

WATER SAFETY PROCEDURE

Purpose

This policy will outline the procedures in relation to managing water safety, including safety during any water-based activities at Meadows and Districts Kindergarten.

Policy Statement

- At Meadows and Districts Kindergarten, we value ongoing engaging opportunities for children to explore their natural environment, including water play. We ensure that children are protected from the risks associated with drowning or non-fatal drowning experiences through our risk assessments. We ensure that part of our curriculum planning incorporates water safety awareness. We also provide information to educators, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and others at the preschool about water safety.
- This policy applies to all staff working in the preschool, leaders, nominated supervisor/person in charge, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending Meadows and Districts Kindergarten including during offsite excursions and activities.

BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

- 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.
- Water safety relates to access to water in the building, the playground or on excursions, and also to the availability of drinking water for children.
- 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 learning environment
- Drowning is a leading cause of death for children, with infants and toddlers the group most at risk. Non-fatal drowning incidents can result in permanent brain damage and disability. Knowledge of potential hazards associated with water will assist educators in providing a safe, stimulating environment for preschool children.
- 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 poor drainage which allows water to collect can also present drowning hazards for young children. Children can drown in as little as a few centimetres of water.
- Keep Watch is a public education program of the 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:
 - **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

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.acecqa.gov.au

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.

Notifiable incident

An incident involving workplace health and safety is required to be reported on IRMS .

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, Response, Management System (IRMS)* as soon as possible and within 24 hours of the incident. The Regulatory Authority (DECD) 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 nappy buckets, water containers, pet water bowls and poor drainage which allow water to collect can also present drowning hazards for young children.

Leaders Responsibilities

- ensuring that children are adequately supervised at all times when near water hazards
- ensuring that educator-to-child ratios are maintained at all times
- conducting a risk assessment in relation to any water hazards on or near the premises that may be accessible to children (see Appendix 1)
- ensuring permission is obtained from parents/guardians for an excursion to a location where there is a water hazard
- ensuring that water hazards and risks associated with water-based activities are considered in a risk assessment prior to conducting excursions and other offsite events (see Appendix 1)
- ensuring 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
- 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 is in attendance and immediately available at all times so children are being educated and cared for by the service
- ensuring that details of current approved first aid qualifications are filed with each staff member's record
- reporting serious incidents to IRMS
- reporting notifiable incidents to WorkSafe SA
- ensuring that water safety awareness is embedded in the curriculum
- provide current information to parents about water safety

Nominated supervisor/person in charge of responsibilities

- assisting the Approved Provider to implement the *Water Safety Policy*
- ensuring parents/guardians are informed of the *Water Safety Policy* on enrolment
- ensuring permission is obtained from parents/guardians for an excursion to a location where there is a water hazard
- ensuring information on water safety is incorporated into the educational program
- ensuring that children are adequately supervised and protected from hazards and harm at all times
- ensuring that water hazards and risks associated with water-based activities are considered in a risk assessment prior to conducting excursions and other offsite events (see Appendix 1)
- ensuring permission is obtained from parents/guardians for an excursion to a location where there is a water hazard
- ensuring increased levels of supervision for an excursion to a location where there is a water hazard
- ensuring that an educator with a current approved first aid qualification is in attendance and immediately available at all times so children are being educated and cared for by the service
- ensuring that all educators' current approved first aid qualifications meet the requirements of the National Regulations and are approved by ACECQA, with annual CPR accreditation included
- informing the Approved Provider immediately if any serious or notifiable incidents

Educators' and other staff' responsibilities

- provide adequate supervision at all times
- undertaking a risk assessment prior to an excursion to a location where there is a significant water hazard (see Appendix 1)
- adjusting supervision strategies to suit the activities being undertaken
- obtaining parental permission for an excursion to a location where there is a water hazard
- maintaining a current approved first aid qualification, with annual CPR accreditation included
- 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
- 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
- provide water safety education as a part of the service's program
- informing the Approved Provider immediately if any serious or notifiable incidents occur at the service

Parents/guardians responsibilities

- 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
- Recognise when resuscitation is required and obtain assistance
- consider undertaking approved first aid qualifications, as resuscitation skills save lives

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

Appendix 1- Bush Kindy and Kindy Water Risk Assessments

Meadows and Districts Kindergarten Bush Kindy Risk Assessment

EXPOSURE TO WATER RISK/BENEFIT ANALYSIS

Benefits of Exposure to Water (Drain, Puddles)

1. Children become aware of open water and associated risks and learn appropriate behaviour around water.
2. Awareness of seasonal and weather changes to still water and running water.
3. Group care and awareness
4. Children self-risk assess open water
5. Raised awareness and appreciation of wildlife on and near wetlands and rivers
6. Group co-operation
7. Group awareness

VERY LOW

HAZARD	PRECAUTION	HAZARD CHECK
Open water – Drain, Puddles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educators have raised awareness of the risks of large puddles of water in the drain area Children have an awareness of the risks having done their own risk assessments on the drain Children are monitored and supervised by staff who are extra vigilant in the vicinity of water and staff/child ratios are strictly adhered to Educators count children at regular intervals 	
Slippery banks near the drain and potential for the area to fill with water after heavy rain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness of slippery surfaces near the drain edge No access to drain after heavy rain or flooding 	
Contaminated water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children have no access to the drain area when filled with contaminated water Educators raise awareness of contamination Children wash hands in clean running water after contact with puddles/dip, wetland water Ensure open wounds are not exposed to creek water Wash hands after contact with drain water prior to eating 	

Risk Assessment – Water play

Meadows and Districts Kindergarten 4678

Site name and ID No	Meadows and Districts Kindergarten 4678			
Title, description and location of activity	Access to water as part of the kindergarten learning program. This includes water play in containers and in the sandpit.			
Risk Assessment done by:	Name	Position	Date of Assessment	Review Due (3 years)
	Meagan Wymne	Director	2024	

Hazard identification (What is the issue of concern?)	Risk Controls (What are you doing to eliminate or reduce the risk?)	Risk (With all controls in place)
Drowning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide adequate supervision by trained staff members to monitor children's play and intervene if necessary to prevent accidents. Ensure that water depths and access heights are appropriate for the age and skill level of the children. Ensure water containers are covered/emptied when not in use. Ensure the water in the sandpit is draining at a rate as to not cause significant pooling 	Medium
Slips and falls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean up spills as necessary. Place water play in areas that absorb spillage such as grass or on the bark chip (where possible) Provide adequate supervision by trained staff members to monitor children's play and intervene if necessary to prevent ingestion. Use clean, potable water for water play activities to minimize the risk of waterborne illnesses. Regularly clean and sanitize water play equipment and toys to prevent the spread of germs and bacteria. Educate children about the importance of not drinking or ingesting water during water play activities. Cover open wounds during water play. Water for water play is clearly labeled 'Not for Drinking'. 	Low
Waterborne illness from ingestion or contact with contaminated water		Low

