

Synchronized Swimming

SECONDARY - INTERSCHOOL 2025

- This activity includes additional safety standards specific to Qualifications and First Aid (previously designated High Risk).
- Consult [Risk Management](#).
- The safety standards for this activity must be presented to the activity provider prior to the activity taking place. The activity provider must meet the minimum requirements listed in the safety standards. For more information on planning trips using outside providers, consult [Outside Activity Providers](#).
- For Class A pools.
- All pools are governed by the [Ontario Public Pools 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.
- Consult [Swimming - Recreational](#) for a definition of Recreational time and safety standards for recreational swimming if, during a try-out/practice session, the focus moves to recreational swimming.

Equipment

- Determine that all equipment is safe (for example, no sharp corners, cracks, or splinters) and all assistive devices (e.g., a walker) are in good working condition and properly adjusted for the height and mobility needs of the student prior to participation.
- Protective equipment must not be altered (for example, cutting a portion off the back of mouth guards, adding padding to a protective helmet).

- Electrical equipment (for example, MP3 players) must be properly grounded (GFI).
- Pools must have access to standard safety equipment as stated in [Ontario Public Pools Regulation 565,s20 \(1\)](#).

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

Clothing/Footwear/Jewellery

- Appropriate swimwear must be worn.
- The wearing of jewellery during practices and competitions must meet the rules of the governing body of the sport/activity, [OFSAA](#), and local athletic association. Consult the [General Safety Standards for Clothing, Footwear, and Jewellery](#) when jewellery is not addressed by the governing body of the sport/activity, OFSAA or the local athletic association.
- Long hair must be secured. Devices (for example, hair pins, elastics and barrettes) used to tie back long hair must not present a safety concern.
- Students must not participate when the length of fingernails poses a safety risk to themselves or others.

Facilities

- Use Class A pools or pools privately owned and operated by an educational institution.
- Apartment, backyard, club, condominium, campground, or hotel pools must not be used.
- School or community pools that conform to [Swimming Canada](#) safety standards. Where facilities do not conform to SNC standards for safety, modifications to the rules must be made (for example, where pools are less than the required depth, swimmers start in the water rather than dive from the blocks or deck).

- Determine that all facilities are safe and accessible for the students participating. Students must be encouraged to report facility problems to the coach.
- Pool deck must be kept clear of obstacles and excess water.

Special Rules/Instructions

Student Medical Information

- Coach/Community Coach Liaison must be aware of Students whose medical condition (for example, asthma, anaphylaxis, diabetes, epilepsy) may affect participation. Consult [Medical Conditions](#).
- Coach/Community Coach Liaison must be aware of Students participating with orthopedic device(s) and/or assistive devices and establish safety rules and procedures to ensure Students can participate safely in activities.
- Coach/Community Coach Liaison is required to inform all individuals who assist with the activity (for example Qualified Instructors, Aquatic Instructor, Lifeguard, Volunteers) of Students who have needs, orthopedic/assistive devices and/or medical conditions that may influence participation.

School Board Policies and Procedures

- Prior to participation Students must receive concussion information through the appropriate Ministry of Education's Concussion Awareness Resource or the school board approved concussion resources. Students must also receive information on:
 - the Concussion Code of Conduct;
 - concussion prevention strategies specific to the activity and inherent risks of the activity (that is, outline possible risks and ways to minimize the risks);
 - procedures and rules for safe play; and

- the importance of reporting symptoms related to a suspected concussion.
- Students must confirm their review of the concussion awareness resource and Concussion Code of Conduct prior to participation.
- Refer to school board policies and procedures (i.e., transportation, excursion/field trip) for parents/guardian communication and permission (for example, the location of an off-site activity, description of the activity and physical environment, means of transportation, inherent risks of the activity, supervision).
- Parents/guardians must be informed of the school board's policy related to initiation/hazing activities.

Coach/Coach Liaison Awareness/Preparation

- 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.
- The activity may include organized games (for example, relay activities, tag games which incorporate skills) but cannot include a recreational/ free swim.
- A warm-up and cool-down must be included.
- Fair play and rules of the sport must be taught and strictly enforced.
- Adequate liquid replacement (personal water bottles, water fountains) must be accessible for students before, during, and after physical activity to prevent dehydration.
- Students must be informed that they are not to share water bottles.
- An In-Water Swim Assessment of students' swim ability must be completed at the beginning of the first try-out/ practice (refer to the [In-Water Swim Assessment](#)).

