



Water Safety Policy



Policy Number	QA 2/19	Title	Water Safety Policy
Revision	2.1	Written By	Nominated Supervisor
Reviewed By	EHOOSH Management Committee	Approved By	EHOOSH Management Committee
Supersedes	2.0	Effective Date	March 2024

1. Policy Statement

Water-based play is an important part of our children’s healthy growth, learning, wellbeing and development. Our educators and other staff ensure that all precautions are employed to safeguard children during these experiences.

Eastwood Heights OOSH (the Service) endeavours to provide experiences with appropriate levels of challenge where children are encouraged to explore and experiment. This includes the use of water as a medium for play in both the outdoor and indoor environment and on excursions.

The safety, health and wellbeing of children is our number one priority. All water-based activities will be adequately supervised and no child will be left unattended when in proximity to water.

2. Background

The *Education and Care Services National Regulations* require approved providers to ensure their services have policies and procedures in place for managing water safety, including safety during any water-based activities.

According to Kidsafe (the recognised authority on the prevention of injuries in children), drowning continues to be one of the main causes of fatalities of Australian children. Every year a number of children drown or were in 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 a lack of supervision. A child can drown in as little as a few centimetres of water. A water hazard or water feature may include dams, ponds, water fountains, large drains or any areas or containers that retain water.

Water safety policies and procedures help keep children safe in and around water and support children's learning in a safe environment. Children's safety and wellbeing will be protected in and around water through supervision and education.

3. Procedures

There are clear roles and responsibilities ensure that management, educators and other staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to water safety.

3.1. Definition of a body of water / a water hazard

The Service recognises the following as bodies of water / water hazard:

- Swimming pools and water fun parks
- Wading pools
- Lakes
- Ponds
- Sea/ocean/beach
- Creeks
- Dams

- Rivers
- Buckets of water for water play or cleaning
- Equipment that could contain 5cm or more of water and would allow a child to submerge both nose and mouth at the same time

Adequate Supervision around water means:

- Following supervision plans.
- Educators 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.

3.2. Water safety in relation to water-based activities within the Service

- A risk assessment is conducted at least annually for any water play activities.
- Waterplay within the Service will always be supervised to ensure that the safety of children and educators is a priority.
- Children will be instructed in the safe use of equipment used during water-based activities, e.g., slip and slide, bubble machines, etc.
- The hygienic state of the water will be assessed before it is used for children’s play.
- Any buckets of water used for water play will not be left unsupervised and will be emptied immediately after use.
- Any buckets of water used for cleaning hands/feet after children have played in the sandpit will not be left unsupervised and will be emptied immediately after use.
- Children will be discouraged from drinking from these water vessels.
- At the completion of any water activity the water containers will be emptied, and the containers turned upside down or packed away.
- Any buckets of water used for cleaning or hand/foot washing will not be left unsupervised near the children and will be emptied immediately after use.
- The children’s play areas will be checked each morning to ensure that no containers or pools of water are accessible to children.

- If rain occurs during the day, outdoor play areas will be checked for safety prior to the children entering the outdoor environment.

3.3. Water safety in relation to excursions

- The Service recognises the risks posed by bodies of water and will ensure that every precaution is taken so children are able to enjoy water-based excursions safely.
- Risk assessments will be carried out for all water-based excursions, prior to the excursion. (refer to the Service's Excursion Policy). Authorisation from families will always be sought prior to their children attending any such excursions.
- A supervision plan will be reviewed by educators before the excursion.

The Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 and Regulations do not specify a specific educator to child ratio for activities where water is a feature. The number of educators present is to be determined by a risk assessment of the proposed activity. Nevertheless sections 165, 167 and 169 contain clear statements about adequate supervision. A range of factors determines the adequacy of supervision, including:

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

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Approved Provider

- Ensure that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met.
- Keep a child-safe environment.
- Take reasonable steps to ensure that the policy and procedures are current, reviewed regularly, and communicated to educators, staff and stakeholders.
- Take reasonable steps to ensure that nominated supervisors, educators, staff and volunteers follow the policy and procedures.
- Ensure copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisors, educators, staff and volunteers, and available for inspection.
- Notify families at least 14 days before changing the policy or procedures if the changes will:
 - Affect the fees charged or the way they are collected or
 - Significantly impact the service's education and care of children or
 - Significantly impact the family's ability to utilise the service.

Nominated Supervisor

- Ensure that there is adequate supervision provided given the ages and developmental needs of children undertaking water activities (including ratios).
- Ensure risk assessments are undertaken and water hazards and risks associated with water-based activities are taken into consideration.
- Ensure copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to, educators, staff and volunteers, and available for inspection.
- Inform families about water safety practices at the service.
- Ensure first aid and CPR qualifications and requirements are met at all times.
- Ensure that at least one educator, staff member or nominated supervisor who holds a current approved first aid qualification is in attendance at all times that children are being educated and cared

	<p>for by the service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake risk assessments for excursions near water and for water-based activities. • Take reasonable steps to ensure that the policy and procedures are current, reviewed regularly, and communicated to educators, staff and stakeholders. • Take reasonable steps to inform and support educators and staff of their responsibilities in implementing the policy and procedures at all times. • Guide and mentor educators and staff to be able to follow the policy and procedures.
<p>Educators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce water safety messages within the children’s education program. • Make sure water hazards are managed as outlined in your procedure, e.g., water trough is emptied and packed away as soon as play has ended. • Ensure buckets that contain liquids are not accessible to children. • Empty, safely cover, or make inaccessible to children all water containers when they are not in use, e.g., mop buckets, water troughs, water containers. • Ensure water troughs or containers for water play will be supervised at all times and containers or troughs will be emptied after use. • Inspecting indoor and outdoor environments for potential water hazards, particularly during and after wet weather.
<p>Families</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform the service about their child's accurate swimming proficiency in any authorisation form.

5. Legislative Requirements

Section 165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
Regulation 25(1)(c)	Additional information about proposed education and care service premises
Section 167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
Regulation 101	Conduct of risk assessment for excursion
Regulation 115	Premises designed to facilitate supervision
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 171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
Regulation 172	Notification of change to policies or procedures

6. References

6.1. Statutory Authority

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Section 165, 167, 169; Regulation 99-102)

6.2. Service Policies

- *Excursions Policy*
- *Provision of Child Safe Environment Policy*
- *Child Safe Policy*

Revision Chronology

Version Number	Date	Reason for Change
1.0	April 2018	Endorsed by OOSH executive committee
1.1	April 2021	Review and evaluation / Endorsed
2.0	January 2023	Edited and reviewed
2.1	March 2024	New updates from ACECQA / New Policy format