



Swimming Instruction and Water Safety Policy

Purpose

To ensure that all school swimming programs are safely conducted; and provide students with the knowledge and confidence to participate in aquatic activities.

Note: This policy applies to programs which have the purpose of teaching swimming and water safety. It does not apply to water activities such as recreational swimming, surfing, canoeing, boating etc.

Programs should include a sequence involving:

- swimming
- water safety
- survival techniques
- rescue and emergency procedures.

Policy

The Principal must ensure that all relevant requirements are met for:

- supervision levels
- staff and/or instructor qualifications
- other health and emergency and safety precautions.

Implementation

Swimming venues

There are three categories of swimming venues:

Type 1: Swimming pools and shallow, calm, confined swimming areas at natural venues such as lakes, dams and non-surf beaches. A shallow, natural-water venue is defined as a venue where the maximum depth of the water is no greater than shoulder height for any of the students involved in the program. The swimming area at natural venues must be clearly defined and surrounded by safety barriers such as the shoreline, piers, jetties or floating ropes.

Type 2: Open deep-water venues include deep and/or flowing water at non-surf beaches, lakes, channels, rivers and dams. Additional hazards associated with this venue type mean that the swimming area should be divided into appropriate group teaching stations, each with recognisable boundaries such as banks, shorelines, flags, piers or floating ropes.

Note: Students taking part in these activities should be able to competently complete the following sequence:

- a jump entry
- survival sculling, floating or treading water for five minutes, a slow swim for five minutes using a different survival stroke (with the arms below the surface of the water) each minute, a feet-first or head-first surface dive
- float for one minute using a flotation aid, swim continuously for 200 metres using a recognised stroke.

Type 3: Surf beaches include all beaches with direct access to ocean waters. Where possible, programs should be conducted at patrolled beaches.

Note: Students taking part in these activities should be able to competently complete the following sequence:

- enter deep water using a feet-first entry
- in water of at least waist depth, dive into the water to simulate an entry under a wave
- demonstrate a feet-first and a head-first surface dive
- demonstrate for one minute how a flotation aid may be used as a support, reassure any other swimmers by talking with them, swim slowly using a combination of three survival strokes for ten minutes, remove such clothing as desired (the clothing may be used for flotation), demonstrate survival sculling, floating or treading water for a total of five minutes
- demonstrate waving one arm occasionally as if signalling for help.

Supervision

This table describes the supervision requirements.

| Staff | Requirement | |
|---------------------|---|------|
| Minimum staff | At least two staff supervise students at swimming and water activities. | |
| Staff-student ratio | The minimum overall staff–student ratio should be: Swimming pools and other shallow venues: | |
| | Beginner swimmers – i.e. students with little or no experience including in shallow water. | 1:10 |
| | Intermediate swimmers – i.e. students with basic skills, able to swim 25 metres with a recognisable stroke. | 1:12 |
| | Advanced swimmers – i.e. students able to swim fifty strokes using two recognisable strokes and to demonstrate one survival stoke in deep water. | 1:15 |
| | Surf beaches Note: Groups should be no greater than 50 students. | 1:5 |
| | Open deep water venues | 1:10 |
| Personnel | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A teacher employed by the Department or the school council must - be in attendance - have overall responsibility for the activity and legal responsibility for emergency procedures. • Other supervising staff must be approved by the principal. These may include parents/guardians, education support class officers, instructors or employees of swimming pools. • When arranging for supervision of swimming or water activities schools must take into account the age and experience of the students as well as the venue and experience of staff. | |

Note: If special precautions are required and the school is not able to provide the necessary supervision, the parents/guardians must take responsibility for ensuring that safety requirements are met without interference with the swimming class supervision. If a student's suitability for inclusion in a school swimming program is in doubt, principals should consult the parent/guardian and the student's doctor.

