

# PROCEDURES

## SCHOOL SWIMMING, WATER SAFETY PROGRAMS AND AQUATIC ACTIVITIES

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This document should be read in conjunction with [School Swimming, Water Safety Programs and Aquatic Activities Policy](#).

### 1. INTRODUCTION

These procedures have been produced to promote safe aquatic participation while minimising risks associated with school swimming and water safety programs. This is supported by providing schools with teacher qualifications, student ratios, and 'duty of care' requirements for school swimming programs including; swimming carnivals, diving, recreational aquatic activities and student resuscitation education.

### 2. DEFINITIONS

**School swimming and water safety program** refers to formal learn to swim and aquatic survival education within structured school swimming and water safety programs based on skill development and assessment of student ability.

**School swimming carnival** refers to amateur swimming competitions consisting of structured swimming events.

**Recreational aquatic activities/unstructured activities** refers to participation in informal aquatic activities other than the school swimming and water safety program. Such as celebration or reward days either for individual classes or the whole school, free swim time as part of an excursion, free swim time incorporated in a school swimming carnival, free swim time or pool play at a school camp or free swimming in a weekly swimming program.

**Ratio** refers to the required number of qualified teachers/supervisors in relation to the swimming ability and number of students participating in the designated activity/program.

**Teacher in Charge** refers to a Department of Education teacher who has overall responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of the group of students in their care, at a swimming and water safety program/activity. This teacher is in charge of organising the activity/program and has ultimate responsibility and therefore authority while the activity/program is in progress.

**Active Adult Supervisor** is an adult who is continually monitoring students in and out of the water.

**Purpose built pool** refers to pools in preschool settings that are used for water familiarisation and play.

**Swimming teacher** is the suitably qualified teacher in accordance with the [Qualifications and Ratios Table \(Attachment A\)](#). Preschools must ensure that they maintain the minimum ratio and qualifications requirements required under the [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#) at all times. The swimming teacher is responsible to the teacher in charge of the swimming and water safety activity/program and holds a Working with Children Clearance Notice.

**Swimming ability assessment** is an assessment conducted at the beginning of a school swimming and water safety program. The assessment of each student is required to confirm the level of swimming ability of individual students in accordance with the [Royal Life Saving Society of Australia Swim and Survive and Bronze Star Rescue Awards \(Attachment B\)](#). This assessment enables the swimming instructor to group students according to their swimming ability.

**Water Survival Challenge Proficiency** is an assessment of student's swimming proficiency conducted at the beginning of any school aquatic activity that includes unstructured or 'free time'. Where there are no active records of a student's swimming proficiency, students will be required to complete the [Water Survival Challenge Proficiency \(Template A\)](#).

**Independent Observer** is an adult who has been notified of his/her role and responsibilities by the person in charge of the swimming or water safety activity. This person needs to be suitably positioned, so as to have clear vision of all participants within the defined area.

**Parent** signifies a child's father, mother or any other person who has parental responsibility for the child, including a person who is regarded as a parent of the child under Aboriginal customary law or Aboriginal tradition.

**Parental responsibility** refers to a person who has:

- a) daily care and control of the child, or
- b) is entitled to exercise all the powers and rights, and has all the responsibilities, in relation to the long-term care and development of the child, or
- c) has daily care and control of the child and the entitlement and responsibilities at (b)

and includes a person who has been given the above responsibilities under another state or territory law.

**Risk Assessment** a procedure undertaken by the teacher in charge of the swimming or water safety program/activity to identify any potential hazards that could cause harm to students involved in the program/ activity. The Risk Assessment should include the location of the swimming or water safety program, the date and time when the assessment was undertaken and a completed [Risk Management Plan \(Template B\)](#).

**Emergency Action Plan (Template C)** is a set of documented and well-rehearsed procedures which are initiated by the teacher in charge of the swimming or water safety program/activity on the occurrence of a major incident.

