

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is 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 Service environment.

Scope

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management, approved provider, nominated supervisor, students, volunteers and visitors (including contractors) of the Service.

Background

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]

Principles

The Service is committed to:

- providing opportunities for children to explore their natural environment including through water play
- ensuring that children are protected from the risks associated with drowning or non-fatal drowning experiences
- ensuring that curriculum planning incorporates water safety awareness
- providing information to educators, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and others at the service about water safety.

Roles and responsibilities

The Approved Provider or Persons with Management and Control is responsible for:

- ensuring that children are adequately supervised at all times when near water hazards
- ensuring that educator-to-child ratios are maintained at all times
- conducting a risk assessment in relation to any water hazards on or near the premises that may be accessible to children
- ensuring permission is obtained from parents/guardians for an excursion to a location where there is a water hazard
- ensuring that water hazards and risks associated with water-based activities are considered in a risk assessment prior to conducting excursions and other offsite events
- ensuring increased levels of supervision for an excursion to a location where there is a water hazard
- conducting a regular safety check of the service premises

- ensuring any water hazards that are not able to be adequately supervised at all times are isolated from children by a child-resistant barrier or fence (particularly large bodies of water including swimming pools, rivers, ponds etc.)
- ensuring that an educator with a current approved first aid qualification is in attendance and immediately available at all times children are being educated and cared for by the service
- ensuring that details of current approved first aid qualifications are filed with each staff member's record
- reporting serious incidents to DET
- reporting notifiable incidents to WorkSafe Victoria
- ensuring that water safety awareness is embedded in the curriculum
- providing current information to parents about water safety.

The Nominated Supervisor or Persons in Day to Day Control is responsible for:

- assisting the Approved Provider to implement the *Water Safety Policy*
- ensuring parents/guardians are informed of the *Water Safety Policy* on enrolment
- ensuring permission is obtained from parents/guardians for an excursion to a location where there is a water hazard
- ensuring information on water safety is incorporated into the educational program
- ensuring that children are adequately supervised and protected from hazards and harm at all times
- ensuring that water hazards and risks associated with water-based activities are considered in a risk assessment prior to conducting excursions and other offsite events
- ensuring permission is obtained from parents/guardians for an excursion to a location where there is a water hazard
- ensuring increased levels of supervision for an excursion to a location where there is a water hazard
- ensuring that an educator with a current approved first aid qualification is in attendance and immediately available at all times children are being educated and cared for by the service
- ensuring that all educators' current approved first aid qualifications meet the requirements of the National Regulations and are approved by ACECQA
- informing the Approved Provider immediately if any serious or notifiable incidents occur at the service.

All staff are responsible for:

- providing adequate supervision at all times
- undertaking a risk assessment prior to an excursion to a location where there is a significant water hazard
- adjusting supervision strategies to suit the activities being undertaken
- obtaining parental permission for an excursion to a location where there is a water hazard
- maintaining a current approved first aid qualification
- ensuring gates and other barriers restricting access to water hazards are closed at all times and that fences are kept clear at all times
- ensuring that containers of water (including nappy buckets and cleaning buckets) are sealed with child-proof lids
- ensuring wading/paddling pools, water play containers and portable water courses are emptied immediately after each use and stored in a manner that prevents the collection of water when not in use
- checking the outdoor learning environment at the beginning and end of each day for puddles or filled containers that could pose a potential risk to small children after heavy rain
- providing water safety education as a part of the service's program
- informing the Approved Provider immediately if any serious or notifiable incidents occur at the service.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- supervising children in their care, including siblings, while attending or assisting at the service
- ensuring that doors, gates and barriers, including playground gates, are closed after entry or exit to prevent access to water hazards
- informing themselves about water safety
- ensuring their children understand the risks associated with water
- recognising when resuscitation is required and obtaining assistance
- considering undertaking approved first aid qualifications, as resuscitation skills save lives.

Induction and ongoing training

This policy will be accessible by service staff via the intranet and by families via the website. Hard copy of the policy will be available through the Service. Nominated supervisors are responsible for ensuring staff access the policy and any supporting documents and undertake induction training prior to the policy being implemented. All service staff are responsible for understanding and complying with this policy and ongoing training will be provided using a range of learning platforms.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

Monitoring of compliance with this policy and the related procedure will be overseen by the policy owner. The review process for this policy will begin eight (8) weeks prior to the scheduled review date and include a consultation period with families, educators, compliance team and any other relevant stakeholders and will be facilitated by the Policy Officer.

Communication about any changes in or review of the policy, procedure or related supporting documents will be provided to all service staff. Where required, training will be provided to ensure an understanding of the changes. Families will be notified of any changes 14 days prior to the implementation. Breaches of this policy will be dealt with in line with the MACSEYE Code of Conduct.

