



WATER SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR UNSTRUCTURED AQUATIC ACTIVITY

INCORPORATING THE WATER SURVIVAL CHALLENGE



NEW SOUTH WALES
DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION
AND TRAINING



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 **Royal Life Saving**
ROYAL LIFE SAVING SOCIETY - AUSTRALIA

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Other support documents may be found at www.royalnsw.com.au

Safety Guidelines for Aquatic Activities such as Surfboard, Wave Ski, Body Board Riding, Water Polo, Swimming and Water Safety, Scuba Diving, Sailing, Sail Boarding and Diving.

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The Water Safety Guidelines are designed to encourage and support schools in the conducting of unstructured aquatic activities and programs.

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PLEASE NOTE:

Students who have not demonstrated a balanced and stable walk in shallow water must be removed from the water and accommodated within the supervised non-aquatic program.

Students who have special needs should be appropriately accommodated for in the aquatic activity, based on a reasonable independent adjustment according to their physical capabilities. Individual's health plans should form part of the aquatic supervisors assessment of an individual's capabilities and aquatic safety prior to inclusion in an unstructured activity (in accordance with the **Disability Discrimination Act**).



SECTION 1

UNSTRUCTURED AQUATIC ACTIVITY

OVERVIEW

OVERVIEW

USING THIS RESOURCE

The Water Safety Guidelines for Unstructured Aquatic Activities has been developed through a collaborative process involving the three sectors of education in NSW, peak water safety agencies and the aquatics industry, and in line with the Australian Water Safety Strategy 2008-2011 (to view the relationship between the Water Safety Guidelines and the Water Safety Strategy view Appendix 1).

These Guidelines only apply to unstructured aquatic activities, such as:

- ‘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.

These Guidelines provide guidance to school principals and aquatic/excursion coordinators in the planning and implementation of unstructured aquatic activity at swimming pools.

Schools considering using a lake, beach or river for unstructured aquatic activities must ensure all swimmers participating have completed ‘The Challenge’ prior to attending the open water environment.

Schools are directed to the Guidelines for Safe Conduct and Physical Activity in Schools for information on using lakes, beaches or rivers.

Specifically, the Water Safety Guidelines will provide:

- information on selecting appropriate aquatic venues
- administrative processes relevant to the planning of unstructured aquatic activity
- staff and student induction information
- criteria to determine the aquatic proficiency of students participating in unstructured aquatic activities
- information on the use of wrist bands to differentiate between the proficient and non-proficient swimmers
- surveillance and scanning information pertinent to aquatic environments.

To successfully coordinate unstructured aquatic activities principals and aquatic/excursion coordinators need to address the three stages below and the eight steps included:

PLANNING	ADMINISTRATION			ACTIVITY / PROGRAM			
STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	STEP 5	STEP 6	STEP 7	STEP 8
Selecting a Venue	Parent/Carer Permission	Staff Supervision	Risk Management	Staff Induction	Student Induction	Testing Proficiency	Classifying Students

WATER SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR UNSTRUCTURED AQUATIC ACTIVITY – STEPS

FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT THE FOLLOWING DEFINITIONS APPLY

Unstructured Aquatic Activity: 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.

Shallow water: 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 signal for help.

Water Survival Challenge: A proficiency test that assesses a student’s aquatic skill level against predetermined criteria. This is a minimum benchmark for students participating in an unstructured aquatic activity. For the purpose of the Water Safety Guidelines, the Water Survival Challenge will also be known as ‘The Challenge’.

Venue: A venue is defined as an aquatic location (swimming pool, lake, dam, etc) in which unstructured aquatic activity is to take place.

Wrist bands: A waterproof band placed on a student’s wrist to identify proficiency against the Water Survival Challenge criteria. Blue wrist bands for proficient students and yellow wrist bands for non-proficient students who are able to walk with balance and stability in shallow water.

Licensed Lifeguard: A NSW Licensed Lifeguard is an individual who has completed Lifeguard training with Royal Life Saving NSW. Licensed Lifeguards are accredited annually.



SECTION 2

PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION FOR
UNSTRUCTURED AQUATIC ACTIVITY

STEPS 1 – 4

PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION STAGE

This section provides an overview of the planning and administration stage. A checklist for planning and administration is included in Section 3. This may form the basis of a risk management plan.

STEP 1. SELECTING A VENUE

School principals and school aquatic/excursion coordinators are encouraged to seek out aquatic venues that have made a commitment to aquatic safety and improvement against best practice guidelines.

The Royal Lifesaving Society Guidelines for Safe Pool Operation is a venue based risk management tool for improving aquatic health and safety. These guidelines act as a voluntary guide for operators in meeting minimum best practice standards.

Pool audits are provided by a number of aquatic industry leaders, including the Royal Life Saving Society.

HIRING AGREEMENT

Principals should seek to obtain the venue emergency action plan and any local rules or regulations relevant to the venue. Schools that hire a venue, or part thereof, should receive from the venue management a letter of agreement or a hiring agreement, which clearly establishes the responsibility of the venue management and the hirer (the school).

These responsibilities will include:

- supervision
- responsibility in an emergency
- responsibility for first aid

This agreement should be countersigned by the hirer to indicate that the terms and conditions have been accepted. The letter of agreement should clearly establish:

- information regarding the likely number of persons using the venue, and if appropriate their skills
- the name of the hirer's representative who will be personally present and in charge of the group
- the age of the hiring group
- the number of lifeguards to be present during the session
- respective responsibilities of the venue management and the hirer in an emergency. A distinction should be drawn between generated emergencies (eg. injuries) and venue emergencies (eg. structural problems)
- any local laws that may be enforced
- rules of behaviour to be followed, if different to the normal rules
- any specific advice to be given to users
- responsibility for the provision of first aid services
- access to first aid equipment

The hiring group should be provided with a copy of the emergency action plan and procedures.

NSW SPORT AND RECREATION CENTRES

The 11 NSW Sport and Recreation Centres are popular venues for school camps and day activities. Pool and other aquatic activities are usually offered as part of a camp program. All NSW Sport and Recreation Centres conduct unstructured aquatic activities.

A proficiency test, in the form of 'The Challenge', must be conducted before the first aquatic activity at camp, unless the school provides evidence of testing having been recently conducted (within a period of two school terms). Wrist bands identifying proficient and non-proficient swimmers will be issued and must be worn for the duration of the camp.

NSW Sport and Recreation standards stipulate that the centre will provide pool supervisors with Bronze Medallion, resuscitation and oxygen equipment qualifications at a ratio of one supervisor to 50 students.

School staff will be required to provide general supervision and support to allow the qualified pool supervisor to focus on water safety.

The overall ratio of school teacher supervisors to students in the pool will be not more than 1:20.

SCHOOLS WITH POOLS

Schools with pools should be aware that it is their responsibility to ensure that the pool meets the same safety requirements as all community swimming pools.

Schools with pools should consider the following fundamental aspects:

- an emergency action plan
- rescue equipment
- signage – depth markers etc.
- risk management.

Schools with pools should further undertake an Aquatic Safety Risk assessment to ensure:

- student and staff welfare
- appropriate maintenance.

Appendix 4: 5 Star Water Safety Partner Benchmarks

STEP 2. OBTAINING PARENT/CAREGIVER PERMISSION

Unstructured aquatic activities are usually conducted as an excursion or part of an excursion. Parents/caregivers specifically must provide consent for their child(ren) to participate in the aquatic activities.

Students who are nominated by their parents/caregivers as swimmers will be required to complete the Water Survival Challenge.

Students who are nominated by their parents/caregivers as non-swimmers (or unknown ability) and are permitted to participate in the unstructured aquatic activity will be provided with a yellow wrist band. These students will need to be assessed on their ability to walk with balance and stability in waist deep water.

Students, whose parents/caregivers do not provide permission for their child(ren) to go in the water or are unable to walk with balance and stability in waist deep water will be involved in non-aquatic activities.

Schools should seek out relevant policy or guidelines in relation to the conduct of excursions via NSW Department of Education and Training, the Catholic/ Diocesan school authority or the Association of Independent Schools of NSW.

STEP 3. STAFF SUPERVISION

The teacher:student supervision ratio for unstructured aquatic activity must not exceed 1:20.

The number of supervising teachers 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. At least one of the supervising teachers must possess recognised current training in CPR.

