



## **WATER SAFETY POLICY**

### **Mandatory – Quality Area 2**

#### **PURPOSE**

This policy will outline the procedures that apply to managing water safety, including safety during any water-based activities at Rowen Street Kindergarten, Inc.

#### **POLICY STATEMENT**

##### **1. VALUES**

Rowen Street Kindergarten, Inc. is committed to:

- the safety, health and wellbeing of children. All water-based activities will be adequately supervised and no child will be left unattended when in proximity to water
- ensuring that the Approved Provider, educators and all other staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to water safety
- providing opportunities for children to explore their natural environment including through water play.
- ensuring that children are protected from the risks associated with drowning or non-fatal drowning experiences.
- ensuring that curriculum planning incorporates water safety awareness.
- providing information to educators, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and others at the kindergarten about water safety.

##### **2. SCOPE**

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisor, Persons in Day-to-Day Charge, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Rowen Street Kindergarten, Inc., including during offsite excursions and activities.

### 3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

#### Background

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 kindergarten 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.

Water safety relates to access to water in the building, the playground or on excursions, and also to the availability of drinking water for children. It is important for services to have detailed risk assessments that consider any water hazards and associated risks, including water-based activities and excursions near water. The service's policy and procedures should outline quality practices relating to water safety that align with the NQS.

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.

Keep Watch is a public education program of Royal Life Saving Society – Australia, aimed at preventing the drowning deaths of children under 5 years of age in all aquatic locations. The program has four key actions:

- **supervise** children constantly around water
- **restrict access** to water hazards by using child-proof barriers and fences
- provide **water awareness** training to children
- **resuscitation** saves lives – ensure that staff have completed current first aid training.

#### Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)*
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*

- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety*
  - Standard 2.3: Each child is protected
    - Element 2.3.2: Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury

#### 4. DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the General Definitions.

**Adequate supervision:** (In relation to this policy) **supervision** entails all children (individuals and groups) in all areas of the kindergarten, being in sight and/or hearing of an educator at all times including during toileting, sleep, rest and transition routines. Services are required to comply with the legislative requirements for educator-to-child ratios at all times. Supervision contributes to protecting children from hazards that may emerge in play, including hazards created by the equipment used.

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).

**Approved first aid qualification:** A list of approved first aid qualifications, anaphylaxis management and emergency asthma management training is published on the ACECQA website: [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au)

**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.

**Notifiable incident:** An incident involving workplace health and safety that is required by law to be reported to WorkSafe Victoria. Notification is required for incidents that result in death or serious injury/illness, or dangerous occurrences. For a complete list of incidents that must

be reported to WorkSafe Victoria, refer to the *Guide to Incident Notification* on the WorkSafe Victoria website: [www.worksafe.vic.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au)

**Serious incident:** An incident resulting in the death of a child, or an injury, trauma or illness for which the attention of a registered medical practitioner, emergency services or hospital is sought or should have been sought. This also includes an incident in which a child appears to be missing, cannot be accounted for, is removed from the service in contravention of the regulations or is mistakenly locked in/out of the service premises (Regulation 12). A serious incident should be documented in an *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record* (sample form available on the ACECQA website) as soon as possible and within 24 hours of the incident. The Regulatory Authority (DEECD) must be notified within 24 hours of a serious incident occurring at the service (Regulation 176(2)(a)). Records are required to be retained for the periods specified in Regulation 183.

**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 POLICIES

### Sources

- FUSE: [www.fuse.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.fuse.education.vic.gov.au)
- Life Saving Victoria - School Swimming and Water Safety Toolkit: [www.lsv.com.au/toolkit/](http://www.lsv.com.au/toolkit/)
- 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)

### Service policies

- *Administration of First Aid Policy*
- *Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy*
- *Emergency and Evacuation Policy*
- *Excursions and Service Events Policy*
- *Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play Policy*
- *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*

