



**OPEN WATER SAFETY PLAN
FOR SCHOOLS USING THE
CAMP FACILITIES**

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Introduction	2
1. Objectives and Scope of Normal Operating Procedure	2
2. Potential areas of risk	2
2.1. Hazards	2
3. Procedures For Staff	3
3.1. Qualifications of Teaching & Supervisory Personnel	3
5.1 Supervision	3
5.2 Users' Behaviour	3
5.3 Swimmer/Supervisor Ratios	4
6 EQUIPMENT	4
6.1 Safety Equipment	4
7 Reporting accidents and incidents	5
8 First Aid Supplies and Training	5
9 Emergency Preparedness	5
9.1 Emergency Action Plan (EAP)	5
9.2 Lifesaving	6
9.3 Action to be taken in the event lightning or approaching storm	6
11 Health condition	7
12 General Rules & Behaviour	7

INTRODUCTION

This document is designed to ensure the safety of staff, visitors and clients when around or near open water areas. It identifies what needs to be done and by whom to establish a safe working routine and environment.

FREQUENCY OF REVIEW

The document will be reviewed and amended as appropriate both annually and in the event of a serious incident.

1. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF NORMAL OPERATING PROCEDURE

This document will identify the processes designed to control water safety in terms of:

- Safety
- Supervision
- Teaching
- Learner and staff activities in the water

2. POTENTIAL AREAS OF RISK

Inherent in every open water environment are potential areas of risk. In recognising the risks, strategies can be put in place to minimise their impact.

2.1. HAZARDS

There are a number of hazards that make any water-based activities potentially dangerous (a) people hazards, (b) activity hazards and (c) physical hazards.

3.1.1 People Hazards

- Persons under the influence of alcohol or drugs, including for medical use
- Persons with poor health and/or with medical conditions
- Weak or non-swimmers, or those that swim but get out of their depth
- Young or inexperienced swimmers
- Persons exhibiting unruly behaviour
- Swimmers using swimming aids
- Persons with communication difficulties
- Persons gaining access to the water when it is not in use or not supervised.
- Suspicious or unknown persons
- Persons entering the open water area inappropriately, for example, by diving or jumping into the water
- Absence of, or inadequate response of staff in an emergency.

3.1.2 Activity Hazards

- Diving or jumping into the water
- Running, pushing or fighting (in play or otherwise) on the waterside
- Tag games or 'horseplay' in the water
- Misuse of facilities or equipment

3.1.3 Physical Hazards

- Clarity of the water
- Slippery surfaces
- Depth of water
- Glare and light reflections
- Emergency rescue aids

- Water temperature
- Surrounding temperature
- Surrounding environment (trees, bush, animals etc)

3. PROCEDURES FOR STAFF OF VISITING SCHOOLS

The following procedures help to maximise user safety.

3.1. QUALIFICATIONS OF TEACHING & SUPERVISORY PERSONNEL

3.1.1. Teaching Staff

It is essential that during water-based activities a teacher who is a competent swimmer is present at all times. The lead teacher(s) will assume overall responsibility for the safety and well-being of the learners under the duty of care, in 'loco parentis'. Competent High Africa guides will assist staff with following safe water procedures.

4.1.2 Qualified swimming instructors

High Africa's staff are qualified to work with clients in open water activities and are qualified NRSI Water Safety and Drowning Prevention Instructors.

5.1 SUPERVISION

At least two members of the accompanying teachers should be present before learners are admitted to the open water area.

To ensure learner and staff safety the following must be adhered to:

- The maximum teacher/learner ratio must not be exceeded
- High Africa staff members will supervise learners in the water during activities. The number of staff members in the water will be determined by the specific needs of the learners present in the activity. Prior to the activity teachers will be requested to identify any learners present who may have specific needs that could impact on their safety in the water.
- The swimming group must be counted by the accompanying teachers before, during and after the activity.
- The last member of staff, preferably the lead teacher(s) together with a member of High Africa Staff, will complete a final scan of the area to ensure that all learners have left the area and returned to base.
- Teachers must remind all learners after each activity that they are not be allowed to go back into the area/river unattended.