In-Water Swim Assessment

- Students must successfully complete the following in-water swim assessment in its entirety, in sequence and without any aids or stops to be permitted to participate in the activity:
 - Rolling entry (backwards or forward) into deep water at 2.75m (9') minimum depth
 - Swim 50m (164') continuously any stroke
 - Tread water for 1 minute
- In lieu of completing the In-Water Swim Assessment, Students must provide proof of Bronze Star certification or higher.
- If the public aquatic facility has a Swimming competency test (i.e. an alternative to the In-Water Swim Assessment) schools must adhere to the components of this in-water swim assessment as well as those of the facility.
- The In-Water Swim Assessment must be administered by a Certified Aquatic Instructor/certified Aquatic Coach or a certified Lifeguard. If the Aquatic Instructor/certified Aquatic Coach does not hold a Lifeguard certificate or an assistant Lifeguard certificate, a certified Lifeguard must also be on deck during the In-Water Swim Assessment.
- The In-Water Swim Assessment must be completed within the school year in which the activity is taking place.
- Results of the In-Water Swim Assessment 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]).
- Students who do not successfully complete the In-Water Swim Assessment or who do not have a Bronze Star certification or higher, must not participate in the activity.

Safety Rules and Emergency Procedures

- Prior to participation, Students must be familiar with safety rules and emergency procedures.
- Students must adhere to the following rules:
 - No running or pushing on deck
 - No chewing gum
 - 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 the pool area
- Showers must be taken before entering the pool.
- Coaches/Community Coach Liaison 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.
- The presence and location of spectators must not present a safety concern. A school is responsible for supervising its own spectators. The ratio of Supervisor to spectators must address safety concerns.

Supervision

- All activities must be supervised.
- The type 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.

- Direct Supervision is required during the safety and initial skill instruction.
- On-Site Supervision is required for the duration of all other components of the activity (e.g., equipment setup and take down, warm-ups/cool downs, application of the skills and games).
- A Coach/Volunteer must accompany pupils to the pool.
- The Coach must be located on the deck or in the pool.
- Close and frequent monitoring of change rooms must take place, but not by the Lifeguard.
- The Community Coach Liaison must be accessible to the Community Coach and students (at practices and competitions). The level of support will be commensurate with the expertise and qualifications of the Community Coach as determined by the Principal/Designate.
- As a minimum the Community Coach Liaison will provide In-the-Area supervision for all practices and competitions. Direct Supervision is required if a Community Coach is under the age of 18.
- When students are competing outside their school district (e.g., travel tournaments, regional/ provincial competitions):
 - a Community Coach Liaison from the same school board must be accessible to the Community Coach; and
 - consult school board and local athletic association rules and regulations with regard to Coach, Community Coach, and Community Coach Liaison duties and adhere to the higher standard of care.
- Where a Qualified Instructor is used, the Qualified Instructor must provide safety and initial skill instruction and monitoring for the safe application of skills and student behaviour for the duration of the activity.
- A Volunteer, under the direction of a Coach, can monitor students during practices and competitions. Refer to your school board's policy on volunteers assisting with students' physical activities.

- Responsibilities must be clearly outlined for additional Coaches and Volunteers who are monitoring the activity.

Supervision Ratios for Instructional Time

- There must be a minimum of 2 Certified Aquatic Instructors/Certified Aquatic Coaches on deck or in the pool.
- Supervision ratio is 2 Certified Aquatic Instructors/Certified Aquatic Coaches per 1-50 students, with both Instructors also certified as Lifeguards or one Lifeguard and one Assistant Lifeguard.
- In situations where there are 51-75 students, an additional Certified Aquatic Instructor/Certified Aquatic Coaches for 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**.

Qualifications

Coaching Qualifications

- Game/match official(s) must be certified and/or experienced in officiating the sport.
- The Head Coach must demonstrate knowledge of the sport, skills, and strategies to the Principal or Designate.
- All Coaches must be familiar with and implement, where applicable, the criteria outlined in **Coaches Expectations**.
- At least one Coach must possess one of the following coaching qualifications:
 - NCCP Artistic Swimming Competition - Introduction (Trained)
 - NCCP Synchro Competition - Development (Trained)

- NCCP Artistic Swimming CDAG (Trained)
 - Completion of swimming's NCCP level 1 and/or level 2 certification (past)
- Attendance at a clinic or workshop within the last three years provided by an instructor who is knowledgeable of the activity (for example, appropriate skills and progressions), and where safety is addressed as outlined in the Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education.
- Past experience within the last 3 years as a coach synchronized swimming having knowledge of the activity (for example, appropriate skills and progressions) and current safety practices as outlined in the Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education.
- For more information on sport-specific NCCP training please visit coach.ca.

