



Pond Policy



Aims

We wish to provide all our pupils with safe opportunities for hands-on access to the pond as part of their learning. This policy outlines the principles for safe practice in the use of the pond. 'Pond' refers to the water and the surrounding environment.

Responsibility

All staff in school have the ultimate responsibility to ensure the health and safety of children and adults. The task of overseeing health and safety for the pond is the responsibility of the Pond Manager. The sustainability lead has the responsibility of overseeing the pond use within the curriculum. The pond manager should record the actions they have taken to maintain the pond and keep it safe. These records will be available from the school office.

In addition, it is the responsibility of teaching and non-teaching staff and other adults to:

- take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others when working at the pond
- remain familiar with this policy and associated documents
- implement what this policy says

Risk Assessment

The pond area is located in the corner of the school field area near the poly tunnel. It is enclosed by a wooden slatted fence with a single gate which is padlocked. The combination code for the padlock will be made known to staff. The gate is to be locked at all times unless being used by a group of children with an appropriate adult. There is a paved path and viewing area across the middle of the pond with a pebble area and planting around the top. To the right of the pond is a shed containing a variety of pond dipping equipment.

The pond will be checked regularly by the sustainability lead and pond manager who will ensure:

- All edges around the pond are clearly visible
- When in use, all paving around the pond are free from leaves and not slippery.
- The pond is maintained regularly, for example, check the build-up of silt; overhanging branches, removal of fast-growing pond weeds in spring and summer.
- Any woodwork is in a good state of repair, including not rotting.



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- The dipping platform is secure.
- The information and warning signs are in good repair and clearly visible.
- Maintenance will be undertaken as required to ensure the pond is healthy and the area is safe.

Before using the pond area, all staff involved in any activity should ensure they are familiar with the risk assessment.

Communication

A line of communication between Pond Manager and Sustainability Lead will be maintained so that actions that have arisen from the checks can be communicated to staff. For example, the dipping bridge is rotten, pond cannot be used until it is replaced. . . /overhanging branches need to be cut back, do not use the pond until this has been done.

No child is allowed in the pond area unsupervised. Children are taught that they may not enter without an adult and are aware of what they should do if they observe unaccompanied children by the pond. For example, tell the nearest adult immediately, don't go to the pond yourself. When planning a pond-based activity, staff must first talk to the Sustainability Lead about the current condition of the pond.

Teachers must visit the pond prior to the activity and carry out an activity-specific risk assessment, taking the following into consideration:

- pond condition and circumstances on the day, if necessary inform the Pond Manager of any control measures that need to be actioned. For example, there are lots of leaves on the decking, which need to be cleared
- requirements of the activity
- the needs of individual pupils

Supervision

It is the duty of the class teacher to inform any support staff/volunteer adults about this policy. Adults other than teachers supporting pond-based activities must be briefed by a teacher prior to carrying out any activity. Adults accompanying the children must be aware of which children they are responsible for. The class teacher must consider the levels of supervision required for an activity.



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This will depend on:

- the activity, for example supervision ratios should be higher the closer to the water the children are
- knowledge of the children engaged in the activity for example, age, behaviour, individual needs
- the available space

Before any pond activity, staff are responsible for ensuring that the following generic control measures are in place, in addition to any activity-specific control measures:

- Children must not put anything in or near their mouth during the activity
- Children and adults must use hand sanitiser after the activity.
- Children and adults must wear appropriate clothing and footwear e.g. sensible school shoes/trainers, wellies if necessary
- Any cuts must be covered with a waterproof dressing
- Children must be taught sensible behaviour for working by water and be reminded of the rules for how to stay safe near the pond, before every visit.
- In case of emergency, the Emergency Action Plan (Appendix A contains the relevant information) must be followed. All staff must be familiar with the Pond Emergency Action Plan.

Pond Dipping

Prior to beginning the activity, staff should ensure:

- Clearly instruct children regarding use and behaviour
- Good visibility for leaders to supervise and monitor whole area used
- Young people dipping are spaced well apart
- Appropriate clothing for conditions (including wellies or hats and sun cream where necessary)
- Pond dipping nets should be hung against the fence when not in use
- Pond dipping bowls should be kept away from the edge of the pond
- Pond dipping equipment is in a good condition. Any broken pond dipping equipment should be removed from the shed and reported to the sustainability lead immediately



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Reviewing

This policy is reviewed in line with all other school policies unless there is a fundamental change in the pond design or there are changes to school health and safety advice in relation to the pond.

Appendix A

Pond Emergency Action Plan

A minor incident is considered to be a child slipping feet first into the water with no obvious danger to life. In this case, follow the steps below:

1. The adult should encourage the child to climb out of the water.
2. If they require assistance, in the first instance the adult should reach towards the child to help them out.
3. If they are still struggling, the adult should step into the shallows of the pond and continue to assist.
4. A first aider should see the child as soon as possible. They child should be brought inside where they can be assessed for any cuts/swallowed water.
5. Headteacher to complete an online accident form

A major incident is considered to be life-threatening, including suspected drowning. In the event of a child falling into the pond, resulting in injury or near drowning, follow the steps below:

If there is no immediate danger to the child follow the steps above, otherwise:

1. Adult in charge should alert a member of SLT immediately. Ensure other children are safely removed from the area by another member of staff.
2. A first aider should see the child as soon as possible OR call 999.

All incidents involving a fall into a pond should be reported to the head teacher and recorded using the school incident record system.