

## Spring 2020 Newsletter

The weather has certainly been very varied to put it mildly! Wind storms have played havoc with the fences around the carpark but fortunately they are relatively easy to fix once the bad weather has cleared. With an onslaught of cold weather predicted please ensure pupils have a towel or preferably a robe to wrap up in after lessons. Infrared heating does operate along the walk way. We have had a few electrical outages caused by the heaters being covered with towels etc and would ask that in order to prevent heating being switched off automatically when the thermostats are stressed that heaters are not blocked in anyway. There is plenty of heating in the changing and waiting rooms. The heating will work more effectively if not blocked.

We are taking advice from PHE re coronavirus, as I am sure everyone is. We are lucky enough to have the filtration and sterilising system that we have as it ensures water is constantly tested and oxygen and disinfectant levels adjusted accordingly. We also water test twice daily as well as having a professional water test regularly. Over the weekends we are also adding extra disinfectant to the pool and the usual daily backwashing. We only add chemicals if the pool is out of use for a minimum of 24 hours. If your child is unwell please do not bring them swimming even if it seems like just a mild cold as we all need to remain vigilant. Pupils with coughs must not come to the pool as per the latest advice. Updates will be posted on our website [www.easy2swim.co.uk](http://www.easy2swim.co.uk)

The recent headlines concerning a drowning of several members of a family whilst on holiday have raised a few questions from parents. Sadly the age of the child involved initially, is a very common age of when children have stopped regular lessons. When pupils are young they learn to swim and other water skills by rote and the ability to question and self correct comes much later, often by this stage the child has stopped regular lessons and missed these key skills. Without regular input water skills do regress quite quickly.

Here we don't just teach pupils to swim but also introduce them to water safety skills and life saving as they get more competent and stronger. SO what can parents do to ensure children's skills do not regress? Firstly, don't stop lessons at too young an age. Secondly - I would always advise pupils who have been away from lessons for a while to do an annual boost session, which could take the form of an intensive over the summer holidays or lessons in the term before the summer holidays. This will not only rebuild skills but could also give stringer swimmers an opportunity to learn some life saving. Learning life saving also builds knowledge and helps them to realise it is not as straightforward as just jumping into the water to provide assistance. Often this can cause further problems if not done safely. Our focus here during lessons is always to teach pupils respect for the water and to making themselves as safe as possible at all times. When young children are often unaware of the danger they may be in and accidents can happen so quickly.

Before half term many of the middle and senior classes used the training fins during their lessons. The training fins are challenging, as they are heavy they provide added resistance so the legs have to work harder which builds more strength. We focused on front crawl and butterfly and it was good to see the progress across the board. Breath control is always a key focus area as without being able to keep the face in the water for an extended period the body struggles to become buoyant. Getting pupils to practice blowing bubbles as often as possible in the bath is a fantastic way to help them when they are not at lessons. The more they do the better and easier it becomes. Exhaling into the water, rather than holding the breath, also ensures the lungs are relaxed and that when turning the head to breathe because they have emptied their lungs, they are then able to inhale more deeply. Those that breath hold, are very restricted in being able to breathe deeply and this is why we spend so much time encouraging and explaining these principles to pupils. Exhaling into the water also prevents water going up the nose which is never fun!

We are now focusing on backstroke, looking for extended and streamlined bodies being held at the surface. This is not easy and neither is kicking to the surface using the full leg rather than the knees. Head position also plays a key role to assist buoyancy and a rapid, foot kick with legs close together provides stability for the arms to lift centrally. Back floats and rotations front back to front and vice versa as well as sculling are water safety skills, if a child is floating on their back, they are able to breathe. Learning to float and keep the body as still as possible is challenging and quite scary for many pupils initially with many young children not finding water in the ears very pleasant which is why the latex swimming caps over the ears does help them to relax. Feeling to body float at the surface when on the back can feel a little like falling as the body can experience a sense of vertigo but the ability to float is crucial to safety. Tears and fears are normal and wobbles very common especially for pupils that are doing more and more with less support. We never push a pupil beyond what we feel they can achieve but sometimes they feel a bit out of their comfort zone for a while. This is normal and it is important they go through this process and realise they are able and capable as they will become stronger and safer in the water in the long term. Upper classes are also adding rotations, starts and finishes for backstroke and increasing speed and distance.

**This term ends on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> April and the summer term starts Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April. Coaching and adult lessons end Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March and resume Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April. Renewals for child lesson are £90.00 and are due by Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> March, as are adult and coaching fees of £115.00.**

Please do continue to take your child/children to play in the water as often as you can as playing around in shallow water or deeper water if they are safe is so important for ongoing progress. Do not worry about the 'correct' way or getting them to swim any distance as they actually are learning the more they experiment and discover their skills they are learning do support them in the water. Letting children just be in the water is so important to their long term confidence.