



Department of  
**Education**

## SWIMMING AND WATER BASED ACTIVITIES

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## SWIMMING AND WATER-BASED ACTIVITIES

**This document contains specific requirements related to Swimming and Water-Based Activities and must be read in conjunction with *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures*.**

### 1. BACKGROUND

Students participate in many different aquatic activities, and many of these activities have their own requirements. The Department teacher-in-charge should refer to separate advice in the relevant activity specific document if including:

- *Paddling;*
- *Sailing and Sailboarding;*
- *Scuba Diving;*
- *Snorkelling;*
- *Surfboard Riding;* and
- *Powerboating.*

### DEFINITIONS

#### ASSISTANT SUPERVISOR

Assists the Qualified Supervisor and or Department teacher-in-charge. May or may not have relevant qualification or experience.

#### CALM WATER

A still or slow moving water environment with no to low swell. These areas may include; a sheltered/ protected coastal area or river, dam, waterhole or inland water body.

#### FREE SWIM

A recreational swim with no educational purpose. Normally as a celebration following a structured activity, such as a swimming carnival or excursion.

#### OPEN WATER

An uncontrolled/ unprotected water environment that may be fast flowing or turbulent, such as a surf beach, flowing river or waterway, tidal coastal water, or areas affected by swell and/or strong currents.

#### SWIMMING CARNIVAL

School swimming events may include traditional swimming competitions, activities or novelty events at swimming pools, lakes or beaches.

#### SWIMMING POOL

A controlled, indoor or outdoor, still water environment contained within an artificial structure, monitored for water quality.

#### TEACHER-IN-CHARGE

The member of the teaching staff who is authorised by the Department of Education to manage the school activity.

#### WATER-BASED ACTIVITIES

Less formal activities occurring in and around water. Examples include team development, games and raft building.

N.B. Ocean Pools and Wave Pools may be classified as Calm Water or Open Water depending on environmental conditions. Appropriate risk assessment of the environment must be conducted to confirm adequate supervision levels and qualifications are maintained.

#### WATER SAFETY PROGRAMS

Focuses on water safety awareness, stroke correction, fitness training and/or the preparation of students for competition in aquatic sports, such as competitive swimming, triathlons, water polo and/or lifesaving activities.

#### WHITE WATER

A section of white water where the water current or tidal movement is sufficient to create hydrological features. Hydrological features may include but are not limited to rapids, eddies, whirlpools etc. (Refer to the International River Grading System below to assist with identification of white water).

<b>INTERNATIONAL RIVER GRADING SYSTEM</b>	
<b>Grade of White Water</b>	<b>Classification</b>
<b>1</b>	EASY: Slow to medium flowing water with very small, regular waves or riffles. Relatively few obstacles, with an easy path to find and follow. Suitable for novices.
<b>2</b>	MEDIUM: Rapids are straightforward with medium sized, regular waves. The path through the rapids can be easily seen from the water and is often indicated by well-defined chutes or Vs of water. There are some obstacles that require manoeuvring around, but paddlers with a good command of basic strokes can easily miss them.
<b>3</b>	DIFFICULT: Rapids have moderate, irregular waves and strong currents. Manoeuvring is required to follow the preferred route. Small to medium sized stoppers may have to be negotiated. The route is difficult for inexperienced paddlers to see and scouting is advisable. Suitable for experienced white water paddlers, with the ability to roll an advantage.

This section provides requirements for teachers who are planning and conducting:

- Swimming and Water Safety Programs (including Surf Lifesaving lessons);
- Swimming Carnivals; and
- Water-Based activities (including free swims).

Recreational or 'free' swims present a higher risk and must be endorsed by the principal prior to the event.

#### **Guidance**

*The Department's Swimming and Water Safety branch is responsible for the coordination of the VacSwim and Intern swimming programs.*

*The information in these Guidelines does not apply to these programs.*

*Royal Life Saving and Surf Life Saving provide specific information and fact sheets pertinent to particular water safety issues.*

## 2. ENVIRONMENT

The nature of aquatic venues will vary depending on the purpose of the activity. The following factors should be considered when choosing a venue. These include:

- the age, capacity and skills of each student;
- qualifications and experience of the supervisor(s);
- supervisors' knowledge and experience at the specific location;
- amount of supervision required;
- environmental conditions;
- size of waves;
- speed of flowing water;
- submerged objects; and
- depth variations.

The level of risk varies according to the nature and location of the activity.

Water depth must be appropriate for the activity.

Selected activity areas are clearly defined (e.g. by using as relevant: on-shore markers, flags or natural features, off-shore buoys and/or anchored markers such as coloured plastic bottles).

Signage at all aquatic locations with respect to diving, must be adhered to at all times.

Weather conditions need to be assessed and monitored in the days leading up to the activity, on the day of the activity and throughout the activity. The supervisory team may need to modify, relocate or cancel the activity at any time.

Swimming activities must not be conducted where a river is in flood, or in known estuarine crocodile habitats.

If activities are in ocean or estuarine environments, checks must be made directly prior to the activity regarding shark sightings or alerts in the area of use. In the event of a shark sighting the activity may need to be postponed or modified. If a shark alert is current for the area then the Department teacher-in-charge must check current shark sightings using the:

- [SharkSmart](#) website;
- [Surf Life Saving WA \(SLSWA\)](#) website; or
- SLSWA [Twitter feed](#).

