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Dear Parents and Carers,

There are a growing number of children from school, not taking part in school swimming lessons for a variety reasons.

Swimming and water safety has been a statutory element of the national curriculum for physical education (PE) programme of study since 1994.

Any children attending St. Mary Magdalen’s agree to follow our curriculum, which, in line with LCC guidelines, includes school swimming.

Annual research undertaken by the national governing body for swimming, Swim England, shows that since 2012 only half of the children nationally aged between seven and 11 years old have met the required swimming target. This is a real concern as **drowning is still the third most common cause of childhood deaths**, and one of the aspects of school swimming focuses on safe self-rescue in different water-based situations. This is alongside stroke development and the 25-metre targets.

As a response to this problem in October 2017 there was a new requirement for schools to publish swimming attainment levels. The new condition is part of the updated guidance from the Department for Education regarding PE and sport premium funding. Schools are now required to publish how many Year 6 pupils have met the national curriculum requirements relating to swimming and water safety.

If your child suffers from water anxiety, it is possible to meet with the class teacher who can go through strategies to ensure their participation will be a positive experience and unpick barriers they may face. Including children in the whole-class activity is important for so many more reasons than just the 'schools must provide swimming instruction either at KS1 or 2' but about belonging and participating with their peers, alongside developing a life skill.

We appreciate and value your support in this matter.

Regards, Mrs Hardman and Mrs Bird