

	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Water Safety Policy and Procedure</h2>
<b>Version No.</b>	Version 3.0 12 April 2023 (approved)
<b>Authorisation</b>	Director City Life
<b>Expiry Date</b>	Policy to be reviewed by 1 December 2025
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Manager Families and Children
<b>Policy Owner</b>	Early Childhood Coordinator

### 1. Purpose

Melton City Council is committed to;

- promoting water safety, including safety during any water-based activities at children's services protecting children from the risks associated with drowning or non-fatal drowning experiences
- providing opportunities for children to explore their natural environment including through water play
- ensuring that educational program planning incorporates water safety awareness
- providing information to educators, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and others at the service about water safety.

1.1. This policy has been adapted from *PolicyWorks* Manual - National Quality Framework released by the Early Learning Association Australia.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to the Nominated Supervisor, Person in day-to-day charge, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Melton City Council children's services, including during incursions and offsite excursions and activities.

### 3. Background

The supervision and safety of children with and around water is of paramount importance.

Learning spaces and environments should offer an array of possibilities and connect children with natural materials. Water is one experience that offers children sensory-rich, open-ended experiences that engage children's curiosity and imagination. Children may encounter these resources in the service environment and/or when on excursions. These experiences, especially those conducted with and near water, will be carefully supervised ensuring the safety of children and adults.

Drowning is a leading cause of death for children in Victoria, with infants and toddlers most at risk. Non-fatal drowning incidents can result in permanent brain damage and disability. Keep Watch is a public education program run by the Royal Life Saving Society – Australia, aimed at preventing the drowning deaths of children under five years of age in all aquatic locations.

### 4. Definitions

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy and related procedures. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *Glossary of Terms*.

Word/Term	Definition
<p><b>Adequate Supervision</b></p>	<p>(In relation to this policy) supervision entails all children (individuals and groups) in all areas of the service, being in sight and/or hearing of an educator at all times including during toileting, sleep, rest and transition routines. Services are required to comply with the legislative requirements for educator-to-child ratios at all times. Supervision contributes to protecting children from Hazards that may emerge in play, including Hazards created by the equipment used.</p> <p>Adequate Supervision refers to constant, active and diligent supervision of every child at the service. Adequate Supervision requires that educators are always in a position to observe and/or hear each child, respond to individual needs, and immediately intervene if necessary.</p> <p>Variables affecting supervision levels include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• number, age and abilities of children</li> <li>• number and positioning of educators</li> <li>• current activity of each child</li> <li>• areas in which the children are engaged in an activity (visibility and accessibility)</li> <li>• developmental profile of each child and of the group of children</li> <li>• experience, knowledge and skill of each educator</li> <li>• need for educators to move between areas (effective communication strategies).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Approved First Aid Qualification</b></p>	<p>A list of Approved First Aid Qualifications, Anaphylaxis management and emergency Asthma management training is published on the Australian Children’s Education &amp; Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) website.</p>
<p><b>Hazard</b></p>	<p>A source or situation with a potential for harm in terms of human injury or ill health, damage to property, damage to the environment or a combination of these.</p>
<p><b>Notifiable Incident</b></p>	<p>An incident involving workplace health and safety that is required by law to be reported to WorkSafe Victoria. Notification is required for incidents that result in death or serious injury/illness, or dangerous occurrences. For a complete list of incidents that must be reported to WorkSafe Victoria, refer to the Guide to Incident Notification on the WorkSafe Victoria website (see <i>Sources</i>).</p>
<p><b>Risk Assessment</b></p>	<p>(In the context of this policy and procedure) a Risk Assessment must identify and assess any hazard that poses a risk to a child’s health, safety and/or wellbeing while on an excursion, and specify how these risks will be managed and/or minimised (National Regulation 101).</p> <p>Risk Assessments must consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the proposed route and location of the excursion</li> <li>• any water hazards or risks associated with water-based activities</li> <li>• transport to and from the proposed location of the excursion (refer to <i>Occupational Health and Safety Policy and Procedure</i>)</li> <li>• the number of adults and children participating in the excursion</li> <li>• the number of educators or other responsible adults who will be providing supervision given the level of risk, and whether or not specialised skills are required (e.g. lifesaving skills)</li> <li>• the proposed activities, and the impact of this on children with varying levels of ability, additional needs or medical conditions</li> <li>• the proposed duration of the excursion, and the impact of this on children with varying levels of ability, additional needs or medical conditions</li> </ul>

