

Smart Start Plan for Pools

Pools that are open:

Seward High School – Opened 9/1/2020
Soldotna High School – Opened 9/2/2020
Homer High School – Opened 8/10/2020
Skyview – Opened – Opened 7/6/2020
Kenai Central High School – Opened 7/6/2020

At this time, the above pools are currently open to individuals who already know how to swim, as it is not possible to maintain socially distant protocols while teaching non-swimmers. Even the younger students are difficult to manage as they focus on swimming, are not as aware of their surroundings and are unable to maintain social distancing well.

We have mitigation protocols in place for our lifeguards from World Water Association and American Red Cross including water rescue to mitigate potential exposure, however any rescue increases the risk of exposure.

Locker rooms are a challenge to maintain, considering social distancing and time needed to complete the extra CDC cleaning protocols between groups. Depending on site and gender mix one to three students can use shower trees per locker room, we then must manage locker/bench spacing for social distancing. Once one group of swimmers leaves the locker rooms, the locker rooms are sanitized per CDC guidelines. To minimize this requirement, some swim clubs have been coming ready to swim and leaving, changing, and showering at home.

As student swimmers are trained in the new protocols, we are working on slowly increasing the numbers, as swimmers help manage the social distancing, with the help of an event coordinator. Based on observation, the district has established steps to increase the number of swimmers allowed in the pool, as swimmers demonstrate the ability to remain socially distanced. Groups that have been successful at this, are made up of consistent users, who routinely swim together.

Personnel numbers required to manage pool operations and follow up with CDC cleaning protocols are extremely staff intensive, especially when compared to those using the pool. From coordinating reservations, managing social distancing, cleaning, and lifeguarding it is challenging to operate a pool during the pandemic.

Our smaller pools: Seldovia and Ninilchik remain closed as it is not effective to need to use twice as many staff as swimmers that are allowed in the pool. During an open public lap swim, we can only have two lanes open, for two individuals swimming to meet the social distancing protocols, and we need to have four people working per CDC guidelines.

The non-personnel cost associated with opening the smaller pools and maintaining them is approximately \$100,000 annually as a basic number for a pool the size of Ninilchik and Seldovia. Personnel costs are in addition to that figure and vary by hours of use.

The Director of Planning and Operations, the District Pool Manager, the Site Administrator, and the Assistant Superintendent of Support Services working together have determined it is not feasible to reopen the small pools, at this time, considering the COVID restrictions and inability to use the pools effectively for Physical Education.