School principals/aquatic coordinators should engage suitably qualified pool staff, local swimming teachers or parents etc to act as the aquatic supervisor if no one on the school staff holds suitable current aquatic qualifications.

In addition to the aquatic supervisors, other school staff providing supervision do not require any special aquatic competencies to provide appropriate supervision, scanning and surveillance support for unstructured aquatic activities.

School principals are advised to refer to the Guidelines for the Safe Conduct of Sport and Physical Activity in Schools and relevant school sector guidelines and policies for information relating to supervision requirements.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Before working with students with special needs extra information is required. The individual's health plan should provide information including:

- their ability to understand and follow directions, including English as a second language students
- whether they require help entering and exiting the pool
- whether there are any further medical issues that supervisors should be aware of

- whether parents, caregivers or attendants will be attending to their personal needs.

Additionally and as an example, students with seizure conditions are particularly vulnerable in the water and require close supervision. Any student with seizure conditions must have 1:1 supervision.

STEP 4. RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

The degree of planning required is influenced by the nature of the unstructured aquatic activity, the level of risk and the student group. For activities that have previously been planned and conducted, previous risk management plans may be reviewed and reused.

An important component of the risk management process is consultation, which should include staff, external venue providers and parents.

Principals should retain the documented plan as verification of the planning undertaken. The documentation will aid communication of the plan, and can also be used in future planning of unstructured aquatic activities. All staff participating in the activity should be given a copy of the risk management plan.

A sample of the type of indicators that a risk management plan may include is provided in Section 3.

All plans should be developed in conjunction with relevant excursion policies developed by the respective sectors and individual schools. Sporting or physical activities should also be organised in accordance with the Guidelines for the Safe Conduct of Sport and Physical Activity in Schools available at www.sports.det.nsw.edu.au/spguide

Support Resources

For NSW Department of Education and Training principals, the following resources are available at the Department's OH&S website, <https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/adminandmanage/ohands/excursions/index.htm>

1. Guidance in completing the risk management plan proforma for excursions.
2. Risk management plan proforma for excursions.
3. Sample risk management plan for excursions.
4. Excursions policy.

To support schools, a database of venue and safety information from common excursion sites is available on the OH&S website. These should be considered and if appropriate attached to the excursion risk management plan.

AIS school principals may refer to the AIS Risk and Compliance team for additional advice.

Schools in the Catholic education sector may refer to Diocesan/ School Authority Guidelines, or the Catholic Education Commission's Student Safety Policy Guidelines in the publications section of the CEC website, www.cec.nsw.catholic.edu.au



SECTION 3

A WORKBOOK FOR TEACHERS
ACTIVITY AND PROGRAMMING STAGE FOR
UNSTRUCTURED AQUATIC ACTIVITY

STEPS 5 – 8

A WORKBOOK FOR TEACHERS COORDINATING EXCURSIONS INVOLVING UNSTRUCTURED AQUATIC ACTIVITIES.

This section is a summary of the key aspects associated with the Water Survival Challenge.

The Water Safety Guidelines for Unstructured Aquatic Activity has been developed through a collaborative process involving the three sectors of education in NSW, peak water safety agencies and the aquatics industry.

These Guidelines have been developed to ensure participation in unstructured aquatic activities is undertaken as safely as possible.

Students are required to progress through an aquatic proficiency test in the form of the Water Survival Challenge to ensure they possess appropriate skills to participate in unstructured aquatic activity.

Appropriate adjustments may need to be implemented for some students with special needs.

These Guidelines apply to unstructured aquatic activities, such as:

- '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.

The Activity and Program stage for implementing the Water Survival Challenge includes the following.

Activity/Program Stage

- Staff induction
- Student induction
- 'The Challenge' testing student proficiency
- Classifying students

THE ACTIVITY AND PROGRAM STAGE STEP 5. STAFF INDUCTION

The principal or school aquatic coordinator should provide the school staff with information on the Water Survival Challenge (testing proficiency and on scanning and surveillance techniques relevant to aquatic venues).

Supervision of aquatic environments provides new challenges for school staff. A small scanning and surveillance reminder card is available and should be used at the venue to prompt and remind staff on the key aspects of aquatic supervision.

The overall ratio of teacher supervisors to students in the water will be no more than 1:20.

At least one supervisor (not necessarily a teacher) must hold current qualifications in one of the following (or equivalent):

- AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety Certificate
- RLSSA Bronze Medallion
- RLSSA Swimming Teacher Rescue Award
- SLSA Patrol Bronze Medallion
- SLSA Surf Rescue Certificate

'The Challenge' DVD is included with this resource to support understanding of the elements contained in 'The Challenge'. The DVD may be a centre piece of a staff development session.

The staff member designated as the aquatic coordinator should be easily recognisable throughout the day. For example, a red hat or brightly coloured shirt will make identification easier.

School staff will need to have access to rescue equipment such as a rescue tube or reach pole to minimise the need to enter the water to perform a rescue.

Staff induction run by the appointed aquatic coordinator should include information about:

The Venue

- layout including entry, exits and first aid room
- rules, regulations and emergency procedures
- roles and responsibilities of venue staff including lifeguards
- appropriate activities and activity areas including pool space planned for non-proficient or non-swimmers
- other information resulting from the risk assessment.

School Staff

- roles and responsibilities of staff
- emergency procedures, first aid, reporting and recording procedures
- communication equipment and techniques
- scanning and surveillance roles.

SCANNING AND SURVEILLANCE TECHNIQUES

Supervision is the key for the safe conduct of aquatic activity. Supervising students in aquatic environments requires a unique set of skills and knowledge. It is vital that staff maintain vigilance throughout the activity day, providing ongoing supervision of students in the water.

WHAT IS SCANNING?

Scanning is the systematic visual observation of the venue, its users and their activities. Teachers/supervisors will observe student behaviour and look for signals that someone in the water requires assistance.

Effective scanning assumes that teachers:

- can see their entire supervision area
- know what they are looking for
- know how to respond and react to a student in difficulty.

Teachers/supervisors should be in a position to maintain supervision of the water at all times and should scan not only the surface of the water but also along the edges and the bottom.

KEY PRINCIPLES OF SCANNING

- Teachers/supervisors must be positioned with clear, unobstructed sight lines. Lifeguards may assist in the positioning of teachers.
- Move to counteract student and patron interference, especially in ground-level supervision.
- Focus on people and what they are doing. Make eye contact whenever possible. Watch the face. Spend less time on students who are good swimmers or safely enjoying the water, but still include them in scanning. Check weaker swimmers more frequently.
- Each student within an individual teacher's/supervisor's area of responsibility should be checked regularly.
- Look and listen for the unusual.
- Avoid staring at the same thing.
- Give eyes a break by focusing momentarily on some distant object, or the horizon.
- Use peripheral vision to detect movement.
- In outdoor facilities, monitor changes in the environmental conditions (weather and water) for their potential impact on student behaviour and safety.
- Be careful of conditions that affect visibility, such as glare from the sun, overhead lights, cloudy water or shadows on the water at different times of the day.
- Avoid turning away from the area – walk backwards or sideways to avoid loss of eye contact.
- Scan the bottom of the pool first then the surface.
- Don't interrupt scanning the area except to make a rescue or stop someone from breaking the rules. It should only take a few seconds to explain the dangers to someone breaking the rules and often teachers/supervisors are able to continue scanning while doing this. If more time is needed, teachers should seek assistance.
- If a student asks a question or has a concern, acknowledge them and explain that while listening supervision must be maintained. Refer the student to the duty supervisor or another staff member if needed.

WHERE TO SCAN

Scan the entire zone of supervision. Take note of students and activity directly in front of you. Check adjacent supervisors on each sweep to receive any visual communication they might be sending.

Scan below the surface. In swimming pools, it is important to scan the bottom regularly. Attend to the risk points more often: eg, diving boards, drop-offs and ladders. Check to see that each student who enters the water from a dive, slide or diving board resurfaces.

SCANNING STRATEGIES

A variety of strategies are used to organise and sort through sensory input, which can be overwhelming on crowded days. Common techniques may include the following:

- head counting – try to count the number of students in each area on each scan. When the number changes, find out why.
- grouping – sort students into groups by age, sex, risk potential, activity and combinations of the above. Monitor changes in the groups.
- mental filing – on successive sweeps, build student profiles that take note of swimming ability, skill, activity or other relevant factors. Track changes in student behaviour or activity on each scan.
- tracking – track the progress of individuals who submerge (from the diving board or the surface), and those who fit the high-risk profile, eg. the lone student at the water's edge.

