



Child Supervision – Pool Alone Policy - Questions and Answers

General Information

Splash Centre Whanganui and Whanganui East Pools are lifeguarded by professionally qualified lifeguards. The ratio of lifeguards to customers is 1:50.

The primary role of a lifeguard is to proactively supervise the pool environment and customers to prevent accidents, incidents, and hazards from occurring. This includes constantly scanning the pool to identify if anyone is trouble, addressing unsafe behaviours, and ensuring children are supervised correctly by caregivers. Their secondary role is to respond to incidents or emergencies to minimise harm to the casualty or others.

Lifeguards are an important safety feature providing supervision for all pool users. But it's parents and caregivers that provide the close personal supervision young children need. Parent and caregiver responsibility for supervising children does not diminish due to the presence of lifeguards.

We are asking you to put down your phones, books, coffees, and conversation and actively supervise your child. Ensuring you have no distractions can mean the difference between life and death. You should be able to see and hear your child and be close enough at all times to provide assistance - should they need it.

Why do I and my child have to wear a wristband?

- This is so our lifeguards and wider team can quickly identify a child's age and that an appropriate caregiver is looking after that child
- Wristbands are also used for large groups, and hydro slide users, this assists our staff to manage ratios appropriately in the pool.

If my child is wearing an orange band, why do I need to be in water with them?

- You need to be within arm's reach, that cannot be attained if you are on the side of the pool (apart from the toddler's pool).
- Supervising adults are also given the equivalent band too, so our staff know you need to be within arm's reach of a child(ren)
- Not being in the water means you could easily be distracted and take your eyes off your child.
- Under 5s are still developing their balance – water may affect this, and they can fall more easily
- In the lazy river, the current may mean a child is unable to stabilise themselves on the bottom of the pool even if they are tall enough.
- Being in the pool with your child is fun and a great experience for your child.

What does actively supervising mean?

- Watching your child at all times and able to provide immediate help
- At a close distance where you and your child can see and hear each other
- For those under 5, its being in the water or within arm's reach in the toddlers.

Actively supervising does not look like the below

- Head down on a mobile





- Being in another pool/space
- Distracted in conversation, or in the toilet/changing room
- Reading a book

My child is a great swimmer – why do I need to actively supervise them?

- Being a good swimmer doesn't take away the other risks within the pool area space such as other children – rough play/risk taking
- The rules apply to everyone and for clarity and consistency there's no exceptions.
- It's awesome that your children are in the water and are confident, however we see a big variety of swimming abilities and we need to have clear rules to keep the pool safe for everyone.

What happens if the rules aren't followed?

- Our team actively educates pool users, but if children are not accompanied by a suitable caregiver, they will be refused entry and/or not allowed in the water.
- Failure to comply with our policy may result in you being asked to leave for the safety of your children and other users.

Why do you have this policy when you have lifeguards?

- Our lifeguards are not babysitters, our staffing ratios do not allow for the close supervision of your under 8-year-old requires.
- Our policies follow PoolSafe accreditation guideline to make sure everyone is safe in a high-risk environment.

My child is in a lesson, why do I have to be present when there is an instructor?

- Our instructors often have multiple children with them at a time, for the most part we don't expect there to be an issue but as a caregiver it is your responsibility to ensure the safety of your child – you know them best and will be able to identify if they are struggling.
- Children often get distracted to and from lessons, it's important that all our pools have the same rules apply as they may hop into other areas before/after their lessons.
- Your child will love to show you what they are achieving along the way, it's a great opportunity to be there for their successes and celebrate with them.

What will happen if my child arrives unaccompanied at the pool?

Unaccompanied children under 8 years old will be refused entry.

Procedure for unaccompanied children

1. If a child under 8 years old is unsupervised in the water or within the premise they will be moved to the reception area, ensuring they have a towel to keep them warm.
2. An attempt to locate the child's parent/caregiver will be made requesting they come and actively supervise the child before the child is allowed to re-enter the pool/facility.
3. If unable to locate the child's parent/caregiver an attempt will be made to contact them using details provided by the child or from within our facility management system.
4. If attempts to locate and contact parents/caregiver is unsuccessful Police should be contacted.

