WATER SAFETY POLICY

The safety and supervision of children is paramount when in or around water. This relates to water play, excursions near water, excursions near water, safety around hot water, and hygiene practices with water in the Out of School Hours (OSHC) Service environment. Children and young people will be actively 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. Water safety education is embedded in the educational program to help children develop lifelong safety awareness.

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.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
S. 165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
S. 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
136	First aid qualifications
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
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
172	Notification of change to policies or procedure
176	Time to notify the certain information to the Regulatory Authority

RELATED POLICIES

Administration of First Aid Policy Child Safe Environment Policy Educational Program Policy Excursion/Incursion Policy	Health and Safety Policy Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy Physical Environment Policy Sun Safe Policy Supervision Policy

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, educators, approved provider, nominated supervisor, students, volunteers and visitors of the OSHC Service.

DEFINITIONS

Adequate supervision: an educator can respond immediately when a child is distressed or in a hazardous situation; knowing where children are at all times and monitoring their activities actively and diligently

Hazard: Situations or things that have the protentional to harm a person

Risk assessment: A systematic process of identifying hazards, assessing risks, and deciding on control measures to ensure children's safety

Water hazard: Any body of water that poses a threat of drowning risk to a child or children. This could include:

- large bodies of water- dams, rivers, creeks, dams, swimming pools, portable spas, fountains, water play troughs
- smaller bodies of water- baths, buckets, containers that collect water, pet bowls.

Source: ACECQA Water Safety policy guidelines

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. [source: Kidsafe]

THE APPROVED PROVIDER, MANAGEMENT AND NOMINATED SUPERVISOR WILL:

- adhere to all obligations under the *Education and Care National Law and Regulations*
- ensure educators, staff, students and volunteers have knowledge of and adhere to this policy and associated procedure and are advised on how and where the policy can be accessed
- ensure all educators, staff and volunteers participate in a comprehensive induction and refresher training that includes an understanding of child safety, CPR and our Water Safety Policy
- 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
- ensure there are no items near fencing that children could climb up onto to gain access to a water hazard (pot plants, boxes, chairs)
- conduct a risk assessment in accordance Reg. 101 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 current approved first aid qualifications, that was attained within the previous three years (Reg. 136), is in attendance at the OSHC Service at all times
- ensure at least one educator has successfully completes cardio pulmonary resuscitation training (CPR) each year, is in attendance at the OSHC Service at all times
- display a Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) guide near any swimming pool, wading pool, or body of water
- ensure hot water is inaccessible to children, including hot drinks accessed by educators, staff or families
- notify parents as soon as practicable but within 24 hours if their child is involved in an incident/accident at the Service or while under Service care
- ensure details of the incident/accident will be recorded on an *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record*
- notify the regulatory authority within 24 hours of becoming aware of a serious incident
- conduct a review of practices following any water-related safety incident including an assessment of areas for improvement within the policy and associated procedure.

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 that any body of water with a depth greater than 3cm is inaccessible to children at all times and is guarded with an effective barrier at all times (child proof fence/ grate over the water)
- complete a daily *Outdoor Cleaning and Safety Check* 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 the 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
- discouraged children from drinking from any water activities for health and safety
- 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 as part of the educational program
- ensure wading pools are hygienically cleaned, and disinfected appropriately:
    - on a daily basis remove leaves and debris, hose away surface dirt and scrub inside with disinfectant.
        - wash away disinfectant before filling pool
        - children with diarrhoea, upset stomach, open sores or nasal infections should not use the pool
        - all children should wear appropriate swimwear / bathers, go to the toilet before entering the pool, and follow correct toilet hygiene practices while in the pool
        - remove all children immediately, empty and disinfect the pool should a child pass a bowel motion whilst in the pool
        - empty the wading pool at the end of each use
- follow emergency procedures and contact emergency Services if a child appears to be missing or unaccounted for or is involved in a serious incident or accident
- follow the *Administration of First Aid Policy* after any incident involving a water-based activity, including contacting 000 if a child is found unresponsive or has inhaled water
- reflect on practice and share strategies during staff meetings to maintain and improve child safety around water.

OPERATIONAL SAFETY

- water tanks will be labelled with "Do Not Drink" signage and the children will be supervised in this area to make sure they are not accessing this water for drinking
- educators will discuss with the children the use of water tank water and how it differs from drinking water
- hot water accessible to children will be maintained at the temperature of 45.C° which will be tested annually. (Australian standard AS 3498)
- hot drinks are not to be consumed near children by educators, students or visitors
- water for pets at the Service must be changed daily and only be accessible to children when educators are present.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Our *Water Safety Policy* will be updated and reviewed annually, or earlier if there are changes to legislation, ACECQA guidance or after a water-related incident. Feedback will be requested from children, families, staff, educators and management and notification of any change to policies will be made to families within 14 days.

CHILDCARE CENTRE DESKTOP- RELATED RESOURCES

Outdoor Cleaning and Safety Checklist	Water Safety Procedure

SOURCES

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2025). *Guide to the National Quality Framework*
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)
KidSafe (2021). Water Safety. https://kidsafe.com.au/water-safety/
Victoria Government. Better Health Channel. Water safety for children.

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	Marty Gray	Principal	Mar 26
POLICY REVIEWED	March 2026	NEXT REVIEW DATE	March 2027
VERSION NUMBER	V8.09.25		

MODIFICATIONS	• annual policy maintenance • added- definitions, induction of staff/educators/review of practices following any water related incident • removal of any reference to use of chlorine in service (hazardous material) • hyperlinks checked and repaired as required