


Policy

Early Years Policy – Water Safety

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| Date of Adoption | April 2013 | | |
| Adoption Method | <input type="checkbox"/> Council | <input type="checkbox"/> CEO | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Director Community |
| Director Signature | Signed by:  <small>A4566C08D5B4450...</small> | | Date 06-12-2024 |
| Responsible Officer and Unit | Samantha Waymouth, Coordinator Early Years Services | | |
| Nominated Review Period | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Annually | <input type="checkbox"/> Every 4 years | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>please specify</i>) |
| Last Endorsement Date | October 2020 | | |
| Next Endorsement Date | November 2025 | | |

Macedon Ranges Shire Council acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land and waterways. Council recognises their living cultures and ongoing connection to Country and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging. Council also acknowledges local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander residents of Macedon Ranges for their ongoing contribution to the diverse culture of our community.

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Purpose/Objective

This policy outlines how to manage water safety, including safety during any water-based activities at Council's Early Years Services.

Scope

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children, and others attending the programs and activities of Macedon Ranges Shire Council kindergartens including during offsite excursions and activities.

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 important for services to have detailed risk assessments that consider any water hazards and associated risks, including water-based activities and excursions near water.

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 in Victoria, 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 to provide a safe, stimulating environment for kindergarten 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.

Gender Impact Assessment

In accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, a Gender Impact Assessment was not required in relation to the subject matter of this policy.

Definitions

| Term | Definition |
|----------------------|---|
| Adequate supervision | <p>Children (individuals and groups) in all areas of the services, being in sight and/or hearing of a staff member 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.</p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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 |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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 Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) website: https://www.acecqa.gov.au/qualifications/nqf-approved |
| 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 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 their Guide to Incident Notification: https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/resources/guide-incident-notification |
| Serious incident | <p>A serious incident (<i>Regulation 12</i>) is defined as any of the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the death of a child while being educated and cared for at the service or following an incident at the service ● any incident involving serious injury or trauma while the child is being educated and cared for, which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a reasonable person would consider required urgent medical attention from a registered medical practitioner; or ○ the child attended or ought reasonably to have attended a hospital e.g. a broken limb* ● any incident involving serious illness of a child while that child is being educated and cared for by a service for which the child |

attended, or ought reasonably to have attended, a hospital e.g. severe asthma attack, seizure or anaphylaxis*

*In some cases (for example rural and remote locations) a General Practitioner conducts consultation from the hospital site. Only treatment related to serious injury or illness or trauma is required to be notified, not other health matters.

- any emergency^ for which emergency services attended

^This means an incident, situation or event where there is an imminent or severe risk to the health, safety or wellbeing of a person/s at an education and care service. It does not mean an incident where emergency services attended as a precaution.

- a child appears to be missing or cannot be accounted for at the service
- a child appears to have been taken or removed from the service in a manner that contravenes the National Regulations
- a child was mistakenly locked in or out of the service premises or any part of the premises.

Examples of serious incidents include amputation (e.g. removal of fingers), anaphylactic reaction requiring hospitalisation, asthma requiring hospitalisation, broken bone/fractures, bronchiolitis, burns, diarrhoea requiring hospitalisation, epileptic seizures, head injuries, measles, meningococcal infection, sexual assault, witnessing violence or a frightening event.

If the approved provider is not aware that the incident was serious until sometime after the incident, they must notify the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours of becoming aware that the incident was serious.

Notifications of serious incidents should be made through the NQA IT System portal (<http://www.acecqa.gov.au>). If this is not practicable, the

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| | notification can be made initially in whatever way is best in the circumstances. |
| Water hazard | <p>Hazards which could lead to drowning or non-fatal drowning incidences, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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. |

References

- > Victorian Department of Education, Arc Learning:
<https://arc.educationapps.vic.gov.au/learning/sites/arc-learning>
- > Life Saving Victoria, School Swimming and Water Safety Toolkit: <https://lsv.com.au/toolkit/>
- > Royal Life Saving Society Australia: www.royallifesaving.com.au
- > Victorian Government, Water Safety - Play it Safe by the Water:
<https://www.vic.gov.au/water-safety>
- > Kidsafe, Water Safety: <https://kidsafe.com.au/water-safety/>

Related Policies

- > Early Years Policy – Administration of First Aid
- > Early Years Policy – Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing
- > Early Years Policy – Supervision of Children
- > Early Years Policy – Excursions and Service Events
- > Early Years Policy – Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play

