



SAFETY GUIDELINES

Swimming Based Activities

Recreational Swimming

Surfing

Snorkelling

Scuba Diving

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Department of
Education,
Employment and Training

SAFETY IN OUTDOOR ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES SERIES

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Foreword

Safety Guidelines: Swimming Based Activities provides Department of Education, Employment and Training policy and guidelines for schools undertaking these activities. It is one of the booklets in the *Safety in Outdoor Adventure Activities Series*, which will progressively replace the publication *Safety in Outdoor Adventure Activities* (1992).

Outdoor adventure activities form part of the Health and Physical Education key learning area of the Curriculum and Standards Framework for Years Prep to 10, and the Physical Education and Outdoor Education subjects for the Victorian Certificate of Education.

The knowledge and skills gained through participation in outdoor adventure activities enables students to enjoy and interact with the natural environment. Traditionally, outdoor adventure activities have provided participating students with experiences that are uniquely challenging and which build self-esteem and self-confidence.

The policies and guidelines contained in this book are designed to enable school councils, principals and teachers to plan, organise and conduct safe student activities.

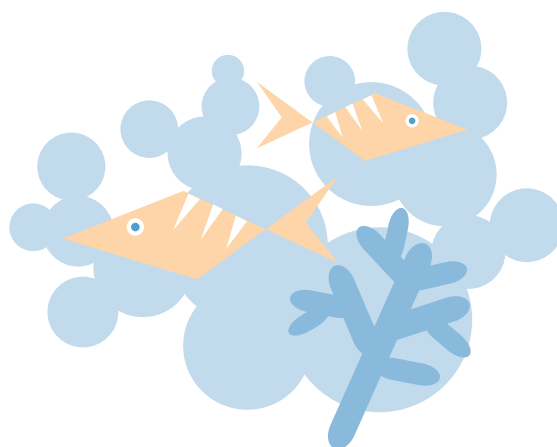
I would like to acknowledge the contribution of the Camping Association of Victoria, Inc., the coordinating writer Dr Gale Orford, and numerous teachers and other experts from a range of organisations and associations for their valuable input to this publication.

Safety Guidelines: Swimming Based Activities provides the minimum requirements for government schools undertaking recreational swimming, surfing, snorkelling and scuba diving activities.



Michael White

Director of Schools



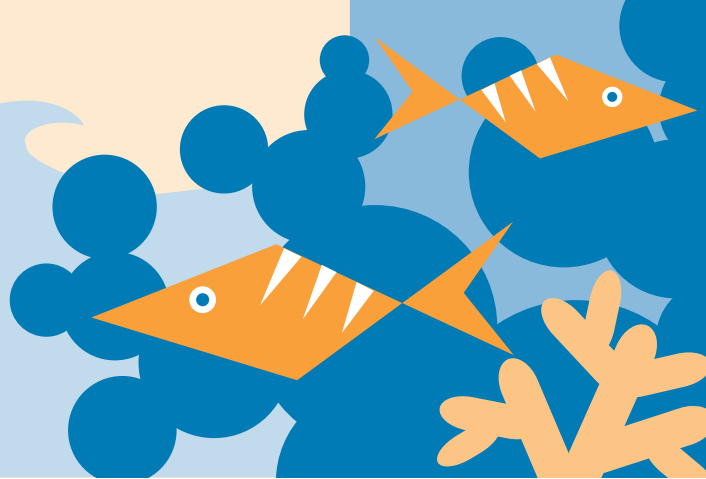
Contents

1.	Introduction	9
1.1	Adventure activities	9
1.2	Challenge and risk	9
1.3	Curriculum	10
1.4	Acronyms	10
2.	Excursions—policy and guidelines	11
2.1	Legal liability	11
2.2	Risk and safety management	11
2.3	Emergency management planning	13
2.4	Approval to conduct an excursion	14
	2.4.1 School council approval	14
	2.4.2 Principal approval	14
	2.4.3 Approval considerations	14
	2.4.4 Approval for joint excursions	15
2.5	Approval for student participation	15
	2.5.1 Parental consent	15
	2.5.2 Student consent	15
2.6	Student medical information	16
2.7	Supervision of students	16
	2.7.1 Guidelines for supervision	16
	2.7.2 Excursion staff	17
2.8	Preparation of students	19
2.9	Student behaviour and discipline	19
	2.9.1 Smoking and alcohol	19
	2.9.2 Acceptable behaviour and consequences	20
2.10	Emergency management	20
	2.10.1 Notification of school activity	20
	2.10.2 Communication during an emergency	21
	2.10.3 Excursion contact person	21
	2.10.4 Mobile telephones and radios	21
	2.10.5 Smoke detectors	21
	2.10.6 Identity tags	21
2.11	First aid	22

3.	Recreational swimming	23
3.1	Preamble	23
3.2	Staff–student ratio	24
3.3	Staff experience and qualifications	25
3.4	Planning and preparation	26
3.5	Student preparation	27
3.6	Specific equipment and clothing	28
3.7	Specific safety aspects	28
3.8	First aid	29
4.	Surfing	31
4.1	Preamble	31
4.2	Staff–student ratio	31
4.3	Staff experience and qualifications	32
4.4	Planning and preparation	33
4.5	Student preparation	34
4.6	Specific equipment and clothing	35
4.7	Specific safety aspects	36
4.8	First aid	36
5.	Snorkelling	37
5.1	Preamble	37
5.2	Staff–student ratio	37
5.3	Staff experience and qualifications	38
5.4	Planning and preparation	39
5.5	Student preparation	39
5.6	Specific equipment and clothing	42
5.7	Specific safety aspects	43
5.8	First aid	44
6.	Scuba diving	45
6.1	Preamble	45
6.2	Staff–student ratio	45
6.3	Staff experience and qualifications	46
6.4	Planning and preparation	46
6.5	Student preparation	47
6.6	Specific equipment and clothing	50
6.7	Specific safety aspects	51
6.8	First aid	52

7.	Resources	53
7.1	Organisations	53
7.2	Print and video resources	54
7.3	Providers of professional development, training, certification/accreditation	55
	Appendices	57
Appendix A	Proforma: Parent excursion consent	58
Appendix B	Proforma: Confidential medical information for school council approved excursions	59
Appendix C	Proforma: Notification of school activity	60
Appendix D	Proforma: Scuba diving: participant medical history	61
Appendix E	Sun protection and ultraviolet radiation	62
Appendix F	Student medical considerations	63
Appendix G	Procedure for response to a near drowning/drowning or serious injury	64
Appendix H	Proforma: Analysis of activities for risk and safety management	65
Appendix I	Proforma: Documentation of participant preparation, prerequisite skills/knowledge	67
Appendix J	Proforma: Documentation of staff member qualifications and experience or expertise in lieu of certification/accreditation	68

1. Introduction



1.1 Adventure activities

Adventure activities are those activities that involve greater than normal risk such as:

- travel into a relatively undeveloped area of country in which vehicular contact is difficult and/or uncertain
- less than normal contact, in person or by telephone, with medical and other public services available in normal day-to-day life
- exposure to the natural elements with less than the normal physical protection provided in day-to-day life
- confrontation with natural environmental challenges requiring greater reliance upon personal resources than would normally be required in day-to-day life
- base camping, bushwalking, canoeing, caving, snow activities, orienteering, cycling, horse riding, rock climbing and abseiling, gliding, swimming (other than school swimming programs), surf activities, water skiing, snorkelling, scuba diving, shooting, sailing, sailboarding, and similar activities.

1.2 Challenge and risk

In school situations, involvement in outdoor adventure activities provides students with the opportunity of experiencing a sense of achievement through participating in a variety of challenging situations involving contact with the natural environment.

By their nature, outdoor adventure activities involve some level of risk, whether undertaken in introductory phases in the school grounds or within the natural environment.

The level of risk and the resultant challenge is unique to each participant. Personal skill levels, knowledge of the activity and environment, attitude, confidence and previous experience contribute to each student's *perception* of the risk and challenge. It is this perception derived from participation in the activity that will impact on the outcomes gained by each student.

As the safety and welfare of students and staff is of paramount importance, each outdoor adventure experience should create a perception of risk and challenge but, at the same time, be organised and managed in such a way that students are engaging in a comparatively safe activity. The risks that are an integral part of the nature of outdoor adventure activities must be kept to an acceptable level. The implementation of effective risk management processes should ensure that all activities are conducted safely (refer to 2.2 Risk and safety management).

INTRODUCTION

1.3 Curriculum

Outdoor adventure activities are part of both the Physical and Sport Education and the Outdoor Education components of the Health and Physical Education key learning area of the Curriculum and Standards Framework for Years Prep to 10, and the Physical Education and Outdoor Education subjects for the Victorian Certificate of Education. When developing school policies and planning programs that involve outdoor adventure activities, reference should be made to the Outdoor Education and Physical Education perspectives of the Health and Physical Education Teacher Support Materials (on the curriculum@work CD-ROM, Department of Education, Employment and Training, 2000).

The information provided in this book must be read in conjunction with the *Schools of the Future Reference Guide* (Department of Education, 1996). The requirements and guidelines for excursions and outdoor adventure activities contained in the Reference Guide apply to all government schools in Victoria.

1.4 Acronyms

The following acronyms are used in this publication:

CPR	Cardiopulmonary resuscitation
RLSS	Royal Life Saving Society
SLSAA	Surf Life Saving Association of Australia

2. Excursions— policy and guidelines



2.1 Legal liability

In addition to the professional obligation a teacher owes to students, there is a legal duty of care for principals and teachers to take such measures as are reasonable in the circumstances to protect a student in their care from risks of injury that the educator should have reasonably foreseen.

In excursions, this duty of care has two main aspects. The first is to provide adequate supervision. This requires not only protection from known hazards, but also protection from those risks that could arise (that is, those that the teacher should reasonably have foreseen) and against which preventative measures could be taken. The second is to provide safe and suitable buildings or shelter, grounds and equipment.

In both aspects, the duty of the teacher is higher than that of the ordinary citizen in that a teacher is obliged to protect a student in their care from harm or to assist an injured student, while the ordinary citizen may choose to do nothing in a similar situation.

This legal duty is imposed on the individual teacher, the principal and other staff who have students in their care and varies according to the particular circumstances. For example, an individual teacher is under a duty of care in performing supervisory duties, and the principal is under a duty of care to provide the supervision roster and to ensure that it is implemented.

To minimise the risks of injury, principals should implement risk and safety management processes (refer to 2.2 Risk and safety management) for identifying and controlling hazards and risks as well as ensuring that teachers have appropriate first aid training.

Under the *Crown Proceedings Act 1958*, the Crown may be held liable to pay compensation for injuries or damages caused by the negligence of its servants or agents. It is, therefore, important that full details of accidents that may result in a claim are recorded and retained on file at the school.

2.2 Risk and safety management

Effective risk and safety management processes should be implemented to ensure that all outdoor adventure activities are planned and conducted safely. These processes will involve a systematic analysis of the activity, the equipment, the environment, the participants and the staff so that unacceptable risk factors can be identified and removed or suitably controlled. Basically, these processes will include:

- *identifying* hazards, risks and safety issues
- *managing* hazards, risks and safety issues through the development of a safety management plan
- *avoiding* any hazards and risks that cannot be satisfactorily controlled.

EXCURSIONS—POLICY AND GUIDELINES

There is no simple formula for safety management planning that can cover all situations. Every outdoor session needs to be analysed to *identify* risks in such things as the nature of the activity, the location or venue, the characteristics of the participants, the experience and expertise of the staff, and weather considerations. A decision can then be made about whether the safety issues can be *managed* or whether they should be *avoided* by not conducting the activity, or aspects of the activity.

To *identify* safety issues, consider:

- the physical, social and emotional needs of the participants and staff, including any disabilities and impairments and special medication needs
- the qualifications and/or experience of staff, including their strengths and limitations
- safety concerns inherent in the activity and location, such as sheer cliffs, deep and cold lake water, or highly flammable stove fuel
- the condition of equipment and its suitability for the activity and use by the students
- the possible effects of various weather conditions
- any potentially harmful hazards, such as a tree dropping a branch
- communication and access to assistance in an emergency
- school records of any previous incidents, accidents and ‘near misses’.

The safety *management* plan is developed in response to the assessment of the risks so that they are reduced sufficiently for the activity to be safe. The plan should address:

- the qualifications and/or experience of staff specific to the activity, the nature of the group, and the area to be visited (refer to Appendix J for Proforma: Documentation of staff qualifications and experience or expertise in lieu of certification/accreditation)
- the preparation of the participants, including sequential skill development, appropriate fitness development and thorough briefing prior to the excursion and the individual activities (refer to Appendix I for Proforma: Documentation of participant preparation, prerequisite skills/knowledge)
- the choice of activities, including their appropriateness for the age, maturity, physical stature and readiness of the students, and the relationship of the activities to the curriculum
- equipment maintenance procedures and checks (including personal clothing and equipment, special equipment for specific activities, transport, and equipment for emergencies)
- the use of protective clothing and equipment according to recommended practices for the activity (for example, riding helmets and correct footwear)
- the organisational arrangements for conducting the activity, including staff–student ratios, location, roles of staff, and the use of recognised safety measures, such as spotting and belaying
- group management arrangements, including the possibility of an additional activity where participants spend considerable time waiting their turn
- alternatives to the activity plan in case of weather changes, injuries or other circumstances
- the need for outdoor adventure activity venues and locations to be visited before the excursion and in the same season as the planned activities (for example, the route for a trip planned above the snowline in winter should be checked in winter, or in wintry conditions).

Where a teacher intends to inspect a venue or location, either within or outside normal school hours, prior approval should be sought from the principal. Principals should approve such inspection visits where they are necessary to ensure that appropriate safety requirements and educational objectives for the proposed activity are met

- procedures to be implemented (including the ongoing supervision of students) in emergencies such as storms, bushfire, floods, lost students, and severe injury or death of students and/or staff (refer to 2.3 Emergency management planning, and appendices).

In instances where the risks to participants cannot be kept to an acceptable level, the potential risk should be avoided by excluding the activity from the program (refer to Appendix H for Proforma: Analysis of activities for risk and safety management).

2.3 Emergency management planning

All Department of Education, Employment and Training, Victoria, schools are required to develop and maintain an emergency management plan that describes actions to be taken during and following an emergency to ensure the ongoing safety of students, staff and others. Schools should ensure that staff and students, where appropriate, know what the plan contains and, through the provision of appropriate training, what they are required to do during an emergency. Information about planning is contained in the publication, *Managing School Emergencies* (Department of Education, 1997).

The responsibility of schools to plan for the safety of students and staff involved in school activities extends beyond planning for events occurring under normal circumstances. All school activities, regardless of where they are to be conducted, must be planned in such a way as to ensure that the safety of students and staff is maintained, and that students are adequately supervised, even during an emergency.

Emergency management planning should include:

- the range of emergencies covered
- a site plan (where appropriate)
- a general description of the area and environment
- an assessment of risks and hazards
- roles and responsibilities of staff and others
- procedures for reporting emergencies
- procedures to be followed by staff and students during an emergency
- alternative evacuation routes and assembly areas
- emergency services contact numbers
- measures to prevent or reduce the impact of emergencies that do occur
- arrangements for establishing recovery programs following emergencies
- an endorsement, where appropriate, by the relevant emergency services that the plan content is appropriate.

For additional emergency requirements and guidelines for excursions, refer to 2.10 Emergency management.

2.4 Approval to conduct an excursion

Prior to an excursion in which students leave the school grounds for the purpose of engaging in educational activities, the approval of the school council or the principal must be obtained.

2.4.1 School council approval

The school council is responsible for the approval of:

- overnight excursions
- camps
- interstate and overseas visits
- excursions requiring sea or air travel
- excursions involving weekends or vacations
- adventure activities.

2.4.2 Principal approval

The principal is responsible for the approval of all single-day excursions other than those referred to above to be approved by the school council.