Certified 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 before 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:
 - 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.

Certified Aquatic Coach Qualifications

- To be recognized as a Certified Aquatic Coach for Synchronized Swimming (referred to in OPASSE as Certified Aquatic Instructor) as per the Ontario Public Pool Regulation 565, section 17, subsection (16) an individual must hold one of the following certifications:
 - NCCP Artistic Swimming Competition - Introduction (Certified)
 - NCCP Synchro Competition - Development (Certified)
 - NCCP Artistic Swimming CDAG (Certified)

Lifeguard Qualifications

- A 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 certificate issued by one of the following organizations:
 - Lifesaving Society - National Lifeguard – Pool
 - Equivalent certificate approved by Minister of Health and Long Term Care
- A student may not act as a Lifeguard if they are participating in the activity.
- Verified copies of certification must be available in the pool area.

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.
- The designated individual who takes responsibility for providing first aid to injured students must:
 - as a minimum, have a current first aid certification from a recognized first aid provider (for example, St. John Ambulance, Red Cross) that includes CPR B or C and training in head, neck and spinal injury management;

- be in the area and readily accessible during the entire practice/competition;☒☒
- be aware of the school's first aid emergency action plan and follow their first aid emergency response (consult First Aid Plan and First Aid Emergency Response) including specific direction for participants with accessibility needs, and use of assistive devices or medications;☒☒
- follow their school board's concussion protocol for a suspected concussion;
- and not be a participant in the activity.☒

Definitions

- **Coach** (i.e. Teacher Coach/Community Coach):

- An individual who volunteers to coach a school team and is approved by the Principal/Designate.

- **Community Coach:**

- An individual approved by the principal who volunteers to coach a school team. An individual acting in the role of a Community Coach must be assigned a Community Coach Liaison.
- Examples of a Community Coach are:
 - teachers not under contract by the board;
 - retired teachers;
 - early childhood educators, teacher candidates, educational assistants;
 - co-op students, other secondary students;
 - parent/guardian;
 - individuals/coaches from the community.

- **Community Coach Liaison:**

- A Teacher, Principal, or Vice Principal with a current certification from the Ontario College of Teachers and under contract by the school board who is responsible for carrying out all the duties required of a Teacher pursuant to the Education Act and the safety standards. The level of support will be commensurate with the expertise and qualifications of the Community Coach and will be determined by the Principal or Designate.

- **Instructional Time:**

- Time during which there is formal instruction and/or instructor led activities. Examples of instructional time are lessons, events, practice, and games.

- **Lifejacket:**

- Canadian-approved lifejackets are designed to turn an unconscious or incapacitated person face-up in the water. Lifejackets are available with varying amounts of flotation and turning ability. Canadian approved Lifejackets are stamped or labelled indicating that they are approved by Transport Canada, the Canadian Coast Guard or the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

- **Monitor:**

- A Volunteer and/or Qualified Instructor who assists the Teacher Coach with a group of students and has a responsibility to monitor student behaviors for the duration of the activity.
- A Community Coach who has a responsibility to coach and monitor student behaviors for the duration of the athletic season and/or a Qualified Instructor(s)/Volunteer(s) who assists the Community Coach during practices and competitions.

- **Monitoring:**

- The role of monitoring is to observe, identify, act, and report:
 - **Observe:** Observe with attention to detail the actions of the students.
 - **Identify:** Identify the student and the unsafe behaviour.
 - **Act:** Take appropriate actions to safeguard students and others (e.g., stop the activity).

- Report: Provide the name of the student and the unsafe behaviour to the Coach for management and direction.

- **Personal Flotation Device (P.F.D.):**

- Canadian-approved P.F.D.'s are designed for use in recreational boating and are generally smaller, less bulky and more comfortable than lifejackets. They may have less flotation than lifejackets and may have no or little self-turning ability (the ability to turn an unconscious or incapacitated person face-up in the water). Canadian approved P.F.D.'s are stamped or labelled indicating that they are approved by Transport Canada, the Canadian Coast Guard or the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

- **Qualified Instructor:**

- An individual who provides safety and skill instruction, and monitoring for an activity, and possesses the required qualifications (e.g., experience, certifications). This role could be fulfilled by a teacher, volunteer, or an employee of an outside provider. An instructor does not have the authority to supervise.

