

## Water Safety Policy:



### POLICY STATEMENT:

Grays Point Activity Centre (GPAC) will plan experiences with appropriate levels of challenge where children will be encouraged to explore, experiment and take appropriate risks (“My Time, Our Place”, Outcome 4), including the use of water as a medium for play in both the outdoor and indoor environment and on excursions.

Water use will be supervised at all times to ensure the safety of children is a priority. The hygienic state of water will be assessed before it is used for children’s play.

The safety and supervision of children is paramount when in or around water. This relates to water play, excursions near water, hot water, drinking water and hygiene practices with water in the Out of School Hours Care Service environment.

Children will be supervised at all times during water play experiences to help keep children safe in and around water and support children’s learning in a safe environment.

### PURPOSE:

To ensure the safety and supervision of children in and around water. This includes water play, excursions near water, hot water, drinking water and hygiene practices with water in the Out of School Hours Care Service environment.

### SCOPE

This Policy applies to children, families, staff, Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, management students, and visitors of the Service.

### PROCEDURES:

#### **WATER HAZARDS**

The National Regulations make reference to ‘water hazards’ however the term is not expressly defined. In this Policy, a water hazard is defined as anything that can hold 5cm of water and fit a child’s nose and mouth and a ‘water hazard’ may include:

#### **Definition of a body of water**

This Service recognises the following locations as bodies of water:

- large bodies of water such as dams, creeks, river or pooling water, swimming pool, portable pools and spas, jetted bathtubs (or Jacuzzis)
- fishponds

- smaller bodies of water such as baths, mop buckets
- sinks, basins
- water features, such as a wishing well
- containers for feeding animals
- water troughs, containers for paddling- clam shells
- beach
- swimming pools and /or water fun parks
- wading pools
- lakes
- ponds
- the sea / ocean
- equipment used by the Service that could contain 5cm or more of water and would allow a child to submerge both nose and mouth at the same time.

### IMPLEMENTATION

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations, an Approved Provider must ensure that Policies and procedures are in place for managing water safety, including during any water-based activities and take reasonable steps to ensure those Policies and procedures are followed.

According to Kidsafe, drowning is one of the leading causes of unintentional death for Australian children. Every year a number of children are killed and hundreds more rescued from near drowning situations. Non-fatal drowning incidents are also of great concern as they can have potential long-term effects, including brain damage and permanent disability.

The most common factor in childhood drowning is lack of supervision. A child can drown in as little as a few centimetres of water. Items such as nappy buckets, sinks, pet drinking bowls, ponds, pools, water features, water tanks are all potential drowning hazards. [source: [Kidsafe](#)]

### THE APPROVED PROVIDER/NOMINATED SUPERVISOR/ RESPONSIBLE PERSON WILL:

- adhere to all obligations under the *Education and Care National Law and Regulations*
- complete detailed Risk Assessments that identify and assess risks associated with any water hazards and water-based activities
- ensure water hazards and water play are always highly supervised including:
  - direct and constant monitoring of children
  - careful and intentional positioning of Educators
  - scanning and moving around the environment
  - observing play and anticipating behaviour
  - ensuring higher adult to child ratios

- ensuring no child is left unattended when in proximity to water
- provide direction and education to Educators, staff and families on the importance of children's safety and supervision in and around water
- ensure health and safety practices incorporate approaches to safe storage of water and water play
- ensure premises adjacent to or providing access to any water hazards that are not able to be adequately supervised at all times (e.g., dams, swimming pool) are to be isolated from children by a child resistant barrier or fence
- ensure there are no items near fencing that children could climb up onto to gain access to a water hazard (pot plants, boxes, chairs)
- conduct a Risk Assessment in accordance with the requirements prior to taking children on an excursion which is near water - consider any water hazards and any risks associated with water-based activities before an excursion/incursion is approved
- ensure at least one Educator who holds a current approved First Aid qualification that was attained within the previous three years (Reg. 136), is in attendance at all times including emergency life support and cardio pulmonary resuscitation
- ensure at least one Educator has successfully completes cardio pulmonary resuscitation training (CPR) each year, is in attendance at the Service at all times
- display a Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) guide near any swimming pool, wading pool, or body of water
- ensure hot water is inaccessible to children.

