



Water safety procedure

Overview

Drowning is one of the most common causes of unintentional death in Australia in children aged 4 years and younger. Children, especially toddlers seem to be drawn to water whether it is in the bath, the toilet, buckets, swimming pools, puddles, or other vessel.

The most common factor in childhood drowning is a lack of supervision. A child can die silently by drowning in as little as 3 cm of water in less than 2 minutes¹.

The supervision and safety of children with and around water is of paramount importance.

Thorndon Park is committed to ensuring children are kept safe when in and around water including when engaging in water -based activities as part of the learning environment, and when managing water hazard risks in and away from the service.

Water Safety Procedure must be read alongside the department [water safety policy](#). Together, these address the requirements in regulation 168 of the National Regulations for education and care services to have policies and procedures in place for managing water safety, including safety during any water- based experiences.

A copy of this procedure and the department policy will be kept policy /procedure folder.

Values

At Thorndon Park Kindergarten we believe in the importance of:

- *Providing opportunities for children to explore their natural environment including through water play*
- *Ensuring that children are protected from the risks associated with water so that they can safely engage in the learning environment, free from harm and hazard.*
- *Ensuring that curriculum planning incorporates water safety awareness.*
- *Providing information to educators, staff, parents, carers, volunteers, and others at the service about water safety.*

¹ [Water Safety | Kidsafe SA](#)

Procedures

Active Supervision

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 environment.

To ensure water hazards and water play experiences are actively supervised at all times educators will follow the 6 steps for active supervision as follows:

1. Set up the environment
2. Position educators within 1 to 2 metres of children
3. Scan and count
4. Listen
5. Anticipate behaviour
6. Engage and redirect
7. Ensure appropriate lid /cover is secured or emptied when not in use

For further guidance on the above 6 steps, refer to <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/active-supervision-6-steps>

Managing water hazards

A water hazard is identified as anything that can hold 3cm of water and fit a child's nose and mouth.

Unsafe water environments children may be exposed to in and around the learning environment include the following:

- Sinks, basins, fish tanks, fishbowls, baths
- Swimming pools, portable pools, spas
- Water courses, ponds, sandpits, clam shells
- Water troughs, containers and buckets used for play, animal drinking containers
- Drains, pooling water

To ensure children are protected from harm that may be caused by water hazards we:

- Assess any potential water hazards as part of our [daily visual inspection](#) of the outdoor environment including ensuring gates are locked and fences are secure and monitor areas where there may be poor drainage.
- Ensure that any barriers that are restricting access to water hazards such as gates, fences, doors sandpit covers are locked/shut, maintained regularly and in good working order.
- Ensure risk assessments are comprehensive, up to date and followed by all staff including staff such as cleaners, maintenance staff and volunteers.
- Ensure that water is emptied immediately after use and stored in a manner that prevents any vessel from filling when not in use, taking care to ensure water drains effectively.
- Ensure that the design of the environment facilitates adequate drainage of water to prevent pooling.
- Report any water hazards of concern through the department incident management system Director
- *Ensure that laundry or cleaning buckets are not in reach of children*
- *Ensure that water trough is emptied and packed away as soon as play has finished.*
- *Plugs are not to be used in the children's bathroom.*

- *Access to the kitchen is restricted by a low gate which is locked unless an adult is present supervising children in the kitchen.*
- *Outdoor taps are accessible only to educators and kept out of children's reach.*
- *Water courses are to be directed into sand areas and garden beds that have suitable drainage systems.*
- *Children are discouraged from drinking from unsafe water sources, such as during water activities or from rainwaters tanks or storm water.*
- *Teach children to be aware of the dangers in the environment and always actively supervise children in and around water.*
- *Create opportunities to reinforce water safety messages within the Early Years Learning Framework so that children can safely explore their natural environment.*
- *Fill troughs or containers for water play to a safe level of 300mm*
- *Encourage children to change into dry clothes if they become very wet during water play activities*
- *Daily inspection and safe guarding of Fish Tank and surrounds. Refer to Fish Risk Assessment.*

Risk Assessment

At Thorndon Park Kindergarten risk assessments are completed prior to children's exposure to potential water hazards either in and around the learning environment or when planning for excursions and regular outings.

Risk assessments cover the following matters:

- Active supervision and the additional supervision required to undertake the proposed activity.
- Elimination of water hazards
- Restricting access to water hazards
- Education strategies for prevention

When assessing risk, we make sure:

- The proposed activity will not go ahead if we cannot implement sufficient controls to ensure children's safety in and around water.
- When choosing locations for regular outings and excursions, consideration will be given to the purpose of the activity and avoid unnecessary exposure to water hazards where possible.
- Children are involved in assessing the risk to support their understanding of potential hazards and how to keep themselves safe.

When implementing risk assessments, we make sure

- All educators, staff and volunteers clearly understand their roles and responsibilities in order to effectively implement risk management strategies.
- The risk assessment is available at the service and can be easily accessed.
- Risk assessments are reviewed on a yearly basis or when circumstances change.

Site leaders will ensure that, as soon as practicable after a risk assessment is completed, any necessary updates to this procedure will be made.

A copy of all completed risk assessments will be kept by the service.

Roles and responsibilities

Site Leaders

- Ensure that there is adequate supervision provided given the ages and development needs of children undertaking water activities (including ratios.)
- Inform families about water safety practices at the service
- Ensure first aid and CPR qualifications and requirements are met at all times.
- Undertake risk assessments for all water hazards including water-based experiences in and away from the service
- Take reasonable steps to ensure that the policy and procedures and risk assessments are current, reviewed regularly and communicated to all stakeholders including as part of staff induction processes.

Educators

- Inspecting indoor and outdoor environments for potential water hazards, particularly during and after wet weather.
- Undertake risk assessments for all water hazards including water-based experiences in and away from the service
- Promote water safety messages to children as part of the teaching and learning program.
- Ensure hazards are managed as outlined in this procedure.

Procedure creation and revision record

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