- > Early Years Policy – Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness
- > Occupational Health and Safety Policy (Council)

Related Legislation

- > *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*
 - *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*

Responsibilities

Mandatory – Quality Area 2

| Responsibilities | Approved provider and persons with management or control | Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge | Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff | Parents/guardians | Contractors, volunteers and students |
|--|--|---|--|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted | | | | | |
| Ensuring that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met | R | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Ensuring parents/guardians are informed of the Early Years Policy - Water Safety on enrolment (<i>Regulation 168(2)(a)(iii), 171</i>) | R | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Assisting the approved provider to implement the Early Years Policy - Water Safety (<i>Regulation 170</i>) | | R | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Ensure that there is adequate supervision (refer to Definitions) provided, given the ages and developmental needs of children undertaking water activities (including ratios) (<i>National Law: Section 165, Regulation 115</i>) | R | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Adjusting supervision strategies to suit the activities being undertaken (refer to Early Years Policy - Supervision of Children) | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Ensuring risk assessments are undertaken and water hazards and risks associated with water-based activities are taken into | R | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |

| Responsibilities | Approved provider and persons with management or control | Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge | Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff | Parents/guardians | Contractors, volunteers and students |
|---|--|---|--|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| consideration both at the service and prior to conducting excursions and other offsite events (<i>National Law: Section 16, Regulation 101</i>) | | | | | |
| Conducting a risk assessment in relation to any water hazards on or near the premises that may be accessible to children (<i>National Law: Section 165</i>) | R | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Ensuring permission is obtained from parents/guardians for an excursion to a location where there is a water hazard (<i>Regulation 102</i>) (refer to Early Years Policy - Excursions and Service Events) | R | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Ensuring increased levels of supervision for an excursion to a location where there is a water hazard (refer to Early Years Policy - Supervision of Children) (<i>National Law: Section 165</i>) | R | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Conducting a regular safety check of the service premises (Refer Early Years Policy Supervision of Children) (<i>National Law: Section 167</i>) | R | R | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Ensuring doors, gates and other barriers restricting access to water hazards are closed at all times, and that fences are kept clear at all times (<i>National Law: Section 167</i>) | R | R | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

| Responsibilities | Approved provider and persons with management or control | Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge | Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff | Parents/guardians | Contractors, volunteers and students |
|--|--|---|--|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Ensuring that containers of water (including nappy buckets and cleaning buckets) are sealed with child-proof lids (<i>National Law: Section 167</i>) | R | R | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Ensuring wading/paddling pools, water play containers, portable water troughs and pet water containers are emptied immediately after each use and stored in a manner that prevents the collection of water when not in use (<i>National Law: Section 167</i>) | R | R | ✓ | | ✓ |
| 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 (<i>National Law: Section 167</i>) | R | R | ✓ | | ✓ |
| 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.) (<i>National Law: Section 167</i>) | R | R | ✓ | | ✓ |
| 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 | R | ✓ | | | |

| Responsibilities | Approved provider and persons with management or control | Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge | Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff | Parents/guardians | Contractors, volunteers and students |
|---|--|---|--|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| being educated and cared for by the service (<i>Regulation 136</i>) | | | | | |
| Ensuring that all educators' current approved first aid qualifications meet the requirements of the National Regulations and are approved by ACECQA (refer to Early Years Policy - Administration of First Aid) (<i>Regulation 136</i>) | R | ✓ | | | |
| Ensuring that details of current approved first aid qualifications (refer to Definitions) are filed with each staff member's record | R | ✓ | | | |
| Reporting serious incidents (refer to Definitions) to the Victorian Department of Education (<i>Regulation 174, 175</i>) | R | ✓ | | | |
| Informing the approved provider immediately if any serious or notifiable incidents (refer to Definitions) occur at the service | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Reporting notifiable incidents (refer to Definitions) to WorkSafe Victoria | R | ✓ | | | |
| Supervising children in their care, including siblings, while attending or assisting at the service | | | | ✓ | |
| Providing current information to parents about water safety | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |

| Responsibilities | Approved provider and persons with management or control | Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge | Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff | Parents/guardians | Contractors, volunteers and students |
|---|--|---|--|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Providing water safety education and information as a part of the service's program | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |

Evaluation

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the approved provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from educators, staff, parents/guardians, children, management and all affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify all stakeholders, including parents/guardians, at least 14 days before making any significant change to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk (*Regulation 172 (2)*).

Attachments

Nil