5.2 LEARNERS' BEHAVIOUR

High Africa staff will, during the safety talk at the beginning of camp instruct learners of the following. Accompanying teachers are requested to assist High Africa staff to ensure that these behaviours are adhered to:

- No learner may enter the water unless specifically directed to do so.
- Where appropriate, given the specific needs of the class, learners should be aware of the emergency procedures to clear the area. This should be practiced prior to open water activities.
- Learners should be encouraged to use the toilet if appropriate before they enter the water.
- Long and shoulder length hair should be tied back.
- Flippers and snorkels should not be used unless when supervised appropriately.
- Shouting should be discouraged unless in an emergency.
- No acrobatics in the river
- Users must not be allowed to push or pull others into the water

- Bombing is not allowed.

5.3 SWIMMER/SUPERVISOR RATIOS

The following swimmer/supervisor ratios are designed with safety considerations rather than teaching requirements in mind. Accompanying teachers are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of learner competency and base the ratio accordingly. A qualified supervisor may be a teacher or a competent High Africa staff member (NSRI Water Safety and/or Drowning Prevention Instructor).

5.3.1 Learners Under 7 Years

A ratio of one qualified supervisor for every twelve learners (1:12) under 7 years old must not be exceeded irrespective of swimming ability.

5.3.2 Beginner/Non-Swimmers

A ratio of one qualified supervisor for every twelve swimmers (1:12) who are unable to swim 10 metres unaided on their front and on their back, should not be exceeded.

5.3.3 Special Needs Persons/Learners

A ratio of one qualified supervisor for every one – eight persons/learners (1:1 – 8) depending on disability should not be exceeded. An assessment of need should take place before swimming begins and each situation should be considered individually. Special measures are put in place for each child.

In an emergency, two whistles are blown at which point the child's carer and swimming teacher will assist the child out of the water. The child will use their frame/wheelchair and will be escorted by a staff member to a safe area. A foil blanket will be provided.

5.3.4 Improving Swimmers

A ratio of one qualified supervisor for every twenty swimmers (1:20) of a similar ability to each other who can swim at least 10 metres competently, unaided on their front and on their back should not be exceeded. It is recommended that learners are not out of their depth.

5.3.5 Mixed Ability Groups

A ratio of one qualified supervisor for every twenty swimmers (1:20) with a range of abilities (from improving to competent) should not be exceeded, where the least able and least competent are working within their depth. Swimmers' techniques, stamina and deep-water experience should be considered.

5.3.6 Competent Swimmers

A ratio of one qualified supervisor for every twenty swimmers (1:20) who can swim at least 25 metres competently and unaided on their front and on their back and who can tread water for 2 minutes, should not be exceeded.

6 EQUIPMENT

All safety equipment used for open water swimming is checked regularly by High Africa Facilitators to ensure that it is fit for purpose. Should a teacher notice equipment which is damaged they must bring it to the immediate attention of the High Africa Facilitators.

6.1 SAFETY EQUIPMENT

Safety equipment (such as life vests, ropes etc) is checked regularly for defects so that it can be used in emergencies. All equipment has an allocated position so it is available when required. Once used it should be put back in its allocated position as soon as possible after use.

7 REPORTING ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS

Accident and incident reporting must be in accordance with High Africa Camp's Guidelines, the visiting school's policies and all relevant legislation.

8 FIRST AID SUPPLIES AND TRAINING

High Africa has members of staff that are first aid qualified and will be available on-site during open water activities. Accompanying staff must include one qualified first aider who has access to learners medical information and needs.

9 EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

9.1 EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN (EAP)

A key role for staff (High Africa Staff, teachers and facilitators) is to remove or substantially reduce the chances of learners getting into difficulties whilst in the water. This requires all staff present to use their training and experience to avoid an incident happening by early intervention in any given situation.

Preventing the situation is the prime objective, but when an incident does occur it is important that all staff know what action is to be taken. This document outlines those procedures. Staff accompanying learners to High Africa camp must take note of the following:

9.1.1 Emergency Signals

An immediate response is expected to the following signals

One whistle = Learners and staff in water stand still (or swim to side and remain still) and listen to instructions

Two whistles = Learners and staff clear the water at their nearest exit and listen (danger)

Designated staff must have

- Emergency Numbers available on their mobile phones
- carry a whistle at all times.
- ensure a spare whistle is always available
- assess the situation, clear the area and send for help if necessary
- contact the Emergency Service(s)

9.1.2 Action to be taken in the event of Swimmer in difficulty

This action must be carried out immediately if it has been observed that a swimmer is in difficulty.

