

2021

RNLI YOUTH WATER SAFETY MESSAGES

Version 2



Lifeboats



CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Age Groups	6
Presentation Hints and Tips	8
Core Messages	10
Stop and Think	12
Stay Together	14
Float	16
Call 999 or 112	18
Respect the Water	20
Useful Links	22
Notes	24

INTRODUCTION

This booklet is full of key safety messages designed specifically for young people under the age of 18 years. It has everything you need to know to speak to young people confidently about increasing their awareness of everyday risks in, on and around water, and how to stay safe.

These water safety messages take into account the most recent research carried out with young people, teachers, volunteers and staff about message understanding and retention.

We hope you find this useful as we work together to help young people enjoy the water safely.

Who

This booklet is intended for use by anyone who talks to young people on behalf of the RNLI or prepares materials or campaigns that young people and families will see.

Why

If we all deliver the same water safety messages then our impact will be greater and we will be able to help more young people develop the knowledge and skills to stay safe in, on and around water.

This booklet provides the updated and new youth safety messages to help deliver the messages to young people with consistency and accuracy.

AGE GROUPS

We don't have one style for all under 18s. Our communications need to look different and work differently depending on the age of the child, so that we grab their attention and engage them with our message.

Many aspects of what and how we communicate are appropriate for all ages – even into adulthood. But some aspects are only appropriate for the youngest; while others bridge childhood and adolescence. The way we communicate grows up, as they do.

We have different styles and communication methods for 0–6, 7–11, 12–15 and 16–18 year olds (see Presentation Hints and Tips).



0–6



7–11



12–15



16–18

PRESENTATION HINTS AND TIPS

0–6 years

- Deliver the message based on what they need to know, not the reasons why.
- Use yes and no in your answers.
- Reinforce the learning and key messaging throughout the presentation/conversation.
- Use role play.
- Use active games.
- Use closed questions.
- Use of positive messaging (not scary).
- Use flash card and flags.

7–11 years

- Use peer-to-peer education.
- Use challenges, such as spot the dangers challenges.
- Design a rap/song/poem/poster using the key safety words to teach your friends and family how to be safe around the water.
- Use visual aids, for example using the RNLI news site, film and images.
- Group work activities – to encourage discussion.
- Focus on engaging, fun and interactive activities.
- Avoid too much talking at the children.
- Deliver a short factual message.
- Reward for positive behaviour and answers.
- Use open questions.
- Design a safe beach using Lego or Meccano.

12–15 years

- Use a mix of open and closed questions.
- Make the safety messaging matter to the young person.
- Use of first person stories and film.

16–18 years

- Presentations need to be example led and interactive.
- Take the approach of a facilitator rather than a presenter. For example, use open questions to open up discussion, then guide towards key messaging.
- Use open-ended questions to lead a discussion.
- Use questioning skills to assess the current knowledge of the group.
- Consider appropriate language, speak to them like adults as opposed to children.
- Use a film to start your session as a hook.

Note: the ages categories are based on the key stages and school years of the National Curriculum structure in England. This will vary for Wales, Republic of Ireland and Scotland – please contact your local RNLI Youth Education Manager for more information or email education@rnli.org.uk.

CORE MESSAGES

Our core messages have been designed to break the drowning chain by identifying, assessing and managing the dangers and knowing what to do in an emergency.

The mnemonic SAFE was used previously but this has now been replaced with updated messages developed after extensive research with all age groups, primary through to teens.

Our core messages are the same across all age groups and should be delivered every time we have a conversation with a young person.

The core messages are:

- **Stop and think** – spot the dangers or know the dangers.
- **Stay together** with a friend or family member.
- **Float** – if you are in trouble in the water, float until you feel calm and then think what to do next.
- **Call 999/112** – if you see someone else in trouble in the water call 999/112 immediately.

Within the main core messages there are further key points to deliver, which can be used where appropriate (see the following sections for detail).



An example of the core messages used for 0–11 year olds

STOP AND THINK

For 0–11 year olds: Spot the dangers.

For 12–18 year olds: Know the dangers.

Stop and think – key points

The key points for Stop and think are:

The water is powerful:

It's not what you're used to in a swimming pool.

- The water is moving.
- The water is colder than you think.
- The edge can be dangerous.
- There might be dangers under the water.

The water is moving

Water around our coasts and in rivers is always moving.

- Rips are strong currents running out to sea that can easily take swimmers out beyond their depth. Know what to do if you get caught in one.
- Tides cause a rise and fall in sea level. Check times of high and low tide so you don't get cut off.
- Unexpected waves can quickly sweep people off their feet, even on a calm day. Keep an eye on the water and don't go too close to the water's edge.

The water is colder than you think

The waters around the UK and Ireland are, on average, 12°C.

- If you fall into water this cold it can take your breath away and make it hard to swim.
- If you swim in water this cold, it can make you feel tired quickly and make it hard to call for help.