- **Recreational Time:**

- Time during which there is no formal instruction or instructor led activities.

- **Supervision:**

- The vigilant overseeing of an activity for management 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 includes three Types of supervision, Direct Supervision, On-Site Supervision, and In-the-Area Supervision. These types of supervision take into consideration the level of risk, which is related to the number of participants, the skill level of the participants, the type of equipment used, the environmental conditions, the age, and developmental stage.

- The three types of supervision described are not hierarchical but represent the type of supervision that activities require and the type of supervision that is inherently possible.
- Some activities in OPASSE transition from one type of supervision to another type of supervision (e.g., Direct Supervision to On-Site Supervision OR On-Site Supervision to In-the-Area Supervision).

- **Teacher Coach:**

- A Teacher Coach is a teacher, principal, or vice principal with a current certification from the Ontario College of Teachers and under contract by the school board.

- **Types of Supervision:**

- **Direct Supervision:**

- Direct Supervision requires that the Coach is physically present at the activity, providing visual and verbal oversight for management and direction of both the activity and student safety.
 - Provisos:
 - No other activity can occur when part of the activity or the entire activity is under Direct Supervision when there is only one Coach supervising.
 - The Supervision section of the relevant activity safety standards page in the Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education describes when parts of an activity are under Direct Supervision.
 - Where a Community Coach is providing the safety and initial skill instruction and monitoring, a Community Coach Liaison is accessible for management and direction as determined by the Principal/Designate.
 - An activity may be under Direct Supervision:
 - During the entire duration of the activity;
 - During the set up and take down of equipment;

- During the safety and initial skill instruction;
 - During the performance/practice of the activity skill; and
 - When the activities transition from Direct Supervision to On-Site Supervision.
- **In-the-Area Supervision:**
 - The Coach is located in proximity to a combination of locations where the student activities take place, is circulating, and is accessible for providing management and direction of the physical activity and student safety.
 - Provisos:
 - The Coach is circulating between the activities, occurring at separate locations, and is readily accessible, or the location of the coach is communicated to the student.
 - Where a Community Coach is providing the safety and initial skill instruction and is monitoring, a Community Coach Liaison is accessible for management and direction as determined by the Principal/Designate.
 - Students may be out of sight for periods of time.
 - An activity or a component of the activity is under In-the-Area Supervision:
 - Where the same activity is located in separate locations. (e.g., Track and Field, Cross Country Running, Skiing (Alpine));
 - Where two or more activities under In-the-Area Supervision occur in separate locations (e.g., Badminton, Table Tennis, Handball (Wall));
 - Where the skill application of the activity takes place at a different location from the Coach (e.g., Cross Country Running, Skiing (Alpine), Cycling);
 - Where activities occur in double or triple gymnasiums; and
 - Where more than one Qualified Instructor is providing activities at a combination of locations.

- **On-Site Supervision:**

- The Coach is present at one location where the student activity takes place (e.g., gymnasium, sports field, tennis courts at an Outside Activity Provider's facility) and is accessible for providing management and direction of the physical activity and student safety.
 - Provisos:
 - Where more than one activity occurs in one location, the Coach is circulating between the activities and is accessible for management and direction.
 - Momentary presence in adjoining rooms (e.g., equipment room, outside storage shed, boathouse) is considered to be On-Site Supervision.
 - Where a Community Coach is providing the safety and initial skill instruction and monitoring, a Community Coach Liaison is accessible for management and direction as determined by the Principal/Designate.
 - An activity may be under On-Site Supervision:
 - During the entire duration of the activity;
 - During the safety and initial skill instruction;
 - With activities using multiple stations while the Coach is circulating;
 - When combining two or more activities at one location while the Coach is circulating; and
 - When activities transition from On-Site Supervision to In-the-Area Supervision.

- **Volunteer:**

- A responsible adult (e.g., Educational Assistants, Retired Teachers, Co-op Students, Parents/Guardians, Teacher Candidates) approved by the Principal/Designate who is under the direction of a Coach and has been instructed on their monitoring responsibilities. Refer to your school board's policy on volunteers assisting with students' physical activities.

Last Published
Fri, 03/27/26 11:33 am