

Surfboard, Bodyboard, Wave Ski Riding and Stand-Up Paddling

Link <https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/sport/page/1105?returnpageid=1114>

Introduction

You must refer to the [Requirements for All Sport and Physical Activity](#) to understand your overall compliance responsibilities.

Parents or caregivers must be informed of the full details of the possible locations, supervision to be provided, activities to be undertaken, cost, pre-requisite qualifications and transport arrangements including intended departure and return times before their written permission is obtained.

The activity permission note must contain a clause authorising medical aid if it is considered necessary by the supervising teacher. The note should include a section where the parent advises the school of any illness or medical condition that the student suffers from, or any medication the student is currently taking.

Students are to be instructed to use appropriate and adequate protection in summer or winter conditions. These include, an SPF50+, broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen reapplied regularly and a wide brimmed hat and long sleeve shirt when appropriate, or a rash-vest is also required. In winter or cold weather a wetsuit is required.

Teachers planning surfing activities need to be familiar with the procedures detailed in the [Excursions Policy Implementation Procedures](#) and other [Departmental Aquatic Activity](#) policies.

Student Pre-Requisites and Experience

Participating students must possess either a Surf Life Saving Association (SLSA) Surf Survival Certificate, Australian Professional Ocean Lifeguard Association (APOLA) Ocean Safety Surfer Award or higher level award. The teacher-in-charge must ensure that each intending participant is competent swimmer and demonstrate under teacher supervision that they are capable of swimming 200m, in a still water pool not less than 25m in length, in under 5 minutes. This is an annual requirement.

Additionally students should be assessed annually in rescue techniques and first aid/emergency care procedures.

Schools may facilitate Surf Survival or Ocean Safety Surfer Award courses, or alternatively, arrange for students under teacher supervision to undertake the Surf Survival Certificate from SLSA qualified personnel or undertake the Ocean Safety Surfer Award from APOLA qualified personnel. Teachers may also make use of accredited Surf Coaches endorsed by SLSA or APOLA to assist students attain the Surf Survival Certificate or Ocean Safety Surfer Award.

Teacher/Instructor Qualifications and Experience

Surfing skills and fitness levels expected of school surfing supervisors need to be assessed annually because of the risks inherent in the beach environment.

Teachers of School Surfing or any involved non-teacher instructors must, as a minimum:

- Possess a SLSA Bronze Medallion, or APOLA School Surfing Supervisor Award (SSSA) or an Australian Coaching Council Surfing Australia Level 1 Surf Riding qualification, or higher level award.
- Be competent surfboard, bodyboard, wave ski riders or stand-up paddlers, as determined at any annual re-accreditation days conducted by SLSA, APOLA or Surfing NSW.
- Successfully complete an annual proficiency update that includes the following fitness pre-requisite activities being signed off by the principal or delegated officer, before teachers present themselves for an initial or annual re-accreditation in the above awards:
- Swim 500 metres in a pool of not less than 25m in length in less than 12 minutes.
- Possess recognised current training in cardio-pulmonary resuscitation and emergency care.

Supervision

The teacher to student ratio must not exceed 1:16 students being in the water at anyone time and at all times a minimum of one (1) teacher must conduct supervision and surveillance of the student surfing activity from the beach in addition to the qualified instructors running the activity.

Principals and organising teachers should take into account such factors as age, experience and maturity of the students, experience and qualifications of the adult supervisors and venue characteristics when arranging supervision.

For teachers undertaking instruction programs for students seeking Surf Survival Certificates or Ocean Safety Surf Coach Awards, the teacher to student ratio must not exceed 1:8 students being in the water at anyone time. Teachers are encouraged to use the buddy system to facilitate additional safety in the supervision of students, whereby each student has an assigned buddy to watch during the surfing activity sessions.

The teacher-in-charge is responsible for maintaining a time record (or log) of each session. The record must include a description of the surfing conditions on any given day.

Equipment

- All equipment must be checked to ensure that it is in working order and damaged surf craft that has sharp exposed edges, are not to be used.
- All students must wear a school issued rash-vest that assists in supervision and identification of surfers as a school group.
- Surfboard riders must wear leg-ropes.

