Pool Safety Guidelines & Best Practices

This information is a summary of best practices for swimming activities as part of physical education (PE) classes and during district sponsored events such as field trips.

Personal Guidelines

• Shower thoroughly with soap before entering pool.
• Do not swim if you have an upset stomach, diarrhea or open sores.
• Pin up long hair.
• Do not swallow pool water.
• Avoid contact with pool drains.

Swim Testing Protocols

Acknowledgement to Safe-Wise Consulting & the American Red Cross

A shallow water competency test consists of the following:

• Swimmer is placed in a horizontal position on their back by the testing guard.
• Swimmer must then stand up (regain a vertical position).
• Swimmer is then placed in a horizontal position on their front by the testing guard.
• Swimmer must then stand up (regain a vertical position).
• If a person cannot regain a vertical position from either a back or front floating position, they are considered a non-swimmer.

A deep water competency test consists of the following:

• Swim across the shallow end of the pool. If successful, move to the deep end.
• Jump into water that is over the subject’s head and return to the surface.
• Swim one pool length (25 yards) unassisted and without rest. Swimmer must maintain positive body position (legs should not drop past a 45-degree angle) for the entire distance. Start swimmers at the deep end and travel to the shallow end (if they tire, they may be able to stand).
• Tread water for one minute, turn on their back, float briefly, then swim (either on front or back) to the side and exit the pool.
Swimmer Identification

It is prudent to identify swimmers based on their ability to swim/skill level. Different colored swim caps, necklaces or wristbands can be used to identify skill levels. For example:

- Green—deep water competent.
- Yellow—shallow water competent.
- Red—non-swimmer.

Pool Use Restrictions

- Deep water competent swimmers may access all parts of the pool.
- Shallow water competent swimmers must stay in water that is armpit deep or less.
- Swimmers who do not pass the shallow water competency test are considered non-swimmers.
- Swimmers who decline to take the test are considered non-swimmers.
- Non-swimmers must stay in water that is armpit deep or less and require active adult supervision.
- Active supervision means the adult must be in the water within arm’s reach at all times.

Pool Safety Arrangements

If you have control over the pool arrangements:

- Pools should be sectioned off with the use of buoy lines to create deep-water, shallow-water and non-swimmer zones.
- Diving areas should be sectioned-off with buoy lines to control access by deep water competent swimmers.