

AUSTSWIM GUIDELINES

SWIMMING AND WATER SAFETY

Background and Terminology

The AUSTSWIM Council has researched the value of swimming and water safety programs and advises AUSTSWIM teachers, parents and pool management of the following key points:

- Participation in aquatic activities must be a positive experience for all students in a safe and stimulating environment.
- Students must be allowed to progress at their own pace and must never be forced to take part in aquatic activities.
- Irrespective of their swimming ability, children are never safe when in or around water and must be under constant adult supervision.

The term 'swimming and water safety' refers to classes where educational learning outcomes of knowledge, skill and understanding are the focus. AUSTSWIM teachers of swimming and water safety are responsible for students within these classes. AUSTSWIM teachers are not qualified or responsible for general supervision of an aquatic environment.

AUSTSWIM Swimming and Water Safety Charter

AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety guidelines provide best practice for:

1. Aquatic industry accreditation
2. Public and private venues, including hotel/motel, apartments, body corporate, schools, resorts and holiday parks delivering programs to meet the diverse needs of communities
3. Community members visiting pools
4. Scope of the AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety (TSW) in program delivery.

Teaching of Swimming and Water Safety Focus

Swimming and Water Safety focus is to develop strong foundation and best practice strategies for drowning prevention, safer participation in aquatic environments and swimming and water safety knowledge, skill and understanding.

1. ACCREDITATION AND LICENSING

Training

The Department of Education and Training is responsible for national policies and programs that help Australians access quality Vocational Education and Training (VET).

The AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety skill set includes nationally recognised units of competency from the SIS10 Sport, Fitness and Recreation Training Package that is the national framework for skills development for the industry.

Current units of competency for the Swimming and Water Safety skill set may be found at <http://www.austswim.com.au/Training/AUSTSWIMCourses/SwimmingandWaterSafety.aspx>

The VET skill set includes basic competencies for the Swimming and Water Safety course. AUSTSWIM Swimming and Water Safety Licence requirements are, however, over and above the aforementioned skill set. These additional AUSTSWIM requirements are documented on the AUSTSWIM website at

<http://www.austswim.com.au/Training/AUSTSWIMCourses/SwimmingandWaterSafety.aspx>

Scope of Accreditation

Successful completion of the AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety course incorporates extended learning elements aligned with ISO 17024 accreditation and AUSTSWIM standards. Teachers who hold this accreditation are licensed and insured to conduct classes for swimming and water safety students **aged 4 years and over**.

AUSTSWIM encourages teachers to enhance their knowledge, skill and understanding through attendance at annual conferences, internal and external workshops, enrolling in further formal training programs and peer networking and learning opportunities. Ongoing professional development is a requirement when renewing the AUSTSWIM Licence.

Teachers must have specific understanding, aptitude, patience and enthusiasm for teaching swimming and water safety and continue their education in order to remain up to date with current new developments.

The AUSTSWIM teacher must upskill and gain an additional accreditation if they choose to teach:

- Infant and preschool aquatics (6 months – 4 years of age)
- Access and Inclusion participants (CALD, people with a disability, aged)
- Aqua aerobics.

2. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE VENUES

It is the responsibility of the employer to provide employees/contractors with practices which include a thorough workplace induction, details and protocols for Emergency Management and Risk Assessment. Employees/contractors must be aware of relevant manufacturer warranties and Australian Standards relating to the use and operation of equipment, hoists, other accessories and program equipment as listed in these Guidelines.

At the venue the student may require special consideration to be given to:

- staff ratios ensuring safe and effective class sessions
- equipment and aids that are in good working order
- water and air temperature that comply with Guidelines for Safe Pool Operations (GSPO)
- water depth that is suitable for the specific activity
- adherence to the Disability Discrimination (DDA), Privacy and Racial and Vilification Acts.

The AUSTSWIM teacher should operate within their level of comfort and training in addition to maintaining a duty of care towards students at all times.

Supervision

The AUSTSWIM teacher is responsible and owes a duty of care to students in the class, not other users at the facility.

The AUSTSWIM teacher may be considered the sole pool supervisor where class students are the ONLY students in the pool. Employers, however, must ensure the AUSTSWIM teacher is competent in:

- facility function
- emergency management
- current water rescue competency*
- current resuscitation and first aid qualifications.