OTHER ISSUES TO CONSIDER WHEN SCANNING

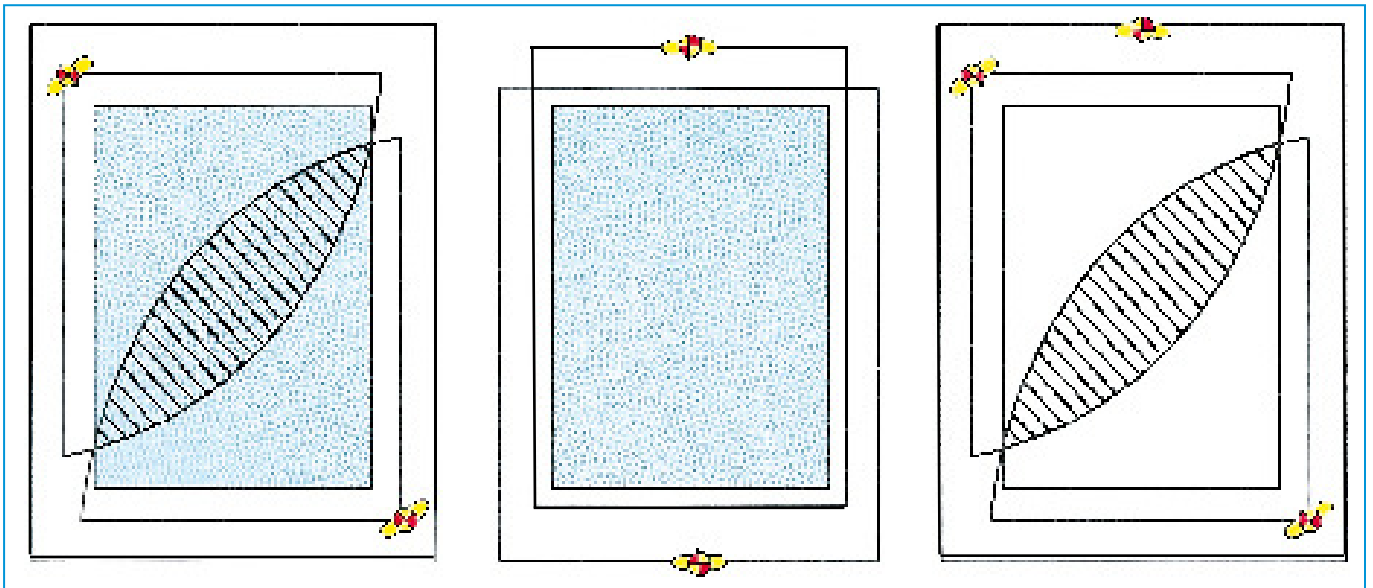
- Water bobbers who jump up and down from the floor of the pool, just breaking the surface with their mouths.
- Corner jumpers who attempt to leap across the corner of the pool. Ban this activity immediately.
- Side jumpers who leap from the side of the diving board towards the sides of the pool, or those who jump from the sides of the pool and try to turn around to face the side in mid-air. Ban these activities immediately.
- Gutter grabbers and rope holders who move into deep water hand-over-hand along ropes or edges.
- Swimmers under diving boards, slides, ladders or other aquatic equipment.
- Disoriented people who have been doing somersaults, flip-turns, dives, or who have just come down a water slide, twisting and turning at high speed. Ban these activities immediately.
- Breath holders, tile counters and students playing 'dead man floating' who hold their breath. Ban these activities immediately. See DET Hypoxic memo, www.sports.det.nsw.edu.au/latest_news/year_2005/hypoxic.htm

TECHNIQUES – Supervision Zones

Certain zones at a venue (or areas within a zone) are known to frequently cause concern because of the number of students and patrons, the nature or intensity of student and patron activity, or because some physical characteristic of the zone results in the need for frequent intervention.

Seek the assistance of the venue lifeguards to establish each teacher's area of responsibility. Remember, regular rotation and movement will prevent boredom and therefore provide a higher level of vigilance.

Supervising teachers should position themselves to maximise visual coverage of the venue. The diagrams below show common positioning of lifeguards supervising a swimming pool. By placing supervising staff around the pool and overlapping zones an extensive supervision network is provided.



HOW TO AVOID COMPLACENCY, FATIGUE AND LACK OF CONCENTRATION

It is important that aquatic coordinators ensure teachers / supervisors remain vigilant throughout the entire unstructured activity.

Staff are required to maintain active supervision (scanning and surveillance) whenever students are in or around water!

There are many issues and conditions that can impact on students participating in aquatic activity. Supervisors need to be aware of these including:

- changes in environmental conditions such as wind and cool weather, which can result in hypothermia
- fatigue can easily result in loss of coordination and cramps
- injury and illness can lead to swimming difficulties
- medical conditions can result in sudden behavioural changes and physical impediment.

Aquatic coordinators should be conscious of the safety implications surrounding complacency, fatigue and lack of concentration that results from, but is not limited to:

- time/duration of supervision session
- time of day
- workload
- weather (outdoor pools) humidity (indoor pools)
- noise

Regular rotations, changes in duty or supervision area, along with regular breaks all assist in avoiding lapses in concentration.

CHANGES IN ACTIVITY/SUPERVISION POINTS:

The maximum period for a person to undertake any supervision or duty will depend upon the environment in which the duty is taking place. Ideally, staff should change their points of supervision or duty every 15 to 30 minutes.

KEY REMINDER CARDS

Photocopy and laminate for poolside use (See Appendix 6).

WATER SURVIVAL CHALLENGE	
Elements	SURVIVAL CHALLENGE
Entry	Perform a slide in entry Walk 5m through the water
Survival Swimming	Continuously swim 25m • Using an action that resembles a stroke
Survival Sequence	Survival Sequence • Survival scull, float or tread water for 1 minute in deep water. • Call for help once within the sequence.
Exit	Exit the water unassisted
Rescue Sequence	Voice Rescue • Reassure the person in difficulty. • Talk to the person in difficulty in an attempt to calm and encourage them all the way to safety. • Call for assistance.

AQUATIC SCANNING & SURVEILLANCE

- Establish clear, unobstructed sight lines.
- Sweep your eyes over the entire area you are scanning.
- Each student within the scanning area should be checked regularly.
- Scan the bottom of the swimming area as well as the surface.
- Check weaker swimmers more frequently.
- Look and listen for the unusual.
- Be careful of conditions that affect visibility: sun glare, overhead lights, cloudy water, shadows or disturbance on the water.
- If a student asks a question or has a concern, acknowledge them and explain that you are listening but still need to scan your area.

Supervision is the key for the safe conduct of aquatic activity.

RECOGNISING A PERSON IN DIFFICULTY

A PERSON IN REAL DISTRESS MAY NOT BE ABLE TO CALL FOR HELP

- Eyes wide open searching for teacher
- Eyes scrunched shut and holding breath
- Fear evident on face
- Unable to respond to instructions (either verbal or visual)
- Gasping/hyperventilating
- Grabbing at nearby swimmers
- Periodically submerging and uncontrolled movement used to reach the surface
- Attempting to swim in one direction and not succeeding
- Rigid jerky movements/slowing of movement
- Trying to swim in a vertical position /45-degree angle
- Holding on to injured body part
- Blue or white lips
- Uncontrolled shivering

A STUDENT DISPLAYING ANY OF THE ABOVE SIGNS SHOULD IMMEDIATELY BE REMOVED FROM THE WATER.

