Water Safety Policy

Policy Relevant to:	All staff, Educators, families, visitors, and volunteers
Last Reviewed:	September 2026
Next Review:	September 2028
ECS National Law:	S.165, S167
ECS National Regulations	R25(1)(c), r12, r101, r115, r122, r126, r136, r168(209a)(iii), r170, r171, r172, r176, r345
NQS:	2.1.2, 2.2, 2.2.1, 2.2.2

Rationale

The safety and supervision of children is paramount when in, or around, water or water hazards. 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.

Adventure Patch recognises that water safety is an essential component of child safety. Decisions regarding water-based experiences, and excursions near water will prioritise children's safety, wellbeing and best interests.

This includes water play, excursions near water, hot water, drinking water and hygiene practices with water in Adventure Patch service environments. Children will be actively 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.

Water safety education is to be embedded in the educational program to help children develop lifelong safety awareness.

Purpose

To ensure the safety and supervision of children in and around water. This includes water play, excursions near water, hot water, drinking water and hygiene practices (i.e. washing hands) with water in Adventure Patch service environments.

Operational requirements for managing water hazards, water play, excursions near water and emergency responses are detailed in the Adventure Patch Water Safety Procedure and must be followed by all staff and educators.

Implementation

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations, Adventure Patch 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, children are casualties, and many more are 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 as little as a few centimetres of water. Items such as nappy buckets, sinks, pet drinking bowls, ponds, water features, water tanks are all potential drowning hazards. https://kidsafe.com.au/water-safety/

Risk Assessment

A documented risk assessment must be completed prior to:

- Water play activities
- Excursions near waterways
- Activities involving water storage or water hazards
- Any experience where children may have access to water (beyond handwashing)

Definitions

Adequate supervision: Active supervision requires educators to position themselves strategically, maintain visual and auditory awareness of children, anticipate risks and respond immediately to unsafe situations.

Hazard: Situations or things that have the potential to harm a person

Risk assessment: A systematic process of identifying hazards, assessing risks, and deciding on control measures to ensure children's safety

Water hazard: Water hazard: Any source, container, storage area, feature or body of water that presents a risk of drowning, injury, illness or unsafe access for children.
his could include:

- Large bodies of water - dams, rivers, creeks, swimming pools, portable spas, fountains, water play troughs
- Smaller bodies of water - baths, nappy buckets, containers that collect water, pet bowls.

Source: ACECQA Water Safety policy guidelines

Adventure Patch will:

- Ensure water hazards are identified and managed through daily safety checks and risk assessments.
- Ensure educators and staff actively supervise children in and around water at all times.
- Provide access to current first aid and emergency response procedures.
- Maintain environments to minimise drowning and water-related risks.

Educators and staff will:

- Conduct and document risk assessments for water-based activities and excursions near water.
- Remove or empty water containers after use.
- Immediately address identified water hazards.
- Maintain active supervision of children around water.

Related policies

Administration of First Aid Policy Child Safe Environment Policy Educational Program Policy Excursion/Incursion Policy Health and Safety Policy	Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy Physical Environment Policy Sun Safe Policy Supervision Policy

Source

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2025). https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-03/Guide-to-the-NQF-March-2023.pdf*Guide to the National Quality Framework*
Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2023). Policy and procedure guidelines-*Water Safety Guidelines*
Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).
Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2023).
Education and Care Services National Regulations. (Amended 2023)
KidSafe (2021). Water Safety. https://kidsafe.com.au/water-safety/
Royal Life Saving Society Australia Toddler drowning prevention
https://www.royallifesaving.com.au/families/at-home/toddler-drowning-prevention
Victoria Government. Better Health Channel. Water safety for children.

Review History

Policy Reviewed By:	Scott Norris	DCEO	September 2026
POLICY REVIEWED	September 2026	NEXT REVIEW DATE	September 2028
Modifications	• Minor policy update • Updated laws and regulations • Updated policy list • Removed water hazards and replaced with definitions		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS		NEXT REVIEW DATE
June 2023	• Policy maintenance - no major changes to policy • Hyperlinks checked		September 2026

Signed:

CEO:	
Manager:	