

Swimming

ELEMENTARY - CURRICULAR

- For Class A pools.
- Consult [Risk Management](#).
- This activity page must be presented to the activity provider prior to the activity taking place. The activity provider must meet the minimum requirements listed on this page. For more information on planning trips using outside providers, consult [Outside Activity Providers](#).
- All pools are governed by the [Ontario Public Pool Regulation 565](#). Sections of this regulation have been highlighted, as they are of the utmost importance for the safety of students as they participate in swimming programs.
- For pond/lake swimming, consult [Outdoor Education \(Swimming\)](#).

Equipment

- Determine that all equipment is safe for use (for example, no sharp corners, cracks, or splinters). Students must be encouraged to report equipment problems to the teacher.
- Must have accessibility to standard safety equipment as stated in [Ontario Public Pools Regulation 565](#).
- A correctly fitting and [Transport Canada](#) approved personal flotation (P.F.D.) device must be worn by identified non-swimmers.
- Electrical equipment (for example, MP3 players) must be properly grounded.

Refer to the [First Aid](#) section for first aid equipment requirements.

Clothing/Footwear/Jewellery

- Appropriate swimwear must be worn.
- Follow the rules of the pool for wearing jewellery.
- When long hair poses a safety risk it must be secured. Devices (for example, hair pins, elastics and barrettes) used to tie back long hair must not present a safety concern.

Facilities

- Backyard pools must not be used.
- Use school or community swimming pools.
- Determine that all facilities are safe for use. Students must be encouraged to report facility problems to the teacher.
- Pool deck must be kept clear of obstacles and excess water.

Special Rules/Instructions

- Be aware of students whose medical condition (for example, asthma, anaphylaxis, casts, previous concussion, orthopaedic device) may affect participation. Consult [Medical Conditions](#).
- Students with open cuts or sores must not be in the pool.
- Inform in-charge person on deck of any student with a medical history or any medical problems that may affect the student's safety in water (for example, diabetes, asthma, heart condition, convulsions, epilepsy, frequent ear infections).
- Students must not participate in the activity until they receive information on concussion prevention specific to the activity, inherent risks of the activity (for example, outline possible risks and ways to minimize the risks), and procedures and rules for safe play. Students must receive instruction on the importance of reporting symptoms related to a suspected concussion.
- Refer to the school board's transportation procedures related to communicating with parents/guardians the location of an off-site activity and the means of transportation used as well as to the need for obtaining parent/guardian permission.
- Activities must be modified according to the age, ability level, language, and experience of students, number of participants, and the facility available.
- Previous training, fitness level, and the length of time and intensity of physical activity must be taken into consideration.
- Activities must be based on skills that are taught.
- Skills must be taught in proper progression.

- Skill instruction can be followed by skill application (for example, relay activities, tag games which incorporate skills). This is considered to be part of the instructional program – not recreational/free swim.
- A proper warm-up and cool-down must be included.
- When a student displays hesitation (verbally or non-verbally) with participating, the teacher must determine the reason(s) for doubt. If the teacher believes that a potential hesitancy during the skill could put the student at risk, the student must be directed toward a more basic skill, or be permitted to select a challenge at their comfort level, including the choice to not participate.
- Students with Special Needs: Prior to participation the teacher must address student's safety concerns and make appropriate accommodations/modifications to provide a safe learning environment.
- Adequate liquid replacement (personal water bottles, water fountains) must be accessible for students before, during, and after physical activity to prevent dehydration.
- Students must adhere to the following rules:
 - no running or pushing on deck
 - no gum chewing
 - no food in pool area
 - no diving off deck or blocks into water less than 2.75m (9') in depth
 - no street shoes on deck
 - students must ask permission to leave pool/swimming area.
- Showers must be taken before entering the pool.
- During recreational swim, students must not use a mask, snorkel or scuba equipment.
- Instructional swim may include organized games (for example, relays) but cannot include an unorganized recreational/free swim.
- Teachers must be knowledgeable of the school board's procedures for emergency, accident or injury in a pool.
- Emergency procedures must be outlined to students prior to entering the water.

