

# Progression Pathway



water safety  
Scotland

## Our Aim

As part of [Scotland's Drowning Prevention Strategy](#), Water Safety Scotland aims to drive a generational change in water safety education and enjoyment in and around the water, with a key focus on promoting the [Water Safety Scotland Code](#). Recognising the pivotal role of education, we are supporting all practitioners to further develop children's and young people's understanding and awareness of the dangers of open water, enabling them to safely participate in water-based activities.

The provision of age- and stage-appropriate water safety education supports all children and young people aged 3 to 18 to develop valuable lifesaving knowledge, skills and understanding. The current proposal of one lesson per key educational level will support the embedding of water safety education and progression within Curriculum for Excellence. Additional extension activities to enhance the learning experience will also be made available through the Education Scotland [National Improvement Hub](#) and [Water Safety Scotland website](#).

## Health and Wellbeing Experiences and Outcomes

- ***I am learning to assess and manage risk, to protect myself and others, and to reduce the potential for harm when possible.***  
HWB 0-16a / HWB 1-16a / HWB 2-16a / HWB 3-16a / HWB 4-16a
- ***I know and can demonstrate how to travel safely.***  
HWB 0-18a / HWB 1-18a / HWB 2-18a / HWB 3-18a / HWB 4-18a
- ***I am developing my understanding of the human body and can use this knowledge to maintain and improve my wellbeing and health.***  
HWB 0-15a / HWB 1-15a / HWB 2-15a / HWB 3-15a / HWB 4-15a
- ***I know and can demonstrate how to keep myself and others safe and how to respond in a range of emergency situations.***  
HWB 0-17a / HWB 1-17a / HWB 2-17a / HWB 3-17a / HWB 4-17a

