



CONTACT

Mrs. H. Keelan-Edwards
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Keelan-edwardsh@ripongrammar.com

Safeguarding Team:

Mrs T. Davidson

Assistant Headteacher and Deputy DSL

Mr T. Fell

Assistant Headteacher and Deputy DSL

Mrs E. Hewison

Pastoral Support Officer and Deputy DSL

Mr M. Powell

Our local Police School Liaison Officer

Local Safeguarding risks include:

- Child on Child abuse – online
- Child on Child abuse – sexual harassment/sexual violence
- Child Criminal Exploitation/ County Lines

Additional Resources:

- Further information: Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS UK) and the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) provide excellent water safety advice for families and young people.

SUMMER TERM 2-2026

Water Safety: Why Drowning Risks Increase for Teenagers

As the weather becomes warmer, it is important to be aware of the increased risks that open water can present to teenagers.

Although many young people are confident around water, adolescence is a time when risk-taking behaviour is more common. Teenagers may overestimate their swimming ability, underestimate hazards, and feel pressured to keep up with or impress their peers. The areas of the brain responsible for judgement, decision-making, and impulse control are still developing during adolescence, making young people more vulnerable to dangerous situations.

Alcohol can also significantly increase the risk of drowning. Research shows that drinking alcohol while swimming, boating, or spending time near water impairs judgement, balance, coordination, and the ability to respond to danger.

Key Water Safety Risks to Discuss with Your Teenager

1. Peer Pressure and Risk-Taking

- Group situations can encourage unsafe behaviour around water.
- Teenagers may attempt activities beyond their ability to fit in or impress others.
- Encourage your child to make safe choices and speak up if they feel uncomfortable.

2. Jumping or Diving into Unknown Water

- Rivers, lakes, canals, and reservoirs may contain hidden hazards such as rocks, debris, shopping trolleys, submerged objects, or thick weeds.
- Water depth can be difficult to judge.
- Serious spinal injuries and drownings can occur when people jump into unfamiliar water.

3. Tombstoning

- Jumping from bridges, walls, jetties, or other elevated structures is extremely dangerous.
- Risks include cold water shock, hidden objects below the surface, strong currents, and serious injury.

4. Swimming in Open Water

Even during hot weather, open water can remain dangerously cold.

Risks include:

- Cold water shock causing an involuntary gasp and loss of breathing control.
 - Rapid fatigue and loss of coordination.
 - Strong currents that can quickly drain energy.
 - Weirs, sluices, locks, and other water-control structures that can trap swimmers.
 - Difficulty getting out of the water safely.
 - Coastal hazards such as tides and rip currents.
- Many drowning incidents occur during late spring and summer when these dangers are underestimated.

5. Alcohol and Water Do Not Mix

- Alcohol impairs judgement, balance, and reaction times.
- It increases the likelihood of slips, falls, poor decision-making, and drowning.

6. Inflatables and Makeshift Rafts

- Inflatable toys can quickly drift away from shore or overturn.
- Homemade rafts may collapse or trap limbs.

7. Playing Near Water's Edge

- Riverbanks and canal edges can be slippery, unstable, or covered with algae.
- An unexpected fall into deep water can quickly become life-threatening.

8. Swimming Near Boats

- Risks include propeller injuries, collisions with vessels, and becoming trapped beneath pontoons or jetties.

9. Attempting to Rescue Friends

- Many drowning tragedies occur when someone enters the water to help another person.
- Cold water shock and panic can overwhelm even strong swimmers.
- Teach young people to call 999, ask for help, and throw something that floats rather than entering the water themselves.

10. Exploring Restricted Water Areas

Never enter:

Drains, Culverts, Weirs, lock systems or restricted waterways:

These environments can contain powerful currents, sudden surges, low oxygen levels, and serious entrapment hazards.

Should you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me directly or one of the safeguarding team.

Safety Reminder for Families

Please encourage your child to:

- Swim only in designated supervised areas.
- Never enter water alone.
- Avoid alcohol near water.
- Respect warning signs and safety barriers.
- Call **999** in an emergency and ask for the Coastguard if at the coast.
- Remember: **Float to Live** if they unexpectedly enter the water.

Key Message

Open water is unpredictable. What cannot be seen beneath the surface can quickly become dangerous. Talking openly with your teenager about water safety could help save a life.

PSHCEe at Ripon Grammar School

The RGS PSHCEe Curriculum is available here: [Studying PSHCe at Ripon Grammar School](#)

Parents can contact the Head of PSHCEe, Ms. Mars, on marsh@ripongrammar.com to discuss any aspect of the curriculum.

Topics for Autumn Term 1 (Year 7-9 are focusing on 'Being happy and health')

Year 7 –Self care

Year 8 –Sexual Health

Year 9 - Using the NHS

Year 10 and Year 11 will be covering one of the following topics on a rotation:

Leading a healthy life: Diet, NHS, gambling, self-examination

Being safe: The media and the law – consent, rape and abuse reporting, stalking, revenge porn, sextortion, upskirting, exploitation, knives, punches

Being an adult: Marriage, relationships and parenting – forced marriage attitudes to relationships, protected characteristics, conflict management

Being happy and healthy: The internet – misinformation, democracy, AI, gambling, suicide, seeking help for mental health, medical online

Citizenship: Democracy, communities and citizens

Being happy and healthy: Sexual education – PREP, STI, contraception, abortion

Being safe: Safer relationships – consent, peer pressure, leaving situations, porn, preferences ethics

Being an adult: Finances

Should you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me directly or one of the safeguarding team.