



## Swim Offer

### Context

Water confidence is a life skill. It is one of the most important skills we can teach our children because it can actually save their lives. Garras School is committed to building every child's development in this crucial area. Recent changes to the National Curriculum have highlighted the importance of water confidence by targeting all primary aged children to achieve 25 m and develop lifesaving skills by year 6.

Cornwall is a coastal county, being surrounded on three sides by water. We recognise that Cornish children are more likely to regularly participate in both beach activities and pool activities as they grow and develop (this is very different to the experiences of children in other rural and urban settings). As such we are committed to our offer being extended to include 'open' water environments like the sea, lakes, rivers etc. as well as the traditional 'closed' water environment of a swimming pool. This will ensure all our children have the opportunity to develop their skills to be more confident in the closed and open water environments they regularly use and come into contact with.

We offer a progression based approach to swimming and water confidence as we do with all other areas of learning. Once children have mastered the skills needed in a closed water environment they then move to open water environments which take the children beyond physical swimming into becoming more aware and capable in managing and risk assessing these dynamic environments. It is important to note that water confidence is more than just being able to swim. Confidence in the pool does not necessarily transfer to confidence in the sea and as such it is important that children are not exposed to these dynamic environments until they are sufficiently robust and confident enough to manage them. To support with this we use a range of partners, voluntary and community organisations which are specialists in this area.

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## Approach

### *Closed water swim training*

All children, where relevant, will be supported to develop water confidence in the pool with a qualified swim coach at Helston Leisure Centre. As an ASA partner school children will be offered the opportunity to progress through the ASA stage system. This will support all of those children who lack water confidence or are unable to swim 25 metres with a progressive programme of swim teaching. Like other ASA partner schools, who have carefully evaluated their swim offer, we will focus these sessions to support children who are currently unable or are likely to be unable to be confident swimmers by year 6 without an intensive programme of swim training. These will be 10 week programmes of half an hour to an hour of swim training. Children who come to school already water confident will not be asked to repeat what they have already learnt but instead be offered the next stage on the progression which will support them to be water confident in an open water environment.

### *Open water swim training and surf lifesaving skills*

Swim training in open water environments require children to be confident swimmers (able to swim over 25 metres) and over the age of 8. This ensures that they will be physically robust enough to meet the challenges of weather, wind and tide. Children ready for this stage will be offered an intensive programme of surf lifesaving skills, typically a day or half a day each year until they leave. This will involve shore based risk management and theory followed by open water based skill application. We use a variety of partners to achieve this which include the RNLI, Hayle Surf Lifesaving Club, Global Boarders, Dan Joel Surf School and Elemental.

### *Open water sport specific focus*

We recognise that children in Cornwall are more likely to take part in water based sports and leisure activities. We work hard to offer the opportunity for children to take part in sailing and alternative water sports activities with partner organisations like Children's Sailing Trust (CST) (formerly Helford River Children's Sailing Trust HRCST) and Stithians Lake Water Sports Centre.

All children over the age of 8 will have the opportunity to take part in a sailing based after school club or water based activity at school camp which can be accessed on either an annual or biannual basis. In the case of CST, returning children will be offered the opportunity to progress through the RYA sailing stage system.

This part of the offer will also cater for those children in KS2 who may still be developing their water confidence in the pool. We are able to do this because of the enhanced provision these organisations provide with safety boats, buoyancy aids etc.

## Parent Support

As you can appreciate this comprehensive package is both logistically and financially challenging. Schools at the vanguard of excellence in sport and PE are using this model to support their children to be water confident and go beyond the requirements of the National Curriculum. We hold the view that activities should be stage appropriate and progression will be based on the children's ability and not age. Therefore, it is feasible that children of different year groups will be completing activities which are relevant to their stage of water confidence and we ask for your patience whilst we assess, identify and organise this provision.

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Many parents already help with various elements of this package and we thank them for their time and support. Parental support is essential in making this offer work. School will always try to contribute towards costs of this package. However, there will be times when we will need to ask for voluntary contributions. Such contributions will be a small but a necessary part and currently stand at £30 for pool based swimming lessons and £20 for sailing after school club. We feel this is good value for money considering the full cost of this package is many hundreds of pounds per child.

We strongly encourage all parents to support their children with swimming lessons outside school to help build water confidence. We understand that not all parents are in a position to do this but early exposure to positive water experiences will ultimately benefit your child's progression through their water safety journey. In the future we may consider water tasters for the youngest children alongside additional water sports activities as our current package rolls out and is embedded.

### **What Happens Next**

Further correspondence will follow regarding particular activities for your child. If your child already has swimming lessons and has achieved their 25 metre badge then please let us know as this will inform our ongoing assessment which has been taking place this academic year for all children.

Open water swim training and surf lifesaving skills will take place in the summer months for children from both schools at this stage.

For children working on the closed water swim training stage a rolling programme of sessions will commence in the autumn term. This will start with relevant children from upper KS2 and work back. As the older children achieve and progress to the open water stages of water confidence new children will replace them from other year groups.

We welcome your comments, thoughts and updates but kindly ask if you can make them specific to the package as outlined in our swim offer. We look forward to sharing your child's journey to water confidence and reiterate the schools commitment to developing water confidence for all.

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