



Water Safety

Purpose

The safety and supervision of children is paramount when in or around water. This relates to water play, hot water, drinking water and hygiene practices with water in the Centre environment. Children will be supervised at all times during water play experiences.

Policy statement

1 Values

At St. Kevin's Out of Hours School Care (OHSC) Centre, we recognise the sensory and development benefits gained by children engaged in safe water play activities. We believe that water play is important part of learning and fine motor skill development. Similarly, we also recognise and understand that a child can drown in as little as 5cm of water and we take our responsibility to provide a safe, resource rich learning environment seriously

2 Scope

This policy applies to staff, committee, students on placement, volunteers and parents/guardians whose child/ren are attending, or who wish to enrol child/ren, in St Kevin's Out of Hours School Care (OHSC) Centre early childhood programs.

3 Background and legislation

Water discovery is a sensory, educational and fine motor skill development tool used at St. Kevin's OHSC. We use water as a learning tool:

- Learning to measure for scientific experiments and through cooking experiences
- Through holding, pouring, transporting and filling vessels to develop fine motor skills
- As a sensory experience, on hot days using it to cool the body

We also use water for drinking and must ensure water is available to the children at all times under National legislation.

Keep Watch is a public education program of Royal Life Saving Society – Australia, aimed at preventing the drowning deaths of children under 5 years of age in all aquatic locations. The program has four key actions which St Kevin's OHSC have used as guidance within this policy :

- supervise children constantly around water
- restrict access to water hazards by using child-proof barriers and fences
- provide water awareness training to children
- resuscitation saves lives – ensure that staff have completed current first aid training.

Relevant legislation may include but is not limited to:

- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic) (Part 2: Principles for Children)
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*: Section 167
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*: Regulations 101(2), 168(2)(a)(iii)
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
 - o Standard 2.3: Each child is protected
 - Element 2.3.2: Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury

4 Definitions

Adequate supervision: (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.

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 each child, respond to individual needs, and immediately intervene if necessary. Variables affecting supervision levels include:

- number, age and abilities of children
- number and positioning of educators
- current activity of each child
- areas in which the children are engaged in an activity (visibility and accessibility)
- developmental profile of each child and of the group of children
- experience, knowledge and skill of each educator
- need for educators to move between areas (effective communication strategies).

Approved first aid qualification: A list of approved first aid qualifications, anaphylaxis management and emergency asthma management training is published on the ACECQA website:
www.cecqa.gov.au

Centre: The building and grounds, entrance, foyer, children's indoor and outdoor licensed areas, kitchen, storage areas and community room.

Child: A child aged 0–8.

Department of Education and Employee workplace relations (DEEWR): federal government responsible for the licensing and regulation of out of hours school care.

Hazard: 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.

Hot drink: Any receptacle containing a liquid that has been heated or boiled and that remains above room temperature (25°C).

Notifiable incident: 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:
www.worksafe.vic.gov.au

Serious incident: 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 (Regulation 12). A serious incident should be documented in an Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record (sample form available on the ACECQA website) as soon as possible and within 24 hours of the incident. The Regulatory Authority (DEECD) must be notified within 24 hours of a serious incident occurring at the service (Regulation 176(2)(a)). Records are required to be retained for the periods specified in Regulation 183.

Water hazard: (in relation to this policy) 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 buckets, water containers, pet water bowls and poor drainage which allows water to collect can also present drowning hazards for young children.

5 Sources and related policies

Sources

- DEEWR

- Community Child Care Cooperative NSW, Sample Policy

Centre Policies:

- Incident & Medical Emergency Policy (first aid)
- Nutrition, Healthy Eating and Active Play Policy
- Child-safe environment
- Excursions & Centre Events
- Food safety
- Hygiene
- Code of Conduct
- Determining the responsible person present
- Program participation
- Supervision

Procedures

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- ensuring that educator-to-child ratios are maintained at all times (Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Sections 169(1)&(3), Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 123, 355, 357, 360)
- conducting a regular safety check of the service premises (refer to Occupational Health and Safety Policy)
- ensuring 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.)
- ensuring that an educator with a current approved first aid qualification (refer to Definitions) is in attendance and immediately available at all times children are being educated and cared for by the service (Regulation 136)
- reporting serious incidents (refer to Definitions) to DEECD
- reporting notifiable incidents (refer to Definitions) to WorkSafe Victoria
- ensuring that water safety awareness is embedded in the curriculum
- providing current information to parents about water safety.

