

Risk assessment – Open Water Environment

Bolton School	Assessment carried out by: Steven Bradley
Date of next review: 04/09/2026	Date assessment was carried out: 04/09/2025

Overview of activity	Bolton school runs various paddle sports trips which sometimes involve travelling on areas of Open water such as large lakes or reservoirs. This risk assessment aims to identify hazards specific to those environments and ways to mitigate those risks.				
What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed?	What are you already doing to control the risk?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?
Open water	staff/participant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several weather reports from reputable organisations obtained • Where necessary ensure groups paddle close to shore • Consider where the group could land on a journey should conditions change and require the group to get off the water • Staff to carry equipment suitable for the environment in line with what is on the Paddlesport SOP 	Inform group of expected conditions Have a plan B	Staff	prior to event
Becoming seperated	Staff/participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close supervision throughout • Regular head counts throughout the day • Only paddle as fast as slowest group member • Brief group beforehand • Change tandem crews around if necessary • Adapt leadership strategy if needed • Raft together if necessary (canoes) 			
Conditions change	Staff/participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure staff have checked forecasts • Staff to keep an eye on conditions throughout the day and be mindful of conditions “creeping” up on them • Staff are encouraged to have the confidence to abandon trip if necessary or change the plan throughout the day • Escape routes identified prior to departure 			