

Clayton South Primary School

Key lessons:

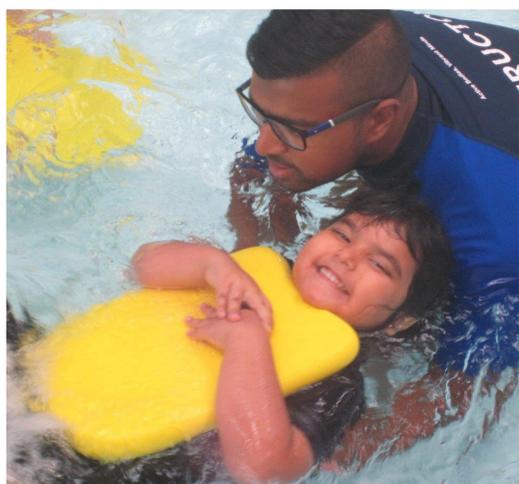
- Delivery of swimming and water safety education in a proudly diverse and multicultural metropolitan area.
- Engaging parents to understand the importance of swimming and water safety education in an Australian context.
- Different swimming and water safety education approaches for different ages and capabilities.

Clayton South Primary School's student population is made up of a multicultural demographic, representative of the diversity of the broader Clayton community, in which only 24.7 per cent of people are Australian born. Student backgrounds range from Chinese, Indian, Malaysian, Indonesian and Sri Lankan, amongst others.



The approach

Clayton South Primary School recognises the importance of teaching new Australians how to be comfortable in the water, as many students come from landlocked countries where learning to swim from an early age is not common. They work closely with their parent community to familiarise them with aquatic environments and the benefits of a school swimming and water safety program. This is done through promotion of programs at parent information evenings and the school newsletter, in the lead up to the program.



Following this, the school works closely with those parents who may still have reservations about their child participating, by inviting them to accompany their child on the bus to the facility and personally assisting their child to get changed in the gender-neutral change room. The school also invites parents to attend their 'Meet a Lifeguard' classroom visit, to familiarise families with the safety elements of Australian beach environments (swimming between the flags, dangers, rip currents and how to signal for help) and further address the reluctance and anxieties of both parents and students to learn to swim.





Year levels

Clayton South Primary School involves all students from Foundation to Year 6 in an intensive swimming program.

In addition to the school swimming program, senior primary school students (Years 3-6), also participate in an Open Water Learning Experience at Carrum Beach, conducted by Life Saving Victoria.



“Approximately 50% of our students have never been to the beach prior to the beach program” and that “parents are sometimes apprehensive of a visit to the beach given their lack of skills and knowledge”.

Sue McSweeney, Clayton South Primary School Principal



Venue

The school conducts their swimming program at the Doug Ellis Pool, Monash University. Instruction is delivered by AUSTSWIM qualified staff.



Timetabling

Eight 45-minute lessons are spread over a two-week period.

Clayton South schedule their Open Water Learning Experience in Term 4, so that students gain the necessary skills to be safe in preparation for the summer holiday period when many students will be around beaches and water.



Assessment

Prior to their two-week intensive program, and to maximise time at the pool, the school issues a parent survey to assist with grouping the students into ability levels. This initiative increases student time spent in the water, rather than using valuable swimming time conducting a pre-program ‘assessment’ at the pool.

The Doug Ellis Pool uses the Victorian Water Safety Certificate (VWSC) and structures their lessons around the competencies of the certificate.

At the conclusion of the swimming program, students who successfully meet the VWSC capabilities are awarded with the certificate, while those students who did not achieve the capabilities receive a school swimming completion certificate at conclusion of the program.

This alternate certificate outlines the abilities which have been met, highlights additional skills required for further development and emphasises the importance of continuing ongoing swimming practice.