

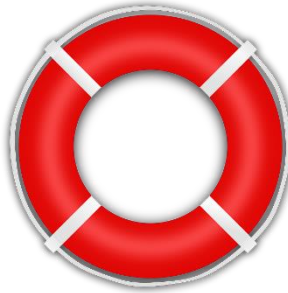
## Focus on Health

### Water Safety Information for Parents

F.S. 1003.225

St. Johns County School District, Health Services Dept.

School Year 2022-23



#### Water Safety for Kids and Teens

**Source:** Florida Department of Children and Families; <https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/child-welfare/summer-safety-tips/water-safety-for-kids.shtml>; and Healthy Children.Org <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-play/Pages/Water-Safety-for-Older-Children.aspx>

Teaching water safety and how to swim is a key part of reducing child drownings. In Florida, drownings are one of the leading causes of child deaths.

**The following information is important to teach to your teen or younger child:**

- **Always supervise; it saves lives.** Remember that knowing how to swim will not "drown proof" a child of any age. Even among older children and teens, most childhood drownings happen when there is no adult supervision. Make sure your teen knows to swim only where there are lifeguards on duty and to never swim alone. Urge them to use the buddy system, even when swimming with large groups of friends. It is important for young children to know that the fun can't begin until a "Water Watcher" is present. Once an adult is watching, the swimming fun can start. Make sure your child knows never to go near the water alone and always has a swimming partner.
- **Wear a lifejacket.** Like adults, adolescents should always wear life jackets whenever they are on boats, jet skis and other watercraft. Younger children should also wear life jackets including while in a floating device or on a dock. If a child cannot swim or is an inexperienced swimmer, lifejackets should be utilized at all times while in the water. Never rely on inflatable tubes and rafts as life preservers.
- **Learn how to swim.** Swimming lessons have been shown to reduce drowning incidents, which is why the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children ages 4 and older learn to swim. Even if your child has taken swimming lessons, never assume that their risk of drowning has subsided. Always be cautious of pool floats or toys that could interfere with your child in the water. If your family hasn't been able to learn basic swim and water survival skills yet, it's not too late! Many organizations offer lessons specifically geared toward teens and adults.
- **If there is an emergency, call 9-1-1 or find an adult.** Although a child may have had swimming lessons or is utilizing a life jacket, sometimes water accidents do happen. Make sure your child knows to call for help or find an adult when trouble occurs. When watching a child swim, always make sure to have a cell phone nearby in order to call 911 if a dangerous situation arises. Stress the importance of staying away from pool drains and suction fittings in order to have a fun, safe swimming experience.

To find swimming lessons in your area. Contact your local YMCA, city facilities, or swim school.

**Ponte Vedra YMCA**  
170 Landrum Lane  
Ponte Vedra Beach,  
FL 32082

**St. Augustine YMCA**  
500 Pope Road  
St. Augustine, FL  
32080

**Solomon Calhoun  
Community Center  
Pool**  
1300 Duval Street  
St. Augustine, FL  
32084

**Aquafin Swim School**  
130 Center Place Way  
St. Augustine, FL  
32095