

Preschool water safety procedure

This is a mandated procedure under the operational policy framework. Any edits to this procedure must follow the process outlined on the [creating, updating and deleting operational policies](#) page.

Overview

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

Education and care services must have policies and procedures in place in relation to water safety to comply with the [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#) (R 168 (2) (a) (iii)).

Scope

This procedure applies to all employees in a department preschool including occasional care and rural care programs.



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Detail

Water safety policy

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))).

Employees must use the department's [Incident and Response Management System \(IRMS\)](#) (staff login required) and select the New hazard or corrective action reporting function to report and assess water hazards, including rating the level of risk and corrective actions. Contact Work Health and Safety on (08) 8226 1440 or at education.WHS@sa.gov.au, for advice about reporting hazards.

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)). Refer to the [camps and excursions](#) page (staff login required) and the [risk management plan for sports, adventure, camps and excursions \(DOCX 2MB\)](#) (staff login required).

Site leaders must refer to the Kidsafe and department [water safety in education and care settings fact sheet \(PDF 352KB\)](#) (staff login required) for information to help develop their local water safety policy.

Water hazards

A water hazard is defined as anything that can hold 5cm of water and fit a child's nose and mouth.

Water hazards in children's learning environments include:

- 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
- pooling water.

Managing water hazards

Site leaders must complete risk assessments that identify and assess risks associated with any water hazards and water-based activities. Risk assessments must address:

- 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 to 2 metres)
 - careful and intentional positioning
 - scanning and moving around the environment

- listening closely for sounds or the absence of noise
- observing play and anticipating behaviour
- higher adult to child ratios.
- 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.
- Restricting access – compliant fencing or barrier. Refer to [water safety in education and care settings fact sheet \(PDF 352KB\)](#) (staff login required).

Roles and responsibilities

Director, Early Childhood Services and Strategy

Approve this procedure.

Preschool Policy and Advice

Review and update this procedure in consultation with Work Health and Safety and other key stakeholders.

Preschool directors and school principals

Comply with the requirements of this procedure.

Develop a local water safety procedure based on a completed risk assessment.

Access a copy of the risk assessment through the Incident and Response Management System (IRMS) (interfaces with the hazard and corrective action reporting function) for reference during the preschool's assessment and rating process.

Educators

Comply with this procedure and the local services' water safety policy.

Report identified hazards and notify other people in the immediate vicinity that a hazard is present.

Definitions

adequate supervision

That an educator can respond immediately, particularly when a child is distressed or in a hazardous situation. In addition, knowing where all children are at all times, and monitoring their activities actively and diligently.

preschool

An approved early childhood educational program delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher to children in the year before they start schooling, or as defined within the Education and Care Services National Regulations.

Preschools may also be referred to as a kindergarten, school-based preschool, children's services centre or integrated children's centre.

risk assessment

The overall process of risk identification, risk analysis and risk evaluation.

hazard

An object, situation or behaviour that has the potential to cause physical or psychological harm or injury.

water hazard

Anything that can hold 5cm of water and fit a child's nose and mouth.

Supporting information

[Camps and excursions](#) (staff login required)

[Risk management plan for sports, adventure, camps and excursions \(DOCX 2MB\)](#) (staff login required)

[Critical incidents, injury and hazard reporting](#) (staff login required)

[Incident and Response Management System \(IRMS\)](#) (staff login required)

[Is your swimming pool kid safe? What you need to know about swimming pool fencing \(PDF 3.7MB\)](#)

[Preschool policy compliance – self-assessment resource](#) (staff login required)

[Safety management](#) (staff login required)

[The Early Years Learning Framework \(PDF 24.9MB\)](#)

[Water safety in education and care settings \(PDF 352KB\)](#) (staff login required)

Related legislation

[Education and Early Childhood Services \(Registration and Standards\) Act 2011, Schedule 1 Education and Care Services National Law \(South Australia\)](#)

[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)

Related policies

[Camps and excursions policy \(PDF 247KB\)](#)

[Camps and excursions procedure \(PDF 447KB\)](#)

[Reporting critical incidents, injuries, hazards and near misses procedure \(PDF 234KB\)](#) (staff login required)

[Safety management procedure](#)

[Outdoor learning environments standard \(PDF 969KB\)](#) (staff login required)

Record history

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Policy sponsor: Director, Early Childhood Services, and Strategy

Responsible Executive Director: Head of the Office for the Early Years

Approved by: Director, Early Childhood Services, and Strategy

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Contact

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