

## 2.35 WATER SAFETY POLICY

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### INTRODUCTION

Children can drown in as little as a few centimetres of water, therefore it is essential that access is restricted by safety barriers, and that they are constantly supervised around water. Toddler pools, backyard ponds, bathtubs, the washing machine, buckets of water and even pet drinking bowls must be recognised as potential drowning hazards. Drowning is the leading cause of death for children aged 1-4 in Australia. While most drowning occurs in backyard swimming pools, it is important to be aware that children can drown in less than 6cms of water.

### PURPOSE

Lindfield Montessori Preschool aims to educate children, educators, and parents about the risks of playing with water. The service aims to prevent and minimise any accidents relating to water play with the children. They believe water play is an essential sensory experience and an important learning activity that promotes many domains of development, aids understanding of safety and awareness of different elements.

### STRATEGIES

In providing children with access to water play and activities involving water, including bathing, washing, watering the garden, or cleaning up, the educator will:

- Actively supervise children whenever any body of water is in their environment including water troughs and toilets.
- No child will be left unsupervised at any stage around any body of water.
- Safely cover and/or make inaccessible to children all water containers such as ponds, spas, nappy buckets, and bathtubs.
- Empty baths, basins, sinks, buckets, wading pools, and troughs immediately after use and ensure they are not accessible to children while in use, or children are actively supervised by the educator maintaining constant visual contact and always being within an arms' reach of the child/ren.
- Educator to child ratios will be increased where appropriate around water.
- Ensure that empty containers accessible children do not collect rainwater.
- Not take children in care to public pools for recreational or other purposes at any time during the hours of care.
- In assessing the risks of any excursion, consider potential water hazards such as the beach/ seaside, channels, rivers, dams, ponds, and other water course or still water.
- When on an excursion, ensure that the risks associated with children entering any water are controlled.
- Educate families and children about how to be safe around water. For example, learn to swim programs via Kid Safe NSW, and water safety messages, such as emptying buckets.

Lindfield Montessori Preschool recognises that children will benefit from playing with water and will provide opportunities for children to engage in safe water play (for example water in the sandpit, water tray activities) and water use (for example watering the garden, washing equipment).

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### Approved Provider

- Ensure the Service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011.

### Nominated Supervisor

- Ensure children are adequately supervised and are protected from harms and hazards.
- Provide supervision, guidance, and advice to always ensure adherence to the policy.
- Ensure risk assessments for excursions planned near water, or any water-based activities, identify a higher staff to child ratio to ensure adequate supervision.
- Ensure First Aid and CPR qualifications and requirements are always met.
- Provide families with community messages regarding safe water practices.

### Early Childhood educators

- Embed water safety messages into the children's education program.
- Ensure water troughs or containers for water play are filled to a safe level and emptied or covered securely after use.
- Ensure water troughs or containers are only always filled while in attendance by an adult.
- Ensure no child is left unattended at any time with any body of water.
- Empty buckets used for cleaning immediately after use.
- Ensure no cleaning buckets are left in areas accessible to children.
- Prevent children from drinking grey water.
- Always provide clean drinking water.

### Families

- Reinforce water safety practice with children.

## MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy every 2 years.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R.172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service.; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

<b>Relevant Legislation</b>	Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011. Reg. 168 (2)(a)(iii) Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010 Occupational Health and Safety Act 2014 Kid Safe NSW – <a href="http://www.kidsafensw.org/water-safety">www.kidsafensw.org/water-safety</a>
<b>Related to NQS QA</b>	2.2, 2.2.1, 2.2.3, 7
<b>Sources &amp; Further Reading</b>	Community Early Learning Australia

<b>POLICY REVIEWED</b>	<b>MODIFICATIONS</b>	<b>NEXT REVIEW DATE</b>
April 2021	Adapted policy from Kidsafe NSW Checked relevant regulations.	2023
October 2023	Updated the drowning statistic in the introduction. Included the responsibilities of all – as updated in CELA sample policy	2025