

Aston Academy

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Dear parent/carer,

Welcome back. I hope that you and your family enjoyed half term and managed to spend some time together. My letter this week may be a little shorter, but it focuses on a topic that has saddened communities across the country over the past week, including our own.

Over the Spring Bank Holiday period, tragic incidents in open water have occurred across the country, highlighting the risks that open water can present, particularly in such hot weather. Sadly, a young person lost their life at Rother Valley Country Park in the south of the borough. Our thoughts remain with the family and friends of the young person.

The words below have been sent to schools by Niall Devlin, Service Director for Education & Inclusion. I thought it was important to share these with our families. As you will be doing, I have been speaking to my own two children about the dangers outlined by Niall below.

We understand that incidents like those during half term raise concerns about safety, and we take those concerns extremely seriously. We are asking school leaders to remind children and young people about the dangers of swimming in open water during periods of hot weather.

Here is some information you can share with your children about the importance of staying safe around water:

- Shallow water often feels deceptively warmer at the edge of reservoirs, rivers and lakes, but it can be ice cold in deeper areas.
- It may be tempting, especially in hot weather, to jump into open water to cool down, but it is very dangerous and can lead to drowning. Water can be deeper than anticipated, contain debris out of sight, or have underwater currents which can pull you further under.
- Cold water shock is a very real danger and can be fatal in as little as 60 seconds.
- Even strong swimmers can get into difficulty in open water.

Please take care when you are near lakes, reservoirs, rivers, canals and the sea. Here are a few tips if you find yourself in the water unexpectedly:

- Take a minute — don't try to swim straight away.
- Relax and float to catch your breath.
- Keep calm.
- Ask someone to call for help or phone 999.



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Further advice and information are available at the following websites:

[Water safety and drowning prevention](#)

[rnli - Water safety](#)

[Sam's Army's Mission 1 Life](#)

Niall Devlin, Service Director, Education & Inclusion:

We continue to use our tutor periods and assembly programmes to promote safety for our students, stressing how they can keep themselves and others safe from danger. Throughout their time with us, we will cover topics such as first aid techniques, staying safe online, healthy relationships, exploitation, knife crime, drug awareness, and local safeguarding issues such as rail tracks and the dangers of open water.

Below is part of a PowerPoint presentation that staff have used this week to speak to our students about the dangers of open water:

 [Back to school post half term - open water.pptx](#)

On our school website (www.astonacademy.org), we have mapped out the PSHE curriculum that students follow during their tutor and personal development time. You may be interested to see what else we teach our students outside the traditional academic curriculum.

[Curriculum Map PSHE](#)

The combination of home, school and student will make a difference.

Have a wonderful weekend.

Best regards,



Mr J Graham
Principal

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