

Oscar Goes to a School Swimming Lesson

A supporting resource to help school swimming **lesson providers** share site-specific information with schools, so pupils can be prepared using a tailored social story before attending their school swimming lessons.

Objective

This resource is designed to support swimming lesson providers in creating a detailed, site-specific social story to share with schools ahead of pupils' first swimming session. By using the "Oscar Goes to the Pool" <https://www.swimming.org/assets/charter-resources-schools/videos/oscar-goes-to-the-pool-2.mp4> video alongside this guidance, lesson providers can supply tailored information and resources that reflect the layout, routines, and expectations of their own facility. The aim is to help pupils understand what will happen during their first school swimming lesson, where they will swim, how they will travel to the pool, what they need to bring, and how they are expected to behave. Through clear preparation and positive messaging, pupils are supported to feel confident, reassured, and excited about beginning their school swimming journey.

Equipment schools require to deliver the session:

- Display screen or television and computer or device to play the video.
- Individual whiteboards and markers or paper and pencil/pencil crayons.
- Photo/videos of pool attending.
- Examples of swimming kit.
- Now and next cards (optional): Provide photos for pupils to place in the appropriate order e.g. transport, external view of leisure centre, changing room, showers, pool.

Resources lesson providers to share with schools to provide site specific information to pupils:

- Photos/video of transport (if transport tender is provided)
- Photos/walk through video of the facility from outside of the building through the entrance to changing and toilets through shower area and poolside.
- Details of emergency procedures.
- Pool programme and information relating to upcoming sessions at your pool.
- Lesson plan for Oscar goes to the pool at xxxxx leisure centre/pool.

Lesson Duration

Approximately 60 minutes (this can be delivered by schools in shorter sections in line with other curriculum requirements)

Lesson Introduction (5 minutes):

It is best practice for swimming lesson providers to give schools site-specific pre-swimming familiarisation materials, so pupils understand what to expect during their first visit to your pool. The *Oscar the Otter* video <https://www.swimming.org/assets/charter-resources-schools/videos/oscar-goes-to-the-pool-2.mp4> provides general guidance but is not tailored to your facility. You may wish to use the video as a framework to produce your lesson plan, asking schools to pause it at key points so they can share your site-specific information, photos/videos, and routines with pupils.

School Information	Pupil Activity	Lesson Provider Information
<p>Begin the lesson by talking with pupils about the importance of learning to swim, while also exploring how swimming can be fun.</p> <p>Explain that school swimming will be an enjoyable learning experience for all pupils, regardless of their previous swimming experience.</p>	<p>Discussion – Partner and small group:</p> <p>Ask if anyone has been swimming before. Discuss what swimming strokes and skills they have learned. Talk about how they felt when they went swimming.</p> <p>For pupils who haven't been swimming before, discuss how they feel about going swimming for the first time.</p>	<p>Share your facilities social story with schools at the time of booking. Make recommendations to schools that this information should be delivered to pupils before they attend their first school swimming lesson.</p> <p>Share a lesson plan specific for your facility with all the schools you work with.</p>


Video Presentation (Approx. 50 minutes):

Schools play the animation video for pupils (insert video link). Class teachers pause the video at the points indicated in the lesson plan and deliver the corresponding activities. During these pause points, teachers can share the site-specific information and resources provided by the swimming lesson provider.

The lesson can be delivered by schools in shorter sections over the days or weeks leading up to the school swimming lessons, helping to maintain pupils' attention and engagement. Where comprehensive, site-specific information has been provided and key points are already covered, it may not be necessary for schools to use every part of the *Oscar* animation video.

Extension activities can be delivered at any time by schools before the first swimming lesson.