Up-to-date information regarding current shark sightings can be accessed from the following apps:

- [Beachsafe](#)
- [SharkSmart WA](#)

The activity must be cancelled immediately if a shark warning alert is sounded.

**Guidance**

*The qualified supervisor must have first-hand knowledge of the venue or location. Other sources of information can be found in Appendix A: General Requirements for all Outdoor Education Activities. For more information regarding weather:*

- *Bureau of Meteorology;*
- *Weatherzone;*
- *Seabreeze; and*
- *Swellnet.*

**Calm water environments and swimming pools**

A minimum depth of 900mm is recommended where tumble turns are expected to be performed and turn indicators (e.g. flagged ropes must be used when backstroke is being performed).

Flagged ropes shall be suspended across the pool, 1.8 metres above the water surface, from fixed standards placed 5.0 metres from any end where swimmers will turn or finish. Supporting poles should not obstruct the concourse.

False start ropes, when used, are suspended across the pool not less than 1.2 metres above the water level from fixed standards placed 15.0 metres in front of the starting end.

Where lane ropes are used, they should not have sharp edges or fittings that could entrap fingers.

**Guidance**

*The Federation Internationale De Natation (FINA) Facilities Rules provides information to create the best possible environment for competitive use and training.*

**Open water environments (e.g. ocean environment)**

The swimming area should be divided into appropriate group teaching stations, each with recognisable boundaries such as a bank, shorelines, flags, piers or floating ropes.

Temperature, water turbidity and the presence of submerged objects should be checked before commencing the activity.

The length of shoreline defined for use in these venues should not exceed 100 metres.

Beach programs should be conducted at patrolled beaches wherever possible.

Swimming programs are not to be conducted if the water temperature is low and/or there is a risk of hypothermia.

**Guidance**

*Supervisors should recognise that each water-based environment is unique and that some water environments are more hazardous than others. The effects of current, wind, waves, tide and land formations are less predictable, more difficult to control, and should be continuously monitored.*

*Potential dangers in aquatic environments may include shallow water blackout; immersion in deep water; impact injuries from dumping waves; or from diving into shallow water; cuts and abrasions from rocks or snags; sunburn, hypothermia; marine stings; objects in water acting as strainers; and the presence of marine craft.*

*It is recommended for calm and open water locations, board or ski riders should be engaged to provide additional water safety.*

### 3. CAPACITY OF STUDENTS

Prior to commencing the activity, the Department teacher-in-charge must determine whether each student has the capacity and required swimming and water safety skills to participate safely in the proposed activity.

Specific strategies and support must be put in place for those students who cannot swim and for students from cultural backgrounds where there may have been limited exposure to water-based activities.

Alternative, modified or adjusted activities should be provided for students who have limited capacity to participate.

Students with an impairment may participate in aquatic activities provided adequate safety and control measures are implemented. Specific consideration is given to:

- the type and level of impairment;
- location and access;
- on-water supervision levels;
- suitable flotation devices, if required;
- teaching and learning adjustments so that the student can access the curriculum activity on the same basis as their peers; and
- on-shore assistance and supervision.

Students should demonstrate the following skills and understandings prior to, and/or whilst participating in, open water activities or programs:

- Recognition of rips and currents, wave types and breaks
- Identification and treatment of marine stingers
- Self-rescue in surf conditions
- Familiarity with buddy practices
- Surf etiquette and rules
- Recognition of signals

Students who have a medical condition that may impact on their safety must be cleared by a medical practitioner before they can participate.

The Department teacher-in-charge must be aware of health care maintenance and/or any intensive health care needs of students, particularly allergic reactions to stings or bites in a marine environment. Protective equipment such as gloves and appropriate exposure suits should be considered for students who are susceptible.

A re-assessment of students' capacity is undertaken if any circumstances surrounding the activity change. This includes any change in the condition of the aquatic environment, their medical fitness, or their capacity to undertake the activity.

**Guidance****Swimming**

*The Department's Swimming and Water Safety Continuum and the Safety Survival Sequence (refer to Swimming and Water Safety Activities document) within the Swimming Instructors Handbook and Guidelines and Royal Life Saving Swim and Survive Instructor Assessment Guide are useful resources for gauging students' swimming and water safety skills. They are only indicative of student skills at the time of assessment and their use does not guarantee students' safety, nor reduce a teacher's duty of care responsibilities.*

*The Department teacher-in-charge determines if students will require additional skills before they commence an activity.*

**Guidance for teaching safe water entry and diving for beginners:**

*The teaching of safe water entries and diving should must be taught progressively in the following sequence:*

- *In water push and glide from standing position*
- *Pool side, seated*
- *Pool side, standing crouched*
- *Poolside, standing*
- *Starting block*

*Reference: Royal Life Saving Society, Australia (WA Branch)*

*The Department teacher-in-charge should determine the additional skills required by students to participate safely in activities before taking part in aquatic activities in **swimming pools, calm and/or open water locations**. These skills may include:*

- *diving or jumping from various heights;*
- *swimming under water;*
- *swimming in turbulent water;*
- *catching waves; and*
- *entering and exiting the water.*

*Prior to taking students in open water environments students should be able to swim continuously for 200m and, immediately following, tread water for one minute.*

**4. STUDENT HEALTH CARE**

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements* in the *Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* for further requirements.