## Water Safety Code



**Stop and Think,  
Spot the Dangers**



**Stay Together,  
Stay Close**



**In an Emergency,  
Call 999**

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# 1 Early Level



**Stop and Think,  
Spot the Dangers**



**Stay Together,  
Stay Close**



**In an Emergency,  
Call 999**

Learning objective and outcomes	Key terms and words	Key questions	Potential activities to be used in the lesson	Extension activities
<p><b>Learning objective</b></p> <p>To begin to develop an understanding of how to be safe and have fun in and around water.</p> <p><b>Learning outcomes</b></p> <p>I understand that, while water can be fun, I need to stay safe around it.</p> <p>I know to always stay close to an adult when near water.</p> <p>I understand that some things float and some things sink.</p> <p>I understand that there are many different types of water (rivers, canals, the sea, lochs, swimming pools) and there are different risks in each.</p> <p>I have a better understanding of the people who help us.</p>	<p><b>Stop and Think, Spot the Dangers</b></p> <p>Water</p> <p>Staying safe</p> <p>Cold</p> <p>Warm</p> <p>Shivering</p> <p><b>Stay Together, Stay Close</b></p> <p>Stay close to an adult/parent/guardian</p> <p>Fun</p> <p><b>In an Emergency, Call 999</b></p> <p>Help</p> <p>Floating</p> <p>Starfish</p> <p>Relax/Be calm</p> <p>Call 999</p>	<p><b>Stop and Think, Spot the Dangers</b></p> <p>How do we feel when something is bothering us?</p> <p>Think of three things you would find at a... (beach, river, loch).</p> <p>What is different about the sea and a river?</p> <p><b>Stay Together, Stay Close</b></p> <p>What activities do you like to do with your family/siblings/friends?</p> <p>Why is it important to stay together?</p> <p>How many people have been around water?</p> <p>Has anyone seen a swimming pool?</p> <p>What do we know about swimming?</p> <p>Can everyone swim?</p> <p>What does it feel like to splash in a puddle or paddle at the sea?</p> <p>What do you need to take for a trip to the beach?</p> <p>What do you need to wear for a walk in the rain/splashing in puddles?</p> <p><b>In an Emergency, call 999</b></p> <p>Who can help you if you are in trouble? (Trusted adults – identify parents and carers.)</p> <p>Who can help you if you see someone in trouble?</p> <p>Why would it be very dangerous to go into the water to help someone?</p> <p>Why should you not go into the water?</p>	<p><b>Stop and Think, Spot the Dangers</b></p> <p>Talking tub: pupils touch and feel the objects in the box to generate discussion (goggles, armbands, towel, sunscreen, hat, sunglasses, shells, sand etc.)</p> <p>Safely using inflatable toys – what is suitable for the pool and for the sea? (How to use them safely – note: inflatable toys are strictly for swimming pools and always when supervised, and should never be taken to the beach.)</p> <p>'Beach bag' – pupils have an outline of a beach bag and need to draw in the bag what they would bring for a day to the beach. Pictures on the board can generate thinking, including items that might not be safe (rubbish, broken glass etc.).</p> <p><b>Stay Together, Stay Close</b></p> <p>Pretend to be shivering – what makes us warm?</p> <p>Draw round a young child – this is our body, what can we do to get warm?</p> <p><b>In an Emergency, Call 999</b></p> <p>Using water play to introduce the concept of floating. Different items that float differently (this could progress through different developmental ages). Note: any teaching around buoyancy must reflect that concern, so highlighting ways younger children could safely practice buoyancy at a swim lesson or with supervision from a parent or guardian.</p>	<p>Use musical instruments to make rain/water/sea music.</p> <p><b>Water Safety Song</b></p> <p>Note: for this level we're looking into specific children's stories, rhymes and songs that could be used for discussion purposes. (Within extension activities – wider literacy links that support water safety and discuss water in a positive way.) Your literacy officer may be able to provide further guidance and support.</p> <p>'Bookbug': liaise with your local Bookbug. Bookbug sessions for consideration:</p> <p><b>Bobbing Up and Down</b></p> <p><b>All the Little Ducks Go Upside Down</b></p> <p><b>Five Little Ducks</b></p> <p><b>Row Row Row your Boat</b></p> <p><b>The Big Ship Sailed on the Ally Ally Oh</b></p> <p>Suggested books:</p> <p><i>A Harey Day at the Seaside</i>, Hedley Griffin</p> <p><i>The Singing Mermaid</i>, Julia Donaldson</p> <p><i>A Treasure at Sea for Dragon and Me</i>, Jean Pendziwol</p>

