

Swim@Barker FAQs

Learning to Swim

How long will it take for my child to learn how to swim?

Learning to swim well is a long-term commitment. Children learn skills at different rates, and need to continue swimming regularly to maintain proficiency. The key to learning to swim is regular attendance and persistence.

When is my child water safe?

Swim Australia recommends children should be able to swim 400m with good style before they can swim well. In conjunction, children should acquire valuable essential water safety skills such as back floating and basic rescue techniques. These attributes build a sound foundation for children to be able to enjoy water-based activities such as competitive swimming, lifesaving, surfing, water polo, and sailing.

Will my child get colds and flu if they swim through winter?

It's not uncommon for families to ponder taking a break from swimming lessons during winter. However, after 3-6 months of not swimming, children often need to re-learn skills when they return. While the air outside will be cooler, our heated and well-maintained pools provide a safe, warm and comfortable environment for exercise and learning. Being cold in itself will not cause a cold or flu, however we recommend children dress appropriately before they leave the centre after their lesson.

Are the instructors accredited?

Our instructors hold nationally recognised certifications in the teaching of swimming and water safety through Swim Australia and / or Austswim. Our coaches are licensed under the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme prescribed by the Australian Sports Commission. All staff are qualified in a minimum of CPR, and all have Working With Children Checks (WWCC), and Police Checks.

What can I do outside of lessons to help my child progress?

Spending time in the water away from lessons is not only beneficial, it's also a great fun family activity! Our aim during lessons is to reinforce correct technique in a purpose-built learning environment. Swimming outside of lessons provides an opportunity to reinforce these skills, but also to explore and experiment. Exposing children to swimming experiences away from our pool can help children understand that skills they learn at Barker can be transferred to other aquatic experiences. Of course, make sure children around water are always appropriately supervised by an attentive, responsible adult.

What should I do if my child isn't progressing?

Learning to swim well takes time and there are times where progress may seem to stagnate. This is normal! Some skills are particularly complex to master, and require repetition and coordination. We've often found holiday intensive programs (or as we call them, HILTS) an effective way to give plateauing students a boost. However if you have concerns regarding your child's progress we invite you to speak with our Deck Supervisors, who monitor progress and ensure the smooth operation of our programs.

How long will my child spend in each level?

There is no set length of time that children should spend in each level, as our program is skills-based. While repetition is an important component of skill acquisition, our instructors are also trained in student-engagement to keep your children interested and motivated. However, if you have concerns about the length of time your child has been in a certain level we invite you to please speak with our Deck Supervisors, who monitor progress and ensure the smooth operation of our programs.

What age should my child start lessons?

It's never too early or late to learn to swim! We welcome all ages and abilities, however starting when young provides a range of benefits. Research indicates early-age swimming lessons assists physical and psychological development including strength, mobility, self-esteem, and social skills acquisition. Our infant classes are designed to aid in water awareness, water safety, water confidence, and social interaction. Swim@Barker enrolls children from 6 months of age into our Jellyfish classes, which are also a great bonding activity for parents or guardians with their children.

Do you use floatation aids?

While floatation aids such as arm bands or bubbles can provide a child with greater independence in the water, we find that they are not conducive to teaching swimming. They tend to place the child into a more vertical body position, whereas the most efficient swimming posture is a horizontal, streamlined position. A good streamline is the foundation of all other important swimming skills.

Why do classes run through school holidays?

Regular attendance at lessons is key to maintaining progress and learning new skills. We've found establishing a regular, consistent routine and swimming year-round the best way to foster a successful learning environment. Complex skill acquisition requires repetition and appropriate intervention from Instructors to enable refinement on subsequent attempts. Attending weekly lessons all year round gives children the best opportunity to reinforce good technique, and learn new skills.

Why does my child have to wear a swimming cap?

