

Community Agreements for Two-Spirit, Trans, and Gender Diverse (2STGD) Swim

Queer Inclusion Team

2026.03.04 – This version is intended for public access on the City of Vancouver website, and specific details about the program location have been removed for safety considerations while retaining all other information.

Location details for the swim and other 2STGD programs will be shared with members of the 2STGD community by the Queer Inclusion staff, through email at 2STGD@vancouver.ca or in person at any Queer Inclusion program.

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For a brief list of gender and identity vocabulary used in this document, see Appendix A.

Land Acknowledgement

The host pool for the 2STGD Swim is location on the traditional, unceded, and stolen lands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples. These nations and their people have cared for the land and the water since time immemorial and continue this stewardship to this day. We are grateful for the lands on which we can live, work, and play.

We acknowledge that colonialism and the legacies of colonialism cause disproportionate harm to Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer members of our community. We ask that all settlers participate in the 2STGD swim with respect for Indigenous community members and in solidarity with the people on whose lands we recreate and build community.

Development of Guidelines

Participants in our Spring 2023 2STGD Swim community engagement led by Transfocus requested clearer behavioral expectations, community values, and policies. This document is written by the Queer Inclusion team to address specific concerns that were brought up by participants during the engagement and during the program through 2022-2023.

This document is not a comprehensive document that includes all aquatics pool policies, just those exclusive or particularly relevant to the 2STGD swim. General pool rules are posted at each facility, and questions can be directed to aquatic staff for more detailed information about general guidelines.

We acknowledge that the language and culture of the 2STGD community continues to evolve. Please send further feedback or suggestions to 2STGD@vancouver.ca so that we can continue to adapt to the needs of the community.

Historical and Present Inclusion

The 2STGD swim is built on the work done by the All Bodies Swim organizers, who first ran Trans-inclusive All Bodies Swims at Park Board swimming pools. The All Bodies swim aimed to make a welcome space for all attendees, including trans, gender diverse, queer, fat, tattooed, and hairy bodies, as well as those with scarring, limb differences, or using mobility devices. The 2STGD swim continues to celebrate the diversity of bodies and identities within this growing community. This swim is intentionally welcoming of 2STGD, intersex, and gender-questioning folks of all intersecting identities. We do not accept discriminatory behaviour, including discrimination based on race, age, ability, class, or other personal characteristics.

During the 2STGD swim, all changerooms and washrooms are universal and welcome to any gender. Our pool staff and lifeguards have received 2STGD inclusion training. All staff and participants are expected to be respectful of others by using gender neutral language and identified pronouns.

Fostering better accessibility during the 2STGD swim also includes accommodating folks with disabilities and sensory needs, who may have different access requirements. We ask attendees to be mindful of others' access needs and adapt their own behaviours so that everyone can participate in the swim.

The Purpose of the 2STGD Swim

The weekly 2STGD Swim is meant to provide a safe, welcoming space for 2STGD folks, where they experience relief from these issues that may occur during mainstream public swim sessions:

- Being stared at and having their body or appearance examined
- Being harassed or made to feel unwelcome in the changerooms

Other concerns raised by 2STGD Swim attendees include:

- Being excluded in the pool environment due to large groups of cis parents and family members
- Being concerned about their safety due to the influx of people unfamiliar with 2STGD norms

Cis gender folks are welcome at the swim when they are attending in a role of support for their 2STGD family member, loved one, or client, provided that they recognize the importance of centering and keeping space for 2STGD attendees.

2STGD parents or guardians are always welcome to bring their cis gender children.

Behavioral Expectations and Guidelines

See the Vancouver Swimwear [Policy](#) (see Appendix B) for specifics about clothing options at the pools.

If you are cis gender, please read this section and then continue through the section titled “Education for Cis Gender Allies at the 2STGD Swim”

Unacceptable Behaviours

Unacceptable behaviour will be managed by staff following guidelines set out in Vancouver’s Safe Access for Everyone [policy](#). (see Appendix C) Disability-based behaviour will be addressed with accommodations.

These behaviours are unacceptable in all public swims and can be addressed with lifeguards for assistance.

- Staring at other attendees
- Commenting on bodies – shapes, sizes, texture, hair, limb differences, mobility devices
- Using scented products in the sauna, hot tub, or changerooms
- Using cell phones or cameras in changerooms
- NEW: Using cell phones or on deck without approval from Queer Inclusion and Aquatic staff
- Taking photos of others in the pool (any photography in the pool must be approved by Aquatic staff first and angled so that they do not capture other pool patrons)

If you are not comfortable approaching the lifeguards, Queer Inclusion staff are able to assist with these concerns. Queer Inclusion staff are best suited to address issues related to the behaviour list below, please ask the lifeguard or cashier to locate QI staff if needed.

