



# Wickaninnish Community School:

## Water Safety, Swimming Lessons, Surf Instruction

My name is Drew Ryan and I am the Principal of Wickaninnish Community School which serves the surrounding areas of the District of Tofino, Opitsaht, Ty-Histanis, and Esowista. Having lived and taught on the West Coast for 20 years I feel privileged to have been able to help and work with local knowledge holders to integrate the Nuuchahnulth beliefs of Isaak (respect) and Hishuk ish tsawalk (everything is one) into my teaching practice and now into an entire school. Our school mission of learning in and through our local environment embeds these beliefs which would not be possible without the generous support of local businesses and grantors.

Through these contributions our school community (all 253 learners) have been able to participate in yearly water safety programming as well as surf and swim lessons. As West Coasters who live, play, and often work in and on the ocean, it is pivotal that our children learn how to be safe while participating in water-based activities. As well, through developing a strong connection to our local waters, students become passionate ambassadors for our ecosystems while developing knowledge and skills around health living. Below is an overview of some of the knowledge and skills students acquire through these programs and some pictures of the students participating in these activities.

### **Kindergarten / Gr.1**

**\* All the activities that students participate in give them opportunities to develop confidence, leadership and social-emotional and physical wellness.**

Awareness of land and ocean hazards

Self-rescue games: hypothermia – H.E.L.P. and Huddle, lifejacket, communication with adult, buddy system, selfcare in cold water, knowledge

Ladder Approach: Talk, Throw Rescue

Rescue of others: Checking Hazards, Use of Assist, Safe Entry, Safe Approach, Low Risk Rescue, Safe Removal

Fitness: run, safe entry, shallow water swim or walk with lifejacket, run

### **Gr.2 / Gr.3**

Awareness of land and ocean hazards

Self-rescue games: hypothermia, lifejacket, communication with adult, buddy system knowledge

Ladder Approach: Talk, Throw Rescue

Rescue of others: Checking Hazards, Use of Assist, Safe Entry, Safe Approach, Low Risk Rescue, Safe Removal, Follow Up – Asking Good Questions

Fitness: run, safe entry, shallow water swim or walk with lifejacket, run

## **Gr.4 / Gr.5**

Components of Bronze Star Lifesaving ([www.lifesaving .bc.ca/level/bronze-star](http://www.lifesaving.bc.ca/level/bronze-star))

Awareness of land and ocean hazards

Self-rescue games: hypothermia, lifejacket, communication with adult, buddy system knowledge

Ladder Approach: Talk, Throw, Reach, Wade Rescues

Rescue of others: Checking Hazards, Choosing the best Assist, Safe Entry, Safe Approach, Low and Intermediate Risk Rescue, Safe Removal, Follow Up – Asking Good Questions and calling 911 from the beach, recovery position

Fitness: run, safe entry, shallow water swim or walk with lifejacket, run with a weight

## **Gr.6 / Gr.7**

Components of Bronze Star Lifesaving ([www.lifesaving .bc.ca/level/bronze-star](http://www.lifesaving.bc.ca/level/bronze-star))

Awareness of land and ocean hazards

Self -Rescue games: hypothermia, lifejacket, communication with adult, buddy system knowledge

Ladder Approach: Talk, Throw, Reach, Wade, Swim, Tow, Carry (assist) Rescues

Rescue of others: Checking Hazards, Choosing the best Assist, Safe Entry, Safe Approach (Ready Position), Low and Intermediate Risk Rescue, Safe Removal, Follow Up – Asking Good Questions and calling 911 from the beach, recovery position

Fitness (longer distances): run, safe entry, shallow water swim or walk with lifejacket, run with a weight

## **Swimming**

Lesson are structured on the Red Cross Learn to Swim Programs and Lifesaving Society Courses. Classes are based on progressive learning (basic water safety and skills in a playful direction for the younger students, and larger skills and techniques for swimming with elements of lifesaving for the older students).

## **Surfing**

Surfing is more than just an athletic pursuit. Surfing is about meeting and overcoming challenges. It is about observing, experiencing and learning from the natural environment and forming a sense of stewardship. It is about persistence, dedication and strength of character. It is about self-discovery, leadership, and realizing one's potential. When students decide to pursue this life changing practice they are rewarded by meeting and overcoming challenges, developing adaptability, courage, resilience, responsibility, and physical well-being (Clarke, 2014).

