

	<b>Water Safety Policy &amp; Procedures</b>
<b>Version No.</b>	Version 6 2024
<b>Authorisation</b>	General Manager
<b>Expiry Date</b>	Policy to be reviewed Annually
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Manager Evolve Early Learning & Kindergarten
<b>Policy Owner</b>	Evolve Early Learning & Kindergarten

## Policy

Evolve Early Learning & Kindergarten is committed to:

- Providing opportunities for children to explore their natural environment including through water play
- Ensuring that children are protected from the risks associated with drowning or nonfatal drowning experiences
- Ensuring that educational program planning incorporates water safety awareness
- Providing information to educators, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and others at the service about water safety

## Purpose

Evolve Early Learning & Kindergarten is committed to:

- Promoting water safety, including safety during any water-based activities
- This policy has been adapted from *PolicyWorks* Manual - National Quality Framework released by the Early Learning Association Australia

## Scope

This policy applies to Evolve Early Learning & Kindergarten who is responsible for the direct education and care of children including offsite excursions and activities.

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Educators, Staff, Students on placement, Volunteers, Parents/guardians, Children and others attending Evolve Early Education & Kindergarten

## National Quality Standards (NQS)

### Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety

**2.1.2 Health practices and procedures** - Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented

**2.2 Safety** - Each child is protected

**2.2.1 Supervision** - At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard

**2.2.2 Incident and emergency management** - Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented.

## **Background**

- 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 in Victoria, with infants and toddlers 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 all children in care.
- 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 anything with 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 run by the Royal Life Saving Society – Australia, aimed at preventing the drowning deaths of children under five 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

- Ensure that staff/educators have completed current First Aid training.

## **Education and Care National Regulations**

- Conduct of risk assessment for excursions (National Regulations 101)
- Premises designed to facilitate supervision (National Regulations 115)
- Educators must be working directly with children to be included in ratios (National Regulations 122)
- Centre based services-general educator qualifications (National Regulations 126)
- Education and care service must have policies and procedures (National Regulations 168)

## **Responsibility/Accountability**

The Approved Provider, according to Regulations is responsible for the implementation of this policy. This will be achieved through the Centre Manager and the staff:

- Ensuring that children have Adequate Supervision (refer to *Definitions*) at all times when near Water Hazards (refer to *Definitions*)
- Ensuring that educator-to-child ratios are maintained at all times (National Law: Sections 169, National Regulations 123, 355, 357 and 360)
- Conducting a Risk Assessment in relation to any Water Hazards on or near the premises that may be accessible to children
- Ensuring permission is obtained from parents/guardians for an excursion to a location where there is a Water Hazard (refer to *Excursions and Service Events Policy*)
- 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 (National Regulation 101)
- Ensuring increased levels of supervision for an excursion to a location where there is a Water Hazard (refer to *Supervision of Children Policy*)
- Conducting a regular safety check of the service premises (refer to *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*)
- 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 (refer to *Definitions*) is in attendance and immediately available at all times children are being educated and cared for by the service (National Regulation 136)
- Ensuring that details of current Approved First Aid Qualifications (refer to *Definitions*) are filed with each staff/educator's record
- Reporting Serious Incidents (refer to *Definitions*) to DET
- Reporting Notifiable Incidents (refer to *Definitions*) to WorkSafe Victoria
- Ensuring that water safety awareness is embedded in the educational program
- Providing current information to parents/guardians about water safety

**The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:**

- 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 (refer to *Excursions and Service Events Policy*)
- Ensuring information on water safety (refer to *Sources*) is incorporated into the educational program
- Ensuring that children are adequately supervised (refer to *Definitions*) 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 (National Regulations 100, 101)
- Ensuring increased levels of supervision for an excursion to a location where there is a Water Hazard (refer to *Supervision of Children Policy*)
- 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 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 (refer to *Administration of First Aid Policy*)
- Informing the Approved Provider immediately if any serious or Notifiable Incidents (refer to *Definitions*) occur at the service

#### **Educators are responsible for:**

- Providing Adequate Supervision (refer to *Definitions*) at all times
- Undertaking a Risk Assessment prior to an excursion to a location where there is a significant Water Hazard (refer to *Excursions and Service Events Policy*)
- Adjusting supervision strategies to suit the activities being undertaken (refer to *Supervision of Children Policy*)
- Obtaining parent/guardian permission for an excursion to a location where there is a Water Hazard (refer to *Excursions and Service Events Policy*)
- Maintaining a current Approved First Aid Qualification (refer to *Definitions*)
- 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 buckets) are out of children's reach
- 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
- Providing water safety education as a part of the service's educational program
- Informing the Approved Provider immediately if any serious or Notifiable Incidents (refer to *Definitions*) occur at the service

