

# SWIMMING INSTRUCTION/WATER SAFETY POLICY

## Rationale

- This policy applies to programs which have the purpose of teaching swimming and water safety. It does not apply to water activities such as recreational swimming, surfing, canoeing, boating etc.
- Programs should include a sequence involving:
  - swimming
  - water safety
  - survival techniques
  - rescue and emergency procedures.
- There are three categories of swimming venues:

### Type 1

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

### Type 2

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

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

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

### Type 3

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

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

- enter deep water using a feet-first entry
  - in water of at least waist depth, dive into the water to simulate an entry under a wave
  - demonstrate a feet-first and a head-first surface dive
  - demonstrate for one minute how a flotation aid may be used as a support, reassure any other swimmers by talking with them, swim slowly using a combination of three survival strokes for ten minutes, remove such clothing as desired (the clothing may be used for flotation), demonstrate survival sculling, floating or treading water for a total of five minutes
  - demonstrate waving one arm occasionally as if signaling for help.
- A school must have a clearly written set of emergency procedures that is understood by those involved in the program and includes:
    - rescue, resuscitation and first aid procedure

- how to contact a doctor, ambulance or emergency service
- the supervision and safety of all other children at the venue
- is in harmony with the procedures used by pool owners, pool managers or rescue and life-saving patrols
- outlines areas of responsibilities and organisation required to carry out a rescue and maintain child safety.

### **Purpose**

- To ensure that all school swimming programs are safely conducted and provide children with the knowledge and confidence to participate in aquatic activities.
- To ensure Tarneit West Primary School (Interim Name) complies with DET policy and guidelines.

### **Implementation**

- In describing requirements for a range of venues i.e. swimming pools, surf beaches and open deep water venues, the school does not imply that all such venues will be utilised.
- The principal will ensure that all relevant requirements are met for:
  - supervision levels
  - staff and/or instructor qualifications
  - other health and emergency and safety precautions.

### **Staffing Requirements**

- At least two staff members will supervise children at swimming and water activities at all times.
- The minimum overall staff–child ratio at swimming pools and other shallow venues will be:

Beginner swimmers - i.e. children with little or no experience including in shallow water.	1:10
Intermediate swimmers - i.e. children with basic skills, able to swim 25 metres with a recognisable stroke.	1:12
Advanced swimmers - i.e. children able to swim fifty strokes using two recognisable strokes and to demonstrate one survival stroke in deep water.	1:15

For surf beaches the ratio will be no more than 1:5

The group must be no more than 50 children.

For open deep water venues, the ratio will be no more than 1:10

### **Personnel**

- A teacher employed by the Department or the School Council will be in attendance and have overall responsibility for the activity and legal responsibility for emergency procedures.
- Other supervising staff will be approved by the Principal. These may include parents/carers, education support class officers, instructors or employees of swimming pools.
- When arranging for supervision of swimming or water activities the school will take into account the age and experience of the children as well as the venue and experience of staff.

### **Qualifications**

- All supervising staff must be capable and have the knowledge and skills to teach swimming and water safety and for emergency rescue and cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
- Appropriate levels of competence are the rescue and CPR requirements specified in the certificates for:
  - AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety
  - Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) Bronze Medallion or Surf Rescue Certificate

- Royal Life Saving Society – Australia (RLSSA) Bronze Medallion or Pool Lifeguard Certificate
- Life Saving Victoria (LSV) Community Surf Life Saving Certificate.
- At a swimming pool or a natural water shallow and confined venue, one staff member must hold an AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety Certificate and, where possible, a second staff member should hold the same certificate.
- At an open deep water venue and at a surf beach, all staff must hold an AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety Certificate and at least one staff member must hold a current Bronze Medallion or Surf Rescue Certificate from Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) and a Community Surf Lifesaving Certificate from Life Saving Victoria (LSV).
- It is unlikely that the school will participate in recreational swimming, but for further information please refer to the Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors website, including the recreational swimming activity guidelines within [Department resources](#) at the web reference below.
- A record of staff swimming and water safety qualifications will be maintained at the school and include the date of issue of the qualification and formal notification of any subsequent renewal or upgrade.

#### Emergency Procedures and Safety Measures

- The school will have a clearly written set of emergency procedures that:
  - is understood by those involved in the program
  - includes: rescue, resuscitation and first aid procedures  
how to contact a doctor, ambulance or emergency service  
the supervision and safety of all other children at the venue
  - is in harmony with the procedures used by pool owners, pool managers or rescue and life-saving patrols and outlines areas of responsibilities and organisation required to carry out a rescue and maintain child safety.

Note: The teacher in direct control of the swimming group is legally responsible for implementation of the procedures that may include the involvement of others who have more experience in dealing with emergencies.

