



Water-Based Activities (Sport/Camp/Excursion)

RATIONALE:

Swimming and water-based activities pose considerable risk to students and it is therefore the school's Duty of Care to ensure that all water-based activities are assessed for risk, planned for, supervised using appropriate ratios, and managed safely.

THE FOLLOWING JVS REQUIREMENTS ARE HALF THE RECOMMENDED RATIOS BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION NSW, IN RECOGNITION OF THE SPECIFIC HIGH NEEDS OF JVS STUDENTS:

1. Swimming at Beach and Inland Waterways

1.1 Supervision

- Principals and organising teachers should take into account such factors as nature of the activity, age, experience and maturity of the students, water conditions at the venue and experience and qualifications of the adult supervisors when arranging appropriate supervision.
- The activity supervision plan should include provision for students when they are not swimming. This would indicate where these students should be, what they can do and how they are to be supervised. For students with disabilities, such as at JVS, supervision requirements will vary and need to be assessed accordingly. In any case, the minimum supervision ratio for students who are not swimming should be no more than one staff member to ten students (1:10).
- A major factor when determining 'adequate supervision' that teachers must afford their students in aquatic activities in these locations is the swimming ability of the students in the class. Therefore, a reasonable assessment of student swimming ability should be made as close to the commencement of the activity as possible. Provision then needs to be made for the safe participation of weak or poor swimmers. This will involve additional, close supervision, restricting them to shallow water, and implementing a 'buddy' system.
- A minimum of two adult supervisors with appropriate expertise and/or training in the teaching or instruction of swimming must be present at all times. They must also have the ability to competently initiate an emergency rescue. The adult supervisor to student ratio in any swimming activity is not to exceed 1:7.

1.2 LEADER/INSTRUCTOR QUALIFICATIONS & SUPERVISION:

At beach locations, at least one supervisor must possess a current SLISA Bronze Medallion or SLISA Surf Rescue Certificate.

At inland waterways, at least one supervisor must possess:

a current RLSSA Bronze Medallion or

a SLSA Bronze Medallion or SLSA Surf Rescue Certificate.

All other supervisors actively supervising or instructing in the water must hold a current qualification in one of the following:

RLSSA Bronze Medallion,

SLSA Patrol Bronze Medallion or SLSA Surf Rescue Certificate,

APOLA Ocean Safety Surf Coach Award,

Surfing Australia Level One Coaching Certificate or

AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety Certificate.

Lifeguards may only be included in the staff to student ratio if they do not have general lifeguard duties at the venue at the time, and their sole responsibility is to the students in the program.

Where a surf patrol or lifeguard is on duty and students are within the designated patrol area, staff members must still meet the qualifications requirements and maintain supervisory responsibilities.

The teacher-in-charge of the activity must arrange for all swimming areas to be supervised including the change rooms and amenities.

In addition, there must be at least one supervisor patrolling the venue to exercise overall supervision.

All teachers must be ready to render assistance in case of emergency.

It is desirable that all supervising teachers are in swimming attire.

Appropriately qualified and/or experienced adults may be included in the supervision plan, provided that the principal is satisfied with their ability and qualifications and that there are sufficient teachers to maintain control of the activity and assume overall responsibility.

Appropriate roll marking procedures must be established.

1.2.1 A Supervision Guide

Venue Type	Supervision
Confined shallow water at natural venues.	Students with little or no experience - the adult supervisor: student should not exceed 1:10. A 1:15 ratio may apply to students who are able to competently swim 100m.
Deep open water including deep and/or flowing water at non-surf beaches, lakes and rivers.	Students taking part in deep water activities should be able to competently swim, using recognised strokes, 200m. Students should be proficient in survival sculling and treading water. A supervisor: student ratio of 1:10 is recommended in these circumstances.
Patrolled surf beaches (Non-patrolled beaches are not to be used for swimming activities).	As a guide, a supervisor: student ratio of 1:10 applies. However, supervision may need to be increased taking into account: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ type of activity/program eg. recreational swimming, structured surf awareness program, surf life saving ▪ student ages and experiences eg. no familiarity with surf at all ▪ student swimming ability ▪ use of supplementary support eg. instructors provided by SLS NSW or lifeguard services ▪ experience and qualification of teachers and adult supervisors
Note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A minimum of two qualified adult supervisors must be present at all times. ▪ A teacher must be present who has current training in CPR and emergency care. ▪ Group size should not exceed fifty students. ▪ The younger the student and the deeper the water, the greater will be the supervision required. 	