## 2 First Level



**Stop and Think,  
Spot the Dangers**



**Stay Together,  
Stay Close**



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Call 999**

Learning objective and outcomes	Key terms and words	Key questions	Potential activities to be used in the lesson	Extension activities
<p><b>Learning objectives</b></p> <p>To understand the dangers in and around water.</p> <p>To understand how water can be dangerous and how we can be safe and have fun around it.</p> <p><b>Learning outcomes</b></p> <p>I know who to call in an emergency and who helps us.</p> <p>I know how to get help.</p> <p>I know that learning to swim can keep me healthy, active and safe.</p> <p>I know to float on my back if I get into trouble in the water (to make a star shape in the water to help me float).</p> <p>I know that cold water can affect me (emotionally and physically).</p> <p>I know to stay together with my friends and adults near water.</p> <p>I know the differences between fresh and salt water.</p>	<p><b>Stop and Think, Spot the Dangers</b></p> <p>Cold water</p> <p>Dangers</p> <p>Depth of water</p> <p>Weather</p> <p>Hidden hazards</p> <p><b>Stay Together, Stay Close</b></p> <p>Stay close to an adult/parent/guardian</p> <p>Keep within your depth</p> <p>Be prepared for a trip</p> <p><b>In an Emergency, Call 999</b></p> <p>Emergency</p> <p>Floating</p> <p>999</p> <p>Relax/Be calm</p> <p>Treading water (to be discussed if appropriate for this level)</p> <p>Shout for help</p> <p>Get an adult</p>	<p><b>Stop and Think, Spot the Dangers</b></p> <p>Do you enjoy being in the water?</p> <p>What fun activities can you do safely in or near water?</p> <p>Can you think of a time when you got a fright or felt scared around water?</p> <p>Where is the safest place to swim?</p> <p>Can you swim?</p> <p>How can we stay safe around water?</p> <p>What activities can people do in and around the water?</p> <p>How does it feel to jump into a paddling pool or swimming pool?</p> <p>How might it feel to fall into cold water?</p> <p>Who can help us if we're at the beach?</p> <p><b>Stay Together, Stay Close</b></p> <p>Is there someone to watch over me – friend/family/lifeguard?</p> <p>Why is it important to stay close to an adult when you're near water?</p> <p>If you were going out to spend some time in the water, who would you be with and where would you go?</p> <p><b>In an Emergency, Call 999</b></p> <p>How do you call for help?</p> <p>What number should you dial in an emergency?</p> <p>Why is it important to never go into the water to help an animal or person?</p> <p>What would you do if your dog was in trouble in the water? Why is it important to never go into the water to help a person or animal?</p>	<p><b>Stop and Think, Spot the dangers</b></p> <p>Discussion questions (or 'Spot the dangers' activity).</p> <p><b>Stay Together, Stay Close</b></p> <p>Blether stations: a statement and question – pupils discuss the statement and question, record their answer, and move to the next station. Examples of statements:</p> <p>How can we stay safe around water?</p> <p>What activities can we do safely at the beach?</p> <p>What do we need to bring to the beach to have a fun and safe day?</p> <p>Can you think of a time when you got a fright or felt scared around water?</p> <p><b>In an Emergency, Call 999</b></p> <p>Concept cartoon: A situation is presented in a cartoon format and around this image are four different people giving different statements/opinions.</p> <p>Example: in the middle of the screen is a drawing of someone at the beach and their ball has drifted out to sea.</p> <p>Person one says: We should go in to get it, the water doesn't look that deep.</p> <p>Another says: We should ask the lifeguard to help. We should leave the ball, it's too dangerous to go in etc.</p> <p>Summary of WSS Water Safety Code.</p>	<p>Still to be created.</p>