2.4.3 Approval considerations

Before approving an excursion, the school council and/or the principal needs to consider:

- the contribution of the activity to the school curriculum
- the adequacy of the planning, preparation and organisation in relation to school policy and Department of Education, Employment and Training policy and guidelines in:
 - *Schools of the Future Reference Guide* (1996)
 - *Managing School Emergencies* (1997)
 - *Safety in Outdoor Adventure Activities* (1992)
 - *Safety in Outdoor Adventure Activities Series* booklets
 - Curriculum and Standards Framework II, Health and Physical Education (2000)
 - Health and Physical Education Teacher Support Materials – Outdoor Education Perspective (on the curriculum@work CD-ROM) (2000)
- the provisions for the safety and welfare of students (including those with a disability or impairment) and staff
- the experience and competence of staff relevant to the activities being undertaken
- the adequacy of the student supervision
- the cost.

Note: Schools that use campsites within Victoria, whether school owned or otherwise, are expected to only use those sites accredited by the Camping Association of Victoria Inc through the Australian Campsite Accreditation Program. Where schools use other venues, such as caravan parks, motels/hotels or ski lodges, they may wish to refer to the Australian Campsite Accreditation Program accreditation criteria when undertaking their risk management assessment prior to confirming a booking. Schools can contact the Camping Association of Victoria, telephone (03) 9457 5434, for further information.

2.4.4 Approval for joint excursions

Where school council approval is required, each school involved in a joint excursion must receive the approval of its own school council. Where principal approval is required, the principal of each participating school must give approval.

In such circumstances, a coordinating principal or teacher, agreed to by the principals of the schools concerned, should ensure that:

- the necessary organisational arrangements are undertaken
- supervision is adequate and that normal procedures for the conduct of the excursion are carried out
- parents are informed that their children may be supervised by teachers and other approved adults from the other school(s) during the excursion.

2.5 Approval for student participation

2.5.1 Parental consent

A parent must provide written consent for their child to take part in an excursion and any particular adventure activities that will be undertaken during the excursion.

Parental consent is required for the following reasons:

- for overnight excursions, to authorise the school to have the student in its care after normal school hours
- for day excursions, to authorise the school to take the student out of the school environment
- to enable the parent to alert the school to any medical condition or allergies of the student
- to authorise the school to consent to emergency medical treatment for the student
- for the parent to consent to any financial cost of the excursion
- for the parent to consent to the student being sent home from the excursion in the event of serious misbehaviour (refer to 2.9.2 Acceptable behaviour and consequences).

Parents asked to sign consent forms must be given sufficient information about the nature of the proposed activity, the risks involved, and the degree of supervision, to enable them to make an informed decision and to ensure the school obtains a proper consent (refer to Appendix A for Proforma: Parent excursion consent).

Consent forms are to remain at the school or to be taken on the excursion by the teacher-in-charge, and a list of participants and contacts in the case of emergency should be held by the designated school contact person (refer to 2.10.3 Excursion contact person).

2.5.2 Student consent

Students eighteen years of age and over may sign consent forms on their own behalf. In situations where a student is under the age of eighteen years and is living separately and independently of parents, the consent of parents may be inappropriate or may be difficult to obtain. In such circumstances, where the principal is satisfied that:

- the student is living separately and independently of parents and other guardians, and
- the student is unable to obtain the required parental consent, or is unwilling to approach their parents, and

EXCURSIONS—POLICY AND GUIDELINES

- the student has sufficient maturity, understanding and intelligence to be capable of making up their own mind on the issue in question (such students will generally be fifteen years and over)

then the student may:

- give consent in relation to medical treatment and participation in excursions and adventure activities if fully comprehending the nature and consequences of the activities
- enter into agreements with the school about the payment of excursion expenses.

2.6 Student medical information

It is essential that excursion staff have adequate and up-to-date medical information about students who are participating in each excursion.

In advance of each school council approved excursion a confidential medical information form (refer to Appendix B for Proforma: Confidential medical information for school council approved excursions) must be completed by:

- the parent of each student under eighteen years
- each student who is eighteen years and over
- in particular circumstances, students who are under eighteen years and who are living separately and independently (refer to 2.5.2 Student consent).

The student confidential medical information forms provide opportunity to vary information given to the school annually for use during normal school hours, and to ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to manage the specific medical and first aid needs of each student.

The student confidential medical information forms must be taken on the excursion by the teacher-in-charge, and must be accessible to other excursion staff in emergency situations. A copy of the forms and a list of participants and contacts should be held by the designated school contact person while the excursion is being held.

There should be an overall plan for managing student medication during an excursion and, desirably, an individual management plan for each student who needs medication. In general, all medication is to be handed to a designated teacher prior to leaving on the excursion. All containers must be labelled with the student's name and include instructions for administering the medication. In instances where it may be necessary or appropriate for students to carry their own medication (for example, asthma puffers, insulin, adrenalin), the approval of the teacher-in-charge must be obtained.

A student should not be denied attendance at an excursion, including a camp or swimming program, because the parent refuses permission for a blood transfusion. Transfusions or other courses of treatment are matters for legally qualified medical practitioners. Teachers cannot be held liable for medical treatment given against the wishes of a parent.

2.7 Supervision of students

2.7.1 Guidelines for supervision

Subject to Department of Education, Employment and Training requirements and guidelines, the degree of supervision of students involved in school excursions is a matter for local decision. Department of Education, Employment and Training guidelines provide the *minimum* requirements for staff–student ratios (refer to the *Schools of the Future Reference Guide*, staff experience

and staff qualifications (in this document and other *Safety in Outdoor Adventure Series* booklets)). In many instances, following the safety assessment for an activity, principals choose to implement enhanced measures to ensure the safety of students. Where students with disabilities and impairments are participating, staff–student ratios are likely to be higher.

Sufficient excursion staff to ensure appropriate and effective supervision must be provided. In deciding what constitutes sufficient excursion staff, the principal should take into account the guidelines contained in the publications *Safety in Outdoor Adventure Activities* (1992) and the *Safety in Outdoor Adventure Activities Series* booklets as well as:

- the qualifications and previous experience of the excursion staff and their knowledge of the area to be visited
- the age, maturity, abilities, experience and sex of the students
- the size of the group
- the nature and location of the excursion
- the activities to be undertaken
- any other relevant factors of which they are aware.

When requesting parental consent for a child to take part in an excursion, it is essential that the parents are provided with relevant details about the degree of supervision, the nature of the activity, and the risks involved.

In addition to more specific Department of Education, Employment and Training guidelines, the following general guidelines for supervision apply:

- For the great majority of excursions, including those for which school council approval is required, the excursion must be under the control of a teacher employed by the Department of Education, Employment and Training, or by the school council, and at least one other excursion staff member must be present.
- For some excursions where it is considered safe and appropriate, principals may approve small group excursions where the supervision is provided by one or more excursion staff members who are employed by the Department of Education, Employment and Training, or by the school council (for example, school services officers such as integration aides and teacher assistants).
- In a small number of instances and for secondary-aged students only, principals may determine that direct supervision is not needed for activities involving small groups or individual students. In such circumstances, the teacher responsible for the activity should maintain a formal record containing:
 - a description of the activity, including locations
 - the names and ages of students involved
 - the time of leaving and returning to school.
- Where excursions involve overnight stays for mixed groups, excursion staff should include at least one person of each sex. In primary schools, this requirement may be waived where staff of each sex are unavailable.

2.7.2 Excursion staff

In addition to teachers employed by the Department of Education, Employment and Training, or by the school council, excursion staff may include other adults on a volunteer or paid worker basis, such as parents, school services officers, community members, instructors, campsite staff

EXCURSIONS—POLICY AND GUIDELINES

and trainee teachers. All approved excursion staff can be included in the staff–student ratio. School students cannot be used as excursion staff.

In approving excursion staff prior to the excursion, the principal or school council must:

- be satisfied that each excursion staff member is able to provide effective supervision of the activities involved (refer to Appendix J for Proforma: Documentation of staff qualifications and experience or expertise in lieu of certification/accreditation)
- be satisfied that excursion staff do not have medical conditions that might put them or others at risk
- ensure that there are sufficient excursion staff to provide effective supervision of students. (For the great majority of excursions, including those types of excursions for which school council approval is required, there must be sufficient teachers employed by the Department of Education, Employment and Training, or by the school council, to maintain appropriate control of the excursion and of each activity. In most cases, teachers should comprise at least half of the excursion staff. However, where instructors are approved excursion staff, the teachers together with these instructors should comprise at least half the excursion staff.)
- ensure that where specialist instructors are used they:
 - have the necessary skills and/or qualifications for the activity
 - have appropriate experience for the age and skill level of the students
 - hold appropriate public liability insurance (for paid instructors only)
 - are able, if required and appropriate, to provide written procedures for the conduct of the activity and the supervision of the students
- ensure that the names of volunteer workers are recorded for the purposes of volunteer workers' insurance.

In addition to the Department of Education, Employment and Training requirements for police record checks for its employees, school councils may wish to develop a school policy that requires excursion staff who are not Department employees to undergo police record checks.

It is important that the specific roles and responsibilities of each staff member (teachers, instructors, campsite staff, volunteers etc) are clarified and understood by all staff and students prior to the commencement of the excursion.

Staff should be reminded that they owe a legal duty of care to the students during the entire period of the excursion, and that the consumption of alcohol is inconsistent with the standard of professional conduct necessary to maintain community confidence in such activities.

Instructors

In some instances, schools may use specialist instructors to ensure that excursion activities are undertaken correctly and safely. These instructors can be included in the staff–student ratio with the prior approval of the principal/school council, and can be either paid or volunteers.

While instructors have the technical knowledge and expertise to instruct the students, the teachers continue to have responsibility for the general safety and welfare of the students, even where the teachers do not directly provide the actual instruction.

Campsite program staff

An increasing number of campsites now make program staff available to assist schools with their camp programs. These program staff can be included in the staff–student ratio with the prior approval of the principal and school council.

In some instances, schools may wish to include campsite program staff as instructors in the staff–student ratios for specific activities that require additional staff (for example, canoeing). In such circumstances, the campsite program staff must be in attendance and undertake their designated responsibilities for the duration of the specific activity.

In instances where campsite program staff are included in the overall staff–student ratio throughout the camp program, they must be on duty and available on the same basis as other staff included in the staff–student ratio. This will usually mean being available on a twenty-four-hour basis.

Camps accredited by the Camping Association of Victoria through the Australian Campsite Accreditation Program which make program staff available, have written advice that describes the qualifications and/or experience of individual staff in the activities offered, and the scope and limitations of the supervision available.

2.8 Preparation of students

Involvement in excursions and outdoor adventure activities is frequently a new and challenging experience for most students. Generally these experiences take place outside the school grounds and in the natural environment.

Therefore, it is essential that prior to their involvement in such activities, students are prepared educationally, physically and psychologically so that their experiences are enjoyable and educationally rewarding.

It is essential that school staff who are familiar with students' abilities and disabilities are involved in the planning of the entire excursion program to ensure that, as far as practicable, all students are able to participate with enjoyment and success. While students may need to be prepared in advance for particular activities, some modifications to activities may be needed to enable those with disabilities and impairments to participate.

Well in advance of a school program that is to involve excursions or outdoor adventure activities, the students and their parents should be provided with information about the program's educational objectives, the nature of the activities, the venue, any particular clothing and equipment requirements, and the cost.

Prior to the program and before each activity, students need to be briefed about the organisational arrangements that will apply during the program/activity, the specific requirements for their participation, environmental impact considerations for the area to be visited, potential hazards and risks, safety arrangements, and procedures to be followed in an emergency. Where particular skills and knowledge are a prerequisite to safe participation (such as lighting and refuelling a stove), evidence that students possess these skills and knowledge should be documented (refer to Appendix I for Proforma: Documentation of participant preparation, prerequisite skills/knowledge).

2.9 Student behaviour and discipline

2.9.1 Smoking and alcohol

No student is to be permitted to smoke or consume alcohol on any school excursion. It is suggested that parents and students are informed of this policy before departure, and warned that any student who fails to observe this policy will be severely disciplined and, where appropriate, immediately returned to school or home.

2.9.2 Acceptable behaviour and consequences

Students and their parents need to be made aware that acceptable standards of behaviour will be expected during excursions.

Disciplinary measures applying to students on excursions should be consistent with the school's student code of conduct.

In extreme cases, following consultation with and approval of the school principal, excursion staff may determine that a student should return home during an excursion. In such circumstances, the parent should be advised of the:

- circumstance associated with the decision to send the student home
- time when the parent may collect the child from the excursion, or the anticipated time that the student will arrive home.

When returning a student home, consideration should be given to the age and maturity of the student when travelling arrangements are made.

It is recommended that schools ensure that parents signing the approval form for their child to attend the excursion, consent to their child being sent home in the event of the child's serious misbehaviour on the excursion (refer to 2.5.1 Parental consent).

Parents should also be advised that they will be responsible for any costs associated with the student's return.

2.10 Emergency management

The emergency management process in schools should extend to and incorporate all excursions (refer to 2.3 Emergency management planning, and the publication, *Managing School Emergencies*, 1997).

The entire program and all activities must be planned in such a way as to ensure that the safety of students and staff is maintained during an emergency, and that students continue to be adequately supervised. Emergency procedures should, therefore, include the effects of an emergency on student supervision in the event of excursion staff being required to assist injured students or go for help.

All excursion staff (teachers, instructors, volunteers) and, where appropriate, students, need to be familiar with the specific procedures for dealing with emergencies on each excursion. In particular, emergency procedures pertaining to campsites should be explained as soon as practicable after arrival.

On days of extreme fire danger or total fire ban, principals may need to cancel excursions at short notice. Where excursions are not cancelled, special fire safety precautions will be required.

2.10.1 Notification of school activity

In advance and preferably at least three weeks prior to a school council approved excursion or other activity that by its nature, location or timing may be hazardous, government schools should use the proforma (refer to Appendix C for Proforma: Notification of school activity) to fax relevant details to the Emergency and Security Management Branch, Department of Education, Employment and Training, on fax (03) 9589 0543.

The details will be used to provide initial information to the emergency services during an emergency. Where additional information is required during an emergency, schools will be expected to provide it from the documentation prepared for the activity.

2.10.2 Communication during an emergency

In the event of an emergency, an accident or an injury to a participant or staff member, staff on the excursion should take appropriate emergency action and immediately notify the school principal. The principal should make arrangements for the Department's Emergency and Security Management Branch to be telephoned immediately on (03) 9589 6266 (twenty-four-hour service).

For excursions held outside school hours, parents should be advised of telephone numbers (both during and outside school hours) of the designated school contact person (refer to 2.10.3 Excursion contact person). While the students are on excursion, if parents have reason to believe that an emergency may have occurred (for example, through a media report), they should in the first instance liaise with the school contact person and not the excursion group directly. This will ensure that the telephone lines are kept free at the excursion site.

2.10.3 Excursion contact person

It is important that relevant details of each excursion are held by a designated school contact person, and that the contact person is readily available during both school hours and outside of school hours.

Details should include:

- the location of the excursion participants at all times, including during travel
- the relevant telephone number(s) through which excursion staff may be contacted in an emergency
- the names and family contacts for all students and staff
- copies of the parental approval and medical advice forms
- where appropriate, the location, description and registration numbers of any vehicles used by excursion staff to transport students
- the location and telephone number of the nearest police station, or nearest park ranger station if more appropriate.

2.10.4 Mobile telephones and radios

School councils and principals may wish to consider equipping excursion groups and buses used to transport the students with mobile telephones to be used in emergency situations. Groups may need to be cautious about dependence on mobile telephones and need to ascertain where they will work and the location of the nearest telephone service. In more remote bush areas, other forms of communication, such as UHF radios, may provide another option.

2.10.5 Smoke detectors

Where indoor accommodation facilities do not have smoke detectors, it is recommended that schools supply their own detectors. Camps accredited through the Australian Campsite Accreditation Program have approved smoke detection devices/systems.

