Swim School Standards

Have you established specific Teaching Standards for your swim school that address safety issues in the following areas?

- Are manageable class sizes maintained? (specific ratios have been previously suggested)

- Are classes grouped or graded according to similar skills? (avoiding beginners being grouped with advanced swimmers)

- Have you established maximum Teacher distances from Children, for example, "within an arms' length for beginner levels or non swimmers"?

- Do you have an established procedure for entries & exists of your pool? (safest possible, supervised, railing provided)

- Do you use a safety oriented class organisation that:

uses strategies to avoid back turning by the Teacher and keeps the class within view?

minimizes how far the Teacher gets from young Children?

maintains movement and activity?

Are all staff and pool users aware of proper equipment use, placement and storage?

For example, "Are platforms moved into other teaching areas at the end of a class?" Other Teachers may be unaware of this change of location so the risk of impact by their Students is increased.

Staff training should educate Teachers about the safety related Teaching Standards suggested
above.

Teachers should include safety related skills in each class, along with familiarization, mobility, swimming skills or stroke development skills for more advanced swimmers.

Teachers should emphasis that water safety skills are not only practiced during "safety weeks" or periodic safety themes but are a regular part of the Child's water experience in every lesson.

Some of the rescue skills that can be practiced, as ability and development allow might include:

- turn around swims of various types where children practice reorienting back to the wall

- climbing out, if possible

- floatation – back floating, rolling from front to back

- sculling, paddling or treading water

- swimming without goggles for a few minutes each class. Many swimmers who use goggles can become dependent on them and turn into virtual non swimmers if they are without them. The ideal would be that while swimmers may use their goggles for comfort and orientation, they know they can swim without them as well. The best way to achieve this is a little practice each day

- exposure to "rough water" – Water is not always as calm as the pool. As a swimmer's skill increases, it could be beneficial to expose them to a different scenario in the pool, perhaps by making some waves with kickboards as they swim, or involving it in a game. The intention would be for a subtle experience, not to surprise, frighten the Child, or extend them beyond their abilities. Kept within reason, this could supply valuable experience that would help prepare the swimmer and help delay the onset of panic if they find themselves in more turbulent water than they are used to

- exposure to Cooler water – Just as with the rough water, described above, water is often cooler than in the heated learn to swim pool. A gradual and gentle exposure to cooler water can help prepare the Child for that experience. For locations that have a bigger or cooler pool, this may be as simple as making a supervised exploration into that pool, to try it out

- exposure to Rescue scenarios – What would they do if their friend was in trouble? Ask them. Role play. Many Children's tendency will be to help their friend and attempt a rescue. While this is admirable in its intention, it will most likely end up in a multiple drowning if they try to swim out to their friend. Correct rescue techniques can be practiced, but it should be encouraged that their primary response be to get help/get an adult/call 000

- the Child being exposed to swimming with their clothes on? Most Children who fall in unexpectedly are not prepared to enter the water. Organise occasional lessons where Children wear clothes and shoes. Less experience learners may commence with just a T-Shirt and progress with experience to long pants, long shirt and shoes over a number of lessons

- the Child simulating a fall, or unexpected entry (closely supervised), into the pool from a variety of places (side of pool, steps, etc.) to prepare them for the unexpected and reduce the chance of panic

- the Child grabbing a stick or pole offered to them in the water. Can they accurately underarm throw something that floats to another Child without falling in?