- Misgendering or assuming someone’s gender or pronouns based on how they look
- Assuming that parents with children at the pool are cis gender
- Assuming that kids at the swim or in swim lessons are cis or transgender

Social Interactions

These additional guidelines around social interactions during 2STGD swim and social activities help foster a safer community environment.

- Don’t know someone’s pronouns? Use name or neutral descriptions only until pronouns shared
- Outside of the pool or changeroom, receive consent before taking photos of others or including everyone within frame (ie. In the multipurpose room during social events)
- Receive consent before initiating a conversation or bringing up a topic that could be potentially triggering (ie. Transphobia, violence)
- Receive consent before asking someone a personal question
- If you are bringing a cis person as your anchoring support, please ensure that they familiar with the behavioural expectations for cis parents/allies/guests on the next section
- In order to prioritize 2STGD people at this swim, bring cis allies only if they anchor your attendance to the swim

Community Building

Behaviours that are encouraged to build a welcoming community at 2STGD swim:

- Build community by welcoming new participants
- Make introductions in social environments (hot tub, sauna, post-swim socials, etc)
- Not everyone can be social in public environments, but try including new folks into existing social circles if participants seem to be left out of conversation
- Connect with children, youth and parents for intergenerational trans joy and to celebrate queer families
- Rotate through crowded social spaces such as the hot tub and sauna to give everyone a chance to enjoy these spaces. Sauna and whirlpool guidelines are as follows:
Please limit each stay to a maximum of 10 minutes and then shower, cool down. *Extended exposure has the potential for heat exhaustion/stroke.*

Safety Protocol

Queer Inclusion and pool staff have a safety protocol for scenarios that intend to disrupt the program or threaten the safety of swim attendees. The specific details of the safety plan are not publicly shared for security reasons.

Staff will provide directions to swim participants to protect their safety in the event of a protest or situation that may impact the swim. Lifeguard directions must be followed in all emergencies. The safety plan includes directions to inform program participants, in the event that staff have contacted Corporate Security or VPD to respond to an incident.

After a safety incident, Queer Inclusion staff follow up may include:

- Addressing the incident in e-mail/newsletter
- Reaching out to specific victims
- Assisting attendees to file their own incident reports/feedback if desired
- Providing a list of resources for support
- Debrief with staff and modify safety plan as needed

Education for Cisgender Allies at 2STGD Swim (Guests, Parents, Guardians, Dependents)

General Participation by Cis Allies

Building on the requirements outlined in the Vancouver Park Board's Safe Access For Everyone (SAFE) policy, found [here](#) (see Appendix C), we include these guidelines that are specific to the 2STGD Swim:

Behavioural Basics

- Do not stare or make comments about bodies
- Prioritize access to pool space, showers, and toilets for 2STGD people
- If a 2STGD person is asking you to change your behaviour, accept their feedback and modify what you are doing. If you have questions related to their request, please speak to the Queer Inclusion staff on site

Body Inclusion reminders

- All bodies are welcome and celebrated at the 2STGD swim
- One of the joys of shared universal changerooms is the normalization of visible trans bodies. This is a space where 2STGD folks may feel safe to change in communal change areas
- If you are new to 2STGD centered changeroom spaces, you may consider choosing to use the private stalls in the permanent universal changeroom by the wading pool

Encouraged Interactions

We recognize that some swim attendees are neurodiverse or have social anxiety, and the suggestions listed below may not be workable or comfortable for everyone. We encourage this behaviour when possible, to help build a warm, welcoming, and joyful environment at the 2STGD swim

- Make eye contact, say hello, and smile at folks
- Introduce yourself, child, partner(s), etc.
- Use small talk to engage when you are in a shared space

Some of our 2STGD attendees find that the presence of cis adults (particularly those who are read as cis and heterosexual) at 2STGD swim to be particularly triggering. In order to build a more trauma-informed space inside the pool, we encourage cis parents / guardians to do the following:

- As a cis parent / guardian, introduce yourself and why you are attending the 2STGD swim or who you are there to support
- Wear supportive symbols and pins and signal support in a way that centres the needs and experiences of 2STGD folks (we have pronoun pins at the Queer Inclusion table in the lobby)

Allyship

- Be sure that your actions consistently centre the needs and comfort of 2STGD swim attendees
- Do not expect 2STGD participants to educate you on 2STGD community experiences or needs

- If you find yourself in a large group of cis people, ensure that you take up less space and do not monopolize sections of the pool area or changerooms
- If you see that your group is actively excluding 2STGD folks from your conversation or group activity, take initiative to invite 2STGD in
- Speak to other cis folk if they are being problematic and feel free to involve the Queer Inclusion staff or lifeguards if witnessing poor behaviour

Family participation

Cis family members or guardians are welcome to swim as long as they are anchoring the attendance of their 2STGD child. We want to emphasize the anchoring language because cis members of the family can swim during other pool hours. However, we also understand the importance of providing family time for 2STGD kids.

