



# Pond Policy

TO BE REVIEWED REGULARLY BY THE GOVERNING BODY (June 2026)

Somerville Nursery School  
"Aiming High Together"

# Pond policy

We wish to provide all our pupils with safe opportunities for hands-on access to the pond as part of their learning. This policy document dated 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2025 was adopted by the staff of Somerville Nursery School on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2025 and was endorsed by the school governors.

This policy outlines the principles for safe practice in the use of the pond. 'Pond' refers to the water and the surrounding environment.

## Responsibility

The employer<sup>1</sup> Somerville Nursery School has ultimate responsibility to ensure the health and safety of children and adults. The task of overseeing health and safety for the pond has been delegated to Paul Thompson (for the purposes of this policy this person is called the *Pond Manager*).

In addition, it is the responsibility of teaching and non-teaching staff and other adults to:

- take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others when working at the pond
- remain familiar with this policy and associated documents
- implement what this policy says

Pond managers should record the actions they have taken to maintain the pond and keep it safe.

## Risk Assessment

The pond area is located on the Nursery grounds. This is in a fenced off area with a padlocked gate and is a raised pond.

The key is held by Paul Thompson and Sue booth and is available from Sue Booth's office. All staff are responsible for ensuring the gate is kept locked at all times. This is checked by the Site Manager on a daily basis.

The pond will be checked regularly by Paul Thompson:

- All edges around the pond are clearly visible
- The pond is maintained regularly for example, check the build-up of silt; overhanging branches, removal of fast growing pond weeds in spring.
- Any woodwork/boardings/decking is in a good state of repair, including not rotting.

Maintenance will be undertaken as required to ensure the pond is healthy and the area is safe.

## Communication

Actions that have arisen from the checks must be communicated to staff. *For example, the decking is rotten, pond cannot be used until it is replaced.../overhanging branches need to be cut back, do not use the pond until this has been done.*

No child is allowed in the pond area unsupervised. Children are taught that they may not enter without an adult and are aware of what they should do if they observe unaccompanied children by the pond. For example, tell the nearest adult immediately, don't go to the pond yourself.

When planning a pond-based activity, staff must first talk to the *Pond Manager* about the current condition of the pond.

Teachers must visit the pond prior to the activity and carry out an activity-specific risk assessment, taking the following into consideration:

- pond condition and circumstances on the day, if necessary inform the *Pond Manager* of any control measures that need to be actioned. For example, there are lots of leaves on the decking, which need to be cleared
- requirements of the activity
- the needs of individual pupils.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this document 'the employer' refers to local authorities, governing bodies, trustees or any other body that has responsibility for the health, safety and wellbeing of the organisation's pupils, staff and visitors.

## Supervision

Adults other than teachers supporting or leading pond-based activities should be briefed by a teacher prior to carrying out any activity.

It is the duty of the class teacher to inform any support staff/volunteer adults about this policy.

Adults accompanying the children must be aware of which children they are responsible for.

The class teacher must consider the levels of supervision required for an activity. This will depend on:

- the activity, for example supervision ratios should be higher the closer to the water the children are
- knowledge of the children engaged in the activity for example, age, behaviour, individual needs
- the design of the pond, for example a small pond might only allow space for 4 children near the edge of the water whereas a larger pond may be suitable for 8-10 children.

## Generic control measures for all pond-based activities

Before any pond activity, staff are responsible for ensuring that the following generic control measures are in place, in addition to any activity-specific control measures:

- Children must not put anything in or near their mouth during the activity
- Children and adults must wash their hands with soap and water after the activity
- Children and adults must wear appropriate clothing and footwear eg sensible school shoes/trainers
- Any cuts must be covered with a waterproof dressing
- Children must be taught sensible behaviour for working by water and be reminded of the rules for how to stay safe near the pond, before every visit.
- In case of emergency, the **Emergency Action Plan** (Appendix A) must be followed.

All staff must be familiar with the Pond Emergency Action Plan.

## Reviewing

This policy is reviewed in line with all other school policies unless there is a fundamental change in the pond design or there are changes to school health and safety advice in relation to the pond.

## Appendix A

### Pond Emergency Action Plan

**A minor incident** is considered to be a child slipping feet first into the water with no obvious danger to life.

In this case, follow the steps below:

- An adult will help the child to get out of the pond, as carefully and as quickly as possible.
- Another member of staff will move other children to safety.
- Accompany the child who fell into the pond back to school building to wash and dry, check for any cuts/swallowed water.

**A major incident** is considered to be life-threatening, including suspected drowning.

In the event of a child falling into the pond, resulting in injury or near drowning, follow the steps below:

- If safe to do so, an adult could walk into the water to aid the victim. The pond is approximately 0.75 metre deep at its deepest part.
- Summon other help and the emergency services by sending someone to the school office to do so.
- Another member of staff will move other children to safety as soon as possible.

### Emergency services

Ring 999 and give details of the incident to the operator.

School telephone number:

School address:

### Other action

*e.g. include information that may assist emergency vehicles to access the area*

**All incidents involving a fall into a pond should be reported to the head teacher and recorded using the school incident record system.**