



Date 26th May 2026

Dear Principal

Re: Quarry Safety Campaign “Stay Safe Stay Out”

Once again we are writing to you to ask for your support in communicating our national cold water safety campaign which aims to warn young people and children about the dangers of trespassing in disused or active quarries as well as highlighting the dangers of swimming in quarry lakes.

Tragically, over the past few years across the UK and Ireland a number of young people have been killed or seriously injured after entering disused or working quarries and got into difficulty in deep cold lagoons or on the steep rugged quarry faces. With warm weather and the summer holidays approaching, there is concern that children, teenagers and young adults could be tempted to enter their local quarry or lake.

To help prevent this, the Mineral Products Association NI (MPANI), with the support of the Health and Safety Executive NI (HSENI), are promoting the Mineral Products Association (MPA) national “**Stay Safe**” campaign to raise awareness amongst younger children, teenagers, parents, teachers and youth workers about the dangers of entering quarries uninvited.

All too often after the death or serious injury to a young person in a quarry, their friends or parents say that they were not aware of the risks they were exposing themselves too, they thought they were engaged in a harmless bit of fun. If the friends who were with them had understood the risks, they might have stopped them. This is why we believe that helping to raise awareness of these hazards will help to save young people’s lives.

We are appealing to you to help us pass on this important message to young people in your care - “**STAY SAFE... STAY OUT**” - so that they heed this warning that quarries (working or disused) are not fun places and that by trespassing they place both their own and their friends lives at risk. Fencing and warning signs are there to protect them, please do not ignore them.

The potential hazards that people expose themselves to are:

- Swimming in quarry lakes that can have very cold water even on a hot day in the middle of summer. Strong swimmers have drowned in quarries due to the unexpected impact that the extreme cold has had on their bodies.
- The water in quarry lakes can be very deep and shelving, exit from the water may only be possible in a few places, there may be pumps working or currents that can drag you under the water.
- There can be concealed underwater obstructions and other hazards that can seriously injure swimmers or individuals jumping into the water - tombstoning into quarry lakes is not safe.
- Tunnelling into piles of sand or playing on stockpiles exposes you to the risk of sudden collapses or movements that can easily bury you.
- Walking near the edge of quarry faces exposes you to the risk of serious falls as the edges can be unstable and collapse unexpectedly or sheer faces be obstructed by vegetation.
- Climbing or walking near rock faces can expose you to the risk of rock falls.
- Surfaces in quarries that may look solid, such as the surface of a silt pond, can suddenly break and act like quick sand sucking you down.
- Trail and quad biking in a quarry will expose riders to risks from unstable terrain, unexpected obstructions and being hit by moving plant.
- Young people on bikes or on foot may not be visible to operators of large machinery, they may not appreciate that the driver cannot see them.
- Quarries can often be located in remote sites where mobile reception is poor and there is no one on hand to help in the event of an accident

How you can help

This issue is relevant for each school in the Northern Ireland, as there is always a quarry no more than 10 miles away.

Teachers and youth leaders are vital partners in the campaign to spread the message to young people that quarries are not places to play. Your support could help us save lives.

Resources are available online for Schools and Youth Groups to communicate this serious message and to discourage teenagers and children from trespassing in UK's quarries. Please view the Stay Safe videos, leaflets, posters and education materials. Go to [Stay Safe \(mineralproducts.org\)](http://Stay Safe (mineralproducts.org))

And [Quarry water is a stone-cold killer. Stay out. Stay alive.](#) | [Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs \(daera-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

One of the most effective ways of highlighting the dangers of quarries is to arrange a supervised quarry visit or to invite the local quarry manager to visit your school. If you want to organise a school visit, an on-line presentation or simply use of the MPA teaching resources on our website then please don't hesitate to contact me at gbest@mpani.org if you would like help or advice in setting up any of the above.

We trust you will support us in delivering this vital safety message to young people, particularly in advance of the Summer Holidays.

Yours faithfully,



Gordon Best
Regional Director MPANI



Brian Pryce
Principal Health and Safety Inspector
HSE NI



DANGER
Cold water can kill
Do not swim

#RESPECTTHEWATER

A quarry lake can look very inviting on a hot summer's day but can be a killer

The impact of cold water and other hazards can put even strong swimmers at risk. Remember that warning signs and fencing are there to protect you. Please choose to enjoy water based activities where it is safe to do so.

If you are in trouble in the water: **'Float to Live'** – tilt your head back with ears submerged. Relax and move your hands to help you stay afloat. Once you have adjusted to the water look for a place to exit – call for help.

If you see someone in difficulty, resist the temptation to enter the water to try and save them. **CALL – TELL – THROW**
CALL 999 and ask for the Fire and Rescue Service at inland water and the Coastguard at the coast
TELL them to stay calm and float on their back
THROW them something that floats or find something to reach them and pull them in

Lifeboats
If you're struggling in the water ...
Tilt your head back with ears submerged
Relax and move your hands to help you stay afloat
Remember it. Share it.
FLOAT TO LIVE
#RESPECTTHEWATER

respectthewater.com | www.mineralproducts.org/Campaigns/Stay-Safe.aspx

Based on original artwork by Department of the Environment Northern Ireland ©

The RNLI is the charity that saves lives at sea. The Royal National Lifeboat Institution, a charity registered in England and Wales (209603), Scotland (SC037736), the Republic of Ireland (CHI 2678 and 2000326), the Bailiwick of Jersey (14), the Isle of Man (1208 and 005320), the Bailiwick of Guernsey and Alderney, of West Quay Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1WZ.

 'Stay Safe... Stay Out of Quarries' is on <https://www.facebook.com/StaySafeStayOutOfQuarries>