

## Swimming at Abbey Court School

Swimming is a valued and essential part of the curriculum at Abbey Court School. It is an important life skill, which enables pupils to enjoy the water safely. In addition to this, for many pupils, it is integral to supporting their physical development, enabling them to experience a degree of physical independence, that they cannot achieve without the support of the water.

Swimming is highly motivating for many pupils, and therefore an excellent tool for support learning in many areas of the curriculum, not just physical education. Using our onsite hydrotherapy pool, we aim to provide a safe and supportive environment to introduce children to the pleasure of swimming and to support them to develop water confidence and the skills to swim effectively. For some pupils, accessing swimming in a public swimming pool can be challenging, and in some cases, completely inaccessible. It is our aim to enable as many pupils as possible to access swimming at school, as we recognise the positive impact it can have on their health and wellbeing. For those who are highly motivated by the water, we are able to use our state of the art sensory equipment to promote and develop their communication and engagement during their time in the water.

Staff at Abbey Court School are trained to support pupils safely in the water using a range of teaching methods, including strategies from The Halliwick Association of Swimming Therapy (Halliwick AST), a programme devised to develop the teaching of water safety and swimming for people with disabilities. Pupils are taught using a structured, individualised approach to gain a range of accredited swimming awards during their time at Abbey Court, including Duckling Awards and Water Skills awards.

Swimming can offer a lifelong hobby that promotes a healthy lifestyle. As pupils develop their skills and become more confident in their swimming, we take a number of pupils swimming at local leisure centres to enable them to learn essential social skills in how to use a public pool. For example, where to get changed, how to use a locker to store their clothes safely, and most importantly, how to keep themselves safe in deeper water.

The National Curriculum states that “All schools must provide swimming instruction either in key stage 1 or key stage 2” (National Curriculum 2014). At Abbey Court School, we go beyond this and offer weekly swimming sessions to all year groups from Reception onwards.