# 3 Second Level



**Stop and Think,  
Spot the Dangers**



**Stay Together,  
Stay Close**



**In an Emergency,  
Call 999**

Learning objective and outcomes	Key terms and words	Key questions	Potential activities to be used in the lesson	Extension activities
<p><b>Learning objectives</b></p> <p>To understand how to stay safe and have fun in and around water.</p> <p><b>Learning outcomes</b></p> <p>I know to never put myself in danger.</p> <p>I have a good understanding of cold water shock (why it can happen and the effects it can have on my body).</p> <p>I know what to do if I get into trouble in water.</p> <p>I know how to keep myself and others safe, and how to respond in an emergency.</p> <p>I know how to calmly ask for help from an emergency service and what information I need to tell them.</p> <p>I understand the importance of being prepared for activity near water. I know to 'stop and think' about the dangers in and around water.</p> <p>I know my swimming ability and limitations.</p>	<p><b>Stop and Think, Spot the Dangers</b></p> <p>Cold water</p> <p>Staying safe</p> <p>Weather</p> <p>Dangers</p> <p>Depth</p> <p>Strength of water</p> <p>Hidden dangers</p> <p>Temperature of water</p> <p>Risk assessment</p> <p><b>Stay Together, Stay Close</b></p> <p>Stay close to an adult/parent/guardian/</p> <p>Keep within your depth</p> <p>Be prepared for a trip</p> <p><b>In an Emergency, Call 999</b></p> <p>Emergency</p> <p>Floating</p> <p>Buoyancy</p> <p>999</p> <p>Treading water</p> <p>Sculling</p> <p>Coastguard</p> <p>Police</p> <p>Fire Service</p> <p>Relax/Be calm</p> <p>Shout for help</p> <p>Get an adult</p>	<p><b>Stop and Think, Spot the Dangers</b></p> <p>What might be dangerous about swimming in a river (canal/beach/loch)?</p> <p>If you are out by a river with your friends and someone suggests having a swim, what would you do? What might the dangers be? How would you say no?</p> <p><b>Stay Together, Stay Close</b></p> <p>Why is it important to stay together?</p> <p>Do you always tell someone where you are going and when you plan on returning?</p> <p>If you were going out to spend time near water, who would you be with and where would you go?</p> <p>Can you think of a time when you got a fright or felt scared around water?</p> <p><b>In an Emergency, Call 999</b></p> <p>What would you do in an emergency?</p> <p>What is the first thing you should do?</p> <p>How should we respond in an emergency?</p> <p>Why is it important to stay calm?</p> <p>What information do you need to give in a 999 call?</p> <p>Which emergency service do you ask for if there's an incident at a beach/loch/river?</p> <p>How do you know how deep the water is? What might cause the water level to change?</p> <p>Why should you never go into the water to help someone? What would you do instead?</p> <p>Which emergency service do you ask for at the beach/river/loch/canal?</p>	<p><b>Stop and Think, Spot the dangers</b></p> <p>Activities around risk recognition (spot the dangers) rather than being told there are dangers.</p> <p><b>Stay Together, Stay Close</b></p> <p>Four different images on the screen showing four different locations. In their groups, pupils need to plan for a day out to this location, thinking about the following: weather conditions, what they need to bring, whether it is safe to go etc. Pupils then need to report back to the class (one nominated speaker, one note taker). Pupils can 'evaluate' each other's feedback based on criteria (e.g. Did they think about what they needed to bring with them? Did they check the weather?).</p> <p><b>In an Emergency, Call 999</b></p> <p>Think-Pair-Share.</p> <p>Use of case studies (real or fictional): discussion of case study, what happened, why and what they would do in that scenario.</p> <p>Summary of WSS Water Safety Code.</p>	<p>Which activities could you get involved in locally that involve water?</p> <p>Community survey on public rescue equipment – what is this? Do you know how to use it? When would you use it? Why should you never play with it?</p> <p>Community engagement project in which the group/class investigate safety equipment local to them and local risks.)</p> <p>Decision-making videos and discussion. (Further information and activities can be found <a href="#">here</a>).</p>

