

## Water Safety Policy

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### 1. Policy Statement

#### Values

NERPSA is committed to:

- providing opportunities for children to explore their natural environment including through water play
- ensuring that curriculum planning incorporates water safety awareness
- safe excursions for children as they learn through responsive and reciprocal relationships with people, places, and things.

#### Purpose

The NERPSA Water Safety Policy will ensure all children are adequately supervised when around water.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to NERPSA, individual kindergartens within the NERPSA cluster, their committees and staff and parents/guardians who wish to have their children enrolled, or have children already enrolled at NERPSA.

### 3. Background and Legislation

The supervision and safety of children with and around water is of paramount importance.

Learning spaces and environments should offer an array of possibilities and connect children with natural materials. Water is one experience that offers children sensory-rich, open-ended experiences that engage children's curiosity and imagination. Children may encounter these resources in the service environment and/or when on excursions. These experiences, especially those conducted with and near water, will be carefully supervised ensuring the safety of children and adults.

It is imperative that educators remain vigilant in their supervision of children in and around water, and are alert to potential risks in everyday practice in the learning environment.

Drowning is a leading cause of death for children in Victoria, with infants and toddlers the group most at risk. Non-fatal drowning incidents can result in permanent brain damage and disability. Knowledge of potential hazards associated with water will assist educators to provide a safe, stimulating environment for preschool children.

Drowning hazards include large bodies of water such as swimming pools, rivers, creeks, dams and ponds. Smaller bodies of water, including nappy buckets, water containers, pet water bowls and poor drainage which allows water to collect can also present drowning hazards for young children. Children can drown in as little as a few centimetres of water.

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic) (Part 2: Principles for Children)
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*: Section 167
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*: Regulations 101(2), 168(2)(a)(iii)

#### 4. Definitions

**Adequate supervision:** refers to constant, active and diligent supervision of every child at the service. Adequate supervision requires that educators are always in a position to observe each child, respond to individual needs, and immediately intervene if necessary. Variables affecting supervision levels include:

- number, age and abilities of children
- number and positioning of educators
- current activity of each child
- areas in which the children are engaged in an activity (visibility and accessibility)
- developmental profile of each child and of the group of children
- experience, knowledge and skill of each educator
- need for educators to move between areas (effective communication strategies).

**Hazard:** A source or situation with a potential for harm in terms of human injury or ill health, damage to property, damage to the environment or a combination of these.

**Water hazard:** (in relation to this policy) can lead to drowning or non-fatal drowning incidences. Drowning hazards include large bodies of water such as swimming pools, rivers, creeks, dams and ponds. Smaller bodies of water, including nappy buckets, water containers, pet water bowls and poor drainage which allows water to collect can also present drowning hazards for young children.

#### 5. Sources and Related NERPSA Policies

- Royal Life Saving Society – Australia: [www.royallifesaving.com.au](http://www.royallifesaving.com.au)
- Water Safety Victoria – Water Safety Guide: *Play it Safe by the Water* [www.watersafety.vic.gov.au](http://www.watersafety.vic.gov.au)
- Kidsafe – Water Safety Fact Sheet: [www.kidsafevic.com.au](http://www.kidsafevic.com.au)
- *Excursions Policy*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*

#### 6. Procedures

Educators are responsible for:

- 6.1. Ensuring permission is obtained from parents/guardians for an excursion to a location where there is a water hazard (refer to *Excursions Policy*)
- 6.2. Ensuring that children are adequately supervised (refer to *Definitions*) and protected from hazards and harm at all times
- 6.3. Ensuring that water hazards and risks associated with water-based activities are considered in a risk assessment prior to conducting excursions and other offsite events (Regulations 100, 101)
- 6.4. Ensuring increased levels of supervision for an excursion to a location where there is a water hazard
- 6.5. Adjusting supervision strategies to suit the activities being undertaken
- 6.6. Ensuring that containers of water (including nappy buckets and cleaning buckets) are sealed with child-proof lids or out of reach
- 6.7. Ensuring wading/paddling pools, water play containers and portable water courses are emptied at the end of each day and stored in a manner that prevents the collection of water when not in use
- 6.8. Checking the outdoor learning environment at the beginning and end of each day for puddles or filled containers that could pose a potential risk to small children after heavy rain
- 6.9. Providing water safety education as a part of the service's program.

#### 7. Evaluation

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, NERPSA will:

- Seek feedback regarding the effectiveness of the policy

- Monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- Keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- Revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required.

**8. Authorisation**

The policy was adopted by NERPSA on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2013.

**9. Review date**

The policy will be reviewed every three years from date of adoption.