

WATER SAFETY POLICY

The safety and supervision of children is paramount when in or around water.

This relates to water play, excursions near water, hot water, drinking water and hygiene practices with water in the Out of School Hours Care Service

environment. Children will be supervised at all times during water play experiences to help keep children safe in and around water and support children's learning in a safe environment.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected.
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS/EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
Sec. 165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
Sec. 167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
12	Meaning of a serious incident
101	Conduct of risk assessment for excursions
115	Premises designed to facilitate supervision
122	Educators must be working directly with children to be included in ratios
168(2)(a)(iii)	Education and care service must have policies and procedures in relation to- Water safety, including safety during any water-based activities
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
176	Time to notify the certain information to the Regulatory Authority

PURPOSE

To ensure the safety and supervision of children in and around water. This includes water play, excursions near water, hot water, drinking water and hygiene practices with water in the Out of School Hours Care Service environment.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, approved provider, nominated supervisor, management students, and visitors of the service.

WATER HAZARDS

The National Regulations make reference to '*water hazards*' however the term is not expressly defined. In this policy, a water hazard is defined as anything that can hold 5cm of water and fit a child's nose and mouth and a 'water hazard' may include:

- large bodies of water such as dams, creeks, river or pooling water, swimming pool, portable pools and spas, jetted bathtubs (or Jacuzzis)
- fishponds
- smaller bodies of water such as baths, mop buckets
- sinks, basins
- water features, such as a wishing well
- containers for feeding animals
- water troughs, containers for paddling- clam shells
- beach

IMPLEMENTATION

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations, an approved provider must ensure that policies and procedures are in place for managing water safety, including during any water-based activities and take reasonable steps to ensure those policies and procedures are followed.

According to Kidsafe, drowning is one of the leading causes of unintentional death for Australian children. Every year a number of children are killed and hundreds more rescued from near drowning situations. Non-fatal drowning incidents are also of great concern as they can have potential long-term effects, including brain damage and permanent disability.

The most common factor in childhood drowning is lack of supervision. A child can drown in as little as a few centimetres of water. Items such as nappy buckets, sinks, pet drinking bowls, ponds, pools, water features, water tanks are all potential drowning hazards.

The adequacy of supervision shall be determined by a range of factors that include:

- Numbers, ages and abilities of the children
- Number and positioning of educators
- Each child's current activity
- Areas where the children are playing, in particular the visibility and accessibility of these areas
- Risks in the environments and experiences provided to children
- Educators' knowledge of each child and each group of children
- The experience, knowledge and skill of each educator

THE APPROVED PROVIDER/NOMINATED SUPERVISOR/ RESPONSIBLE PERSON WILL:

- adhere to all obligations under the *Education and Care National Law and Regulations*
- complete detailed risk assessments that identify and assess risks associated with any water hazards and water-based activities
- ensure water hazards and water play are always highly supervised including:
 - direct and constant monitoring of children
 - careful and intentional positioning of educators
 - scanning and moving around the environment
 - observing play and anticipating behaviour
 - ensuring higher adult to child ratios
 - ensuring no child is left unattended when in proximity to water
- provide direction and education to educators, staff and families on the importance of children's safety and supervision in and around water
- ensure health and safety practices incorporate approaches to safe storage of water and water play
- ensure premises adjacent to or providing access to any water hazards that are not able to be adequately supervised at all times (e.g., dams, swimming pool) are to be isolated from children by a child resistant barrier or fence
- conduct a risk assessment in accordance with the requirements prior to taking children on an excursion which is near water- consider any water hazards and any risks associated with water-based activities before an excursion/incursion is approved
- ensure at least one educator who holds a current approved first aid qualification is in attendance at all times including emergency life support and cardio pulmonary resuscitation
- display a Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) guide near any swimming pool, wading pool, or body of water
- ensure hot water is inaccessible to children.

EDUCATORS WILL:

- provide active supervision when children are participating in water activities including:
 - supervise children near water at all times
 - never leave children alone near any water
 - direct and constant monitoring of children
 - scanning and moving around the environment
 - observing play and anticipating behaviour
- ensure fish / frog ponds and water features that are not able to be adequately supervised at all times and/or pose an unacceptable risk to children are guarded or effective barriers are in place
- complete a daily Safety Inspection of premises to ensure that all hazards are known and minimised
When a hazard or potential hazard is detected, educators will complete a risk assessment to address any concerns and children will be excluded from the area until the hazard has been rectified.
- utilise water activities in appropriate weather as part of the planned program
- allow children the opportunity to experiment with water, sand, and mixing materials
- incorporate water safety awareness into the educational program
- monitor all taps on the premises that children have access to and ensure they are turned off securely when not in use
- safely cover or make inaccessible to children all water containers
- empty wading pools immediately after every use store to prevent the collection of water, e.g., upright
- check for and empty any water that has collected in holes or containers after rainfall or watering gardens
- ensure water troughs are not used without a stand to keep it off the ground
- ensure children remain standing on the ground whilst using the water trough
- ensure buckets of water for soaking toys or clothing are inaccessible to children
- ensure water troughs or containers for water play are filled to a safe level and emptied into the garden areas after each use
- ensure laundry, storerooms and Educator areas have Staff only signs on doors to remind adults to close doors behind them
- they teach children about staying safe in and around water



SOURCE

Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
 ACECQA. (2023). [Policy and procedure guidelines- Water Safety Guidelines](#)
 Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).
 Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2023).
[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (Amended 2023)
 Guide to the National Quality Framework. (Amended 2023).
 KidSafe (2021). Water Safety. <https://kidsafe.com.au/water-safety/>
 National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC): www.nhmrc.gov.au
 Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).
 Victoria Government. [Better Health Channel. Water safety for children.](#)
[Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	[NAME]	[POSITION]	[POSITION]	[DATE]
		OSHC Director		
		School Principal		
		Governing Council member		
POLICY REVIEWED	July 2024	NEXT REVIEW DATE	July 2027	