

STATEMENT

The safety and supervision of children is 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 at all times during water play experiences to help keep children safe in and around water and support children's learning in a safe environment.

PURPOSE

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 Out of School Hours Care Service environment

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, management students, and visitors of the Service.

WATER HAZARDS

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, river or pooling water, swimming pool, portable pools and spas, jetted bathtubs (or Jacuzzis)
- Fishponds
- Smaller bodies of water such as baths, mop buckets sinks, basins
- Water feature, such as a wishing well
- Containers for feeding animals
- Water troughs, containers for paddling- clam shells
- Beach

IMPLEMENTATION

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. (<https://kidsafe.com.au/water-safety/>)

MANAGEMENT/NOMINATED SUPERVISOR/RESPONSIBLE PERSON WILL:

- 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 to provide active supervision;

- Scanning and moving around the environment;
 - Observing play and anticipating behaviour;
 - Ensuring the required educator to child ratios
 - Ensuring no child is left unattended when in proximity to water
- Provide direction and education to educators 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 premises adjacent to or providing access to any water hazards that are not able to be adequately supervised at all times (e.g. dams, swimming pool) are to be isolated from children by a child resistant barrier or fence
- 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 prior to taking children on an excursion which 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 a current approved first aid qualification is in attendance at all times;
- Ensure water hazards and water play are always highly supervised.

EDUCATORS WILL:

- Supervise children near water at all times;
- Never leave children alone near any water;
- Ensure children in a bath (if required) are directly supervised at all times;
- 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.
- 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;
- Empty wading pools immediately after every use and 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 water troughs or containers for water play are filled to a safe level and emptied into the garden areas after each use;
- Children will be discouraged from drinking from these water activities;
- Teach children about staying safe in and around water;

WATER SAFETY IN RELATION TO EXCURSIONS

KCS recognises the risks posed by bodies of water and will ensure that every precaution is taken so that children are able to enjoy water-based excursions safely.

Risk assessments will be carried out for all water-based excursions. The risk assessment will consider any water hazards and/or any risks associated with the water-based activities.

Parents/carers will be provided details of the water-based excursion and authorisation for their child to attend will need to be secured prior to excursion departures. The excursion risk assessment and supervision plan will also be available for parent's/carers reference at the Service on the day of the excursion.

KCS are guided by a best practice ratio of 1:5 (educator: child) in terms of supervision when water-based excursions where children will be in or on the water in an unsupervised facility are programmed and 1:8 (educator: child) if a life guard/bronze medallion trained educator is present. A risk assessment of the proposed activity will determine if an alternative number of educators are required from our best practice guide.

A range of factors will be considered when determining the supervision of water-based activities, including:

- Numbers, ages and abilities of the children;
- Number and positioning of educators for the purpose of supervision;
- Each child's current abilities;
- 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 / group of children;
- The experience, knowledge and skill of each educator.

A range of factors will be considered when planning water-based excursions, including:

- Swimming excursions are to be arranged at swimming pools with lifeguards on duty or shallow bodies of water with 1:5 staff ratio for swimming supervision.
- Children must be able to demonstrate that they can swim 25 metres before they are permitted to swim above their own height at a swimming pool.
- Children aged 5 years or under will not be permitted to attend any water-based excursions.
- Water fun parks with slides are not to be programmed for children under 8 years. Height and other restrictions for participation in water slides and other water fun park activities must be checked and adhered to.
- Water sports and excursions to venues other than swimming pools with lifeguards, where there is significant water hazard (e.g. beach with surf, river) requires prior approval by Children's Services Manager and a higher-level risk assessment must be completed.
- Water sports such as kayaking, sailing and surfing, are not to be programmed for children under 9 years. Children must be able to demonstrate they can swim 50 metres to attend water sports activities.
- For Water sports and excursions to venues other than swimming pools with lifeguards, at least 2 adults must have:
 - A current Bronze Medallion Award, or award given on completion of a water rescue test, issued by the Royal Life Saving Society Australia, and
 - The knowledge and ability to implement water safety procedures.
- These following water activities will not be approved:
- Venues with hidden snags, flood debris, fast flowing water or very deep water.
- Areas with very shallow water over slippery or hazardous surfaces.
- Water activities in dams

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
- 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 the temperature of 45.c° which will be tested annually. [Australian standard as 3498]
- Water for pets at the service must be changed daily and only be accessible to children when educators are present.

ACCIDENTS

- Parents will be notified as soon as practicable but within 24 hours if their child is involved in an incident/accident at the Service or while under Service care. Details of the incident/accident will be recorded on an Incident, Injury, Trauma, Illness, First Aid Record.

- If the incident/accident, situation or event presents imminent or severe risk to the health, safety and wellbeing of the child or if an ambulance was called in response to the emergency (not as a precaution) the Regulatory Authority will be notified within 24 hours. Educators will follow emergency procedures and contact emergency services if a child appears to be missing or unaccounted for or is involved in a serious incident or accident.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

The Water Safety Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis in conjunction with children, families, staff, educators and management.

COMPLIANCE

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS) 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 hazards.
2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS/EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
Sec. 165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
Sec. 167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
25(1)(c)	Additional information about proposed education and care services premises
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(2)(a)(iii)	Education and care service must have policies and procedures in relation to Water safety, including safety during any water-based activities
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
274	Swimming pools (NSW)

SOURCE

- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
- Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2018).
- Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2011)
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations (2017).
- Guide to the National Quality Standard. (2020).
- National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC): www.nhmrc.gov.au

- NSW Department of Health: www.health.nsw.gov.au
- Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Administration of First Aid Policy
- Child Safe Environment Policy
- Excursion/Incursion Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Physical Environment Policy
- Sun Safe Policy
- Supervision Policy

RECORD OF REVISIONS

Unless the Policy specifically states otherwise, the Policy does not form part of your employment agreement with KCS. KCS may unilaterally vary, remove or replace this Policy at any time. To the extent that this Policy imposes any obligations on KCS and/or purports to provide any right or benefit to you, those obligations are not contractual and do not give rise to any contractual rights. The Employee is required to be familiar with the content of the Policy and comply with the terms at all times.

File Reference	CSP040 - Water Safety Policy				
Date Created	14/10/2021	Created By	Jordan Ross	Responsible	Children's Services Manager

Version Number	Modified or Reviewed by	Modifications Made/Notes	Date	STATUS (Internal, External, Archived)
V1	OM	Compliance with NQF & Rebrand	January 2016	External
V2	TT	Incorporating Childcare Desktop template and update changes	November 2020	External
V3	MT	Content Review	January 2021	External
V4	JR	New Format	October 2021	External
V4	MT	Content review, formatting and approval	25/11/2021	External
V5	JR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regular policy maintenance • minor formatting edits within text • hyperlinks checked and repaired as required 	March 2023	External