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Accidents Involved in School Physical Education and Measures to Counter Such Accidents

— Responsibilities for Accidents and Teachers' Obligations
for Safety Administration —

By *Ryuji Takamine**

Accidents involved in the physical education at school are happening in spite of teachers' safety efforts, posing a significant question.

Among such accidents, those happening while school children and students are swimming sometimes are attended with danger of life, therefore, teachers are getting anxious about how to institute safety countermeasures.

Among the most difficult techniques concerning swimming guidance, there is a diving start technique.

For beginners, plunging into the water from a position high above the water surface with their heads down gives them a great fear. However, this technique, if mastered once, becomes one of the most thrilling swimming techniques, and at the same time, one of the most dangerous ones.

Skilled divers can make diving safety even in a pool of the depth of just one meter, however, in the case of unskilled divers, they sometimes may fail and hurt their cervical vertebra or die unluckily by hitting their heads onto the bottom of the pool.

The reason why diving is prohibited in many of city pools is to prevent such accidents as mentioned above from occurring.

The example quoted here in this paper pertains to one accident: a student at a certain high school hurt his cervical vertebra while practicing diving start in a pool during a recess with attendance of no teacher, and he became disabled, lying in the bed perpetually. The case was brought to trial, demanding reparation for the injury.

The focus of the dispute in court pertained to whether the teacher can be blamed from the safety administration aspect for the accident which occurred during a recess or not.

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This problem was solved finally in a form of the defendant paying a sum of fifteen million yen in compliance with the amicable settlement advice of the court.

What is learned from this settlement is that teachers are imposed a safety administration obligation to watch the movements of their students and prohibit them from doing dangerous actions even during a recess.

Accidents always happen in an unexpected condition, and the matter mentioned above teaches us that the teachers are imposed an obligation at all times to keep watch on the safety of physical educational facilities and to take necessary measures for the prevention of occurrence of an accident.