Wearing caps help keep a child's hair away from their face which is often a distraction and impediment to effective learning, even for children with shorter hair. Additionally, wearing caps makes a significant difference to the load on our filtration system, helping us keep our pool water quality pristine.

What kind of nappy should my infant wear in parent and child classes?

All children in our infants classes or not fully toilet-trained must wear a disposable swim nappy. Additionally, we strongly recommend the wearing of a durable, re-usable firmly-fitting "Happy Nappy" as they are the most effective way of preventing accidents, and hence keeping our water quality at the high standard our customers are used to.

Swim@Barker FAQs

General Enquiries

Do lessons continue during school holidays?

As we operate a perpetual program, normal lessons continue during school holidays. The only exception is the December/January period which will be advertised by the Centre well in advance. Swim@Barker is also closed on public holidays. During school holidays we also run holiday intensive classes (or as we call them, HILTS) in addition to normal programming. In our experience these courses are particularly beneficial for children who are new to a level or close to progressing.

What is a Barker only time slot?

As Swim@Barker is owned and operated by Barker College, there are time slots that are only available for current Barker students. This allows for these students to align their schooling and swimming. As such, all Monday-Friday learn to swim classes up to and including Shark that commence between 3:00pm and 4:00pm are designated "Barker Only Timeslots".

Do you accept Active Kids vouchers?

Yes, we do. Just forward the complete Active Kids Voucher to our Reception staff via email: swim@barker.nsw.edu.au. To obtain your voucher you will need to apply through Service NSW <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au>. Please note that we are only able to accept one Active Kids Voucher per student per calendar year towards weekly lessons.

What do I do if my child is upset?

It can take young children time to get used to the routine of swimming lessons. For a variety of reasons, swimming lessons can cause children to become upset. This is perfectly natural as children adjust to a new environment and / or routine. In most cases children will settle within a few weeks, but on occasion it may take longer. Our staff are experienced in guiding children through this process; however we encourage you to communicate with our Deck Supervisor to provide us with any important details that may assist us.

What do I need to bring to the first lesson?

We recommend families arrive early for their first lesson to give you plenty of time to prepare and get settled. Classes start promptly at the designated time, and the late arrival of students can be disruptive. When you arrive speak with our Receptionists or our Deck Supervisor to confirm the location and Instructor for your lesson. Please ensure your child is wearing appropriate swimwear, the correct coloured swim cap, has well-fitting goggles, and has been to the toilet. Remember to bring towel and clothes to dress following the lesson. Many children are also hungry after a swimming lessons so it's a good idea to bring some healthy snacks too! Squad swimmers may require additional equipment however this will be advised at the time of booking.

Am I able to transfer makeups between my children?

In most cases the best child to use a makeup lesson is the same child who has missed a lesson. However, there may be times when families would like to utilise a makeup for a different child. Make-up voucher bookings can only be made for students currently booked into ongoing weekly lessons. Please speak with our reception staff if you have any queries regarding Make-ups.

Do I need to remain at the Centre during lessons?

It is a requirement that parents or guardians remain on site during their child's class for all learn to swim levels up to and including Shark, excluding children who attend OSH Club after their class. Once a child's lesson has concluded, a parent or guardian must be available to receive their child immediately. As our staff are focussed on teaching the following group, uncollected children will be unsupervised, which is an acceptable risk in an aquatic centre. Additionally, many children enjoy having their parents watch as they master new skills and we can also communicate with you regarding progress or any issues that may occur during the lesson.

Using Our Customer Online Portal

What is the Customer Online Portal and how do I sign up to use it?

Our Customer Online Portal gives our customers access to book make ups and change existing bookings without having to wait in lines to speak to our staff at the Centre, or on the phone. All customers are eligible to use our portal. As part of the enrolment process you will be emailed a link to our portal, where you can create an account to access the system.

How do I sign up for direct debit?