UNSTRUCTURED AQUATIC ACTIVITY

WATER SURVIVAL CHALLENGE – CHECK LIST AND RISK MANAGEMENT INDICATORS

Administration

Select Venue	Yes	No
• Is the pool 50m long?		
• Is the pool 25m long?		
• Is there shallow water (waist deep or less)?		
• Is there chest deep water?		
• Is there deep water?		
• Are there appropriate areas for non-banded, yellow-banded and blue-banded students in and around the pool?		
• Are all points of the pool visible for supervision/scanning?		
• Are there appropriate shaded areas?		
• Are change rooms appropriate for student numbers?		
• Does the venue cater for changes in weather conditions?		
• Does the venue/facility have liability cover?		
• Are emergency procedures in place in the venue?		
• Emergency vehicle access?		
• Are first aid facilities available?		
• Water quality and pool deck safely maintained?		
• Is rescue equipment easily accessible?		
• Do the staff at the venue have appropriate qualifications?		
• Will venue staff will be assisting?		
• Have the roles of the venue staff been organised?		
Staff	Yes	No
• Do any members of the school staff hold aquatic qualifications?		
• Have suitably qualified supervisors been employed if no staff member holds aquatic qualifications?		
• Does one of the attending school staff members have a current CPR?		
• Are all staff familiar with the Water Survival Challenge and viewed the DVD?		
• Are all staff physically capable of supervising an aquatic activity?		
• Have considerations been made for weather, noise, workload and duration of supervision/scanning?		
Permission Notes	Yes	No
• Do the notes clearly inform parent/caregiver of specific aquatic activity?		
• Has the parent/caregiver given signed consent for the student to participate in the aquatic activity?		
• Does the note allow the parent/caregiver to provide information about students swimming ability?		
• Can the permission note be translated into the required language (s)?		
• Does the note provide information regarding health issues?		
Pupil Assessment	Yes	No
• Have all students completed the Water Survival Challenge within the last 2 terms?		
• Do any students need to be assessed prior to this activity?		
• Has the students ability to comprehend directions been considered (including ESL students)?		
• Have rolls been collated of non participants, non-proficient and proficient swimmers?		
• Is there a plan in place for checklisting students entering water and exiting the pool and venue?		
Transport	Yes	No
• Has transport been considered?		
• Have aspects of travel been considered to and from venue?		

Staff Induction

Venue	Yes	No
• Are staff familiar with venue layout, entry/exit points, water depths, assembly areas, first aid rooms?		
• Are staff familiar with venue rules and regulations?		
• Are staff familiar with emergency procedures?		
• Are staff familiar with responsibilities of venue staff including lifeguards		
Aquatic Knowledge		
• Are staff familiar with the Water Survival Challenge and viewed the DVD?		
• Are staff capable of assessing a student in the Water Survival Challenge?		
• Are staff aware of scanning techniques and vigilance when possible?		
• Are staff aware of carrying rescue aids when supervising?		
• Can staff recognise a person in trouble, fatigued, etc?		
Staff Responsibilities	Yes	No
• Do staff understand all their individual responsibilities on the day?		
• Are staff aware of their appropriate personal attire and rehydration?		
• Does staff know how to recognise the aquatic organiser?		
• Are staff aware of rotation roster when supervising?		
• Are staff aware of student/teacher ratio?		
• Have the staff been informed about the activities that will be taking place?		
• Have the staff been given appropriate written information to help with the days procedures?		

Activities

Venue	Yes	No
• Has lack of shallow water/lack of deep water been considered in pool allocation for the activity?		
• Is equipment in place for the aquatic activity?		
• Are activities of a suitable duration for students (including those not entering the water) and staff?		
• In choosing activities, has consideration been given to time of day, physical exertion, weather?		
Student Induction	Yes	No
• Have all students completed or are up to date with the Water Survival Challenge before the unstructured aquatic activity?		
• Have appropriate pool areas been assigned to correlate with the aquatic proficiency of the students?		
• Have students who are participating been wristbanded?		
Staff Duties	Yes	No
• Are teachers aware of all their duties and responsibilities?		
• Are all teachers carrying a piece of rescue equipment?		
• Are teachers appropriately positioned for scanning and other activities?		
• Do all teachers have reminder cards for surveillance?		
• Are teachers appropriately attired?		
• Are all teachers equipped with appropriate paperwork?		

THE WATER SURVIVAL CHALLENGE

All swimmers will be required to complete the Water Survival Challenge prior to participation in unstructured aquatic activity. 'The Challenge' has been developed in consultation with Royal Life Saving Australia.

The aim of 'The Challenge' is to determine the aquatic proficiency of students prior to participation in unstructured aquatic activity.

School staff will be required to fulfil various roles during 'The Challenge.' These roles will be outlined by the aquatic coordinator.

STEP 6. STUDENT INDUCTION

Prior to or at the venue it is important that students are provided with an induction into 'The Challenge.' The outcome will determine how the student can participate in the unstructured aquatic activity. Each element within 'The Challenge' should be outlined to the students. The DVD can be utilised as a teaching resource highlighting the different aspects of 'The Challenge.'

Students wishing not to participate in aquatic activities will not be allowed to enter the water, this includes students whose parents have not provided consent for them to enter the water. Students who are nominated by their parents/caregivers as swimmers but who do not wish to participate in 'The Challenge' are to be treated as non-proficient

STEP 7. THE CHALLENGE

TESTING STUDENT PROFICIENCY

'The Challenge' identifies the proficiency that each student demonstrates at the time of testing. If a student is able to walk with balance in the water but is unable to complete 'The Challenge', a yellow wrist band is issued.

'The Challenge' consists of five elements:

- **Entry** – Slide in entry into shallow water and walk five metres (Please note: This is the minimum benchmark for yellow wristbanded students).
- **Survival Swimming** – 25m swim with recognisable strokes
- **Survival Sequence** – Scull, float or tread water for 1 minute, call out for help once
- **Exit** – Exit the water unassisted
- **Rescue Sequence** – Demonstrate a simple voice rescue.

To be regarded as proficient, each student is required to demonstrate proficiency against 'The Challenge', as outlined in the table provided.

STEP 8. CLASSIFYING STUDENTS/WRIST BANDS

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

Proficient students issued with a blue wrist band will be deemed safe to participate in the appropriate activity as outlined in the schools risk management plan.

Non-proficient students will be issued with a yellow wrist band. and can participate in shallow water activities.

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

Wrist bands are utilised prior to the commencement of unstructured activities. to recognise the proficiency of students. When selecting a wrist band please ensure the following:

- the wrist band is designed for single use is waterproof, tear resistant and non stretch. Wrist bands made of Tyvek are recommended.
- sufficient numbers of wrist bands are available to cater for the entire group
- ensure additional wrist bands are available in case of breakage or loss during activity
- are disposable to avoid students reusing bands or providing to other groups or students. Must be cut off to be removed making them a single use item.

Wrist bands come in a variety of sizes and schools need to ensure adequate wrist band thickness to enable quick identification. (Recommended 250mm x25mm).

When applying a wrist band, ensure they are tight enough to avoid student removal or swapping of wrist bands but not too tight to interfere with circulation or cause discomfort.

Wrist bands can be sourced from local suppliers, the internet or are available from Royal Life Saving NSW (www.royalnsw.com.au).

Blue wrist bands should be used to indicate proficient students. Yellow wrist bands should be used for non-proficient students.

It is important that schools consistently utilise these colours to avoid confusion at aquatic venues where pool lifeguards/staff will also be observing.

Appropriate activities should be organised for those students deemed not proficient but assessed as being capable of walking with balance and confidence in water (yellow wrist band). Students with yellow wrist bands should have a designated shallow water area for their use. This area will be in the shallow part of the pool and established in collaboration with the facility management and lifeguard. This area must be appropriately defined and with area specific supervision applied.

Shallow water is defined as water depth no higher than a student's waist. This allows for a distressed student to signal for help.

Teachers supervising non swimmers (yellow wrist bands) should monitor students ability to walk with balance and confidence in shallow water. If the student has difficulty they should be removed from the water.

Students who are not participating (ie. students without a yellow or blue wrist band) in the aquatic activity must be assigned a supervised area away from the water's edge.

Any student who is in the water without a wrist band should be immediately removed from the water.

NOTE: Schools may consider additional support through school swimming lessons for students unable to meet 'The Challenge' criteria or identify themselves as non swimmers. Schools may also recommend to parents that their child be referred to an AUSTSWIM recognised swim school for professional assistance.