Information	Considerations for school staff	Pupil Activity	Video timing	Extension activity	Swimming lesson provider information
<i>Swimming is fun</i>					
Oscar introduces himself on the video and pupils receive positive messaging about swimming.	<p>The lesson should be positive and reassuring, helping pupils feel excited and comfortable about their first swimming lesson.</p> <p>Some children may say they have been swimming before, even if they have not. The extension activity can help you gauge prior knowledge.</p>	Watch video.	0:00 to 0:41	<p>Optional pause at 0:41 seconds to identify previous swimming experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask who has been swimming before. • Ask pupils which strokes or activities they have done. • Ask pupils to demonstrate their swimming strokes. 	Swimming teachers should check whether class teachers have delivered the pre-swimming lesson plan before pupils enter the water on the first swimming lesson. Pupils who have completed this lesson have already received key information and expectations. This allows swimming teachers to get pupils into the water quickly during the first swimming lesson, without needing a lengthy poolside briefing. Instead, teachers can reinforce essential points at appropriate moments throughout the

					lesson in a practical, engaging way.
What you will need					
Oscar explains what swimming kit pupils need to bring to school.	<p>Some pupils may not have the kit shown in the video, reassure them that alternative kit (e.g., board shorts) is acceptable, though it may create more drag and reduce movement.</p> <p>Avoid overly baggy clothing or materials like denim or wool, which become heavy when wet.</p> <p>Consider:</p> <p>Is the kit safe?</p> <p>Is it hygienic (e.g., not worn for PE and then worn unwashed)?</p> <p>Does it provide appropriate coverage?</p> <p>Some children may wish to wear a swimming dress or burkini.</p>	Watch video.	0:42 to 1:24	<p>Show the pupil different types of swimming kit. It is useful to show pupils good examples of non-traditional swimming kit e.g. leggings and rash vests.</p>  <p>Please note, the categories above are not intended to be prescriptive. Where appropriate, swimwear may be chosen from either category.</p>	<p>Provide school information relating to your facilities swimwear policy.</p> <p>The <i>Oscar goes to the pool</i> animation provides schools and pupils with preferred swimming kit information. There are some children who may not have access to ideal swimming kit. Swimming teachers and school staff should not single out those children or tell them off for not bringing the most appropriate swimming kit.</p> <p>Swimming Teachers Consider:</p> <p>Is the kit safe?</p> <p>Is it hygienic (e.g., not worn for PE and then worn unwashed)?</p> <p>Does it provide appropriate coverage?</p>
Oscar explains rules for jewellery and swimming.	Refer to current guidance (e.g., Association for PE Safe Practice in	Watch video.	01:25 to 01:34	Discuss the removal of jewellery.	Share with schools your arrangements for those

	<p>PE). Where possible, all jewellery should be removed. Children should be encouraged to leave jewellery at home on swimming days.</p> <p>Consider: Some religious jewellery cannot be removed (e.g., a Raksha Bandhan bracelet). Assess the risks and identify reasonable adjustments, for example, wearing a sweatband over the item. Note: Covering jewellery with a plaster is not sufficient as it will fall off when wet.</p>			<p>Discuss responsible adjustments for pupils who are unable to remove religious jewellery and inform pupils what control measures will be used e.g. bring a sweat band.</p>	<p>children who are unable to remove jewellery, identify what arrangements you will have in place.</p>
<p>Oscar explains goggle usage</p>	<p>Goggles are not required for school swimming lessons. In some instances, the use of goggles maybe beneficial: For longer swimming lessons Prescription goggles For competitive swimming For seeing underwater</p> <p>For pupils to demonstrate safe self-rescue in different water based situations; to replicate an unattended entry, pupils will need to perform some skills without their goggles.</p>	<p>Watch video</p>	<p>01:35 to 01:48</p>	<p>For pupils who will be wearing goggles, send the goggle permission slip home with them to obtain consent.</p> <p>Provide pupils with goggle permission form.</p>	<p>Share the Swim England or your site specific goggle permission form with schools at the time of booking.</p>

	Pupils who are using goggles should be able to put on and remove their goggles independently without pulling the goggles away from the face.				
Oscar explains the activity.	N/A.	Watch video.	01:49 to 01:54	N/A.	N/A
Schools pause the video Pupil activity time: Pupils will draw the items they need to bring on swimming days, then explain their drawing to a partner.	Pupils will draw different items; this may include additional items such as sweat band or goggles.	Drawing and discussion.	01:55	Pupils write a checklist of the items required on swimming days.	You could consider having a competition for the best school's drawings.
When you will go swimming					
Oscar explains that the class teacher will give more details about swimming days and times.	N/A	Watch video.	01:56 to 02:03	N/A	Ensure that lesson programming is shared with nominated swimming lead at the school you work with in a timely manner to allow information to be shared with pupils and families.

