**Water Safety Policy 2022**

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

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| 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. |

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| EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS | |
| 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 |
| 126 | Centre based services-general educator qualifications |
| 168 | Education and care service must have policies and procedures |

**Background**

Children’s access to clean water for drinking and for washing their hands is important for their health and wellbeing. In addition, access to water play affords children the opportunity for open-ended, exploratory and sensory play which contributes to their development and learning. It also develops environmental awareness.

However, children can drown in as little as 5cm of water. Accordingly, their access to water requires effective management and the highest level of supervision.

**Policy statement**

This Policy outlines the Service’s approach to water safety so that children remain unharmed and healthy and applies at the Service and during excursions. Safety and supervision of children are the highest priority when children have access to water. The Policy covers hot water, drinking water, hygiene practices with water, and water play. It also includes safe storage of equipment used for water play.

**Strategies and practices**

* At enrolment, the Service’s *Water Safety Policy* is explained to parents.
* Families are provided with water safety information including water safety in the home and the availability of learn-to-swim programs in the local community.
* Children are closely supervised at all times they are involved in water play or are near water. They are never left alone near water.
* Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) posters are displayed prominently throughout the Service, and where water play is set up.
* Educators intentionally teach children about staying safe in and around water.
* Educators receive continuing professional development in water safety, and specific water safety issues are discussed in team meetings.
* Children have ready access to clean drinking water at all times, and are regularly offered water throughout the day.
* The water in troughs and containers used for water play is kept at safe levels for children, and at weights that educators can move or secure according to WHS guidelines for safe lifting.
* Children are discouraged from drinking any water used in the play activities.
* All water troughs and containers are emptied and hygienically cleaned at the end of each water play activity, allowed to dry thoroughly to prevent the build-up of potentially harmful bacteria such as mould, and then stored in an area inaccessible to children.
* Educators and children wash and dry their hands after each water play activity to reduce the risk of cross-infection.
* Buckets used for cleaning are kept out of children’s reach, emptied immediately after each use and stored in an area inaccessible to children.
* The Service’s fences and gates meet regulatory requirements, and educators ensure that items that could be used to scale the fence are kept away from the fence.
* The Nominated Supervisor completes an Excursion Risk Management Plan prior to every excursion. As part of the risk assessment, particular attention is focused upon water safety whenever the excursion is near a body of water, and upon supervision implications.
* The Nominated Supervisor ensures Water safety risk management for routine learning experiences within the service is conducted yearly and all staff are aware of the risk management plan.
* Parents are asked to provide a spare set of clothing for their child in the event that the child engages in water play and becomes uncomfortably wet.
* Water conservation is embedded in the Service’s practices
  + only the amount of water required to undertake programmed water play is used
  + water used in water play is emptied onto gardens
  + water play is discontinued during water restrictions, and the reasons explained to the children
  + educators encourage children to turn taps off to avoid wastage
  + water conservation posters are displayed in bathrooms.
* Educators model and intentionally teach children water conservation, and provide parents with information to continue the Service’s conservation message at home. Refer to the Service’s *Environmental Sustainability Policy.*
* Children do not wade or swim while at the Service.
* In the event of an educator noticing water pooling (puddles) in the outdoor playground, that educator is to immediately notify the Nominated Supervisor. The Nominated Supervisor will assess the situation, taking into account but not limited to variables such as: depth of the puddle, location, slipperiness of the area, age of the children, weather and number of educators, to determine any action deemed necessary to uphold the safety of children and educators. That action may include a formal documented risk assessment. The Nominated Supervisor will then exercise options which include:
  + seizing the opportunity for children to engage in active safe exploratory water play while being carefully supervised by their educators;
  + supervising children/taking children inside while a designated educator disperses the water using the wide outdoor broom; or,
  + contacting the Service’s on-call maintenance person for advice on any further corrective measures if it is believed that the water will not subside naturally in a reasonable time.
* Adults consume hot drinks in areas not accessed by children, including excursions.
* The temperature of hot water accessible to children is maintained at 38 Celsius or below in accordance with the AS 3500.4. Thermostatic valves are tested and serviced annually by a plumber, and this action recorded.

#### Responsibilities of the Approved Provider

Ensure the service operates in line with the Children Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations.

#### Responsibilities of the Nominated Supervisor

* Ensure children are adequately supervised, are not subject to inappropriate discipline, and are protected from harms and hazards **(National Law 166)**.
* Provide supervision, guidance and advice to ensure adherence to the policy at all times.
* Ensure risk assessments for excursions planned near water identify a higher staff to child ratio to ensure adequate supervision **(National Regulation 100, 101).**
* Ensure First Aid and CPR qualifications and requirements are met at all times.
* Provide families with community messages regarding safe water practices.

#### Responsibilities of the Educators

* Embed water safety messages into the children’s education program such as Kids Alive.
* Ensure water troughs or containers for water play are positioned and filled to a safe level and emptied or covered securely after use.
* Empty buckets used for cleaning immediately after use. No cleaning buckets are to be left in areas or accessible to children.
* Discourage children from drinking grey water. Provide clean drinking water at all times.
* Always supervise children in toilet/shower/bath facilities within the service.
* Ensure that all children are supervised while using toilets.
* 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.
* Monitor all taps on the premises that children have access to and ensure they are turned off securely when not in use.

#### Responsibilities of the Children

Ensure that every child has an adult with them before approaching an area with water.

#### Responsibilities of the Families

Reinforce water safety practices with children at home.

#### Definitions, Terms & Abbreviations

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| **Term**  CPR | **means**  Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation |
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#### Related Statutory Obligations & Considerations

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| **Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)** | http://www.acecqa.gov.au/ |
| **Children (Education and Care Services) Nation Law (NSW) 104a** | https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/2010/104a/full |
| **Department of Education** | http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/what-we-offer/regulation-and-accreditation/early-childhood-education-care |
| **Education and Care Services National Regulations** | https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653 |
| **Kidsafe NSW** | <http://www.kidsafensw.org/water-safety/>  http://www.kidsafensw.org/imagesDB/wysiwyg/SwimmingPoolSafetyKL2009\_2.pdf |
| **Kids Alive** | https://kidsalive.com.au/early-childhood-program/ |
| **Kids Health** | http://kidshealth.org/ parent/firstaid\_safe/ outdoor/water\_safety.html |
| **National Quality Framework (NQF)** | http://acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework/ |
| **NSW Government Fair Trading – Pool Fencing Requirements** | http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/ftw/Consumers/Product\_and\_service\_safety/Pool\_safety/Pool\_fencing\_requirements.page |

#### Related Telephone Numbers

* Early Childhood Directorate – 1800 619 113
* Kidsafe - 02 9845 0890
* Emergency Services – 000

**Links to other policies**

* Animal Policy
* Enrolment and Orientation Policy
* Educational Program Policy
* Environmental Sustainability Policy
* Excursion Policy
* Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
* Supervision Policy

#### Amendment History

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| **Version** | **Amendment** | **Date** |
| Previous LDC based Policy | Same name policy  Adaptation of ACA policy  Review- adding plumbing certification, strategies and  practices | May 2018  October 2020  May 2022 |

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| Date: | May 2022 |
| Version: | 02/2020 |
| Last Amended By: | Julia Koti |
| Next Review: | May 2023 |
| Position: | Approved Provider/Director |

This policy will be updated to ensure compliance with all relevant legal requirements every year. Appropriate consultation of all stakeholders (including staff and families) will be conducted on a timely basis. In accordance with Regulation 172 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulation*, families of children enrolled will be notified at least 14 days and their input considered prior to any amendment of policies and procedures that have any impact on their children or family.