#### **Parents/guardians are responsible for:**

- 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
- 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

## Definitions

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy and related procedures. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *Glossary of Terms*

Word/Term	Definition
<b>Adequate Supervision</b>	<p>(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.</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.</p> <p>Variables affecting supervision levels include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>number, age and abilities of children</li> <li>number and positioning of educators</li> <li>current activity of each child</li> <li>areas in which the children are engaged in an activity (visibility and accessibility)</li> <li>developmental profile of each child and of the group of children</li> <li>experience, knowledge and skill of each educator</li> <li>need for educators to move between areas (effective communication strategies).</li> </ul>
<b>Approved First Aid Qualification</b>	A list of Approved First Aid Qualifications, Anaphylaxis management and emergency Asthma management training is published on the Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) website.
<b>Hazard</b>	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.

<b>Notifiable Incident</b>	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 the Guide to Incident Notification on the WorkSafe Victoria website (see <i>Sources</i> ).
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	(In the context of this policy) a Risk Assessment must identify and assess any hazard that poses a risk to a child's health, safety and/or wellbeing while on an excursion, and specify how these risks will be managed and/or minimised (National Regulation 101). Risk Assessments must consider: the proposed route and location of the excursion any water hazards or risks associated with water-based activities transport to and from the proposed location of the excursion (refer to <i>Occupational Health and Safety Policy</i> )
	the number of adults and children participating in the excursion the number of educators or other responsible adults who will be providing supervision given the level of risk, and whether or not specialised skills are required (e.g. lifesaving skills) the proposed activities, and the impact of this on children with varying levels of ability, additional needs or medical conditions the proposed duration of the excursion, and the impact of this on children with varying levels of ability, additional needs or medical conditions any items/information that should be taken on the excursion e.g. First Aid kit, emergency contact details for children, medication for children with known medical conditions (such as Asthma, Anaphylaxis and Diabetes) and a mobile phone. A sample Excursion Risk Management Plan is provided on the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) website (see <i>Sources</i> ).
<b>Serious Incident</b>	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 (National Regulations 12). A Serious Incident should be documented in an <i>Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record</i> (sample form available on the ACECQA website) as soon as possible and within 24 hours of the incident. The Regulatory Authority (Department of Education & Training (DET)) must be notified within 24 hours of a Serious Incident occurring at the service (National Regulations 176). Records are required to be retained for the periods specified in the National Regulations 183.

<b>Water Hazard</b>	(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 anything with poor drainage which allows water to collect, can also present drowning Hazards for young children.
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## **WATER SAFETY PROCEDURE**

### **Purpose**

This procedure will provide a process to provide guidance on water associated activities and experiences, minimising Hazards and ensuring a rich age and developmentally appropriate education and care program is provided to each child

### **Procedure**

- In terms of water-based play (all educators)
- Educators must ensure appropriate supervision is provided during all water-based activities
- The level of supervision will vary depending on the age and developmental capacity of each child and the water-based activity.
- It is important to include the children in activities that teach the principles of water conservation (for example when discarding water after water-based experiences the children use excess water on the garden or some other activity that teaches the benefits of water conservation therefore encouraging a sustainable water supply).
- In terms of water containers and water features
- Any moveable water container, that is not part of the water play experience, capable of allowing immersion of a young child's face, or coverage of mouth or nose (e.g. bucket, wading pool, plate etc.) must be stored out of the reach of the child or enclosed in an area that the child cannot access or alternatively, store items in such a way that water is not retained
- By law across Australia, all bodies of water over 300mm deep that are designed for human aquatic use must be fenced. Fencing involves isolating the pool from the home with a well-constructed and well-maintained barrier and a gate that self-closes and self-latches

### **In terms of plumbing fixtures and appliances**

- Any room, area or cupboard containing a bath, basin, tub, washing machine or similar plumbing fixture or appliance shall:
- Be capable of being securely enclosed by doors or gates fitted with catches which cannot be operated by a young child
- Have any removable plug used in association with such plumbing fixtures or appliances stored out of reach of a young child or in the event that the plugs are not removable, provide suitable supervision
- Note: Hand washing facilities must be accessible by children at all times

### **References, Sources, Links to Legislation and Other Documents**

Please refer to Reference and Sources page

#### **Related service policies:**

*Administration of First Aid Policy*  
*Emergency and Evacuation Policy*  
*Excursions and Service Events Policy*  
*Occupational Health and Safety Policy*

*Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy*  
*Nutrition and Active Play Policy*  
*Supervision of Children Policy*