<p>Schools pause the video</p> <p>Timetable information School teachers tell the class the day and times of their swimming lessons.</p>	<p>Explain the length of the lesson and any specific information about the programming of the lessons e.g. attending for 12 weeks over 2 half terms.</p>	<p>Discussion.</p>	<p>02:04</p>	<p>Share local pool timetables with families.</p>	<p>Share pool programmes and information relating to appropriate activities at your pool with the school so this can be shared with families and pupils to encourage children to get some swimming experience before the first school swimming lesson.</p>
<p>Travelling to the pool</p>					
<p>Oscar talks about travelling to the pool.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Watch video.</p>	<p>02:05 to 02:21</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Schools pause the video: School teachers tell the class which swimming pool they will be using and how they will travel to the pool.</p>	<p>If the class will be using active travel e.g. walking/scooting/cycling/wheeling to the pool, discuss appropriate clothing for different weather conditions.</p>	<p>Discussion.</p>	<p>02:21</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show pictures of the transport method or walking route. • If possible, show a photo of the driver if travelling by coach. • Do a practice walk, scoot, wheel or cycle to the pool if using active travel. • If using a school pool, show pupils the pool before the first lesson. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If your organisation arranges transport for the school swimming lesson programme provide photos/video of the coach.

Changing					
<p>Oscar explains the changing rooms.</p>	<p>Consider allowing pupils to wear active uniform/PE kit on swimming days to make changing faster and easier. Items like tights, ties, blazers, and buttoned shirts slow down changing and reduce time in the pool.</p> <p>Some children may not realise that underwear should be removed before swimming and, without clear information, may keep it on underneath their swimming kit. This information should be shared in a sensitive, age-appropriate way. At this point, class teachers may wish to pause the video and use the consistent/resources messaging that is already used within school.</p> <p>Children should go to the toilet before they shower. Consider, if the travel time is short; is it more appropriate for children to use the toilet just before they leave school.</p>	<p>Watch video.</p>	<p>02:41 to 02:57</p>	<p>Ask pupils to practice changing at home.</p> <p>Explain the specific changing arrangements at the pool, including where clothes will be stored.</p>	<p>Share walk through video of your facility with schools at the time of booking including changing location.</p>
<p>Oscar explains children have a shower before entering the pool.</p>	<p>Using the word “walk” reinforces safe behaviour in slippery areas such as changing rooms and poolside.</p>	<p>Watch video.</p>	<p>02:58 to 03:12</p>	<p>Show photos or videos of the changing area, showers and relevant equipment.</p>	<p>Share walk through video of your facility including the shower area.</p>

	<p>Discuss any equipment used for transitioning to the pool (e.g., shower chairs, poolside wheelchairs, changing beds).</p> <p>Some children may not have a shower at home or be nervous about going underneath the shower.</p>			<p>Show photo/video of where clothing will be stored when swimming.</p> <p>Ask children to practice washing their faces at home and putting their head under the shower at home.</p>	
The swimming lesson					
Oscar explains what will happen at the start of the lesson.	<p>Emergency procedures differ between pools. Ensure staff know their roles, including support for pupils with additional needs (e.g., using a hoist). Inform pupils of the emergency procedure (e.g., alarm sound, climbing out, waiting away from the pool).</p>	Watch video.	03:13 to 03:36	<p>Discuss pool rules and share facility-specific information.</p> <p>Pupils create a list of expectations for swimming or draw a poster.</p>	<p>Share pool rules and pupil expectations with schools at time of booking and with the lesson plan.</p> <p>Have a competition for the school with the best posters.</p>
Pupils watch video of a swivel entry.	Different pools use different entry methods (e.g., wide steps, ladder, beach entry, hoist, ramp).	Watch video.	03:37 to 03:39	<p>Discuss with the class the type of entry they will be using.</p> <p>Show video/photos of the pool.</p>	Share a video of the types of entry at your pool.
Schools pause the video: Pupils practice how they are	Find out which methods of entry will be used at the swimming pool that your class will be attending.	Practice swivel entry.	03:40	Practice swivel entries using benches, chairs or gymnastic tables.	Swimming teachers should find out from class teachers if pupils have practiced a swivel entry. For those schools who have practiced swivel entries,

