

2.7 Connétable J. Gallichan of St. Mary of the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture regarding the provision of swimming lessons in primary schools:

Would the Minister confirm whether department policy states that swimming lessons are recommended for Key Stage 1 and should be compulsory for Key Stage 2 pupils, and can he apprise whether all primary schools are able to meet these policy requirements and if not identify the reasons why?

Deputy J.G. Reed of St. Ouen (The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture)

It is a general policy of the department to actively encourage all young people to learn to swim, including those in Key Stage 1. Prior to this all 3 to 4 year-olds have the opportunity to access free swimming lessons provided at Les Ormes by Swim Right, which is very generously sponsored by the Bedell Group. The pupils in Key Stage 2, aged 7 to 11, swimming is one of 6 activities which students are required to participate in. To my knowledge all primary schools can access our swimming pools. These are situated at Les Quennevais, Haute Vallée and Langford, all of which provide lifeguard cover and qualified swimming instructors. There are constraints that sometimes face schools in delivering this entitlement, including swimming pool availability, time and transport. However, it is my expectation that this should not deter schools from delivering what I believe to be an essential skill.

2.7.1. The Connétable of St. Mary:

I am grateful for the Minister's answer because certainly my own initial research had led me to believe that there were some primary schools that were unable to provide the swimming lessons, and I will happily talk to the Minister privately about that. My concern is that department policy says that wherever possible the Island follows the U.K. curriculum except where there are potentially unique environmental reasons concerning perhaps environment, culture or history why they should not. It seems to me that with our marine environment and our huge tidal movements and races we should be concentrating on swimming as a major investment. Would the Minister confirm that in his opinion we exceed the requirements of the U.K. curriculum in this matter?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I fully support the Constable's comments regarding the need for everybody to learn to swim, and I believe the statement that we ensure and require all children to learn to swim between the ages of 7 and 11 to be more than sufficient and supports the U.K.'s position on this.