Supervision

- All activities must be supervised.
- The level of supervision must be commensurate with the inherent risk of the activity. The level of risk is related to the number of participants, the skill level of the participants, the type of equipment used, and environmental conditions.
- On-site supervision is required.
- A teacher or other school supervisor must accompany pupils to the pool, and be on deck or in the pool.
- Close and frequent monitoring of change rooms must take place, but not by the lifeguard.

Refer to the [Swim Test](#) section for the swim test supervision ratios.

Supervision Ratios for Instructional Time

- There must be a minimum of 2 certified aquatic instructors on deck or in the pool.
- Supervision ratio is 2 aquatic instructors per 1-25 students (grades 1-3), per 1-35 students (grades 4-8) with both instructors also certified as lifeguards or one lifeguard and one assistant lifeguard.
- In situations where there are 26-50 students (grades 1-3) or 36-70 students (grades 4-8) an additional certified aquatic instructor is required.
- If assistant lifeguards are used, the number of assistant lifeguards on deck may never exceed the number of lifeguards.

Refer to the definition of [Instructional Time](#).

Supervision Ratios for Recreational Time

- According to [Ontario Public Pools Regulation 565](#), during recreational time, a certified lifeguard is required. Aquatic instructor certification and Ontario Teachers Aquatic Standard (OTAS) do not meet the safety requirements of the regulation.
- When certified lifeguards are on the deck, the minimum ratio of lifeguards to swimmers/bathers on deck and in the pool is:
 - 2 lifeguards per 1-125 bathers. If the teacher is a certified lifeguard, they may act as one of the two lifeguards, and therefore a third person is not necessary.
 - 3 lifeguards per 126-250 bathers. If the teacher is a certified lifeguard they may act as one of the three lifeguards, and therefore a fourth person is not necessary.
- When certified lifeguards and assistant lifeguards are on deck the minimum ratio of lifeguards

and assistant lifeguards to swimmers/bathers on deck and in the pool is:

- 2 lifeguards or 1 lifeguard and 1 assistant lifeguard per 1-100 bathers. If the teacher is a certified assistant lifeguard/lifeguard, they may act with a lifeguard, and therefore a third person is not necessary.
 - 3 lifeguards or 2 lifeguards and 1 assistant lifeguard per 101-200 bathers. If the teacher is a certified assistant lifeguard/lifeguard, they may act with two lifeguards, and therefore a fourth person is not necessary.
- The number of assistant lifeguards may never exceed the number of lifeguards on deck.
 - Note: a swimmer/bather is considered to be anyone within 1.8m (6') from the water's edge.
 - The Ontario Public Pool Regulation 565 mandates that during recreational/free swims every owner and every operator of a Class A pool must ensure that there is a process in place to ensure a guardian or designated person supervises children under 10 years of age. The process must include a swimming competency test and a method of communicating the requirements of the process. Prior to the implementation of a recreational/free swim, refer to your school board process to address this requirement.

Refer to the definition of **Recreational Time**.

Qualifications

Aquatic Instructor Qualifications

- An aquatic instructor must possess both an aquatic instructor certificate and a lifeguard/assistant lifeguard certificate that are dated not more than two years prior to the date on which they are required to instruct and lifeguard. If the aquatic instructor does not hold a lifeguard certificate or an assistant lifeguard certificate, a certified lifeguard must also be on deck during the aquatic instruction.
- Aquatic Instructor Certificates:

- Canadian Red Cross - Water Safety Instructor Certificate
 - Lifesaving Society - Instructor Certificate
 - YMCA - Instructor Certificate
 - Ontario Teachers Aquatic Standard (OTAS) - for pool situations only
- Verified copies of certification must be available in the pool area.

Refer to the [Swim Test](#) section for the swim test aquatic instructor qualification requirements.

Lifeguard and Assistant Lifeguard Qualifications

- A lifeguard/assistant must be 16 years of age or older and possess a current (the date on the certificate must not be older than two years) lifeguard/assistant lifeguard certificate issued by one of the following organizations:
 - Lifeguard Certificates:
 - Canadian Red Cross - Pool Lifeguard
 - Lifesaving Society - National Lifeguard - Pool
 - Equivalent certificate approved by Minister of Health and Long Term Care
 - Assistant Lifeguard Certificates for Pools:
 - Canadian Red Cross - Assistant Lifeguard
 - Lifesaving Society - Bronze Cross
 - Equivalent certificate approved by Minister of Health and Long Term Care
- A student may not act as a lifeguard/assistant lifeguard if they are participating in the activity.
- Verified copies of certification must be available in the pool area.

