment will not be used near the pond.
- Ponds in school must be fenced to prevent accidental approach. The fencing may be around an area containing the pond or directly around the pond if necessary. If the fencing has slats those must be vertical not horizontal with no gaps large enough for a child to pass through. The fence must be a minimum of one metre in height. A lockable gate must be provided to deter unsupervised entry. The fence around our school pond area will be 1.2 metres high and the area will be accessed through a lockable gate.
- Excessive plant growth deposits of silt or mud should be removed on a regular basis – The Caretaker to be responsible for pond maintenance.
- Appropriate warning signs must be posted warning of the presence of a pond and detailing safety rules for use. Signs must be used in addition to, not instead of, other control measures.
- The school must carry out risk assessments in relation to the pond and activities involving the pond. The risk assessment will be reviewed annually, alongside this policy, or when appropriate e.g. any changes to the area. All relevant information (i.e. the findings of the assessment and the control measures) will be relayed to staff and other people who may carry out activities involving the pond.
- The classes or groups using the pond must be supervised at all times.
- The pond must be regularly maintained to ensure that the perimeter does not deteriorate.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the Geography and Science Leads to monitor the standards and impact on children's learning in the outdoor classroom environment. The safety policy should be monitored, as should the pond itself e.g. if signage is damaged, it must be replaced, and user behaviour should be monitored and the operating procedures altered accordingly. The same principles should be applied to the assessment of pond dipping activities organised by the school. Reach poles and risk assessments should be available to staff supervising the activity.

Appropriate Health and Safety measures must be adhered to at all times

APPENDIX A

Emergency Action Plan for incidents associated with the pond.

All staff must be familiar with the pond emergency action. It is there to provide a safe environment. Before any activities are started staff must assure themselves that the pond appears safe and operational and that the paths are not obstructed.

Staff must be alert at all times.

In the event of a child falling into the pond resulting in injury or near drowning follow the steps below:

- Due to the size of the pond an adult can reach the victim.
- If adult is unable to do this then use the life hook pond pole or the life ring lifebuoy. If they are not accessible use something like a hoe, brush or long branch to throw and reach the victim.
- Send someone to summon other help, use walkie talkie and/or contact the emergency services – use red card.

A minor incident is considered to be a child slipping feet first into the water

A major incident is considered to be life threatening for any and all individuals including suspected drowning.

Emergency Services:

- Ring 999 or 911
- School telephone number is 01942201140
- The address is: Church Lane Lowton, Near Warrington WA3 2PW
- Provide details of the incident to the operator