1.3 Equipment

- Adequate and appropriate rescue equipment must be available and placed ready for use by suitably qualified teachers and/or instructors. Rescue tube or rescue board and fins are essential.
- A megaphone, air horn, or whistle should be available to allow the leader and observers to communicate with those in the water.
- An appropriate communication system must be readily available in the case of an emergency. Where mobile phones are to be used, teachers should be aware that they may not operate in all locales.
- A well-equipped OH&S Category B first aid kit containing a resuscitation mask with one way valve must be readily available.

1.4 Venues

When assessing the suitability of a swimming venue prior to conducting the activity, considerations should be given to the following:

- the ages and abilities of the students
- the qualifications and experience of supervising staff
- the capacity to clearly define the swimming area
- analysis of risks and hazards to determine if a satisfactory plan can be developed to

ensure the safety of students

- the depth and condition of the water in relation to the skills of the students
- available shelter from sun, wind and rain given likely weather conditions
- the suitability of facilities including the need for changing clothes and security of clothing
- emergency communication
- intrusion into the school group by uninvited members of the public
- first aid and rescue equipment
- venue access for emergency purposes.

The prevailing water or surf conditions must be assessed thoroughly by the teacher-in-charge/leader on arrival. If the conditions are unsuitable at any time, the swimming component of the activity must be cancelled. Teachers should ensure that students comply with signage and instructions from the beach patrol or facility authorities.

1.5 Beach Locations

- Recreational swimming and body surfing is only to be conducted at a location recognised as a safe surfing location, where a surf patrol or council beach inspector lifeguard is operating and where rescue equipment is readily available.
- A safe surfing area must be defined by the teacher-in-charge in consultation with the beach authorities and will always be indicated by flags. Students are to be instructed to remain within this area. Supervising staff should ensure that students remain in the designated activity area.
- Schools are strongly encouraged to contact the respective seaside council lifeguard service, Surf Life Saving NSW or regional offices of the Department of Sport and Recreation in the planning of the activity.
- These organisations are able to provide information and further advice concerning the conduct of the activity. Seaside councils or the local branch of Surf Life Saving NSW are often able to provide instruction in various surfing activities. Schools are advised to give advance notice to secure times and venues for their proposed activity.

1.6 Inland Waterways

- Recreational swimming at an Inland water location is only to be conducted at an area recognised as a safe swimming location. Councils will be able to recommend suitable areas and advise on available water safety services.
- The teacher-in-charge should produce a documented risk assessment of the activity prior to the activity being approved by the principal. This assessment will identify major risks and hazards and make judgements as to the likely occurrence of difficulties, their severity and consequences. It will indicate any actions that are being taken to minimise or reduce risks and hazards. Refer to page 71 for a risk management procedure.
- The boundaries of the safe swimming area should be defined eg. floats or anchored buoys linked with ropes.
- A supervisor or lifeguard with current qualifications in rescue, resuscitation and first aid must be present.

1.7 Safety

- The teacher-in-charge must ensure that all staff and students are adequately briefed in water safety and swimming techniques applicable to the venue and the

lesson, "buddy" safety system, appropriate communication signals, cooperative nature of the activity and safe working practice.

