

**PRESS RELEASE
IRISH WATER SAFETY**

11th April 2017

Thirty children drowned in ten years Curriculum support will curb child drownings

Half a million primary school children are on Easter Holidays yet 90% of them are not learning the classroom based water safety curriculum and therefore may not know how to stay safe at aquatic environments. Irish Water Safety is calling on parents and schoolteachers to embrace this curriculum so that children learn how to avoid aquatic accidents or drowning.

The newly appointed Council of Irish Water Safety is also pointing to the importance of constant uninterrupted child supervision as thirty children aged fourteen and under drowned in a decade.

According to the Council, the ideal scenario to improve child safety beyond responsible supervision is for more primary schools to adopt Irish Water Safety's non-mandatory Primary Aquatics Water Safety (PAWS) programme, a component of the primary school curriculum that teaches children how to stay safe around water. Irish Water Safety issues 47,000 certificates to primary schools every year, meaning that more than 450,000 children do not receive certification, much of which is classroom-based.

In a recent consumer research study commissioned by the Council, only 35% of parents felt confident about the level of their children's water safety knowledge, prompting Council to remind schools and parents that there is still time before summer holidays to teach behaviours that will keep children safe from drowning. The free resources are available here: <http://paws.iws.ie/>

Water safety advice for your bank holiday safety:

Those boating should wear a properly fitting serviced lifejacket with crotch strap.

Shore anglers should also wear a lifejacket and be extremely vigilant for ocean swells.

An IWS analysis showed that 62% of drownings occurred at inland water sites therefore walkers should stay well away from the edge of waterside pathways.

Another IWS analysis showed that a third of drowning victims had consumed alcohol therefore alcohol should not be consumed before any aquatic activities.

More online advice is available at www.iws.ie

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