- The school will ensure that:
  - all staff are dressed appropriately to perform an immediate contact rescue
  - each staff member is positioned to account for all children in their respective swimming groups at all times
  - a 'buddy' system is used during lessons and incorporated into the emergency plan as a check of child safety
  - all staff must be prepared for and able to cope with an emergency rescue and apply CPR
  - aids such as ropes, poles and approved buoyancy devices are immediately available at each teaching station and other places where children are swimming or diving
  - swimming programs are not conducted if the water temperature is low and there is a risk of hypothermia
  - children are protected from excessive exposure to sunlight and the resulting sunburn with:
    - hats
    - sunglasses
    - protective clothing
    - broad-spectrum sunscreen creams and lotions
    - waterproof sun creams or clothing while in the water.
- The teacher-in-charge will

- liaise with the pool owners, pool managers or rescue and life-saving patrols to ensure practices are in harmony with the procedures used at the venues and outlines areas of responsibilities and organisation required to carry out a rescue and maintain child safety
  - know the location of first aid, rescue and resuscitation equipment
  - know where the telephone is for ambulance or other emergency service
  - know the name and phone number of a local doctor
  - ensure ropes, poles and approved buoyancy devices are immediately available at each teaching station and other places where children are swimming or diving
  - convey this information to all other school staff and assisting personnel (parents, SSO staff)
- In an emergency,
    - the teacher who first becomes aware of the emergency will signal or call for assistance from the closest teacher and venue personnel before attending to the person at risk
    - all children will be instructed to leave the water, gather and remain in a pre-determined location at the venue.
    - the children will be supervised by staff and other assisting personnel (parents, SSO staff) not directly involved in the emergency.
    - all staff must be dressed appropriately to perform an immediate contact rescue
    - as appropriate, staff will access the rescue aids which have been placed there before the session commenced
    - all staff must be prepared for and able to cope with an emergency rescue and apply CPR
    - whilst each staff member will be ready to provide such first aid and CPR as is required or call a doctor or ambulance, it is expected that venue staff will assume responsibility for this at the earliest possible time
    - once the safety of all children is assured, the teacher-in-charge of the program will advise the school Principal
    - the Principal will contact the child's parent/guardian
    - depending on the nature of the emergency, the Principal may or may not advise Security Services
- Each staff member must be positioned to account for all children in their respective swimming groups at all times.
  - A 'buddy' system will be used during lessons and incorporated into the emergency plan as a check of child safety.
  - Swimming programs will not be conducted if the water temperature is low and there is a risk of hypothermia.

#### Health Precautions

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

#### Special Precautions

##### Epilepsy

If a child has epilepsy, or any other form of medical condition involving periodic loss of

consciousness, the school may permit the child to swim if a valid medical certificate is provided by the parents stating that it is safe.

Note: Such a certificate is usually valid for 12 months, however a new certificate is required if loss of consciousness is known to have occurred. A certificate that is conditional upon special precautions should not be accepted unless the parents arrange for additional supervision and accept responsibility for the safety of their child during swimming classes; and then only if the Principal is satisfied that the arrangement will not interfere in the conduct of the class.

#### Asthma

If a child has asthma and may require medication before a swimming lesson, the child may participate if the parents provide written consent of their child's participation and indicate that their doctor also has no objection and the child's medication is available at the swimming venue.

#### Diabetes

If a child has diabetes the child may participate if the child takes extra food before activities to prevent insulin or hypo glycaemic reactions e.g. fruit, biscuits or fruit juice.

- If special precautions are required and the school is not able to provide the necessary supervision, the parents/carers must take responsibility for ensuring that safety requirements are met without interference with the swimming class supervision. If a child's suitability for inclusion in a school swimming program is in doubt, the Principal will consult the parent/carer and the child's doctor.
- All parents holding a current Health Care Card or Veterans Card are eligible to apply for the Camps Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF). This money will be used only to pay/offset for camps, sports and excursions, which may include the swimming program.
- Please refer to the school's Camps & Excursions Policy, Medical Emergencies Policy and the more detailed policies relating to Asthma Management, Diabetes Management and Epilepsy Management.

#### Evaluation

- The policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or if guidelines change (latest DET update early July 2017).

<u>Ratification Date</u>	<u>Review Date</u>	<u>Policy Number</u>	<u>Version Number</u>	<u>Date Produced</u>
October 2017	2020	83	1	September 2017

#### References:

[www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/curriculum/pages/swimming.aspx#1](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/curriculum/pages/swimming.aspx#1)  
[www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/curriculum/pages/swimming.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/curriculum/pages/swimming.aspx)