- Signs, rules and conditions established by local controlling authorities must be observed.
- Because of the risks inherent in aquatic activities, the teacher-in-charge of the group must ensure that a plan detailing suitable emergency procedures is in place and that it will ensure access to emergency support without compromising the duty of care to the group or a casualty. All staff must be familiar with the plan.
- The supervising teacher must be aware of the location of all participants in their charge. Procedures for regular, on-going accounting for the number of students in a group should be established. A "buddy" system should be established for all water activities.

No student is to enter the water without appropriate supervision.

If the swimming venue does not have sufficient shade and shelter facilities, temporary shelter or shorter swimming sessions should be considered. Supervisors should be aware of conditions contributing to, and symptoms of, over exposure to heat (hyperthermia) and over exposure to cold (hypothermia).

Many natural venues do not have drinking water readily available. The provision of water and ensuring that the students drink it, particularly on hot days, should be included in the planning. Students are not, under any circumstances, to dig tunnels or large holes in sandy locations because of the unstable nature of the material. Students must be advised of this instruction.

2. Swimming and Water Safety

2.1 Introduction

Many schools as part of sport, physical education or special focus programs engage in aquatic activities and conduct programs that may be categorized as:

- weekly training and instruction sessions which provide for water safety, life saving and advanced swimming programs
- intensive learn to swim and water safety programs
- recreational swimming incorporated in sport programs, school excursions and camp situations
- Surf education initiatives conducted by Surf Life Saving NSW and seaside councils and designed for students training to gain surf qualifications or developed as surf awareness programs.

For all aquatic programs and activities, parents must be informed of full details of the location, supervision to be provided and planned activities to be undertaken when seeking their written permission.

THIS ALSO RELATES TO THE USE OF THE SCHOOL'S OWN SWIMMING POOL, WITH ALL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES THAT FOLLOW ALSO RELATING TO THE USE OF THE SCHOOL'S OWN POOL, FOR WHATEVER PURPOSE.

The permission note must contain a clause authorising medical aid if it is considered necessary by the supervising teacher. The note should also include a section where the parent advises the school of any illness or medical condition that the student suffers

from, or any medication the student is currently taking (including asthma sprays, etc). If a student suffers from a medical condition which might put that swimmer at risk in the water, a medical certificate must be obtained for the student to participate in the swimming program.

Parents of students participating in excursions which incorporate aquatic activities must be asked to indicate the swimming ability of their children when giving consent. If parents indicate students are poor or non swimmers, principals will need to assess whether such students should participate in the swimming or water activities. This assessment will need to take into account whether flotation devices can be used to aid the student. This assessment must take place irrespective of parental permission for the students to participate in the swimming or water activities.

For students with disabilities, supervision requirements will vary and need to be assessed accordingly. Particular attention may need to be given to:

- the possible need for integration aides and trained volunteers with specialist expertise and qualifications who might advise on adaptations and improvisation before and during the activities
- consideration of fitness levels of participants
- the need for additional support or safety equipment, such as buoyancy vests
- suitability of facilities and access for students in wheelchairs or who have restricted mobility
- specific medical needs of students
- water temperature and weather conditions.

When epileptic students participate in swimming activities, there must be one supervisor, not necessarily a teacher, for each student in the water. A teacher must always be responsible for the overall supervision of the group.

Students are to be instructed to use adequate sun protection, eg. as a minimum a SPF30+, broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen reapplied regularly and a hat when not in the water. For outdoor venues, parents and students should be advised to provide a shirt for additional protection in the water. A rash vest is ideal for this purpose.

Teachers planning swimming and water safety activities, either as a special focus program or part of an excursion, need to be familiar with the procedures associated with ***'Excursions'***.

Where adults other than teachers, are engaged to assist school staff in the supervision or instruction of swimming groups, refer to other related policies and procedures in order to assess responsibilities and their 'duty of care'.

Sports activities and excursions involving water activities are to be accompanied by a staff member with current training in cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and emergency care. Re-accreditation for CPR is required annually and every three (3) years for the emergency care qualification.

