

OP57 Water Safety Policy

Policy Title:	Water Safety Policy
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1 Purpose

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 service environment.

Children will be supervised at all times during water play experiences to help keep children safe in and around water and support children's learning in a safe environment.

2 Scope

The Approved Provider, Operations Managers, Nominated Supervisor/Centre Director, educators, employees, and visitors are all responsible for maintaining safe practices and the highest level of supervision where children are in or around water.

3 Definitions

Excursion – Any outing away from the principal place of care (ie. outside the Petit ELJ premises) is considered an "excursion". For clarity this does not include activities which may take place in the centre carpark as this area is a part of the centre premises and the children are not leaving the premises, and includes regular outings.

Risk assessment – is one part of risk management. It is the process by which specific risks are evaluated and addressed. Undertaking a risk assessment means evaluating or deciding which risks are significant and how they should be addressed. It involves critical reflection on the benefits and hazards identified within the service, such as an experience, excursion, practice, piece of equipment or learning environment.

Water Hazards

The National Regulations 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. 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
- Fishponds
- Smaller bodies of water such as baths, mop buckets
- Sinks, basins
- Water features
- Pet drinking bowls

- Water troughs, containers for paddling- clam shells.
- Puddles left by rain.

4 Policy principles

Petit ELJ recognises it has a duty of care to ensure the safety of all children in and around water.

Safety and supervision of children are the highest priority when children have access to water.

This policy covers hot water, drinking water, hygiene practices with water, and water play. It also includes safe storage of equipment used for water play.

5 Policy implementation

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations, an Approved Provider must ensure that policies and procedures are in place for managing water safety, including during any water-based activities and take reasonable steps to ensure those policies and procedures are followed.

According to Kidsafe, drowning is one of the leading causes of unintentional death for Australian children. Every year a number of children are killed and hundreds more rescued from near drowning situations. Non-fatal drowning incidents are also of great concern as they can have potential long-term effects, including brain damage and permanent disability.

The most common factor in childhood drowning is lack of supervision. A child can drown in 20 seconds and in less than a few centimetres of water. Items such as nappy buckets, sinks, pet drinking bowls, ponds, pools, water features, water tanks are all potential drowning hazards. [<https://kidsafe.com.au/water-safety/>]

Risk Assessments

- Detailed risk assessments using the Risk Assessment and Management Plan Form must be completed in respect of any water hazard at the service and/or water-based activity undertaken at the service.
- A detailed risk assessment using the Excursion or Regular Outing Proposal and Risk Management Plan Form must be completed prior to any excursion being approved and this must consider any water hazards and risks associated with water-based activities.
- A detailed risk assessment using the Regular Transportation of Children Risk Assessment and Management Plan Form must be completed prior to any regular transportation of children for OSHC being approved and this must consider any water hazard that may be encountered on the transportation route, or at the destination.

Supervision

- Direction and education is provided to educators, staff and families on the importance of children's safety and supervision in and around water.
- Water hazards and water play is always highly supervised by:
 - direct and constant monitoring of children
 - careful and intentional positioning of educators
 - scanning and moving around the environment
 - observing play and anticipating behaviour
 - ensuring higher educator to child ratios
 - ensuring no child is left unattended when in proximity to water
 - ensuring there are no items near fencing that children could climb to gain access to a water hazard (such as pot plants, boxes, tables, or chairs).

Operational Safety

- Health and safety practices at Petit ELJ services incorporate approaches to safe storage of water.
- Water safety awareness is incorporated into the Educational Program.
- Water play areas are incorporated into the service's Safety Checklist – Outdoor Daily and inspected daily to ensure any concerns are identified and immediately addressed or children excluded from the area until the hazard or potential hazard has been rectified.
- Water tanks will be labelled with “Do Not Drink” signage and the children will be supervised in this area to make sure they are not accessing this water for drinking. Educators will discuss with the children the use of water tank water and how it differs from drinking water.
- Hot water accessible to children will be maintained at the temperature of 45.C° which will be tested annually. (Australian standard AS 3498)
- Fish/frog tanks are guarded with effective barriers in place to ensure they are only accessible to children when educators or staff are present.
- Water for pets at the service must only be accessible to children when educators are present.

