

Swimming and water safety education Years 1 to 6 – information for schools

Policy statement

Through structured swimming and water safety education every student in Years 1 to 6 in a Northern Territory (NT) school will be provided opportunities to develop and achieve the competencies of level 7 of the Royal Life Saving Australia (RLSA) Swim and Survive program by the time they complete their primary school education.

This information sheet should be read in conjunction with the Swimming and water safety education in schools Years 1 to 6 policy and guidelines.

Frequently Asked Questions

How will swimming and water safety education in schools be paid for?

\$3 million will be provided to enable Territory schools to deliver swimming and water safety lessons for all students in Years 1 to 6 from Term 1 2025.

Schools will receive up to \$150 per enrolled student in years 1 – 6. Additional funding requests for travel should be made through the existing application for financial support process and policy which considers the school's overall financial position. The application for financial support guidelines and procedures are available on the Policy and Advisory Library on eLearn [School Resourcing Model | eLearn](#).

Will school budgets be worse off to fund the swimming in the school program?

No, the \$3 million provided will go directly to government and non-government schools and additional funding support will be available to schools that have to travel long distances to their nearest pool.

Is the \$3 million ongoing?

\$3 million is being provided for 2025. It is anticipated that schools will fund the program from 2026 using funding uplifts provided through the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement.

How will my school receive the budget for this?

Government schools will receive a specific budget in line with the School Resource Model allocation based on the number of enrolled students in Years 1 to 6. For non-government schools a grant will be distributed based on the number of enrolled students in Years 1 to 6.

Do parents need to contribute?

No. Swimming lessons are being provided at no cost to families.

Can the NT Sports voucher be used?

No, the program is provided in addition to the Sports vouchers.

If a child is under 5 years of age and not enrolled in school, parents are able to access two \$100 Learn to Swim vouchers each year.

For more information about the swim vouchers and other activities, go to the [Northern Territory Government Sport and Recreation website](#).

What if there isn't a pool near our school?

The department has developed a list of pools and their proximity to schools.

There will be travel and logistics support provided to deliver on this commitment. There will also be flexible delivery models for swimming and water safety so that all primary school students have the opportunity to learn these important water skills. Contact swimming.watersafety@education.nt.gov.au for support.

Will there be options for schools to undertake “block” delivery of swimming and water safety lessons so that children aren't spending hours on a bus?

Yes. The department is working with stakeholders including Royal Life Saving NT (RLSNT) to ensure flexible delivery options are provided for all schools.

What are the delivery options?

At this stage the department, in consultation with RLSNT, have proposed three main delivery models:

- Urban schools will select from registered providers and organise 7 to 8 swimming lessons at 45 minutes per lesson over 7 to 8 weeks at the closest pool appropriate for their students.
- Remote schools within close proximity to a swimming pool will select from registered providers and organise 7 to 8 swimming lessons at 45 minutes per lesson at the closest pool appropriate for their students.
- Remote schools not within close proximity to a swimming pool will undertake an excursion to a location where a swimming program will be incorporated with lessons over 2 or 3 full days. Additionally, water safety lessons can be provided without a pool and further work will occur with RLSNT to design a program on a location-by-location basis.

School participation in the swim program is not limited to these models. The department and RLSNT will work with schools to provide approaches based on their individual needs.

Does the NT have enough swim instructors to deliver the program across all regions?

The department recognises that the success of this commitment relies on having sufficient swim instructors and will monitor the rollout and support schools to sequence implementation to best utilise available instructors.

In addition, the department will support fast tracking training programs for swimming instructors in regional and remote areas, including options for classroom teachers to become instructors if interested.

Will my school have to provide instructors?

Schools will have the discretion to utilise qualified instructors who are part of their staff to suit the broader school needs.

Schools must adhere to ratios for swimming lessons outlined in the Swimming, water safety and aquatic activities – procedure on eLearn [Learning, teaching, curriculum and sport | Department of Education and Training](#).

Are there appropriate safety measures in place?

The department takes the safety of students and staff seriously. Schools are already familiar with duty of care responsibilities associated with excursions and the department will ensure appropriately qualified staff and safety measures are in place.

Prior to any excursion, a comprehensive and carefully considered risk assessment must be undertaken.

What about children in Transition?

The commitment does not include Transition students however schools can continue to offer swimming and water safety education to Transition students in the same way they currently do.

If I don't spend the full budget can I use the money to provide swimming and water safety lessons to students in Transition?

