

# Be River Safe

## Supervision at Rivers

### Notes for Teachers & Leaders

Rivers are New Zealand's most dangerous aquatic environment and every year people die or are severely injured in rivers.

Children and young people can easily get into trouble in rivers. Many river drownings and accidents could have been prevented if those engaged in the activity had been actively supervised or had taken responsibility to look out for themselves and their companions.

Supervision is about setting up systems where those engaged in aquatic activities take responsibility for themselves and others.

Supervision of under fives, learners and those who cannot swim requires active supervision from a strong swimmer who is in the water with them.

Supervision of larger groups of people involves supervision from in the water and on the river bank.

Supervision can often involve a buddy system where those in the water take responsibility for behaving sensibly but take on the added responsibility of watching out for one companion or buddy. This is in addition to one or more supervisors who do not participate in the activity.

In rivers it is not appropriate for an older child to supervise younger children. The risks of being swept into the river current are just too great.

The factsheet: SUPERVISION AT SWIMMING HOLES AND NEAR RIVERS outlines key features of supervision. Teachers and leaders are urged to read this factsheet to remind themselves of appropriate supervision practices.



#### Supervision when taking students or trainees on an aquatic activity

Any teacher or leader taking groups of students and trainees on an activity in, on or near a river needs to consider supervision. Organisations will have their own policies relating to risk management including supervision. Schools will want to refer to EOTC Guidelines **Bringing the Curriculum Alive**.

#### Encouraging participants in aquatic activities to act responsibly and set up supervision

The **Be River Safe Toolbox** contains a range of activities for students and trainees. Where appropriate, each of these activities has the learners consider the need to act responsibly when in, on or around rivers and organise appropriate supervision.

Be River Safe ... *supervise children and learners*