

Water Safety Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safety and supervision of children in every situation where water may be a factor in the Service environment. This includes maintaining safe practices during water play, on excursions where water hazards may be present, and in daily routines where water is used for hygiene or drinking.

Scope

This policy applies to all children enrolled in the service, their families, staff members, management, volunteers and visitors. It ensures that everyone connected with the service understands the importance of water safety and their role in keeping children safe.

Water Hazards

Water hazards exist in many forms within an OSHC environment. They may include small pools of water in play spaces, outdoor puddles, nearby creeks or ponds during excursions, hot water systems, or even laundry and kitchen areas. It is the responsibility of the management team, nominated supervisor, responsible person and educators to identify, assess and manage these risks effectively to protect children from harm.

Responsibilities of Management

Management, the nominated supervisor and responsible persons are committed to completing thorough risk assessments whenever water hazards or water-based activities are planned. They will ensure that water play and other activities involving water are highly supervised at all times.

This includes careful and intentional positioning of educators, ongoing scanning and movement around the environment, close observation of play and anticipation of children's behaviour, and where necessary, increasing the number of adults supervising. Before any excursion takes place near water, a detailed risk assessment will be conducted to assess hazards and identify strategies to manage risks. At least one educator who holds an approved first aid qualification will always be present when children are engaged in activities involving water. Management will also ensure that hot water is made inaccessible to children at all times.

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Responsibilities of Educators

Educators will supervise children closely whenever water is present and will never leave children alone near water. They will complete daily safety inspections of the premises to ensure that water hazards are identified and minimised. When a potential hazard is detected, a risk assessment will be carried out and children will be excluded from the area until the hazard has been removed or controlled. Educators will also provide safe opportunities for children to explore water play, mixing materials and engaging with sand and water, while ensuring this is always supervised. Areas such as laundries, storerooms and staff areas will be marked with “Staff Only” signage, and educators will be responsible for ensuring doors are closed securely after use.

Family Communication and Incident Management

Families will be notified within twenty-four hours if their child is involved in any incident or accident at the service or while under the care of the service. All details of the incident will be recorded in the Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record. If an incident presents imminent or severe risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child, or if an ambulance is called in response to an emergency, the regulatory authority will be notified within twenty-four hours. In the event that a child is missing, unaccounted for, or involved in a serious incident, educators will follow the service’s emergency procedures and contact emergency services immediately.

Legislative Requirements and Frameworks

This policy is guided by the Education and Care Services National Law, the Education and Care Services National Regulations (2025), and the National Quality Standard. It is also informed by the My Time Our Place Framework and the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. Together, these documents ensure that the safety, wellbeing and learning of children remain central to all practices relating to water safety within the service.

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Child Safe Standards and Paramountcy Principle

The Service is committed to upholding the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and embedding a strong child safe culture across all practices, including water safety and risk management. In accordance with the Paramountcy Principle, the safety, wellbeing and best interests of the child are the primary and overriding consideration in all decisions, actions and practices undertaken by the Service, including all situations where water may be present.

This requires that all practices relating to water safety prioritise the protection, supervision and wellbeing of children above all other considerations. Educators, staff and management must exercise sound professional judgement and take all reasonable precautions to identify, assess and minimise risks associated with water hazards, ensuring children are closely supervised and never left unattended near water.

The Service will ensure that water-related activities and environments are carefully planned, risk assessed and actively supervised at all times. This includes maintaining effective supervision strategies, positioning educators appropriately, increasing supervision where required, and ensuring that all potential hazards are controlled or eliminated to maintain a safe environment for children.

All practices relating to water safety must prioritise the protection of children from harm, uphold their dignity and wellbeing, and ensure that every child is safe, supported and cared for at all times.

Review

This policy will be reviewed at least once every twelve months, or sooner if changes to legislation or best practice occur. All reviews will include input from staff, families and management.



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Review

Date:	Changes:	Reviewed by:
12/01/2022	New policy (All updated)	Charmayne Nathan
02/06/2023	Full Policy Update	Charmayne Nathan
07/08/2024	New water safety information was added	Charmayne Nathan
17/09/2025	Policy was condensed and made easier for families to understand.	Charmayne Nathan
30/04/2026	Child Safe Standards & Paramountcy Principle was implemented in align with new laws and regulations	Charmayne Nathan