Refer to the [Swim Test](#) section for the swim test lifeguard qualification requirements.

First Aid

- A fully stocked first aid kit must be readily accessible. (Consult [Sample First Aid Kit](#))

- A working communication device (for example, cell phone) must be accessible.
- At least one aquatic instructor, lifeguard, or assistant lifeguard must have a minimum of a current (not more than three years prior to the day on which the holder is on duty) first aid certificate (standard or higher) issued by one of the following agencies: St. John Ambulance; Canadian Red Cross; Lifesaving Society; Canadian Ski Patrol; or an organization whose certificate is deemed equivalent by the medical officer of health in the local health unit.
- Follow the school's first aid emergency response (consult [First Aid Plan and First Aid Emergency Response](#)) and the school board's concussion protocol (consult [Concussions](#)).
- An emergency action plan and response to deal with evacuations and lock downs must be followed and communicated to students.

Swim Test

Swim Test for Shallow and Deep Water

- An initial screening/testing of swimming ability must be done in shallow water prior to the activity.
- Schools must adhere to the facility swim test standard regarding the components of the swim test for shallow and deep water. If a facility swim test standard does not exist, the Lifesaving Society Swim to Survive swim standard must be used.
- The test must be administered by a certified aquatic instructor or a certified lifeguard (the test is based on the Lifesaving Society's Swim to Survive™ Standard).
- The swim test must be completed within the school year in which the activity is taking place.
- In lieu of completing the swim test, students may provide proof of Bronze Star certification or higher.
- Results of the swim test must be documented and communicated as per school board policy (for example, to the student, teacher, principal, parents/guardians, trip guide(s), lifeguards, aquatic instructor, and outside provider [if applicable]).
- The students who do not pass the swim test must be identified and wear a properly fastened Personal Flotation Device (P.F.D.). The P.F.D. can be removed during instructional swims when students are under constant visual supervision by the aquatic instructor during learn-to-swim skill instruction and/or practice.

Clothing/Footwear/Jewellery for the Swim Test

- Appropriate swimwear must be worn.

Aquatic Instructor Qualifications for the Swim Test for Shallow and Deep Water

- An aquatic instructor must possess both an aquatic instructor certificate and a lifeguard/assistant lifeguard certificate that are dated not more than two years prior to the date on which they are required to instruct and lifeguard. If the aquatic instructor does not hold a lifeguard certificate or an assistant lifeguard certificate, a certified lifeguard must also be on deck during the swim test.
- Aquatic Instructor Certificates:
 - Canadian Red Cross - Water Safety Instructor Certificate
 - Lifesaving Society - Instructor Certificate
 - YMCA - Instructor Certificate
 - Ontario Teachers Aquatic Standard (OTAS) - for pool situations only
- Verified copies of certification must be available in the pool area.

Lifeguard and Assistant Lifeguard Qualifications for the Swim Test for Shallow and Deep Water

- A lifeguard/assistant lifeguard must be 16 years of age or older and possess a current (the date on the certificate must not be older than two years) lifeguard/assistant lifeguard certificate issued by one of the following organizations:
- Lifeguard Certificates:
 - Canadian Red Cross - Pool Lifeguard
 - Lifesaving Society - National Lifeguard - Pool
 - Equivalent certificate approved by Minister of Health and Long Term Care
- Assistant Lifeguard Certificates for Pools:

- Canadian Red Cross - Assistant Lifeguard
- Lifesaving Society - Bronze Cross
- Equivalent certificate approved by Minister of Health and Long Term Care
- A student may not act as a lifeguard/assistant lifeguard if they are participating in the activity.
- Verified copies of certification must be available in the pool area.

Supervision Ratios for the Swim Test for Shallow and Deep Water

- There must be a minimum of 2 certified aquatic instructors on deck or in the pool.
- Supervision ratio is 2 aquatic instructors per 1-25 students (grades 1-3), per 1-35 students (grades 4-8) with both instructors also certified as lifeguards or one lifeguard and one assistant lifeguard.
- In situations where there are 26-50 students (grades 1-3) or 36-70 students (grades 4-8) an additional certified aquatic instructor is required.
- If assistant lifeguards are used, the number of assistant lifeguards on deck may never exceed the number of lifeguards.

