



# **Water Safety School Procedures Manual**

**October 2021**



## Introduction

Welcome to the Prince William County Public Schools Water Safety School! Thank you for choosing to support this program through your school's participation. The Water Safety School was developed as our solution to an epidemic in our nation: drowning.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, drowning is the second leading cause of death for children under the age of 14 (second only to motor vehicle accidents).

Inadequate access to aquatic instruction and activities is often cited as a reason youth in America do not know how to swim. Our goal is to limit those barriers and provide water safety instruction to the students of Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS).

We are proposing that all second-grade students in your school participate in this program. This program's learning objectives are developmentally appropriate for ages seven to nine, and we believe this is a vital age for mastery of water safety skills. We realize all grades have a tight schedule to cover the required standard of learning objectives, but we believe second grade students will thrive in this program.

The Water Safety School program consists of two phases:

1. Pre-Session Introduction – Provide students and parents with information about the program and a brief introduction to the Aquatics Center. Dates to be announced.
2. Water Safety Instruction – Five 50-minute instructional periods at the Aquatics Center (once per week for five weeks).

Whether students have no swimming experience at all or are a competitive year-round swimmer, this program is designed to fit every student's needs. We will conduct this through a station-based curriculum, with each station having a progressively advanced set of skills for students to master.

To date, we have reached over 10,000 second grade students through one-day and five-day programs. Our goal for the future is to reach as many second-grade students as possible.

Again, thank you for your participation in the Water Safety School Program. We hope you are ready to help prevent drownings in Prince William County!



## Phase 1: Pre-Session Introduction

It is likely that some students and parents will be apprehensive about participation in the Water Safety School. To provide as much information as possible and diminish some of the nervousness, the program will include a pre-session introduction. The introduction will be a parent/teacher information session conducted virtually by Aquatics Center staff.

### Parents

Parent involvement in this program is imperative for its overall success. We will need their support to ensure that students are bringing everything they need to the Aquatics Center each day (swimsuits, towels, goggles, etc.). Providing information directly to the parents will limit the amount of information that is lost via second and third-hand communication.

We would like to present this information to the parents through a virtual information session at least two weeks prior to the start of the program. The Aquatics Center staff's presentation will provide:

- An opportunity to learn about the Aquatics Center and the Water Safety School; and
- A Q & A portion where parents can get additional information

A parent letter is given to parents with all the pertinent information about the program. For parents that do not attend, this letter will be sent home with contact information for the program staff included (should they have any additional questions or concerns). It is **very** important that this letter is provided to the parents several weeks before the start of the program.

While student participation in this program is not mandatory (parents can opt their child out of the program, but it is up to the school to determine what they will do while the other students participate), we highly encourage you to explain its importance to uncertain parents. It is important to note that this program is for the fearful and competitive alike.



## Phase 2: Water Safety Instruction

The water safety instruction portion of the program will consist of five 50-minute instructional periods at the Aquatics Center; these periods will occur once per week over a span of five weeks. The purpose of spreading the instruction over a five-week span is to reduce the impact on classroom instruction. To assist us with staffing instructors for this program and to ensure adherence to social distancing guidelines, one class of second grade students can receive water safety instruction at a time (up to three classes per day). Your school will likely be scheduled to attend more than one day per week to accommodate all second-grade classes.

To assist us in tracking the number of students (and their associated demographics) that participate in this program, we ask that you send us the roster of the students (using the template we have provided) for each class at least two weeks prior to the start of the program.

### Curriculum

This program will utilize the American Red Cross (ARC) Learn-to-Swim curriculum, one of the most widely recognized and cutting-edge programs in the aquatics industry.

Here is the list of skills for each of the six levels:

#### Level 1 – With Support

- Enter and exit water using ramp, steps, or side;
- Fully submerge mouth, nose, and eyes;
- Blow bubbles, three seconds;
- Back float;
- Roll from front to back and back to front;
- Recover from front or back glide to vertical position; and
- Flutter kick on front and back.

#### Level 2 – With Assistance

- Enter water by stepping or jumping in;
- Fully submerge and retrieve object;
- Front and back float, ten seconds;
- Front and back glide, one body length;
- Recover from front or back glide to vertical position; and
- Finning arm action on back.

#### Level 3 - Independently

- Enter water by jumping in;
- Fully submerge and retrieve object, five times;



- Demonstrate rotary breathing;
- Front and back float, 20 seconds;
- Front and back glide, two body lengths;
- Tread water, 30 seconds; and
- Finning arm action on front and back.

