



LIWARA CATHOLIC OUTSIDE SCHOOL HOURS CARE

WATER SAFETY POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

At Liwara Outside School Hours Care we 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. Children will wear appropriate clothing for water based activities, for example, hats and collared shirts and staff will role model effective sun smart behaviour, for example, seeking shade when necessary.

Water use will be supervised to ensure 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. Clean drinking water will be accessible at all times.

RATIONALE

While water play provides many opportunities to enhance children's learning and development, drowning remains one of the leading causes of preventable death for children under five years of age in Western Australia. Supervision will play a key role in ensuring that children's safety is protected when participating in activities that involve water or that are conducted in close proximity to water.

PROCEDURES

The safety and supervision of children is paramount when in or around water. This relates to water play, excursions near or at bodies of water, hot water, drinking water and hygiene practices with water in the service environment. Children will be adequately supervised at all times during water play experiences.

All activities involving water-based activities (see Definitions) will be accompanied by an appropriate risk management plan.

Water safety in relation to excursions

The regulations do not specify a specific educator to child ratio for activities where water is a feature. The number of educators present is to be determined by a risk assessment of the proposed activity. 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
- 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.

A risk management plan will be undertaken for all excursions near or at bodies of water and from this additional staffing requirements will be determined. (Refer to *Excursion Policy*).

Water based activities involving swimming pools or beaches

Children will only participate in excursions that involve water based activities such as swimming if the following criteria have been met:

A ratio of one educator, parent or volunteer for every two kindergarten children in attendance can be maintained.

In addition the requirement above a ratio of one educator, parent or volunteer for maximum of every 8 children pre primary age or older in attendance can be maintained. (This ratio may be reduced further if required by the service risk assessment).

An educator or staff member who is a qualified rescuer and who has a resuscitation certificate will accompany each excursion where activities are planned for children involving swimming in pools, lakes, beaches or similar venue when children will be fully submerged in water as part of any swimming activities.

Qualified rescuer in relation to a low risk water based activity in the ocean is a person who holds one of the following qualifications:

- A Surf Life Saving WA (SLSWA) Bronze medallion
- A SLSWA Surf Rescue certificate
- An equivalent qualification

Water safety in relation to water play within the service

- Educators will ensure water troughs or containers for water play are filled to a safe level. These activities will be supervised at all times by educators and containers or troughs will be emptied onto garden areas after use.
- Children will be discouraged from drinking from these water vessels.
- Where children may be playing in a wading pool or paddling pool they will be under close supervision of an educator with appropriate first aid training (ratios will be maintained at all times).
- Children will be instructed in the safe use of equipment used during water-based activities, for example, slip and slide, bubble machines, etc.
- The hygienic state of water will be assessed before it is used for children's play.
- 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 for children. If rain occurs during the day, outdoor play areas will be checked for safety prior to the children entering the outdoor environment.

Health and safety

Educators will explain safety precautions to children including the need to clean up spilt water promptly. Spilt or splashed water will be cleaned up promptly to reduce the risk of children and educators slipping.

Educators and children with open cuts or sores on their hands, wrists or arms will be required to avoid playing in shared water trolleys and will be re-directed to other activities. Children with ongoing skin conditions may be provided with their own container of water.

DEFINITIONS

Water based activity refers to swimming or an activity in a body of water such as a swimming pool, beach, lake, fun park, dam, creek and stream.

Water play refers to play, either indoors or outdoors, that involves water and may include paddling or wading pools, water slides, water trolleys, buckets of water and sprinklers.

Qualified rescuer in relation to water play or a water based activity in a low risk setting such as a pool or other still water is a person who holds one of the following qualifications:

- A Royal Life Saving Society of Australia (RLSSA) Aquatic Rescue certificate
- A RLSSA Bronze medallion
- A RLSSA Swimming Teacher Rescue certificate
- An equivalent qualification

REFERENCES

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (2012), Education and Care Services National Regulations (WA) 2012. ACECQA, NSW.

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (2011), The Guide to the National Quality Standard, ACECQA, NSW.

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (2012), The Guide to the Education and Care Services Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations, ACECQA. NSW.

Royal Life Saving Society of Australia, Fact Sheet Number 1, retrieved from http://www.royallifesaving.com.au/resources/documents/Fact_Sheet_No._1_Supervise.pdf, on the 7th of November 2013.

Ralton and Young (2008), Water Play is Essential Play, Early Childhood Australia, Victoria.

Community Child Care Co-Operative, Sample Water Safety Policy, retrieved on the 13th of November 2013, from <http://www.cscentral.org.au/Resources/water-safety.pdf>.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Review History		
Previous Review	Year of Review	Next Review
April 2017	May 2018	May 2019
May 2018	April 2020	April 2021