The edge can be dangerous

Don't get too close to the edge.

Cliff edges and river banks can be slippery and unstable.

- Unexpected waves can quickly sweep people off their feet, even on a calm day.
- Stick to marked paths and keep an eye on the water.

There might be dangers under the water

Think about what could be hidden under the water.

- Rocks and rubbish can be dangerous.
- The water depth might change depending on the tide, the time of year or the weather.
- There are often strong currents around piers, jetties and walls.

STAY TOGETHER

Stay with a friend or family member.

Stay together – key points

The key points for Stay together are:

Be prepared.

- Stay close to a friend or family member.
- Plan for your activity.
- Find a safe place to go.
- Be able to swim and float.

Stay close to a friend or family member

Always go with someone else when you go into or near water.

Friends or family can help in an emergency.

Plan for your activity

- Check the weather forecast, check out the tides, get local advice.
- Find a safe place to go (see Find a safe place to go section opposite).
- Carry a mobile phone so you can call for help.
- Always let someone know where you are going and when you expect to be back.
- Follow the five Ss of sun safety:
 - Slop on some sunscreen.
 - Slip on a T-shirt.
 - Slap on a hat.
 - Slide on your sunglasses.
 - Seek shade, particularly at the hottest time of day (11am to 3pm).

- If you are going in or on the water, wear the right clothing. A wetsuit keeps you warm and helps you float.
- Use a lifejacket or buoyancy aid when going on the water. It could save your life.
- Activity-specific messaging including using inflatables and wearing your leash when surfing. Refer to the *Community Safety – Key message booklet*.

Find a safe place to go

Only swim at a lifeguarded beach or swimming area.

- Look for the warning and safety signs.
- Swim or bodyboard between the red and yellow flags.
- Surf, kayak or stand-up paddleboard (SUP) between the black and white flags.
- Red flags mean danger – don't enter the water!

Be able to swim and float

- Be able to swim, float and tread water.
- Be able to swim in an outdoor environment (like the sea, a river or a lake).
- Take swimming and water safety lessons – at school, at your local pool, with a club or attend a Swim Safe session.

FLOAT

If you're in trouble in the water, float until you feel calm. Then think about what to do next.

Float – key points

The key points for Float are:

If you're in trouble in the water.

- Float until you feel calm
- Keep warm.
- Activity-specific advice:
 - Bodyboarding and surfing.
- Environment-specific advice:
 - Rip currents.

Float until you feel calm

- Hold onto anything that floats, like a bodyboard or ball.
- If you don't have anything that floats, then float on your back:
 - Face above the water.
 - Lie on your back and lean your head back.
 - Stretch out your arms and legs.
 - Take control of your breathing.
- When you're calm, raise your arm and shout for help.
- Swim to safety if you can.



Keep warm

Once you're calm, stay warm.

- Know the heat escape lessening position (HELP) and huddle positions.



Heat escape lessening position (HELP)



Huddle position

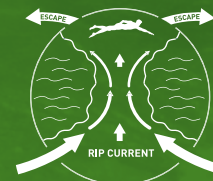
Activity-specific advice Bodyboarding and surfing

Keep hold of your bodyboard or surfboard. It will help you float.

Environment-specific advice Rip currents

If you're in trouble in a rip current:

- If you can stand, walk, don't swim.
- If you have a board or inflatable you should keep hold of it to help you float.
- Raise your hand and shout for help.
- Never try and swim against the rip or you'll get exhausted.
- Swim parallel to the beach until you are free of it (see illustration), then make for shore.



CALL 999 or 112

Call 999 or 112 – key points

The key points for Call 999 or 112 are:

If you see someone in trouble in the water, call 999 or 112 immediately and tell them that someone is in trouble in the water.

Once you've called for help:

- Stay back from the edge and do not enter the water.
- Look for anything you can throw to help them float, for example public rescue equipment (like a lifering), or even a football.
- Keep watch until help arrives.