# 4 Third/Fourth Level



**Stop and Think,  
Spot the Dangers**



**Stay Together,  
Stay Close**



**In an Emergency,  
Call 999**

Learning objective and outcomes	Key terms and words	Key questions	Potential activities to be used in the lesson	Extension activities
<p><b>Learning objectives</b></p> <p>To develop an understanding of the dangers of water, including the effects of cold water shock.</p> <p>To develop an understanding of the preventative measures that can keep you and others safe.</p> <p><b>Learning outcomes</b></p> <p>I understand the impact of cold water shock and what I can do to minimise it.</p> <p>I know to float on my back if I get into trouble.</p> <p>I know who to call and how to do so calmly in an emergency (as well as what information I need to provide).</p> <p>I understand that not all dangers are visible.</p> <p>I understand the importance of being prepared for a trip or activity near water and how to minimise risk.</p> <p>I know that there are many benefits of swimming, including being active and healthy.</p>	<p><b>Stop and Think, Spot the Dangers</b></p> <p>Risk</p> <p>Hazard</p> <p>Dynamic risk assessment</p> <p>Hypothermia</p> <p>Depth of water</p> <p>Strength water</p> <p>Hidden dangers</p> <p>Currents</p> <p>Tides</p> <p><b>Stay Together, Stay Close</b></p> <p>Stay in a group</p> <p>Always tell someone where you are going and when you'll be coming back</p> <p>Floating</p> <p>Means of calling for help</p> <p>Planning a trip to water</p> <p><b>In an Emergency, Call 999</b></p> <p>Float</p> <p>Call 999</p> <p>Safety equipment</p> <p>Disorientation</p> <p>Coastguard</p> <p>Police</p> <p>Fire service</p> <p>Stay calm</p> <p>Shout for help</p>	<p><b>Stop and Think, Spot the Dangers</b></p> <p>Why are some hazards not visible or clear to see? What are they?</p> <p>Why can water be dangerous?</p> <p>How can water differ depending on the location? For example, how is a loch different from a river?</p> <p>How can water be fun? Which activities do you like to do?</p> <p>How could you get involved in activities locally in a safe manner?</p> <p><b>Stay Together, Stay Close</b></p> <p>Do you always tell someone where you are going and when you plan on returning?</p> <p>Do you bring a means of calling for help, such as a phone?</p> <p>Do you always go out in a group, or with an adult?</p> <p>Why is it important to stay together?</p> <p><b>In an Emergency, Call 999</b></p> <p>Why is it important to remain calm?</p> <p>What information would the emergency services need to get to the scene as soon as possible?</p> <p>What is cold water shock? How might falling or jumping into cold water affect you physically and emotionally?</p> <p>How can floating on your back help you in an emergency?</p> <p>How does it feel to jump into a swimming pool? How might it feel to fall into cold water outdoors?</p> <p>Can you tell how deep the water is? What hidden dangers could there be? Why does the water level change?</p>	<p><b>Stop and Think, Spot the Dangers</b></p> <p>Think-Pair-Share: "I never take risks around water." Pupils need to think about the statement and be prepared to give their opinion. Use a continuum of 1 to 10 (1 = totally agree, 10 = totally disagree) to illustrate their point of view.</p> <p>Four images on the board showing different water environments. List of discussion questions on the board to guide discussions. Challenge question on the screen: What are the differences between swimming in a pool and the sea?</p> <p>Pupils are given different 'destinations' with mixed weather and scenarios. They need to work in pairs or in a group to come up with a plan of what they need to take with them, risks they would need to consider and how they could avoid hazards and have fun. Groups feed back to class.</p> <p><b>Stay Together, Stay Close</b></p> <p>Cold water shock activity: stages of cold water shock. Using a bucket with cold water, two volunteers place their writing hands into the water. How long can they keep their hands in for? How does it feel? How would they feel if they fell into cold water unexpectedly? The volunteers are then asked to use a pen to try to write their name on paper after their hand has been submerged. How does it feel? Did they notice a difference?</p> <p><b>In an Emergency, Call 999</b></p> <p>Pupils return to original activity regarding the image they assessed. Return to questions – would they answer them differently?</p> <p>Summary of lesson and WSS Water Safety Code.</p>	<p>Card sort or drawing – pupils need to draw an arrow from the key term relating to effects of cold water shock to the outlined figure. This will demonstrate the effects of cold water shock on the body (short- to long-term effects).</p> <p><b>RNLI video clip</b> – includes introduction to floating as a survival technique.</p> <p>Optional extension activity to discuss the real-life story of Cameron Lancaster. This includes a short video clip. This is to be sensitively discussed, and a warning is needed before viewing the video. There will be guidance notes specific to this additional activity.</p> <p>Community-based activity (surveys, carefully going to a local site).</p> <p>What water safety advice would you give to someone younger than you? (Top tips)</p> <p>Pupils watch video (in production) of boy in the river. He is describing why he went in and how he feels as the water rises. This is an introduction to cold water shock. Questions surround the video on the board for pupils to reflect upon.</p>

