



ROYAL
LIFE SAVING
SOCIETY UK

Enjoy Water **Safely**
Free From Drowning



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WATER SAFETY ADVICE PRESS RELEASE

FAO Parents / Carers

We are deeply saddened by the recent loss of young people in open water incidents across the UK. Our thoughts are with their families, friends and all those affected.

These heartbreaking incidents are a reminder that open water can present serious risks, even when conditions appear calm or safe. Raising awareness of those risks is an important part of helping people stay safe around water.

As the weather becomes warmer, we know that many children and young people are naturally drawn to rivers, lakes, canals and other open water areas. These places can seem calm and inviting, they can also present serious and often hidden dangers.

Most drownings involving young people are preventable, yet 88% occur without adult supervision. The majority take place in everyday inland locations (84%), with risk peaking between May and August (71%). Most concerning, the National Child Mortality Database reports a 67% increase in drowning deaths among 13 to 17 year olds in recent years, highlighting the urgent need to equip young people with the knowledge and awareness to stay safe near water. *Figures provided by the Royal Life Saving Society UK*

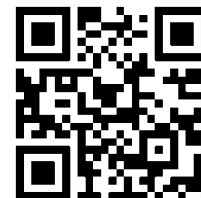
We kindly ask for your support in speaking with your young person about the risks of swimming or playing in open water without appropriate supervision. Even strong swimmers can get into difficulty due to cold water shock, hidden currents, uneven ground and submerged hazards. It is also important to talk with your child about what to do in an emergency, including how to stay calm, float if they get into difficulty and how to call for help.

To support parents and carers, the Royal Life Saving Society UK provides a wide range of practical, easy-to-use resources designed to help families talk about water safety. These materials are age-appropriate and include guidance, videos and activities to help children and young people understand the risks of open water, build confidence and learn what to do in an emergency.



Please visit: RLSS - [Water Safety Advice](#)

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) also offers a range of accessible resources to support families in understanding key water safety messages, including the 'Float to Live' technique and awareness of cold water shock - a major contributing factor in many drowning incidents. Their guidance helps parents and carers explain how floating on your back can control breathing and prevent panic if someone unexpectedly enters the water, also highlighting the physical effects of cold water immersion. Through videos, campaigns and simple step-by-step advice, the RNLI empowers families to build young people's confidence and resilience around water, ensuring they know how to respond calmly and effectively in an emergency.



Please visit: RNLI - [Water Safety Advice and Tips - Know the Risks](#)

Having these conversations at home can make a real difference in helping children and young people make safer choices and reduce the risk of accidents. Starting these conversations early can help young people build awareness and develop safer habits, giving them the confidence to make better choices as they grow older.

Key Points to Remember:

- Open water is very different from swimming pools - it may look calm but can be dangerous
- Never go into open water alone or without supervision
- Choose safer places to swim, such as lifeguarded beaches, pools, or designated swimming areas
- Avoid taking risks or giving in to peer pressure
- Understand the dangers of cold water shock
- Know what to do if you get into trouble e.g. Float to Live
- Know what to do if someone else is in trouble e.g. call 999, never enter the water and throw something that floats

Please remember that drowning is preventable. By working together to support, guide and educate our young people, we can empower them with the skills and awareness they need to make safer choices and stay safe around water.

Thank you for your continued support.

With kind regards,

The Prevention Team



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Sources

¹WAID 2020-2024; WSI 2020-2024

²The National Child Mortality Database (NCMD)