**5. ACTIVITIES**

The full swimming program is assessed before determining the activities and areas that will be used.

Buddy practices and lost buddy procedures are used wherever practical.

*Diving*

For crouching and standing dives, it is preferable to have a depth of 2.0 metres.

Diving must not be taught in shallow water (e.g. generally water that is less than 1.5 metres deep). It is recognised that some pools may not provide appropriate water depths. If the preferred minimum water depth is not available, a risk assessment must be conducted, recorded and all supervisors informed of its findings and recommendations.

A risk assessment process must be in place before allowing swimmers to dive into the pool from a flat (pool edge) or elevated (blocks/starting platforms) position.

Flat racing dives should be taught from the side of a swimming pool in deep water before allowing a dive entry into more shallow water, or from a starting block.

### *Diving*

Where diving is to be performed, consideration must be given to each student's diving competence and the depth of the water.

Diving classes should be segregated from swimming areas.

### **Guidance**

*Supervisors should be aware that activities involving the use of diving towers and springboards' or interactive or floating play equipment present a greater risk. These items should be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.*

*If diving activities are planned, the NSW Department of Education and Training and Royal Life Saving Society Australia's Aquatic Guidelines Safe Water Entry for Competitions and Competitive Dive Starts provides information about diving for students in lower primary to upper secondary schools, as well as a risk management matrix that helps supervisors determine the relevant depth of water required for various diving activities.*

*Refer to Federation Internationale de Natation (FINA) for Pool Depth Guidelines.*

### *Beach activities*

A pre-start safety check should always include revision of how to swim across a rip, and not against it.

When participating in activities involving free swims and body boards, supervisors must conduct greater risk assessments that include the capacity of the students and the desired aquatic environment. Refer to *Surf Riding Activities* for maximum board numbers.

## 6. EQUIPMENT

All equipment is checked to confirm that it is appropriate to the activity, safe and in working order (i.e. including swimming and rescue equipment, swimming pool lane ropes etc.).

Emergency rescue equipment will vary according to the aquatic activity. The following equipment should be considered and the most appropriate for the venue and situation made available during the activity such as:

- reaching aids;
- throw rope;
- personal flotation device;
- spinal board;
- a whistle;
- surfboard;
- rescue tubes and boards;
- access to board riders;
- a life-saving ring;
- wave skis;
- body boards; and/or
- swim fins.

The rescue equipment must be readily accessible at each teaching station and/or at other places where students are swimming or diving.

Appropriate first aid equipment must be readily accessible. The first aid kit must contain items appropriate for the specific water-based activity (i.e. include a thermal blanket), the location, size and needs of the group, and the duration of the activity.

In case of emergency, appropriate communication equipment must be readily available. If range is limited, it is important to know the closest location of a landline phone and or locations that have mobile reception. Consideration should be given to carrying an EPIRB and/or the viability of participating in water-based activities in locations where access to emergency services and communication is limited.

Students should be protected from excessive exposure to the sun to minimise the risk of sunburn (e.g. using hats, protective clothing, sunblock and sun glasses).

The use of goggles and/or swimming caps (especially for students with long hair) is recommended.

Enclosed sandals or other appropriate footwear should be worn when swimming in water where visibility is limited and the bottom surface is unknown.

#### **Guidance**

*A broad-spectrum, water-based sunscreen should be applied as per the manufacturer's instructions.*

*Students who own sunglasses should be encouraged to bring and wear them.*

*Drinking water should be available at all times.*

## **7. THE SUPERVISORY TEAM**

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* for further requirements.

## **8. EXTERNAL PROVIDERS**

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* for further requirements.

## **9. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCIES**

The Department teacher-in-charge must confirm that supervisory team members possess the skills required for aquatic activities, and have the appropriate experience, knowledge and skills to identify and manage potential risks in the appropriate water environment.

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* for mandated:

- first aid qualifications; and
- evidence requirements for qualifications and competencies.

*Rescue and CPR requirements*

At least one member of the supervisory team must be experienced in instruction of the desired aquatic program, and providing emergency rescue and cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

*Recommended minimum qualifications and/or formal training requirements*

Recognised qualifications are specific to different aquatic environments. At least one member of the supervisory team must hold a current, activity-specific qualification and/or have attained current, activity-specific competencies through a recognised tertiary institution or Registered Training Organisation (RTO) recognised by the Department; including:

<p><b>Swimming Pools and Calm water</b></p>	<p>Must have at least <u>ONE</u> of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AUSTSWIM <i>Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety</i> certificate (for swimming pools only); or</li> <li>• ASCTA Swim Australia Teacher (SAT) qualification (for swimming pools only); or</li> <li>• <i>Bronze (or higher)</i> award relevant to the specific activity under the <i>National Coaching Accreditation Scheme</i>; or</li> <li>• Royal Life Saving Society Australia (RLSSA) <i>Swimming Instructor</i> certificate (for swimming pools only); or</li> <li>• RLSSA <i>School Teacher Aquatic Rescue Training</i> START certificate (for closed and open water locations); or</li> <li>• RLSSA <i>Aquatic Rescue</i> qualification; or</li> <li>• Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) <i>Surf Rescue</i> certificate; or</li> <li>• Surf Life Saving Western Australia (SLSWA) <i>Community Surf Rescue</i> certificate; or</li> <li>• RLSSA <i>Bronze Medallion</i> qualification or equivalent; or</li> <li>• RLSSA <i>Pool Lifeguard</i> certificate (swimming pools only); or</li> <li>• Australian <i>White Water Rescue Training</i> certificate (for non-surf environments, such as a lake exposed to wind or waves); or</li> <li>• an equivalent award, as recognised by the Director General.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Open water</b></p>	<p>Must have at least <u>ONE</u> of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SLSA or RLSSA <i>Bronze Medallion</i>; or</li> <li>• SLSA <i>Surf Rescue</i> certificate; or</li> <li>• SLSWA <i>Community Surf Rescue</i> certificate; or</li> <li>• RLSSA <i>School Teacher Aquatic Rescue Training</i> (START) certificate; or</li> <li>• <i>White Water Rescue Training</i> certificate (for non-surf environments, such as a lake exposed to wind or waves); or</li> <li>• <i>Bronze (or higher)</i> award relevant to the specific activity under the <i>National Coaching Accreditation Scheme</i>; or</li> <li>• an equivalent award, as recognised by the Director General.</li> </ul>

**Guidance**

*The RLSSA Bronze Medallion is not suitable for a surf beach environment where there are waves and currents. The supervisor may need additional training to be able to demonstrate the capacity to supervise or perform a rescue at a surf beach location.*

*For current information about recreation industry training, refer to the Commonwealth Department of Education and Training.*

*Skills and experience*

The Department teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team:

- has experience in the activity at the level being offered to students;
- has the relevant qualifications;
- has current CPR qualifications; and
- understands the emergency responses and supervision responsibilities.

All supervisors should, as a minimum, be able to swim twice the length of the area they are supervising and be able to effect a rescue. They should also have experience in, or be able to demonstrate capacity to supervise at the specified (or similar) locations.

Supervising staff should have the required training and qualifications and the required physical attributes to undertake any necessary rescue.

**Guidance****Records of qualifications**

*A record of staff swimming and water safety qualifications should be maintained by the school. The date of issue of the qualification and formal notification of any subsequent renewal or upgrade should be included.*

**10. MINIMUM LEVELS OF SUPERVISION**

The Department teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team members possess skills in the relevant water-based activities and have the appropriate experience, knowledge and skills to identify and manage potential risks at any stage during water-based activities.

Supervisory requirements must take into consideration the:

- age, experience and capacity of each student;
- students' medical conditions or disabilities;
- supervisors' competence and experience;
- competence of supervisors at the venue;
- type of activity to be undertaken;
- nature of the environment (e.g. a swimming pool, calm or open water location);
- location of the activity;
- *Surf Life Saving WA [Twitter feed](#)* of surf locations and shark sightings; and
- weather conditions, which need to be assessed and monitored in the days leading up to the activity, on the day of the activity, and throughout the activity. The supervisory team may need to modify, relocate or cancel the activity at any time.

The level of risk in aquatic activities is dynamic and must be constantly monitored.

Greater supervision must be provided for beginners, primary aged or less able students if they are participating in aquatic activities. Specialist supervision may be required because of the nature of the water-based activity, or inherent risks at a particular venue (e.g. a wave pool, water slide or surf beach).

Although different levels of supervision are required for swimming pools, calm water, open water and white water environments, it is recommended at least two experienced supervisors are on duty at all times.

A second supervisor is not required for all aquatic environments, provided that there are clear systems in place so that supervisors can quickly summon assistance if required.

Students must be within the qualified supervisors line of sight at all times. If the activity goes outside of line of sight a second supervisor is required to maintain adequate supervision.

Prior to commencing any water-based activity, the Department teacher-in-charge must confirm that each student has the capacity and required swimming and water safety skills to participate safely.

## **SWIMMING AND WATER SAFETY PROGRAMS**

### **SWIMMING POOLS**

#### **Kindergarten - Year 3**

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof; and
- one supervisor for every eight students or part thereof (including the qualified supervisor).

#### **Year 4 - 6**

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 32 students or part thereof; and
- one supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof (including the qualified supervisor).

#### **Year 7 - 12**

It is recommended that there are two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 32 students or part thereof.

### **CALM WATER**

#### **Kindergarten - Year 3**

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof; and
- one supervisor for every six students or part thereof (including the qualified supervisor).

#### **Year 4 - 6**

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof; and
- one supervisor for every 12 students or part thereof (including the qualified supervisor).

#### **Year 7 - 12**

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 32 students or part thereof; and
- one supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof (including the qualified supervisor)

### **OPEN WATER**

#### **Kindergarten - Year 3**

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof; and
- one supervisor for every four students or part thereof (including the qualified supervisor).

Year 4 - 6

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof; and
- one supervisor for every eight students or part thereof (including the qualified supervisor).

Year 7 - 12

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof.

The table below illustrates the supervision requirements for common group sizes. Groups may be larger than those indicated here but must remain within the prescribed supervision ratios and any limits set within this document.