WATER SURVIVAL CHALLENGE – MUST SEE CRITERIA

Elements	SURVIVAL CHALLENGE	MUST SEE	VALIDATION
Entry	<p>Perform a slide in entry. Walk 5 metres through the water</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unassisted, hold side of pool. • Twist body to face the wall while lowering the body into the water. • Feel for the bottom with feet. • Walk through the water maintaining balance and control of direction. • Head still and eyes open. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe controlled form of entry. • Allows student to 'feel' the depth of water. • Safe controlled movement that student can utilise if unable to swim. • Recover to standing position.
Survival Swimming	<p>Continuously swim 25 metres</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using an action that resembles a stroke. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous swim for 25m. • Any stroke may be selected, including freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, survival backstroke or sidestroke. • Body position, breathing and arm and leg actions should resemble the chosen stroke. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate distance to determine swimming proficiency. • Proficient swimming of 25m enables student to reach a point of safety in a 50m swimming pool.
Survival Sequence	<p>Survival Sequence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survival scull, float and/or tread water for 1 minute in deep water. • Call for help once within the sequence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempt controlled hand sculling action. • Stationary position. • Face clear of the water. • Loud clear voice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The capacity to scull, float or tread water for an extended duration ensures a student can remain in safe position, with face clear of the water, until intervention by lifeguard or rescuer if required. • Calling out to alert lifeguard or rescuer that assistance is required.
Exit	<p>Exit the water unassisted</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold onto the edge of the pool. • Move to a point (using hand over hand movements so as not to let go the edge of the pool) in the pool where an exit can be demonstrated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not all students will be able to climb out over the edge of the pool. • Students must be able to remove themselves from the pool. • Students must show the ability to recognise their own capabilities regarding exits. • Students must be appropriately accommodated for regarding their individual physical capabilities. (refer DDA)
Rescue Sequence	<p>Voice Rescue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reassure the person in difficulty. • Talk to the person in difficulty in an attempt to calm and encourage them all the way to safety. • Call for assistance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good eye contact. • Calm clear instructions. • Alerting lifeguard or adult that assistance is needed while still maintaining eye contact with person in difficulty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced risk to rescuer by not entering the water. • Voice rescues are the safest form of rescue and provide reassurance to a distressed individual. • Alert an adult that assistance is required. • Maintaining eye contact with person in difficulty ensures their condition is monitored until reaching a point of safety.

STRUCTURING 'THE CHALLENGE'

The diagram below is one example of how to position teachers/supervisors when conducting 'The Challenge'. The conduct of 'The Challenge' will vary according to the venue layout and its use. This example is relevant for large schools with adequate staffing levels. Small schools should seek the assistance of lifeguards/parents to help with supervision.

The configuration of staff supervisors in the example below allows for large numbers of students to be assessed quickly minimising time required to complete 'The Challenge'. For small student numbers less staff are required as the number of students in the water at any one time should be modified to ensure appropriate supervision.

For the purpose of this diagram the pool is 25 metres long.

It is recommended that schools seek advice from the pool venue in relation to planning and conducting of 'The Challenge'.

COORDINATION AND PLACEMENT OF STAFF

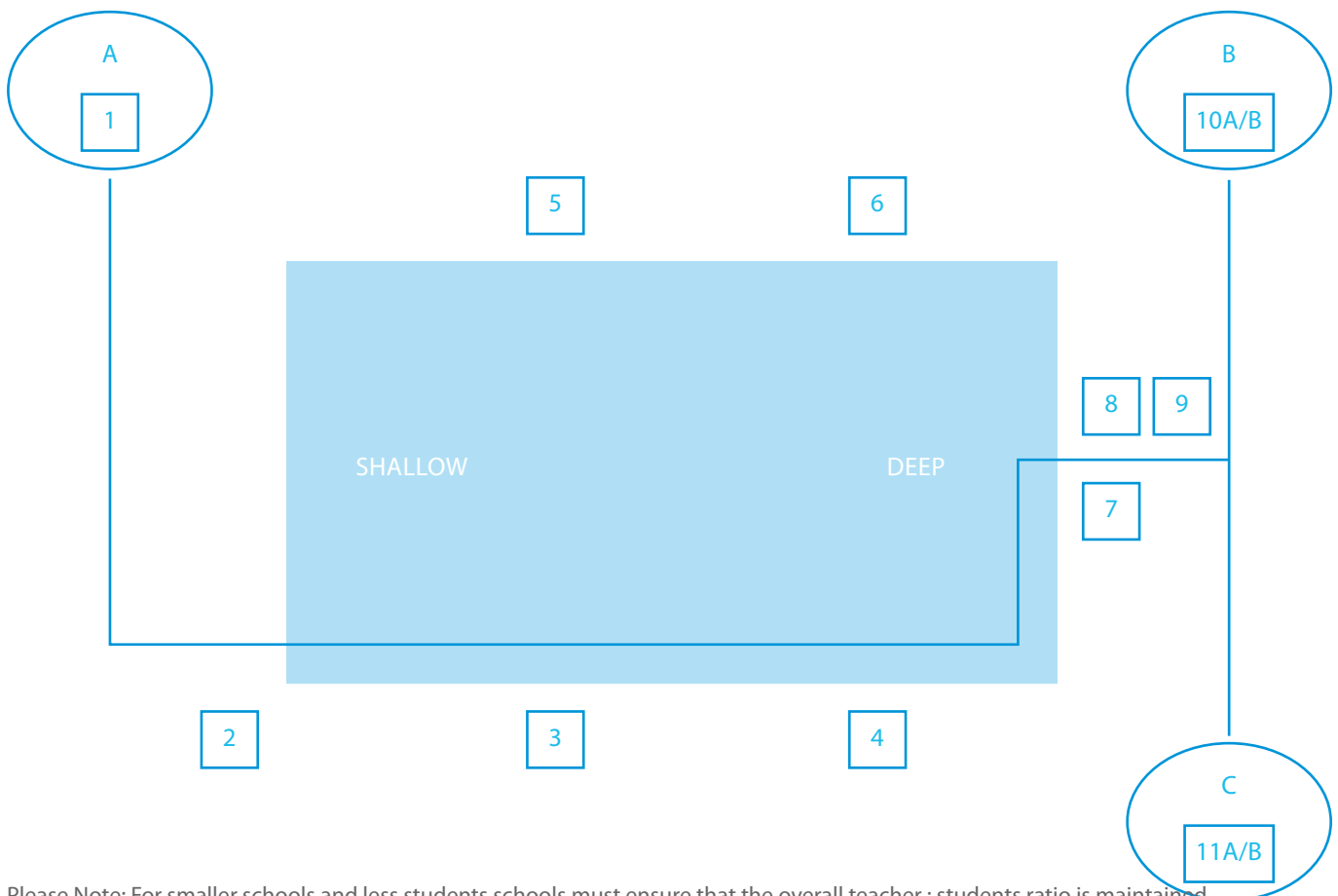
STATIONS

- A Student induction and coordination point
- B Non-Proficient Station – Students issued yellow wrist bands
- C Proficient Station – Student issued with blue wrist bands

TEACHER/SUPERVISOR ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1 Staff member to induct students
- 2 Students to progress to staff member in single line for slide-in entry– allow 5-10 seconds between students
- 3 Supervise swim element (remove student if showing signs of fatigue or weakness)
- 4 Supervise swim element (remove student if showing signs of fatigue or weakness)
- 5 Supervise shallow water
- 6 Supervise deep water
- 7 Supervise survival element and exit
- 8 Supervise rescue element
- 9 Ensure students attend appropriate station for wrist band application
- 10 Apply wrist band and record non-proficiency
- 11 Apply wrist band and record proficiency.

All staff should have access to a rescue device (rescue tube or reach pole) in case of a student experiencing difficulty. In the first instance, staff should try to avoid entry into water.



Please Note: For smaller schools and less students schools must ensure that the overall teacher : students ratio is maintained



SECTION 4

UNSTRUCTURED AQUATIC ACTIVITY

SUPPORT RESOURCES

APPENDIX 1:

STRATEGIC LINKS TO THE AUSTRALIAN WATER SAFETY STRATEGY 2008-2011

The Water Safety Guidelines have been developed to meet key strategies identified in the Australian Water Safety Strategy 2008-2011. The table below identifies the relationship between the Water Safety Guidelines and the Australian Water Safety Strategy.

Developing the Water Safety Guidelines	Australian Water Safety Plan 2008-2011
<p>Government, Peak Agencies and the Aquatic Industry</p>	 <p>Foster Collaborative Approaches to Drowning Prevention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and implement strategies that build the capacity of the sector to reduce drowning.
Water Safety Guidelines	Australian Water Safety Plan 2008-2011
<p>Planning Stage</p>	 <p>Build Systems that Support Safe Aquatic Recreation Venues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement programs that minimise risk in aquatic recreational environments.
<p>Administration Stage</p>	 <p>Strengthen Policies, Legislation and Standards Related to Water Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop, implement, advocate and improve policies, legislation and standards related to water safety.
<p>Activity/Program Stage</p>	 <p>Strengthen the Skills, Standards and Contribution of our Drowning Prevention People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement strategies that strengthen our Australian culture of water safety. • Promote water safety and lifesaving education to school aged children. • Investigate the effects of survival swimming skills in children and youth.
Monitoring and Reviewing	Australian Water Safety Plan 2008-2011
<p>Royal Life Saving Drowning Report Royal Life Saving Aquatic Injury Report</p>	 <p>Extend the Drowning Prevention Evidence Base</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate to foster meaningful drowning and aquatic injury research.