Water conservation is promoted and practiced at Petit ELJ's services

- Only the amount of water required to undertake programmed water play is used.
- Water used in water play is emptied onto gardens once activity is completed.
- Water play is discontinued during water restrictions, and the reasons explained to the children.
- Educators encourage children to turn taps off to avoid wasting water while washing hands.
- Discarded water from cups and drink bottles is emptied onto gardens.
- Water conservation posters are displayed in bathrooms.

In the event of an incident:

- A fully qualified educator will immediately administer first aid.
- An educator will immediately inform the Nominated Supervisor/Centre Director or Responsible Person of the incident and call an ambulance.
- Other educators will immediately move any other children from the area to a safe space where they can be closely supervised and monitored.
- Parents of the child will be informed of the incident as soon as possible.
- The Nominated Supervisor/Centre Director or an educator known to the child and the family will travel with the child in ambulance if the parents/guardian have not arrived in time.
- An Incident, Injury, Trauma, and Illness Record will be completed as soon as possible after the incident.
- The Nominated Supervisor/Centre Director will inform the service's Operations Manager as soon as possible after the child has been attended to and Nominated Supervisor/Centre Director in conjunction with Operations Manager will make sure any notification in relation to serious incidents is within the regulated timeframes as per the *Managing Reporting Requirements and Notifications Policy*.

In the event of child drowning:

- In the event of a child who appears to be unresponsive or not breathing an educator trained in emergency first aid response will respond immediately administering first aid and commence CPR.
- An educator will immediately inform the Nominated Supervisor/Centre Director or Responsible Person of the incident and call an ambulance.
- Other educators will immediately move any other children from the area to a safe space where they can be closely supervised and monitored.

- The educator who has administered the first aid and CPR will provide a detailed account of events to the Paramedics on their arrival.
- All educators and staff will follow the direction of the paramedical staff.
- Only a qualified medical practitioner can declare a person is deceased, therefore the Nominated Supervisor/Centre Director should ensure the parents are only advised that the injury is serious and refer them to the hospital where the child has been taken. This information should be provided in a calm and extremely sensitive manner.
- The Nominated Supervisor/Centre Director will inform the service's Operations Manager as soon as possible after the child has been attended to.
- The scene is to be left as it is to allow an investigation to be completed.
- An Injury, Incident, Trauma, and Illness Record is to be completed by the educator who found the child as soon as possible after the incident.
- Witness statements will be collected from all educators involved in the event as soon as practical after the child has been taken from the service by the ambulance.
- The Nominated Supervisor/Centre Director in conjunction with Operations Manager will make sure any notification in relation to serious incidents is within the regulated timeframes as per the *Managing Reporting Requirements and Notifications Policy*.
- The Operations Manager in conjunction with the People and Culture Operations Manager and COO will notify the WorkSafe Authority within 24 hours of the incident.

6 Responsibilities

Approved Provider:

It is the responsibility of the Approved Provider to:

- Ensure that in New South Wales for children preschool age or under that there is no swimming pool on the service premises unless the swimming pool existed on the premises before 6 November 1996.
- Ensure they keep a child safe environment.
- Ensure that there is adequate supervision provided given the ages and developmental needs of children undertaking water activities (including ratios).
- Ensure premises adjacent to or providing access to any water hazards that are not able to be adequately supervised at all times (e.g., dams, swimming pool) are isolated from children's access.
- Ensure risk assessments are undertaken and water hazards and risks associated with water-based activities are taken into consideration.
- Ensure that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law, National Regulations and the relevant State Work Health and Safety Act are met and staff are aware of their responsibilities and obligations in relation to this policy and relevant procedures.
- Make sure any notification in relation to serious incidents is within the regulated timeframes as per the *Managing Reporting Requirements and Notifications Policy*.

Operations Managers:

It is the responsibility of the Operations Manager to:

- Keep the Approved Provider abreast of any legislative requirements that are not being met or that have changed.
- Monitor compliance at a service and site level and ensuring staff and students have completed the training on all policies and procedures.

- Complete all training requirements – reading this policy and associated documents within their 3-month induction period and annually thereafter.