### SWIMMING AND WATER SAFETY PROGRAMS

Activity	Year level	Environment	Number of students	Qualified supervisor	Experienced assistant supervisor	Total supervisory team
Swimming and water safety programs	K - 3	Swimming Pool	1 - 8	1	1	2
			9 - 16	1	1	2
			17 - 24	1	2	3
			25 - 32	2	2	4
		Calm Water	1 - 6	1	1	2
			7 - 12	1	1	2
			13 - 18	1	2	3
			19 - 24	1	3	4
		Open Water	25 - 30	2	3	5
			1 - 4	1	1	2
			5 - 8	1	1	2
			9 - 12	1	2	3
	4 - 6	Swimming Pool	13 - 16	1	3	4
			17 - 20	2	3	5
			1 - 16	1	1	2
		Calm Water	17 - 32	1	1	2
			33 - 48	2	1	3
			1 - 12	1	1	2
			13 - 24	1	1	2
			25 - 36	2	1	3
		Open Water	1 - 8	1	1	2
			9 - 16	1	1	2
			17 - 24	2	1	3
			25 - 32	2	2	4
	7 - 12	Swimming Pool	1 - 32	1	0	1
			33 - 64	2	0	2
		Calm Water	1 - 32	1	1	2
			33 - 48	2	1	3
Open Water		1 - 16	1	1	2	
		17 - 32	2	0	2	

## **SWIMMING CARNIVALS**

### **SWIMMING POOLS**

#### **Kindergarten - Year 3**

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof; and
- one supervisor for every eight students or part thereof (including the qualified supervisor).

#### **Year 4 - 6**

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 32 students or part thereof; and
- one supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof (including the qualified supervisor).

#### **Year 7 - 12**

There must be two Supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 32 students or part thereof.

### **CALM WATER**

#### **Kindergarten - Year 3**

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof; and
- one supervisor for every six students or part thereof (including the qualified supervisor).

#### **Year 4 - 6**

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof; and
- one supervisor for every 12 students or part thereof (including the qualified supervisor).

#### **Year 7 - 12**

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 32 students or part thereof.

### **OPEN WATER**

#### **Kindergarten - Year 3**

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof; and
- one supervisor for every four students or part thereof (including the qualified supervisor).

#### **Year 4 - 6**

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof; and
- one supervisor for every eight students or part thereof (including the qualified supervisor).

#### **Year 7 - 12**

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof.

The table below illustrates the supervision requirements for common group sizes. Groups may be larger than those indicated here but must remain within the prescribed supervision ratios and any limits set within this document.

### SWIMMING CARNIVALS

Activity	Year level	Environment	Number of students	Qualified supervisor	Experienced assistant supervisor	Total supervisory team	
Swimming carnivals	K - 3	Swimming pool	1 - 8	1	1	2	
			9 - 16	1	1	2	
			17 - 24	1	2	3	
			25 - 32	2	2	4	
		Calm water	1 - 6	1	1	2	
			7 - 12	1	1	2	
			13 - 18	1	2	3	
			19 - 24	1	3	4	
		Open water	25 - 30	2	3	5	
			1 - 8	1	1	2	
			9 - 12	1	2	3	
			13 - 16	1	3	4	
	4 - 6	Swimming pool	17 - 20	2	3	5	
			1 - 16	1	1	2	
			17 - 32	1	1	2	
		Calm water	33 - 48	2	1	3	
			1 - 12	1	1	2	
			13 - 24	1	1	2	
		Open water	25 - 36	2	1	3	
			1 - 8	1	1	2	
			9 - 16	1	1	2	
			17 - 24	2	1	3	
		7 - 12	Swimming pool	25 - 32	2	2	4
				1 - 32	1	1	2
	Calm water		33 - 64	2	0	2	
			1 - 32	1	1	2	
	Open water		33 - 64	2	0	2	
			1 - 16	1	1	2	
			17 - 32	2	0	2	

## **WATER-BASED ACTIVITIES (including Free Swims)**

### **SWIMMING POOLS**

#### Kindergarten - Year 3

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof; and
- one supervisor for every six students or part thereof (including the qualified supervisor).

#### Year 4 - 6

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 32 students or part thereof; and
- one supervisor for every 8 students or part thereof (including the qualified supervisor).

#### Year 7 - 12

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 32 students or part thereof; and
- one supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof (including the qualified supervisor).

### **CALM WATER**

#### Kindergarten - Year 3

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof; and
- one supervisor for every six students or part thereof (including the qualified supervisor).

#### Year 4 - 6

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof; and
- one supervisor for every eight students or part thereof (including the qualified supervisor).

#### Year 7 - 12

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof; and
- one supervisor for every 12 students or part thereof (including the qualified supervisor).

### **OPEN WATER**

#### Kindergarten - Year 3

This activity is not recommended for students in Years K - 3.

#### Year 4 - 6

This activity is only to be conducted in a fixed location with clearly defined boundaries over no greater distance than 50metres.

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof; and
- one supervisor for every six students or part thereof (including the qualified supervisor).

Year 7 - 12

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof; and
- one supervisor for every eight students or part thereof (including the qualified supervisor).

