

School swimming, water safety programs and aquatic activities – policy

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This document should be read with the School swimming, water safety programs and aquatic activities procedures.

1. Policy

The aim of this policy is to promote safe aquatic participation and minimise the risks associated with school swimming and water safety programs. Schools must follow teacher qualifications, student ratios, and duty of care requirements for school swimming programs including swimming carnivals, diving, recreational aquatic activities and student resuscitation education, outlined in the School swimming, water safety programs and aquatic activities procedures.

Schools with swimming pools and purpose built pools on their premises must ensure they comply with the Royal Life Saving Australia (RLSA) Guidelines for safe pool operations.

2. Business need

This policy aims to ensure schools carry out appropriate planning, implementation and supervision of school swimming programs including swimming carnivals and recreational aquatic activities. The policy is based on the RLSA Guidelines for safe pool operations and AUSTSWIM Swimming and water safety program guidelines.

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 7 of the RLSA swim and survive program. By year 10, each student should be able to satisfactorily perform all competencies equivalent to RLSA bronze star including resuscitation, or Surf Life Saving Australia surf survival including resuscitation.

If preschool children are participating in a swimming program or aquatic activities, the Managing water hazards in preschool policy and procedures must be followed to ensure the requirements under the *Education and Care Services (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011* and Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (NSW) are met.

3. Scope

This policy applies to any water-based activity in all Northern Territory (NT) Government schools, including preschools.

4. Reporting requirements

The national benchmark of swim and survive level 7 achievement in primary schools is reported to the NT Government as part of the NT Water Safety Strategy 2017-2021.

Records of student swimming ability are maintained in the Student Administration Management System at the conclusion of each swim program or activity and reported to Royal Life Saving NT (RLSNT). The Department of Education (the department) and RLSNT have an agreement for schools to use the Swim and survive program and report the student data to RLSNT. This information is reported annually to the department to ensure student access to water safety is recorded and aquatic survival skills are achieved.

5. Roles and responsibilities

Refer to the School swimming, water safety programs and aquatic activities procedures.

6. Definitions

Term	Definition
Purpose built pool	All pools in special education and preschool settings that are used for water familiarisation and play.
Ratio	The required number of qualified teachers and supervisors in relation to the swimming ability and number of students participating in the designated activity or program.
Recreational aquatic activities or unstructured activities	Participation in informal aquatic activities other than the school swimming and water safety program. Examples include celebration or reward days 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 and similar.
School swimming and water safety program	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	Amateur swimming competitions consisting of structured swimming events.

7. Related legislation, policy and procedures, resources and documents

7.1. Legislation

- *Education and Care Services (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011* - <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/EDUCATION-AND-CARE-SERVICES-NATIONAL-UNIFORM-LEGISLATION-ACT-2011>
is the legislation that adopts the national law in the NT.
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Vic)* - <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/education-and-care-services-national-law-act-2010/012>
is the Schedule that sets out the national law.
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (NSW)* - <https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2011-0653>
- *Swimming Pool Safety Act 2004* - <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Legislation/SWIMMING-POOL-SAFETY-ACT-2004>

7.2. Policies and procedures

- School swimming, water safety programs and aquatic activities procedures - <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/health-safety/swimming-and-water-safety>
- Excursions policy - <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/school-operations#excursions>
- Managing water hazards in preschool policy and procedures - <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/early-childhood-education-and-care/preschool-specific-policy>

- Sun safety in schools policy - <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/health-safety/sun-safety>

7.3. Resources

- Australian Water Safety Council - <https://www.watersafety.com.au/>

7.4. Documents

- Australian water safety strategy 2030 - <https://www.watersafety.com.au/australian-water-safety-strategy>
- AUSTSWIM Swimming and water safety program guidelines - <https://austswim.com.au/swimming-and-water-safety-program-guidelines>
- NT Water Safety Strategy - <https://www.royallifesaving.com.au/nt/About-Royal-Life-Saving-NT/Who-we-are/nt-water-safety-strategy-2017-2021>
- RLSA Guidelines for safe pool operations - <https://www.royallifesaving.com.au/Aquatic-Risk-and-Guidelines/guidelines/GSPO>
- Sun Safety Advice - <https://www.sunsmart.com.au>
- Work Health and safety incident report form (internal access required) - <https://elearn.ntschoools.net/digital-apps/3486>

Acronyms	Full form
NT	Northern Territory
NTG	Northern Territory Government
RLSA	Royal Life Saving Australia
RLSNT	Royal Life Saving Northern Territory
TRM	Territory Records Manager

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Version	Date	Author	Changes made
1. to 3.2	September 2013	School Support Services	Various revisions of the Swimming and water safety policy
3.3	October 2015	School Support Services	Major review
3.4	July 2022	Operational Policy	Minor update - TRM 50:D22:68978
4	November 2022	Quality Standards and Regulation, Operational Policy	Administrative amendments to align roles and responsibilities to the structural alignment in effect from 1 July 2022, including NTG template and minor formatting
5	April 2023	Early Years and Primary Policy	Updates to reflect changes to the Swim and survive program levels and included references to the national law and other departmental policies and procedures.