2.10.6 Identity tags

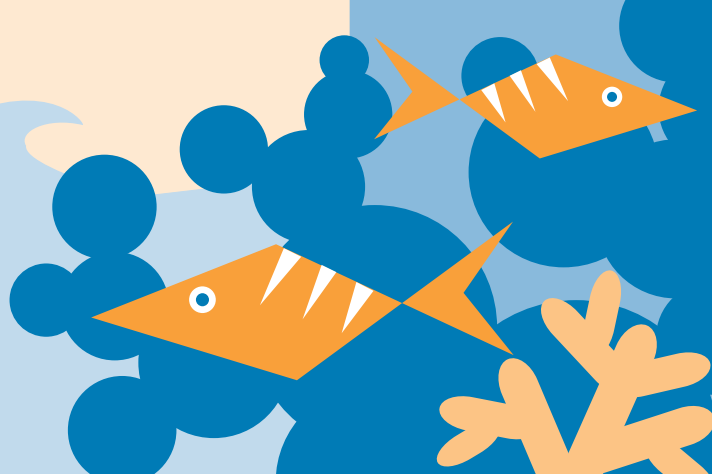
It is recommended that young students, or those who because of a disability or impairment may have difficulty in communicating in an emergency, wear identity tags on excursions.

2.11 First aid

Principals and teachers have a legal duty to assist students who may be injured or ill, including the appropriate administration of first aid when necessary. As the range of activities undertaken on excursions is extensive, principals need to ensure that excursion staff have levels of first aid training appropriate to the excursion activities, location, and any student disabilities, and that adequate and appropriate first aid kit(s) are available on the excursion. Principals should ensure that first aid training includes provision for dental injuries.

There is no 'ideal' or recommended first aid kit for all outdoor activities. Excursion staff should assess first aid needs specific to the activity, the location (particularly considering its remoteness), the student group, and their own level of first aid training to determine the suitable composition of a first aid kit for each excursion (refer to 7.3 Providers of professional development, training, certification/accreditation for sources of first aid kit information and first aid training).

3. Recreational swimming



3.1 Preamble

Recreational swimming occurs where the learning of swimming and water safety is not the prime objective. As these sessions are less structured than sessions designed to teach swimming and water safety, the potential for accidents and drownings may be increased. For this reason, and to provide quality supervision, the requirements vary for recreational swimming at various types of venues.

It is therefore essential that staff are familiar with the particular requirements for a particular venue type that will be used before recreational swimming activities are approved and conducted. For the purposes of teaching swimming and water safety, three venue types have been designated (refer to *Schools of the Future Reference Guide*, Department of Education, 1996).

For recreational swimming, only venue types one and two apply (see below). Guidelines for recreational swimming to be held at type three venues are to be found in section 4. Surfing.

Venue type 1: Swimming pools and confined, shallow, natural-water venues

Type 1 venues include municipal and commercial swimming pools, as well as shallow, calm, confined swimming areas at natural venues such as lakes, dams and non-surf beaches. A shallow, natural-water venue is defined as a venue where the maximum depth of the water is no greater than shoulder height for any of the students involved in the program.

Venue type 2: Open, deep-water venues

Type 2 venues include deep and/or flowing water at non-surf beaches, lakes, channels, rivers and dams. Bay and ocean beaches and lakes may be classified as type 2 or type 3 venues, depending on prevailing conditions during the day of the activity. Certain ocean beaches on particularly calm days may be classified as type 2 venues. Bay beaches and lakes will be classed as type 3 venues during storms or when strong winds create large waves and currents. Conditions may change at short notice, and staff should exercise sound judgement in determining the classification of a beach before and during the activity.

Characteristics of a non-surf beach:

- it is not exposed to full ocean swell (that is, it is protected by a point or headland)
- there is a gently sloping sandy beach with sufficient area for all students to be in waist-to chest-deep water (where there is a drop-off into deeper water, it must be possible to designate the area using buoys, boats etc)
- it is free of hazards (rocks, reefs, people fishing, boating, jet skis etc)
- it is possible to see the bottom throughout the activity area
- weather conditions are stable

RECREATIONAL SWIMMING

- swell is less than approximately half a metre
- surface chop is minimal or non-existent
- there are no rips or strong currents
- wind is light.

Venue type 3: Surf venues

Type 3 venues include all beaches with direct access to ocean waters, any beach exposed to ocean swell, and any beach or lake that is exposed to currents, strong wind or large waves, and that does not have the characteristics listed above for type 2 venues.

Guidelines, staff–student ratios, and staff qualifications, by venue type can be found in the following sections of this document:

Venue type 1: Swimming pools and confined, shallow, natural-water venues

Refer to:

- Section 3 for guidelines
- Section 3.2 for staff–student ratios
- Section 3.3 for staff qualifications

Venue type 2: Open, deep-water venues

Refer to:

- Section 3 for guidelines
- Section 3.2 for staff–student ratios
- Section 3.3 for staff qualifications

Venue type 3: Surf venues

Refer to:

- Section 4 for guidelines
- Section 4.2 for staff–student ratios
- Section 4.3 for staff qualifications.

3.2 Staff–student ratio

At least two staff members must supervise students involved in swimming activities. A teacher employed by the Department of Education, Employment and Training, or by the school council, must be present and have overall responsibility for the activity.

Lifeguards at pools and beaches can only be used for supervision and counted in staff–student ratios if they do not have general lifeguard duties at the venue at that time, and their sole responsibility during the activity is for the students in the program.

The following guidelines and staff–student ratios are minimum requirements.

Venue types 1 and 2: one staff member to no more than ten students (1:10) in the water. For additional staffing information for type 1 and 2 venues, refer to 3.3 Staff experience and qualifications.

Staff–student ratios and the maximum number of students in the water at any one time will vary according to the levels of risk perceived to be associated with the activity. When determining the specific staff–student ratio for each activity, consideration needs to include the age and experience of students, the experience and qualifications of staff, characteristics of the venue, and weather and water conditions. Arrangements need to be sufficiently flexible that should water conditions become more challenging, activities can be transferred to another venue or a plan be implemented to make groups smaller and more manageable for easier supervision, or some other appropriate action.

The maximum number of students in the water at one time should be based on an assessment of beach conditions and their affect on effective supervision.

If there are not sufficient qualified staff to supervise the number of students who are to be involved in recreational swimming, a plan to rotate students in and out of the water may be implemented to maintain safe supervisory ratios.

The minimum ratio of one staff member to no more than twenty students (1:20) should be maintained for students who are not in the water. Appropriate on shore activities may need to be provided for these students.

Venue type 3: refer to 4. Surfing.

3.3 Staff experience and qualifications

Venue type 1

At least one staff member must hold a current:

- AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety Certificate, or
- Bronze Medallion of the Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS) of Australia, or
- Bronze Medallion of the Surf Life Saving Association of Australia (SLSAA), or
- Surf Rescue Certificate (SLSAA).

Additional staff, wherever possible, should also hold one of these certificates or have documented swimming experience, knowledge and experience of the type of venue, and the ability to competently initiate emergency response procedures, including cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

Venue type 2

At least one staff member must hold a Bronze Medallion (RLSS), or a Bronze Medallion (SLSAA), or a Surf Rescue Certificate (SLSAA), for every twenty swimmers (1:20) or part thereof.

All other staff must:

- hold an AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety Certificate, or
- hold a Bronze Medallion (RLSS), or a Bronze Medallion (SLSAA), or a Surf Rescue Certificate (SLSAA), or
- have documented swimming experience, water safety and rescue training, knowledge and experience of the type of venue (refer to Appendix J for Proforma: Documentation of staff qualifications and experience or expertise in lieu of certification/accreditation), and
- the ability to competently initiate emergency response procedures, including CPR.

Where a Royal Life Saving Society or a Surf Life Saving Society patrol is on duty and students are within the designated area, staff members must continue to meet the qualifications requirements for the venue type, and maintain supervisory responsibility. However, in situations where a rescue is necessary, it would normally be expected that the duty lifeguards would take charge of the rescue. In situations where the duty lifeguards are otherwise occupied, the staff member(s) would undertake the rescue.

To ensure that there is no confusion between the roles of duty lifeguards and excursion staff members, it is recommended that staff consult with the relevant lifeguard on arrival at the venue.

Venue type 3: refer to 4. Surfing.

3.4 Planning and preparation

The planning and preparation for recreational swimming activities should include the implementation of risk and safety management processes for identifying and controlling hazards and risks, and emergency management planning to identify actions to be taken during and following an emergency (refer to 2.2 Risk and safety management, 2.3 Emergency management planning, and Appendix H for Proforma: Analysis of activities for risk and safety management).

Swimming must be conducted within an environment that has been judged to be safe. Staff need to be aware of the swimming ability of all students so that safe organisational arrangements can be made. In general, when assessing the suitability of a swimming venue before conducting the activity, consideration should be given to the following:

- the ages and abilities of the students
- the qualifications and experience of staff
- analysis of risks and hazards to determine if a satisfactory plan can be developed to ensure the safety of students
- potential hazards, such as submerged rocks, snags, logs, currents and tides
- the depth and condition of the water in relation to the skills of the students
- available shelter from sun, wind and rain given the potential weather conditions
- the suitability of facilities, including those needed for changing clothes
- the capacity to clearly define the swimming area
- security for clothing
- emergency communication
- intrusion into the school group by uninvited members of the public
- proximity to medical expertise
- venue access.

Although the following aspects are applicable to planning for all participants, where students with disabilities or impairments are participating in recreational swimming, particular attention may need to be given to:

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

To assist with supervision and safety planning, the following guidelines are provided for venue types 1 and 2:

Venue type 1: Swimming pools and confined, shallow, natural-water venues

The swimming area at natural venues should be clearly defined and surrounded by safety barriers, such as the shoreline, piers, jetties or floating ropes. Appropriate rescue aids need to be located close to the activity areas.

Venue type 2: Open, deep-water venues

Additional hazards associated with open, deep-water venues mean that the swimming area should be divided into appropriate group activity stations, each with recognisable boundaries, such as banks, the shoreline, flags, piers or floating ropes. Small boats, rafts or floating platforms may be placed strategically for added safety. Appropriate rescue aids, determined by safety considerations for the venue and the abilities of the students, need to be located close to the activity areas.

Given the range of different conditions that might exist between natural swimming venues of an apparently similar type, adequate knowledge of the specific swimming area should be obtained before school programs are conducted at a venue. In south-eastern Australia there can be marked differences between apparently similar lakes, surf beaches, rivers etc in terms of water temperature, water turbidity, currents, visibility, water-borne debris, sand bars, rips, tides, deep holes, submerged logs, rocks and the like. Where such hazards are identified, a decision must be made as to whether a safety management plan can be developed to make the venue safe for students. Refer to 2.2 Risk and safety management, and Appendix H for Proforma: Analysis of activities for risk and safety management.

Venue type 3: refer to 4. Surfing.**3.5 Student preparation**

Students need to be progressively introduced to and taught the skills needed for safe participation. To ensure that they have a safe and enjoyable experience, it is important that students' skill levels and abilities are appropriate for the activity and the venue. It is suggested that a record of students' prerequisite skills for recreational swimming be developed. Refer to Appendix I for Proforma: Documentation of participant preparation, prerequisite skills/knowledge.

The preparation of students to be safe recreational swimmers will vary according to their age, ability and experience, the venue used, 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 this venue
- the essential safe practices for swimming at this particular venue
- the boundaries of the swimming and out-of-water waiting or playing area
- what to do when feeling tired or cold
- how to use and control swimming aids and other equipment safely, particularly in moving water
- who to notify if leaving the water or returning to it
- where to go if leaving the water to get dressed, have a rest, use the toilet etc
- what to do and/or say if approached by an unwelcome member of the public
- the limitations, if any, to activities/play in the water
- the sun/wind protection measures that are appropriate

RECREATIONAL SWIMMING

- the response to any accident or other emergency that might occur
- a signal to indicate that students are to leave the water (such as a long whistle blast, air horn blast or a visual signal).

For type 1 venues, students need to be taught safe swimming and emergency procedures relevant to the particular venue.

For type 2 venues, students taking part in recreational swimming activities in open water should be able to competently complete the following skills sequentially and continuously:

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

3.6 Specific equipment and clothing

The venue, season and weather will determine specific equipment and clothing needs. However, the following points are basic considerations for all swimming activities:

- Before and after swimming students need to protect themselves from the sun (for example, shirt, sunblock and hat), and from cold and wet weather (for example, jumper, long pants and jacket) as appropriate for the season and location. They also need a towel.
- A broad spectrum, water resistant SPF 30+ sunscreen should be used on all exposed parts of the body and should be applied according to the manufacturer's recommendations. Sun protection clothing should be readily available when students leave the water.
- A first aid kit must be located at the venue (refer to 2.11 First aid).
- Staff may wish to wear a brightly coloured vest or other identifiable clothing so they can be easily located.
- Staff members should carry a whistle or other device for signalling swimmers and other staff.
- A mobile telephone on site for use in an emergency may be useful when a telephone is not readily accessible (refer to 2.2 Risk and safety management, and 2.3 Emergency management planning).
- An assessment of the swimming venue (water depth, type of water, rescue equipment on site) and the ability of the swimmers should result in identification of any additional non-contact rescue aids for reaching and throwing (such as flotation aids, poles and ropes, surfboards) that need to be available during the activity.

3.7 Specific safety aspects

As safety aspects at different swimming venues may vary considerably, a supervision plan specific to each venue should include such items as:

- 'who does what'—the specific roles of staff members, including their roles in relation to other staff at the venue (for example, pool staff, campsite program staff, lifeguards on patrol)

- procedures for regular, ongoing accounting for the number of students in a group
- where students who are not swimming should be, what they can do, and how they are to be supervised
- the rotation of supervisory staff (where there is glare off the water or the sun is in a position to make supervision tiring, staff may need to be rotated at intervals sufficiently short for them to be able to maintain concentration)
- the means that will be used for staff to communicate with each other, generally, and in an emergency
- the roles and procedures for all staff in an emergency (refer to 2.3 Emergency management planning)
- the need for staff to be fully briefed and dressed suitably to carry out their supervisory and emergency response roles.

All staff should be thoroughly briefed before the activity commences.

A plan detailing emergency response procedures needs to be available for each swimming venue. Where such a plan has been developed by the owners/managers of the venue, staff must be familiar with the plan and be satisfied that it is appropriate for the school group. Where there is no pre-existing plan, the school needs to ensure that a plan is developed and that all staff are familiar with it. Plans detailing emergency response procedures should be available at the venue and should include the location and telephone numbers of the nearest emergency services (for example, police, ambulance, hospital) (refer to *Managing School Emergencies*, 1997).

A vehicle designated for emergency use should be available at natural water venues. If the car park is located at a distance from the swimming site, staff must be aware of any emergency vehicle access routes.

If the swimming venue does not have areas with shade, wind and/or rain shelter, temporary shelter (for example, tarps, tent flies, beach umbrellas) or shorter swimming sessions should be considered. Staff should be aware of conditions contributing to overexposure to heat (hyperthermia) and overexposure to cold (hypothermia) and the symptoms of these conditions. The wind-chill factor which arises where there are onshore winds, little shelter and students who are wet from swimming can quickly contribute to the onset of hypothermia.

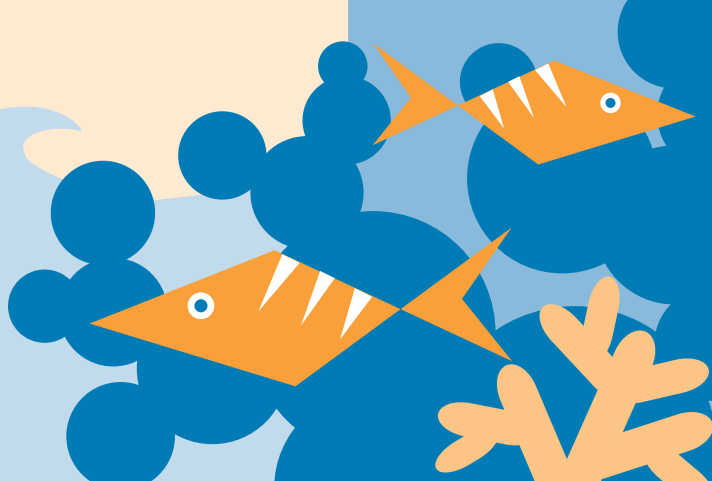
Many natural water venues do not have drinking water readily available. The provision of water and a means of ensuring that the students drink it, particularly on hot days, should be included in the planning.

