

# Water safety procedure

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## National Quality Standard Area 2 | Children's health and safety

Children have the right to experience quality education and care in an environment that safeguards and promotes their health, safety, and wellbeing.

### Purpose

This procedure provides instructions in relation to managing water safety, including during water-based activities at Modbury Kindergarten.

All education and care services must have a local water safety policy in place that outlines how they will manage water safety, including during water-based activities, based on a completed risk assessment (*Education and Care Services National Regulations (R 168 (2) (a) (iii)*).

Site leaders must also consider water safety and potential water hazards when undertaking a risk assessment for an excursion, including a routine excursion (*Education and Care Services National Regulations R 101 (2) (b)*).

### Detail

Children are most at risk of drowning because they love to play with water and are naturally drawn to it, they do not understand the danger, and they are top heavy (their head is large in comparison to their body), and they have a tendency to fall. The most common factor for childhood drowning is lack of active supervision; a child can drown silently in as little as 5cm of water, in less than 20 seconds. For every child who drowns, 10 others are rescued from a near drowning incident.

### Water hazards

A water hazard is anything that can hold 5cm of water and fit a child's nose and mouth. There are a number of water hazards in children's learning environments, including...

- > Sinks, basins, fish tanks/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

Employees use the department's *Incident and Response Management System (IRMS)* to report and assess water hazards, including rating the level of risk and corrective actions. In addition to IRMS, this site uses a combination of measures to ensure water hazards are safely managed, including...

1. **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 – 2 metres)
  - > Careful intentional positioning
  - > Scanning and moving around the area
  - > Listening closely for sounds or the absence of noise
  - > Observing play and anticipating behaviour

- > Higher adult/child ratios, noting family day care standards apply for swimming activities.
- 2. **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.
- 3. **Restricting** access – compliant fencing or barrier.

## Water courses and ponds

- > Water courses must be designed so that the depth of the water, at any point, is less than 300mm.
- > Where a pond (or any other water collection area) has, or has the potential to, pool water at a depth greater than 300mm, then the area is to be fenced with swimming pool fencing compliant with AS 1926.1:2007.
- > Appropriate controls must be implemented to ensure pond water does not become stagnant – refer to *Outdoor learning environments standard*.
- > A sub-surface bubbler is preferred to remove the need for hoses and portable equipment.
- > Water courses are, where possible, to be directed into areas that have suitable drainage systems to avoid pooling such as sand and garden areas. Fishponds and water features should have a rigid barrier over the water to prevent children from falling in.

## Water troughs, buckets, and other water receptacles

Water receptacles must be emptied immediately after use and stored upside down and out of children's reach. Access to laundry and kitchen areas must be restricted when unattended by adults.

## Excursions

A risk assessment is conducted when considering excursions (including routine excursions) where water safety and potential water hazards are present.

## Supporting information

This procedure has been developing using...

- > **Water Safety in Education and Care Settings** | [https://edi.sa.edu.au/library/document-library/people-and-culture/work-health-and-safety/kidsafe/Water safety in education and care-settings.pdf](https://edi.sa.edu.au/library/document-library/people-and-culture/work-health-and-safety/kidsafe/Water%20safety%20in%20education%20and%20care-settings.pdf)
- > **Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority Water Safety Policy Guidelines** | <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-08/WaterSafetyPolicyGuidelines.pdf>
- > **Outdoor learning environments standard** | <https://edi.sa.edu.au/library/document-library/infrastructure/capital-programs-and-asset-services/Outdoor-Learning-Environments-Standard.pdf>

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Approved by: Caitlin Herr | Governing Council, Modbury Kindergarten

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