1. Alert staff verbally of an incident occurring. This warns staff immediately that there is a problem, and you may need assistance.
2. Carry out the rescue procedures as per your training, getting the learner or staff member out of the water as quickly and as safely as possible.
3. Carry out basic First Aid procedures until the medical team arrives and assess whether emergency services is required.
4. If an ambulance is required High Africa will assist in procuring immediate emergency services on site.
5. As soon as incident is over, complete appropriate report forms to be completed as required.

9.1.3 Action by school staff and other facilitators

This procedure should be carried out immediately after the alarm has been raised.

1. Assess the situation. If the facilitator in the water requires immediate assistance, this takes priority.
2. Clear the water and move learners to a designated safe area.
3. Assess whether or not an ambulance is required and designate someone to call emergency services.

4. Assist in giving first aid as per training, assess again if an ambulance is required and summon as above. If not required, give further assistance, and then continue to help supervise other learners on the waterside until the incident is over.
5. When the incident is over, inform the school management and High Africa management.

9.2 LIFE SAVING

9.2.1 Recovering a casualty from the water

1. On sighting a person in difficulty, the teacher/competent swimmer should attempt to recover the casualty by methods other than direct water entry
2. Where the above is impossible, e.g., an unconscious casualty, the teacher/competent swimmer should alert the accompanying teacher/competent swimmer and then enter the water. The accompanying teacher/competent swimmer will take responsibility for clearing all other learners from the area.
3. When the casualty is reached the teacher/competent swimmer should employ an approved tow/carry to move the person to a safe point of exit from the water.

9.2.2 Resuscitating the casualty

1. If the casualty is in the water and does not appear to be breathing, the teacher/competent swimmer will alert the accompanying teacher/competent swimmer, blow the whistle and enter the water
2. The casualty should be towed to an appropriate landing point. The teacher/competent swimmer must have assistance to land the casualty. First Aid trained staff, where possible, will do the following:
 - Airway, Breathing and Circulation should be checked
 - If breathing – place in the recovery position and remain with the casualty. Observe for signs of deterioration
 - If not breathing – carry out EAV (Expired Air Ventilation).
 - If no pulse – carry out CPR (Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation) until professional help arrives
 - In the unlikely event of a teacher being unaccompanied, (s)he must phone for assistance at this stage

9.2.3 Communication with ambulance service/ the office

The accompanying teacher/competent swimmer will be responsible for making sure the designated member of the office is informed and the ambulance service contacted. The ambulance service will be directed to the closest entrance and the gate/access opened by the accompanying teacher/competent swimmer/High Africa Staff Member.

9.3 ACTION TO BE TAKEN IN THE EVENT LIGHTNING OR APPROACHING STORM

The following action is to be taken by all staff:

1. Clear the water immediately.
3. Proceed into designated safe area and stay there until all learners/staff are out.
4. Make way out into external safe area and carry out a head count.
5. Call for assistance if required

9.4 LACK OF WATER CLARITY

The activity should not continue if one or more of the following occur

- the water is stagnant
- excessive plant life potentially restricts movement
- faeces in the water

11 HEALTH CONDITION

Teaching staff should be aware of any medical problems relevant to learners taking part in open water activities, e.g., asthma (inhaler at with staff member)/epilepsy etc. This must be brought to the attention of the High Africa Facilitators before the learner takes part in any open water activities.

12 GENERAL RULES & BEHAVIOUR

If helpers are being used, they must be made fully aware of what is expected of them and are able to achieve the tasks set

Supervision – an accompanying teacher must always to be nearby

Learners are to be made aware of dangers (**hazards**)

Learners are to be told of possible injuries (**risks**)

Learners are to be made aware of water code of conduct (**controls**)

The numbers of swimmers and of non-swimmers have to be counted separately at the start, at regular intervals and as well as at the end of each lesson

Running waterside is strictly forbidden as is boisterous behaviour

Pushing-in, ducking, jumping in backwards, excessive splashing to cause interference etc. are all strictly forbidden

All non-swimmers must remain where instructed