2.2 Student Preparation

Students need to be progressively introduced to and taught the skills needed for safe participation. To ensure that students have a safe and enjoyable experience, it is

important that their skill levels and abilities are appropriate for the activity and the venue.

The preparation of students to be safe recreational swimmers will vary according to the student's age, ability and experience, the venue and the nature of the proposed swimming activity. Such preparation might include the following types of information and procedures:

- the potential risks of swimming at the selected venue
- the essential safe practices for swimming at the venue
- the boundaries of the swimming and out-of-water waiting, rest or playing area
- how to use swimming aids and other equipment safely
- who to notify if leaving or returning to the water
- designation of recreation and rest areas when out of the water
- what to do and or say if approached by an unwelcome member of the public
- any limitations to activities or play in the water
- the sun protection measures that are appropriate
- the response to any accident or other emergency that might occur

3. Surfboard, Bodyboard, Wave Ski Riding and Stand-Up Paddling

3.1 Introduction

- Parents or caregivers must be informed of the full details of the possible locations, supervision to be provided, activities to be undertaken, cost, pre-requisite qualifications and transport arrangements including intended departure and return times before their written permission is obtained.
- The activity permission note must contain a clause authorising medical aid if it is considered necessary by the supervising teacher. The note should include a section where the parent advises the school of any illness or medical condition that the student suffers from, or any medication the student is currently taking.
- Students are to be instructed to use appropriate and adequate protection in summer or winter conditions. These include, an SPF30+, broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen reapplied regularly and a wide brimmed hat and long sleeve shirt when appropriate, or a rash-vest is also required. In winter or cold weather a wetsuit is required.
- Teachers planning surfing activities need to be familiar with the procedures detailed in the Excursions Policy Implementation Procedures and other Departmental Aquatic Activity policies.

3.2 Student Pre-Requisites and Experience

- Participating students must possess either a Surf Life Saving Association (SLSA) Surf Survival Certificate or an Australian Professional Ocean Lifeguard Association (APOLA) Ocean Safety Surfer Award. The teacher-in-charge must ensure that each intending participant is competent swimmer and demonstrate under teacher supervision that they are capable of swimming 200m, in a still water pool not less than 25m in length, in under 5 minutes. This is an annual requirement.
- Additionally students should be assessed annually in rescue techniques and first aid/emergency care procedures.
- Schools may facilitate Surf Survival or Ocean Safety Surfer Award courses, or alternatively, arrange for students under teacher supervision to undertake the Surf

Survival Certificate from SLSA qualified personnel or undertake the Ocean Safety Surfer Award from APOLA qualified personnel. Teachers may also make use of accredited Surf Coaches endorsed by SLSA or APOLA to assist students attain the Surf Survival Certificate or Ocean Safety Surfer Award.

3.3 Teacher/Instructor Qualifications and Experience

Surfing skills and fitness levels expected of school surfing supervisors need to be assessed annually because of the risks inherent in the beach environment.

Teachers of School Surfing or any involved non-teacher instructors must, as a minimum:

- Possess a SLSA Bronze Medallion, or APOLA School Surfing Supervisor Award (SSSA) or an Australian Coaching Council Surfing Australia Level 1 Surf Riding qualification, or higher level award
- Be competent surfboard, bodyboard, wave ski riders or stand-up paddlers, as determined at any annual re-accreditation days conducted by SLSA, APOLA or Surfing NSW
- Successfully complete an annual proficiency update that includes the following fitness pre-requisite activities being signed off by the principal or delegated officer, before teachers present themselves for an initial or annual re-accreditation in the above awards:
- Swim 500 metres in a pool of not less than 25m in length in less than 12 minutes
- Possess recognised current training in cardio-pulmonary resuscitation and emergency care.