The committee is responsible for:

- Ensuring the educator has appropriate water vessels to implement this policy
- Appropriate levels of staff are rostered on to ensure supervision of children around water play
- Monitoring staffs adherence to this policy
- Bringing any pooled water issues to the schools attention and monitoring their resolution
- ensuring that details of current approved first aid qualifications (refer to Definitions) are filed with each staff member's record
- ensuring that an educator with a current approved first aid qualification (refer to Definitions) is in attendance and immediately available at all times children are being educated and cared for by the service

Staff are responsible for:

- Adhering to this policy and implementing the risk mitigation procedures set out in attachment 1
- ensuring that children are adequately supervised (refer to Definitions) at all times when near water hazards (refer to Definitions)
- conducting a risk assessment in relation to any water hazards on or near the premises that may be accessible to children and reporting any issues to the approved provider
- assisting to implement the Water Safety Policy
- informing the Approved Provider immediately if any serious or notifiable incidents (refer to Definitions) occur at the service.
- adjusting supervision strategies to suit the activities being undertaken (refer to Supervision of Children Policy)
- maintaining a current approved first aid qualification (refer to Definitions)

- ensuring wading/paddling pools, water play containers and portable water courses are emptied immediately after each use and stored in a manner that prevents the collection of water when not in use
- checking the outdoor learning environment at the beginning and end of each day for puddles or filled containers that could pose a potential risk to small children after heavy rain
- planning and providing water safety education as a part of the service's program
- informing the Approved Provider immediately if any serious or notifiable incidents (refer to Definitions) occur at the service.

The parents/guardians are responsible for :

- Providing their children with a sealed water bottle for them to drink water
- Being familiar with this policy

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
- recognising when resuscitation is required and obtaining assistance

Evaluation

To assess whether the policy has achieved the values and purposes, the committee will:

- Take into account feedback from staff and parents/guardians regarding the policy
- Monitor complaints and incidents regarding waterplay of children attending the centre
- Ensure that all information on display and supplied to parents, related to infectious diseases, is current.
- Review Staff's use of the policy and feedback on effectiveness

Attachments

Attachment 1 - Risk Mitigation Around Water at St. Kevin's Out of Hours School Care Centre

Authorisation

This policy was adopted by the St Kevin's Out of Hours School Care (OHSC) Centre committee of management at a committee meeting on **18th October 2016**.

Review date: October 2018

Attachment 1 - Risk Mitigation Around Water at St. Kevin's Out of Hours School Care Centre

At St. Kevin's OHSC staff will following the following procedures to reduce risk of drowning or accidents around water:

- Ensure active supervision around water ; this is our number one tool
- Within the service there are no pools or body of water that maybe considered a potential hazard.
- Any water play is confined to small quantities in containers/buckets, measuring cups and strictly supervised.
- Water fountains, which are located outside for children to drink from, are free draining with no pooling water.
- Ensure that children are encouraged to safely explore the properties of water, building water safety messages into our programming as appropriate
- Minimise water waste and reinforce the water conservation message by ensuring that only such water as is required to undertake a programmed water play activity is placed within the vessel. We will further ensure that our programming reflects the appropriate environmental water-wise message when water play activities are planned
- Ensure that all water carrying vessels are emptied at the end of each water play activity and removed from access by children
- Ensure that all water carrying vessels are stored in a manner to prevent the inadvertent collection of water through natural causes such as rain
- Ensure that all water carrying vessels are emptied and allowed to dry thoroughly at the end of each water play activity to prevent the build-up of potentially harmful bacteria and mould or mosquito breeding
- Ensure children thoroughly wash and dry their hands following Centre procedures after each water play activity too reduce the risk of cross infection
- Ensure any spillage of water inside is cleaned up immediately to avoid any slipping dangers
- Ensure drinking water is taken from the taps only, as this is safe consumable water
- Buckets used for general cleaning in the Centre will be emptied immediately after use. No buckets will be left in play areas or accessible to children.
- The School professionally maintain all hot water accessible to children at or below 43.5°C
- Staff will use their breaks to consume hot drinks away from the children. (see Food Safety Procedure)
- If rain occurs during the day, outdoor play areas will be checked for safety prior to the children entering the outdoor environment.