Where students need to respond quickly and efficiently for safety (such as getting out of the water on a specific signal and assembling nearby) the procedures should be explained before each session begins.

3.8 First aid

Refer to 2.11 First aid, Appendix E: Sun protection and ultraviolet radiation, and Appendix G: Procedure for response to a near drowning/drowning or serious injury.

4. Surfing



4.1 Preamble

The following guidelines refer to all swimming and surfing activities at type 3 venues (or type 2 venues during storms or when there are strong winds as described in 3.1 Preamble to recreational swimming) and include body surfing, surfboard and bodyboard riding, and wave-ski paddling.

In general, those organising school surfing programs should not use beaches with a rating above '6' (refer to 4.2). This does not apply to competition surfing or surf competition training, where the skill and experience levels of students and staff are higher, providing them with a greater ability to manage more challenging conditions safely.

4.2 Staff–student ratio

At least two staff members must supervise students involved in surfing activities. A teacher employed by the Department of Education, Employment and Training, or by the school council, must be present and have overall responsibility for the activity.

Lifeguards at beaches can only be used for supervision and counted in staff–student ratios if they do not have general lifeguard duties at the venue at that time, and their *sole responsibility* during the activity is for the students in the program.

The following guidelines and staff–student ratios are minimum requirements.

Recreational surf swimming and body surfing (without boards):

- a minimum of one staff member to no more than five students (1:5) in the water
- for every twenty students, or part thereof, there must be at least one staff member with a current Bronze Medallion (SLSAA) or Surf Rescue Certificate (SLSAA) (refer to 4.3 Staff experience and qualifications).

Surfing training or practice (with boards) at a type 2 venue and while type 2 venue conditions prevail:

- a minimum of one staff member to no more than ten students (1:10) for students in the water
- for every twenty-four students, or part there of, there must be at least one staff member with a current Bronze Medallion (SLSAA) or Surf Rescue Certificate (SLSAA) (refer to 4.3 Staff experience and qualifications).

Surfing (with boards) at a type 3 venue:

- a minimum of one staff member to no more than eight students (1:8) in the water
- for every twenty-four students, or part there of, there must be at least one staff member with a current Bronze Medallion (SLSAA) or Surf Rescue Certificate (SLSAA) (refer to 4.3 Staff experience and qualifications).

When determining the specific staff–student ratio for each activity, consideration needs to include the age and experience of students, the experience and qualifications of staff, characteristics of the venue, prevailing weather and surf conditions, and the type of surfing equipment. Arrangements need to be sufficiently flexible that should surf conditions become more challenging, activities can be transferred to another venue, or a plan can be implemented to make groups smaller and more manageable for supervision, or the activity cancelled.

Local surf lifesaving clubs, municipal councils, camp operators and private providers of beach activities are sources of information about the safety of beaches in their areas.

In addition, most surfing beaches are rated in the publication, *Beaches of the Victorian Coast and Port Philip Bay: A Guide to their nature, characteristics, surf and safety* (1996) (refer to 7.2 Print and video resources). This is a highly recommended reference for safety planning for surfing venues. Hazard ratings of 1 to 10 are given to beaches under average conditions, with 1 being the safest and 10 the least safe. The ratings increase with higher waves and stronger winds.

The maximum number of students in the water at one time should be based on the number of appropriately qualified staff, and an assessment of beach conditions and their impact on effective supervision.

A minimum ratio of one staff member to no more than twenty students (1:20) should be maintained for students who are not in the water.

If there are not sufficient qualified staff to supervise the number of students who are to be involved in surfing activities, a plan to rotate students in and out of the water may be implemented to maintain safe supervisory ratios. Appropriately supervised activities may need to be provided on shore.

4.3 Staff experience and qualifications

At least one staff member must:

- hold a Bronze Medallion (SLSAA) or Surf Rescue Certificate (SLSAA) for every twenty students (recreational surf swimming and body surfing) and every twenty-four students (surfing with boards), and
- have local knowledge of the venue.

One additional staff member included in the ratios should:

- hold an AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety Certificate, or
- hold a Bronze Medallion (RLSS) or a Bronze Medallion (SLSAA) or a Surf Rescue Certificate (SLSAA), or
- have documented experience in the surf activity being conducted as well as water safety and rescue training (refer to Appendix J for Proforma: Documentation of staff qualifications and experience or expertise in lieu of certification/accreditation), and
- the ability to competently initiate emergency response procedures and CPR.

Other staff included in the ratios must be able to competently carry out the supervisory role assigned to them.

Staff giving surfing instruction should:

- hold an instructor or coaching qualification from a recognised surfing organisation (refer to 7.3 Providers of professional development, training, certification/accreditation), or
- have the equivalent documented training and/or experience (refer to Appendix J for Proforma: Documentation of staff qualifications and experience or expertise in lieu of certification/accreditation).

Where a Surf Life Saving patrol is on duty, staff members must continue to meet the ratios and qualification requirements for the venue, and maintain supervisory responsibility. However, in situations where a rescue is necessary, it would normally be expected that the duty lifeguards would take charge of the rescue. In situations where the duty lifeguards are otherwise occupied, the staff member(s) would undertake the rescue.

To ensure that there is no confusion between the roles of duty lifeguards and excursion staff members, it is recommended that the staff consult with the relevant lifeguard on arrival at the venue.

4.4 Planning and preparation

Planning and preparation for surfing activities should include the implementation of risk and safety management processes for identifying and controlling hazards, and risks and emergency management planning to identify actions to be taken during and following an emergency (refer to 2.2 Risk and safety management, 2.3 Emergency management planning, and Appendix H for Proforma: Analysis of activities for risk and safety management).

Surfing must be conducted within an environment that has been judged to be safe. Staff need to be aware of the level of swimming ability and surfing skill of all students so that safe organisational arrangements can be made (refer to 2.2 Risk and safety management, and 2.3 Emergency management planning).

In general, when assessing the suitability of a surfing venue prior to conducting the activity, consideration should be given to:

- the ages and abilities of the students
- the qualifications and experience of qualified staff
- analysis of risks and hazards to determine if a satisfactory plan can be developed to ensure the safety of students
- potential hazards, such as rips, submerged rocks, currents and tides
- the depth and condition of the water in relation to the skills of the students
- available shelter from sun, wind and rain, given the potential weather conditions
- the suitability of facilities, including those needed for changing clothes
- the capacity to clearly define the surfing area
- security for clothing
- emergency communication
- intrusion into the school group by uninvited members of the public
- proximity to medical expertise
- venue access.

Given the range of different conditions that might exist between apparently similar surfing venues, adequate knowledge of the specific beach should be obtained before school programs are conducted at the venue. In south-eastern Australia there can be marked differences between two different beaches with regard to conditions such as water temperature, currents, sand bars, rips, tides etc.

Where possible, programs should be conducted at patrolled beaches. Where beaches are not patrolled, appropriate rescue aids need to be located close to the activity areas. Current venue information must be checked before commencing surf activities, as wave and wind activity on Victorian beaches can alter sand bars, river entrances, rips and beaches quite dramatically in a short period of time. *Beaches of the Victorian Coast and Port Phillip Bay* (1996) gives a

description of each beach, together with a hazard rating and a diagram showing key landmarks, sand bars and rips. For safety planning purposes, note that the hazard rating only applies to the surf (wave breaking) zone, under average conditions for that beach.

Whether equipment is hired, or owned by the school or students, it must be checked to ensure that it is in safe working condition and that any equipment owned by students is appropriate for the activity. Under no circumstances must a student be permitted to use equipment known to be in unsafe condition.

Plan teaching sessions to maximise teaching and practice opportunities. Beginners should be kept well within the impact zone (breaking surf), catching broken waves in approximately waist-deep water.

4.5 Student preparation

Students need to be progressively introduced to and taught the skills needed for safe participation. To ensure that they have a safe and enjoyable experience, it is important that their skill levels and abilities are appropriate for the activity and the venue. A record of student prerequisite skills for surfing is suggested (refer to Appendix I for Proforma: Documentation of participant preparation, prerequisite skills/knowledge).

Just how students are prepared to be safe surfers will vary according to their age, ability and experience, the venue used, and the nature of the proposed surfing activity. Preparation might include the following types of information and procedures:

- the potential risks of surfing at this venue
- the essential safe practices for surfing at this particular venue
- the boundaries of the surfing and out-of-water waiting or playing area
- what to do when feeling tired or cold
- who to notify if leaving the water or returning to it
- where to go if leaving the water to get dressed, have a rest, use the toilet etc
- what to do and/or say if approached by an unwelcome member of the public
- the limitations, if any, to activities/play in the water
- the sun/wind protection measures that are appropriate
- the response to any accident or other emergency that might occur
- a signal to indicate that students are to leave the water (such as a long whistle blast, air horn blast or a visual signal).

Prerequisites for all surf activities (with or without boards), except for beginners under surfing instruction (with boards)

Before participating in surfing activities, students must demonstrate basic swimming and water-safety skills in flat water, including demonstrating:

- for one minute how a flotation aid may be used as a support, and reassuring any other swimmers by talking with them
- survival sculling, floating or treading water for a total of five minutes
- waving one arm as if signalling for help.

In addition to the above, *when swimming or body surfing* (with no board for buoyancy support), students should be able to swim 200 metres in flat water.

Beginners, under surfing instruction (with boards), must be taught basic water competence skills as soon as possible so that they are able to:

- demonstrate the ability to submerge and resurface competently
- physically handle the surfboard being used.

Note: All students should be taught surf swimming techniques, such as swimming through waves and body surfing. Special emphasis should be placed on teaching about the changing nature of the sea bed and the dangers associated with diving under waves in shallow water.

Before entering the water, students should be taught about the following:

- How to identify a rip. How water moves in a rip, and how they should swim if they are caught in one. At the specific surfing beach, students should be able to point out any rips and other hazards, such as rocks, and be able to indicate where the safe areas are and where they would swim to if caught in a rip.
- Safety procedures and considerations for the particular venue, including the boundaries of the surfing area depicted by clearly seen flags or landmarks on the shore.
- Surf signals (for example, one arm raised on the shore to indicate that all students must come out of the water, and for a surfer in trouble, one arm raised to signal for help) and the need to watch carefully for signals at all times.

4.6 Specific equipment and clothing

The venue, season and weather will determine specific equipment and clothing needs. However, the following points are basic considerations for all surfing activities:

- It is recommended that wetsuits are worn for warmth and buoyancy, as well as for protection from the sun and surfboard knocks to the body.
- Swim fins are recommended for surfing with body boards, particularly when surfing in an unpatrolled area.
- Before and after surfing students need to protect themselves from the sun (for example, shirt, sunblock and hat), and from cold and wet weather (for example, jumper, long pants and jacket) as appropriate for the season and location.
- A broad-spectrum, water resistant SPF 30+ sunscreen should be used on exposed parts of the body and applied according to the manufacturer's recommendations. Sun protection clothing should be readily available to students when they leave the water.
- A first-aid kit must be located with the group (refer to 2.11 First aid).
- Leg ropes or wrist leashes must be worn when board riding and body boarding to prevent runaway boards from hitting other surfers and swimmers, and for keeping boards on hand to be used as a flotation device if needed.
- A rescue tube and/or a board should be readily available to staff for rescue purposes.
- It is advisable that staff wear a brightly coloured vest or other identifiable clothing so they can be easily located.
- Staff members should carry a whistle or other device for signalling to swimmers and other staff.
- A mobile telephone on site for use in an emergency may be useful when a telephone is not readily accessible (refer to 2.2 Risk and safety management, and 2.3 Emergency management planning).
- Soft boards are recommended for beginner surfers.

SURFING

- All equipment should be checked to ensure that it is in safe working condition. For guidelines for equipment provided by students refer to 4.4 Planning and preparation.

4.7 Specific safety aspects

As safety aspects at different surfing venues may vary considerably, a supervision plan specific to each venue should include such items as:

- ‘who does what’—the specific roles of staff members, including their roles in relation to other staff at the venue, such as lifeguards on patrol
- procedures for regular, ongoing accounting for the number of students in a group
- where students who are not surfing should be, what they can do, and how they are supervised
- the rotation of supervisory staff (where there is glare off the water or the sun is in a position to make supervision tiring, staff may need to be rotated at sufficiently short intervals for them to be able to maintain concentration)
- the means that will be used for staff to communicate with each other, generally, and in an emergency
- the roles and procedures for all staff in an emergency (refer to 2.3 Emergency management planning)
- the need for staff to be fully briefed and dressed suitably to carry out their supervisory and emergency response roles.

All staff should be thoroughly briefed before the activity commences.

A plan detailing emergency response procedures needs to be available for each surfing venue. Where such a plan has been developed by lifeguards at the venue, staff must be familiar with the plan and be satisfied that it is appropriate for a school group. Where there is no pre-existing plan, the school needs to ensure that a plan is developed and that all staff are familiar with it. Plans detailing emergency response procedures should be available at the venue and should include the location and telephone numbers of the nearest emergency services (police, ambulance, hospital) (refer to *Managing School Emergencies*, 1997).

A vehicle designated for emergency use should be readily available. If the car park is located at a distance from the surfing site, staff must be aware of any emergency vehicle access routes.

If the surfing venue does not have areas with shade, wind and/or rain shelter, temporary shelter (for example, tarps, tent flies, beach umbrellas) or shorter surfing sessions may need to be considered. Staff should be aware of conditions contributing to, and symptoms of, overexposure to heat (hyperthermia) and overexposure to cold (hypothermia). The wind-chill factor which arises where there are onshore winds, little shelter and students who are wet from swimming can quickly contribute to the onset of hypothermia.

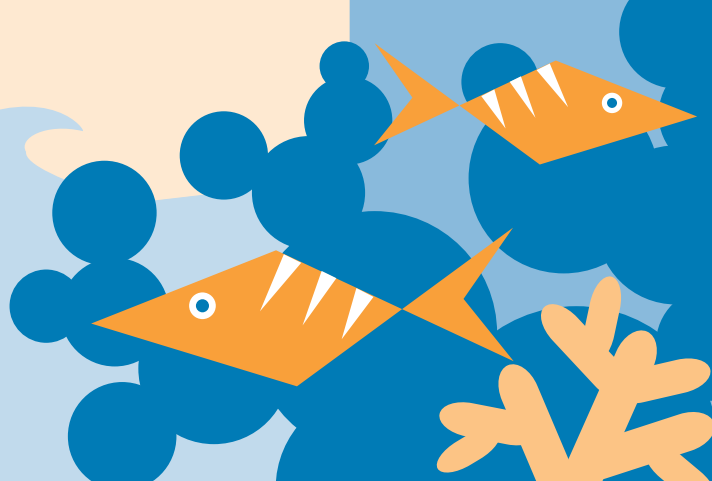
Many natural venues do not have drinking water readily available. The provision of water and a means of ensuring that the students drink it, particularly on hot days, should be included in the planning.

Where students need to respond quickly and efficiently for safety (such as getting out of the water on a specific signal and assembling nearby) the procedures should be explained before each session begins.

4.8 First aid

Refer to 2.11 First aid, Appendix E Sun protection and ultraviolet radiation, and Appendix G Procedure for response to a near drowning/drowning or serious injury.

5. Snorkelling



5.1 Preamble

Snorkelling is described as the activity in which a person swims on the surface of the water, or dives below it using a mask, snorkel and swimming aids such as fins, but no self-contained underwater breathing apparatus (SCUBA).

Snorkelling includes both snorkel swimming and snorkel diving. *Snorkel swimming* is snorkelling on the surface of the water where the swimmer is positively buoyant. In *snorkel diving*, the diver is neutrally buoyant (with the potential to become negatively buoyant, that is, to sink to the bottom) and able to engage in breath-hold diving and swimming below the surface.

Snorkelling activities should generally be undertaken in water that has a minimum of 3 metres visibility.

Snorkelling venues may be:

- a pool or enclosed water with pool-like conditions (venue type 1)
- open, shallow water where the bottom has a gradual slope and the water is approximately chest-deep, with safe and easy entry and exit points
- open, deep water.

Note: ‘Snorkelling’ does not include activities in a swimming teaching program where masks and snorkels may be used incidentally as part of the program.