Nominated Supervisor/Centre Director

It is the responsibility of the Nominated Supervisor/Centre Director to:

- Ensure detailed risk assessments using the Petit ELJ Risk Assessment and Management Plan Form are completed that identify and assess risks associated with any water hazards and water-based activities in the service.
- Ensure water hazards and water play are always highly supervised
- Provide direction and education to educators, staff, and families on the importance of children's safety and supervision in and around water and ensure that health and safety practices incorporate approaches to safe storage of water and water play.
- Ensure an Excursion or Regular Outing Proposal and Risk Management Plan Form is completed prior to every excursion and that as part of the risk assessment, particular attention is focused upon water safety whenever the excursion is near a body of water or incorporated water-based activities, and an increased ratio of educators to children is applied.
- Ensure any Regular Transportation of Children Risk Assessment and Management Plan Form considers any water hazard that may be encountered on the transportation route or at the destination.
- Ensure there are no items near fencing that children could climb up onto to gain access to a water hazard (pot plants, boxes, chairs)
- Ensure grey water systems or water tanks are labelled with "do not drink" signage and the children are supervised to ensure that they do not play in or drink this water.
- Ensure staff and students are familiar with and follow all policies and procedures as developed by Petit ELJ. This includes ensuring compliance with all related policies and procedures.
- Complete all training requirements – reading this policy and associated documents within their 3-month induction period and annually thereafter.

Educators:

It is the responsibility of Educators to:

- Ensure they reinforce water safety messages within the children's educational program especially before an event involving water play or an excursion to or near water.
- Ensure water hazards are managed appropriately, water troughs or containers for water play are emptied and packed away as soon as play has ended, buckets that contain water are not accessible to children and are emptied as soon as they are finished with.
- Ensure water troughs or containers for water play are supervised at all times and when in use water troughs are not placed on the ground but are placed in the metal frame provided to allow children to stand at trough.
- Ensure indoor and outdoor environments are checked for potential water hazards, particularly during and after wet weather, prior to children entering the playground.
- Ensure they are familiar with and follow all policies and procedures as developed by Petit ELJ. This includes ensuring compliance with all related policies and procedures.
- Complete all training requirements – reading this policy and associated documents within their 3-month induction period and annually thereafter.
- Ensure that they ask for clarification if any information is unclear.

Families

It is the responsibility of parents and guardians to:

- Provide a spare set of clothing for their child in the event that the child engages in water play.

- Ensure that they complete in full any documents regarding excursions in order for children to attend excursion. Failure to complete will mean child cannot attend an excursion.

7 Reporting and Compliance

Links to NQS and Legislation:

Education and Care Services National Law (2010)	
Section 165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
Section 167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011	
100	Risk assessment must be conducted before excursion
101	Conduct of risk assessment for excursions
102	Authorisation for excursions
115	Premises designed to facilitate supervision
122	Educators must be working directly with children to be included in ratios
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
172	Notification of change to policies or procedures
274	Swimming pools

National Quality Standards		
Quality Area 2 Childrens Health and Safety		
2.2 Safety		
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.

Links to related procedures and forms

- OP12-F006 Regular Transportation of Children Risk Assessment and Management Plan Form
- OP24-F001 Excursion Authorisation Form
- OP24-F002 Excursion or Regular Outing Proposal and Risk Management Plan Form
- OP35-F001 Incident, Injury, Trauma, and Illness Record
- OP51-F022 Safety Checklist - Outdoor Daily
- OP52-F001 Risk Assessment and Management Plan
- OP12 Regular Transportation of Children Policy
- OP24 Excursion Policy
- OP40 Managing Reporting Requirements and Notifications Policy.

Links to references and further reading

- Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. ACEQCA- Policy and Procedure Guidelines- Water Safety Guidelines.
- Education and Care Services National Regulations.
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations.
- Guide to the National Quality Framework.
- National Quality Standard.
- Code of Ethics
- United Convention on the Rights of the Child
- KidSafe (2021). Water Safety. <https://kidsafe.com.au/water-safety/>
- National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC): www.nhmrc.gov.au
- NSW Department of Health: www.health.nsw.gov.au
- Victoria Government. Better Health Channel. Water safety for children

8 Approval and review details

APPROVAL AND REVIEW	DETAILS
Approval Authority	COO
Administrator	Operations Managers
Next Review Date	12 months from date of acceptance