

15th December 2022

Re: Safeguarding information for parents and carers – Water Safety

Dear parents and carers

You will all have heard the devastating news that 4 boys lost their lives this week in Solihull in an incident which took place on frozen water. Before we break up for Christmas, we would like to share the following advice and information about [Winter Water Safety from West Midlands Fire Service](#) and the [Royal Lifesaving Society](#) which is available on their website to help you to keep yourselves and your children safer.

How to stay safe in winter: the dangers of frozen or icy cold water

It is extremely dangerous to play or walk on open water or canals covered in ice.

It's risky for people of all ages, but especially children. Adults may be tempted to rescue them, or even dogs and other animals which stray on to the ice.

Although frozen lakes, ponds, canals and reservoirs can look picturesque during the winter months, please do not be tempted to venture into the water or on to ice.

Here are some important emergency tips:



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What to do if YOU fall through ice:

- Stay calm and shout for help
- Spread your arms out across the surface of the ice in front of you
- First check if the ice is strong enough. If it is, then kick your legs to propel yourself forward
- Lie flat and use your arms to pull yourself over the ice towards the shore
- If the ice on the water breaks, try to make your way to the bank or shore, breaking ice in front of you as you go
- If you find yourself stuck and unable to escape, wait for help. Stay as still as possible to conserve your energy. Bring your arms close to your sides and keep your legs together, while keeping your head out of the water
- When you're safely out of the water it's important to go to a hospital for a check-up.

What to do if you see SOMEONE ELSE fall through the ice:

- Shout for help, call 999 or 112 and – if the incident involves inland water – ask for the fire service
- Do not go on to ice to attempt a rescue
- Call out to the casualty and encourage them to stay calm
- To try to reach the person from the bank, use a rope, pole, tree branch, clothes tied together or anything else that can extend your reach
- Lie down flat on the bank, to avoid slipping or being pulled in
- If you can't reach them, try sliding something that floats – like a football or large plastic bottle – to them, to help them float
- If the casualty is too far away, DO NOT try to rescue them yourself.
- Wait for the emergency services to arrive. Continue to calm and reassure the person.

After the casualty has been rescued from the ice or water:

- Ensure the ambulance service are on their way
- Lay the casualty flat. Begin CPR if necessary and you know how
- Keep them warm with clothing and blankets and try to shelter them from the cold
- Leave them in their clothes until you reach a safe, warm location
- Don't rub their skin, never apply hot water bottles and do not give them alcohol
- Keep the casualty wrapped up, so they gradually warm up.

The Canal and River Trust have created the following information videos which give advice about what to do if you or somebody else falls into the water in winter.

- [What to do if you fall in the water in winter](#)
- [What to do if someone else falls into the water in winter](#)



The [Royal Life Saving Society also has Winter Water Safety advice](#) on it's website. I have included a copy of their Rookie Lifeguard Winter Smart Winter Safe information booklet which you can use to support your child to learn more about how to keep themselves safe in winter.

I hope that you find this information useful and that you enjoy a safe and joy-filled Christmas break.

Warmest wishes,

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