

Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education
Minister for Mental Health
Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers



Monday, 25 October 2021

SPLASHING BACK INTO SCHOOL SWIMMING LESSONS

The Victorian Government is making sure all school students have the opportunity to catch up on vital swimming and water safety skills, with vouchers for catch-up lessons missed during the pandemic.

Swimming and water safety education has been part of the Victorian Curriculum since 2017, but restrictions have meant many schools have not been able to deliver practical swimming lessons over the past year.

All Government and Catholic primary schools that deliver swimming programs will provide students who missed out on lessons in 2021 with vouchers for lessons at their school's usual facilities using their accrued swimming funding. The vouchers will be available this term – with bookings able to be made up until the end of June 2022.

Schools will liaise with their usual swim school to confirm the eligible students, the number of swimming lessons students can access and when they will be available – and parents will be provided with the voucher to book lessons at the designated swim school for after school, weekends or during school holidays.

When the pandemic began in 2020, the Department of Education worked with Life Saving Victoria to develop classroom-based resources to teach vital water safety, and students have continued to engage with these online resources over the past year to keep building their knowledge of the water while pools were closed.

A new interactive in-class program will also be available to students from this term, designed by Life Saving Victoria to ensure children meet the knowledge component of the Victorian Water Safety Certificate.

The Certificate is currently being updated to align with the National Swimming and Water Safety Framework, setting out the swimming and water safety skills and knowledge that every Victorian student should have by the end of primary school.

Since 2017, the Government has invested more than \$101.5 million to continue swimming and water safety education programs in government, Catholic and specialist schools, and to introduce these programs to government English language schools.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Education James Merlino

"As we reopen our state, we want families to get back out to the pool and the beach throughout summer – and we're investing to make sure every Victorian child has the knowledge and skills they need to stay safe in the water."

"School swimming is always a highlight of the school year – and we don't want any student to miss out on the fun and the vital education that our water safety programs provide."

Quote attributable to Life Saving Victoria Education Group Manager Liz Tesone

"We've proudly worked closely with Victorian Government to develop kids' water safety knowledge during lockdowns so they can make informed and safe decisions around water throughout their lives, but it's now time to get back in the pool to develop their practical swimming skills and fitness."