



AquaMoves

Teenage Girls Programme 2023

Programme Introduction

An aquatic programme running in line with Sport Ireland's "Her Moves" campaign, aimed at getting teenage girls active.

AquaMoves combines a mix of Aqua Aerobics and Artistic Swimming (previously known as Synchronized Swimming) fundamentals. This initiative targets girls aged 13-16 years old and where schools are collaborating, the focus will be on transition year students.

An initial pilot programme commenced in County Sligo in February 2023, with positive feedback thus far. This pilot will capture the voices of participants to enrich the programme for continued delivery nationwide. With four programmes across Ireland planned in 2023.

The programme can be delivered between 6 and 13 weeks and is taught in a fun, social environment and supplemented by e-learning modules; educational pieces on menstruation and aquatics, body confidence in aquatics and social media usage, along with a practical session outside of the pool in nail art, that will last in the water!

Aqua aerobics is a popular activity within the older female demographic, but it can be enjoyed the whole way through the life cycle, which is why it has been refreshed to appeal to teenage girls. Swim Ireland's updated Women in Sport Strategy will include a central goal of increasing Aquatic participation within the teenage years and growing the sport of Artistic Swimming.

Within the Swim Ireland Strategic Plan 2022-2026 "Swimming" is defined as "a form of physical activity in the water that people engage in whether for social connections, exercise, health and physical activity, challenge, mental wellbeing, skill development, competition, fun, or many of these reasons combined". Swim Ireland aim to redefine what swimming means to our various audiences, highlighting that it is not purely traditional lap swimming, that it can involve a multitude of aquatic activities.

AquaMoves provides girls with an introduction to the fundamentals of artistic swimming and everything that comes along with it, aqua aerobic basics, choreography, music selection, team presentation and a strong emphasis on body confidence.

The programme develops a participant's ability across a range of aquatic skills via the use of "skill cards". Instructors will teach the various skills throughout the programme and participants can pick which challenges they would like to accomplish. The practical sessions will be participant led and instructor supported, to empower girls to create their own dance, made up of their own choreography, music, and flare!

Culmination of the programme will be a fun pool party where participants will celebrate its completion and display their dances. A certificate of completion will be awarded to each participant. Outside of physical aquatic skills, the programme will incorporate teamwork, confidence building and leadership skills to create confident young women who enjoy being active.



The programme can be delivered through (but not limited to) Swim Ireland pop-up pools, which migrate across Irish counties every 4-6 months. The programme can be adjusted to fit into the Gaisce programme (for which Swim Ireland is a partner of) criteria for schools who offer the award. Schools will be welcomed to expand the programme into other curriculum i.e., art and design, where participants would be tasked with designing logos and swim wear for artistic swimming teams.

An example of a 12-week programme is detailed below.

- **Week 1;** E-Learning modules distributed introducing the programme and educating on swimwear and its associated safety, menstruation and swimming and use of social media
- **Week 2-4;** Aqua Fitness introduction - water resistance, tempo variation, range of movements, equipment, and session structure.
- **Week 5-7;** Aqua Dance - putting movements to music, accomplishing skills from the skill's menu
- **Week 8-10;** Artistic Swimming introduction – choreography of routines (duet and teams), breath control, music selection and judging considerations.
- **Week 11;** Nail artistry
- **Week 12;** Final display of routines, pool party and certificate awards

Instructors will be carefully selected with qualifications in Artistic Swimming, Swim Teaching / Coaching and Dance or Aqua Aerobics. Instructors will be supported by a bespoke Swim Ireland CPD for the programme.

Programme Goals;

- To create diversity in aquatic activities with a specific focus on engaging teenage girls.
- Encourage and empower girls to participate in aquatics and experience feeling confident in and out of the pool.
- Offer a safe and welcoming environment to enjoy learning new skills

Swim Ireland will be the primary funders of the programme, however LSPs / Schools will be asked to contribute a % of the pool and instructor hire costs.



Below outlines the 8 principles in engaging teenage girls in sport, suggested by Sport Ireland within the Girls Get Active Report and how this programme implements them.

Principle	Description on how this principle is achieved within the programme
Principle 1 - No judgment	Branded ponchos for poolside, Rash vests for in the pool, skills focus rather than competitive focus, training for instructors on how to communicate and support the group
P2 - Invoke excitement	Pool sessions will be participant led and instructor supported, pool party to finish the programme, role models created from pilot programme, LED disco lights and music throughout sessions
P3 - Clear emotional reward	Skills menu with a range of difficulty incorporated for participants to learn new skills as the programme progresses - no pressure to complete the skill's list but rather pick and try Gaisce Bronze Award incorporated
P4 - Open eyes to what's there	Redefining "swimming" define as any form of physical activity in the water that people engage in whether for social connections, exercise, health and physical activity, challenge, mental wellbeing, skill development, competition, fun, or many of these reasons combined, as outlined in the Swim Ireland Strategic Plan 2022-2026. Educating on menstrual cycle (not a barrier to aquatic activity) Incorporating social media into physical activity
P5 - Build into existing habits	Dance, music, social media, and nail art all covered within programme
P6 - Give girls a voice & a choice	Pilot programme will act as our focus group to enrich subsequent programmes Participants create their own choreography in pairs and as one team (separately), own choice of music selection and choreography, as a group participants decide on how they want the final pool party to look
P7 - Champion what's in it for them	Challenging the brain and body to progress through skills menu, peer teaching and learning, group bonding, building confidence in and out of the pool
P8 - Expand image of what sporty looks like.	The pilot programme will develop our role models for subsequent participants, capturing their journey through interviews, photography, and videography Emphasis of the programme is on the participants confidence, enjoyment, team pride and cohesiveness