APPENDIX 2: COMMON QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

UNSTRUCTURED ACTIVITY

Q What is an “unstructured” activity?

A The Water Safety Guidelines only apply to unstructured aquatic activities including unstructured recreational swimming, which may be incorporated in weekly swimming programs, school excursions, camps or activity/celebration days.

Examples of unstructured aquatic activity:

- ‘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

Q Does ‘The Challenge’ need to be completed prior to a swimming carnival?

A No. A swimming carnival is a structured event.

Q Are learn-to-swim programs unstructured activities?

A No. These programs take place with teachers and instructors allocated to specific groups of students and are therefore structured aquatic activities.

Q Will this affect swimming carnivals where free swimming and novelty events are planned to occur?

A In relation to the free swimming component, this is an unstructured activity, and as such, requires assessment of swimming proficiency against the Water Survival Challenge criteria. 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. The elementary nature of novelty events will usually allow non-swimmers to be involved.

Q What about recreational swimming regularly conducted as part of secondary sports program?

A All students requesting involvement in a recreational swimming program where ‘free’ or unstructured activity is an element must be assessed prior to commencement of the program. If this type of activity is a regular event, non-swimmers are not to be included.

This group is selected as per other school sports, according to ability, experience etc, so there is a requirement that students are able to swim.

WRIST BANDS

Q Do the wrist bands need to be blue (swimmer) and yellow (non-swimmer)?

A Yes. We need to ensure that there is a consistent application of this policy between schools and across school education sectors.

Q What situations require using bands?

A Unstructured/fun/celebration/reward days.

Q All students in my planned activity are non-swimmers. Do these students have to apply wrist bands?

A If there are no other groups or schools at the venue, there is no requirement to use wrist bands.

Where other school groups are attending, students must wear wrist bands.

Q When do we apply the bands?

A If parents have advised that their child is a non-swimmer, the wrist bands are applied prior to entry to the aquatic venue if they intend to enter the water. All other students with permission are to participate in ‘The Challenge’. Wrist bands are to be applied to the students immediately after they complete ‘The Challenge’.

Q Why aren’t wrist bands re-usable?

A 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.

Q Why are all students required to wear wrist bands?

A Identification of swimmers and non-swimmers.

Q What about Year 7 Swim and Survive classes that are usually conducted late Term 4 each year and operate over five to 10 days?

A These activities are structured events with teachers allocated specifically to tuition groups.

Q Where do we get the yellow and blue wrist bands?

A Local suppliers or through Royal Life Saving at www.royalnsw.com.au

Q Why not use wrist bands made of rubber?

A Rubber can cause a skin rash, are more expensive and not deemed to be a one-off disposable item.

SURVIVAL CHALLENGE (AQUATIC SURVIVAL ASSESSMENT)

Q Can I undertake ‘The Challenge’ in open water such as a lake or river?

A It is preferable that ‘The Challenge’ be completed in a swimming pool. If there are no alternatives, open water venues may be used upon consultation with local authorities.

Q How often are students required to demonstrate proficiency against ‘The Challenge’?

A Aquatic proficiency (skills) can deteriorate if not practised on a regular basis. It is therefore recommended that students undertake ‘The Challenge’ prior to the first unstructured activity during the school year. Additional assessment against ‘The Challenge’ criteria should occur if previous assessment exceeds two school terms.

Q What about school camps?

A NSW Sport and Recreation Camps can conduct ‘The Challenge’ and provide appropriate pool supervision staff and alternate activities for non participants. Schools should check with alternative camp operators regarding their arrangements.

Q How do we deal with new enrolments?

A It is recommended that schools do not accept any evidence (certificate or record of proficiency) provided by another school, or swim coach or any other organisation or agency. New enrolments that have arrived at the school after 'The Challenge' has been completed should be assessed against 'The Challenge' prior to participating in any future unstructured aquatic activity.

Q Is re-testing allowed?

A Yes. They may have been undertaking learn-to-swim activities, which have increased their proficiency levels.

Q Is 'The Challenge' reliant on any resources?

A The aquatic coordinator in charge must ensure that appropriate rescue equipment, such as buoyancy and reaching aids are readily available and on hand at 'The Challenge' assessment site, for example a pool noodle.

Q Can 'The Challenge' be coordinated by Lifeguards?

A Yes.

Q Can students complete 'The Challenge' the week before the planned aquatic activity?

A Yes.

Q Can I use parents to assist with 'The Challenge'?

A Yes. However, a teacher must take overall responsibility.

Q Can I purchase RLSSA Survival Challenge certificates?

A Yes.

Q Is 'The Challenge' a learn-to-swim program?

A No.

Q Can students wear any flotation devices during "The Challenge?"

A No. Students need to demonstrate their swimming proficiency without the use of equipment.

Q If my students were assessed for a previous excursion (last March), is there a need to reassess the swimming ability of students participating in my next excursion (October)?

A Yes.

- What a student accomplished in March may not necessarily be retained in the following October/summer.
- The swimming ability reported by parents/caregivers on the excursion permission note may be inaccurate for a variety of reasons. The information needs to be confirmed if the student is nominated as a swimmer.

Q Do I have to record names as they are assessed?

A Yes. Names of students who are assessed as either non-swimmers or swimmers are to be recorded immediately following 'The Challenge'. Should a student find that their wrist band is missing (and this should be a rare occurrence) then the teacher is able to refer to the assessment lists to confirm the re-application of the correct band.

Q What if all my students can swim, and have been assessed?

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

EXCURSION VENUE

Q What "venue specific information" is required?

A Schools will need to carry out a full risk assessment and negotiate safety provisions, lifeguarding and supervision responsibility with the venue management.

Q We are planning a 'reward day' for our primary students at the local swimming pool. We intend to use the wrist bands. Pool management advice indicates that a number of other schools will be utilising the facility at the same time for recreational swimming programs and Learn To Swim. What should I do?

A Liaise with pool facility on their policy and use by schools from all sectors. A designated area for each group should be negotiated.

Q What do I need to do in terms of organisation when our school is considering going to fun parks or aquatic centres where water slides are prominent?

A The venue is in the best position to provide advice, schools should liaise with the venue prior to the excursion to define the activities and facilities at the venue. Some recreational parks with slides do not have pools designed for swimming and are considered to be a splash pool in shallow water. The usual non-aquatic excursion requirements still apply to these facilities. For facilities with swimming or deep water pools the school should follow 'The Challenge' requirements.

Q What is shallow water?

A 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.

Q What if in Sport & Recreation Centres the "shallow water" does not fit the definition as presented in these guidelines?

A At Sport and Recreation Centres and where students have been classified via 'The Challenge' and the "shallow water" does not fit the definition presented in these guidelines the decision to allow the use of flotation devices for non-proficient students can be at the discretion of the Sport and Recreation aquatic supervisor.

EXTENSION PROGRAMS

Q For older students, can I undertake a higher level within the RLSSA Aquatic Survival Challenge Series?

A Yes. This is very much encouraged. There are also a range of other providers and alternative programs available.

TEACHER SWIMMING QUALIFICATIONS

Q What is the best option for teachers who are considering qualification in Learn To Swim?

A AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety Certificate (DET has courses available – please refer to the DET Sport Unit website).

The School Sport Unit also conducts a one day workshop for teachers accompanying classes to the School Swimming Scheme – Escort Teacher Course.

SCHOOLS WITH POOLS

Q Do these guidelines apply to schools pools?

A Yes.

APPENDIX 3

WATER SURVIVAL CHALLENGE – VALIDATION

The following information is provided to support each element of 'The Challenge'. All elements must be considered in relation to the Disability Discrimination Act (1992).

ENTRY

Slide in entry takes place in the shallow end of the pool.

Why a slide in entry?

The slide in entry is a safe and controlled form of entry into both known and unknown depths. It allows the student to orientate themselves to the depth of the water and temperature. By facing the edge of the pool, the student has greater control when lowering or raising the body.

