



ALDGATE KINDERGARTEN

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Government of South Australia
Department for Education

Water safety procedure

Overview

Drowning is one of the most common causes of unintentional death in Australia in children aged 4 years and younger. Children, especially toddlers seem to be drawn to water whether it is in the bath, the toilet, buckets, swimming pools, puddles, or other vessel. The most common factor in childhood drowning is a lack of supervision. A child can die silently by drowning in as little as 3 cm of water in less than 2 minutes¹. The supervision and safety of children with and around water is of paramount importance.

Aldgate Kindergarten is committed to ensuring children are kept safe when in and around water including when engaging in water -based activities as part of the learning environment, and when managing water hazard risks in and away from the service.

Aldgate Kindergarten's water safety procedure must be read alongside the department [water safety policy](#). Together, these address the requirements in regulation 168 of the National Regulations for education and care services to have policies and procedures in place for managing water safety, including safety during any water- based experiences. A copy of this procedure and the department policy will be kept in the site policies and procedures folder.

Values

At Aldgate Kindergarten we believe in the importance of:

- Providing opportunities for children to explore their natural environment including through water play
- Ensuring that children are protected from the risks associated with water so that they can safely engage in the learning environment, free from harm and hazard
- Ensuring that curriculum planning incorporates water safety awareness
- Providing information to educators, staff, parents, carers, volunteers, and others at the service about water safety.

Procedures

Active Supervision

It is imperative that educators remain vigilant in their supervision of children in and around water and are alert to potential risks in everyday practice in the environment.

To ensure water hazards and water play experiences are actively supervised at all times educators will follow the 6 steps for active supervision as follows:

1. Set up the environment
2. Position educators
3. Scan and count
4. Listen
5. Anticipate behaviour
6. Engage and redirect

For further guidance on the above 6 steps, refer to <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/active-supervision-6-steps>

Managing water hazards

A water hazard is identified as anything that can hold 3cm of water and fit a child's nose and mouth.

Unsafe water environments children may be exposed to in and around the learning environment include the following:

- Sinks, basins, fish tanks, fish bowls, baths, turtle tank
- Swimming pools, portable pools, spas
- Water courses, ponds, mud patches, sandpits, clam shells
- Water troughs, containers and buckets used for play, animal drinking containers
- Drains, pooling water

¹ [Water Safety | Kidsafe SA](#)



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To ensure children are protected from harm that may be caused by water hazards we:

- Assess any potential water hazards as part of our [daily visual inspection](#) of the outdoor environment including ensuring gates are locked and fences are secure and monitor areas where there may be poor drainage.
- Ensure that any barriers that are restricting access to water hazards such as gates, fences, doors, sandpit covers are locked/shut, maintained regularly and in good working order.
- Ensure risk assessments are comprehensive, up to date and followed by all staff including staff such as cleaners, maintenance staff and volunteers.
- Ensure that water is emptied immediately after use and stored in a manner that prevents any vessel from filling when not in use, taking care to ensure water drains effectively.
- Ensure that the design of the environment facilitates adequate drainage of water to prevent pooling.
- Assess for pooling water after rain in the mud-patch, sandpit or creek bed;
- Report any water hazards of concern through the department incident management system Incident 360 (all staff)
- Ensure that laundry or cleaning buckets are locked away/out of reach of children.
- Ensure that water trough is emptied when active supervision is not possible, and either packed away or plug removed and lid put on securely.
- Ensure that plugs are not used in the children's bathroom basins and change table trough.
- Ensure that access to the kitchen is restricted to children by a latched gate – children can only enter kitchen with an adult.
- Ensure that outdoor taps and hoses are kept out of children's reach, used only under direct adult supervision and put away immediately after use.
- Ensure that water courses are directed into sand areas and garden beds that have suitable drainage systems.
- Discourage children from drinking unsafe water sources e.g. during water activities, from rainwaters tanks/storm water.
- Teach children to be aware of the dangers in the environment and always actively supervise children in and around water.
- Create opportunities to reinforce water safety messages within the Early Years Learning Framework so that children can safely explore their natural environment.
- Remind playgroup parents of their responsibility to directly supervise their child/ren at all times and ensure that only staff have access to the removable tap head to turn on the water in the sandpit.

Risk Assessment

At Aldgate Kindergarten risk assessments are completed prior to children's exposure to potential water hazards either in and around the learning environment or when planning for excursions and regular outings.

Risk assessments cover the following matters:

- Active supervision and the additional supervision required to undertake the proposed activity.
- Elimination of water hazards
- Restricting access to water hazards
- Education strategies for prevention

When assessing risk, we make sure:

- The proposed activity will not go ahead if we cannot implement sufficient controls to ensure children's safety in and around water.
- When choosing locations for regular outings and excursions, consideration will be given to the purpose of the activity and avoid unnecessary exposure to water hazards where possible.
- Children are involved in assessing the risk to support their understanding of potential hazards and how to keep themselves safe.

When implementing risk assessments, we make sure

- All educators, staff and volunteers clearly understand their roles and responsibilities in order to effectively implement risk management strategies.
- The risk assessment is available at the service and can be easily accessed.
- Risk assessments are reviewed on a yearly basis or when circumstances change.

Site leaders will ensure that, as soon as practicable after a risk assessment is completed, any necessary updates to this procedure will be made. A copy of all completed risk assessments will be kept by the service.



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Roles and responsibilities

Site Leaders

- Ensure that there is adequate supervision provided given the ages and development needs of children undertaking water activities (including ratios.)
- Inform families about water safety practices at the service
- Ensure first aid and CPR qualifications and requirements are met at all times.
- Undertake risk assessments for all water hazards including water-based experiences in and away from the service
- Take reasonable steps to ensure that the policy and procedures and risk assessments are current, reviewed regularly and communicated to all stakeholders including as part of staff induction processes.

Educators

- Inspecting indoor and outdoor environments for potential water hazards, particularly during and after wet weather.
- Undertake risk assessments for all water hazards including water-based experiences in and away from the service
- Promote water safety messages to children as part of the teaching and learning program.
- Ensure hazards are managed as outlined in this procedure.

Legislative requirements under the National Law and the National Regulations that are relevant to managing water safety include:

- Section 165 – offence to inadequately supervise children
- Section 167 – Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
- Regulation 25(1)(c) – Additional information about proposed education and care service premises
- Regulation 101 – Conduct of risk assessment for excursion
- Regulation 115 – Premises designed to facilitate supervision
- Regulation 168(2)(a)(iii) – Education and care services must have policies and procedures on water safety, including safety during any water-based activities
- Regulation 170 – Policies and procedures to be followed
- Regulation 171 – Policies and procedures to be kept available
- Regulation 172 – Notification of change to policies and procedures

Procedure creation and revision record

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