

SCHOOL SWIMMING, WATER SAFETY PROGRAMS AND AQUATIC ACTIVITIES POLICY

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the Water Survival Challenge?

The Water Survival Challenge is an assessment of students' survival/swimming proficiency, students are required to demonstrate five elements:

- 1) Entry
- 2) Survival swimming
- 3) Survival sequence
- 4) Exit
- 5) Rescue sequence

The Water Survival Challenge enables students to be classified as:

- a) proficient - students are issued with a **green band**, or
- b) non-proficient - students are issued with a **yellow band**, or
- c) non-swimmers – students are issued with a **red band**.

2. What is an 'unstructured' aquatic activity?

Unstructured aquatic activity could include:

- 'celebration' or 'reward days' either for individual classes or the whole school
- 'free' swimming as part of an excursion
- 'free' swimming incorporated in a school swimming carnival
- 'free' swimming or pool play at a school camp
- 'free' swimming in a weekly school sport program

3. Does the *Water Survival Challenge* need to be completed prior to a swimming carnival?

No – a swimming carnival is a structured event

4. Will the *Water Survival Challenge* affect swimming carnivals where free swimming and novelty events are planned to occur?

Yes, the free swimming component is an unstructured activity and requires assessment of swimming proficiency against the *Water Survival Challenge* criteria. Where possible this assessment should be completed prior to the carnival.

Novelty events are regarded as structured activity with specific supervision and planned events in controlled areas of the pool complex.

5. Is the *Water Survival Challenge* reliant on any resources?

Yes - the aquatic co-ordinator in charge must ensure that appropriate rescue equipment, such as buoyancy and reaching aids are readily available and on hand at the *Water Survival Challenge* assessment site, for example a pool noodle or broomstick.

6. Can I use parents to assist with the *Water Survival Challenge*?

Yes. However, a teacher must take overall responsibility for the students and the conduct of the *Water Survival Challenge*.

7. Can students wear any flotation devices during the *Water Survival Challenge*?

No. Students need to demonstrate their swimming proficiency without the use of flotation devices.

8. What if all my students have been assessed as proficient (green bands)?

Wrist bands are not required if the school is the sole occupant of the venue.

9. What is shallow water?

For the purpose of these guidelines, shallow water is defined as water depth no higher than a student's waist. This ensures no restrictions to arm movements and allows for a distressed student to raise an arm unimpeded when signalling for help.

10. Do these guidelines apply to school pools?

Yes.

11. Do the wrist bands need to be Green, Yellow and Red?

Yes. We need to ensure that there is a consistent application of this policy between schools.

12. When do we apply the bands?

Wrist bands are to be applied to the students immediately after they complete *Water Survival Challenge*.

13. Can wrist bands be re-usable?

No - wrist bands are designed for one use only. Re-usable bands are easy to remove. If the wrist bands are able to be removed without difficulty, there is a reasonable chance that students could swap or discard the band during the aquatic activity.

14. Where can I get the 'bands' from?

Bands can also be purchased through: <http://www.aacidsolutions.com.au/products/id-wristbands/19mm-tyvek-wristbands>

15. If I take my year 5 class (27 students) for a reward day at the pool for 1.5 hours of unstructured free time in the water, what supervisors will I need to have?

Supervision is as per the Qualifications and Ratio Table:

- three Active Adult Supervisors
- one Bronze Medallion holder (this adult can be counted as an Active Adult Supervisor)

16. I am organising a week long school trip to Canberra for 48 students that includes a day at a southern coast beach where students are able to swim (unstructured), which forms need to be completed? What Supervision is required?

- a) The Excursions Policy forms which include:
- Excursion Application
 - Participant List
 - Itinerary
 - Consent Form
 - Risk Management form
 - Self-Inspection checklist
 - Movement Requisition form
 - Education Program
 - Memo for approval in-principle
- b) The School Swimming, Water Safety Programs and Aquatic Activities Policy forms which include:
- Emergency Action Plan – Template C
- c) Supervision is as per the Qualifications and Ratio Table:
- ten Active Adult Supervisors
 - four Bronze Medallion holders (this adult can be counted as an Active Adult Supervisor)

17. What if I do not have enough Bronze Medallion holders to satisfy the ratio?

The ratio must be adhered to. Options could include:

- contacting local Royal Life Saving/Surf Life Saving organisations and arrange for bronze medallion holders to assist with the activity – costs will need to be covered by the school/students
- take students in smaller groups in the water for the activity by including a circuit of dry/land activities.

18. I am from a Katherine school and driving to Darwin for the day with a group of 18 Year 8 students to go to the museum and on the way back stop at Leanyer Recreation Park, which forms need to be completed? What Supervision is required?

- a) The Excursions Policy forms which include:
- Excursion Application
 - Participant List
 - Itinerary
 - Consent Form
 - Risk Management form
 - Self-Inspection checklist
 - Movement Requisition form
 - Education Program

- b) The School Swimming, Water Safety Programs and Aquatic Activities Policy forms include:
- Emergency Action Plan – Template C
- c) Supervision is as per the Qualifications and Ratio Table:
- two Active Adult Supervisors
 - one Bronze Medallion holder (this adult can be counted as an Active Adult Supervisor)

Please note: if you are taking a school group to [Leanyer Water Park](#), you must notify the YMCA of any groups attending the water park, (08) 8927 4199 or leanyer@ymca.org.au

19. Needham Primary school walking 43 Year 6 students to Leanyer Recreation Park for an unstructured (free time) celebration afternoon, which forms need to be completed? What Supervision is required?

