

HEALTH AND SAFETY: WATER SAFETY POLICY

OVERVIEW

Education and Care Services National Regulations require that **SUNBEAMS OOSH** must ensure that the Nominated Supervisor and staff members of, and volunteers at, the service implement adequate health and safety practices to minimise risks to children, including procedures related to water safety and safety during any water-based activities.

The safety and supervision of children is paramount when in or around water. This relates to water play, excursions near water, hot water, drinking water and hygiene practices with water in the Out of School Hours Care Service environment. Children will be always supervised during water play experiences to help keep children safe in and around water and support children's learning in a safe environment.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD	OTHER SERVICE POLICIES/DOCUMENTATION	OTHER
86, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 136, 168	2.1.2, 2.2, 2.2.1, 2.2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing a Child Safe Environment policy Excursion policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> My Time, Our Place. Work, Health & Safety Act 2011. ACECQA: Water safe guidelines.

OUTLINE:

This policy outlines procedures followed by staff regarding water safety in relation to excursions, water safety in relation to water-based activities within the service and clarifies the definition of a water body to include equipment used by the service that could contain 5cm or more of water and would allow a child to submerge both nose and mouth at the same time.

POLICY STATEMENT:

SUNBEAMS 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.

Water use will be always supervised to ensure the safety of children is a priority. The hygienic state of water will be assessed before it is used for children's play. Drinking water will be accessible, hygienically stored and maintained.

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.

WATER HAZARDS:

The National Regulations (Regulation 168) (2)(iii) refer to 'water hazards' however the term is not expressly defined. In this policy, a water hazard is defined as anything that can hold 5cm of water and fit a child's nose and mouth and a 'water hazard' may include:

- large bodies of water such as dams, creeks, river or pooling water, swimming pool, portable pools and spas, jetted bathtubs (or Jacuzzis)
- fishponds
- smaller bodies of water such as baths, mop buckets
- sinks, basins
- water features, such as a wishing well
- containers for feeding animals
- water troughs, containers for paddling- clam shells
- beach

PROCEDURES:

A) WATER SAFETY IN RELATION TO EXCURSIONS

The service recognises the risks posed by bodies of water and will ensure that every precaution is taken so that children are able to enjoy water-based excursions safely. Detailed risk assessments will be carried out for all water-based excursions, (Regulation 101)(2)(b &c), please refer to the service's Excursion Policy. Authorisation from families will be sought prior to excursions (Regulation 102) (1 & 2) including those involving water-based activities and will detail all hazards so families are well informed. The risk assessments will also be available for families, children and staff for review and feedback as needed.

National Law and 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 activities.
- 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.
- Feedback from families and the community will be considered.
- When considering an excursion and completion of risk assessment and on-site visit will be required of the excursion site.
- Appropriate insurance will be always maintained for excursions to ensure water activities are covered.

(B) WATER SAFETY IN RELATION TO WATER-BASED ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE SERVICE

- Water use within the service will be supervised to ensure that 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.
- At the completion of the activity the water containers will be emptied, and the containers turned upside down or packed away. Educators will ensure water troughs or containers for water play are filled to a safe level. Children will be discouraged from drinking these water vessels.
- Children will be instructed in the safe use of equipment used during water-based activities, for example, slip and slide, water pistols, bubble machines, etc. before the activity is available to the children.
- 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 to children. If rain occurs during the day, outdoor play areas will be checked for safety prior to the children entering the outdoor environment.

(C) OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES OF EDUCATORS:

- No child will be left alone or unsupervised near any body of water.
- At all times at least one educator will hold an appropriate first aid qualification as per National Regulations (Regulation 136)(2)
- Ensure that hot water will not be accessible to children.
- Incorporate water safety awareness into the educational program.
- Ensure all taps are turned off after use
- Ensure wading pools are hygienically cleaned, disinfected and chlorinated appropriately:
 - daily remove leaves and debris, hose away surface dirt and scrub inside with disinfectant.
 - wash away disinfectant before filling pool
 - add Chlorine to pool before children use the pool
 - check chlorine levels frequently



- children with diarrhoea, upset stomach, open sores or nasal infections should not use the pool
- all children should wear appropriate swimwear / bathers, go to the toilet before entering the pool, and follow correct toilet hygiene practices while in the pool
- remove all children immediately, empty and disinfect the pool should a child pass a bowel motion whilst in the pool.

Important: Parents will be notified as soon as practicable but within 24 hours if their child is involved in an incident/accident at the Service or while under Service care (Regulation 86). Also, details of the incident/accident will be recorded on an Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record.

If the incident/accident, situation or event presents imminent or severe risk to the health, safety and wellbeing of the child or if an ambulance was called in response to the emergency (not as a precaution) the regulatory authority will be notified within 24 hours. Educators will follow emergency procedures and contact emergency services if a child appears to be missing or unaccounted for or is involved in a serious incident or accident.

ENDORSEMENT BY THE SERVICE

The policy will be reviewed as required. The review will be conducted by management, staff, children, families and the wider community.

Last reviewed: September 2025

Date of next review: March 2027

APPROVAL DATE: _____

DATE FOR REVIEW: _____