

# WATER SAFETY PROCEDURE



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## **POLICY AND PHILOSOPHY**

Drowning continues to be one of the main causes of fatalities of Australian children. Every year a number of children are killed and hundreds more are rescued from near drowning situations. Non-fatal drowning incidents are also of great concern as they can have potential long-term effects for children and families.

The most common factor in childhood drowning is a lack of supervision; items such as nappy buckets, sinks, pet drinking bowls, ponds, pools, water features and water tanks are potential drowning hazards. Our policy and procedure have been developed to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children around water and during water activities.

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# WATER SAFETY

## **WHEN ENGAGING IN WATER PLAY ACTIVITIES WITH CHILDREN, EDUCATORS MUST:**

- Ensure risk assessments for water-based activities are carried out and understood prior to the activity.
- Prepare a supervision management plan for the activity.
- Be prepared by having everything required before beginning the activity.
- Stay close and always be within arms reach of the children.
- Always focus attention on the children; talk and play with them.
- Never leave children alone in or with water.
- Clearly communicate if handing over the role of direct supervision to another educator.

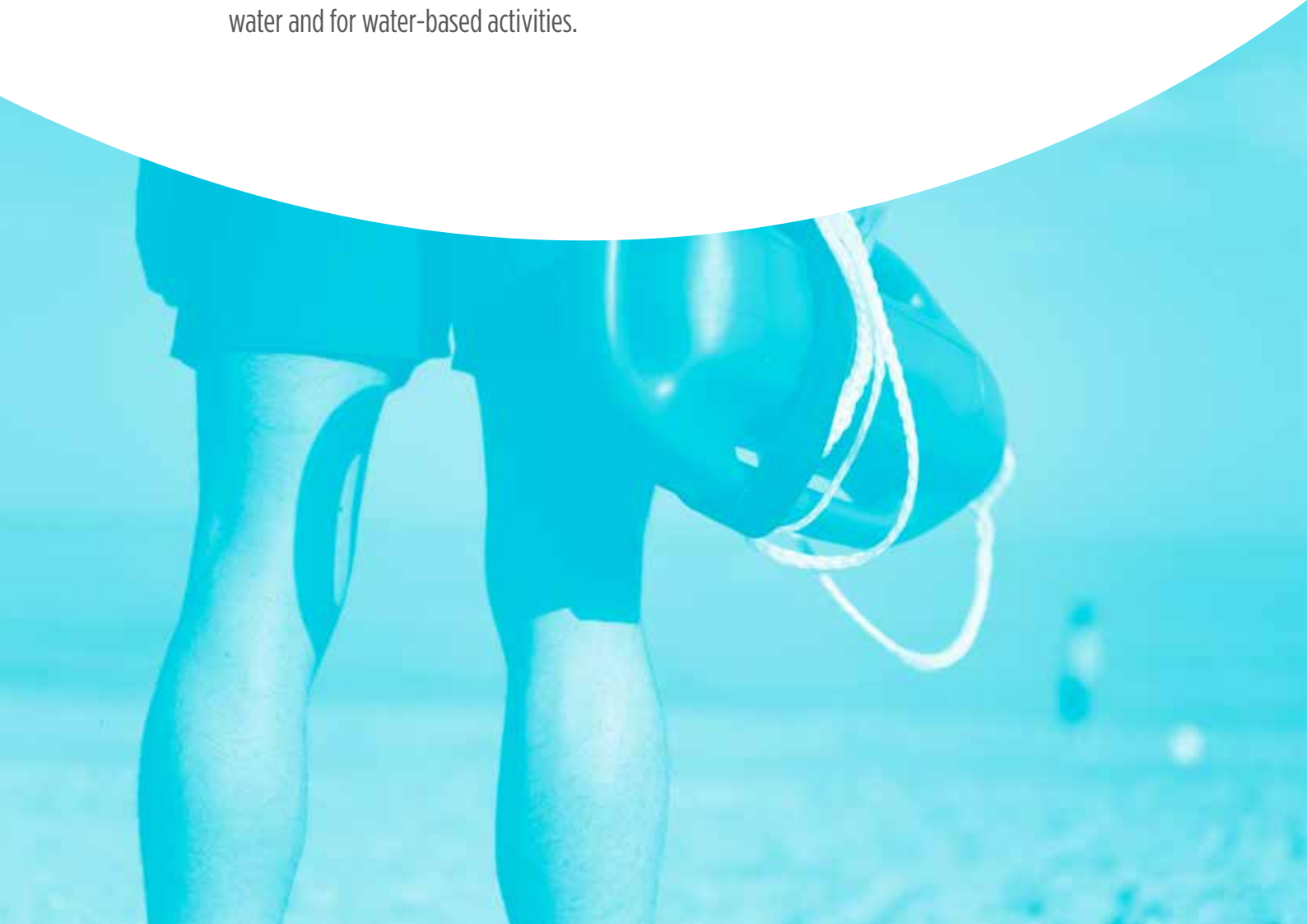
- Acknowledge that water safety encompasses:
  - Water play
  - All experiences undertaken in and around water (including incursions and excursions)
  - Hot water
  - Drinking water
  - Hygiene practices with water