Related policies

Administration of First Aid Policy
Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
Excursion and Incursion Policy
Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
Sun Safe Policy
Supervision Policy

Legislative requirements

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS (NQS)	
Quality Area 2	Children's health and safety
EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW ACT	
Section 165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
Section 167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW REGULATIONS	
Regulation 25 (1)(c)	Additional information about proposed education and care service premises
Regulation 101	Conduct of risk assessment for excursion
Regulation 115	Premises designed to facilitate supervision
Regulation 122	Educators must be working directly with children to be included in ratios
Regulation 168 (2)(a)(iii)	Education and care services must have policies and procedures on water safety, including safety during any water-based activities
Regulation 170	Policies and procedures to be followed
Regulation 176	Time to notify the certain information to the Regulatory Authority
RELATED LEGISLATIONS	
Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)	

Definitions

Term	Meaning
Adequate supervision	Means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an educator can respond immediately, particularly when a child is distressed or in a hazardous situation knowing where children are at all times and monitoring their activities actively and diligently.
Approved first aid qualifications	A qualification that includes training in the matters set out below, that relates to and is appropriate to children, and has been approved by ACECQA and published on the list of ACECQA's approved first aid qualifications and training. Matters are likely to include: emergency life support and cardiopulmonary resuscitation; convulsions; poisoning; respiratory difficulties; management of severe bleeding; injury and basic wound care; and administration of an auto-immune adrenalin device.
Educational program	A program that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is based on an approved learning framework; and is delivered in a manner that accords with the approved learning framework; and is based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child; and is designed to take into account the individual differences of each child (National Law).
Excursion	An outing organised by an education and care service educator but does not include an outing organised by an education and care service provided on a school site if the child or children leave the education and care service premises in the company of an educator and the child or children do not leave the school site (National Regulations).
Hazard	A source or situation with a potential for harm in terms of human injury or ill health, damage to property, damage to the environment or a combination of these.
MACSEYE	Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Early Years Education Ltd, a subsidiary of Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd established to conduct early childhood education and care services.
National Law	Unless otherwise specified, the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 or, in Western Australia, the Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012. This applied law system sets a national standard for children's education and care across Australia. See the ACECQA website for the Application Act or legislation that applies in each jurisdiction.
National Regulations	The National Regulations support the National Law by providing detail on a range of operational requirements for an education and care service.
Nominated supervisor	In relation to an education and care service, means a person who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is nominated by the approved provider of the service under Part 3 to be a nominated supervisor of that service; and unless the individual is the approved provider, has provided written consent to that nomination (National Law).
Notifiable incident	An incident involving workplace health and safety that is required by law to be reported to WorkSafe Victoria. Notification is required for incidents that result in death or serious injury/illness, or dangerous occurrences. For a complete list of incidents that must be reported to WorkSafe Victoria, refer to the <i>Guide to Incident Notification</i> on the WorkSafe Victoria website: www.worksafe.vic.gov.au
Risk assessment	A systematic process of evaluating the potential likelihood and consequences of risks that may be involved in a projected activity or undertaking.
Serious incident	A serious incident (regulation 12) is defined as any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the death of a child while being educated and cared for at the service or following an incident while being educated and cared for by the service any incident involving serious injury or trauma to a child while the child is being educated and cared for, which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a reasonable person would consider required urgent medical attention from a registered medical practitioner; or

Term	Meaning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the child attended or ought reasonably to have attended a hospital e.g. a broken limb* – any incident involving serious illness of a child while that child is being educated and cared for by a service for which the child attended, or ought reasonably to have attended, a hospital e.g. severe asthma attack, seizure or anaphylaxis* NOTE: In some cases (for example rural and remote locations) a General Practitioner conducts consultation from the hospital site. Only treatment related to serious injury, illness or trauma is required to be notified, not other health matters. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any emergency for which emergency services attended NOTE: This means an incident, situation or event where there is an imminent or severe risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a person at an education and care service. It does not mean an incident where emergency services attended as a precaution. • a child appears to be missing or cannot be accounted for at the service • a child appears to have been taken or removed from the service in a manner that contravenes the National Regulations • a child was mistakenly locked in or out of the service premises or any part of the premises. <p>Notifications of serious incidents should be made to the regulatory authority (DET) through the NQA IT System. If this is not practicable, the notification can be made initially in whatever way is best in the circumstances. NOTE: some of serious incidents above are also reportable incidents under the <i>Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004</i> and require notification to WorkSafe.</p>
Water hazard	<p>Any water body that poses a potential drowning risk to children and could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • large bodies of water, such as rivers, creeks, dams, ponds, swimming pools, jetted bathtubs (or jacuzzies), in-ground spas, above ground portable spas (or hot tubs) or any container with poor drainage that allows water to pool • smaller bodies of water, such as baths, nappy buckets and pet water containers.

Policy information

Policy information			
Policy title:	Water Safety Policy	Version:	1.0
Authorised Executive:	Director Quality, Safety and Compliance	Responsible Manager:	General Manager OHS, Wellbeing and Child Safety
Approving authority:	Managing Director	Approval date:	6/9/2024
Effective date:	6/9/2024	Review date:	6/9/2025

Version control		
Version	Date	Changes
1.0	6/9/2024	Policy developed