

## Staying Safe Outside of School

In this half term's newsletter, we're focusing on how to keep safe outside of school. We all want children and young people to enjoy playing out over the summer holidays and as they get older they may want to start playing out on their own and further away from home. This means you may not always be able to see what they are doing. However, there are a number of ways we can help keep them safe.

Be aware of the risks in our local area like building sites, lakes and railway lines, as children may be tempted to explore and be unaware of the dangers of these places.

### Reservoir, Lakes, Rivers, Canals *and other open waters*

In hot weather, increasing numbers of children put themselves at risk of drowning from swimming in rivers, lakes, canals or reservoirs. It can be tempting to cool off in open waters, but there are many dangers, even for a strong swimmer.



- The water can be extremely cold, even on a hot day. Cold water affects your muscles making it very difficult to swim if you get into a dangerous situation.
- It is difficult to estimate the depth of the water and there maybe hidden rubbish like shopping trolleys or glass.
- Open waters are not meant for swimming and so have steep banks which are very difficult to get in and out of.
- The water might be polluted and therefore can make you ill.
- If you do get into danger there are no lifeguards to help.

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## Building Sites

These can look fun to explore but there are many dangers that can seriously harm children. Building sites are working areas and are extremely hazardous. They can contain dangerous machinery as well as toxic waste, and chemicals. It is illegal to enter these properties, so children may be breaking the law by playing there.



## Railway Lines

Research shows that young people are more likely to take a risk on the tracks especially over the summer holidays.

Young people have been caught playing on the tracks or crossing them to take a short cut, but this can result in serious life changing injuries. It is illegal to trespass on railway lines and also very dangerous. Trains travel at great speed and cannot stop quickly. Only appropriate crossings such as bridges or level crossings should be used to cross railway lines.



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Talking to your child about these dangers can help them stay safe when they are out on their own this summer:

- Help them learn about their local environment and acquire the skills to help keep themselves safe, e.g. learning to swim, cycle training, road safety.
- Talk to them about the dangers of being distracted when out and about by music, phones, gadgets etc. and not being able to hear traffic.
- Ask them about the places they might go, where to avoid and why, and what to do if they're worried whilst they're out on their own.
- Remind them not to climb on barriers and fences as they are there to protect them from serious injury and accidents and obey "Danger" signs.
- Agree a time they should be home.



*As children grow, so does their independence.  
By teaching them how to stay safe and make smart choices, we give them the confidence to explore the world – and the tools to do so safely.*