



Water Safety

Approval: November 2022

Review: November 2024

POLICY 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.

Bondi Before and After School Care will plan experiences with appropriate levels of challenge where children will be encouraged to explore, experiment and take appropriate risks ("My Time, Our Place", Outcome 4), including the use of water as a medium for play in both the outdoor and indoor environment and on excursions.

Water use will be supervised at all times to ensure the safety of children is a priority. The hygienic state of water will be assessed before it is used for children's play. Drinking water will be accessible, hygienically stored and maintained.

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 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.

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)

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/>]

WATER HAZARDS

The National Regulations make reference 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) or water fun parks
- 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

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
 - 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 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 Regulation 101 prior to taking children on an excursion- 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 the service at all times
- display a Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) guide near any swimming pool, wading pool, or body of water
- ensure water hazards and water play are always highly supervised
- ensure hot water is inaccessible to children.

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
- 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 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
- At the completion of the activity the water containers will be emptied and the containers turned upside down or packed away.
- Ensure water troughs or containers for water play are filled to a safe level. Children will be discouraged from 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.
- Any buckets of water that may be used 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 each morning 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.
- 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, e.g. mop buckets.
- 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 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 these water activities (as above)
- ensure laundry, storerooms and educator areas are to have **Staff only** signs on doors to remind adults to close doors behind them
- teach children about staying safe in and around water

- ensure wading pools are hygienically cleaned, disinfected and chlorinated appropriately.
- children with diarrhoea, upset stomach, open sores or nasal infections should not use the pool
- 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
- remove all children immediately, empty and disinfect the pool should a child pass a bowel motion whilst in the pool

WATER SAFETY ON EXCURSIONS

The service 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, please refer to the service's Excursion Policy. Authorisation from families will be sought prior to excursions including those involving water based activities.

The National Law and Regulations do not specify a specific educator to child ratio for activities where water is a feature. The number of educators present is to be determined by a risk assessment of the proposed activity. 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 activities
- 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.

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.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

Our *Water Safety Policy* will be updated and reviewed biannually in consultation with families, staff, educators and management.

SOURCE

- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
- ACECQA. (2021). Policy and procedure guidelines- *Water Safety Guidelines*
- 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 National Regulations (2017).
- Guide to the National Quality Standard. (2017).
- KidSafe (2021). Water Safety. <https://kidsafe.com.au/water-safety/>
- 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).
- Victoria Government. Better Health Channel. Water safety for children.

POLICY REVIEWED	MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE
November 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • regular policy maintenance • link to Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations added in 'Sources' • minor formatting edits within text <p>hyperlinks checked and repaired as required</p>	November 2024
November 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy reviewed and included suggested guidelines from ACECQA Water Safety Policy Guidelines (June 2021) • Additional legislative requirements added • Additional related policies • Additional information from KidSafe re: water safety included • information related to risk assessments for excursions considering water hazards added • deleted 'nappy' bucket and replaced to 'mop bucket' 	November 2022

CONSIDERATIONS	
Education & Care Services National Regulations	99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 168
National Quality Standard	2.3
Service Policies & Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing a Child Safe Environment policy • Excursion policy
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Time, Our Place. • Work, Health & Safety Act 2011.