



UACHTARÁN NA hÉIREANN
PRESIDENT OF IRELAND

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT MICHAEL D. HIGGINS

Mar Uachtarán na hÉireann, and as Patron of Water Safety Ireland, I am pleased to extend my heartfelt support for what is a most important initiative - World Drowning Prevention Day. It constitutes a day in which we reflect, with urgency and concern, on the importance of water safety and how it is a shared effort that is required to prevent drowning incidents. May I also take this opportunity to thank Water Safety Ireland for all their work in promoting what is now an important annual initiative.

Over the course of the summer, and beyond, many of our citizens will spend time enjoying water-based activities and sports. For most people, this time will be a fun and rewarding occasion, enjoyable days that will end well. However, regrettably every year we witness how spells of fine weather will also see water-related accidents, some tragic, be they at our beaches, rivers, lakes, canals or swimming pools.

This occurrence of accidents should concern us all. We must never cease in our urging of the greatest care and urge the taken for granted compliance with good regulations and advice.

We must remember that behind each tragic drowning incident lies unspeakable tragedy and the lost potential and possibilities of a precious life, as well as the parents, spouses, sons, daughters, siblings and friends whose own lives in turn are changed irrevocably, often in the space of just a couple of minutes.

Drowning is a preventable tragedy. There is much we can do together and at the individual level to reduce the risk of drowning. By promoting a greater awareness of water safety, we can reduce the tragic numbers impacted further – examples include learning basic swimming and rescue skills, knowing floating techniques and what to do in an emergency, always wearing a properly fitted lifejacket when sailing or participating in water sports, never leaving children unattended near water, avoiding alcohol or drugs before swimming, understanding local water conditions, including currents and tides, and respecting warning signs.

As we observe this year's World Drowning Prevention Day, let us all commit to making water safety a priority in our communities. I urge everyone to respect the water, never to underestimate its power, regardless of your swimming ability, and avoid taking unnecessary risks that can so easily lead to tragedy, loss and heartbreak.

By heeding the advice of Water Safety Ireland, we can honour the memory of those so tragically lost and prevent future drownings.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh go léir.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Michael D. Higgins'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Michael' and last name 'Higgins' clearly distinguishable.

Michael D. Higgins
Uachtarán na hÉireann
President of Ireland