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| FROM | Kevin Jeavons, Health and Safety Officer | Priority 1 |
| TO | Head Teachers and Principals | |
| CC | Chairs of Governors | |
| STATUS | For action | ACTION BY |
| CIRCULAR REFERENCE | 111 | ISSUE DATE |
| | | Thursday 12 July 2018 |

Important: please ensure this information is passed to your Chair of Governors.

Open Water swimming – safety advice for parents and pupils

In light of recent incidents, both locally and nationally, where people have drowned whilst open water swimming and with the school holidays on the horizon, we thought it would be useful to remind parents and pupils of the dangers associated with swimming in open water.

Sandwell has lots of open water including lakes, pools, ponds, canals and rivers.

These areas can be particularly inviting during periods of warm weather and people are often tempted to swim in them.

Water may feel warm on the surface, but just a few feet below can be icy cold, even in the hot weather and can very quickly cause severe cramp and hypothermia.

Young people can often misjudge their swimming ability - they may view a river or lake as a tempting means of cooling off during a hot spell of weather, but fail to appreciate the harmful effects that the cold water can have on their stamina and strength.

Due to these dangers, we are urging people, particularly children and teenagers, not to swim anywhere other than in purpose-built and supervised swimming pools.

Key safety tips for staying safe near water

The following are some key safety tips for staying safe near water:

- Alcohol and swimming do not mix - stay out of the water if you have been drinking.
- Always watch your child around open water.
- Never let older children swim in unsupervised areas like quarries, canals or ponds or any type of open water.
- Do not swim near boats or other water craft.

- Never interfere with lifesaving equipment - you might need it yourself.
- Learn to spot and keep away from dangerous water.
- Take safety advice - heed notices which warn you of the danger.
- Children should always visit open water sites with a grown-up.
- Swimming anywhere other than at purpose built and supervised swimming pools is highly dangerous and is not recommended, unless as part of an organised club.

This information is also available on the [Sandwell Leisure sections water safety web page](#)