### Types of swimming environments

Type of environment	Description	Examples
<b>Closed pool</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A fence encloses the pool</li> <li>• Qualified lifeguard is on duty</li> <li>• The pool can be hired outside public hours</li> <li>• First aid facilities may be on site</li> </ul>	Council/Shire/Community pools in Darwin, Palmerston, Katherine, Nhulunbuy, Jabiru, Tennant Creek, Pirlangimpi, Ngukurr, Yuendumu and Alice Springs
<b>Shallow Pool</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depth of water is at or below waist level of students</li> </ul>	Preschool Pools
<b>Deep Pool</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depth of water is above waist level of students when standing on both feet</li> </ul>	Most 'closed pools' could be considered 'deep pool' depending on height of students
<b>Supervised Water Recreational Facility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The depth of the water may vary</li> <li>• A qualified lifeguard is on duty</li> <li>• Water clarity may depend on the time of year</li> <li>• First Aid facilities would be present</li> </ul>	Leanyer Recreation Park Palmerston Water Park Darwin Waterfront Lagoon and Wave Lagoon Palmerston Water Park
<b>Natural Waterway including Sheltered Waters*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The depth of water may vary</li> <li>• There is no qualified lifeguard on duty</li> <li>• The body of water may be still or flowing</li> <li>• Water clarity may depend on the time of year</li> <li>• Vegetation may surround part or all of the body of water</li> <li>• There may be submerged rocks and or tree branches</li> <li>• Water level may change rapidly due to heavy rainfall</li> <li>• Crocodile activity may change due to seasonal changes</li> <li>• Not all natural waterways are safe for swimming and this will need to be identified in the risk assessment</li> </ul> <p>* Absence of windy, choppy or moving water</p>	Lake Alexander Darwin Waterfront Recreation Lagoon Edith Falls (Katherine) Ellery Big Hole Glenn Helen Ormiston Gorge Berry Springs Wangi Falls Lake Bennett Mataranka and Bitter Springs
<b>Open Water</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coastal location not enclosed by land, includes ocean, gulf and any large expanse of water</li> </ul>	Mindil Beach, Casuarina Beach, Yirrkala
<b>Not recommended for the teaching of swimming</b>		

### 3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Principals** are responsible for ensuring that:

- the school provides opportunities for all primary and middle years students to participate in swimming and water safety programs which include resuscitation education
- all teaching staff including outside providers, are holders of a Working with Children Clearance Notice
- all teachers of swimming and water safety have current qualifications as outlined in the [Qualifications and Ratios Table \(Attachment A\)](#)
- all school staff are made aware of the policy and familiarise themselves with this document
- the Risk Assessment including a Risk Management Plan and Emergency Action Plan is conducted as outlined in this document and authorised by the principal
- records of student swimming ability are updated, maintained in the Student Administration Management System (SAMS) at the conclusion of each swim program/activity and reported to Royal Life Saving NT Branch.

**Teachers in Charge** are responsible for ensuring that:

- a Risk Assessment is conducted for the aquatic environment and an appropriate [Risk Management Plan and Emergency Action Plan](#) is authorised and implemented
- all participants and staff are aware of, and practice the emergency procedures, identified in the Emergency Action Plan at the start of the swimming and water safety program, activity or event
- when using a natural waterway, the managing body is contacted to confirm the designated area is crocodile free and is safe for swimming (this may include Parks Australia, NT Parks and Wildlife, Stations and Resort Management)
- the [Excursions Policy Consent Form](#) requesting parents identify the swimming ability of individual students is returned for all swimming and water safety programs/activities
- no student is permitted to enter the water without a completed Consent Form that includes parental assessment of the child's swimming ability
- information obtained from Consent Form, SAMS and Royal Life Saving Australia is taken to all swimming and water safety programs, swimming carnivals and recreational activities
- at the beginning of a school swimming and water safety program, a swimming ability assessment of each student is conducted and recorded in accordance with these procedures
- at the beginning of any school unstructured aquatic activities, where there are no records of a student's swimming proficiency, students are required to complete the [Water Survival Challenge Proficiency \(Template A\)](#); and that
  - all students are issued with a coloured band. Proficient students are issued with a green band, non-proficient students are issued with a yellow band and non-swimmers are issued with a red band. Assessment information is located in the supporting documents for this policy
- records of student swimming ability are updated in SAMS at the conclusion of each swim program/activity and report to Royal Life Saving NT Branch
- sun smart procedures and practices are followed by students and staff
- they take overall responsibility for the department's duty to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the students in its care at a swimming or water safety program/activity
- a First Aid Kit is available for use at the aquatic location

- an adult with a current First Aid Certificate is present during all swimming and water safety programs/activities
- the adult/teacher to student ratios set out in the [Qualifications and Ratios Table \(Attachment A\)](#) are adhered to.

## 4. PROCEDURES

### 4.1 Duty of Care

The teacher in charge has overall responsibility for ensuring that the department meets its duty to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the group of students in its care at a swimming and water safety program/activity.

The swimming teacher is responsible to the teacher in charge of the swimming and water safety program/activity.

