

# HIGHVIEW COLLEGE RECREATIONAL WATER POLICY

Person Responsible – Sports Co-ordinator



## Rationale

- Recreational swimming occurs when learning swimming and water safety is not the main objective of the activity. Recreational swimming is often less structured than sessions designed to teach swimming and water safety, and may occur in a wider than usual range of environments. For this reason, and to provide quality supervision, the requirements vary for recreational swimming at various types of venues.
- Recreational swimming environments may include dams, natural inland lakes and rivers, and marine and coastal environments.
- A wide range of environmental factors need to be considered when planning recreational swimming activities. These include the location, size, depth and turbidity of the body of water; the wind and sun; the strength of tides and currents; the presence and power of waves; and the water and air temperatures.
- When preparing for recreational swimming, staff should consider ways to minimise the environmental impact of the activity.

## Aims

- To maximise the safety of students undertaking recreational swimming activities by careful planning specific to each activity
- To minimise adverse effects on the environment

## Implementation

### Location

- Due to the unique nature of each location, the teacher responsible for the activity should specifically assess the suitability of the location before the excursion.
- The choice of location should be based on the recent and first-hand knowledge of at least one member of the planning and supervising staff.
- Where this is impractical, planning and supervising staff should be thoroughly familiar with the general characteristics and conditions found in similar locations, and should have consulted with people who can supply recent and first-hand knowledge of the locations being considered.

When assessing the suitability of a location, staff must consider:

- the potential to support the educational objectives
- the level of access to resources, services and facilities that may be needed, such as campsites, water, walking trails, toilets, shelter from extreme weather
- the level of access to communications and external assistance in the event of an emergency or extreme weather conditions; the more remote the location is, the more self-contained and self-reliant the group must be and this must be taken into account in the planning of the activity
- the potential exposure to environmental hazards and difficulties

- the ability and fitness levels of students.

Contact with relevant authorities should be made in order to access current information and determine any access and permit requirements.

These authorities may include:

- Emergency services
- Parks Victoria or other land managers
- Department of Environment and Primary Industries
- Transport Safety Victoria - Maritime Safety
- Lifesaving Victoria
- Staff need to be aware that severe weather conditions may develop before or during the proposed activity and should be prepared to cancel, modify or relocate the activity at any time.
- Swimming locations are categorised into three venue types. Please refer to Appendix 1 for a description of type 1, 2 and 3 venues.
- Given the range of different conditions that may exist between apparently similar recreational swimming venues, adequate knowledge of the specific venue should be obtained before activities are conducted.

**Note:** If environmental conditions change, a type 1 venue may change to a type 2 or 3 venue. Type 2 or 3 venues may also change with environmental conditions.

## Staff

- Where not directly responsible for the instruction of the activity or assisting the instructor, the teacher responsible for the activity must understand the activity and the environment in which it will be conducted.
- This teacher must confer with the designated instructor about the supervisory role and establish areas of responsibility.
- If this teacher is not the designated instructor, he/she is to act on the advice of the designated instructor on technical safety issues.
- Staff involved in the planning and conduct of the activity should have sufficient knowledge and experience of the activity and its environment to operate in all foreseeable conditions.
- When developing a Risk Assessment for a particular activity, the responsible staff member should refer to the Education and Training website: Recreational Swimming – Common Risks  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/Pages/outdoorswimrisk.aspx>

## Students:

- The preparation of students to be safe recreational swimmers will vary according to their age, ability and experience, the venue and the nature of the proposed swimming activity.
- Please refer to Appendix 2 for a description of student preparation for type 1, 2 and 3 venues.

**Additional information**

**Appendix 1: Types of venue**

**Appendix 2: Instructions for students for different venues**

Policy developed by Marion Martin – 2016

Updated by Luke Treacy – 2016

## APPENDIX 1: TYPES OF VENUE

### **Type 1 Venue**

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 activity. The water in Type 1 venues is clear.

### **Type 2 Venue**

Type 2 venues include deep and/or flowing water at non-surf beaches, lakes, channels, rivers and dams. The water in Type 2 venues is clear. Water turbidity, temperature and submerged objects should also be assessed.

### **Type 3 Venue**

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 winds or large waves. Type 3 venues also include Type 1 and 2 venues where the water is not clear.

**Note:** If environmental conditions change, a Type 1 venue may change to a Type 2 or 3 venue. Likewise, Type 2 or 3 venues may also change with environmental conditions.

## APPENDIX 2

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS FOR DIFFERENT VENUES

#### Type 1 Venues

Students must be given directions about safe swimming, appropriate boundaries, standards of behaviour and emergency procedures relevant to the particular venue.

#### Type 2 Venues

In addition to the skills required for Type 1 venues, students taking part in recreational swimming activities in open water must also be able to competently demonstrate the following skills

- a jump entry
- survival sculling, floating and treading water for five minutes, followed by a slow swim for five minutes
- feet-first and 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.

#### Type 3 Venues

In addition to the skills required for Type 1 Venues, students must also be able to swim 200 metres and demonstrate basic swimming and water safety skills in flat water, including:

- using a flotation aid as a support for one minute
- re-assuring other swimmers by talking with them
- survival sculling, floating or treading water for five minutes
- waving one arm as if signalling for help.

In surf environments, students must know surf swimming techniques, e.g. swimming through waves and body surfing. Emphasis should be placed on teaching students about the changing nature of the sea bed and the dangers associated with diving under waves in shallow water.

Before entering the water, students must understand:

- how to identify a rip, how water moves in a rip, and how to swim if caught in a rip – at a specific surf beach, students should be able to point out any rips and other hazards, such as rocks, and be able to indicate the safe areas 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 visible flags or landmarks on the shore
- surf signals (e.g. 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.

In a flowing river environment, students must understand relevant river features and the power of flowing water. Students must also be trained in rescue techniques before swimming in this environment.

The psychological preparation of students is as important as the physical preparation, especially for students who are anxious about the activity. Under no circumstances should students be pressured by staff or peers to participate beyond their readiness.