Word/Term	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>any items/information that should be taken on the excursion e.g. First Aid kit, emergency contact details for children, medication for children with known medical conditions (such as Asthma, Anaphylaxis and Diabetes) and a mobile phone.</li> </ul> <p>A sample Excursion Risk Management Plan is provided on the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)</p>
<b>Serious Incident</b>	<p>An incident resulting in the death of a child, or an injury, trauma or illness for which the attention of a registered medical practitioner, emergency services or hospital is sought or should have been sought. This also includes an incident in which a child appears to be missing, cannot be accounted for, is removed from the service in contravention of the Regulations or is mistakenly locked in/out of the service premises (National Regulations 12).</p> <p>A Serious Incident should be documented in an <i>Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record</i> (sample form available on the ACECQA website) as soon as possible and within 24 hours of the incident. The Regulatory Authority (Department of Education &amp; Training (DET)) must be notified within 24 hours of a Serious Incident occurring at the service (National Regulations 176). Records are required to be retained for the periods specified in the National Regulations 183.</p>
<b>Water Hazard</b>	<p>(In relation to this policy and procedure) can lead to drowning or non-fatal drowning incidences. Drowning Hazards include large bodies of water such as swimming pools, rivers, creeks, dams and ponds. Smaller bodies of water, including nappy buckets, water containers, pet water bowls and anything with poor drainage which allows water to collect, can also present drowning Hazards for young children.</p>

## 5. Responsibility/Accountability

5.1. The Approved Provider, according to Regulations is responsible for the implementation of this policy. This will be achieved through the Leadership Group and their service staff:

- that children have Adequate Supervision at all times when near Water Hazards
- that educator-to-child ratios are maintained at all times (National Law: Sections 169, National Regulations 123, 355, 357 and 360)
- conducting a Risk Assessment in relation to any Water Hazards on or near the premises that may be accessible to children
- permission is obtained from parents/guardians for an excursion to a location where there is a Water Hazard
- that Water Hazards and risks associated with water-based activities are considered in a Risk Assessment prior to conducting excursions and other offsite events (National Regulation 101)
- increased levels of supervision for an excursion to a location where there is a Water Hazard
- conducting a regular safety check of the service premises
- any Water Hazards that are not able to be adequately supervised at all times are isolated from children by a child-resistant barrier or fence (particularly large bodies of water including swimming pools, rivers, ponds etc.)
- that an educator with a current Approved First Aid Qualification is in attendance and immediately available at all times children are being educated and cared for by the service (National Regulation 136)

- that details of current Approved First Aid Qualifications (refer to *Definitions*) are filed with each staff/educator's record
- reporting Serious Incidents (refer to *Definitions*) to DET
- reporting Notifiable Incidents (refer to *Definitions*) to WorkSafe Victoria
- that water safety awareness is embedded in the educational program
- providing current information to parents/guardians about water safety.

5.2. The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

- ensuring parents/guardians are informed of the Water Safety Policy and Procedure on enrolment
- ensuring that all educators' current Approved First Aid Qualifications meet the requirements of the National Regulations and are approved by ACECQA

5.3. All staff and educators are responsible for:

- providing Adequate Supervision at all times
- undertaking a Risk Assessment prior to an excursion to a location where there is a significant Water Hazard
- adjusting supervision strategies to suit the activities being undertaken
- obtaining parent/guardian permission for an excursion to a location where there is a Water Hazard
- maintaining a current Approved First Aid Qualification
- ensuring gates and other barriers restricting access to Water Hazards are closed at all times and that fences are kept clear at all times
- ensuring that containers of water (including nappy buckets and cleaning buckets) are sealed with child-proof lids and/or out of children's reach
- ensuring wading/paddling pools, water play containers and portable water courses are emptied at the end of each day and stored in a manner that prevents the collection of water when not in use
- checking the outdoor learning environment at the beginning of each day for puddles or filled containers that could pose a potential risk to small children after heavy rain
- providing water safety education as a part of the service's educational program
- informing the Approved Provider immediately if any serious or Notifiable Incidents occur at the service.

