

May 2019

DROWNING PREVENTION AND WATER SAFETY
LETTER TO SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES OF FURTHER EDUCATION
MINERAL PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION

Dear Madam/Sir

I would be very grateful if you could share some information about water safety and drowning prevention with your pupils this term, possibly during an assembly or PHSE lessons.

You may be surprised to learn that drowning is amongst the leading causes of accidental death in the UK. 255 people accidentally drowned in open water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs in 2017. 50% of the people who drowned were not even taking part in water-based activities, often drowning following an unexpected fall or trip into water. Young men are particularly at risk of drowning as they engage in activities they often perceive as harmless fun without understanding the risks they are exposing themselves to.

All too often, the parents and friends of young people who have drowned believe that their tragic loss could have been avoided if the individual, or one of the friends with them at the time, had been more aware of these risks.

A National Drowning Prevention Strategy has been developed using a multi-agency approach involving organisations such as the RNLI, RLSS (Royal Life Saving Society), RoSPA, Fire and Rescue Services and Police Forces across the UK, water utilities and the quarrying industry. The strategy identifies educating the public about the risks of open water and what to do if one is in difficulty, as a key driver for change.

Enclosed are some posters and a card that provide some safety tips and explain the risks associated with quarry lakes and other man-made water bodies such as reservoirs. At the bottom of this letter, I have also shown links to some of the websites from safety organisations that provide tips about how to keep yourself, family and friends safe whilst enjoying the water, whether inland or on the coast. I would particularly recommend the short video on 'Float to Live' produced by the RNLI.

This letter has been sent to you on behalf of the members of the Mineral Products Association (MPA), the trade association for the majority of the UK's quarry operators. Our members have identified that your school is located within close proximity to a quarry lake that has been recognised as high risk. These are normally water filled voids associated with a restored site that are unsuitable for swimming. The site may also have a history of members of the public swimming in the lake, ignoring warning signs and other measures there to help protect them.

Sadly, across the UK in 2018, 8 people drowned in quarry lakes, the majority of whom were young males.

The MPA is very keen to prevent any further fatalities and play its part in encouraging schools to share water safety messages that will help to save lives. This is not intended to discourage people from enjoying water based activities, whether on the coast or on inland water, but to equip them with the information that enables them to assess the potential risks before they plunge or accidentally fall into water and importantly, to understand what to do if they or a friend gets into trouble.

Hopefully, the enclosed resources or the websites will provide sufficient information for a simple briefing. However, should you be interested, we may be able to arrange for a representative from one of our member companies, or an organisation such as the RNLI, RLSS or the Fire and Rescue Service to provide a representative to deliver a water safety assembly/session.

Several water safety campaigns will be run during the year. The Chief Fire Officers Association has recently run its "Be Water Aware" Week, the RNLI's **Respect the Water Campaign** is launched in May and the RLSS will be running its **Drowning Prevention Week Campaign** from 14th June.

If it would be of interest to you to have someone visit your school please either e-mail me at elizabeth.clements@mineralproducts.org or call 07775 894285. Similarly, if you would be interested in organising a quarry visit during the next academic year, please contact me.

I would also welcome any comments or feedback you might have.

If you would like to download a digital copy of this letter including the attached list of resources with the embedded digital links please type the following link into your browser - www.mineralproducts.org/watersafetyengland.pdf

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth Clements". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Elizabeth Clements

Director - Communications and lead for MPA Stay Safe Campaign.

E-mail elizabeth.clements@mineralproducts.org Mobile 07775 894285

PLEASE SEE PAGE BELOW FOR LINKS TO USEFUL FREE RESOURCES

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES ON WATER SAFETY

Please see below a list of free resources that provide key messages on water safety produced by a number of safety organisations. Please click on the links to access these resources.

By sharing simple advice “such as what to do when you fall into water” - the RNLI’s Float to Live information - many lives could be saved. These generic water safety messages apply to both inland open water and tidal water. Please help your students, their family and friends, your colleagues and others to enjoy water activities safely.

- The RNLI website contains sections that provide guidance on water safety and water rescue. <https://www.respectthewater.com/>
- [‘Float to Live’ RNLI](#) - YouTube videos case studies by young people
- RLSS (Royal Life Saving Society) - [Drowning Prevention Week Resources](#) for schools
- [‘One last Breath’ - Wales Water](#) - YouTube video - mini drama
- [‘Why quarry lakes are killers’](#) - MPA - YouTube video
- Please go to YouTube and type in [Stay Safe Stay Out of Quarries](#) to view a short video summary giving key messages and clips of the friends and parents of teenagers who have died in quarry accidents. (This covers water related and other hazards - older audience)
- Please go to Facebook and type in [Stay Safe Stay Out of Quarries](#), to view the campaign page which includes recent examples of quarry related incidents and links to other resources and campaigns.
- For more information about the campaign or if you would like to arrange for a school or a supervised, educational quarry visit please contact Elizabeth Clements at elizabeth.clements@mineralproducts.org
- Information and a downloadable copy of the National Drowning Prevention Strategy at <http://www.nationalwatersafety.org.uk/strategy/>
- National Fire Chiefs Council Campaigns - ‘Be Water Aware’ <https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/Water-aware-week-2019>

Please support us in helping your students, colleagues and their families to “Respect the Water” and appreciate that quarries, reservoirs and other similar industrial sites have hidden dangers, there are better places for adventurous activities.

FREE COPIES OF THE ENCLOSED LEAFLET AND POSTER CAN BE ORDERED FROM MPA by contacting david.yelland@mineralproducts.org or telephone 01769 540044 (direct dial)

[Download and print a digital copy of poster](#)