- a) The Excursions Policy forms which include:
- Excursion Application
 - Participant List
 - Itinerary
 - Consent Form
 - Risk Management form
 - Self-Inspection checklist
- b) The School Swimming, Water Safety Programs and Aquatic Activities Policy forms include:
- Emergency Action Plan – Template
- c) Supervision is as per the Qualifications and Ratio Table:
- five Active Adult Supervisors
 - one Bronze Medallion holder (this adult can be counted as an Active Adult Supervisor)

Please note: if you are taking a school group to [Leanyer Recreation Park](#) you must notify the YMCA of any groups attending the park, (08) 8927 4199 or leanyer@ymca.org.au.

20. If we have a swimming carnival with only nine students (9 swimming lanes) in the water at one time what ratio must be followed? There will be no unstructured/free time for students.

Supervision is as per the Qualifications and Ratio Table for 9 students:

- one Active Adult Supervisors
- one Bronze Medallion holder (this adult can be counted as an Active Adult Supervisor)

Please note: the above ratio is for the supervision of the students **in the water**. The students who are not in the water will still need to be supervised by teachers/adults.

21. Can the Austswim teacher also be the holder of the bronze medallion if the ratios are adhered to?

Yes

22. If we go to the local swimming pool for UNSTRUCTURED activities can we count the life guard on duty in the ratio?

Only if the pool life guard is actively supervising your group of students on pool deck and this arrangement has been documented with pool management.

23. If we are teaching swimming lessons (structured) with suitably qualified swim teachers do we need to have a Bronze Medallion (of higher) holder at the venue?

Yes. Most schools will use a swimming pool as the venue for swim lessons. If the pool life guard is on duty they can be counted as the Bronze Medallion holder or higher.

If the school has a hire agreement with the pool and no life guard is on duty, a minimum of one staff member must hold a Bronze Medallion or higher.

24. Where can I access a Water Safety Kit and what does it contain?

The education library has 4 kits that can be borrowed. The kits contain:

- Two rescue tubes
- Two personal flotation devices
- Two ropes with throw bag
- Two whistles (hand)
- Two Personal Flotation Devices (PFD)
- Five kick boards
- Five noodles

25. Do pre-school unstructured aquatic activities require a bronze medallion holder to be present?

A Swim Teacher Rescue Award or higher is required for preschool pools, for pre-school students to participate in unstructured activities, please note a Risk Management Plan and Emergency Action plan must be completed.

26. Which qualifications are 'higher' than the minimum Teacher qualification of AUSTSWIM Swim Teacher Rescue Award?

- a) Bronze Medallion
- b) Pool Life Guard

27. Where can I get my qualifications from?

- <http://www.austswim.com.au/>
- <http://www.royallifesaving.com.au/training>
- <http://sls.com.au/what-we-do/training>

28. Is it mandatory to teach CPR to all middle and senior school students?

CPR is a nationally accredited course and many students complete this training through Vocational and Education Training (VET) in school programs. CPR and CPR awareness courses for students is a school based decision.

29. If we take students to the Wave Lagoon at Darwin Waterfront Precinct: What Supervision is required? How do we conduct the Water Survival Challenge?

The wave pool conditions are considered similar to the conditions at a beach (waves) therefore the qualifications and ratio table for natural waterway/open water: *Ratio 1:5 Active Adult Supervisor INCLUDING 1:15 Bronze medallion or higher.*

Active swimming records are the most effective in identifying student swimming ability for banding. If a school is using the water survival challenge the school would need to set up a circuit for students to demonstrate their swimming ability while the waves are on.

Please note if you are taking a school group to the [Wave Lagoon at the Darwin waterfront precinct](#) you must notify the [Surf Life Saving Northern Territory](#) on 8985 6588

30. If we have a pool that is less than 25 metres how do we assess if students can swim 25 metres – for example at a hotel pool like a back yard pool?

If the pool is a small type pool, students would not be required to swim 25 metres, they would need to demonstrate ability to swim across the length of the pool from the shallow end to the deep end and climb out at the deep end. Students would also need to demonstrate their floating/sculling/treading water ability and calling for help skills and knowledge.

31. Do non-government schools have to align with the policy?

Please contact the [Catholic Education Office](#) or the [Association of Independent Schools of the Northern Territory Office](#).

32. If we are on camp and students have free time each afternoon, do we need to conduct the *Water Survival Challenge* each day?

If the conditions are the same each afternoon e.g. swimming in the same pool you **do not** need to do the *Water Survival Challenge* each day. However bands must be worn each day.

33. Can the *Water Survival Challenge* be performed at the beginning of the year and be used for unstructured activities throughout the year?

No. Student abilities, water conditions and venue conditions vary and the *Water Survival Challenge* needs to be performed prior to each unstructured activity.

