



Rector: Mrs C McGonigal
Depute Rector: Mr C D O'Neill
Depute Rector: Mr I Weafer
Depute Rector: Mr R Sim
Depute Rector: Mr D Munro
Depute Rector: Mrs J Urquhart

Keppoch Road
Culloden
INVERNESS
IV2 7JZ
Phone 01463 790851

S1 & S2 Swimming Programme – Information for Parents/Carers and Pupils

Dear Parents/Carers and Pupils,

This term, Culloden Academy is aiming to provide all S1 and S2 pupils with a 6-block of swimming lessons as part of their Physical Education programme. We want every pupil, regardless of their current swimming ability, to develop greater confidence in the water, improve their swimming and build essential water-safety skills.

Why swimming matters

Swimming is more than a physical activity – it is an important life skill. National Water Safety Forum data show that confirmed accidental water-related fatalities across Scotland were 45 in 2022, 47 in 2023, 33 in 2024 and 39 in 2025. These are avoidable deaths and the figures underline the importance of helping young people become safer and more confident in and around water. Tragedies have occurred very close to home, with a pupil at Forres Academy tragically drowning after getting into difficulty in a loch near Grantown-on-Spey, marking the 12th person killed in a water tragedy in the UK during the month of May 2026 alone.

Tragedy at beauty spot near Scottish town as 16-year-old boy becomes 12th water death in a week

A fantastic opportunity at Culloden Academy

We are very fortunate to have a swimming pool within the school, something the vast majority of schools do not have. We want our pupils to make full use of this excellent facility and the opportunity it gives them to develop a skill that can stay with them for life.

We have also been fortunate that High Life Highland were granted £6,000 to support swimming at Culloden Academy. This funding will help pay for lifeguards to support the school swimming programme and for a school lifeguarding course for some S6 pupils, helping us to strengthen swimming provision further.

What pupils need to bring

- Swimming costume or swimming shorts
- A towel

Pupils who would feel more comfortable doing so may wear shorts and/or a T-shirt over their swimming costume. Our priority is that pupils feel able to participate and build confidence. There will be a minimum of 15 minutes at the end of each swimming lesson for pupils to shower, dry themselves, get changed and prepare for their next class.

Supporting weaker and non-swimmers

Pupils do not need to be able to swim already to take part. The pool has a shallow end which will support pupils who are weaker swimmers, lack confidence in the water or are currently non-swimmers. Staff will ensure activities are appropriate to pupils' ability and confidence levels.

We need the support of parents and carers

We are asking parents and carers to reinforce our message to pupils: give it a go, push yourself slightly outside your comfort zone and make the most of this opportunity. We understand that some pupils may initially feel nervous or self-conscious, and our staff will work hard to make lessons supportive, inclusive and positive.

Pupils who do not bring swimming kit and do not have a suitable note explaining why they are unable to participate will be supplied with kit by the school so that they can take part. Where there is a genuine medical or other reason why a pupil cannot participate, parents/carers should communicate this with the school via a signed and dated note. Due to an increase in forged notes, it may be that from time to time one of the members of the department contacts home to check that notes are legitimate.

Our aim

By the end of these swimming blocks, we want our young people to be more confident in water, stronger swimmers, more knowledgeable about water safety and better prepared to keep themselves and others safe.

We would greatly appreciate your support in encouraging S1 and S2 pupils to bring their swimming kit, participate fully and make the most of this valuable opportunity.

All other PE lessons

Please also note that it is expected that pupils bring full PE kit for each of their PE lessons. Acceptable kit includes trainers or football boots if applicable (no boots, smart shoes or crocs), jogging bottoms/shorts/leggings (no skirts, jeans, gymnastic shorts or flare trousers), a tshirt (no school buttoned shirts or crop tops), a jumper (if needed) and a thin base layer jacket (if needed). Also, pupils should not be wearing inappropriate jewellery or possess chewing gum.

Thank you for your continued support.

Scott Houston
PT PE Department
Culloden Academy

Sources:

National Water Safety Forum, Water Incident Database (WAID), Scotland annual reports 2022–2025. [National Water Safety Forum – WAID reports](https://www.scottishdailyexpress.co.uk/news/scottish-news/tragedy-beauty-spot-near-scottish-37222459)

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