### 4.2 Qualifications

The swimming and water safety program/activity must be conducted by a suitably qualified teacher in accordance with the [Qualifications and Ratios Table \(Attachment A\)](#).

For swimming and water safety programs/activities conducted in purpose built pools e.g. pools in preschool settings, teachers of swimming and water safety are required to have a current minimum qualification of Royal Life Saving Australia Swim Teacher Rescue Award and a completed [Emergency Action Plan and Risk Management Plan](#) for the purpose built pool.

### 4.3 First Aid

It is the responsibility of the teacher in charge of the swimming and water safety program/activity to ensure that a First Aid Kit is available for use at the aquatic location, and that an adult with a current First Aid Certificate is present during all swimming and water safety programs/activities.

In the case of drowning or severe accident an ambulance must be called. All accidents should be reported to the principal, and the [Injury, Incident or Hazard Report Form](#) must be completed on the same day as the accident.

If a serious injury/incident occurs or a dangerous hazard is identified, NT WorkSafe must be notified immediately by telephone 1800 019 115 and, if required, in writing within forty-eight hours by submitting the [Incident Notification Form](#). If in doubt about reporting requirements, contact NT WorkSafe for advice.

### 4.4 Risk Assessment, Risk Management Plan and Emergency Action Plan

A Risk Assessment must be conducted for the aquatic environment being used, and a [Risk Management Plan and Emergency Action Plan](#) must be designed for that environment by the teacher in charge of the program/activity in consultation with the certified swimming teacher.

All participants and staff should be aware of and practice the Emergency Procedure identified in the Emergency Action Plan at the start of the swimming and water safety program/activity. Safety equipment must be available at all times during programs/activities. An essential item

is a rescue tube, other items could include; flotation device (kickboard), broom handle, length of rope (minimum six metres), and personal flotation device (PFD).

#### **4.5 Natural waterways including sheltered waters and open water**

When using a natural waterway the teacher in charge of the swimming and water safety program/activity must contact the managing body prior to and on the day of the event to confirm the designated area is crocodile free and is safe for swimming (this may include Parks Australia, NT Parks and Wildlife, Stations and Resort Management).

Swimming and water safety programs/activities conducted in a natural waterway must have the area for instruction clearly defined, and a designated independent observer who has clear vision of all participants at all times during the program. From time to time authorised swimming areas may be subject to closure for health and safety reasons. Hence information and warning signs should always be observed.

Open water such as the ocean or a large bay must not be used for the teaching of swimming. [Teacher Qualifications and Ratios](#) vary for different types of swimming environments.

#### **4.6 Jellyfish safety precautions**

As *Chironex fleckeri* (the major box jellyfish) are prevalent in Northern Territory ocean waters during the wet season, particularly between 1 October and 31 May, school swimming and water safety programs/activities are not permitted in the sea during this time.

If swimming programs are implemented in the sea during the dry season, (typically June to September), students should enter the water with caution as *Chironex fleckeri* are known to frequent Northern Territory waters all year (based on the historical data of stings).

It is essential that protective clothing such as a stinger suit be worn by students if undertaking swimming and water safety programs/activities in the sea during the dry season. The minimum requirement must be coverage of the torso, arms and upper legs. Vinegar should be taken to the venue as an added safety precaution. Dousing the jellyfish stung area with vinegar and calling 000 is an immediate first aid measure.

For more information, please visit

<https://nt.gov.au/wellbeing/emergencies-injuries-and-accidents/bites-and-stings/jellyfish>

#### **4.7 Sun protection**

Teachers and students participating in a swimming or water safety program should apply a broad spectrum SPF 30+ water resistant sunscreen at least twenty minutes before going outdoors. Sunscreen should be reapplied every two hours when outdoors and available shade should be used whenever possible to reduce exposure to the sun. Teaching staff and students participating in swimming and water safety programs/activities are strongly encouraged to wear sun protective clothing and lip balm.

Sunscreen should be kept below thirty degrees Celsius and expiry dates should be checked to ensure sunscreen remains effective.

#### **4.8 Consent forms**

It is the responsibility of the teacher in charge of the swimming and water safety program/activity to ensure that a [Excursions Policy Consent Form](#) requesting parents to

identify the swimming ability of individual students be returned for each student involved in swimming and water safety programs, swimming carnivals and recreational aquatic activities. This form will indicate to teachers, the swimming ability of students and must be checked with records of each student's swimming proficiency stored in SAMS or with Royal Life Saving Australia.