The table below illustrates the supervision requirements for common group sizes. Groups may be larger than those indicated here but must remain within the prescribed supervision ratios and any limits set within this document.

### WATER-BASED ACTIVITIES (including Free Swims)

Activity	Year Level	Environment	Number of students	Qualified supervisor	Experienced assistant supervisor	Total supervisory team	
Water-based activities (including free swims)	K - 3	Swimming pool	1 - 6	1	1	2	
			7 - 12	1	1	2	
			13 - 18	1	2	3	
			19 - 24	1	3	4	
			25 - 30	2	3	5	
		Calm water	1 - 12	1	1	2	
			13 - 16	1	2	3	
			17 - 18	2	1	3	
			19 - 24	2	2	4	
		25 - 30	2	3	5		
		Open water	This activity not recommended for Years K - 3				
		4 - 6	Swimming pool	1 - 8	1	1	2
	9 - 16			1	1	2	
	17 - 24			1	2	3	
	25 - 32			1	3	4	
	33 - 40			2	3	5	
	Calm water		1 - 8	1	1	2	
			9 - 16	1	1	2	
			17 - 24	1	2	3	
			25 - 32	2	2	4	
	Open water		1 - 12	1	1	2	
			13 - 16	1	2	3	
			17 - 18	2	1	3	
			19 - 24	2	2	4	
			25 - 30	2	3	5	
	7 - 12		Swimming pool	1 - 32	1	1	2
		33 - 48		2	1	3	
		Calm water	1 - 24	1	1	2	
25 - 36			2	1	3		
Open water		1 - 16	1	1	2		
		17 - 24	2	1	3		

### **Guidance Swimming**

*The Department's Swimming and Water Safety Continuum and the Safety Survival Sequence (refer to Swimming and Water Safety Activities document) within the Swimming Instructors Handbook and Guidelines and Royal Life Saving Swim and Survive Instructor Assessment Guide are useful resources for gauging students' swimming and water safety skills. They are only indicative of student skills at the time of assessment and their use does not guarantee students' safety, nor reduce a teacher's duty of care responsibilities.*

*Life guards on duty at pools and beaches may be considered a qualified adult supervisor and part of the supervisory team only if they do not have general lifeguard duties at the venue at that time, and if their sole responsibility during the activity is for the students undertaking the activity.*

*At some pool venues, schools may be able to pay for life guard support (e.g. the venue might designate a lifeguard to a particular event such as a swimming carnival if numbers warrant this action). Alternatively, and depending on participant numbers, the venue might consider opening only for that event. These various arrangements would need to be negotiated on an individual basis with the venue manager (see Guidelines for Safe Pool Operations).*

## **11. SUPERVISION STRATEGIES**

Supervision strategies must be confirmed by the Department teacher-in-charge to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students is maintained at all times. They must:

- confirm that the safety and well-being of students is maintained at all times;
- reflect risks associated with proximity to water;
- address circumstances when students are not in clear view of the supervisors; and
- include students who are not actively participating in the activity.

When arranging supervision requirements, the age, capacity and experience of each student; characteristics of the venue; and qualifications and experience of the supervisory team, external provider and/or staff at the venue are taken into account.

If other schools or groups are using the same venue, potential risks must be identified, and supervisory strategies put in place to deal with the nature and number of those groups, and any risks that might arise from that situation.

The appropriate number of supervisors directly monitoring the students in water must be maintained at all times.

Supervisors must be appropriately attired and equipped to effect a rescue during the activity. Students are not to enter the water until instructed to do so.

Avoid lengthy, tiring training sessions. Continuously monitor students for signs of fatigue and exhaustion and hypothermia.

Confirm that if flotation aids are used, they are checked for correct fit.

Restrict underwater swimming to short-duration activities under close supervision. Be aware and supervise for symptoms of underwater blackout.

Recreational equipment such as inflatable devices and slides must be used in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.

## Diving

Where diving occurs, confirm that:

- only one person is on the diving board at any one time;
- no one moves across the diver's line of vision during backwards facing dives; and
- cross-swimming under the diving board is prohibited.

Students in the water must be actively supervised (i.e. all students in the water should be in the line of sight of at least one supervisor at all times).

Additional supervision strategies must be put in place for:

- students who are in the water;
- circumstances where all students are not in the water (due to inherent risks associated with the proximity of water);
- students who cannot swim, as well as students from cultural backgrounds who may have had limited exposure to water-based activities; and
- diving activities (which must be supervised at all times).

A buddy system is put in place (if relevant) and lost buddy procedures are planned.

Consideration is given to positioning, scanning and safety check systems.