5.2 Staff–student ratio

At least two staff members must supervise students involved in snorkelling activities. A teacher employed by the Department of Education, Employment and Training, or by the school council, must be present and have overall responsibility for the activity.

The following guidelines and the staff–student ratios are the minimum requirements.

Swimming pool or closed pool-like water (venue type 1)

For all *snorkelling*, a minimum of one qualified staff member to fifteen students (1:15) in the water (refer to 5.3 Staff experience and qualifications).

Open, chest-deep water in optimal weather conditions, and using mask, snorkel, fins and wetsuit

For *snorkel swimming*, a minimum of one qualified staff member to twelve students (1:12) in the water.

For *snorkel diving*, a minimum of one qualified staff member to ten students (1:10) in the water.

SNORKELLING

Open, deep water in optimal weather and water conditions, and using mask, snorkel, fins and wetsuit

For *snorkel swimming*, a minimum of one qualified staff member to ten students (1:10) in the water.

For *snorkel diving*, a minimum of one qualified staff member to eight students (1:8) in the water.

The above ratios are minimum requirements for optimal weather and water conditions. Supervision plans need to take into consideration the age, experience and competence of students, the experience and qualifications of staff, venue characteristics, weather and water conditions. In some instances the decision will be made to have smaller groups that can be more easily supervised. In general, it would be expected that staff members included in the ratios would be supervising from in the water, unless prevailing conditions meant that supervision would be more effective from a boat or the shore.

The maximum number of students in the water at one time should be based on an assessment of the water and weather conditions, and the impact of these on effective supervision.

If there are not sufficient qualified staff to supervise the number of students who are to be involved in snorkelling, a plan to rotate students in and out of the water may be implemented in order to maintain safe supervisory ratios.

Students not involved in water activities must be supervised separately in an appropriate shore-based program planned in advance with a minimum staff–student ratio of one to twenty students (1:20).

5.3 Staff experience and qualifications

For *snorkel swimming*, the qualified staff member must have:

- documented experience in snorkelling, and
- knowledge and experience at the venue (refer to Appendix J for Proforma: Documentation of staff qualifications and experience or expertise in lieu of certification/accreditation), and
- a current lifesaving qualification appropriate to the venue (refer to Recreational swimming, 3.3 Staff experience and qualifications).

For *snorkel diving*, the qualified staff member must have:

- a snorkel instructor’s qualification from a recognised snorkelling or scuba diving organisation (refer to 7.3 Providers of professional development, training, certification/accreditation), and
- a current lifesaving qualification appropriate to the venue (refer Recreational swimming, 3.3 Staff experience and qualifications).

Note: Swimming in a pool using a snorkel, mask and fins may be an extension activity for a school swimming program, with no intention of progressing into snorkelling as an adventure activity. In such cases, the guidelines for swimming and water safety programs apply (refer to section 4.4.4 of the *Schools of the Future Reference Guide*).

Where a charter powerboat is used to accompany divers, the boat must have a Marine Board Certificate of Survey and be crewed according to Marine Board of Victoria specifications.

5.4 Planning and preparation

The planning and preparation for snorkelling activities should include the implementation of risk and safety management processes for identifying and controlling hazards and risks, and emergency management planning to identify actions to be taken during and following an emergency (refer to 2.2 Risk and safety management, 2.3 Emergency management planning, and Appendix H for Proforma: Analysis of activities for risk and safety management).

Snorkelling must be conducted within an environment that has been judged to be safe. Staff need to be aware of the swimming abilities and snorkelling skills of all students so that safe organisational arrangements can be made (refer to 2.2 Risk and safety management, and 2.3 Emergency management planning).

In general, when assessing the suitability of a snorkelling venue prior to conducting the activity, consideration should be given to:

- the ages and abilities of the students
- the qualifications and experience of staff
- an analysis of risks and hazards to determine if a satisfactory plan can be developed to ensure the safety of students
- the potential hazards, such as submerged rocks, currents, tides
- the depth and condition of the water in relation to the skills of the students
- available shelter from sun, wind and rain given the potential weather conditions
- the suitability of facilities, including those needed for changing clothes
- the capacity to clearly define the snorkelling area
- security for clothing
- emergency communication
- intrusion into the school group by uninvited members of the public
- the proximity to medical expertise
- venue access.

Given the range of different conditions that might exist between similar snorkelling venues, adequate knowledge of the specific venue should be obtained before a school program is conducted there. In south-eastern Australia there can be marked differences between apparently similar venues with regard to conditions such as water temperature, currents, tides etc.

All equipment (whether hired, owned by the school or provided by the student) must be checked to ensure that it is in good condition and appropriate for the snorkelling activity.

5.5 Student preparation

Students need to be progressively introduced to and taught the skills needed for safe participation. To ensure that they have a safe and enjoyable experience, it is important that their skill levels and abilities are appropriate for the activity and the venue. A record of student prerequisite skills for snorkelling is suggested (refer to Appendix I for Proforma: Documentation of participant preparation, prerequisite skills/knowledge).

SNORKELLING

For *snorkel swimming* in approximately chest-deep water in optimal weather and water conditions and where students can enter and leave the water easily, students must be taught the basic water competence skills of submerging and resurfacing as soon as possible. Students who are unable to float or swim competently must wear a wetsuit or buoyancy vest.

Prerequisites for participation

For *snorkel swimming* in open water, or in shallow water where water and weather conditions are less than ideal, and for *snorkel diving* students must be able to:

- swim continuously for 200 metres using a recognised stroke, then
- demonstrate survival sculling, floating and treading water for ten minutes without the use of fins or flotation equipment.

Students taking part in *snorkel diving* must be at least twelve years of age.

All *snorkel diving* students must demonstrate competency in snorkel swimming and have preparation in the following:

- an understanding of buoyancy concepts (knowledge of how to gain and maintain positive buoyancy, and the effects on buoyancy with the increase in pressure as under water depth increases)
- knowledge of the dangers of separation from the group, hyperventilation, hypothermia, squeeze in ears, sinuses, mask and lungs (the pressure–depth relationship), and how to equalise pressure in ears and mask air space
- ditching and replacing a weight belt (if wearing one) in the water
- clearing flooded snorkel and mask
- surface diving techniques, including equalising the pressure in the ears when descending
- entry and exit methods
- self-rescue techniques
- correct finning technique
- hand signals (OK and not OK)
- appropriate safety practices, such as the buddy system (responsibility for a buddy or diving partner) where one dives and the other one stays on the surface.

See Appendix I for Proforma: Documentation of participant preparation, prerequisite skills/knowledge, as a means of recording student preparation.

Some medical conditions may preclude a student from snorkel diving. However, as such conditions vary in severity and recency, it is possible that a student with one of these conditions may want to participate, and may do so with a certificate from a medical practitioner. These include:

- chronic ear infection
- perforated eardrum
- epilepsy, seizures or blackouts
- chronic bronchitis
- severe asthma
- heart or lung conditions.

The medical certificate must be current for the specific snorkelling activity, unless the doctor is prepared to certify the student as medically fit for a longer period of time. Any special precautions indicated in the certificate must be able to be met.

Where there may be doubt about a student's fitness to snorkel or snorkel dive because of a temporary illness, such as a cold, flu or hay fever, a certificate from a medical practitioner may be requested.

Where there is doubt about a student's fitness for snorkel diving, a certificate for diving fitness should be obtained from a medical practitioner certified in diving medicine.

Briefings

Briefings should occur before and after all snorkelling activities.

Pre-snorkelling briefings should include:

- characteristics of the area in which the activity is to take place
- potential hazards of the venue, including water and weather conditions
- boundaries of the area (snorkel divers to stay within a 50 metres radius of the diving flag)
- proximity to staff
- time limits
- what to do when feeling tired or cold
- importance of staying with the group in the water
- checking of functioning and fitting of all essential equipment
- reviewing essential techniques (clearing mask, equalising, finning, surface diving)
- review, in the water, of emergency procedures—what to do if in trouble
- safety practices to be used, such as the buddy system, hand signals etc
- hyperventilation and hypothermia symptoms, and how to avoid and relieve cramp
- hazards of some marine animals, people fishing and boats
- who to notify if leaving the water, or returning to it
- where to go if leaving the water to get dressed, have a rest, use the toilet etc
- what to do and/or say if approached by an unwelcome member of the public
- the sun and/or wind protection measures that are appropriate
- the response to any accident or other emergency that might occur
- checking that students with asthma and other medical conditions who potentially may need medication have it with them
- checking that students with asthma have their nebuliser, and reviewing the response to any asthma distress.

Post-dive briefings should include checks for:

- ear discomfort
- signs of hypothermia
- breathing problems
- headaches.

SNORKELLING

Should any health-related problems occur as a result of diving, a plan should be in place for follow-up, including reporting to parents and possibly first aid or referral to a doctor.

5.6 Specific equipment and clothing

For *snorkel swimming*, students must at all times be positively buoyant. A wetsuit recommended for deep Victorian waters at all times of the year will provide sufficient positive buoyancy. Wearing wetsuits is an additional safety precaution when the water is too deep for students to stand up comfortably.

Before the snorkel swimming or snorkel diving activity, all snorkelling equipment should to be checked to ensure that:

- exposure protection is used as appropriate (for example, wetsuits, if worn, must fit adequately)
- the snorkel is attached, usually to the left-hand side of the mask, with a snorkel keeper
- masks have tempered glass and should enclose the nose and seal correctly
- fins are properly fitted and suited to the conditions
- weight belts, if used for snorkel diving, must have quick-release buckles (correct buoyancy is paramount). Note that snorkel swimmers must not wear a weight belt.

Gloves are recommended for snorkel diving—neoprene for winter and cold conditions, light weight gloves for mild conditions.

The venue, season and weather will determine specific equipment and clothing needs.

However, the following points are basic considerations for all snorkelling activities:

- Before and after snorkelling, students need to protect themselves from the sun (for example, shirt, sunblock and hat), and cold and wet weather (for example, jumper, long pants and jacket) as appropriate for the season and location.
- The increased intensity of ultraviolet radiation while in the water must be considered and a broad spectrum, water-resistant SPF 30+ sunscreen should be used on all exposed parts of the body and applied according to the manufacturer's recommendations. Sun protection clothing should be readily available to students when they leave the water.
- A first-aid kit must be located at the venue (refer to 2.11 First aid).
- It is advisable that staff wear a brightly coloured vest or other identifiable clothing so they can be easily located.
- Staff members should carry a whistle or other device for signalling to snorkellers and other staff.
- A mobile telephone on site for use in an emergency may be useful when a telephone is not readily accessible (refer to 2.2 Risk and safety management, and 2.3 Emergency management planning).
- An assessment of the snorkelling venue (water depth, type of water, existing rescue equipment on site) and the ability of the swimmers, should result in the identification of any additional non-contact rescue aids for reaching and throwing (such as flotation aides, poles and ropes, surfboards) that need to be available during the activity.

Divers' flags must be used for all snorkelling activities in open water venues and must be displayed at the site at all times to indicate that there are snorkellers in the area or below the water surface.

For snorkel diving, a safety float should be towed by a staff member if more than 50 metres from the shore, boat or platform. (A car tube with a diving flag securely attached is adequate.)

Under no circumstances are spear guns, hand spears, slings or knives to be carried or used by students.

Students with asthma must have medication for emergency treatment with them in the water. Pressurised nebulisers can be tucked up a wetsuit sleeve. In case the nebuliser is lost in the water, it is essential that a spare is immediately available.

In addition to the requirements of the Marine Board of Victoria (detailed in the current *Victorian Boating Guide*—refer to 7.2 Print and video resources), boats that are used to transport snorkellers to open water venues, need to be equipped with flags, a radio and first-aid kit.

5.7 Specific safety aspects

For all snorkelling

At least one staff must have a thorough knowledge and experience of the venue, including tides, currents and the range of possible conditions. All staff should be thoroughly briefed before the activity commences.

On the day of the activity, the conditions must be assessed by the staff as being suitable for the participating students. Staff must be prepared to modify, relocate or cancel the activity, if at any time, in their judgement, it cannot be conducted safely.

The following guidelines for water and weather conditions are recommended:

- in general, underwater visibility should be at least 3 metres
- the water surface should be calm with minimal or no 'sea' (the 'chop' of the water), and swell (unbroken waves) should be less than 0.5 metre
- stable weather conditions must prevail, with no obvious threat of a sudden change in the weather that could significantly affect the safety of the activity.

A safe water entry and exit should be chosen where there is minimal water movement and suitable access back to the point of water entry should weather or water conditions change.

The location must be free from obvious dangers, such as boat traffic, people fishing, water skiers, dangerous marine animals and any other potential hazards.

As safety aspects at different snorkelling venues may vary considerably, a supervision plan specific to each venue should include such items as:

- 'who does what'—the specific roles of staff members, including their roles in relation to other staff at the venue (for example, pool staff, campsite program staff, lifeguards on patrol)
- procedures for regular, ongoing accounting for the number of students in a group
- where students who are not snorkelling should be, what they can do and how they are to be supervised
- the rotation of supervisory staff (where there is glare off the water or the sun is in a position to make supervision tiring, staff may need to be rotated at sufficiently short intervals for them to be able to maintain concentration)
- the means that will be used for staff to communicate with each other, generally, and in an emergency

SNORKELLING

- the roles and procedures for all staff in an emergency (refer to 2.3 Emergency management planning)
- the need for staff to be fully briefed and dressed suitably to carry out their supervisory and emergency response roles.

A plan detailing emergency response procedures needs to be available for each snorkelling venue. Where such a plan has been developed by others, such as the specialised activity instructors at the venue, school staff must be familiar with the plan and be satisfied that it is appropriate for a school group. Where there is no pre-existing plan, the school needs to ensure that a plan is developed and that all staff are familiar with it. Plans detailing emergency response procedures should be available at the venue, and should include the location and telephone numbers of the nearest emergency services (police, ambulance, hospital) (refer to *Managing School Emergencies*, 1997).

A vehicle designated for emergency use should be available. If the car park is located at a distance from the activity site, staff must be aware of any emergency vehicle access routes.

If the snorkelling venue does not have areas with shade, wind and/or rain shelter, temporary shelter (for example, tarps, tent flys, beach umbrellas) or shorter snorkelling sessions may need to be considered. Staff should be aware of conditions contributing to overexposure to heat (hyperthermia) and overexposure to cold (hypothermia) and the symptoms of these conditions. The wind-chill factor which arises where there are onshore winds, little shelter and students who are wet from swimming can quickly contribute to the onset of hypothermia.

Many natural venues do not have drinking water readily available. The provision of water and a means of ensuring that the students drink it, particularly on hot days, should be included in the planning.

Where students need to respond quickly and efficiently for safety (such as getting out of the water on a specific signal and assembling nearby) the procedures should be explained before each session begins.

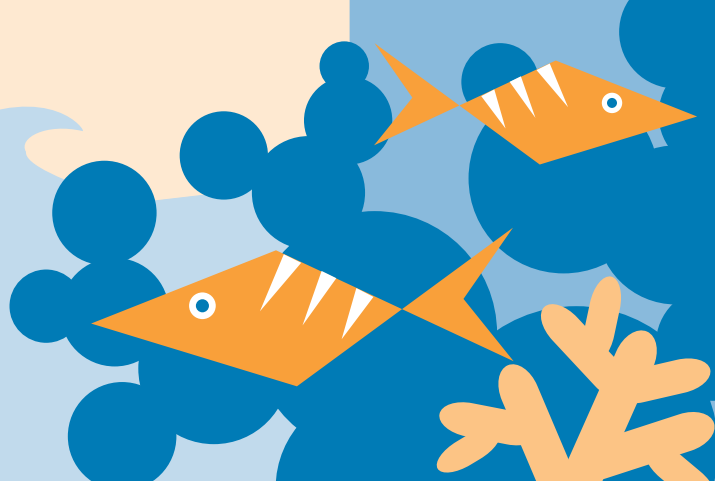
In addition, for snorkel diving:

- The snorkel diving point in open water should be within 200 metres of the shore or within 90 metres of the boat.
- Wetsuits must be worn.
- A student's weight belt should be no more than the weight required to achieve neutral buoyancy.
- If powerboats are chartered to transport students to the diving site, boat operators must adhere to the requirements of the Marine Board of Victoria.
- Staff should be able to be easily recognised by boat operators and all students by having identification, such as brightly coloured caps, singlet or specific (bright) coloured fins.