Cis parents / guardians with 2STGD children under the age of 8 must enter the water with their child to meet the pool safety rules. This includes when the child wants to swim before or after their swim lesson.

Cis parents / guardians are also welcome to attend with 2STGD children and youth over the age of 8 when their attendance is desired by their child/youth.

Larger Families

Larger families supporting the attendance of one 2STGD child or youth should be particularly mindful of centering 2STGD folks' access to space in the pool and changerooms. In the pool or post-swim socials, this may look like making specific efforts to centre 2STGD attendees in any conversations and organized games or activities.

2STGD children will benefit from knowing 2STGD adults! Cis parents / guardians who find themselves socializing exclusively in cis parent groups are encouraged to actively engage with the rest of the 2STGD swim community.

Sharing Space in Changerooms

When their children are comfortable attending the swim and changing by themselves, cis parents / guardians are encouraged to wait outside. When attending with a 2STGD child, large families are encouraged to have most cis members use the permanent Universal changeroom (located behind the wading pool) in consideration of the comfort of other 2STGD participants while in the changerooms. Families should still note that 2STGD participants do still use the permanent Universal changeroom, as it is the most physically accessible changing facility for some folks. If a person with a physical disability is waiting to use a shower, please prioritize their access.

Family or Adult Participation during Swim Lessons

For Cis parents / guardians supporting 2STGD children under the age of 8:

A parent / guardian does not have to enter the water if their child under the age of 8 is only in the pool for the swim lesson. Parents / guardians of children under 8 must stay with them on the pool deck until the instructor has taken over their supervision, and then be on deck at the end of the lesson to resume

direct supervision. Adults can alternatively hand-off to the instructor at the viewing area door if the instructor has been informed.

For Cis parents / guardians supporting 2STGD children taking swim lesson:

The 2STGD swim is not the time or place for cis parents / guardians to access the pool, hot tub, gym, or sauna alone while their 2STGD child is in a lesson. We understand the appeal and timing ease, but it has an impact on the folks who see this swim as their one safe space in the city's pools.

Cis gender parents / guardians with multiple children are welcome to swim with them while the 2STGD child has their lesson. Please be mindful to centre the needs of the 2STGD swim attendees.

Like during other lessons times, cis parents / guardians are welcome to support their 2STGD child from the pool deck benches during kids swim lessons if their children require it. However, cis adults watching lessons from the pool deck still make many 2STGD participants uncomfortable. Cis adults who are viewing lessons from the pool deck should also avoid using their phones in this space due to heightened concerns around 2STGD participant privacy. When their children are comfortable participating in swim lessons without caretaker supervision, cis parents / guardians are encouraged to wait outside. This may be an opportunity for cis parents and adults to connect with each other in the lobby.

These guidelines will be revisited as the 2STGD swim continues to grow, please watch for updates shared at the time of lesson registration.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – Vocabulary

Education on terminology

Vocabulary

2STGD

Two Spirit, trans, and gender diverse – includes agender, intersex, and other gender/sex identities other than cis gender

Two Spirit

A term used within some indigenous communities, encompassing gender, attraction, cultural and spiritual identity, and reflecting complex indigenous understandings of gender roles and the long history of sexual and gender diversity in indigenous cultures. “Two Spirit” was developed in a pan-nation gathering in 1990, and is based in Anishinaabe language. Some nations have a word in their own language to describe people of this nature in their community.

trans gender

One whose gender does not match the sex assigned to them at birth

gender diverse

One who do not identify as a (cis or trans) man, or (cis or trans) woman, but may identify as both, neither, a mixture, or something other. Includes non-binary, gender fluid, genderqueer, agender, and other identities of folks who are not cis or trans

“cis” or “cis gender”

One whose gender matches the sex assigned to them at birth

APPENDIX B – Attire for Swimming in Public Aquatic Facilities
Attire for Swimming in Public Aquatic Facilities – [Policy](#)

This is a Vancouver Park Board policy that was adopted in April of 2023.

APPENDIX C – Safe Access for Everyone (City of Vancouver Policy)

Safe Access for Everyone ([SAFE](#)) is a Vancouver Park Board policy to uphold its commitment to creating welcoming parks and recreation services for all.

The public version that is included here lists the policy, behavioural expectations, addressing unacceptable behaviours, and appeal process. The staff version is more detailed and includes specific guidelines for follow-up after repeat instances of unacceptable behaviour from an individual.