#### Level 4

- Headfirst entry from side in sitting and kneeling position;
- Fully submerge and retrieve object while moving toward safety;
- Demonstrate rotary breathing;
- Front and back float, 30 seconds;
- Tread water, 60 seconds;
- Push off in a streamlined position, front and back; and
- Freestyle, 15 yards.

#### Level 5

- Headfirst entry from side in compact and stride position;
- Push off in a streamlined position, front and back, three or more body lengths;
- Feet first surface dive, submerge completely;
- Front and back crawl open turn;
- Tread water, two minutes;
- Freestyle and backstroke, 25 yards; and
- Breaststroke, 15 yards.

#### Level 6

- Shallow angle dive from the side and starting block;
- Freestyle and backstroke flip turns;
- Tread water, five minutes;
- Freestyle and backstroke, 50 yards; and
- Breaststroke, 25 yards.

## Schedule

In general, the overall schedule for the five-day program will break down like this:

#### Day 1:

- Students arrive at the Aquatics Center in their swimsuits and ready to receive instruction;
- Reminder about the special rules of the pool and any additional questions are answered;
- Longfellow's WHALE Tales video: Reach or Throw
- Individual pre-assessment to determine station placement; and



- Water safety instruction for the remainder of the instructional period.

Day 2:

- Longfellow’s WHALE Tales video: Be Cool, Follow the Rules; Think So You Don’t Sink; and
- Water safety instruction for the remainder of the instructional period.

Day 3:

- Longfellow’s WHALE Tales video: Intro to Swim as a Pair; and
- Water safety instruction for the remainder of the instructional period.

Day 4:

- Longfellow’s WHALE Tales video: Don’t Just Pack It, Wear Your Jacket; In Your Yard; and
- Life jacket and water safety day.

Day 5:

- Longfellow’s WHALE Tales video: Too Much Sun is No Fun; Look Before You Leap; and
- Rotations between water basketball, free play and the water slide

The following is a sample schedule of what one-day of participation in the program could look like for your school:

**GROUP ONE**

- 9:25 AM Departs home school.
- 9:55 AM Arrives at Aquatics Center;  
Receives instruction from 10:00 AM to 10:50 AM; and
- 11:00 AM Departs Aquatics Center.
- 11:30 AM Arrives at home school.

**GROUP TWO**

- 10:15 AM Departs home school.
- 10:45 AM Arrives at Aquatics Center;  
Receives instruction from 10:50 AM to 11:40 AM; and



11:50 AM Departs Aquatics Center.

12:20 PM Arrives at home school.

### GROUP THREE

11:05 AM Departs home school.

11:35 AM Arrives at Aquatics Center;  
Receives instruction from 11:40 AM to 12:30 PM; and

12:40 PM Departs Aquatics Center.

1:10 PM Arrives at home school.

This schedule may be tailored to each school depending on their size of groups and distance to the Aquatics Center.

### Health and Safety

Students who display COVID-related symptoms upon arrival or at any time during their visit to the Aquatics Center will be placed in an isolation room. PWCS protocols for a student with COVID-like symptoms will be followed.

All students, PWCS staff, and parent chaperones will be required to wear face coverings at all time in the facility (until they are entering the water). Once on deck, students will remove their face covering and leave it on top of their towel while they are in the water.

### Locker Room Procedures

In an effort to limit the amount of time students spend away from the home school, we ask that schools have their students arrive at the Aquatics Center already in their swimsuits. This eliminates the time students would spend changing after arriving and before the instruction can begin.

During instructional time at the Aquatics Center, school staff or parent volunteers will need to accompany any student to the restroom (should the need arise). Staff members and chaperones will not enter the restroom with the student, rather they will walk them to the door and wait there. This will eliminate the need for Aquatics Center staff to accompany a child which would detract from the water safety instruction.

At the end of the instructional period, one or more of the chaperones will need to accompany the students and an Aquatics Center staff member in the locker rooms to ensure order while they are changing out of their suits. There are individual shower stalls with curtains as well as bathroom



stalls with doors where the students will be required to change. Parents and staff members are **not** permitted behind the curtains with students.