Yes, if the school has provided swimming and water safety lessons to all enrolled students in years 1 to 6 and there are surplus funds, the department is supportive of the remaining budget being used to deliver swimming and water safety education to transition students.

What if parents refuse to provide consent?

Parents have the right not to consent for their children to engage in the program. Schools will need to make arrangements for those students in the same way they do for any excursion where a parent does not provide consent.

What support is available to my school to deliver this commitment?

A dedicated project officer employed by Teaching and Learning Services will assist schools with pool scheduling and travel logistics in partnership with School Operations. Contact swimming.watersafety@education.nt.gov.au

A specific online excursion form is in development and will significantly reduce the administrative burden on schools.

What if there are multiple schools accessing the same pool?

It is possible for multiple schools to be doing a program at the same pool. A dedicated project officer has been assigned to support timetabling and managing pool space.. Schools can collaborate and coordinate efforts to meet this commitment.

Can I ask another school to help us with transport if they have buses?

Yes, schools are encouraged to support each other to deliver this commitment.

Do we have to provide the Royal Life Saving Australia (RLSA) Swim and Survive program?

Yes, the RLSA Swim and Survive program is the department's approved program. Most providers in the NT already deliver Swim and Survive. The use of Swim and Survive supports clear reporting and consistency in competency and attainment across NT schools. A list of Swim and Survive partners is available for schools.

Are students with additional needs required to participate?

Students with additional needs should have the same opportunity to engage in swimming and water safety education. In some instances, there will be students with disabilities who are not able to participate in the program. In these instances, alternate education provision will be provided in line with current practice.

What exceptions are there?

Schools must provide the opportunity for students in years 1-6, in some instances there may be individual students who are injured, ill or for family circumstances or cultural reasons are not able to participate in the program. In these instances, alternate education provision is provided in line with current practice.

Do I have to track the student data?

Yes, student competencies will be recorded in SAMS and must also be provided to RLSNT within ten business days of the final day of lessons.

For schools that have to travel overnight or longer, what will students do before and after swimming lessons?

Schools should consider incorporating swimming and water safety education into their current educational excursion travel and planning. For example, many schools currently undertake educational excursions to regional centres or interstate. When planning for these excursions consider if it is possible to incorporate swimming and water safety education.

What is expected for students who are not participating in swimming?

Alternate education provision will be provided in line with current practice.

If a student misses out on swimming due to injury or illness, will schools be required to provide lessons at another time?

No, you don't need to provide additional lessons.

Through the Swim and Survive program, each student's level and competency is monitored annually. Instructors of the program will ensure that modifications are made to allow the child to achieve their required competency.

What about students who are already proficient?

In the event that a student has already attained the level 7 competency, instructors will work with those students to ensure the program remains engaging for them.

What if students do not obtain the proficiency level by the time they complete year 6?

Through the Swim and Survive program students will be provided every opportunity and support to achieve the required competency. There may be some instances where students aren't able to reach Level 7 competency, but every effort will be made to support students to achieve level 7 by the end of their primary school.

How do we manage age differences against proficiency levels? For example, a proficient year 1 student and students in year 6 who are not proficient.

In most cases lesson delivery is based on groups, therefore students are grouped within their proficiency ability. In cases where this is not possible due to the small number of students at the school, modification of program delivery will need to be considered by the swimming provider.

What is the qualification requirement for instructors?

The qualification required to deliver the program is SISSS00132 - Swimming and Water Safety Teacher. The skill sets for this qualification are:

- SISCAQU020 - Perform water rescues
- SISCAQU023 - Plan swimming lessons
- SISCAQU024 –Teach water familiarisation, buoyancy and mobility skills
- SISCAQU025 - Teach water safety and survival skills
- SISCAQU026 – Teach swimming strokes
- HLTAID009 - Provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation

The instructor must also have a current Working with Children Clearance.

Find out more about the Swimming and Water Safety Teacher skill requirements [here](#).

Note: The units listed above reflect the current standards but are subject to change.

Will staff be offered the opportunity to obtain the swim qualification?

Yes, teaching or administration staff can obtain their qualification to support delivery of programs.

There are a number of providers who can deliver the Swimming and Water Safety Teacher qualification including AUSTSWIM who has scheduled additional courses for January to May 2025. Find out more information [here](#).

The department is working to make the qualification more accessible to staff in schools, including subsidising costs. More information will be available in early 2025.

We have over 600 students who need to participate. Will there be enough room to cater for that many students?

Yes. Teaching and Learning Services and Regional Services will provide support to schools to manage scheduling. Contact swimming.watersafety@education.nt.gov.au