5.8 First aid

Refer to 2.11 First aid, Appendix E: Sun protection and ultraviolet radiation, and Appendix G: Procedure for response to a near drowning/drowning or serious injury.

6. Scuba diving



6.1 Preamble

Scuba diving is an underwater swimming activity involving the use of self-contained underwater breathing apparatus (SCUBA).

School scuba diving programs generally can be classified into two types:

- an introductory scuba program with training in the use of scuba equipment in a pool, basic scuba theory and, possibly, an introductory dive in open water
- scuba training towards the achievement of a recognised scuba diver qualification.

The guidelines in this section apply to the type of introductory scuba program described in the first dot point above.

Any scuba diving beyond an introductory program or where students are working toward scuba qualifications must be conducted according to the Australian Standard AS 4005.1 Australian Standard, Training and Certification of Recreational Divers.

6.2 Staff–student ratio

At least two staff members must supervise students involved in scuba diving activities. A teacher employed by the Department of Education, Employment and Training, or by the school council, must be present and have overall responsibility for the activity.

While minimum staff–student ratios must always be met with *qualified* staff (refer to 6.3 Staff experience and qualifications), any staff in excess of the minimum ratio who are out of the water (supervisory staff in the boat) need not have scuba diving qualifications, but must have the swimming, lifesaving and CPR ability to assist in an emergency. Any adults who are learning to scuba dive must be included with the students for the purpose of staff–student ratios.

Note: Students, in general, should be at least fifteen years of age before taking part in scuba diving activities, although students from twelve years of age may participate under specified circumstances (refer to 6.5 Student preparation).

The following guidelines and staff–student ratios are minimum requirements.

In a *pool* for skills training, a minimum of one qualified staff member to eight students (1:8).

In *open water*, where students have completed the necessary prerequisite skills training (refer to 6.5 Student preparation), a minimum of one qualified staff member to four students (1:4), that is, two buddy pairs.

For an introductory dive where only one skills training session has been completed, a minimum of one qualified staff member to two students (1:2).

The above ratios are *minimum* requirements for optimal weather and water conditions. Supervision plans need to take into consideration the age, experience and competence of students,

SCUBA DIVING

the experience and qualifications of staff, venue characteristics, weather and water conditions. In some instances the decision will be made to have smaller groups that can be more easily supervised. In general, it would be expected that staff members included in the ratios would be supervising from in the water, unless prevailing conditions meant that supervision would be more effective from a boat or the shore.

The maximum number of students in the water at one time should be based on an assessment of water and weather conditions, and the impact of these on effective supervision.

If there are not sufficient qualified staff to supervise the number of students who are to be involved in scuba diving, a plan to rotate students in and out of the water may be used to maintain safe supervisory ratios.

For students who are not in the water, the minimum ratio of one staff member to no more than twenty students (1:20) should be maintained.

6.3 Staff experience and qualifications

The qualified staff member who is instructing must:

- hold an instructor certificate from a recognised certifying organisation (refer to 7.1 Organisations for certifying organisations), and
- possess a current qualification in the administration of oxygen, and
- have current experience and knowledge of the dive site.

Other staff, if diving with the group, must be qualified divers and be able to demonstrate competency and recent experience in scuba diving.

Where a powerboat is chartered to accompany divers, the boat must have a Marine Board Certificate of Survey and be crewed according to Marine Board of Victoria specifications.

6.4 Planning and preparation

The planning and preparation for scuba diving should include the implementation of risk and safety management processes for identifying and controlling hazards and risks, and emergency management planning to identify actions to be taken during and following an emergency (refer to 2.2 Risk and safety management, 2.3 Emergency management planning, and Appendix H for Proforma: Analysis of activities for risk and safety management).

Scuba diving must be conducted within an environment that has been judged to be safe. Staff need to be aware of the swimming ability and scuba diving skills, if any, of all students, so that safe arrangements can be made. Staff must be prepared to modify, relocate or cancel the activity if, in their judgement, it cannot be conducted safely (refer to 2.2 Risk and safety management, and 2.3 Emergency management planning).

In general, when assessing the suitability of a scuba diving venue before conducting the activity, consideration should be given to:

- the ages and abilities of the students
- the qualifications and experience of staff
- an analysis of risks and hazards to determine if a satisfactory plan can be developed to ensure the safety of students
- potential hazards, such as submerged rocks, boat traffic, people fishing, currents and tides
- selection of safe entry points where there is minimal water movement

- the capacity to clearly define the diving area
- availability of shelter from sun, wind and rain, given likely weather conditions
- the depth of the dives to be undertaken in relation to the skills of the students
- the suitability of facilities, including those needed for changing clothes
- security for clothing
- emergency communication
- intrusion into the school group by uninvited members of the public
- proximity to medical expertise
- location of the nearest decompression chamber
- venue access for emergencies.

Given the different conditions that might exist between scuba diving venues, adequate knowledge of the specific venue should be obtained before conducting a school program there. In south-eastern Australia there can be marked differences between apparently similar venues with regard to conditions such as water temperature, currents, tides etc.

Any special needs that students might have, such as mobility, communication, equipment and supervision should be addressed in planning for each activity, and in safety management planning in particular (refer to 2.3 Risk and safety management planning).

6.5 Student preparation

Students need to be progressively introduced to and taught the skills needed for safe participation. To ensure that they have a safe and enjoyable experience, it is important that students' skill levels and abilities are appropriate for the activity and the venue. A record of student prerequisite skills for scuba diving is suggested. Refer to Appendix I for Proforma: Documentation of participant preparation, prerequisite skills/knowledge.

Prerequisites for participation

To participate in introductory scuba training in a pool, as described in 6.1, students must be able to demonstrate the ability to submerge and resurface confidently without scuba equipment.

Current medical information on students must be obtained. For pool training the standard Department of Education, Employment and Training medical information form can be used (refer to Appendix B for Proforma: Confidential medical information for school council approved excursions), together with a medical information form designed specifically for scuba diving (refer to Appendix D for Proforma: Scuba diving: participant medical history).

If the introductory scuba experience is not in a pool and is in water that is more than chest-deep and/or includes a dive, then a medical information form designed specifically for scuba diving must be completed (refer to Appendix D for Proforma: Scuba diving: participant medical history).

Where students with one or more of the following medical conditions want to participate in an introductory scuba experience, they may do so if they have obtained, within the previous three months, a certificate of diving fitness from a medical practitioner certified in diving medicine (refer to 7.3 Providers of professional development, training, certification/accreditation):

- chronic ear infection
- perforated eardrum
- epilepsy, seizures or blackouts

SCUBA DIVING

- chronic bronchitis
- severe asthma
- heart or lung conditions.

For scuba diving beyond the introductory experience, all students must have obtained, within the previous three months, a certificate for diving fitness from a medical practitioner certified in diving medicine (refer to 7.3 Providers of professional development, training, certification/accreditation).

Where there may be doubt about a student's fitness to scuba dive because of a temporary illness, such as a cold, flu or hayfever, a certificate from a medical practitioner may be requested.

Prior to a scuba activity in open water, students must demonstrate that they can (without the use of mask, fins, snorkel or flotation equipment):

- swim 200 metres on the surface of the water using a recognised stroke
- float and/or tread water for ten minutes.

In general, students should be fifteen years of age or older to ensure that they have the physical strength to carry the equipment, the ability to follow complex instructions, and the maturity and responsibility to understand and implement the necessary safety procedures.

Students who are twelve years of age may participate in scuba pool training and open water diving provided that:

- they have the physical strength to participate
- the venue has optimal conditions for beginner divers, and
- any necessary additional safety measures can be put in place to support the potentially less mature student.

Prior to every diving session, students must be able to demonstrate the following skills:

- ability to clear and replace the face mask
- ability to clear and replace the regulator
- ability to achieve positive buoyancy while on the surface.

Before students can proceed to open water situations beyond the introductory scuba experience, they must be deemed by a qualified instructor to have demonstrated the required 'standard' of theory and pool training. To progress to more advanced dives, students must hold, or be training for, the appropriate scuba qualification for that level of diving (refer to 6.1 Preamble).

Records should be kept of students' prerequisite ability (refer to Appendix I for Proforma: Documentation of participant preparation, prerequisite skills/knowledge).

Additional preparation for student safety at a scuba diving venue should include such information and procedures as:

- checking on the essential safety considerations for the particular venue
- establishing the boundaries of the scuba diving and the out-of-water waiting area
- reminding students what to do when feeling tired or cold
- checking that they understand where to go if leaving the water to get dressed, have a rest and so on
- specifying what, if any, safety limitations apply to activities/play in the water
- reminding students about protection from the sun
- going over the response plan for any accident or other emergency that might occur.

Briefings

Pre- and post-diving briefings must occur for all scuba diving activities. The content of the briefing may vary with the venue but should include the following.

Pre-diving briefings should include:

- characteristics of the area in which the activity is to take place
- potential hazards of the venue, including water and weather conditions
- clear delineation of the boundaries of the diving area
- location of staff
- depths
- time limits
- air reserve limits (appropriate to the dive venue and the level of competence and experience of the students)
- ascent rate
- safety stops
- instruction that all students must come up to the surface if one student is low on air
- what to do if feeling tired or cold
- importance of staying with the group
- checking of functioning and fitting of all essential equipment, including buddy equipment checks
- reminder of the buddy system, including lost buddy procedure
- hand signals
- who to notify if leaving the water or returning to it
- where to go if leaving the water to get dressed, have a rest, use the toilet and so on
- what to do and/or say if approached by an unwelcome member of the public
- the sun and/or wind protection measures that are appropriate
- the response to any accident or other emergency that might occur
- warnings regarding ears and lungs
- reminding about symptoms of hypothermia and how to relieve cramp
- hazards of some marine animals, people fishing and boats
- checking that students with medical conditions who may need medication have it with them
- checking that students with asthma have their nebuliser, and reviewing the response to any asthma distress.

Post-diving briefings should include checks for:

- ear discomfort
- signs of hypothermia
- breathing problems
- headaches

SCUBA DIVING

- depths achieved by students
- air reserve limits of students
- time at depth for each student
- adherence to time, depth and air reserve limits.

Any health-related problems that occur as a result of the diving should be dealt with according to the diving plan that should be in place. Follow up might include first aid, reporting to parents, or referral to a doctor.

6.6 Specific equipment and clothing

Before the activity begins, all equipment should be checked to ensure that it is operating satisfactorily.

The minimum equipment for each student in an open-water dive should include:

- exposure protection, as appropriate—wetsuits must be worn, and hoods and gloves are strongly recommended (neoprene for winter and cold conditions, lightweight gloves for mild conditions)
- fins properly fitted and suited to the conditions
- masks with tempered glass, fully enclosing the nose and sealing correctly
- snorkel, attachable or attached to the mask
- inflatable buoyancy control device with scuba feed inflator designed to maintain the head above the water surface when inflated and suitable for the working depth
- weight belt/system with quick-release buckle
- compressed air cylinder and valve with a current test stamp
- single hose regulators only, fixed with alternate air source
- submersible depth and cylinder pressure indicators
- timing device
- a functioning whistle attached to the buoyancy control device.

The venue, season and weather will determine specific equipment and clothing needs.

However, the following points are basic considerations for all scuba diving activities:

- Before and after scuba diving, students need to protect themselves from the sun (for example, shirt, sunblock and hat), and cold and wet weather (for example, jumper, long pants and jacket) as appropriate for the season and location.
- A broad spectrum, water-resistant SPF 30+ sunscreen should be used on all exposed parts of the body and applied according to the manufacturer's recommendations. Sun protection clothing should be readily available to students when they leave the water.
- A first-aid kit must be located at the venue (refer to 2.11 First aid).
- A mobile telephone on site for use in an emergency may be useful when a telephone is not readily accessible (refer to 2.2 Risk and safety management, and 2.3 Emergency management planning).

The diving site must have divers' flags displayed (AS 4005.1).

The instructor should have:

- a safety sausage (an alerter balloon to hold up into the air in an emergency)
- a diver's watch or timer suitable for use at depth.

Under no circumstances are spear guns, hand spears, slings or knives to be carried or used by students.

Students with asthma must have medication for emergency treatment with them in the water. Pressurised nebulisers can be tucked up a wetsuit sleeve. In case the nebuliser is lost in the water, it is essential that a spare is immediately available.

In addition to the requirements of the Marine Board of Victoria (detailed in the current *Victorian Boating Guide*—refer to 7.2 Print and video resources), boats that are used to transport scuba divers to open water venues, need to be equipped with flags, a radio and first-aid kit.

6.7 Specific safety aspects

At least one staff member must have a thorough knowledge and experience of the venue, including tides, currents and the range of possible conditions. All staff should be thoroughly briefed before the activity commences.

The staff member instructing is primarily responsible for determining the suitability of the site for the dive. Recommendations are:

- the current should be less than 0.5 knot
- visibility should not be less than 3 metres
- stable weather conditions must prevail, with no indication that there might be a sudden change in the weather
- water surface should be calm with minimal or no 'sea' (the 'chop' of the water), and swell (unbroken waves) should be less than 0.5 metre
- the diving point must be within 200 metres of the shore, or 90 metres of the boat in open water
- entry and exit points must continue to be safe throughout the dive session
- the location must be free from obvious dangers, such as boat traffic, people fishing, water skiers and potentially dangerous marine animals.

In case of an emergency the venue must have safe and ready accessibility for emergency personnel, in particular transport to a decompression chamber.

Students should not dive below a depth of 18 metres. Venues must be carefully selected so that students cannot descend to an unsafe depth if they lose buoyancy.

On the day of the activity, the conditions must be assessed by the staff as being suitable for the participating students. Staff must be prepared to modify, relocate or cancel the activity, if at any time, in their judgement, it cannot be conducted safely.

The dive venue must be selected in accordance with the basic qualifications and experience of the students. At all times there must be unimpeded access to the surface. Therefore, diving into caves or shipwrecks is prohibited.

Medical diving problems must be immediately referred to the Diving Emergency Service on telephone 1800 088 200.

SCUBA DIVING

As safety aspects at different scuba venues may vary considerably, a supervision plan specific to each venue should include such items as:

- 'who does what'—the specific roles of staff members, including their roles in relation to other staff at the venue
- procedures for regular, ongoing accounting for the number of students in a group
- procedures for ensuring that every diver has returned to the boat or shore before departure from the diving site
- where students who are not scuba diving should be, what they can do and how they are to be supervised
- the means that will be used for staff to communicate with each other, generally, and in an emergency
- the roles and procedures for all staff in an emergency (refer to 2.3 Emergency management planning)
- the need for staff to be fully briefed and dressed suitably to carry out their supervisory and emergency response roles.

A plan detailing emergency response procedures for the scuba venue needs to be available. Where such a plan has been developed by others, such as the specialised activity instructors at the venue, school staff must be familiar with the plan and be satisfied that it is appropriate for a school group. Where there is no pre-existing plan, the school needs to ensure that a plan is developed and that all staff are familiar with it.

Plans detailing emergency response procedures should be available at the venue, and should include the location and telephone numbers of the nearest emergency services (police, ambulance, hospital) (refer to *Managing School Emergencies*, 1997).

A vehicle designated for emergency use should be available. If the car park is located at a distance from the activity site, staff must be aware of any emergency vehicle access routes.

If the venue does not have areas with shade, wind and/or rain shelter, temporary shelter (for example, tarps, tent flies, beach umbrellas) or shorter sessions may need to be considered. Staff should be aware of conditions contributing to overexposure to heat (hyperthermia) and overexposure to cold (hypothermia) and the symptoms of these conditions. The wind-chill factor which arises where there are onshore winds, little shelter and students who are wet from swimming can quickly contribute to the onset of hypothermia.