** Perform Basic Water Rescues unit of competency that must be assessed on an annual basis by the employer or Certification for Pool / Surf Lifeguard, Bronze Medallion*

Emergency / Evacuation

After securing the safety of students in the class, the teacher may be required to assist in any emergency action or processes as and when they arise under the direction of a responsible person, example, facility duty manager, chief or area warden.

It is an employer's responsibility to assess and ensure employees and contractors ongoing competency of all emergency management and current water rescue, resuscitation and, in the case of a sole operator, a mandatory first aid qualification.

Competency, Class Size and Ratios

Class size and ratios vary in accordance with venue type, environmental conditions and student competency.

Risk assessment must be undertaken in planning, development and presentation of swimming and water safety lessons.

Note: Education Department programs must be conducted in association with relevant departmental guidelines.

The Activity Type for all venues is swimming and water safety education. Risk assessment for all venue types should consider additional supervision requirements across all venue types, equipment, emergency procedures and communication access for emergency purposes.

The list below is provided as a guide only. As a feature of risk management, students must be assessed prior to taking part in swimming and water safety education.

Beginner

- Not confident or comfortable in water
- Vertical propulsion
- None or poor horizontal propulsion
- No deeper water experience
- Poor breath control and/or recovery to stable stand
- Poor submersion

Intermediate

- Comfortable and confident in water
- Competent breath control and recovery to stand from horizontal
- Confident prone and back propulsion – recognisable strokes
- Knows and complies with pool rules
- Confident exit from deeper water
- Minimal experience out of depth
- Gaining treading water skills

Advanced

- Very confident and comfortable in deep water
- Distance and endurance capability is evident across four recognisable strokes
- Tread water / float / scull to maintain safe breathing in deep water
- Safe and confident feet and head first entries

Location	Maximum Ratio	Water Safety Supervision Requirements
<p>Swimming Pools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • public pools • learn to swim school • body corporate • private pool • hotel/motel • resort/holiday park • home pool • education department pool 	<p>Beginner: 1 teacher to 10 students</p> <p>Intermediate: 1 teacher to 12 students</p> <p>Advanced: 1 teacher to 15 students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety (TSW) with current competency in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water rescue appropriate to the venue* • Resuscitation

Location	Maximum Ratio	Water Safety Supervision Requirements
Inland Waterways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lake • Dam • Lagoon • River • Creek • Stream 	Beginner: 1 teacher to 10 students Intermediate: 1 teacher to 12 students Advanced: 1 teacher to 15 students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TSW with current competency in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water rescue appropriate to the venue* • Resuscitation • Certification for rescue and emergency management in inland open waterways such as RLSSA Inland Waterway Bronze Medallion • For integrated classes, please refer to the Aquatics – Access and Inclusion Guidelines
Open Waterways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beach • Ocean • Harbour 	Beginner: 1 teacher to 10 students Intermediate: 1 teacher to 12 students Advanced: 1 teacher to 15 students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TSW with current competency in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water rescue appropriate to the venue* • Resuscitation • Certification for rescue and emergency management in inland open waterways such as Surf Lifesaving Patrol Bronze Medallion • For integrated classes, please refer to the Aquatics – Access and Inclusion Guidelines

Water Quality

Facilities must be maintained in accordance with standards, legislation and guidelines specified by state, local authorities and industry regarding safety, water purity and sanitary conditions.

- Water purification standards for public swimming pools and spa pools are available from state/territory health authorities.
- Industry best practice GSPO detail facility operation standards.
- The person(s) responsible for monitoring water quality must be suitably qualified and comply with legislation requirements.
- Teachers should be aware of pool water quality and report any concerns to the appropriate personnel.

Outdoor Venues

Swimming and water safety programs can be conducted in outdoor pools. Employers and teachers must consider weather conditions and water temperature as these may necessitate adjustment to class structure and duration. Lessons should not exceed 30 minutes duration and students must be kept active in the water and not left sitting or standing on the edge of the pool, as the cooler air temperature may cause rapid loss of body heat or sun rays may have a burning effect. The learning of swimming and water safety must never take precedence over the child's comfort and welfare.

Air and Water Temperature

For optimal learning, the water temperature must be a minimum of 30°C and the air temperature similar to the water temperature (that is, not significantly warmer or colder). This provides an environment that is comfortable, enjoyable and optimal for learning. As previously stated, whether indoor or outdoor lessons should not exceed 30 minutes duration and students must be kept active in the water and not left sitting on the edge.

Some students become cold very quickly, even when the air temperature appears to be warm. Teachers must monitor closely and adapt practices to ensure minimal time out of the water.