Educators will ensure water hazards and water play are always highly supervised including:

- Direct and constant monitoring of children
- Careful and intentional positioning of Educators
- Ensuring our higher adult to child ratio
- Ensuring no child is left unattended when in proximity of water
- Ensure at least one Educator has a First Aid Certificate
- provide active supervision when children are participating in water activities including:
  - supervise children near water at all times
  - never leave children alone near any water
  - direct and constant monitoring of children
  - scanning and moving around the environment
  - observing play and anticipating behaviour
- ensure fish / frog ponds and water features that are not able to be adequately supervised at all times and/or pose an unacceptable risk to children are guarded or effective barriers are in place

- complete a daily Safety Inspection of premises to ensure that all hazards are known and minimised  
When a hazard or potential hazard is detected, Educators will complete a Risk Assessment to address any concerns and children will be excluded from the area until the hazard has been rectified.
- utilise water activities in appropriate weather as part of the planned program
- allow the children the opportunity to experiment with water, sand, and mixing materials
- incorporate water safety awareness into the educational program
- monitor all taps on the premises that children have access to and ensure they are turned off securely when not in use
- safely cover or make inaccessible to children all water containers
- empty wading pools immediately after every use store to prevent the collection of water, e.g., upright
- check for and empty any water that has collected in holes or containers after rainfall or watering gardens
- ensure water troughs are not used without a stand to keep it off the ground
- ensure children remain standing on the ground whilst using the water trough
- ensure buckets of water for soaking toys or clothing are inaccessible to children
- ensure water troughs or containers for water play are filled to a safe level and emptied into the garden areas after each use
- discouraged children from drinking from these water activities
- they teach children about staying safe in and around water
- ensure wading pools are hygienically cleaned, disinfected and chlorinated appropriately:
  - on a daily basis remove leaves and debris, hose away surface dirt and scrub inside with disinfectant.
  - wash away disinfectant before filling pool
  - add Chlorine to pool before children use the pool
  - check chlorine levels frequently
  - children with diarrhoea, upset stomach, open sores or nasal infections should not use the pool
  - all children should wear appropriate swimwear / bathers, go to the toilet before entering the pool, and follow correct toilet hygiene practices while in the pool
  - remove all children immediately, empty and disinfect the pool should a child pass a bowel motion whilst in the pool.

## OPERATIONAL SAFETY

- Water tanks will be labelled with “Do Not Drink” signage and the children will be supervised in this area to make sure they are not accessing this water for drinking
- Educators will discuss with the children the use of water tank water and how it differs from drinking water
- Hot water accessible to children will be maintained at the temperature of 45.C°
- Hot drinks are not to be consumed near children by Educators, students or visitors

Important: Parents will be notified as soon as practicable but within 24 hours if their child is involved in an incident/accident at the OSHC Service or while under Service care. Also, details of the incident/accident will be recorded on an Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record.

Regulation 176: If the incident/accident, situation or event presents imminent or severe risk to the health, safety and wellbeing of the child or if an Ambulance was called in response to the emergency (not as a precaution) the Regulatory Authority will be notified within 24 hours. Educators will follow emergency procedures and contact emergency services if a child appears to be missing or unaccounted for or is involved in a serious incident or accident.

### **Water safety in relation to excursions:**

- The Service recognises the risks posed by bodies of water and will ensure that every precaution is taken so that children are able to enjoy water-based activities safely. Risk Assessments will be carried out for programmed water-based activities (R101).
- Whilst the Regulations do not specify a specific Educator to child ratio for activities where water is a feature, the recommended number of Educators present it to be determined by a Risk Assessment of the proposed activity. Excursion ratio of 1:8 is considered best practice, and this may need to be adjusted should the water be risk assessed to pose a higher hazard such as unfenced water areas, areas where there will be a large group of children etc.

