

CHECKLIST · SWIM SCHOOLS, AQUATIC CENTRES AND RECREATION PROGRAMS

Child safe checklist for aquatic and recreation programs

A practical self-check against the National Principles and state child safe rules, for pools, swim schools and children's recreation programs.

For aquatic and recreation managers, swim school coordinators, YMCA and council program leads in Australia and New Zealand.

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The rules that apply

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse named the aquatic industry as one where abuse had occurred. Since then, child safety rules for pools and recreation programs have tightened.

Where	What applies
Australia (national)	The 10 National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, the benchmark most state schemes are built on.
Victoria	11 Child Safe Standards in force since 1 July 2022, including cultural safety for Aboriginal children and managing risks in online environments.
New South Wales	Since 1 February 2022, sport and recreation organisations that provide services to children must implement the Child Safe Standards. The Office of the Children's Guardian regulates the scheme and the Working with Children Check, and organisations must verify the WWCC of anyone in child-related work.
New Zealand	Under the Children's Act 2014, government-funded organisations and their contractors must safety-check children's workers before they start, and re-check them every three years.

The 10 National Principles

- 1. Leadership, governance and culture
- 2. Children's rights, participation and voice
- 3. Family and community involvement
- 4. Equity and respect for diverse needs
- 5. Suitable and supported people
- 6. Child-focused complaints and concerns processes
- 7. Education, training and skills for staff and volunteers
- 8. Safe physical and online environments
- 9. Regular review and improvement
- 10. Documented policies and procedures

Self-check

Leadership and policy

- ☐ A child safety policy and staff code of conduct are published and known by every staff member and volunteer
 - ☐ Leaders review child safety risks at least yearly, including pool deck, change rooms, transport and online communication
 - ☐ Families can easily find how the centre keeps children safe
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People

- ☐ Every instructor, coach and volunteer in child-related work has a current Working with Children Check (or NZ safety check), verified by the organisation, not just sighted
- ☐ Check numbers and expiry dates are recorded centrally and someone is alerted before they expire
- ☐ New staff complete child safety induction before working with children
- ☐ Reference checks ask specifically about child safety

Pool deck, change rooms and programs

- ☐ Clear supervision rules: no staff member is alone and out of sight with a child
- ☐ Change room rules for staff, parents and school groups are written and displayed
- ☐ School groups arrive with a teacher-to-student plan and a clear hand-over to instructors
- ☐ Children with disability or additional needs have their support needs recorded and shared with instructors

Online, photos and communication

- ☐ Photo and video consent is recorded for every child, and staff can see it before taking photos
- ☐ Staff communicate with families through approved channels, not personal phones or social media
- ☐ Private one-to-one messaging between staff and children is not allowed
- ☐ Children's records are stored securely, with access limited to staff who need them

Complaints, incidents and review

- ☐ Children and families know how to raise a concern, in plain language and more than one way
- ☐ Concerns are recorded, acted on quickly and reported to police or authorities when required
- ☐ Staff are trained to recognise signs of harm, including harm by other children
- ☐ Incidents and complaints feed into a yearly review of practices

Signs you need to act

- WWCC details live in a spreadsheet nobody owns
- Photo consent is on paper forms nobody checks

- Instructors message parents from personal phones
- You can't quickly show an auditor who worked with which class

About GreeneDesk. GreeneDesk is an Australian company and a software platform for sports and recreation facilities: FitDesk for fitness floors and seniors programs, SwimDesk for aquatic programs, and SportDesk for squads. Australian customer data stays in Australia. Book a demo at greenedesk.com.au.

Sources

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