going to get into the pool.	<p>A swivel entry may not be suitable method of entry for all of your pupils. Identify which alternative method of entry may be required.</p> <p>If a hoist will be required for entry, ensure that there is appropriately training staff available to operate the hoist.</p> <p>Ensure all pupils are aware of the method of entry they will be using.</p>			Show photos/videos of different entries at the pool you will be attending.	entry into the water should then be more efficient in terms of time.
Oscar explains not to worry if it is the first time you are going to the pool.	<p>Pupils may hide the fact they haven't been swimming before. Encourage honesty.</p> <p>Consider a family information meeting to explain the programme and share the wellbeing benefits of swimming.</p>	Watch video.	03:41 to 03:53	<p>If possible, show photos of swimming teachers or photos of the uniform the swimming teachers will be wearing.</p> <p>Display posters of positive images relating to swimming and aquatic activity.</p> <p>Pupils can work in pairs to talk about why learning to swim is important.</p>	<p>Share positive images of aquatic activities at your pool.</p> <p>Share image of swimming teacher and or lifeguard uniform.</p>
After the lesson					
Oscar explains what happens at the end of the	Some pupils may struggle with drying themselves—encourage practice at home.	Watch video.	03:54 to 04:19	Pupils put now and next cards into order.	Share a walk through video returning from the pool back

<p>lesson. Including showering, returning to the changing rooms, drying and getting dressed</p>	<p>Provide now-and-next cards for the routine.</p>			<p>Pupils are set homework to dry themselves fully after baths or showers at home.</p>	<p>through the shower area into the changing area.</p>
<p>Oscar explains that pupils will return back to school.</p> <p>Pause the video and explain if there will be an alternative method of return travel.</p>	<p>Explain whether pupils will return using the same method of travel or use a different method.</p>	<p>Watch video.</p>	<p>04:20 to 04:25</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Oscar explains the importance of drying your swimming kit and towel.</p>	<p>Pupils often attend the second swimming lesson with wet swimming kit and a wet towel. Remind pupils to hang everything up to dry at home.</p>	<p>Watch video.</p>	<p>04:26 to 04:41</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Oscar says bye.</p>	<p>Ensure the lesson finishes on a positive note to ensure that pupils are looking forward to their school swimming lessons.</p>	<p>Watch video.</p>	<p>04:42 to 04:51</p>	<p>Questions and discussion.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Discussion, Reflection and Conclusion (5 minutes):

Schools staff will summarise the key learning points.

Pupils will be asked what they need to bring swimming, how they will travel, and when their lessons are.

Possible homework/extension activities for schools to complete with pupils:

Drawing of swimming kit

Pupils draw what they will bring on swimming days.

Changing

Homework - Practice changing/drying

Creative writing

Create a short written piece highlighting what will happen on the first swimming day.

Make swimming visible in school

Pupils read books that mention swimming.

Schools use swimming themed maths problems. During swimming lessons, swimming teachers use cross curriculum activities e.g. maths/numbers in the pool.

Share water safety code posters with schools which can be downloaded at [Downloadable Water Safety Posters - Swim England Learn to Swim](#)

During PE lessons, movement breaks or lunchtime

Leading up to the school swimming and water safety programme school staff can conduct pre-swimming familiarisation activities from the Swim England School Swimming and Water Safety Charter.

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Activities include:

- Swivel entry
- Regaining feet practice
- Exits
- Kicking

- Front paddle arms
- Sculling action
- Spring jumps (push and glide position)
- Log rolls

Now and next cards

Provide schools with images for “now and next” cards to provide an activity for pupils to put the images into the correct order for what will happen on swimming days. Images for the cards include:

- Image of coach
- Image of the outside of the leisure centre/pool
- Image of the changing rooms
- Image of the shower area
- Image of the pool

Assessment:

School staff will evaluate pupils on their participation, engagement, and the quality of their drawings or written work. They will assess pupil understanding of what to expect during their first swimming lesson.