## **WHEN PLANNING EXCURSIONS OR REGULAR OUTINGS, EDUCATORS WILL:**

- Ensure risk assessments consider any water hazards,
- Identify and assess risks that posed to the safety, health or wellbeing of children; and
- Specify how the identified risks will be managed and minimised.

## **THE RESPONSIBLE PERSON IN CHARGE WILL:**

- Ensure risk assessments for excursions near water and for water-based activities are carried out, reviewed and updated as required.
- Ensure at least one educator with current first aid, asthma and anaphylaxis training is in attendance and immediately available in an emergency.
- Ensure regular head counts and ratio checks are conducted for excursions near water and for water-based activities.
- Ensure procedures for water safety, supervision (including supervision management plans) and removal of water hazards are regularly reflected on and reviewed in meetings.
- Ensure educators understand their supervision, water play and safety responsibilities.



# WATER SAFETY INCIDENTS

## IN THE EVENT OF A WATER SAFETY INCIDENT, EDUCATORS WILL:

- Follow the Administration Of First Aid To Children Procedure in the management of the incident.
- Serious Incident First Aid response and/or Serious First Aid Incidents requiring Emergency Services; and
- Post Major/Serious First Aid Incidents.

## POST INCIDENT, THE SERVICE LEADER WILL:

- Collaborate with educators to reflect and identify improvements and or changes to water safety procedures to ensure similar incident does not occur again.

## IN A SUSPECTED IMMERSION INCIDENT, THE RESPONSIBLE PERSON IN CHARGE WILL:

- Ensure a phone is immediately available during excursions near water and for water-based activities for emergency use only.
- Ensure at least one educator with current first aid, asthma and anaphylaxis training is in attendance and immediately available in an emergency.
- Direct an educator to check water hazards first if a child is missing.

- Dial 000 in the case of an immersion incident requiring emergency services. The operator may ask:

- The address where the ambulance is required;
- What the problem is;
- How many people are injured;
- The patient's age;
- The patient's gender;
- If the patient is conscious; and
- If the patient is breathing.
- And provide you with advice to assist the patient while you are waiting for the ambulance.

- DO NOT HANG UP** until the operator tells you to; you may have to hold the line while an ambulance is dispatched.

## IN THE EVENT OF A WATER SAFETY INCIDENT RESULTING IN THE IMMERSION, DROWNING, OR NEAR DROWNING OF A CHILD OR EDUCATOR, THE RESPONSIBLE PERSON IN CHARGE WILL:

- Refer to the Crisis Management Procedure.

# RISK ASSESSMENTS

## **RISK ASSESSMENTS FOR WATER-BASED ACTIVITIES MUST:**

- Identify and assess risks that posed to the safety, health or wellbeing of children; and
- Specify how the identified risks will be managed and minimised.
- You must consider:
  - Any water hazards; and
  - Any risks associated with water-based activities.
  - Given the risks, the number of educators or other responsible adults appropriate to provide supervision and whether any adults with specialised skills are required e.g., Specialised skills could include life-saving skills.
- Be completed prior to the activity taking place.
- Be created, discussed and reviewed regularly with all educators to ensure all have input and understanding.
- Be available to families.

