

Water Safety Policy

Purpose

To ensure all children are protected from water-related hazards and are provided with safe, supervised opportunities for water play and learning. This policy recognises water as a high-risk environment and outlines ECMS's commitment to preventing injury, illness or drowning incidents.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- The Approved Provider, persons with management or control, Centre Director, Nominated Supervisor, and persons in day-to-day charge.
- Early Childhood teachers, educators, staff, contractors, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children, and others enrolled and participating in ECMS programs and services, including during offsite excursions and activities.
- All ECMS-operated Early Learning Centres and Kindergarten programs.

Policy Statement

ECMS is committed to an anti-bias approach in early childhood. ECMS operates within a framework of social justice and equity - this means we celebrate family and cultural diversity and aim to be supportive, responsive, and inclusive of all children. ECMS is committed to:

- Always protecting children from water hazards, in line with our duty of care under the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* and other relevant legislative and regulatory requirements.
- Ensuring children are actively supervised when participating in water play or activities involving water.
- Identifying, assessing and minimising risks associated with water hazards, both on-site and during excursions.
- Complying with all relevant legislation, regulations, and recognised water safety standards.

Water Safety Practices

On-Site Water Hazards

- All bodies of water (paddling pools, troughs, containers, sinks, buckets, fish tanks, ponds) must be always supervised when in use and emptied immediately after use.
- Nappy buckets and cleaning buckets must be kept inaccessible to children.
- Outdoor play areas will be checked daily to ensure there are no water hazards (e.g. collected rainwater).

Water Play Activities

- Children will only engage in water play where supervision ratios are maintained, and educators are positioned to actively monitor children's safety.
- Equipment used for water play must be safe, age-appropriate and cleaned after use to reduce the risk of infection.
- Water used in play must be fresh, clean and replaced regularly.

Excursions and Off-Site Activities

- Any excursion involving water (e.g. pools, beach, lakes) must be planned in accordance with the *Excursion/Regular Outing Policy* and undergo a comprehensive risk assessment.
- Ratios for excursions near or on water will be increased beyond the minimum required to ensure adequate supervision.
- At least one educator with current first aid, CPR, anaphylaxis, and asthma training must be present for all water-related excursions.
- Parents/families will be informed in advance and written consent obtained for all excursions involving water.

Supervision and Training

- Educators must provide active supervision: positioning themselves to see and hear all children, remaining within arm's reach of younger children during water play and avoiding distractions.
- Staff will be trained in ECMS procedures for water safety, risk management and emergency response.

Roles & Responsibilities

Approved Provider/Executive Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure water safety is included in policy and practice, with adequate resources and training available.
Nominated Supervisors/ Centre Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct and document risk assessments for water play and excursions.• Ensure all educators are trained and understand their obligations under this policy.

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Educators, Staff, Students on Placement, Volunteers and Contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively supervise children when around water. • Implement safe water play practices and complete daily hazard checks. • Remove or immediately address any water hazards identified.
Parents/Guardians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide consent for children to participate in water-based excursions or activities. • Inform the service of any specific water safety concerns or health needs (e.g. seizures, sensory issues).

Related Legislation, Regulations and Resources

- Education and Care Services National Law: Section 167
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (Reg 100-102; Reg 168-172)
- National Quality Standard (NQS) Quality Area 2: Children's Health & Safety
- Child Safe Standards (Victoria) - Standard 2: Child Safety and Wellbeing
- Royal Life Saving Society Australia: Guidelines for Water Safety

Related Policies and Procedures

- Child Health and Hygiene Policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints and Feedback Policy
- Emergency and Evacuation Management Policy
- Interactions with Children Policy
- Privacy and Confidential Information Policy
- Risk Management Framework
- Supervision of Children Policy

Supporting Documents

- Risk Management Plan & Assessment Template

Document Version History			
Version	Reason for Amendment	Approved by	Approval date
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