

Water Safety Week 20th – 26th June 2016

20 June 2016

***37 children drowned in a decade Summer drownings can be prevented**

Thirty seven children aged fourteen and under drowned in a decade and in just a few weeks half a million children will be on summer holidays. To mark Water Safety Week (June 20th – 26th), Irish Water Safety is appealing to primary school teachers to give children the vital information they need before the summer holidays.

Children are naturally curious about water therefore parents should check if their local primary school has yet introduced Irish Water Safety's primary school curriculum that teaches children how to stay safe around water. Much of the programme is easily delivered as it is classroom based yet many primary schools have yet to deliver this training. With just weeks to go before schools close, there is still time for teachers and parents to teach essential life skills to keep children safe from drowning.

People drown silently, quickly and sometimes in only inches of water. An average of eleven people drown every month**. They can drown beside others who are completely unaware. Children are particularly at risk and need constant supervision near water. Water Safety Week highlights the risks and the steps that need to be taken to avoid drowning over the summer:

Swim at Lifeguarded zones listed at iws.ie	Avoid swimming in unfamiliar places.
Swim within your depth in case of cramp	Lifeguards are not babysitters, take care of your child
Beware of currents that may carry you away from a safe exit point	Be aware of water temperature to avoid hypothermia
Swim in daylight not in darkness.	Swim parallel and close to the shore.
Pay attention to signs on the beach.	Even if your child can swim, constant uninterrupted supervision is essential
Learn to use equipment before trying it out.	Never use inflatable toys in open water
Swim in view of Lifeguards and heed their advice.	Wear a Lifejacket with crotch strap when boating or fishing from shore.
Learn swimming, survival and water rescue skills	Swim with others, never alone.

Irish Water Safety (IWS) is appealing to parents to enrol their children in one of IWS swim weeks at open water venues nationwide.

Media Enquiries to:

Irish Water Safety, The Long Walk, Galway

LoCall 1890-420.202 www.iws.ie

Tel: 091-564400 Fax: 091-564700

John Leech: 087-6789601; Roger Sweeney 087-6789601

*37 children drowned in the ten years up to and including 2014

** 11 drownings per month is based on the annual average of 137 drownings per year in the ten years up to and including 2014