ROLES AND  
**RESPONSIBILITIES**

## **APPROVED PROVIDERS**

(Including Leadership and Management Teams)

- Ensure that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met.
- Keep a child safe environment.
- Ensure adequate supervision is provided given the ages and developmental needs of children undertaking water activities (including ratios).
- Ensure risk assessments are undertaken and water hazards and risks associated with water-based activities are taken into consideration.
- Take reasonable steps to ensure that the policy and procedures are current, reviewed regularly, and communicated to educators and stakeholders.
- Take reasonable steps to ensure that nominated supervisors, educators and volunteers follow the policy and procedures.
- Ensure copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisors, educators and volunteers, and available for inspection.
- Notify families at least 14 days before changing the policy or procedures if the changes will:
  - Affect the fees charged or the way they are collected; or
  - Significantly impact the service's education and care of children; or
  - Significantly impact the family's ability to utilise the service.

## **NOMINATED SUPERVISORS AND RESPONSIBLE PERSONS**

- Ensure every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury, including when children are around water or involved in water-based activities.
- Ensure adequate supervision is provided given the ages and developmental needs of children undertaking water activities (including ratios).
- Inform families about water safety practices at the service.
- Ensure first aid and CPR qualifications and requirements are met at all times.
- Ensure that at least one educator, staff member or nominated supervisor who holds a current approved first aid qualification is in attendance at all times that children are being educated and cared for by the service.
- Undertake risk assessments for excursions near water and for water-based activities.
- Take reasonable steps to ensure that the policy and procedures are current, reviewed regularly, and communicated to educators and stakeholders.
- Take reasonable steps to inform and support educators of their responsibilities in implementing the policy and procedures at all times.
- Guide and mentor educators to be able to follow the policy and procedures.
- Ensure that educators continually monitor and manage the area in and around water hazards so they cannot be accessed by children.
- Display 'do not drink' signage on all water tanks and grey water systems and educate children about this hazard.
- Ensure family members, educators, volunteers, students at the service do not consume hot drinks when they are in the presence of children.
- Ensure hot water taps are inaccessible to children, and the water is tempered to no more than 43 degrees Celsius.

## EDUCATORS

- Reinforce water safety messages within the children's education program.
- Make sure water hazards are managed as outlined in your procedures, e.g. emptied immediately after use and stored safely to prevent accidental water collection.
- Empty, safely cover or make inaccessible to children all water containers when they are not in use, e.g. mop buckets, nappy buckets, bathtubs, water troughs, pet water containers.
- Ensure water troughs or containers for water play are filled to a safe level, supervised at all times and containers or troughs will be emptied after use.
- Inspecting the indoor and outdoor environments for potential water hazards, particularly during and after wet weather.
- Implement adequate and effective supervision at all times to manage risks and promote the safety and wellbeing of children during all water activities.
- Ensure children are never left alone where water is present.
- Ensure children thoroughly wash and dry their hands after each water play activity.
- Ensure all water utilised for water play, cooking/dishwashing, drinking and personal washing is potable.
- Ensure that water provided for pets is changed regularly and children are supervised adequately and effectively at all times when interacting with the pet and the water supply.
- Embed water safety messages in the children's educational programming where appropriate, including during water-based activities such as water play, sand play and play with elements of nature such as mud, creek beds, watering the garden and rain catching.
- Provide families information on water safety.
- Discuss with children water hygiene practices to ensure water provided for pets is not shared with children and/or ingested by children.
- Provide access to clean drinking water.

## FAMILIES

- Ensure you do not consume hot drinks when in the presence of children at the service.
- Provide drinking containers for your child that are clean, hygienic, safe, secure and appropriate.
- Provide a spare set of clothing for your child in the event that the child becomes uncomfortably wet during a session of water play.
- Encouraged to attend First aid and CPR training courses.

## MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

Centacare will place this policy on the Archdiocesan Intranet (AI). Service Leaders and Managers are responsible for ensuring that the appropriate communication of policies and supporting documents to staff has occurred.

- All staff are responsible for understanding and complying with this policy.
- Summary information about fees and related procedures will be included in the CEEC information handbooks.
- Educators and families will be invited to participate in the review of this procedure.
- Changes to this document will be shared with families and educators.
- Ongoing training opportunities for Service Leaders and Responsible Persons in Charge will be provided using a range of learning platforms. Videos of some Xplor processes are available on AI.
- Contact the Policy Sponsor for further interpretation of this policy.