Why walk 5 metres in the water?

A student's ability to walk in the water and maintain balance is imperative to their water safety. The ability to stand up from a swimming position is one of the first skills that introductory swimmers are taught. It is very different to standing on land.

Students demonstrating that they are capable of walking/balancing in the water is a safety assessment for students taking part in novelty races in shallow water if they are otherwise deemed not proficient. If a child cannot balance in the water then they shouldn't be allowed to enter the water even in a novelty tabloid of events.

SURVIVAL SWIMMING

The student will commence swimming towards deeper water in close proximity to the edge of the pool. Therefore the swimming element should be undertaken in a single lane (closest to the edge).

Why the closest lane to the edge of the pool?

This allows for rapid intervention by school staff or a lifeguard if the student is demonstrating difficulties or lack of proficiency. School staff who are assigned as supervisors for the swimming element should have immediate access to a suitable rescue device, ie. a rescue tube or reach pole. With close monitoring there should be no need for any staff member to have to enter the water to perform an aquatic rescue.

Each student should complete 25 metres using recognisable strokes. Students should possess a swimming ability that allows for appropriate movement through the water using one of the following strokes: freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, survival backstroke or sidestroke. Body position, breathing and arm and leg actions should resemble the chosen stroke(s).

Dog paddle or unrecognisable techniques should result in immediate removal from the water. These forms of movement through the water are not deemed appropriate for the undertaking of unstructured aquatic activity. These students are given a yellow wristband.

On achieving 25 metres, each student is to then complete the Survival Sequence.

SURVIVAL SEQUENCE

What is the survival sequence?

The Survival Sequence involves each student "sculling, floating or treading water" for 1 minute in deep water. The Survival Sequence identifies the capacity of the student to keep their head above the water line so that they can call for help. At no point should the face be submersed below the water line. The time frame of 1 minute is based on simulated response times for lifeguards to recognise a swimmer in distress and perform an appropriate rescue.

Throughout the Survival Sequence, students should be asked to call for help. Each student is then required to exit the water unassisted.

EXIT

Why an unassisted exit from the water?

Exit unassisted – a student should be able to swim back to the edge of the pool and hold on to the edge to call for help. The student should then demonstrate that they are capable of either climbing out over the edge or moving along the pool edge to an appropriate exit point, eg. ladder, ramp, stairs. Pool conditions vary and decisions need to be made for the specific circumstances.

RESCUE SEQUENCE

Why a voice rescue?

When attempting the rescue of a person in difficulty, the rescuer should follow a priority sequence that begins with calling out instructions to the person in difficulty. This reduces the risk to the rescuer.

In a voice rescue, instructions are called out to the person in difficulty to reassure them and to provide suggestions on skills that they can use to get back to safety

Primary school aged children are encouraged not to enter the water themselves to save someone.

Voice rescue – reassure the person in difficulty.

The following sequence describes how the rescue is attempted:

- assess the situation quickly to select method of instruction (eg. float on your back, backscull/kick, swim, paddle, bounce)
- talk to the person in difficulty in an attempt to calm and encourage them all the way to safety
- call an adult.

APPENDIX 4:

5 STAR WATER SAFETY PARTNER BENCHMARKS

School principals and school aquatic coordinators are encouraged to seek out those aquatic venues that have made a commitment to aquatic safety and improvement against best practise guidelines. There are several providers of pool audits and school principals and aquatic coordinators are encouraged to select venues that are appropriate for the planned unstructured activities.

An example of a venue-based risk management tool for improving aquatic health and safety and recognised by the Department of Local Government's Practise Note 15 is the Guidelines for Safe Pool Operations. This document was compiled by Royal Life Saving Society.

The NSW Department of Education and Training recognises that the standards set out in the Guidelines for Safe Pool Operations are appropriate benchmarks.

One of the pool audit providers is the Royal Life Saving Society. They offer a pool audit process called 'The 5 Star Water Safety Partner'. This is an initiative that has been developed to identify aquatic venues that have met compulsory stringent safety benchmarks outlined below at the time of audit. These venues will display the logo.



1. ADMINISTRATION

REF.NO.	GUIDELINE REQUIREMENT
1.1	This venue has an up-to-date Operations Manual.
1.4	This venue has an Emergency Action Plan, which includes different scenarios and locations.
1.7	All venue staff are trained in the Emergency Action Plan.
1.8	All lifeguards hold a current recognised lifeguarding qualification and Royal Life Saving NSW Pool Lifeguard licence.
1.9	All lifeguards undertake in-service training covering all areas of lifeguard skills.
1.11	All first aiders hold a current recognised first aid qualification. Note: A first aider is any staff member expected or likely to perform first aid.
1.12	All program leaders, including swim teachers, hold appropriate and current AUSTSWIM Teacher qualifications and registration. Note: May include qualifications for infants, special needs.
1.16	A hirer's agreement is in place that details: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information regarding the likely number of persons using the venue, and if appropriate their skills. • The name of the hirer's representative who will be personally present and in charge of the group. • The age of the hiring group. • The number of lifeguards to be present during the session. • Respective responsibilities of the venue management and the hirer in an emergency. A distinction should be drawn between generated emergencies and venue emergencies (g. structural problems). • Any local laws which may be enforced. • Rules of behaviour to be followed, if different to the normal rules. • Any specific advice to be given to users. • Responsibility for the provision of first aid services. • Access to first aid equipment or otherwise.
1.18	Reports are made for every incident involving life-threatening hazards, and first aid.

2. FIRST AID

2.1	There is a designated first aid room or area of appropriate size and configuration.
2.5	There is at least one portable first aid kit. Note: Lifeguard bum-bags, if appropriately stocked, may be considered.
2.7	Functioning oxygen equipment is available for use in an emergency.
2.8	The oxygen equipment is stored safely ready for use.

3. TECHNICAL OPERATIONS

3.1	All pool water (including spa) is monitored and maintained within regulations set by local statutory authorities (within NSW Health Department Guidelines).
3.3	All pools open for use pools are sufficiently clear. Note: Bottom of pool at deep end clearly visible from sides of pool.
4.13	Depth markers are clearly visible from the concourse.

4. FACILITY DESIGN

4.3	The pool and its surrounds are sufficiently lit. Note: Average = 300 lux.
4.11	There are sufficient depth markers. Marking type: Note: Depth markers are in metric measures and placed at deep water, shallow water, and at regular intervals.
4.12	Depth markers are clearly visible from within the pool.
4.14	There is sufficient signage identifying deep water, shallow water, particularly at pool entry points. Note: Advisory warnings include Danger – Deep Water, and Caution – Shallow Water.
4.15	Deep/Shallow water signage is compliant with the Statewide, Best Practice Manual – Signs as Remote Supervision, Version 3, July 2007.
4.16	All “Do Not Dive” signage is compliant with the AS4614-2005 Design and application of water safety signage, Sign No. 213.
4.17	In water under 1.8 metres “Do Not Dive” sign is displayed.
4.19	There are barriers, appropriate signage or other management measure to control traffic on the concourse adjacent to deep water.
4.20	Toddlers’ and learners’ pools are located away from deep-water pools, or are there sufficient and appropriate barriers between adjacent shallow and deep-water areas.
4.25	Backstroke flags are present when lap swimming is being conducted.
4.26	Backstroke flags contrast against their background?
4.48	Starting blocks, when installed over water less than 2.0 metres in depth, are isolated when not in use.

5. SPA POOL(S)

5.2	The spa is sufficiently supervised.
5.12	The spa depth signage can be clearly viewed form outside the spa.

6. DIVE POOL(S)

6.1	The dive pool is appropriately and sufficiently supervised.
6.7	There is signage displaying rules of conduct.

8. WAVE POOLS

8.1	The wave pool sufficiently supervised.
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10. WATER FEATURES

10.1	Water features are sufficiently supervised.
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11. GENERAL SUPERVISION

11.2	There are sufficient lifeguards supervising the pool area. Note: The recommended maximum ratio is one guard to 100 bathers.
11.3	All pools are adequately supervised.
11.4	Venue management deploy lifeguards based off criteria, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• number of bathers• size of pools• shape of pools• relative location of pools and water features• surface reflection• activities and programs
11.9	All lifeguards have sufficient lines of sight to the pools.It is their duty to supervise.
11.13	There is signage that encourages responsible behaviour.

