

The OSCAR Water Safety Handbook



OSCAR activities in the water provide a great opportunity to relax, let off energy, build confidence and learn life-long behaviours to safely enjoy water-based recreation.

People can typically have quite different levels of experience, confidence and capability around water. We hope this information will help you to feel more confident, safe and certain about your supervision of water activities. We encourage you to freely discuss any of the information with your supervisor and staff colleagues and ask any questions in order to clarify your role and responsibilities during water activities.

Our Expectations of OSCAR Staff Supervising Children in the Water

- Follow all program rules and procedures for water safety: those in this handbook and also in our Water Safety Policy.
- Carry out all supervision duties diligently and professionally.
- Please talk to your supervisor if you have any concerns about supervising water activities or if your ability to supervise may be impaired in any way.

CONSTANT SUPERVISION IS VITAL IN OR NEAR WATER

- Be watching at ALL times
- Be able to provide IMMEDIATE assistance
- Children must be able to SEE and HEAR you - you must be able to SEE and HEAR them
- *It only takes 20-30 seconds to drown: Be in a position which enables you to SCAN the area within 10 seconds and begin effective RESCUE within 20 seconds*

Prepare for Water Activities

POOL EXPERIENCES CAN BE FUN AND QUITE MANAGEABLE, BUT SHOULD NOT BE UNDERTAKEN CASUALLY.

It is very important to PLAN before going to the pool	Have some fun activities to provide STRUCTURE
INTERACTION with swimmers is a key element of supervision	ANTICIPATE behaviour and ACT QUICKLY to get things back on track

Some Water Activities for OSCAR Time

Will it float?

Get each kid to bring in an item from home, and have a few big ones on hand to also include. Talk to about pool safety aids, then predict whether their item will sink or float. What are some other alternatives to traditional rescue aids?

Here are a few ideas to get started:



Make a Whirl Pool

Have all the participants run in a circle in the same direction. Once you get a whirl pool started encourage the participants to try to float.

Create a Rip

Create two whirl pools side by side to create a shoot. Participants can then have turns floating through the rip. This can lead into a discussion about beach safety.

What other games can you think of?

Trains	Stuck in the mud
Rob the nest	Simon says
Obstacle Course	Sea Horse (Noodle) relays

Almost any game you play on land can be adapted to play in a pool.

If you are trying a new activity, check with your supervisor first – polices and rules might need to be updated.

Water Safety: Aware, Alert, Responsible

“In 2006, 4000 people made an ACC claim due to an injury while swimming. A significant number of these injuries occurred in and around swimming pools. The most common causes of injury included: slips, trips and falls, often resulting in fractures, dental injuries, sprains and strains. Pools can be fun places but need to be treated with respect.” Source: *Be Pool Safe* Water Safety New Zealand, 2007

What might go wrong?

- Slips and falls while moving around the poolside.
- Children injured by pushing, trampling, hitting the bottom (spinal injuries & head injuries).
- Children out of depth – even in shallow pools, especially younger children. Children sink very quickly to the bottom of the pool when in difficulty. Once there, it is much harder to see them.
- REMEMBER – drowning is silent.

In & Around the Water

1. Supervising Pool Side

- Children will be put in ability groups and the pool has different ability areas.
- You will be allocated a group and you must maintain constant supervision. A senior staff person will be monitoring the whole environment and available for support.
- In supervising shallow pools it is not required to have staff in the water. Poolside supervision is generally more effective. If you are allocated to be in the pool, you are still expected to be actively supervising and monitoring behaviour. Check in regularly with other staff.
- Take note of pool depths and reinforce the boundaries.
- Interact with children in the pool. If you are in doubt about a child's safety, calmly signal them to come over to you & see if they respond – if you see any problem take immediate action.
- Specific rules will apply for some of our equipment – follow directions from your supervisor and stay where you are allocated.
- Manage your tiredness by regularly moving yourself within your allocated zone and frequently scanning and accounting for your whole group.
- Take steps to minimise the effects of glare and reflection (e.g. use of Polaroid sunglasses)
- When the group leaves the water, you will need to ensure all children are accounted for.
- These are our signals in any emergency (specify) _____
- Remember pools are noisy – when giving directions, you might not be heard
- No cell phones will be in use (except supervisor).
- Do not get distracted by conversations or interactions with other people (e.g. parents, non-swimming children etc.). GIVE THE CHILDREN IN WATER YOUR FULL ATTENTION AT ALL TIMES.

CONTINUES OVER

In & Around the Water (cont.)

2. Responsible Behaviour

- Each swimmer will have a buddy. Ask buddies to check-in approx. every 10 minutes (including a last buddy check when swimmers have left the water).
- Any swimmer leaving the pool must let a staff member know!
- Children must use safe ways to enter the water – feet first, using steps or sit & turn off side.
- Children must always wait for permission to enter the water.
- There is a complete ban on jumping and diving in shallow water – for jumping, the water depth must be over the swimmer's shoulder height.
- There is a complete ban on running and pushing.
- Reinforce our rules firmly, after one reminder, apply relevant consequences immediately – THERE IS NO ROOM FOR LEEWAY.
- THINK LIKE A CHILD. Anticipate what they might do for fun and be ready to respond.

3. Other Guidelines

- Some children will not be allowed to swim, your supervisor will notify you of these children e.g. 2 weeks after diarrhoea or vomiting; school sores; chicken pox;
- Open sores must be covered when swimming.
- Changing rooms: if you are allocated to supervise, ensure you do not remain on your own with just one child. Have a group of children remain until all are changed.

Emergency Procedures

When you see someone is in trouble

- If a lifeguard is present notify them immediately
- Signal to another staff member to notify them of what is happening.
- Attempt to communicate with the child.
- If no response try to push flotation aids in their direction e.g. tubes, noodles, bottles, chilly bins, hoses, foam cushions.
- After attempting to communicate and getting no response, enter the water. Before entering the water signal another staff member.
- Remember to take flotation with you, if the water depth will require it.

Our Water Safety policy has more information – please ensure you are familiar with it BEFORE supervising any water activities.

Water Activity Layout

Use this space to draw a diagram of water activity and how it is to be supervised.



Note any significant hazards or risks at this location:

Pool Rules

Always **ENTER**
the pool
SAFELY



USE the **BATHROOM**
before entering the
pool

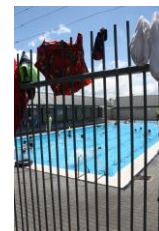


Always **WALK**
around the pool
area

EAT in the
designated
AREA



Always **TELL** a staff member
if you are **LEAVING** the pool
area



Keep the
Gate SHUT
at all times

Water Activity Supervision – Check List

_____ (insert staff member's name)

- ☐ Can accurately and consistently account for the group under supervision, including those who have left the water
- ☐ Maintains designated age/ability groups and pool depth boundaries
- ☐ Has practiced the emergency procedure
- ☐ Follows all supervision guidelines and can identify hazards as they occur
- ☐ Interacts effectively with swimmers to maintain good supervision
- ☐ Effectively manages any distracting incidents and remains focussed on swimmers
- ☐ Is pro-active in managing fatigue and remaining alert
- ☐ Intervenes quickly and effectively with behaviour incidents

Observed by: _____ Date/s: _____

Comments: _____

Declaration

I _____ (insert name) agree to

- follow all the pool safety practices and procedures detailed in this handbook as well as the Water Safety policies of the programme.
- be responsible and accountable for my actions, and display a high level of professional conduct when supervising children in and around the water.

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Employee

Employer