



Oaklands Estate Kindergarten

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Government
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Department for Education

WATER POLICY

During 2016-17, 76% of toddler (children aged 0-4 years) drownings were from falls into water. The most common factor for childhood drowning is lack of active supervision. A child can drown silently in as little as 5cm of water, in less than 20 seconds. For every 1 child who drowns, 10 others are rescued from a near drowning incident.

*Water Safety in Education and Care Settings
Kidsafe and the Department for Education, December 2018*

RATIONALE

Young children are most at risk of drowning because they love to play with water and are naturally drawn to it. They do not understand the danger; and they are top heavy (their head is large in comparison to their body), and they have a tendency to fall.

BROAD POLICY STATEMENT

The Water Policy has been developed to ensure that water hazards are appropriately managed to ensure the safety of all children, employees and visitors attending Oaklands Estate Kindergarten. A water hazard is anything that can hold 5cm of water and fit a child's nose and mouth. There are a number of water hazards in children's learning environments, including:

- Sinks, basins, fish tanks/bowls, baths
- Swimming pools, portable pools, spas
- Water courses, ponds, sandpits, clam shells
- Water troughs, containers and buckets used for play, animal drinking containers etc.
- Pooling water.

OBJECTIVES

The Water Policy has been developed to outline how we shall manage water safety, including during water-based activities based on a completed risk assessment. Risk assessments are required to be completed that identify and assess risks associated with any water hazards and water-based activities on or off site.

PROCEDURES

1. Active supervision

Children will be actively supervised at all times when there is a risk of access to any water hazard. Active supervision includes:

- Direct and constant monitoring of children.
- Careful intentional positioning.
- Scanning and moving around the area.
- Listening closely for sounds or the absence of noise.
- Observing play and anticipating behaviour.
- Higher adult/child ratios, for swimming activities or near water activities including the beach, creeks, ponds etc.

2. *Eliminating hazards on site*

- Water shall be emptied immediately after use and stored in a manner that prevents the vessel filling with water when not in use (water trough turned over when not in use).
- We shall ensure all aspects of the environment are designed to ensure adequate drainage of water to avoid pooling. Any upgrades to the Nature play environment will insist on adequate drainage.

3. *Water courses and ponds*

- Our water course is designed so that the depth of the water, at any point, is less than 300mm.
- The water course water is turned on and off by a hidden tap. It drains easily into the sandpit and pebble course to water the trees and plants in the area.
- It shall be turned off during the lunch break so that we do not waste water.

4. *Water troughs, buckets and other water receptacles*

- Water receptacles shall be emptied immediately after use and stored upside down and out of children's reach in the shed or art sink area.
- Handwashing sink to be kept clear of blockages so that water drains away and does not collect.
- The kitchen area shall be restricted with a locked door when unattended by adults.

5. *Water hazard off site/excursions*

- A risk assessment shall be completed for all excursions with a water hazard. Staff shall visit the excursion location and assess the risk.
- Active supervision shall be employed against the risk – constant monitoring, intentional positioning, increased staff ratio, scanning and moving around area, careful listening and behavioural support for children identified with additional needs.

RELATED REGULATIONS, POLICIES, PROCEDURES, GUIDELINES, STANDARDS, FRAMEWORKS

Education and Care Services National Regulations (R 168 (2) (a) (iii)).

This policy has been developed in consultation with Oaklands Estate Kindergarten staff and Governing Council, as representative of the kindergarten community.

Oaklands Estate Kindergarten Governing Council endorsed this policy on **12 September 2022**.

This policy shall be reviewed every two years or as necessary.