12. LEARN TO SWIM

12.4	Recommended teacher-to-student lesson ratios not exceeded. (www.austswim.com.au for learn-to-swim ratios)
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APPENDIX 5:

ROYAL LIFE SAVING SOCIETY AQUATIC CHALLENGE SERIES

The tables presented are an example of a structured activity offered through the community for schools looking for a progressive aquatic program. The table below may be used by schools wishing to provide extension to their existing aquatics program.

ELEMENTS	SURVIVAL CHALLENGE – Minimum benchmark for unstructured aquatic activities	SURVIVAL CHALLENGE BRONZE	SURVIVAL CHALLENGE SILVER	SURVIVAL CHALLENGE GOLD
Entry	Perform a slide-in entry and walk 5m through the water	Demonstrate a stride entry	Enter deep water using a feet first entry	Enter the water using a feet first entry
Survival Swimming	Swim continuously: (25m) Using an action that resembles a stroke	Swim continuously: (50m) 50m freestyle Using an action that resembles a stroke	Swim continuously: (75m) 50m freestyle 25m on the back or side (underwater arm recovery) (Recognisable stroke technique must be used)	Swim continuously: (100m) 50m freestyle 50m on the back or side (underwater arm recovery) (Recognisable stroke technique must be used)
Survival Sequence	Survival Sequence • Survival scull, float or tread water for 1 minute in deep water • Call for help once within the sequence	Survival Sequence: (Dressed in swimmers): • Survival scull, float or tread water for 1 minute and then swim for one minute holding a flotation aid • Release aid and scull, float or tread water for 1 minute	Dressed in swimwear (shorts and T-shirt) perform the following as a continuous sequence: • Scull, float or tread water for 2 minutes. • Swim slowly for 2 minutes, changing survival strokes after each minute • Scull, float or tread water for 1 minute and exit water	Dressed in swimwear, long pants and long-sleeved shirt, perform the following sequence: • Survival scull, float or tread water for 3 minutes • Swim slowly for three minutes using three survival strokes, changing after each minute
Rescue Sequence	Voice Rescue • Reassure the person in difficulty • Talk to the person in difficulty in an attempt to calm and encourage them all the way to safety • Call for assistance	Throw buoyant aid – a weak swimmer is in difficulty 5m from safety. • Throw a buoyant aid to the person and instruct the person on how to use the aid to reach safety.	A person is in difficulty 8 metres from safety. Using an aid: • Enter the water as for unknown conditions • Wade and offer the aid to the person • Pull the person to a safe position • Instruct the person on how to leave the water	A person is in difficulty 15m from safety. With a flotation aid: • Enter the water maintaining visual contact with the person • Wade and/or swim, keeping a safe distance, pass the aid to the person • Accompany the person to safety • Instruct the person on how to leave the water
Exit	Exit the water unassisted	Exit the water unassisted from the edge of the pool	Exit the water unassisted from the edge of the pool	Exit the water unassisted from the edge of the pool

ELEMENTS	SWIMMING & LIFESAVING CHALLENGE	SWIMMING & LIFESAVING CHALLENGE BRONZE	SWIMMING & LIFESAVING CHALLENGE SILVER	SWIMMING & LIFESAVING CHALLENGE GOLD
Entry	Enter water using a feet first entry	Enter the water using a slide entry	Enter water using a slide in entry	Enter water using a slide in entry
Survival Swimming	Swim continuously: (150m) 100m freestyle 50m on the back or side (Recognisable stroke technique must be used)	Swim continuously: (200m) 150m freestyle 50m on the back or side (recognisable stroke technique must be used)	Swim continuously: (250m) 200m freestyle 50m on the back or side (Recognisable stroke technique must be used)	Swim continuously: (300m) 200m freestyle 100m on the back or side (Recognisable stroke technique must be used)
Survival Sequence	Dressed in swimwear, long pants and long-sleeved shirt ,perform the following as a continuous sequence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter deep water using a feet first entry • Submerge feet first, swim underwater on the back, looking up at the surface • Swim 50m as if escaping from a dangerous situation and then swim 50m slowly. • Tread water for 1 minute • Swim slowly demonstrating survival strokes for 4 minutes • Scull, float or tread water for 4 minutes, waving for help intermittently • Clothing may be removed 	Dressed in swimwear, long pants, long-sleeved shirt perform the following sequence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dive and swim 5m underwater to simulate an escape from a submerged object • Swim a further 45m freestyle. • Swim 50m breaststroke. • Float, survival scull or tread water for 5 minutes and wave one arm occasionally as if signalling for help; reassure any nearby candidates by talking to them • Swim slowly for 100m using survival strokes, changing every 50m • Remove clothing in deep water 	Dressed in swimwear, long pants, long-sleeved shirt, perform the following sequence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter the water using a slide in entry and swim 50m • Swim 100m using survival strokes • Float, survival scull or tread water for 6 minutes, reassure any nearby candidates by talking to them • Swim slowly for 200m using survival strokes, changing every 50m • Remove clothing in deep water. 	Dressed in swimwear, long pants, long-sleeved shirt, perform the following sequence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter the water using a slide in entry treading water for 3 minutes • Swim 200m using survival strokes • Float, survival scull or tread water for eight minutes, reassure any nearby candidates by talking to them • Swim slowly for 200m using survival strokes, changing every 50m • Remove clothing in deep water.
Rescue Sequence	A weak swimmer is in difficulty in deep water 25m from safety. With a non-rigid towing aid: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter deep water using a stride entry or compact jump • Offer the aid to the person and tow to safety • Assist the person out of the water using a stirrup lift 	A weak or injured swimmer is in difficulty in deep water 50m from safety: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter shallow water using a slide-in entry • Wade for 5-10m and swim to the person • Tow the person (non-contact tow) back to the point of entry • Land the person using a suitable method 	An unconscious, breathing person is 50 metres from safety: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter the water, swim 50 m and tow the person 50m to safety. • The candidate will commence the rescue wearing swimwear, trousers and long-sleeved shirt, any of which may be discarded as desired. <p>The time for the test should not exceed four minutes from the starting signal until the completion of the tow.</p>	An injured swimmer who is unable to assist with propulsion is in difficulty 75m from safety: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter the water, swim 75m and tow the person 75m to safety • The candidate will commence the rescue wearing swimwear, trousers and long-sleeved shirt, which may be discarded as desired <p>The time for the test should not exceed 5 minutes and 30 seconds from the starting signal until the completion of the tow.</p>
Exit	Exit the water unassisted from the edge of the pool.	Exit the water unassisted from the edge of the pool.	Exit the water unassisted from the edge of the pool.	Exit the water unassisted from the edge of the pool.

APPENDIX 6:

WATER SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR UNSTRUCTURED AQUATIC ACTIVITY – SUMMARY CHECKLIST

The checklist below will assist in planning and implementing an unstructured aquatic activity. It is vitally important that principals and aquatic coordinators review policies and procedures and consider local regulations and departmental guidelines concerning the undertaking of unstructured aquatic activity.

STAGE	STEP	DETAIL	SUPPORT RESOURCES	COMPLETED
PLANNING	1. Select a venue	Select a venue that has made a commitment to water safety	Hiring Agreement	
ADMINISTRATION	2. Obtain parent/carer permission notes	Complete permission notes and child's swimming proficiency	TBA	
ADMINISTRATION	3. Check staff qualifications	Ensure staff qualifications meet departmental guidelines (CPR, Emergency Care, Rescue Qualification)	TBA	
ADMINISTRATION	4. Risk assessment	Complete Risk Assessment	Risk Indicators	
ACTIVITY	5. Staff induction	Induct staff detailing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Venue details. • Roles and responsibilities • Scanning and surveillance • Testing proficiency (Survival Challenge) • Use of wrist bands 	WATER SURVIVAL CHALLENGE – A workbook for teachers coordinating excursions involving aquatic activities.	
ACTIVITY	6. Student induction	Induct students detailing 'The Challenge' criteria and venue rules and regulations.	Structuring the Water Safety Challenge	
ACTIVITY	7. Testing proficiency	Students participate in the Water Survival Challenge.	The Water Survival Challenge - Reminder Cards	
ACTIVITY	8. Classifying students	Based on outcomes of the Water Survival Challenge apply wrist bands to proficient and non-proficient students and record details on class rolls.	Scanning and Surveillance Reminder Card Wrist Bands	

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