

Industry Partners Temporary “Pop Up” Pools Position Statement:

July 2024

Swim England, the Swimming Teachers Association and Swim Wales have issued the following statement on the use of temporary “pop up” swimming pools.

Our organisations want every child to have the opportunity to learn to swim and to be able to enjoy the water. Increasingly, more schools are utilising temporary pools to deliver their school swimming lessons.

At present, our organisations do not endorse the use of any temporary swimming pools for the delivery of school swimming and water safety lessons.

As leading organisations for swimming, our first priority must be the safety and wellbeing of all participants and serious concerns remain regarding the current provision of pop up pools.

It is our belief that currently, no “pop up pools” in use for school swimming lessons meet guidance provided by the Pool Water Treatment Advisory Group (PWTAG), specifically Technical Note 65 (TN65) or Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance, particularly HSG 179, which specifically pertains to the operation of swimming pools.

The type of temporary/pop up pools seen in use are usually a steel frame construction with waterproof liner designed for domestic use only. With more bathers and increased usage, the pool’s circulation and filtration system may not be able to cope with the increased demand. Ineffective filtration and treatment of water increases the risk of transmission of water borne pathogens.

The utilisation of domestic water treatment systems in a commercial application therefore creates an increased risk to bather safety. There are also additional concerns relating to the flow of water in the tank due to the number of inlets and outlets. Furthermore this can increase the risk of suction entrapment and entanglement. Difficulties in preventing unauthorised access to the pop up pool structure when not in use by the school have also been encountered.

Furthermore, the only means of entrance to the water itself in many pop up pools are by using steps, excluding pupils with specific access needs from being able to use them.

The design of many pop up pools, with no decking area and a large gap between the water level and side of the pool, also means that in the event of an in-water emergency, casualty extraction and speedy pool evacuation may not be achievable due to the design of the pool frame.

Concerns also remain that it is not possible to adequately assess pupil’s attainment against the national curriculum requirements, particularly the skills needed to demonstrate the ability to self-rescue, in pop up pools which are commonly small and shallow.

Our organisations continue to advocate for learning to take place in properly managed settings that are designed to accommodate such activities.

Swim England will work to provide guidance and advice to providers of pop up pools to improve the design of the facilities so as to offer the possibility of a safer, more positive experience for users.

However, for the reasons above, at this point Swim England, the Swimming Teachers Association and Swim Wales do not recommend the use of temporary/pop up pools for the delivery of school swimming and water safety lessons.

If a temporary pool can operate in full compliance with the relevant health and safety guidance (HSG 179), the PWTAG code of practice and relevant PWTAG technical notes, is appropriately maintained and suitably risk assessed for issues like water quality, supervision, rescue, access and egress, then in some circumstances it may offer an opportunity to widen access to water.

Any schools considering the use of such pools are encouraged to contact Swim England at schoolswimming@swimming.org or nofioysgol@swimming.org for Wales based queries.

Swim England
Swimming Teachers Association
Swim Wales

