



Water Safety Policy and Procedure

Policy Statement

Staff at Mark Oliphant College Children's Centre aim to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of each child at all times in relation to water safety.

Supporting Evidence

Drowning is one of the leading causes of unintentional death for Australian children. Statistics from *Australia's National Drowning Report* by the Royal Lifesaving Society of Australia shows that in 2017-2018, 18 children aged 0-4 years drowned. Drowning can occur quickly and silently – 20 seconds and a few centimetres of water is all it takes for a toddler to drown. It's not only large bodies of water, such as pools and the beach that put children at risk; baths, ponds, buckets, eskies, pet's drinking bowls and other small bodies of water are also drowning hazards. ([Kidsafe – Drowning factsheet, 2019](#))

Water Hazard

A water hazard is defined as anything that can hold 5cm of water and fit a child's nose and mouth. Water hazards in children's learning environments include:

- sinks, basins, fish tanks, fish bowls, baths
- swimming pools, portable pools, spas
- water courses, ponds, sandpits, clam shells
- water troughs, containers and buckets used for play, animal drinking containers
- pooling water

Managing water hazards

Site leaders must complete risk assessments that identify and assess risks associated with any water hazards and water-based activities. Risk assessments must address:

- Active supervision – children must be actively supervised at all times when there is a risk of access to any water hazard. Active supervision includes:
 - direct and constant monitoring of children – within arm's length (within 1 to 2 metres)
 - careful and intentional positioning
 - scanning and moving around the environment
 - listening closely for sounds or the absence of noise
 - observing play and anticipating behaviour
 - higher adult to child ratios.
- Eliminating hazards – 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.
 - Restricting access – compliant fencing or barrier.





Implementation

Our staff will:

- Ensure water troughs or containers for water play are filled to a safe level and emptied or covered securely after use.
- Empty buckets used for cleaning immediately after use. No cleaning buckets are to be left in areas accessible to children.
- Water courses are, where possible, to be directed into areas that have suitable drainage systems to avoid pooling such as sand and garden areas
- Discourage children from drinking grey water. Provide clean drinking water at all times.
- Supervise children in toilet facilities within the service.
- Write and implement risk assessments for activities that involve water.
- Respect water as a precious resource and encourage children to turn taps off, only use what they need and have taps for water play on low.
- Actively supervise children when playing with or around water. Active supervision includes:
 - Direct and constant monitoring of children – within 1-2 metres
 - Careful, intentional positioning
 - Scanning and moving around the area
 - Listening closing for sounds or the absence of noise
 - Observing play and anticipating behaviour
 - Higher adult/child ratios
- Explicitly teach water safety as part of the curriculum, especially in the lead up to water play activities
- Be mindful of potential water hazards, particularly during and after wet weather. Areas of water pooling will be referred to maintenance.

Beach Kindy

Our Centre attends Beach Kindy in term 4 each year at Webb Beach. Prior to these excursion days our staff will conduct a risk assessment where particular attention will be focussed upon water safety and ensuring that ratios are adequate when around bodies of water. Staff also conduct daily risk assessments to accommodate changing weather conditions (i.e. where the tide may be high) prior to bringing children to the site. ([DfE Camps and Excursions](#)). Prior to the first Beach Kindy each year, a staff member will visit the site to review the risk assessment in person.

Working with families, health services & industry

Our Centre:

- Provides information from Kidsafe to families and caregivers on water safety through a variety of media such as:
 - Notices
 - Policy consultation
 - Displays
 - Access to risk assessments





- Encourages families to reinforce water safe practices at home with their children

Related Legislation

- [Education and Care Services National Regulation](#)
 - Regulation 101 – Conduct of risk assessment for excursion
 - Regulation 168(2)(a)(iii) – Education and care services must have policies and procedures on water safety, including safety during any water-hyphen based activities
 - Section 165 – Offence to inadequately supervise children
 - Section 167 – Offence relating to protection of children from harms and hazards
- [Education and Early Childhood Services \(Registration and Standards\) Act 2011, Schedule 1 Education and Care Services National Law \(South Australia\)](#)

Sources

- [National Quality Standards](#)
 - Element 2.2.1
- [Kidsafe – Drowning factsheet, 2019](#)
- [DfE Preschool Water Safety Procedure, 2021](#)
- [DfE Camps and Excursions](#)
- [Water Safety in Education and Care Settings](#)

Revision Register

Version Number	Details of Changes Made	Date Issued
1	Policy creation	December 2019
2	Legislation and sources updated Beach Kindy risk assessment review, explicit teaching of water safety, pooling water - added	November 2021
3	Sources updated and added	November 2023
4	Nil	September 2025