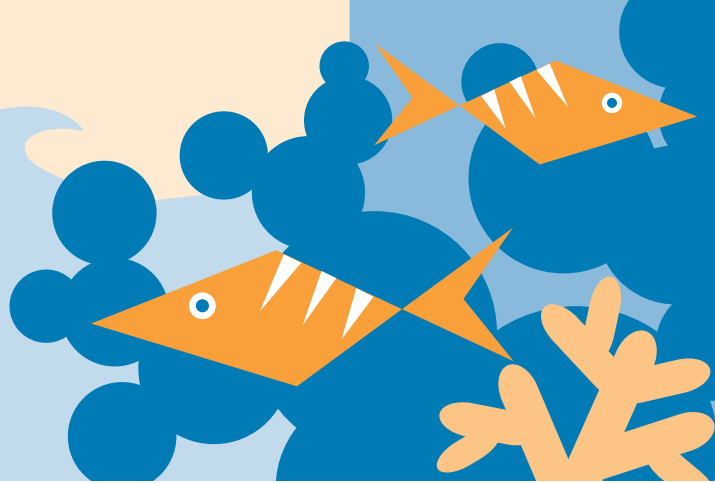
Many natural venues do not have drinking water readily available. The provision of water and a means of ensuring that the students drink it, particularly on hot days, should be included in the planning.

Where students need to respond quickly and efficiently for safety (such as getting out of the water on a specific signal and assembling nearby) the procedures should be explained before each session begins.

6.8 First aid

Refer to 2.11 First aid, Appendix E: Sun protection and ultraviolet radiation, and Appendix G: Procedure for response to a near drowning/drowning or serious injury.

7. Resources



7.1 Organisations

Australian Council for Health, Physical
Education and Recreation Inc (ACHPER)
GPO Box 412C
Melbourne Vic 3001
Telephone: (03) 9686 4611
Fax: (03) 9686 4622
E-mail: achvic@netwide.com.au

Australian Red Cross Victoria
171 City Road
Southbank Vic 3006
Telephone: (03) 9685 9999
Fax: (03) 9685 9898
E-mail: queries@vic.redcross.org.au
Internet: www.vicnet.net.au/~redcross

Australian School Surfing Association
(Victorian Branch)
C/- 15 Inverloch Parade
Inverloch Vic 3996
Telephone: (03) 5674 1510
Fax: (03) 5674 1948
E-mail: mdwells@tpgi.com.au

Australian Surf-riders Association
(Victorian Branch)
2B Anderson Street
Torquay Vic 3228
Telephone: (03) 5261 2907

Australian Underwater Federation (Victoria)
6 Suffolk Road
North Dandenong Vic 3175
Telephone: 0411 410 633 (mobile)
Fax: (03) 9752 2881

Australian Underwater SCUBA Instructors
(AUSI)
PO Box 202
Queenscliff Vic 3225
Telephone: (03) 5258 1188
Fax: (03) 5258 3273

AUSTSWIM
Australian Council for Teaching Swimming
and Water Safety
PO Box 1114
Hartwell Vic 3125
Telephone: (03) 9889 7111
Fax: (03) 9889 7210
E-mail: admin@austswim.com.au
Internet: www.austswim.com.au

Camping Association of Victoria
332 Banyule Road
View Bank Vic 3084
Telephone: (03) 9457 5434
Fax: (03) 9459 3600
E-mail: camping@cav.asn.au
Internet: www.cav.asn.au

Diver Alert Network (DAN) S.E. Asia-Pacific
PO Box 384
Ashburton Vic 3147
Telephone: (03) 9886 9166
Fax: (03) 9886 9155
E-mail: danseap@danseap.com.au

National Association of SCUBA Diving Schools
Australasia Inc (NASDS)
PO Box 42
Collinswood SA 5081
Telephone: (08) 8342 9200
Fax: (08) 8342 9211
E-mail: mail@nasds.com.au

National Association of Underwater Instructors
(NAUI)
PO Box 976
Toowoomba Qld 4350
Telephone: (07) 4659 5062
Fax: (07) 4639 1009
E-mail: nauioz@ozE-mail.com.au

RESOURCES

PADI Aust Pty Ltd
Box 713
Willoughby NSW 2068
Telephone: (02) 9417 2800
Fax: (02) 9417 1434
E-mail: padi-adm@padi.com.au

Royal Life Saving Society Australia
(Victoria Branch)
PO Box 265
Oakleigh Vic 3166
Telephone: (03) 9568 5822
Fax: (03) 9568 5988
E-mail: vic@rlssa.org.au

SCUBA Divers Federation of Victoria
GPO Box 1705P
Melbourne Vic 3001
Telephone: (03) 9764 2001
Fax: (03) 9764 2611
E-mail: telepower@telepower.com.au

SCUBA Schools International (SSI)
Box 904
Manunda Qld 4870
Telephone: (07) 4033 7966
Fax: (07) 4033 7906
E-mail: col@ssiaust.com

Sport and Recreation Victoria
55 Collins Street
Melbourne Vic 3000
Telephone: (03) 9666 4200
Fax: (03) 9666 4394
E-mail: sportrec@vicnet.net.au
Internet: www.vicnet.net.au/~sportrec/srvhome.htm

St John Ambulance
98 York Street
South Melbourne Vic 3205
Telephone: 131 394
Fax: (03) 9696 8247
E-mail: sales@hq.sjaa.com.au

Surf Life Saving Australia
Surf House
128 The Grand Parade
Brighton Le Sands NSW 2216
Telephone: (02) 9597 5588
Fax: (02) 9599 4809
E-mail: info@slsa.asn.au

Surf Life Saving Victoria
A W Walker House
Beaconsfield Parade
St Kilda Vic 3182
Telephone: (03) 9534 8201
Fax: (03) 9534 0311
E-mail: slsv@slsv.asn.au
Internet: www.slsv.asn.au

Surfing Victoria
PO Box 230
Torquay Vic 3228
Telephone: (03) 5261 2907
Fax: (03) 5261 4460
E-mail: surfvic@ne.com.au
Internet: www.surfvic.org.au

Underwater Victoria (DIVA)
PO Box 1063
Ashwood Vic 3147
Telephone: (03) 9809 5666
Fax: (03) 9809 5677
E-mail: inquiries@diva.asn.au

VICSWIM
1104–1108 Toorak Road
Hartwell Vic 3124
Telephone: (03) 9889 5922
Fax: (03) 9889 5933
E-mail: info@vicswim.org.au
Internet: www.vicswim.org.au

Victorian Outdoor Education Association
150 Palmerston Street
Carlton Vic 3053
Telephone: (03) 9349 4311

7.2 Print and video resources

General safety and first aid

Australian Red Cross (1995) *Responding to Emergencies*. Sydney: Mosby Lifeline.

Australian Resuscitation Council (no date) *Policy Statements*. Melbourne (C/- Australasian College of Surgeons, Spring Street, Melbourne).

Department of Education (1998) *Safety in Outdoor Adventure Series: Camping and Bush Activities*. Melbourne.

Department of Education (1997) *Managing School Emergencies*. Melbourne.

Department of Education (1996) *Schools of the Future Reference Guide*. Melbourne.

Lippman, John (1994) *Oxygen*. Sydney: Royal Life Saving Society Australia.

St John Ambulance (1989) *Australian First Aid*, 2nd edition, Volumes 1 and 2. Forrest, ACT.

Recreational swimming and surfing

AUSTSWIM (First Published 1998, Reprinted 1999), *Teaching Swimming and Water Safety—Course Essentials*. Melbourne.

AUSTSWIM (First Published 1998, Reprinted 1999), *Teaching Swimming and Water Safety—The Australian Way*. Melbourne.

Bradley, Jim (1991) *Surf Survival: The Complete Guide to Ocean Safety*. Sydney: Surf Life Saving Australia.

Royal Life Saving Society—Australia (1995) *Swimming and Life Saving*. Sydney.

Short, A. (1996) *Beaches of the Victorian Coast and Port Phillip Bay: A Guide to their nature, characteristics, surf and safety*. Sydney: University of Sydney.

Surf Life Saving Association (1998) *Surf Lifesaving Training Manual*. Sydney, Mosby.

VICSWIM (1991) *Simply Mix With Water: No Problems, Only Opportunities*.

Snorkelling and scuba

Marine Board of Victoria (1999) *Victorian Boating Guide—Complete Recreational Boating Information for Victoria*. Rushcutters Bay, NSW, GORE & OSMENT Publications.

National Association of Underwater Instructors (1992) *Snorkelling for Kids of All Ages*. Toowoomba Publications.

Standards Australia (1992, Amendment 1995) *Australian Standard, Training and Certification of Recreational Divers: Minimum Entry Level SCUBA Diving AS 4005.1*.

7.3 Providers of professional development, training, certification/ accreditation

General safety and first aid

Australian Red Cross Victoria

171 City Road

Southbank Vic 3006

Telephone: (03) 9685 9999

Fax: (03) 9685 9898

E-mail: queries@vic.redcross.org.au

Internet: www.vicnet.net.au/~redcross

St John Ambulance

98 York Street

South Melbourne Vic 3205

Telephone: 131 394

Fax: (03) 9696 8247

E-mail: sales@hq.sjaa.com.au

The above organisations provide a program of training and certification of individuals in general and/or remote area first aid, as well as advice on the preparation of first-aid kits.

There are several other university, TAFE, and private providers of first aid, remote area first aid, and remote area emergency response courses.

Information about these may be obtained through their advertisements in professional journals and school publications.

Outdoor education P–12

Victorian Outdoor Education Association

150 Palmerston Street

Carlton Vic 3053

Telephone: (03) 9349 4311

This organisation provides professional development opportunities in outdoor education.

Recreational swimming

AUSTSWIM

Australian Council for Teaching

Swimming and Water Safety

PO Box 1114

Hartwell Vic 3125

Telephone: (03) 9889 7111

Fax: (03) 9889 7210

E-mail: admin@austswim.com.au

Internet: www.austswim.com.au

RESOURCES

Royal Life Saving Society Australia
(Victoria Branch)
PO Box 265
Oakleigh Vic 3166
Telephone: (03) 9568 5822
Fax: (03) 9568 5988
E-mail: vic@rlssa.org.au

Surf Life Saving Victoria
A W Walker House
Beaconsfield Parade
St Kilda Vic 3182
Telephone: (03) 9534 8201
Fax: (03) 9534 0311
E-mail: slsv@slsv.asn.au
Internet: www.slsv.asn.au

VICSWIM
1104–1108 Toorak Road
Hartwell Vic 3124
Telephone: (03) 9889 5922
Fax: (03) 9889 5933
E-mail: info@vicswim.org.au
Internet: www.vicswim.org.au

Scuba

Australian Underwater Federation (Victoria)
6 Suffolk Road
North Dandenong Vic 3175
Telephone: 0411 410 633 (mobile)
Fax: (03) 9752 2881

Australian Underwater SCUBA Instructors (AUSI)
PO Box 202
Queenscliff Vic 3225
Telephone: (03) 5258 1188
Fax: (03) 5258 3273

Diver Alert Network (DAN) S.E. Asia–Pacific
PO Box 384
Ashburton Vic 3147
Telephone: (03) 9886 9166
Fax: (03) 9886 9155
E-mail: danseap@danseap.com.au

National Association of SCUBA Diving Schools
Australasia Inc (NASDS)
PO Box 42
Collinswood SA 5081
Telephone: (08) 8342 9200
Fax: (08) 8342 9211
E-mail: mail@nasds.com.au

National Association of Underwater Instructors
(NAUI)
PO Box 976
Toowoomba Qld 4350
Telephone: (07) 4659 5062
Fax: (07) 4639 1009
E-mail: nauioz@ozE-mail.com.au

PADI Aust Pty Ltd
Box 713
Willoughby NSW 2068
Telephone: (02) 9417 2800
Fax: (02) 9417 1434
E-mail: padi-adm@padi.com.au

SCUBA Schools International (SSI)
Box 904
Manunda Qld 4870
Telephone: (07) 4033 7966
Fax: (07) 4033 7906
E-mail: col@ssiaust.com

South Pacific Underwater Medical Society (SPUMS)
Suite 304
126 Wellington Parade
East Melbourne Vic 3002

Snorkelling

Australian Underwater Federation (Victoria)
6 Suffolk Road
North Dandenong Vic 3175
Telephone: 0411 410 633 (mobile)
Fax: (03) 9752 2881

Surfing

Australian Surf-riders Association
(Victorian Branch)
2B Anderson Street
Torquay Vic 3228
Telephone: (03) 5261 2907

Surf Life Saving Victoria
A W Walker House
Beaconsfield Parade
St Kilda Vic 3182
Telephone: (03) 9534 8201
Fax: (03) 9534 0311
E-mail: slsv@slsv.asn.au
Internet: www.slsv.asn.au

The image is a stylized illustration of a tropical beach. At the top, there are two palm trees with blue fronds and orange trunks. To the right, a white seagull is flying. The sky is a light blue gradient. Below the sky is a solid orange band representing the sand. At the bottom, there are blue waves. The word "Appendices" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font across the top left, partially overlapping the palm trees.

Appendices

PROFORMA: PARENT EXCURSION CONSENT

1. Name of school

2. Title of excursion

3. Destination of excursion

4. Date(s) of excursion

5. Information about the excursion

Note 1:

Schools need to provide sufficient information to parents about the nature of the proposed excursion (including a description of the activities to be undertaken) and the degree of supervision, to enable the parents to give informed consent to their child’s participation. This information should be included here or provided as an attachment. As a minimum, such information would normally include:

- departure and return times
- a description of the excursion, including the premises to be used, sleeping arrangements, general and specific activities, and travel arrangements
- staff members and supervision
- cost (and refund policy)
- clothing and equipment needed
- name of excursion contact person and contact details
- other matters that may apply, such as behaviour, dress, selection of students (if places are limited).

If the above information is provided as an attachment, the school should identify and list in this part of the form the specific documents that are attached under a subheading ‘attachments’.

6. Student behaviour

Note 2:

Schools may choose to also include the following statement:

‘I acknowledge that during the excursion, acceptable standards of behaviours will be expected of the students.

I understand that in the event of my son’s/daughter’s serious misbehaviour during the excursion, he/she may be sent home. I further understand that in such circumstances I will be informed and that any costs associated with his/her return will be my responsibility.’

7. Parent consent

I have read all of the above information provided by the school in relation to the above excursion, including any attached material.

I give permission for my daughter/son to attend.

Parent/guardian (name)

(signature) (date)

Note 3:

Parents should also complete the form ‘Confidential medical information for school council approved school excursions’, and should sign ‘Consent to medical attention’.

Appendix B

CONFIDENTIAL MEDICAL INFORMATION FOR SCHOOL COUNCIL APPROVED EXCURSIONS

This information is intended to assist the school in case of any medical emergency involving your child. All information is held in confidence.

Child's name

Date of birth Year level

Parent's/guardian's full name

Address Postcode

Emergency telephone numbers After hours Business hours

Name and address of family doctor

Medicare No.

Medical/hospital insurance fund Contribution No.

Please tick if your child suffers any of the following:

- Asthma Bed wetting Blackouts Diabetes Dizzy spells
 Fits of any type Heart condition Migraine Sleepwalking Travel sickness
 Other _____

Allergies to:

- Penicillin _____ Other drugs _____
 Any foods _____ Other _____

What special care is recommended? _____

Tetanus immunisation—year of last tetanus immunisation

(Tetanus immunisation is normally given at five years of age (as Triple Antigen or CDT) and at fifteen years of age (as ADT))

Tablets and medicines—Is your child presently taking tablets and/or medicine? Yes No

If yes, please state name of medication, dosage etc.

All medication must be handed to the teacher-in-charge prior to leaving. All containers must be labelled with your child's name, the dose to be taken, and when it should be taken. (These will be kept in the first aid centre and distributed as required.) If it is necessary or appropriate for your child to carry his or her own medication (for example, asthma puffers or insulin for diabetes) it must be with the knowledge and approval of both the teacher-in-charge and yourself.

Previous experience—Is this the first time your child has been away from home? Yes No

CONSENT TO MEDICAL ATTENTION

Where the teacher-in-charge of the excursion is unable to contact me, or it is otherwise impracticable to contact me, I authorise the teacher-in-charge to:

- consent to my child receiving such medical or surgical attention as may be deemed necessary by a medical practitioner
- administer such first-aid as the teacher-in-charge may judge to be reasonably necessary.