A ratio of 1:5 is recommended for excursions where children are swimming and entering the water.

It must also be noted that in sections 165, 167 and 169 of the National Law there are clear statements about adequate supervision. A range of factors shall determine the adequacy of supervision, including:

- Numbers, ages, and abilities of the children
- Number and positioning of Educators
- Each child’s current activity
- Areas where children are playing, in particular the visibility and accessibility of these areas

GPAC Policy and Procedures – Water Safety Policy (Health & Safety Tab)

- Risks in the environment and experiences provided to children
- Educators' knowledge of each child and each group of children
- The experience, knowledge and skill of each Educator.

**(b) Water safety in relation to water-based activities within the Service:**

- Water use within the Service will be supervised to ensure that the safety of children, and Educators is a priority. The hygienic state of water will be assessed before it is used for children's play.
- At the completion of the activity the water containers will be emptied, and the containers turned upside down or packed away. Educators will ensure water troughs or containers for water play are filled to a safe level. Children will be discouraged from drinking from these water vessels.
- Children will be instructed in the safe use of equipment used during water-based activities, for example, slip and slide, water pistols, bubble machines, etc.
- Any buckets of water that may be used for cleaning or hand washing will not be left unsupervised near the children and will be emptied immediately after use.
- The children's play areas will be checked each morning to ensure that no containers or pools of water are accessible to children. If rain occurs during the day, outdoor play areas will be checked for safety prior to the children entering the outdoor environment.
- Any water-based activities should be undertaken on grassed areas when possible to minimise wasted water.
- Staff will reinforce the water conservation message to embed sustainably practices in children.
- Water restrictions will be taken into consideration when planning and programming water-based activities.
- Families and children will be instructed of water safety if we decide to set up a fish tank or frog pond at GPAC. Educators will ensure fish tank and frog pond are filled to a safe level.

**SOURCE**

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).  
 Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2024). [Guide to the National Quality Framework](#).  
 ACECQA. (2023). [Policy and procedure guidelines- Water Safety Guidelines](#)  
 Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).  
 Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2023).  
[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (Amended 2023)  
 KidSafe (2021). Water Safety. <https://kidsafe.com.au/water-safety/>  
 National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC): [www.nhmrc.gov.au](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au)  
 Victoria Government. [Better Health Channel. Water safety for children](#).

## CONSIDERATIONS:

| Education and Care Services National Law & National Regulations                      | National Quality Standard                     | Other Service Policies/documentation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Other                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| S165, S167<br><br>12, 101, 115, 122, 165, 167, 168 (2) (a) (iii), 169, 170, 176, 274 | 2.1.2,<br><br>2.2,<br><br>2.2.1,<br><br>2.2.2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy</li> <li>Excursion Policy</li> <li>Permission notes</li> <li>Administration of First Aid Policy</li> <li>Workplace Health and Safety Policy</li> <li>Management of Incident, Injury, Infectious Diseases, Illness and Trauma Policy</li> <li>Supervision of Children Policy</li> <li>Sun Protection Policy</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NSW Department of Health: <a href="http://www.health.nsw.gov.au">www.health.nsw.gov.au</a></li> <li>My Time, Our Place</li> <li>Work, Health &amp; Safety Act 2011.</li> <li>Risk Assessments</li> <li>Hazard and Safety Checks</li> <li>Authorisation Records</li> <li>Local water board</li> <li><a href="http://swimaustralia.org.au">SWIM Schools Australia (swimaustralia.org.au)</a></li> </ul> |

## ENDORSEMENT BY THE SERVICE:

Approval date: \_\_\_\_\_ July 2025 \_\_\_\_\_

Date for review: \_\_\_\_\_ January 2027 \_\_\_\_\_

Revised 20/11/2020 KG and KK GPAC  
Amended 14/11/2022 KG and JH  
Amended 18/1/2024 KG  
Amended 17/7/2025 KG