- Bodyboard riders must wear wrist-leashes and correctly fitted flippers with a flipper-saver or another approved flipper securing device.
- Wave ski riders must use a leash that attaches the paddle to the craft.
- Stand-up paddlers (SUP) must wear a leg-rope that attaches to the SUP craft. It is recommended that children are fitted with a personal floatation device (PDF).
- Beach markers should indicate designated surfing area.
- A pealess whistle or air-horn is required for an emergency/evacuation signal.
- A mobile phone or radio must be available for emergency communications. The supervising teacher must have a list of local emergency contacts.
- A first aid kit must be available for emergency use.
- Additional sunscreen, water and large towel/blanket should also be available.
- Surf helmets are an optional surfing accessory and participants should be encouraged to obtain this personal safety equipment.

Venues

Depending on prevailing conditions, a surfing location adjacent to a patrolled area, if one is available, should be considered and utilised.

The location for surfing activities must be selected with consideration of the following:

- Selected beaches must have emergency vehicle access and adequate mobile phone reception (this should be checked prior to the session commencing).
- The teacher-in-charge or the instructor must have first hand knowledge of the area to be used and be satisfied of its suitability for the program and the student group. The skill and experience level of the less able in the group must be a major determining factor in selecting a location on any given day.
- The prevailing water and surf conditions in the selected area must be appraised for activity suitability prior to students entering the water. Where it is possible, the teacher-in-charge should consult the lifeguard on duty. If the conditions are deemed to be unsuitable by beach authorities the activity must be cancelled or transferred to a more suitable location.
- The surfing activity area must be defined to students and the teacher-in-charge must enforce the use of only the specified area.
- Stand-up paddling and wave ski riding at reef or rock seabed locations are not permitted, and surfboard riders and body boarders are not to surf in shallow intense close out conditions including shore breaks.

Introductory Surfboard and Bodyboard Programs

Schools may offer introductory learn to surfboard and bodyboard programs including the Sporting Schools Surfing Australia Super Grom Program and those programs offered by recognised Learn to Surf Schools.

These programs are short term intensive educational experiences and as such do not meet the definition of Surfing as detailed in the Sport and Physical Activity Safe Conduct Guidelines for Specific Sports.

Schools implementing surfing programs as weekly sport and physical activity must comply with the Sport and Physical Activity Safe Conduct Guidelines for Surfboard, Bodyboard, Wave Ski Riding and Stand Up Paddling.

Schools participating in Introductory Learn to Surf Programs including the Sporting Schools Surfing Australia Super Grom Program must:

- Receive appropriate Risk Assessment Planning from the provider which includes the qualifications and experience of the surfing instructors.
- Complete a comprehensive Risk Assessment taking into account the age, ability maturity of the students and details of the proposed activity.
- Notify parents or caregivers of the details of locations, supervision to be provided, activities to be undertaken, cost, pre-requisite qualifications and transport arrangements including intended departure and return times before their written permission is obtained. Reference should be made to the Aquatic Activities Consent note included in the Sport and Physical Activity Safe Conduct Guidelines for Swimming and Water Safety.
- The activity permission note must contain a clause authorising medical aid if it is considered necessary by the supervising teacher. The note should include a section where the parent advises the school of any illness or medical condition that the student suffers from, or any medication the student is currently taking.
- In regard to medical insurance for participants, Principals should refer to the "Requirements for all Sport and Physical Activity" document included in the Sport Safety Guidelines and advise parents accordingly.

Safety

The following safety strategies must be employed:

- A pre-determined emergency action plan has been prepared covering possible emergencies.
- Instruction of students in evacuation procedures and techniques for assisting fellow surfers in difficulty.
- Make regular checks on surf conditions to ensure suitability for the entire group.
- If at a patrolled beach, notify the lifeguard or mobile patrol on arrival and provide details of the session, including student capability and numbers.
- Ensure that all participating students are qualified before taking surfing for sport.
- Ensure students are aware of the defined surfing area before they enter the water.
- Ensure that pealess whistle/air horn signalling equipment is functional and accessible.
- Ensure students are not over exposed to heat/cold - hyperthermia/hypothermia symptoms.
- Instruction of students in flag and whistle signals and the required responses.
- Instruction of students in nature conservation issues and the need to protect marine environments.