Definitions

- **In-charge Person:**

- Some activities refer to an “In-Charge” person. While the teacher is in-charge and responsible for the overall safety and well-being of students under their care, sometimes there are other personnel who must be identified as “In-Charge” related to specific situations (for example, a pool lifeguard). In activities where an “In-Charge” person is designated, that person, in consultation with the teacher, must make final decisions regarding safety of the students

- **Instructional Time:**

- Instructional time is defined as time during which there are organized activities or instructions. Examples of instructional time are lessons, events, practice, and games.

- **Personal Flotation Device (PFD):**

- According to [Canadian Red Cross](#), “A Canadian approved PFD is designed to keep you

afloat in the water. PFDs were designed for use in recreational boating and are generally smaller, less bulky and more comfortable than lifejackets. They have less flotation than lifejackets, and have limited turning capacity, but are available in a variety of styles and colours.”

- **Recreational Time:**

- Recreational time is defined as time during which there are not any organized activities or instruction.

- **Supervision:**

- The vigilant overseeing of an activity for regulation or direction. Activities, facilities, and equipment have inherent risks, but the more effectively they are supervised, the safer they become.
- The Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education designate three categories of supervision, Constant visual supervision, On-site supervision, and In-the-area supervision. The categories take into consideration the risk level of the activity, the participants’ skill level and the participants’ maturity. The three levels of supervision described are not hierarchical but represent the type of supervision that an activity requires and the type of supervision that is inherently possible.

- **Supervisor:**

- A supervisor is defined as a teacher, vice-principal or principal with a current certification from the Ontario College of Teachers and under contract by the school/school board. The supervisor is legally responsible for the students.

- **Types of Supervision:**

- **Constant Visual Supervision:**

- Constant visual supervision means that the teacher is physically present, watching the activity in question. Only one activity requiring “Constant visual” supervision may take place while other activities are going on.
- Curricular example: During a track and field session, some students are involved in high jump, some are practising relay passing on the track while a third group is distance running around the school. For high jump, the teacher is at the high jump area and is observing the activity.
- Intramural example: During a school outdoor special events day, some students are

involved in parachute games, some in relay games, and others in a team scavenger hunt around the school. For parachute, the intramural supervisor is at the event and is observing activity.

○ **In-the-area Supervision:**

- In-the-area supervision means that the teacher could be in the gymnasium while another activity is taking place in an area adjacent to the gymnasium. In-the-area supervision requires the teacher to be readily accessible.
- In-the-area supervision occurs:
 - in activities in which students may be out of sight for periods of time and the location of the teacher is not nearby (for example, alpine skiing, cross-country running). At least one of the following criteria must be in place:
 - The teacher is circulating
 - The location of teacher has been communicated to students and volunteers
 - in single activities and those that may be combined (for example, other in- the-area activities such as badminton, table tennis, handball – wall) with the following criteria in place:
 - The teacher must be circulating between the activities and readily accessible
 - The teacher informs students of the location of the activities

○ Curricular example: During a track and field session, some students are involved in high jump, some are practising relay passing on the track while a third group is distance running around the school. For distance running, the students are running around the school and at times may be out of sight.

○ Intramural example: During a school outdoor special events day, some students are involved in parachute games, some in relay games, and others in a team scavenger hunt around the school. For a scavenger hunt, the students are running around the school grounds and at times may be out of sight.

○ **On-site Supervision:**

- On-site supervision entails teacher presence but not necessarily constantly viewing one specific activity. Momentary presence in adjoining rooms (for example,

equipment room) to the gym is considered part of “on-site supervision”.

- Curricular example: During a track and field session, some students are involved in high jump, some are practising relay passing on the track while a third group is distance running around the school. For a relay, the students are practising on the track and can be seen by the teacher who is with the high jumpers.
- Intramural example: During a school outdoor special events day, some students are involved in parachute games, some in relay games, and others in a team scavenger hunt around the school. For relay games, the students are participating on the playground and can be seen by the intramural supervisor.

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