



Adaptive Swimming Lessons

Victoria Park Leisure Centre introduced Adaptive Swimming Lessons to provide an inclusive and supportive learning environment for children who may struggle in traditional group swimming lessons. These lessons cater to children who require additional support due to special educational needs or those who feel apprehensive about participating without a parent or guardian in the water.

By allowing a parent or guardian to provide assistance while developing independence, the programme creates a smoother transition for children advancing through their early swimming stages.



OVERVIEW

Programme Development and Growth

Adaptive swimming lessons were first introduced on Saturday mornings to bridge the gap for children transitioning from preschool lessons to Stage 1 & 2 classes. Before the programme, children attending Pre School sessions were not being assessed under the appropriate awards scheme for their age once they started full-time school. The adaptive sessions provided a structured yet flexible approach to support these children, allowing them to gain confidence while maintaining the reassurance of a familiar adult in the water.

The success of the initial Saturday morning session quickly became apparent, with swimmers progressing to greater independence and seamlessly integrating into larger group lessons. Recognising the ongoing demand, a second adaptive session was introduced on Sundays in September 2024. This session has rapidly gained traction, reaching participation levels comparable to the original Saturday session. Due to the continued popularity and effectiveness of the adaptive lessons, an additional class is set to launch on Thursday evenings from March 2025.



OVERVIEW

Impact and Participant Progression

To date, 30 children have successfully participated in the adaptive programme. The structure of these lessons has proven highly effective in gradually developing independence and self-assurance among young swimmers. By offering a stepping stone between preschool lessons and mainstream Stage 1 & 2 classes, the programme ensures that children build the skills and confidence necessary to thrive in larger group settings.

Parental Testimonial: Gail Robyns' Granddaughter, Robyn

Gail, whose granddaughter Robyn participated in the adaptive lessons, shared her experience:

“My granddaughter Robyn wouldn't settle in Stage 1 without an adult in the water after three years in Pre School lessons on Fridays. While in Pre School, Robyn was confident and swimming independently, but only if we were close by. We were made aware of the adaptive lessons and decided to give it a try. As soon as we swapped over to the adaptive class, Robyn began swimming independently again. She started listening more, and we were able to take a step back from supporting her. Eventually, she became confident enough to allow us to sit on the side of the pool. Her confidence has continued to grow, and she is progressing well.”



Conclusion

The Adaptive Swimming Lessons at Victoria Park Leisure Centre have been instrumental in supporting children who require additional guidance while learning to swim. The success of the programme is reflected in the increasing demand, the smooth transition of participants into larger group settings, and the overwhelmingly positive feedback from parents and guardians.

With the expansion to Sunday and an additional class planned for Thursday evenings in March 2025, the programme continues to evolve, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to develop essential swimming skills in a nurturing and accessible environment.