### **Guidance**

#### **Swimming carnivals**

*Consideration should be given to the movement of students from one area to another (e.g. from house/faction bays to the marshalling area).*

*It is recommended that a roster is developed to relieve and rotate supervisors. From time to time, a supervisor may need to leave his or her position. In such a situation, the supervisor should alert other supervisors on duty of his/her impending absence in order to confirm that the appropriate number of supervisors directly monitoring students in the water is maintained at all times.*

#### **Positioning**

*After taking into account climatic conditions such as wind and sun the supervisor should adopt a position that:*

- *is in a position to maintain supervision of the surface and the bottom (if visible) of the aquatic environment;*
- *is in a position to have timely access to appropriate rescue, safety and first aid equipment; and*
- *is in close proximity to effectively scan all aquatic users within the area or their zone (if more than one supervisor) and effectively reach an aquatic user in distress within a short time period.*

#### **Scanning**

*All supervisors should:*

- *be positioned in a location that has clear, unobstructed sight lines;*
- *take steps to compensate for any difficulties with sight lines (e.g. distance from students, effect of reflection/glare or their ability to see below the surface of the water) by changing position or using sunglasses; and*
- *be alert to signs of potential trouble and/or behaviours of those in need of help.*

**Safety check systems**

One or more of the following safety check systems can be used:

- Buddy and check-in systems.
- At a pre-arranged signal, buddies hold hands or move closer together and remain in place.
- Supervisors confirm that each pair of buddies is safe and that each individual is looking out for his or her partner.

**Water checks**

The following water check systems can be used:

- The supervisor signals for all swimmers (or a particular group) to leave the water.
- Head counts and supervisor rotations occur at the same time.
- Water checks can be incorporated into a structured educational activity or a planned break.

Best practice supervisory strategies include at least one of the supervisory team who remains out of the water and is both prepared and capable of effecting a rescue if required.

**12. IDENTIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS**

Students and supervisors must be easily identifiable. A system of identification must be determined by the Department teacher-in-charge after assessing the aquatic environment, students' swimming and water safety skills, the type of activities to be undertaken, and the number of students.

**Guidance**

Systems for identifying students may include:

- the wearing of lifesaver or swimming caps, neoprene armbands, rash shirts, school t shirts, vests, bibs, sashes; and
- confining students to designated areas not being utilised by other schools or members of the public.

Each identification system may be used in combination with others.

**13. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* for further requirements.

**14. RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* for further requirements.

**15. EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN**

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* for further requirements.

## 16. BRIEFING STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS

The Department teacher-in-charge must confirm that all participants are briefed about:

- the educational purpose and the cooperative nature of the activity;
- the activity itinerary;
- required skills appropriate to the activity;
- participants' roles and responsibilities, including standards of acceptable behaviour and activity rules;
- the role and location of supervisors;
- the system for identifying students and supervisors;
- food and water requirements;
- procedures that will be followed if members of the party are overdue, or become lost or separated from the group;
- potential hazards and safety procedures appropriate to the activity and venue;
- buddy practices and lost buddy procedures;
- conditions associated with hypothermia, sunburn and dehydration;
- dangers of hyperventilation;
- areas demarcated and identified specifically for student groups;
- communication strategies that will be used throughout the activity, including a signal to gain the attention of the whole group; and a signal to be used if assistance is required;
- emergency and evacuation procedures, signals and location of emergency equipment;
- appropriate clothing for the activity and weather conditions, including thermal and sun protection;
- minimal impact principles for that location (see *Leave No Trace* principles);
- aspects of the environment and expected weather conditions (if appropriate);
- how to identify currents, tides, reefs (if applicable) and other potential hazards of the venue, including safe entry and exit points; and
- the route to be followed including pre-determined stops and/or meeting points along the way (if applicable).

Special briefing sessions must be arranged for students who were absent from preparatory briefings.

### *Recreational or free swims*

Before participating in a recreational or free swims, students are briefed about safety rules (e.g. defined boundaries, communication signals, no acrobatics, no jumping into water etc.).

### **Guidance**

*Supervisors should be aware:*

- *that the use of diving towers and springboards, interactive or floating play equipment, "lazy rivers" and water slides (flumes) present greater risk and need to be used as per manufacturer's and facility instructions; and*
- *of the phenomenon of "shallow-water blackout" during water-based activities, particularly during 'free swims' (these can occur when there is excessive hyperventilation followed by holding of breath when diving or descending into water, making it possible to lose consciousness). Refer to RLSS Fact Sheet #23 and Policy Statement M013 for additional information.*

## 17. INFORMED CONSENT

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* for further requirements.

## APPENDIX 1: SWIMMING AND WATER SAFETY CONTINUUM

The *Swimming Instructors Handbook and Guidelines* contains a coloured version of this page.

