

Avoca Beach Preschool

Background

Children's access to clean water for drinking and for washing their hands is important for their health and wellbeing. In addition, access to water play affords children the opportunity for open-ended, exploratory and sensory play which contributes to their development and learning. It also develops environmental awareness.

However, children can drown in as little as 6cm of water according to Kids Health. Accordingly, their access to water requires effective management and the highest level of supervision.

Policy statement

This Policy outlines the Service's approach to water safety so that children remain unharmed and healthy and applies at the Service and during excursions. Safety and supervision of children are the highest priority when children have access to water. The Policy covers hot water, drinking water, hygiene practices with water, and water play. It also includes safe storage of equipment used for water play.

Strategies and practices

- At enrolment, the Service's *Water Safety Policy* is explained to parents.
- Families are provided with water safety information including water safety in the home and the availability of learn-to-swim programs in the local community.
- Children are closely supervised at all times they are involved in water play or are near water. They are never left alone near water.
- Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) posters are displayed prominently throughout the Service, and where water play is set up.
- Educators intentionally teach children about staying safe in and around water.
- Educators receive continuing professional development in water safety, and specific water safety issues are discussed in team meetings.
- Children have ready access to clean drinking water at all times, and are regularly offered water throughout the day.
- The water in troughs and containers used for water play is kept at safe levels for children, and at weights that educators can move or secure according to WHS guidelines for safe lifting.
- Children are discouraged from drinking any water used in the play activities.

Water Safety

- All water troughs and containers are emptied and hygienically cleaned at the end of each water play activity, allowed to dry thoroughly to prevent the build-up of potentially harmful bacteria such as mould, and then stored in an area inaccessible to children.
- Educators and children wash and dry their hands after each water play activity to reduce the risk of cross-infection.
- Buckets used for cleaning are kept out of children's reach, emptied immediately after each use and stored in an area inaccessible to children.
- The Service's fences and gates meet regulatory requirements, and educators ensure that items that could be used to scale the fence are kept away from the fence.
- The Nominated Supervisor completes an Excursion Risk Management Plan prior to every excursion. As part of the risk assessment, particular attention is focused upon water safety whenever the excursion is near a body of water, and upon supervision implications.
- When around bodies of water, Educator to child ratios will be increased to ensure supervision is adequate and to protect children from harm or hazards.
- At least one educator on excursions must hold a current First Aid and CPR certification.
- Water for pets is changed regularly, and is inaccessible to children unless accompanied by an educator.
- Water conservation is embedded in the Service's practices
 - only the amount of water required to undertake programmed water play is used
 - water used in water play is emptied onto gardens
 - water play is discontinued during water restrictions, and the reasons explained to the children
 - educators encourage children to turn taps off to avoid wastage
 - water conservation posters are displayed in bathrooms.
- Educators model and intentionally teach children water conservation, and provide parents with information to continue the Service's conservation message at home. Refer to the Service's *Environmental Sustainability Policy*.
- Children do not wade or swim while at the Service.
- In the event of an educator noticing water pooling (puddles) in the outdoor playground, that educator is to immediately notify the Nominated Supervisor. The Nominated Supervisor will assess the situation, taking into account but not limited to variables such as: depth of the puddle, location, slipperiness of the area, age of the children, weather and number of educators, to determine any action deemed necessary to uphold the safety of children and educators. That action may include a formal documented risk assessment. The Nominated Supervisor will then exercise options which include:
 - seizing the opportunity for children to engage in active safe exploratory water play while being carefully supervised by their educators;

Water Safety

- supervising children/taking children inside while a designated educator disperses the water using the wide outdoor broom; or,
- contacting the Service’s on-call maintenance person for advice on any further corrective measures if it is believed that the water will not subside naturally in a reasonable time.
- Adults consume hot drinks in areas not accessed by children, including excursions.
- Grey water systems or water tanks are labelled with “do not drink” signage and the children are supervised to ensure that they do not play in or drink this water.
- The temperature of hot water accessible to children is maintained at 45 degrees Celsius. in accordance with the AS 3500.4. Thermostatic valves are tested and serviced annually by a plumber, and this action recorded.

Additional safe practices for babies

- To ensure that babies and toddlers are never left unattended in the bath, near toilets or any containers with water in them left outside after rainfall.

Responsibilities of parents

- To provide a spare set of clothing for their child in the event that the child engages in water play and becomes uncomfortably wet.
- To continue the Service’s water conservation message at home.

Procedures and forms

- Excursion Risk Management

Links to other policies

- Animal Policy
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy
- Educational Program Policy
- Environmental Sustainability Policy
- Excursion Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Supervision Policy

Links Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, National Quality Standard 2011

Regulation	25	Additional information about proposed education and care service premises
Regulation	100	Risk assessment must be conducted before excursion
Regulation	101	Conduct of risk assessment for excursion
Regulation	168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures

NQS	QA2.1.1	Each child’s wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child’s need for sleep, rest and relaxation
NQS	QA 2.1.2	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented

Water Safety

NQS	QA 2.2.1	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard
NQS	QA 3.1.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child
NQS	QA 3.1.2	Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained
NQS	QA 3.2.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child's participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments
NQS	QA 3.2.2	Resources, materials and equipment allow for multiple uses, are sufficient in number, and enable every child to engage in play-based learning
NQS	QA 3.2.3	The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible
NQS	QA 6.1.1	Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions
NQS	QA 6.1.3	Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing
NQS	QA 7.2.2	The educational leader is supported and leads the development and implementation of the educational program and assessment and planning cycle.

Sources

- Community Childcare Cooperative. (2010). *Water safety: Sample policy*
- Early Years Learning Framework 2009
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Guide to the National Quality Framework 2018 (September 2020 Update): Section 4 – Operational Requirements <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-09/Guide-to-the-NQF-September-2020.pdf>
- Kids Health - <https://kidshealth.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/hot-water-and-scalds>

Further reading and useful websites (Consistent with the approach of the National Quality Framework, the following references have prioritised efficacy and appropriateness to inform best practice, and legislative compliance over state or territory preferences.)

- Kidsafe - <https://www.kidsafensw.org/safety/home-community/water-safety/>
- Kids Alive - *Kids alive do the five.* <http://www.kidsalive.com.au/>
- National Health and Medical Research Council – <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/guidelines-managing-risks-recreational-water>
- Royal Life Saving Australia - <https://www.royallifesaving.com.au/stay-safe-active/locations/water-safety-at-home>

Policy review

The Service encourages staff and parents to be actively involved in the annual review of each of its policies and procedures. In addition, the Service will accommodate any new legislative changes as they occur and any issues identified as part the Service's commitment to quality improvement. The Service consults with relevant recognised authorities as part of the annual review to ensure the policy contents are consistent with current research and contemporary views on best practice.

Version Control

Version	Date Reviewed	Approved By	Comments/Amendments	Next Review Date
1	8 January 2018	Dr Brenda Abbey (Author)	Updated to changed NQF requirements 1 February 2018. Service to modify policies to its specific needs.	

Water Safety

2	6 September 2019	Dr Brenda Abbey (Author)	Updated references.	
3	29 September 2020	Dr Brenda Abbey (Author)	Added content about pooling water on the playground. Updated references.	
4	30 December 2020	Dr Brenda Abbey (Author)	Updated references.	
5	May 2022	ACA NSW	Updated references Added a few points regarding water safety.	
6	May 2023	Jessica Adlard	May staff meeting Emailed families	May 2024