Signature of parent/guardian Date

The Department of Education, Employment and Training requires this consent to be signed for all students attending government school excursions which are approved by the school council.

Note: Parents/guardians should provide written approval prior to their child taking part in any excursion.

PROFORMA: NOTIFICATION OF SCHOOL ACTIVITY (FOR GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS IN VICTORIA ONLY)



School councils are responsible for ensuring that the activities listed below are thoroughly planned, checked and documented in accordance with Department of Education, Employment and Training, Victoria, guidelines for the planning and conduct of camps, excursions and outdoor adventure activities.

The information on this proforma will be used to provide initial information to the emergency services during an emergency. If comprehensive information is required during an emergency, schools will be expected to provide it from the documentation prepared for the activity which is held by the school.

Fax the completed proforma to the Department’s Emergency and Security Management Branch on fax (03) 9589 0543, three weeks prior to commencing the following:

- overnight, weekend, interstate or overseas activities
- adventure activities
- non-adventure activities which, by their nature, location or timing, may be hazardous
- school closures, pupil free days, combined sports or cluster days.

Notes:

1. An additional sheet listing the actual dates and locations of activities should accompany this form when the same activity is to be repeated on different occasions.
2. For activities involving a group of schools the coordinating school should complete this form.
3. Day excursions should be reported if activities are to be conducted by:
 - country schools—beyond the local town/city
 - rural schools—beyond the local area
 - metropolitan schools—beyond the greater metropolitan area.

SCHOOL NAME AND NUMBER
(including campus if applicable)

TYPE OF ACTIVITY
(camp, bushwalking, school closure etc)

DATE OF ACTIVITY
(start date, end date) (see Note 1 above)

NAME OF VENUE

PHYSICAL ADDRESS OF VENUE

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBER AT VENUE

IS EMERGENCY TRANSPORT AVAILABLE AT VENUE? YES NO

TOTAL NUMBERS Students Year level Staff

NAME OF PERSON IN CHARGE
(and mobile telephone number if available)

PRINCIPAL'S SIGNATURE

FAX TO THE EMERGENCY AND SECURITY MANAGEMENT BRANCH, (03) 9589 0543

Appendix D

PROFORMA: SCUBA DIVING: PARTICIPANT MEDICAL HISTORY

This information is to be used by the scuba diving instructor to assess the medical fitness to dive of a participant in the school's scuba diving program. In the interest of safety it is important and necessary that full and complete answers are given to all questions.

In addition to this medical history form, parents will need to complete the form, Confidential medical information for school council approved excursions (see Appendix B).

A. PERSONAL DETAILS

Student's name

Date of birth Year level

B. GENERAL INFORMATION

- | | Yes | No |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Are you a non-swimmer? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Have you scuba dived previously?
Details <input type="text"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Have you ever had trouble in water?
Details <input type="text"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Do you smoke?
Amount per day <input type="text"/> Years of smoking <input type="text"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Are you on any medication?
Details <input type="text"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Have you had any operations?
Details <input type="text"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Do you have any disease or disability?
Details <input type="text"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Is there any chance you are pregnant? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Is there a family history of heart disease? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Have you consumed alcohol or any other drug within the past twenty-four hours? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Will you be flying or going to altitudes above 300 metres within twenty-four hours? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you suffer from, or have you ever suffered any of the following: | | |
| 12. Ear problems when flying or diving | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. Depression or claustrophobia | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. Motion sickness (including seasickness) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. Migraine | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16. Back problems | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

C. MEDICAL HISTORY

- | | Yes | No |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Do you suffer from, or have ever suffered any of the following: | | |
| 1. Ear surgery (other than drainage) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Ringing noises or deafness | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Loss of balance | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Persistent allergies affecting nose/sinuses | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Persistent cough or coughing blood | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Recurrent chest/lung infections/problems | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Abnormal chest pain | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Chest surgery (heart or lung) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Abnormal shortness of breath | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Asthma, wheezing or use of a puffer | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Pneumothorax (collapsed lung) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. Fainting or blackouts | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. Head injury requiring hospitalisation | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. Epilepsy | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. Any brain or spinal disorder | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16. Diabetes | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 17. Heart disease | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18. High blood pressure | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 19. Pulse irregularities | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20. Recompression for a diving related illness | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

DECLARATION

I certify that the above information is true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

I authorise Dr _____

telephone _____ to supply relevant medical information to you in my own personal interest.

Signature of participant Date

Signature of parent Date

*This form has been adapted with permission from the Australian Underwater SCUBA Instructors (AUSI)

SUN PROTECTION AND ULTRAVIOLET RADIATION

Adapted from section 4.5.11 Sun protection (revised policy for the *Schools of the Future Reference Guide*, issued in Executive Memorandum No. 99/039, 23 November 1999).

Ultraviolet radiation

Australia has the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world, with two out of three Australians developing some form of skin cancer during their lifetime. Overexposure to the sun during childhood and adolescence is known to be a major cause of skin cancer.

As part of their duty of care, schools are encouraged to develop a specific policy and set of procedures to minimise the danger of excessive ultraviolet (UV) radiation exposure for students and staff.

The following factors should be taken into account in the development of an effective school sun protection policy, which should be implemented throughout the year, but with particular emphasis in terms 1 and 4.

- The danger period for UV is between 10.00 am and 2.00 pm (11.00 am and 3.00 pm daylight saving time). Damage can occur before and after these hours, but it takes longer to occur.
- Everyone is at risk of developing skin cancer. Fair-skinned people with reddish or fair hair are at greatest risk; people with an olive complexion and dark hair have a lower risk, but still require protection.
- UV cannot be seen or felt and UV levels are not related to air temperature. There can be high levels of UV on cool days.
- UV levels are higher during the summer than during winter months. UV levels do vary from day to day, and a high UV day in April or October may be more damaging than a day of heavy cloud in January.
- Reflected UV from light-coloured and shiny surfaces can reach a person under a hat and in the shade.
- At high altitudes where the atmosphere is thinner, the amount of UV reaching the skin can be much higher than at sea level. The use of sunscreen should be encouraged throughout the year in these locations. Fresh snow reflects almost 90 per cent of the UV that falls on it.

School communities can work together to minimise skin damage and skin cancer through active participation in SunSmart education and management practices.

School policy considerations

In developing policies and procedures, schools may wish to include reference to:

- Curriculum: Developing classroom programs that complement health and physical education curriculum. Sun protection can also be included in science and general studies.
- Timetable: Where feasible, scheduling outdoor activities, such as assemblies, sport and physical education, outside the high-risk time of 10.00 am to 2.00 pm (11.00 am to 3.00 pm daylight saving time).
- Hats: Requiring the wearing of hats that shade the face, the back of the neck and the ears when in the sun. Hats with a broad (at least 8 centimetre) brim made of a closely woven material and legionnaire-style hats may be appropriate, particularly for younger children. Support a 'no hat—play in the shade' policy.
- Clothing: Supporting wearing of sun-protective clothing. Loose, closely woven cotton fabrics and shirts with a collar and long sleeves are ideal.
- Sunscreens: Supporting regular use of a broad spectrum, water-resistant SPF 30+ sunscreen on exposed skin that cannot be protected by clothing.
 - To be effective, sunscreen must be applied to clean, dry skin, fifteen to twenty minutes before going into the sun. No sunscreen provides complete protection against the sun. Hats, clothing and other forms of natural protection should be encouraged as a first measure for protection.
 - Skin protection by waterproof sun creams or clothing is necessary while in the water.
 - Special preparations, such as zinc cream, are available for sensitive areas, including the face and lips.
 - A small number of students may have allergic reactions to the chemicals in sunscreen. Such allergies should be identified by parents when they provide the school with medical advice about their children. Any adverse reaction from sunscreen should be reported to parents.
- Sunglasses: Considering the use of sunglasses. Close-fitting, UV protection, wrap-around glasses that meet AS 1067 are recommended. Schools may decide to provide information on the use of sunglasses, but not promote their daily use, because of the cost and potential for breakage and possible injury.
- Shade: Considering the provision of increased shaded areas and low-reflection surfaces.
- Staff: Supporting staff modelling of sun-protection practices. This encourages a whole-school approach.
- Participation: Encouraging students and parents to participate in the development and implementation of SunSmart policies.

Further information can be obtained from the SunSmart Accreditation Program, Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria, telephone (03) 9635 5148.

Swimming activities, more than other outdoor activities, may expose students to UV radiation. Staff preparing students for swimming, snorkelling and scuba diving are advised to document their preparation of students, including preparation for sun protection, using a recording system such as the Proforma: Documentation of participant preparation, prerequisite skills/knowledge, in Appendix I.

STUDENT MEDICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Adapted from section 4.4.4.7 of the *Schools of the Future Reference Guide* (1996).

Medical histories

Principals should ensure that staff who are responsible for swimming-based activities are familiar with the medical histories of students, particularly with respect to epilepsy, diabetes, asthma and heart conditions. The risk of infecting other students and staff means that students suffering from ear infections, throat infections, colds, papillomas and other contagious infections should not be permitted to enter swimming pools and other swimming venues until they have recovered.

It is advisable to seek advice from a parent before including any student with a chronic illness in a swimming-based activity. If there is any doubt concerning a student's reaction to any aspect of the activity, the parent should be advised to seek a medical opinion on the matter.

As far as possible, students with medical conditions should be encouraged to take part fully in swimming-based activities. However, where special precautions are required and the school is unable to provide the necessary supervision, the parents must take responsibility for ensuring that safety requirements are met without interference to the supervision of others participating in the activity. If a student's suitability for inclusion in a swimming-based activity is in doubt, the principal should consult the student's parents and the student's doctor, or seek advice from the Department of Human Services. Under such circumstances, a medical certificate should be provided confirming the doctor's approval for the student to participate in the planned activity, at the specified location and for the duration of the activity.

Hypothermia

For many months of the year, the water temperature of most of Victoria's waterways and many cold-water pools is sufficiently low to induce loss of body heat. Exposure to cold conditions can lead to the body-heat-loss illness known as hypothermia. This is a progressive condition that starts with shivering. Further stages are mental confusion, muscle stiffness, irregular heartbeat, unconsciousness and, ultimately, death. Water temperatures are unlikely to be so low as to produce the extremes of hypothermia, but swimming-based activities should not be conducted if there is a danger to students. It is recommended that students wear wetsuits for surfing, snorkelling and scuba diving activities in Victorian coastal waters.

Sunburn

Refer to Appendix E for information concerning sun protection.

Epilepsy

If a student has been observed, or is otherwise known to be subject to epilepsy or any form of medical condition involving periodic loss of consciousness, the student should be permitted to participate in the swimming-based activity if a medical certificate is provided stating that the program appears to present no undue risks for the student at that time. A new certificate is required if a further episode of loss of consciousness is known to have occurred (see 5.7 Snorkelling—Specific safety aspects, and 6.7 Scuba diving—Specific safety aspects).

A certificate that is conditional upon special precautions being taken should not be accepted unless the parents arrange the additional supervision necessary and accept complete responsibility for the safety of their child during the activity; and then only if the principal is satisfied that the special arrangements will not interfere with the conduct of the activity.

Asthma

Swimming-based activities are regarded as strenuous and students with asthma may require medication before and during these activities. Staff must ensure that all students with asthma carry their own nebuliser with them for all swimming-based activities. In addition, suitable medication should be available at the swimming venue in the school's first-aid kit. Principals should request the parents of students with asthma to provide written consent to their child's participation in the swimming activity. This consent should indicate that their doctor has no objection to the student participating in the particular activity. Students with severe asthma who wish to participate in snorkelling and scuba diving activities may be required to provide a certificate from a medical practitioner (see 5.5 and 6.5).

Diabetes

A student with diabetes must be permitted to take extra food at odd times before extra physical activities, such as swimming, to prevent insulin or hypoglycemic reactions. Staff need to ensure that students with diabetes have ready access to food (for example, fruit, biscuits or fruit juice). With these precautions, all students with diabetes should be encouraged to take full part in all swimming-based activities. The Royal Children's Hospital Diabetic Clinic is able to provide additional information or advice to the school, if required.

PROCEDURE FOR RESPONSE TO A NEAR DROWNING/DROWNING OR SERIOUS INJURY

In the event of a near drowning, drowning or serious injury to a student or staff member:

- provide appropriate first-aid assistance for the injured person
- depending on the circumstances, contact ambulance, medical practitioner and/or the police (from the contact list carried by the leader). Do not delay in the hope that the person will recover
- protect and comfort the non-injured students
- notify the principal or school contact person, who should notify the Department of Education, Employment and Training's twenty-four-hour emergency communication centre (refer to 2.10.2 Communication during an emergency), the regional office, and the parents of all students. (As the media often reports on situations without full or correct details, it is important that the parents of all students are aware of the incident)
- provide students and supervising adults with first aid for shock (for example, keep warm and provide warm fluids, if possible)
- make sure the entire group is safe and warm
- keep detailed notes for a comprehensive report of the injury and incident, which must be retained by the school for purposes of legal liability
- if the media become involved, handle them sensitively, isolating the students from reporters and cameras
- if the police have attended, consider requesting the police officer in charge to inform and handle the media
- for major incidents, assistance from police media liaison can be requested
- in the case of a fatality, it is the role of the police, acting for the coroner, to contact the family.

Later:

- post-trauma counselling for students and supervising adults is important and should be organised through the Department of Education, Employment and Training regional office
- record and file details of the incident that led to the injury and the resultant action
- consider what changes may need to be made through safety and risk management and planning for future activities.

Appendix H

PROFORMA: ANALYSIS OF ACTIVITIES FOR RISK AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT

(Refer to section 2.2, Risk and safety management)

Activity and venue



List safety issues, risks, hazards

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



Can a satisfactory plan be developed to keep participants safe?



Yes

Develop safety management plan

No

Avoid activity



Consider/include:

Nature of the venue—physical terrain, special characteristics of this location, specific checks for immediate hazards (for example, overhanging branches), weather, venue check prior to the excursion.

Notes:

The activity and level of the activity, its appropriateness for the age, maturity, physical stature, ability level and readiness of the students, the suitability of the location for this group.

Notes:

Staff qualifications and/or experience specific to the activity, the nature of the group and the area to be visited.

Notes:

Participant preparation, including skill development, fitness development and advance briefing.

Notes:

- Equipment safety—maintenance procedures and checks (including personal equipment, special equipment for specific activities, transport, equipment for emergencies).

Notes: _____

- Protective clothing.

Notes: _____

- Organisational arrangements for conducting the activity, including staff–student ratios, location, roles of staff, and use of safety measures.

Notes: _____

- Group management arrangements, including additional activities if waiting time is long.

Notes: _____

Alternatives to the activity plan in case of weather changes, injuries or other circumstances.

- Notes:** _____

Procedures to be implemented in emergencies, communication plan.

Notes: _____

Note: This proforma provides one suggested way of documenting an analysis of activities for risk and safety management purposes.

PROFORMA: DOCUMENTATION OF STAFF QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE OR EXPERTISE IN LIEU OF CERTIFICATION/ACCREDITATION

Name of staff member

Activity Location

Year level(s) Season

(eg winter, summer)

1. Training (formal courses, on the job, other)

Types of training (Name of certificate if applicable)	With whom	Dates	Certificate issued (Yes/No)
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2. Activity skill practice/experience—describe:

3. Experience in this or similar locations and seasons:

4. Experience working with this age group/year level in this and/or other activities:

Signed (by above-named staff member) _____ Date _____

Note: This proforma provides one suggested way of documenting staff qualifications and experience or expertise.



Safety Guidelines: Swimming Based Activities is essential reading for principals, teachers and school councillors who are involved with the planning, organisation, approval and conduct of excursions and outdoor adventure activities.

The book contains the minimum safety requirements for government schools in Victoria that organise activities associated with:

- recreational swimming
- surfing
- snorkelling
- scuba diving.

Information provided includes aspects dealing with staff–student ratios, staff experience and qualifications, planning and preparation, student preparation, specific equipment and clothing, specific safety aspects, and first aid.

Although this book was written specifically for schools, it is equally valuable for youth workers, tertiary students and others involved with organising or participating in outdoor adventure activities, especially those involved in swimming based activities.