Direct debit is our preferred method of payment. To set up a direct debit payment please login to the Customer Portal. The Billing section allows you to set up direct debit from a bank account or credit card. Once you have entered your details and they have been confirmed, you will receive a confirmation email. Our system also gives you the capability to switch your payments away from direct debit which will require you to manually pay by card or cash.

How do I cancel my child's class if we can't attend this week?

Prior to your child's lesson, simply login to the customer portal, click on the date your child will be absent and select "Unable to Attend". This will mark your child as absent, and issue you a Make-Up Voucher, which you have 3 months to use from the date of issue.

How do I book a make-up?

Login to the portal to access the dashboard where you can click on the 'Voucher' tab to check that you have a Make-Up Voucher. Click on the "Book Now" button and select the child you wish to book a make-up for. Note that you will only have the option to book a make-up for each child who has been allocated a voucher. Please contact our staff if you wish to have a Make-Up Voucher re-allocated to a different child. Select your child, and the system will display all available sessions for the upcoming fortnight. Select the session you wish to book and confirm.

How do I change my child/ren's day and time?

Login to the portal, select a student, and click through to Upcoming Bookings. At this point you can select Change Day and Time. The system will then display the options available to you. Select your new class and confirm. If your child is enrolled into multiple classes (e.g. swims 2x per week), you will need to select which class to change and which to keep.

How do I check my child/ren's progression?

Login to the portal, click on the 'Progress' tab, click on the child you wish you view the progress for. Scroll until you find your child's level, it should be highlighted with a blue background. Achievements that have achieved will have a tick next to them. Achievements still to be attained will have a grey background.

New Covid-19 Procedures

How do I access the Aquatic Centre?

There is no parent/guardian parking available anywhere on the school grounds. Parents must park off-site and access the College as follows:

- Monday to Friday - via the pedestrian gate at the north-western corner of the Aquatic Centre on College Crescent.
- Saturdays – via the pedestrian gate adjacent to the Aquatics vehicular gate at the south-western corner of the David Gamson Building on College Crescent.

Please enter the complex via either of the north-eastern (stroller-friendly ramp) or south-eastern doors (stairs).

Do we need to Register at the Centre on every visit?

Yes. If your mobile device supports this feature, simply access your camera on your mobile device and scan the QR Code displayed at each entry to the Aquatic Centre. This will bring up a link to a registration site, where you submit your contact details. Older phones may not allow access to the registration site. Manual registration is available at Reception.

What is the after-school pick-up process for Barker students?

Pre-K students are to be collected by parents/guardians and brought up to the Aquatic Centre for their lessons:

- Students enrolled in 3:00pm classes need to be collected on foot at the Clarke Road gate.
- Students enrolled in 3:30pm classes need to be collected from the Car Line under the Kurrajong Building

All Kindergarten to Year 6 Barker students who are enrolled in LTS classes commencing between 3:00pm and 4:00pm on school days will be collected by Aquatic Staff from Prep/Junior Schools.

Parents should endeavour to be present at the Aquatic Centre at least 15 minutes prior to the start time of their children's lessons.

Are there restrictions on the number of people allowed in the Centre at any time?