## Supervision

To ensure adequate supervision for the students during their participation in the program, schools are asked to provide at least one instructional staff member (physical education or classroom teacher) who will stay at the Aquatics Center each day with all groups. Please note that the Aquatics Center will not be able to reimburse for a substitute teacher. In addition to these staff members, schools are **required** to provide *at least* one male chaperone and one female chaperone to be present for each of the three groups. We will always have an Aquatics Center staff member in the locker room as well – no adult will ever be in the locker room alone with students. If a group arrives without a male or female chaperone, the respective students **will not** be able to participate that day. Due to space limitations and social distancing guidelines, we cannot allow more than two male and two female staff members or chaperones per group to assist in the locker rooms and proceed to the pool deck. Any additional staff members or volunteers will be required to sit upstairs in the mezzanine area.

All volunteers **must** receive a visitor badge from the home school **before** coming to the Aquatics Center or they will *not* be permitted in the locker rooms or on deck.

Volunteer duties and roles:

- Report to base school to receive a volunteer badge.
- Volunteers and teachers are permitted in the water on the last day of the program **only**.
- Assist with locker room duties.
- Alert staff with any first aid issues.

## Non-Chaperones (Parents) & Siblings

Parents who do not receive a visitor badge from the home school or parents with siblings of students participating in the program will not be permitted in the locker rooms or onto the pool deck; however, they are invited to observe their children from the mezzanine area. Siblings of students participating in the program are not permitted in the water at any time.

Parents who wish to assist their child changing before or after the program in a family changing room **must** check in at the base school and receive a visitor badge. Teachers and/or school staff must receive advance notice from parents of their intention to have their child change in a family changing room. There are **no** exceptions to this rule.

## Transportation

Coordinating transportation to and from the Aquatics Center will be an integral part of the success of this program. The five trips to the Aquatics Center should be treated as a field trip for





planning and funding purposes. The Aquatics Center bookkeeper will schedule all transportation for this program. Please do not have your bookkeeper book any buses. Contact the Aquatics Center if SPED buses are required.

## Discipline

Our goal is to maintain the discipline policies and procedures of each home school. As such, advanced coordination between school and Aquatics Center staff will be necessary to maintain consistency in the enforcement of those policies. Since the Water Safety School program is considered a field trip, schools should apply the respective discipline procedures.

In general, Aquatics Center staff should not be involved in the specific discipline process of each school. If an issue arises during the instructional period, that information will be conveyed to the school staff member that is present with the group for follow up.

If an action by a student is deemed severe enough by Aquatics Center staff to warrant individual exclusion from the remainder of the program, that recommendation will be made to the on-site school staff member.

## Students with Special Needs

Our goal for this program is to create an inclusive environment in which we provide instruction to the greatest number of students possible. However, due to the dangerous nature of aquatic activities, special considerations must be made when determining who can participate in this program and what accommodations can be made to include as many students as possible.

We are happy to invite all students who regularly learn in group settings to participate in the traditional curriculum and activities of the program. Due to staffing limitations, we are not able to provide one-on-one instruction to any students. If a student will require assistance in the water, a staff member from the school will be required to accompany them in the pool.

## Recreational Water Illnesses

Recreational water illnesses are caused by germs and chemicals found in the water we swim in. They can be spread by swallowing or coming in contact with contaminated water in swimming pools and other bodies of water. The risk of spreading RWIs is greatly reduced through the use of chlorine in our pools and our UV disinfection system; however, we still need your help to further prevent the possibility of these illnesses making it into the water! We ask all participants in the program to follow these simple guidelines:

- Do not urinate or defecate in the water
- Do not swallow the water
- Do not enter the water if they have:
  - Had diarrhea (or signs and symptoms of gastroenteritis) within the past two weeks
  - An open wound that is not covered with a waterproof bandage



- Have an upset stomach

Thank you for your assistance in keeping our water clean and free of RWIs.

## Data Collection

Each student will receive a Certificate of Success on the last day of the program.

The purpose of this data collection is two-fold:

1. Easily measure the progress of students throughout the program
2. Provide students with a visual feedback tool to see the progress they have made

## Bathing Suit Policy

We ask that children come to the Aquatics Center in their bathing suit so they can quickly change upon arrival. Students must wear appropriate swim attire to participate in this field trip; please see the images below. Thanks to a generous donation by Keifer Swim Products, we are able to supply bathing suits to students who cannot afford one. Requests (with size) **must** be made in advance of the first day of the program.



## Suggested Items

Here are a few items for the second graders to bring to the Aquatics Center:

- Goggles
- Hair tie or swim cap
- Towel
- Flip Flops
- Plastic grocery bag for wet suit and towel

## Weather Policy

In the event of a two-hour delay or a Code Red due to inclement weather, field trips to the Aquatics Center will be canceled. Unfortunately, we are unable to schedule make-up days for inclement weather cancellations.