

Child Death Prevention Newsletter - Drowning Prevention

This newsletter is designed to raise awareness and share the learning from the Child Death Overview Panel for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent

Drowning is the third highest cause of accidental death of children in the UK. The majority of drownings are preventable.

A 50-metre swimming badge awarded in a calm, heated swimming pool doesn't mean someone will survive if they deliberately or accidentally enter a cold canal or a fast flowing river. This is because cold water shock severely limits everyone's ability to swim and rescue themselves, irrespective of the strength of the swimmer.



Did you know that people can drown in as little as 2cm of water?

As well as cold water shock, everyone needs to be more aware of other water risks, including tides and currents, and hidden dangers such as objects beneath the surface and unstable ground on beaches, cliffs, river banks and towpaths.

Anyone who spots someone in danger in open water is advised not to enter the water to rescue them, but to call 999 .



Tips for Water Safety at Home

- Prevent children from gaining access to pools of water when they are unsupervised
- Securely cover all water storage tanks and drains.
- Empty paddling pools and buckets when playtimes finished.
- Never leave a baby or child in the bath unsupervised, not even for a minute.

Never leave children unattended near water



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Make sure that you and your loved ones are safe in and around water

For young children, there is a real risk of drowning in the home or garden, including neighbours' gardens. As they get older, the risks are associated more with children exploring and challenging themselves around water. As children grow in confidence they can over-estimate their abilities.

Children under 8 years old need to be supervised in and around water. They might understand instructions but are likely to forget if they are having fun or are excited.

Teach older children to choose safe places to swim, such as public pools and beaches patrolled by lifeguards, rather than canals, gravel pits and rivers.

Swim Safer

Locally, Stoke-on-Trent Public Health is supporting 'Swim Safer' – a campaign offering hundreds of free water safety sessions. The project, which aims to keep young people safe when swimming during the summer holidays, is backed by Ryan Evan's father, Glynn. Ryan Evans, tragically lost his life at Westport Lake aged 13 after getting into difficulty swimming in the open water last year.

Swim Safer is a partnership between Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service, Staffordshire Police, The Sentinel and StokeonTrent Live, and the Royal Life Saving Society UK.

The sessions are available free for 6-14 year olds.

Bookings for free sessions can be made by emailing swimsafer@stoke.gov.uk or by calling 01782 236210