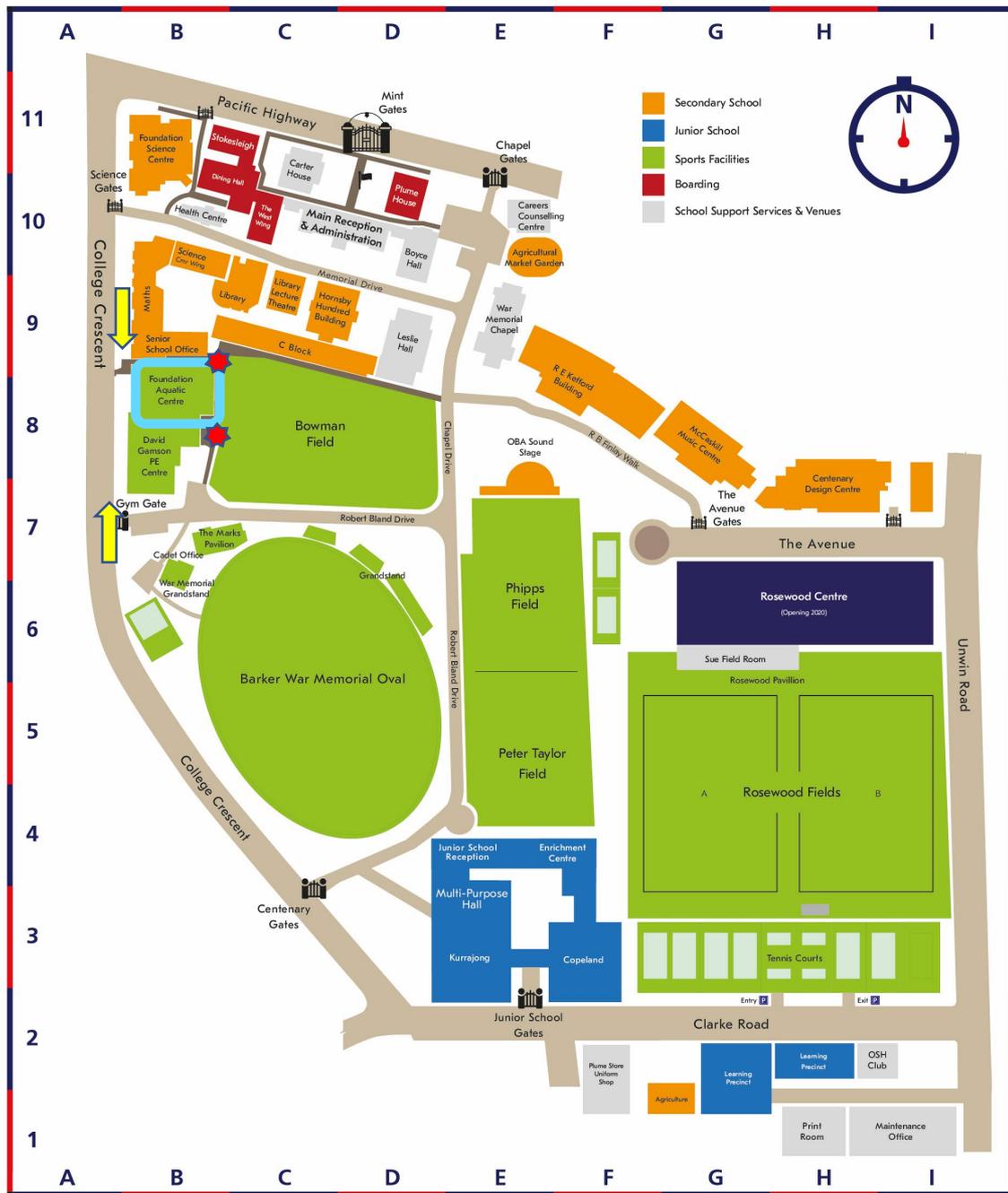
Yes. Only one parent per family is allowed in the Centre. We have also reduced the number of classes per timeslot, as well as the maximum number of persons allowed in each change room (9), to comply with current Covid-19 restrictions.

My child seems unwell. What do we do?

Any parent or student that has symptoms including (but not limited to) fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue and shortness of breath **must** not attend the Aquatic Centre. Staff have been briefed and will be not allowing swimmers showing these symptoms to get in the water.

If you or your child are unwell, simply login to the customer portal, click on the date your child will be absent and select "Unable to Attend". If this is completed prior to your child's lesson, this will mark your child as absent, and issue you a Make-Up Voucher. Vouchers have a 3-month expiry from the date of issue.

How to find us



Entry via the pedestrian gates on College Crescent marked on the map



= Barker Foundation Aquatic Centre



= Pedestrian Gates (only access point into College)



= Access doors to Aquatic Centre