# 5 Senior Phase



**Stop and Think,  
Spot the Dangers**



**Stay Together,  
Stay Close**



**In an Emergency,  
Call 999**

Learning objective and outcomes	Key terms and words	Key questions	Potential activities to be used in the lesson	Extension activities
<p><b>Learning objectives</b></p> <p>To understand how to predict, assess and manage risk in different water environments.</p> <p>To understand strategies that will keep me safe in and around water.</p> <p><b>Learning outcomes</b></p> <p>I understand the impact of cold water shock and how I can minimise it.</p> <p>I understand that alcohol and drugs can seriously affect my decision-making in and around water.</p> <p>I have the knowledge and confidence to positively influence others' behaviour regarding water safety.</p> <p>I can recognise risk and take action to remain safe.</p> <p>I understand how to find out about weather forecasts, tides and wind speeds.</p> <p>I know how to keep myself safe through a dynamic risk assessment.</p> <p>I understand how to perform first aid and evaluate when to contact emergency services.</p>	<p><b>Stop and Think, Spot the Dangers</b></p> <p>Risk Hazards Dynamic risk assessment Currents Tides Offshore wind Depth of water Cold water shock Effects of alcohol/drugs</p> <p><b>Stay Together, Stay Close</b></p> <p>Treading water Sculling Aquatic breathing Floating Safe entries and exits Means of calling for help, a phone for example. Can you access it?</p> <p><b>In an Emergency, Call 999</b></p> <p>Float Call 999 Instructing emergency services Safety equipment Hypothermia Endurance Disorientation Panic Self-rescue Assisting a casualty Public rescue equipment</p>	<p><b>Stop and Think, Spot the Dangers</b></p> <p>What is an offshore wind? How could your actions affect others? Do you have enough knowledge to keep safe around water? How can water be dangerous? How can you keep yourself safe around water? How can you create a dynamic risk assessment to respond to different emergency situations? How can some dangers be hidden? What top tips would you tell a younger person about water safety? How can drugs and alcohol alter your ability to make good decisions near water? What could the consequences be?</p> <p><b>Stay Together, Stay Close</b></p> <p>What is your swimming ability? How can you get involved in fun water-based activities? How could I share this safety information with people around me? What career/voluntary opportunities are available to me in the aquatic and water safety world?</p> <p><b>In an Emergency, Call 999</b></p> <p>How can you create a dynamic risk assessment to respond to emergency situations? Why is it important to remain calm? What information do I need to provide to the emergency services? Do you know which emergency service to ask for at the coast/inland? Why does floating on your back improve your chance of survival? Why should you never enter the water to help someone? At what point should you dial 999? What can you do while you are waiting for the emergency services?</p>	<p><b>Stop and Think, Spot the Dangers</b></p> <p>'Conver-stations': pupils placed into groups of four to six and are given discussion questions. After sufficient time has passed for the discussion to develop, one or two pupils from each group rotate to a different group, and the other group members remain where they are. Once in their new group they will discuss a different, but related question and may also share some of the key points from their last group's conversations. For the next rotation, pupils who have not rotated before may be chosen to move, resulting in groups that are continually evolving (this could be combined with case studies).</p> <p><b>Stay Together, Stay Close</b></p> <p>'Philosophical chair': a statement that has two possible responses (agree or disagree) is read out. Depending on whether they agree or disagree with this statement, pupils move to one side of the room or the other. From that spot, pupils take turns defending their positions, e.g. "If you are a good swimmer you can't drown". Facts can be slowly offered to the class, which may prompt them to change their response.</p> <p><b>In an Emergency, Call 999</b></p> <p>Case study example: pupils work in groups (with evidence provided) to discuss questions around what the situation was, what happened, how it happened, how it could have been prevented.</p>	<p>Discussions around why we take risk (the different factors to consider).</p> <p>Discussion questions that will prompt conversations around drugs/alcohol and risk taking.</p> <p>Careers in the outdoors and aquatic industry.</p> <p>Activities around practical measures to take in an emergency. Deploying public rescue equipment safely, basic first aid.</p> <p>Optional extension activity to discuss the real-life story of Cameron Lancaster. This includes a short video clip. This is to be sensitively discussed, and a warning is needed before viewing the video. There will be guidance notes specific to this additional activity.</p> <p>Group projects around local safety – what risks are present, what could be done?</p>