3.4 Supervision

- The teacher to student ratio must not exceed 1:16 students being in the water at anyone time and at all times a minimum of one (1) teacher qualified adult instructor must conduct surveillance of the student surfing activity from the beach.
- Principals and organising teachers should take into account such factors as age, experience and maturity of the students, experience and qualifications of the adult supervisors and venue characteristics when arranging supervision.
- For teachers undertaking instruction programs for students seeking Surf Survival Certificates or Ocean Safety Surf Coach Awards, the teacher to student ratio must not exceed 1:8 students being in the water at anyone time.
- Teachers are encouraged to use the buddy system to facilitate additional safety in the supervision of students, whereby each student has an assigned buddy to watch during the surfing activity sessions.
- The teacher-in-charge is responsible for maintaining a time record (or log) of each session. The record must include a description of the surfing conditions on any given day.

3.5 Equipment

- All equipment must be checked to ensure that it is in working order and damaged surf craft that has sharp exposed edges, are not to be used
- All students must wear a school issued rash-vest that assists in supervision and identification of surfers as a school group
- Surfboard riders must wear leg-ropes

- Bodyboard riders must wear wrist-leashes and correctly fitted flippers with a flipper-saver or another approved flipper securing device
- Wave ski riders must use a leash that attaches the paddle to the craft
- Stand-up paddlers (SUP) must wear a leg-rope that attaches to the SUP craft
- Beach markers should indicate designated surfing area
- A pealess whistle or air-horn is required for an emergency/evacuation signal
- A mobile phone or radio must be available for emergency communications. The supervising teacher must have a list of local emergency contacts.
- A first aid kit must be available for emergency use
- Additional sunscreen, water and large towel/blanket should also be available
- Surf helmets are an optional surfing accessory and participants should be encouraged to obtain this personal safety equipment.

3.6 Venues

Depending on prevailing conditions, a surfing location adjacent to a patrolled area, if one is available, should be considered and utilised.

The location for surfing activities must be selected with consideration of the following

- Selected beaches must have emergency vehicle access and adequate mobile phone reception (this should be checked prior to the session commencing)
- the teacher-in-charge or the instructor must have first hand knowledge of the area to be used and be satisfied of its suitability for the program and the student group. The skill and experience level of the less able in the group must be a major determining factor in selecting a location on any given day
- the prevailing water and surf conditions in the selected area must be appraised for activity suitability prior to students entering the water. Where it is possible, the teacher-in-charge should consult the lifeguard on duty. If the conditions are deemed to be unsuitable by beach authorities the activity must be cancelled or transferred to a more suitable location
- the surfing activity area must be defined to students and the teacher-in-charge must enforce the use of only the specified area.
- Stand-up paddling and wave ski riding at reef or rock seabed locations are not permitted, and surfboard riders and body boarders are not to surf in shallow intense close out conditions including shore breaks.

3.7 Safety

The following safety strategies must be employed:

- A pre-determined emergency action plan has been prepared covering possible emergencies
- instruction of students in evacuation procedures and techniques for assisting fellow surfers in difficulty
- make regular checks on surf conditions to ensure suitability for the entire group
- if at a patrolled beach, notify the lifeguard or mobile patrol on arrival and provide details of the session, including student capability and numbers
- ensure that all participating students are qualified before taking surfing for sport
- ensure students are aware of the defined surfing area before they enter the water
- ensure that pealess whistle/air horn signaling equipment is functional and accessible

- ensure students are not over exposed to heat/cold - hyperthermia/hypothermia symptoms
- instruction of students in flag and whistle signals and the required responses
- instruction of students in nature conservation issues and the need to protect marine environments.

4. Canoeing / Kayaking - Recreational

Policy Information and Procedures relating to Canoeing including Kayaking (whitewater and flatwater activities) is available on request from the Principal.

These water-based activities are not used very often at the school, and if so, only utilize sufficiently qualified and experienced staff to supervise.

Reference: Department of Education & Communities (DEC) website:

<http://www.sports.det.nsw.edu.au/aboutus/index.htm>

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