

# International Workshop of Green flags

## HANDOUT

### Water safety for children

- 1) **SWIMMING** The main risk at the beach and in swimming pools is drowning. For this reason, children must learn how to swim from the age of three under the supervision of trained instructors at all times, preferably in open water, as children must learn not to be afraid of splashes, deep water and to be able to swim underwater with their eyes open. Children who still do not know how to swim must always go in water with armbands.
- 2) **NEVER ALONE** All children under the age of twelve, including those who already know how to swim, must always be in water with an adult who can swim well and possibly stay near the children at all times.
- 3) **COASTAL SAFETY** The rescue service is fundamental and must always be available, equipped with lifeguard towers, which are guaranteed with trained lifeguards wearing a uniform to easily be spotted.
- 4) **SPOT THE DANGERS** Follow local council regulations concerning swimming. Avoid the areas where aquatic sports are done as well as fishing and competitions. Observe warnings indicated by ropes and buoys which mark the access allowed. Look at safety flags: when the yellow or red flags are flying, it means caution and one must not bathe. Flip flops must always be worn when having a shower, using toilet facilities or walking on a paved floor.
- 5) **IN WATER** Enter the water slowly so that the body adapts to the temperature after having eaten or when the water is cold. Avoid diving in the sea or swimming pool without knowing how deep the water is in order to avoid traumas and injuries.
- 6) **SKIN** Protect your skin from the sun with sunscreen and protective lotions (preferable to sprays) which contain chemical and physical filters, to apply every two hours. Never apply at shorter intervals because it may cause skin rash even if the child has been in the water for a long time or sweats a lot. A sunhat is an extra protection and, should the child suffer a sunburn, let the child wear a white cotton T-shirt as well.
- 7) **SUNSHINE AND HEAT WITH NO PROBLEMS** Be careful with sun exposure between 12pm and 5pm especially when the child is under four years of age. For those who stay on the beach during this time slot, water must be given to the child every 20 minutes and make the child stay in the shade at close intervals.
- 8) **IN THE CAR** When travelling by car with a child, never stop in the sun, not even for short periods of time. Look for a parking space in the shade.
- 9) **CLEANLINESS** Cleanliness everywhere is a safety measure. Clear water is a form of prevention of accidents because it allows us to identify the submerged obstacles. Cleanliness at the beach is also shown by the presence of waste baskets and bins which must never be full but emptied quickly. The sand must not have broken shells, glass, pieces of tin, abandoned rubbish, tar, seaweed not gathered at water's edge or in the sand. There must be care of the environment at all times.

- 10) **FORMATION** It is useful for students of elementary and middle school to take part in free courses given in health education about possible risks at sea and on proper behaviour in the marine environment.