RESPECT THE WATER

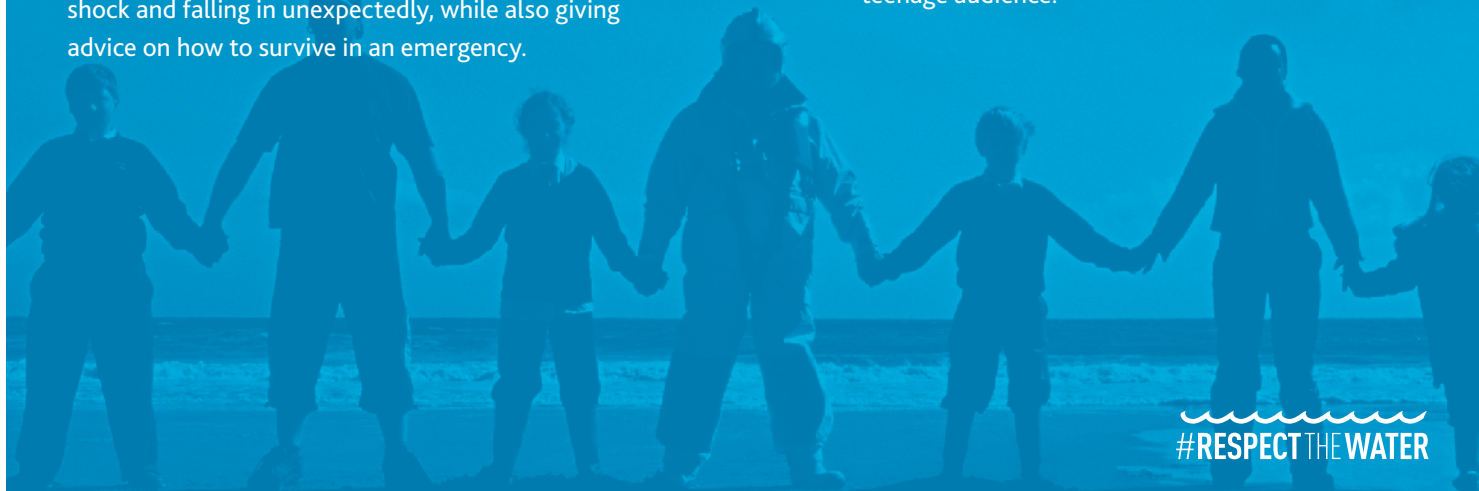
Respect the Water is the RNLI's national drowning prevention campaign, and plays an important role in helping to halve coastal fatalities by 2024.

The campaign has been developed using best practice from other successful public safety campaigns such as Think!, Change 4 Life and Fire Kills.

Its role is to encourage safe enjoyment of the coast, remind people about key risks such as cold water shock and falling in unexpectedly, while also giving advice on how to survive in an emergency.

Every year the campaign evolves so make sure you visit RNLI.org/RespectTheWater to find the latest messaging.

The campaign primarily targets men aged 16–39 years, as this is the group that accounts for the largest number of coastal fatalities each year. However, it also targets specific groups of people who enjoy activities like scuba diving or angling, as well as reaching out to our teenage audience.




#RESPECTTHEWATER

USEFUL LINKS

RNLI

- [RNLI.org/education](https://www.rnli.org/education)
- [RNLI.org/safety](https://www.rnli.org/safety)
- [RNLI.org/RespectTheWater](https://www.rnli.org/RespectTheWater)

Other

- Swim Safe [swimsafe.org.uk](https://www.swimsafe.org.uk)
- RLSS [rlss.org.uk](https://www.rlss.org.uk)
- RoSPA [rospa.com](https://www.rospa.com)
- Canal & River Trust [canalrivertrust.org.uk](https://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk)
- SLSCB [sls.gb.org.uk](https://www.sls.gb.org.uk)
- SLSA Wales [slsawales.org.uk](https://www.slsawales.org.uk)
- Irish Water Safety [iws.ie](https://www.iws.ie)

Activity governing bodies

- Angling [anglingtrust.net](https://www.anglingtrust.net) | [anglingcouncil.ie](https://www.anglingcouncil.ie)
- Canoeing and kayaking [britishcanoeing.org.uk](https://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk) | [canoe.ie](https://www.canoe.ie)
- Coasteering [nationalcoasteeringcharter.org.uk](https://www.nationalcoasteeringcharter.org.uk)
- Kitesurfing [britishkitesports.org](https://www.britishkitesports.org) | [iksa.ie](https://www.iksa.ie)
- Sailing [rya.org.uk](https://www.rya.org.uk) | [sailing.ie](https://www.sailing.ie)
- Stand-up paddleboarding [bsupa.org.uk](https://www.bsupa.org.uk)
- Sub-aqua diving [bsac.com](https://www.bsac.com) | [padi.com](https://www.padi.com) | [diving.ie](https://www.diving.ie)
- Surfing [surfingengland.org](https://www.surfingengland.org) | [irishsurfing.ie](https://www.irishsurfing.ie)
- Swimming [swimming.org](https://www.swimming.org) | [scottishswimming.com](https://www.scottishswimming.com)
[swimwales.org](https://www.swimwales.org) | [swimireland.ie](https://www.swimireland.ie)

NOTES

NOTES

A large white rectangular area on the left page, containing ten horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.

A large white rectangular area on the right page, containing ten horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.

For more information please contact
your local RNLI youth education manager
or email education@rnli.org.uk.



Lifeboats

The RNLI is the charity that saves lives at sea

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution, a charity registered in England and Wales (209603), Scotland (SC037736), the Republic of Ireland (CHY 2678 and 20003326), the Bailiwick of Jersey (14), the Isle of Man (1308 and 006329F), the Bailiwick of Guernsey and Alderney, of West Quay Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1HZ