5.4. Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- supervising children in their care, including siblings, while attending or assisting at the service
- ensuring that doors, gates and barriers, including playground gates, are closed after entry or exit to prevent access to Water Hazards
- informing themselves about water safety
- ensuring their children understand the risks associated with water
- consider undertaking Approved First Aid Qualifications, as resuscitation skills save lives.

5.5. Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.

## 6. References, Sources, Links to Legislation and Other Documents

6.1. Please refer to Reference and Sources page.

6.2. Related service policies:

- *Administration of First Aid Policy and Procedure*
- *Emergency and Evacuation Policy and Procedure*
- *Excursions and Service Events Policy and Procedure*
- *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy and Procedure*
- *Nutrition and Active Play Policy and Procedure*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Policy and Procedure*
- *Supervision of Children Policy and Procedure.*

## Procedure

### In terms of water-based play (all educators)

- Educators must ensure appropriate supervision is provided during all water-based activities.
- The level of supervision will vary depending on the age and developmental capacity of each child and the water-based activity. A pre-school child will generally require greater supervision than a school age child.
- It is important to include the children in activities that teach the principles of water conservation (for example when discarding water after water based experiences the children use excess water on the garden or some other activity that teaches the benefits of water conservation therefore encouraging a sustainable water supply).

### In terms of Family Day Care (FDC) environments

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- Educators' residences that have swimming pools, spas or any other body of water that is required to be fenced, must not be accessible or used by any children in care.

#### In terms of swimming pools, spas and maintenance

- To provide educators with the information necessary to meet the required standards in relation to swimming pools and swimming pool safety maintenance in the FDC environment

#### In terms of water containers and water features

- Any moveable water container, that is not part of the water play experience, capable of allowing immersion of a young child's face, or coverage of mouth or nose (e.g. nappy bucket, animal drinking bowl, wading pool, plate etc.) must be stored out of the reach of the child or enclosed in an area that the child cannot access or alternatively, store items in such a way that water is not retained.
- Any water feature, pond, dam or well must have appropriate secured screen/cover that can hold the weight of a child. The cover needs to be flush with the edge of the unit and secured in such a way to prevent a child lifting or removing it or, enclosed in an area that is inaccessible to the children.
- By law across Australia, all bodies of water over 300mm deep that are designed for human aquatic use must be fenced. Fencing involves isolating the pool from the home with a well-constructed and well-maintained barrier and a gate that self-closes and self-latches.

#### In terms of plumbing fixtures and appliances

- Any room, area or cupboard containing a bath, basin, tub, washing machine or similar plumbing fixture or appliance shall:

- uncontrolled when printed -

- be capable of being securely enclosed by doors or gates fitted with catches which cannot be operated by a young child
- have any removable plug used in association with such plumbing fixtures or appliances stored out of reach of a young child or in the event that the plugs are not removable, provide suitable supervision.
- Note: Hand washing facilities and fresh drinking water must be accessible by children at all times.

#### In terms of water excursions

Educators planning an excursion to a location where children will swim must complete a Risk Assessment and have it approved by the Coordination Unit or Program Supervisor prior to excursion taking place.

Educators must ensure they have an approved Risk Assessment and comply with excursion ratios below when there is the intention for children to swim:

- one educator registered with FDC for each child under the age of three
- one educator registered with FDC for each two children over three years but less than school aged
- one educator registered with FDC for each four school aged children
- one Vacation Care Program educator for each five school aged children.