



# PLAN

Use this as a quick intro for older groups where you want to test their water safety awareness, or as the main lesson for kindergarten and younger children.

Even Grade 1's can memorise the **PLAN**.

Introduce this lesson by talking about Sea Rescue and how the boats and volunteers respond to emergencies at sea. Explain that WaterWise was created to help children and their parents be better planned so that fewer emergencies happen. Ask them how they would feel if they were out with their families and something went horribly wrong and there was a terrible accident. Make sure your voice conveys the seriousness of this.

Take a few answers.

If you have a blackboard, write on it in big letters **PANIC**. Ask them, "do you think you would be scared?" Nod yes. Say it as well. "Do you think you may panic just a little?" They will probably say yes, and be nodding agreement. Now take your chalk, and say, "I want to show you how you can make a **PLAN** so that you will know what to do if something goes wrong, and you will remember it so well that you wont need to PANIC." Rub out the IC of PANIC, and insert an L, so that the word now reads **PLAN**.

## **P – (the "p" in PLAN stands for – PREARE)**

Ask the children what they think they would need for a day at the beach. You will get a variety of answers here. Swimming costume and towels are the most obvious. Agree that swimming costumes are important, as swimming in ones clothes is just plain silly. They will giggle. Pause. Then ask, "Why?"

Let them try and answer the questions, then emphasize the answer for everyone to hear. Because clothes get heavy when they get wet, and heavy clothes mean you may be tumbling round the ocean floor just when you really need to take a breath of air! Make it a bit amusing, so they agree what a silly idea it would be to swim with clothes on. You can tell a story about people who were swept off their feet by a huge wave while they were paddling in knee deep water to reinforce this.

## **L – (the L in PLAN stands for LOOK)**

What should we be looking for? Signs of danger! Like what? Let them tell you a few things. Someone will say, "Sharks!" Ask if anyone has ever seen a shark at the beach. (Shake your head as you do this, otherwise the adrenaline junkies will think you want

their Action Man stories) Then ask if they have ever been at the beach when the waves are really big. Ask what they would do if they arrived and the waves were bigger than them. Would they swim? No, of course not! So, its important to **LOOK** at the sea to see how big the waves are, and if there are dangerous currents. How can you tell if there are currents? Ask them if they have ever noticed a place at the beach where there are waves all around, except for one spot, which looks nice and flat. Ask them if **THAT** would be a good place to swim. Raise your eyebrows and make a shocked expression. Say loudly, "No Ways!

**THAT'S** where the strongest rip currents are. If you swim in that flat part, the current might rip you out to sea. Make a show of looking with your hand up on your brow, then saying, "Bye, bye, we'll find you in Australia!"

What about rivers and dams? Are there currents there too? Tell them to test for the strength of the current by throwing in a small stick and watching how fast it moves.

If you want to focus on the beach, you can talk about flags here too.

What colour are the life savers flags? (red and yellow)

Where should they swim? (between the flags)

What if the lifesavers are not on duty? (don't swim there)

### **A – (the A in PLAN stands for ASK AN ADULT)**

Emphasise that this is non negotiable. If they go to the beach without a parent, they need to find an adult (or a lifeguard) to watch them when they swim. This rule is very important for dams and rivers too. Tell them that someone should always know what their plans are, where they will be. Explain that many teenagers drown because they didn't tell anyone that they would be swimming, so no one could come to their rescue when they got into trouble.

I tell them this rule even applies to the adults – when I go swimming, I always make sure someone is watching me, and knows how to call for help, even though I am a good swimmer.

### **N – (things NEVER to do)**

- Swim Alone

- Swim with your clothes on

- Swim and drink alcohol

- Swim when you are too.....anything (too tired, too hungry, too cold, too upset etc)

Make them repeat the PLAN to you, with the key words. Ask them to remember the PLAN when they next plan an outing near water. Remind them that accidents happen when they don't have a PLAN in place, and when there's no PLAN, there's lots of PANIC when things go wrong.