



Water Safety

POLICY STATEMENT

Lake Mac Newy OOSH will plan experiences with appropriate levels of challenge, where children are encouraged to explore, experiment, and take appropriate risks (“My Time, Our Place,” Outcome 4). This includes using water as a medium for play in both outdoor and indoor environments.

The safety and supervision of children are 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 Service environment. Children will be supervised during water play experiences to help keep them safe in and around water and support their learning in a safe environment. Drinking water will be accessible, hygienically stored, and maintained.

The National Regulations refer 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, rivers or pooling water, swimming pools, 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

PROCEDURE

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 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, many children are killed, and hundreds more are 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. The water hazards listed above are all potential drowning hazards.

THE APPROVED PROVIDER/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
- 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 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 with the requirements before taking children on an excursion that 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), always attends the Service
- ensure at least one educator has successfully completed cardiopulmonary resuscitation training (CPR) each year, is in attendance at the Service at all times
- ensure hot water is inaccessible to children, including hot drinks accessed by educators, staff or families. A risk assessment for children using the kitchen during experiences to be followed
- ensure the regulatory authority is notified within 24 hours of becoming aware of a serious incident.

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 all hazards are known and minimised. When a hazard or potential hazard is detected, educators will complete a risk assessment to address any concerns. 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
- discourage children from drinking from any water activities for health and safety
- ensure laundry, storerooms, and educator areas have Staff only signs to remind adults to monitor these areas whilst children are present
- ensure sinks with large amounts of water, such as those in the laundry and kitchen, are empty when not being actively monitored
- they teach children about staying safe in and 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. Tap keys will be stored away from children
- 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 a 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 unless contained in a safe, non-spill travel mug and lid or similar
- bubblers that are exposed to direct sunlight or heat and accessible to children should be heat-tested during the warmer months to ensure they remain safe for use

Water safety in relation to excursions

- The service recognises the risks posed by bodies of water. The service will ensure that every precaution is taken so that children are able to enjoy water-based activities safely. Risk assessments will be carried out for programmed water-based activities (r101).
- Whilst the Regulations do not specify a specific Educator-to-Child ratio for activities where water is a feature, the recommended excursion ratio of 1:8 is considered best practice, and this is what the service will utilise as a baseline. This may need to be adjusted should the Risk Assessment deem the water to pose a higher hazard, such as unfenced water areas, areas where there will be a large group of children, etc. A ratio of 1:5 is recommended for excursions where children swim and enter the water.

It must also be noted that in sections 165, 167 and 169 of the National Law there are clear statements about adequate supervision. A range of factors shall determine the adequacy of supervision, including:

- Numbers, ages and abilities of the children
- Number and positioning of educators
- Each child’s current activity
- Areas where children are playing, 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
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- children with diarrhea, an upset stomach, open sores, or nasal infections should not use the pool unless appropriate medical precautions are followed for open sores, such as using waterproof medical-grade coverings. If necessary, secure written consent from a guardian to apply
- 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



Water safety in relation to water-based activities within the service

- Water use within the service will be supervised to ensure that the safety of Children and Educators is a priority. The hygienic state of water will be assessed before it is used for Children’s play.
- At the completion of the activity the water containers will be emptied, and the containers turned upside down or packed away. Educators will ensure water troughs or containers for water play is filled to a safe level. Children will be discouraged drinking from these water vessels.
- Children will be instructed in the safe use of equipment used during water-based activities, for example, slip and slide, water pistols, bubble machines, etc.
- Buckets of water for cleaning or hand washing will not be left unsupervised near the children and will be emptied immediately after use.
- The Children’s play areas will be checked before play 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.
- Any water-based activities should be undertaken on grassed areas, if possible, to minimise wasted water.
- Staff will reinforce the water conservation message to embed sustainable practices in Children.
- Water restrictions will be taken into consideration when planning and programming water-based activities.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Education and Care Services National Regulations	National Quality Standard	Other Service policies/documentation	Other
S165, 167 R12, 101, 115, 122, 168(2)(a)(iii), 170, 176	2.1.2, 2.2, 2.2.1, 2.2.2 Child Safe Standards 1-5, 7-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration of First Aid Policy • Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy • Incident, Injury & Trauma Policy • Excursion Policy • Sun Protection Policy • Supervision Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Time, Our Place. • Work, Health & Safety Act 2011. • Risk Assessments. • Safety Checklist.

ENDORSEMENT BY THE SERVICE:

<p>Approval date: November 2024</p> <p>Date for Review: November 2025</p>