- *Supervision of Children Policy*

## PROCEDURES

RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
<b>R</b> indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
Complying with this policy while at the service	√	√	√	√	√
Ensuring that obligations under <i>the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations</i> are met	R	√	√		√
Ensuring parents/guardians are informed of the <i>Water Safety Policy</i> on enrolment ( <i>Regulation 168(2)(a)(iii), 171</i> )	R	√	√		√
Assisting the approved provider to implement the <i>Water Safety Policy (Regulation 170)</i>		R	√		√
Ensure that there is adequate supervision ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) provided given the ages and developmental needs of children undertaking water activities (including ratios) ( <i>National Law: Section 165, Regulation 115</i> )	R	√	√		√
Adjusting supervision strategies to suit the activities being undertaken ( <i>refer to Supervision of Children Policy</i> )		√	√		√
Ensuring risk assessments are undertaken and water hazards and risks associated with water-based activities are taken into consideration both at the service and prior to conducting excursions and other offsite events ( <i>National Law: Section 16, Regulation 101</i> )	R	√	√		√
Conducting a risk assessment in relation to any water hazards on or near the premises that may be accessible to children ( <i>National Law: Section 165</i> )	R	√	√		√
Ensuring permission is obtained from parents/guardians for an excursion to a location where there is a water hazard ( <i>Regulation 102</i> ) ( <i>refer to Excursions and Service Events Policy</i> )	R	√	√		√
Ensuring increased levels of supervision for an excursion to a location where there is a water hazard ( <i>refer to Supervision of Children Policy</i> ) ( <i>National Law: Section 165</i> )	R	√	√		√
Conducting a regular safety check of the service premises ( <i>refer to Occupational Health and Safety Policy</i> ) ( <i>National Law: Section 167</i> )	R	R	√		√
Ensuring doors, gates and other barriers restricting access to water hazards are closed at all times and that fences are kept clear at all times ( <i>National Law: Section 167</i> )	R	R	√	√	√
Ensuring that containers of water that are a potential water hazard are sealed with child-proof lids ( <i>National Law: Section 167</i> )	R	R	√		√

Ensuring wading/paddling pools, water play containers, portable water troughs and pet water containers are emptied immediately after each use and stored in a manner that prevents the collection of water when not in use ( <i>National Law: Section 167</i> )	R	R	√		√
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 ( <i>National Law: Section 167</i> )	R	R	√		√
Ensuring any water hazards that are not able to be adequately supervised at all times are isolated from children by a child-resistant barrier or fence (particularly large bodies of water including swimming pools, rivers, ponds etc.) ( <i>National Law: Section 167</i> )	R	R	√		√
Ensuring that an educator with a current approved first aid qualification ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) is in attendance and immediately available at all times children are being educated and cared for by the service ( <i>Regulation 136</i> )	R	√			
Ensuring that all educators' current approved first aid qualifications meet the requirements of the National Regulations and are approved by ACECQA ( <i>refer to Administration of First Aid Policy</i> ) ( <i>Regulation 136</i> )	R	√			
Ensuring that details of current approved first aid qualifications ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) are filed with each staff member's record	R	√			
Maintaining a current approved first aid qualification		√	√		
Reporting serious incidents ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) to DET ( <i>Regulation 174, 175</i> )	R	√			
Informing the approved provider immediately if any serious or notifiable incidents ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) occur at the service.		√	√		√
Reporting notifiable incidents ( <i>refer to Definitions</i> ) to WorkSafe Victoria	R	√			
Providing current information to parents about water safety		√	√		√
Providing water safety education and information as a part of the service's program		√	√		√
Supervising children in their care, including siblings, while attending or assisting at the kindergarten				√	
Informing themselves and their children about water safety, including recognising when resuscitation is required and obtaining assistance				√	

## EVALUATION

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

- regularly seek feedback from educators, staff, parents/guardians, children, management and all affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- 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
- notifying all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk (Regulation 172 (2)).

## ATTACHMENTS

NIL

## AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the **Rowen Street Kindergarten Inc.** Committee of Management at a committee meeting on 4 March 2024.

**Review date: MARCH 2028**