

2.04V WATER SAFETY POLICY

QUALITY AREA 2 | VERSION 1.0



PURPOSE

This policy provides a clear set of guidelines for managing water safety, including safety during any water-based activities at LEVNT EC Services.

POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

LEVNT EC Services are committed to:

- 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 service about water safety.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, parents/guardians, student educators, volunteers and contractors attending LEVNT EC Services.

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 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.

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 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.

DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms refer to the Definitions file of each LEVNT EC policy folder.

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 (including those used for water play as part of learning programs), pet water bowls and poor drainage which allow water to collect can also present drowning hazards for young children.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Approved Provider, persons with management and control, nominated supervisor and/persons in day-to-day charge are responsible for meeting requirements set out in the table below. Actions which are legislated requirements of the ECEC sector are indicated with **LR**.

	Approved Provider and/or persons with management and	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teachers, educators and all other staff	Parents, guardians and carers	Contractors, volunteers and those on student placement
Ensuring that obligations under <i>the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations</i> are met.	LR	✓	✓		✓
Ensuring parents/guardians are informed of the Water Safety Policy on enrolment.	LR	✓	✓		✓
Assisting the approved provider to implement the <i>Water Safety Policy (Regulation 170)</i> .		LR	✓		✓
Ensure that there is adequate supervision provided given the ages and developmental needs of children undertaking water activities (including ratios).	LR	✓	✓		✓
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.	LR	✓	✓		✓
Conducting a risk assessment in relation to any water hazards on or near the premises that may be accessible to children.	LR	✓	✓		✓
Ensuring permission is obtained from parents/guardians for an excursion to a location where there is a water hazard (<i>refer to Excursions and Service Events Policy</i>).	LR	✓	✓		✓
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>).	LR	✓	✓		✓
Conducting a regular safety check of the service premises (<i>refer to Occupational Health and Safety Policy</i>).	LR	LR	✓		✓
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.	LR	LR	✓	✓	✓
Ensuring that containers of water (including nappy buckets and cleaning buckets) are sealed with child-proof lids.	LR	LR	✓		✓

	Approved Provider and/or persons with management and	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teachers, educators and all other staff	Parents, guardians and carers	Contractors, volunteers and those on student placement
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.	LR	LR	✓		✓
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.	LR	LR	✓		✓
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.).	LR	LR	✓		✓
Ensuring that an educator with a current approved first aid qualification is in attendance and immediately available at all times children are being educated and cared for by the service.	LR	✓			
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>).	LR	✓			
Ensuring that details of current approved first aid qualifications are filed with each staff member's record.	LR	✓			
Reporting serious incidents to DET.	LR	✓			
Informing the approved provider immediately if any serious or notifiable incidents occur at the service.		✓	✓		✓
Reporting notifiable incidents to WorkSafe Victoria.	LR	✓			
Providing current information to parents about water safety.		✓	✓		✓
Providing water safety education and information as a part of the service's program.		✓	✓		✓

EVALUATION

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

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- assess whether a satisfactory resolution has been achieved in relation to issues arising from this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of a policy review cycle, or as required
- notify 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

AUTHORISATION & REVIEW

This policy was adopted by Lutheran Education VIC, NSW, TAS and ACT Ltd as Approved Provider for this service on 16 March 2023.

REVIEW DATE July 2024 or earlier as required.

REFERENCES

LEGISLATION & STANDARDS

- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic) (Part 2: Principles for Children)
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*: Section 167, 165, 169
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*: Regulations 99, 101, 101(2)(b)(c), 102, 123, 136, 168(2)(a)(iii)
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
 - Standard 2.2: Safety
 - Element 2.2.1. At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazards.

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>
- Commonwealth Legislation – ComLaw: <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/>

SOURCES

- Royal Life Saving Society – Australia: www.royallifesaving.com.au
- Water Safety Victoria – Water Safety Guide: *Play it Safe by the Water*: www.watersafety.vic.gov.au
- Kidsafe – Water Safety Fact Sheet: www.kidsafevic.com.au

RELATED POLICIES

- 2.02V Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play
- 2.05V Administration of First Aid Policy
- 2.06V Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- 2.09V Emergency and Evacuation Policy
- 2.14V Supervision of Children Policy
- 2.24V Excursions and Service Events Policy
- 3.02V Occupational Health and Safety Policy