Information obtained from consent forms, SAMS and Royal Life Saving Australia must be taken to all swimming and water safety programs, swimming carnivals and recreational activities.

The teacher in charge is not to permit students to participate in swimming or water safety programs/activities without a completed permission form that includes parental assessment of the child's swimming ability.

#### **4.9 School Swimming and Water Safety Programs**

Schools are strongly encouraged to provide opportunities for all early childhood, primary and middle years students to participate in a Swimming and Water Safety Program.

At the beginning of a school swimming and water safety program, a swimming ability assessment of each student is required to confirm the level of swimming ability of individual students in accordance with the [Royal Life Saving Society of Australia Swim and Survive and Bronze Star Rescue Awards \(Attachment B\)](#). This assessment enables the swimming instructor to group students according to their swimming ability.

At the conclusion of a school swimming and water safety program, another swimming ability assessment is required to confirm the level of swimming ability of individual students in accordance with the RLSSA Swim and Survive and Bronze Star Rescue Awards. The outcome of this assessment must be recorded in SAMS and reported to Royal Life Saving NT Branch. [SAMS User Notes for Entering Student Swimming Levels is available at Attachment C.](#)

The department has adopted the RLSSA Swim and Survive and Bronze Star Rescue Awards scheme as the performance criteria for swimming and water safety programs – aligning with the Health and Physical Education requirements.

To teach preschool aquatics aligned to the RLSSA Swim and Survive, Wonder and Courage Levels, teachers must hold a current [AUSTSWIM Teacher of Infant and Preschool Aquatics Licence](#) (updated every three years), and a current Resuscitation Award (updated each year).

To teach RLSSA Swim and Survive, Active Developing Level 1 to Level 7, teachers must hold a current [AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety Licence™](#) (updated every three years), and a current Resuscitation Award (updated each year).

To teach RLSSA Bronze Star, teachers must hold a [current AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety Licence™](#) (updated every three years), and a Resuscitation Trainers Certificate (updated annually at the Trainers Workshop).

#### **4.10 Minimum standard of water safety and swimming competencies**

The Australian Water Safety Council recommends that by the completion of:

- primary school education, each student should be able to satisfactorily perform all competencies equivalent to Level 4 of the RLSSA Swim and Survive program or Surf Safe level 2 of the Surf Life Saving Australia Surf and Survive program.

- Year 10, each student should be able to satisfactorily perform all competencies equivalent to Royal Life Saving Australia Bronze Star including resuscitation and/or Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) Surf Survival including resuscitation.

#### 4.11 School swimming carnivals

The safe and effective conduct of a school swimming carnival relies on good planning and effective communication with school staff, pool management, students and parents. The teacher in charge of the carnival must have experience with organising events in water environments and student safety is the paramount consideration in any planning process.

The teacher in charge of the swimming carnival must undertake all safety and duty of care requirements and complete a [Risk Assessment, Risk Management Plan and Emergency Action Plan \(Templates B and C\)](#).

If the school swimming carnival includes unstructured/'free time', students will be required to complete the [Water Survival Challenge Proficiency \(Template A\)](#) to determine the aquatic proficiency of students. Following completion of the Water Survival Challenge Proficiency all students are required to be issued with an appropriate coloured band. Schools should document the students' proficiency in case a band is lost or damaged during an activity.

Bands should be issued as follows:

- Green** Proficient swimmer who is safe to participate in deep water.
- Yellow** Non-proficient swimmer who can participate in shallow water, at a depth no higher than a student's waist.
- Red** Non-swimmer who is not permitted to participate in any aquatic activity

**\* Please Note: It is imperative that bands cannot be removed, swapped or changed by students.**

Where applicable the program for the carnival should include scope for modified activities that match the swimming capabilities of the students. The location of the swimming carnival needs to provide shade for students and spectators, safety equipment and provision for supervision of students at the venue.

Supervisory staff ratios need to align with the Qualifications and Ratio Table. Bronze Medallion or higher qualified staff need to be 'rescue ready', dressed appropriately and with rescue equipment within easy access. An active adult supervisor should be assigned to each side of the pool for all races.

#### 4.12 Diving

All students should perform an in-water start to any swimming activity unless they have been taught dive skills through the [RLSSA Swim and Survive program \(Attachment B\)](#) and achieved Active Level 5 instruction in shallow water diving.

