Urgent Advice - Water Safety - for schools/parents/carers

Public Health colleagues in conjunction with Hampshire Safeguarding Children Board have requested that the following communication is shared with schools in the hope that it will be circulated to parents/carers through newsletters and /or websites.

Water Safety

As school holidays approach and the country experiences the current warm weather, children want to cool down quickly and have fun in the water.

It is important to remember that a child can drown within seconds. In particular, babies and small children can drown in very little water as they do not have the range of motion to move their heads. Child drowning is often silent and without struggle.

Wherever a child is enjoying the water there are a number of steps that can be taken to reduce risk and accident:

- Be vigilant, make sure your child is supervised at all times in or around water.
- Always swim at beaches and pools where there is a lifeguard.
- Make sure there is a fence around any garden pools or ponds.
- Familiarise yourself with the location of any ponds, lakes or pools at new locations.
- Make sure your child stays hydrated and takes regular breaks.
- Satisfy yourself that your child is not out of their depth when in water.
- Make sure paddling pools are emptied and turned upside down when not in use.
- Keep paddling and swimming pools free from trip hazards.
- Don't leave toys in paddling and swimming pools.
- Make sure your fence and gate is secure to ensure that your child can't access water hazards in neighbours' gardens.
- Supervise your child in the bath at all times, even if their elder sibling is present.
- Don't expect an elder child to be responsible for the safety of younger siblings.

Should an accident occur seek medical attention immediately by ringing 999

Other Sources of Information

https://www.capt.org.uk/drowning

https://www.rospa.com/leisure-safety/water/advice/children-young-people

Public Health Wales NHS Trust (2016) Thematic review of deaths of children and young people through drowning

National Water Safety Forum (2015) A future without drowning: The UK national drowning prevention strategy 2016-2026

WHO (2017) Preventing drowning: An implementation guide

Department for Education (2013) National curriculum in England: physical education programmes of study