



Water Safety Policy

National Quality Standard Area 2 | Children's health and safety

We Believe

Children have the right to experience quality education and care in an environment that safeguards and promotes their health, safety and wellbeing. The safety and supervision of children in and around water is of the highest priority. This relates to water play, excursions near water and hygiene practices with water in the preschool environment.

Rationale

All preschool age children should have access to a variety of learning experiences including wet and messy play. Using water is a key part of such play and children love to play with water. In all learning children need agency over how they access and use the tools of their play.

While wanting to provide water and access to water as part of children's play, we recognize that childhood drowning is a significant issue and high risk. Young children are at most risk of drowning because they do not understand the danger of water and yet are drawn to water as they love to play with it. The comparative size of a child's head compared to their body means that they are top heavy and more prone to falling (into water). A child can drown in as little as 5 cm of water in less than 20 seconds.

Principles

This policy supersedes the Clarence Park Community Kindergarten Water Safety procedure written in 2022 and uses the 2018 Water Safety and Education in Care Settings document by Kidsafe and the Department for Education (DfE) as well as the DfE Preschool Water Safety Procedure.

This policy provides instructions in relation to managing water safety, including during water-based activities, based on a completed risk assessment. This policy applies to all educators at this site and accompanies the site risk assessment on water play.

To reduce the risk of children drinking from inappropriate water sources and increasing the risk of drowning, children are to have safe independent access to clean and cool drinking water at all times.

Our environment and staffing is set up such that an educator can respond immediately when a child is distressed or in a hazardous situation. Educators need to know where children are at all times and monitor their activities actively and diligently.

Water hazards

A water hazard is anything that can hold 5cm of water and fit a child's nose and mouth. Water hazards in a child's learning environment can include:

- sinks, basins, fish tanks, fishbowls, frog ponds, baths;
- water courses, ponds, sandpits, clam shells;
- water troughs, containers and buckets used for play, animal drinking containers;
- pooling water

Managing water hazards

Our educators regularly complete risk assessments to identify and assess risks associated with

any water hazards and water-based activities. The risk assessments address:

1. Active supervision – children are 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

2. Eliminating hazards

- Filling water troughs or other water containers to a maximum of 5 cm and emptying prior to the end of each day or at other times when active supervision cannot be maintained.
- Monitoring the play in the sandpit watercourse and side area to ensure that ‘dams’ or other pooling of water more than 5 cm in depth does not occur.
- Ensuring that if the side area of the sandpit has been used for water play, that it is emptied prior to the children moving inside.
- Water will be emptied regularly and troughs and buckets etc will be stored in a manner that prevents the vessel filling with water when not in use.
- All aspects of the environment are designed to ensure adequate drainage of water to avoid pooling.

3. Restricting access – compliant fencing/barriers and specific signage where required.

Water Courses

Our water courses surrounding the sandpit is designed so that the depth of water, at any point, is less than 300mm

The water course is directed into the sandpit, ensuring that it has suitable drainage.

Water troughs, buckets and other water receptacles

Water receptacles must be emptied immediately after use and stored upside down and out of children’s reach.

Access to laundry and kitchen areas must be restricted when attended by adults.

Water safety during excursions

Water safety and potential water hazards are considered when undertaking risk assessments for excursions, including routine excursions

The Clarence Park Community Kindergarten’s Water Safety Policy will be shared with all new staff and families and is available to view in the Kindergarten’s Policies Folder and on the Kindergarten’s website.

Endorsed and ratified by Governing Council parents and staff at Governing Council

Approval date: June 2024

Review Date: June 2027