Before diving (including competitive dive starts) can take place at a swimming venue, the teacher in charge of the aquatic activity/event must check the water depth, compare to the [Diving Depth Matrix \(Attachment D\)](#) and complete a [Risk Management Plan \(Template B\) and Emergency Action Plan \(Templates C\)](#).

At the beginning of any swimming activity an official announcement must be communicated to all students, staff and volunteers whether diving is permitted or not.

#### 4.13 Recreational aquatic/unstructured activities

The teacher in charge of the recreational aquatic activity should undertake all safety and duty of care requirements and complete a [Risk Management Plan \(Template B\)](#) and [Emergency Action Plan \(Template C\)](#).

At the beginning of any recreational aquatic activities, where there are no active swimming ability records students will be required to complete the [Water Survival Challenge Proficiency \(Template A\)](#) to determine the aquatic proficiency. Following completion of the Water Survival Challenge Proficiency all students are required to be issued with an appropriate coloured band. Schools should document the students' proficiency in case a band is lost or damaged during an activity.

Proficient students will be issued with a green wrist band and will be deemed safe to participate in events of twenty-five metres and over. Non-proficient students will be issued with a yellow wrist band and can participate in shallow water activities, at a depth no higher than a student's waist. Students who are non-swimmers will be issued with a red wrist band and must be assigned to a supervised area away from the water's edge. Students with a red wrist band will not be participating in any aquatic activity.

Appropriate activities should be organized for those students deemed non-proficient in an appropriately defined shallow water area with specific supervision applied. The location of the recreational swimming needs to provide shade for students and spectators, safety equipment and provision for supervision of students at the venue.

The number of Active Adult Supervisors required at the activity will depend on the number of students, students with special needs, medical conditions, age and maturity, the type of activity and the conditions at the venue. As a minimum, supervision ratio must align with the Qualifications and Ratio Table located in the supporting documents.

An adult with a current First Aid Certificate must be present during all recreational aquatic activities.

#### 4.14 The Water Survival Challenge Proficiency

At the beginning of any unstructured/'free time' aquatic activities, where there are no records of a student's swimming proficiency; students will be required to complete the [Water Survival Challenge Proficiency \(Template A\)](#) to determine the aquatic proficiency of students. Students whose parents have not provided consent for them to enter the water and students who do not pass the Water Survival Challenge Proficiency will not be allowed to enter the water.

The Water Survival Challenge Proficiency consists of five elements:

1. Entry
2. Survival swimming
3. Survival sequence
4. Exit
5. Rescue sequence

To be regarded as proficient, each student is required to demonstrate proficiency against the [Water Survival Challenge Proficiency Criteria as outlined in Template A](#).

#### 4.15 Classifying students – coloured wrist bands

Following completion of the Water Survival Challenge Proficiency all students are required to be issued with an appropriate coloured wrist band. Schools should document the students' proficiency in case a band is lost or damaged during an activity.

Proficient students will be issued with a **green wrist band** and will be deemed safe to participate in deep water.

Non-proficient students will be issued with a **yellow wrist band** and can participate in shallow water, at a depth no higher than a student's waist.

Students who are non-swimmers will be issued with a **red wrist band** and must be assigned to a supervised area away from the water's edge. Students with a red wrist band will not be participating in any aquatic activity.

The bands should remain on the students until they exit the venue at which point they can be appropriately discarded.

Bands can be sourced from local suppliers or the internet and, when selecting bands, please ensure the following:

- band is designed for single use, is waterproof, tear resistant and non-stretch
- sufficient numbers of bands are available to cater for the entire group
- additional bands are available in case of breakage or loss during an activity
- bands must be cut off to make them a single use item
- bands are tight enough to avoid student removal or swapping of band
- schools consistently utilise the colours green for proficient, yellow for non-proficient and red for non-swimmers to avoid confusion at aquatic venues.

## 5. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

A range of resources to support schools implement the policy and procedures include:

Attachment A	Qualifications and Ratio Table
Attachment B	Competencies for RLSSA Swim and Survive, Bronze Star Rescue Awards and Resuscitation Awards
Attachment C	SAMS User Notes for Enter Student Swimming Level
Attachment D	Diving Depth Matrix
Attachment E	Cover Letter to Parents Templates
Attachment F	Responsibilities Summary Checklist
Attachment G	RLSSA NT PE Plan for Aquatic Education
Template A	Water Survival Challenge Proficiency Criteria and Template
Template B	Risk Management Plan
Template B1	Risk Management Plan – Example
Template C	Emergency Action Plan
Template C1	Emergency Action Plan - Example