



# DROWNING IT'S UP TO YOU

LESSON PLAN







## ACTIVITY SUMMARY

This interactive presentation and facilitated discussion is designed for delivery to a school class of approximately 30 pupils, however it can also be used for different sized groups including as an assembly activity. It is recommended for use with Key Stage 3 pupils. (years 7 – 9).

GMFRS staff are delivering this presentation as part of our Safe 4 Spring and Safe 4 Summer education programme.

The activity may also be delivered by school staff, and would be suitable for a Tutor Group or PSHE (PSE) lesson.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Develop understanding of the scale and causes of drowning
- Develop understanding of the danger of cold water, and jumping in from cliffs, bridges, quarries and docks
- Develop understanding of how 'those who are left behind' are affected by drowning
- Explore the decision making required to enjoy water safety

## PREPARATION

1. Download the 'Drowning – It's up to you' film and lesson plan from [www.Safe4Summer.com](http://www.Safe4Summer.com) website
2. Preview the film and make sure it is suitable for all your group. (please consider whether any pupils have suffered a drowning experience through a family member or friend)
3. Use the film and lesson plan to facilitate the question and conversation activities provided





The 'Drowning – It's Up to You' package is designed to present the most essential drowning prevention messages for the secondary school age range, whilst also providing time for facilitated conversation around the topics in the film.

The aided conversation provides students with the opportunity to engage with and explore the subject of drowning and water safety.

### TO RUN THE PACKAGE:

1. Prepare the group by explaining how the presentation will work. Check if any students may already have had a bad experience with drowning, who may not wish to take part in some aspects of the activity. Warn the students that section 3 shows real-life incidents (including a dislocated ankle) which they may not wish to watch.
2. Play the film, pausing at the end of each section when the pause sign appears on the screen. Facilitate the conversation with the pupils using the questions provided as a prompt. Encourage the students to discuss and share their thoughts about drowning as much as they can.





## Video Presentation

## Optional Facilitated Activity (at the end of each section)

### Section 1 – Introduction

This section includes:

- The scale of drowning in the UK and Ireland.
- The location of drownings.
- Definition of 'inland water sites'.
- That 80% of people who drown are male.

### Why do People drown?

Ask the group to come up with ideas and scenarios of what types of activities may lead to drowning. The aim is to develop a discussion and get the group thinking about the topic, so there are no right or wrong answers.

- What sort of situations result in people being in the water?
- Why would someone who can swim drown?
- Why do you think so many more males drown than females?

### Section 2 – Cold Water

This section includes:

- The need to make decisions about your own safety before entering water.
- The hidden dangers of coldwater.
- The affect cold water has on your body, and how this can lead to drowning.

### Cold Water

Hold a discussion based around the following questions:

- Who has been so cold that they haven't been able to use their hands properly, like trying to put a key in a lock or tie their shoe laces after a PE lesson outside on a really cold day? What did it feel like?
- If that feeling spread to your arms and legs, how do you think that would feel (emotionally and physically) if you were trying to use them to stay at the surface of the water?
- If you were in the water, whether intentionally or even if you just fell in, and these effects started happening to you, how would you try to get out? Think about what could happen if you try to get out too quickly and splash water around your mouth whilst you are hyperventilating (breathing is out of control). Come up with an action sequence that you would follow if you found yourself in this situation.

Guide the students conversations towards something like:

1. Keep your mouth clear of the water, try to control your breathing
2. Once your breathing is under reasonable control, get out as soon as you can
3. If you can't get out, keep calling for help and try to keep warm  
Extra information for the students:  
If you are stuck in the water you can reduce the amount of heat you lose by keeping your arms against your sides and holding your legs tightly against each other.



## Video Presentation

## Optional Facilitated Activity (at the end of each section)

### Section 3 – Tombstoning and Jumping In

This section includes:

- The danger of injury from tombstoning and jumping in.
- Real-life examples of young people making poor decisions and facing the consequences
- How the emergency services may not be able to access all water sites

### Tombstoning and Jumping In

Hold a discussion based around the following questions:

- Why do you think people go jumping into the water from cliffs, bridges, quarries, and docks?  
Along with 'fun', 'to cool off' and all of the other positive reasons that pupils come up with, also guide them towards discussing peer pressure.
- Who can remember what one of the first effects on your body cold water is, and how might that cause a problem if you are still under the water after jumping in when that reaction happens?  
If needed, guide the students towards discussing what would happen if someone started gasping for breath whilst they were still under the water, or splashing at the surface.
- If you were with a group of friends and someone suggested going jumping in the water somewhere, what do you think you would say to your friends?
- What other dangers can there be in open water? (sharp objects, pollution / diseases, strong currents, slippery banks, weeds etc)

### Section 4 – Who's Left Behind?

This section includes:

- Time to reflect that when taking a risk, you also risk the future of your family and friends.

### Who's Left Behind?

Hold a discussion based around the following questions:

- How do you think you would feel if you were swimming with one of your friends (somewhere you shouldn't be), and one of them drowned?
- You're not expected to answer this out loud, but think about what effect you drowning would have on your family and friends.

### Section 5 – Safe doesn't mean boring.

This section includes:

- Examples of how you can enjoy the water, including adrenalin sports, without taking unnecessary risks.

### Safe doesn't mean boring.

Hold a discussion based around the following questions:

- Discuss any final thoughts with the students, and thank them for taking part in the discussions.

Thanks to the Royal Life Saving Society for producing and providing this resource.

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