<p style="text-align: right;"><b>S1</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Enter water safely</b> Shallow, safe exit</li> <li>2. <b>Exhale in water</b> Face in</li> <li>3. <b>Open eyes under water</b> Identify an object</li> <li>4. <b>Submerge</b> Waist deep</li> <li>5. <b>Glide forward and recover</b> Waist deep (minimum)</li> <li>6. <b>Float or glide backward and recover</b> Waist deep flotation aid acceptable</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>S2</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. <b>Glide forward and kick 3m</b> Horizontal body position, face in</li> <li>8. <b>Glide backward, kick and recover</b> No set distance</li> <li>9. <b>Swim 5m freestyle</b> Face submerged</li> <li>10. <b>Scull/tread water</b> Basic hand and leg action, chest deep</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>S3</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. <b>Swim 10m freestyle</b> Breathing</li> <li>12. <b>Glide backward and kick 5m</b> Arms by side</li> <li>13. <b>Demonstrate breaststroke leg action</b> On back with board</li> <li>14. <b>Demonstrate survival sculling</b> On back</li> <li>15. <b>Demonstrate a forward roll</b> Extension</li> </ol>
<p style="text-align: right;"><b>S4</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>16. <b>Swim 15m freestyle</b> Regular breathing</li> <li>17. <b>Swim 10m backstroke</b> Catch up acceptable</li> <li>18. <b>Swim 10m survival backstroke OR</b> Below water arm recovery</li> <li>19. <b>Swim 5m breaststroke kick</b> On front with board</li> <li>20. <b>Scull head first on back</b> Without leg action</li> <li>21. <b>Recover an object</b> Chest deep</li> <li>22. <b>Swim in deep water</b> (Only ____ m depth available)</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>S5</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>23. <b>Swim 25m freestyle</b> Proficient technique</li> <li>24. <b>Swim 15m backstroke</b> Alternating arm action</li> <li>25. <b>Swim 15m survival backstroke OR</b> Symmetrical leg action</li> <li>26. <b>Swim 15m breaststroke</b> Symmetrical leg action</li> <li>27. <b>Demonstrate a surface dive</b> Chest deep. Recover an object</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>S6</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>28. <b>Swim continuously 50m freestyle OR</b> * 25m freestyle and * 25m backstroke, or side-stroke, or backstroke, or breaststroke Proficient technique</li> <li>29. <b>Swim 25m backstroke</b> Proficient technique</li> <li>30. <b>Swim 25m survival backstroke</b> Proficient technique</li> <li>31. <b>Swim 25m breaststroke</b> Proficient technique</li> <li>32. <b>Demonstrate a dive entry</b> Deep water required</li> </ol>
<p style="text-align: right;"><b>S7</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>33. <b>Scull feet first on back</b> Sculling hand action</li> <li>34. <b>Demonstrate eggbeater kick</b> Water polo kick</li> <li>35. <b>Swim 150 metres</b> Proficient technique <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 25m backstroke</li> <li>○ 50m breaststroke</li> <li>○ 50m freestyle</li> <li>○ 25m survival backstroke</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>S8</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>36. <b>Swim 25m sidestroke</b> Scissor kick required</li> <li>37. <b>Demonstrate dolphin kick</b> Extension</li> <li>38. <b>Swim 200 metres</b> Proficient technique <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 50m backstroke</li> <li>○ 50m breaststroke</li> <li>○ 50m freestyle</li> <li>○ 25m survival backstroke</li> <li>○ 25m sidestroke</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>S9: Non-contact rescues</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>39. <b>Swim 10m butterfly</b> Extension</li> <li>40. <b>Demonstrate a tumble turn</b> Extension</li> <li>41. <b>Swim 300 metres</b> Proficient technique <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 50m freestyle (or 25m butterfly and 25m freestyle)</li> <li>○ 50m backstroke</li> <li>○ 50m breaststroke</li> <li>○ 50m freestyle</li> <li>○ 50m sidestroke</li> <li>○ 50m survival backstroke</li> </ul> </li> <li>42. <b>Basic principles of resuscitation (as an extension)</b></li> </ol>

**\*Please Note: ADULT SUPERVISION IS ALWAYS NECESSARY**

It cannot be assumed that all skills will be repeated under different conditions. The information within this continuum is only indicative of students' skills at the time of assessment. It does not guarantee students' safety; nor does it reduce teachers' duty of care.

## APPENDIX 2: SAFETY SURVIVAL SEQUENCES

The following safety and survival skills are taught at the appropriate stage to further develop students' understandings of water safety and personal survival.

Please note that skills that have been previously taught are not necessarily re-listed.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>S1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confident entry into and exit from the water.</li> <li>• Float for 10-15 seconds with a flotation aid.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>S2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Glide forward and recover to a standing position.</li> <li>• Float for 30 seconds with a flotation aid.</li> <li>• Be pulled to safety.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>S3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Glide and swim 10m, recover to upright position.</li> <li>• Support body in an upright position and signal distress.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>S4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swim and survival scull for 60 seconds.</li> <li>• Grasp an object and be pulled to safety.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>S5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Step in entry.</li> <li>• Scull for 60 seconds using combination of survival sculling and horizontal sculling keeping the face above water.</li> <li>• Grasp a flotation aid thrown for support and swim for 60 seconds.</li> <li>• Be pulled to safety by a partner.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>S6</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dive entry into deep water.</li> <li>• Rotation of the tucked body, keeping the face above the water.</li> <li>• Swim slowly for three minutes, using two recognised survival strokes.</li> <li>• Grasp an aid thrown for support and kick to safety.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>S7</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enter water using a compact jump.</li> <li>• Swim slowly for four minutes using two recognised survival strokes.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>S8</b></p> <p>Dressed in swimwear, shorts and t-shirt, demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two minutes survival sculling, floating or treading water, then;</li> <li>• Three minutes swimming slowly, using three recognised survival strokes, keeping the arms below the surface, changing each minute.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>S9</b></p> <p>Non-contact rescues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistance in shallow water.</li> <li>• Defensive position and reverse.</li> <li>• Delivery of flotation aid in deeper water.</li> </ul>

Please Note: It cannot be assumed that all skills will be repeated under different conditions.

**ADULT SUPERVISION IS ALWAYS NECESSARY**