In circumstances where air and water temperature cannot be maintained at optimum levels, lessons must be cancelled or appropriate alternative learning options provided.

Information Disclosure and Privacy Act

Medical and other pertinent information that may impact on participation and learning should be disclosed. Parents/carers and adult students have a right to choose whether or not to disclose information. Every effort must be taken to encourage disclosure of information pertinent to or impacting on students taking part in swimming and water safety education programs.

Disclosed information is subject to legislation within the federal Privacy Act and as such is subject to protection controls as it is disseminated to regular and replacement teachers.

Class Areas

Allocated class space should enable students to be spaced adequately themselves, other users, pool walls or other obstacles. The teaching space must be clearly defined and signage provided appropriate to the class type.

3. SCOPE OF THE TEACHER OF SWIMMING AND WATER SAFETY IN PROGRAM DELIVERY

Role and Responsibility

The AUSTSWIM teacher must:

- arrive at the class with sufficient time to ensure set up of equipment
- implement the 'observe, analyse, modify and if necessary adapt' teaching strategy for all students
- ensure appropriate positioning to enable full scanning of the roped off designated class area at all times.

Participation

It is recommended that the pace and level of involvement in Swimming and Water Safety programs be consistent with the functional ability and skill of the student. The degree of participation must never be forced.

Students' rights must be respected at all times. Activities that cause distress to a student must be modified or removed/abandoned. All students have the right to:

- participate at a level appropriate to their physical and emotional development and ability
- have qualified teachers
- where possible, be involved with the decision making process
- be treated with respect within all lesson activities
- be presented with equal opportunity to:
 - strive for success
 - think for themselves
 - establish new relationships
 - enjoy the aquatic experience.

Learning Environment

Competent, professional, skilled and caring teachers provide positive, constructive and enjoyable activities that enhance learning swimming and water safety knowledge, skill and understanding. Individual student needs are responded to within the dynamics of group teaching settings.

A student's reaction to swimming and water safety education will depend on a number of factors that may include, but not be restricted to:

- age
- physical characteristics
- intellectual development
- prior experience
- language development
- cognitive development
- degree of socialisation
- cultural background
- health, wellness and functionality.

Clothing and Swimwear

Teachers and students must wear appropriate swimwear to ensure that they are protected against the sun's harmful rays in outdoor venues. Teachers are advised to wear a rash vest during lessons.

Clothing impacts on safety and learning in a water environment. Well-fitting swimwear takes into consideration:

Student continence

- Young incontinent students must be dressed in aqua nappies. Standard nappies are not appropriate.
- Older incontinent students must be dressed in swimwear that is tight fitting around the top of the thighs.
- In the event of bowel incontinence, the student must be immediately removed from the water, washed and changed into clean swimwear before returning to the lesson.

Long/Flowing Swimwear

Swimwear that restricts or impedes movement of the arms or legs is not ideal in a learning environment. Board shorts, flowing skirts etc. restrict arm and leg action.

Cultural Necessity

The swimwear needs of students from diverse cultures must be taken in account to enhance participation and learning. Swimwear should be close fitting rather than free flowing to enhance safety. Burkinis are appropriate full body swimwear.

Goggles

Well-fitting goggles often assist in learning swimming and water safety; however, teachers must ensure activities that enhance knowledge, skill and understanding with goggles on and off.

Face Masks

These items are not appropriate in a learning environment where students are encouraged to exhale through both mouth and nose. Goggles cover the eyes, leaving the airways clear.

Caps

Caps help control and maintain hair. Long hair flows and moves with the water often impeding the learning of, and ability to, breathe in water. Alternatively, long hair must be tied and secured away from the face.

Program Equipment

Lesson equipment on poolside must not impede or impact on pool entry/exit

Equipment must be age appropriate and safe. Students must understand their own natural abilities and not become reliant on flotation aids.

Equipment and teaching aids may improve the quality of swimming and water safety programs by providing distraction, motivation and a sense of independence. Teachers must

select equipment and teaching aids that are clean, in good condition and suit the interests and capabilities of students.

Flotation aids may assist with gaining confidence, independence and skill. Activity undertaken with flotation aids (that can be deflated) must also be attempted without the use of aids enabling students to understand how their body moves, reacts and responds in water.

Conclusion

The education and learning outcomes provided to students by AUSTSWIM Teachers of Swimming and Water Safety is vital in the reduction in drowning. AUSTSWIM teachers impart knowledge, skill and understanding for safer participation in a range of aquatic environments.