Qualifications

This table describes the qualifications requirements by activity type.

| Activity | Requirement |
|--|--|
| All swimming programs | <p>All supervising staff must be capable and have the knowledge and skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to teach swimming and water safety • for emergency rescue and cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR). <p>Note: Appropriate levels of competence are the rescue and CPR requirements specified in the certificates for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety • Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) Bronze Medallion or Surf Rescue Certificate • Royal Life Saving Society – Australia (RLSSA) Bronze Medallion or Pool Lifeguard Certificate • Life Saving Victoria (LSV) Community Surf Life Saving Certificate. |
| At a swimming pool or a natural water shallow and confined venue | <p>One staff member must hold an AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety Certificate and, where possible, a second staff member should hold the same certificate.</p> |
| At an open deep water venue | <p>All staff must hold an AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety Certificate and at least one staff member must hold a current:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bronze Medallion or Surf Rescue Certificate from Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) • Community Surf Lifesaving Certificate from Life Saving Victoria (LSV). |
| At a surf beach | <p>All staff must hold an AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety Certificate, and at least one staff member must hold a current:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bronze Medallion or Surf Rescue Certificate from Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) • Community Surf Lifesaving Certificate from Life Saving Victoria (LSV). |
| Recreational swimming | <p>For staff qualifications and staff-student ratios see: Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors website, including the recreational swimming activity guidelines within Department resources</p> <p>Note: Recreational swimming sessions occur where the learning of swimming or water safety is not the prime purpose.</p> |

Note: A record of staff swimming and water safety qualifications must be maintained at the school and include the date of issue of the qualification and formal notification of any subsequent renewal or upgrade.

Emergency procedures and safety measures

This table describes the necessary emergency procedures and safety requirements.

| Measure | Requirement |
|----------------------|---|
| Emergency procedures | <p>A school must have a clearly written set of emergency procedures that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• is understood by those involved in the program• includes<ul style="list-style-type: none">- rescue, resuscitation and first aid procedures- how to contact a doctor, ambulance or emergency service- the supervision and safety of all other students at the venue• is in harmony with the procedures used by pool owners, pool managers or rescue and life-saving patrols and outlines areas of responsibilities and organisation required to carry out a rescue and maintain student safety. <p>Note: The teacher in direct control of the swimming group is legally responsible for implementation of the procedures that may include the involvement of others who have more experience in dealing with emergencies.</p> |
| Safety measures | <p>Ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• all staff are dressed appropriately to perform an immediate contact rescue• each staff member is positioned to account for all students in their respective swimming groups at all times• a 'buddy' system is used during lessons and incorporated into the emergency plan as a check of student safety• all staff must be prepared for and able to cope with an emergency rescue and apply CPR• aids such as ropes, poles and approved buoyancy devices are immediately available at each teaching station and other places where students are swimming or diving• swimming programs are not conducted if the water temperature is low and there is a risk of hypothermia• students are protected from excessive exposure to sunlight and the resulting sunburn with:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- hats- sunglasses- protective clothing- broad-spectrum sunscreen creams and lotions- waterproof sun creams or clothing while in the water. |

Health precautions

The Principal will ensure that:

- students suffering from contagious infections are not permitted to enter swimming pools until they have recovered, e.g. ear and throat infections, colds, papillomas
- supervising staff know the medical histories of students in the program, particularly with respect to epilepsy, diabetes, asthma and heart conditions
- for students with chronic illnesses:
 - obtain parent permission before the student is involved in a swimming program
 - advise the parents to obtain medical advice if there is any doubt about the student's reaction to any aspect of the program.

Conditional inclusions in a swimming program

| If a student has | Then the school may permit the student to swim if |
|---|--|
| epilepsy, or any other form of medical condition involving periodic loss of consciousness | a valid medical certificate is provided by the parents stating that it is safe. Note: Such a certificate is usually valid for 12 months, however a new certificate is required if loss of consciousness is known to have occurred. A certificate that is conditional upon special precautions should not be accepted unless the parents arrange for additional supervision and accept responsibility for the safety of their child during swimming classes; and then only if the principal is satisfied that the arrangement will not interfere in the conduct of the class. See: Student Health - Epilepsy and Seizures . |
| asthma, and may require medication before swimming and during a swimming lesson | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the parents provide written consent of their child's participation and indicate that their doctor also has no objection• the student's medication is available at the swimming venue. See: Student Health - Asthma Kits . |
| diabetes | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the student takes extra food before activities to prevent insulin or hypoglycaemic reactions e.g. fruit, biscuits or fruit juice. See: Student Health - Diabetes . |

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Approval:

This policy was approved by School Council on 16 May 2017