

Preschool water safety procedure

This is a mandated procedure under the operational policy framework. Any edits to this page 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.

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 [hazard and 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 [camps and excursions guidelines for schools and preschools](#) and the [camps and excursions risk management plan \(DOCX, 2MB\)](#).

Site leaders must refer to the Kidsafe and department [water safety in education and care settings \(PDF, 336.8 KB\)](#) fact sheet 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, fish 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

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 \(PDF, 336.8 KB\)](#) fact sheet.

Roles and responsibilities

Director, Early Childhood Services

Approve this procedure.

Preschool Policy and Programmes unit

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

Related legislation

[Education and Early Childhood Services \(Registration and Standards\) Act 2011, Schedule 1 Education and Care Services National Law \(South Australia\) \(PDF, 1.11MB\)](#)

[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)

Related policy documents

[Camps and excursions policy](#)

[Camps and excursions procedure \(PDF, 606.7 KB\)](#)

[Camps and excursion risk management plan \(DOCX, 2MB\)](#)

[Hazard and corrective action reporting](#)

[Reporting critical incidents and injuries procedure \(PDF, 440.0 KB\)](#)

[Safety management procedure](#)

[Outdoor Learning Environments Standard \(PDF, 919.8 KB\)](#)

Related supporting information

[Camps and excursions](#)

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

[Is your swimming pool kid safe? What you need to know about swimming pool fencing \(PDF, 332KB\)](#)

[Camps and excursions](#)

[Safety management](#)

[The Early Years Learning Framework](#)

[Water safety in education and care settings \(PDF, 336.8 KB\)](#)

Record history

Published date: April 2020

Approvals

File number: 15/02141

Status: approved

Version: 1.3

Policy officer: senior policy officer, Preschool Policy and Programs

Policy sponsor: manager, Preschool Policy and Programs

Responsible director: director, Early Childhood Services

Approved by: director, Early Childhood Services

Approval date: 7 January 2020

Review date: 31 December 2021

Revision record

Version: 1.3

Approved by: director, early childhood services

Approved date: 7 January 2020

Review date: 31 December 2021

Amendment(s): new branding applied to document, published as HTML document on EDi, edited for plain English in consultation with Communications directorate

Version: 1.2

Approved by: director, early childhood services

Approved date: 22 March 2019

Review date: 1 April 2021

Amendment(s): minor edits to update template, hyperlinks and supporting information

Version: 1.1

Approved by: executive director

Approved date: 15 April 2015

Review date: 15 April 2018

Amendment(s): minor edit to incorporate information into new template

Version: 1.0

Approved by:

Approved date: 1 December 2012

Review date: 1 December 2014

Amendment(s): first publication

Contact

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