



## ALDGATE KINDERGARTEN

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Government of South Australia  
Department for Education

# Water safety policy

### **Purpose:**

Water safety policies and procedures help keep children safe in and around water and support children's learning in a safe environment. Children's safety and wellbeing will be protected in and around water through supervision and education. The *Education and Care Services National Regulations* require approved providers to ensure their services have policies and procedures in place for managing water safety, including safety during any water-based activities.

### **Background:**

According to KidSafe (the recognized authority on the prevention of injuries in children), drowning continues to be one of the main causes of fatalities of Australian children. Every year a number of children drown or were in 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.

Children love to play with water are naturally drawn to it but they may not understand the danger. The most common factor in childhood drowning is a lack of active supervision. A child can drown in as little as a few centimetres of water. A water hazard of water feature may include dams, ponds, water fountains, large drains or any areas that retain water. Items such as buckets, sinks, pet drinking bowls, ponds, water features and water tanks are also potential drowning hazards.

### **Legislative requirements:**

All education and care services must have a local water safety policy in place that outlines how they will manage water safety, including during water-based activities onsite and on excursions, based on a comprehensive risk assessment.

### **The following principles inform this policy:**

- The safety, health and wellbeing of children is our number one priority. All water-based activities will be adequately supervised and no child will be left unattended when in proximity to water.
- Water-based play is an important part of children's healthy growth, learning, wellbeing and development. Our educators ensure that all precautions are in place to safeguard children during these experiences.
- Clear roles and responsibilities ensure that all educators are aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to water safety.
- We create opportunities for children to learn and develop. This includes incorporating water safety awareness into the education program.

### **Site procedures for *Preventing and managing water safety incidents*:**

- The mandated Department for Education *Preschool water safety procedure* and this *Water safety policy* will be included in educator induction which is the responsibility of the director or nominated supervisor;
- All educators will understand their supervision, water play and safety responsibilities, and clearly communicate with each other if handing over the role of direct supervision to another educator;
- Educators will use direct, constant monitoring and active supervision of children, including careful positioning, listening closely for absence of noise, observing play and anticipating behaviours;
- Educators will reinforce water safety messages within the children's education program;
- Educators will conduct daily inspections inside and outside. These will include actively looking for pooling water and removing any identified hazards, especially during or after wet weather;
- Water hazards will be eliminated wherever possible, e.g. Water must be emptied immediately after use and stored in a manner that prevents the vessel filling with water when not in use. All aspects of the environment must be designed to ensure adequate drainage of water to avoid pooling;



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- Water in receptacles such as buckets and water troughs will be emptied immediately after use and stored upside down and out of children’s reach.
- Children will use only the small sandpit buckets for collecting water. No buckets or containers will be provided that could potentially be filled more than 5cm in depth and a child’s head could fit inside.
- Water play troughs will be filled to a maximum depth of 5cm. When not in use or active supervision is not possible, the water will be emptied and the lid will be placed firmly on top of the trough so that children have no access to refill the trough independently.
- Water courses created in the sandpit or creek areas will be closely supervised for potential pooling of water to depths greater than 5cm. Adaptations will be made to children’s designs when a hazard is identified and active supervision is not possible;
- No portable pools/clam shells etc. will be used at any time.
- Children will be actively supervised when near the turtle tank and not allowed to stand on chairs to drop in the food;
- Ensure bathroom basins are always draining freely (visually check often for unintentional temporary blockages e.g. paper towels); use of timer taps;
- During playgroup, parents will be advised of any water hazards and reminded that they are responsible for direct supervision of their child at all times. Educators will be responsible for turning on the tap for the sandpit watercourse;
- The nominated supervisor will ensure that all educators hold a current approved first aid qualification.

## **Other 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

## **Policy creation and revision record**

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Approved by site leader:	Bianca Stanbridge
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