



## **Water Safety Policy**

### **Rationale**

At Gawler and Districts College B-12 Children's Centre we encourage children to engage with and to explore their natural environment; including water. Water is regularly used in our learning environment promoting handwashing, cleaning, care of animals, exploring the properties of water (temperature, pressure and flow) sensory stimulation and scientific and mathematical concepts such as volume, measurement, solvents etc.

The safety and supervision of children in and around water is paramount and includes water play, excursions near water, and drinking water and hygiene practices with water within the centre environment.

Kidsafe states that drowning continues to be one of the main causes of fatalities of Australian children. Every year a number of children die by drowning and hundreds more are rescued from near drowning situations. Non-fatal drowning incidents 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 five centimetres of water. Items such as nappy buckets, water courses, ponds, sandpits, clam shells, water troughs and sinks are potential drowning hazards.

### **Objectives**

To ensure that the centre will prevent child accidents and illnesses relating to water hazards, children's safety and wellbeing will be:

- Protected in and around water through supervision and prevention, and
- Promoted through the availability of clean, hygienic water for play and drinking.

Sustainability and conserving water will also be promoted. Water will be tipped onto the garden, a slow flow trickle hose will be available in the sandpit and troughs will only be refilled when children are still engaging in the experience.

### **Definition:**

Kidsafe define 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
- Water courses, ponds, sandpits, clam shells
- Water troughs, containers and buckets used for play
- Animal drinking containers
- Pooled water.

### **Implementation:**

Educators at Gawler and Districts College B-12 Children's Centre will:

- ensure all water-based activities are adequately supervised at all times
- ensure water troughs or containers for water play are filled to a safe level – no more than 5cm in depth. These will be emptied immediately after use.
- remain within 1.5 metres of the container and closely supervise the children at all times if the container if the depth of the water is greater than 5cm
- empty containers immediately after use, or if/when educator needs to move away from the area.
- store equipment to prevent collection of water from rain or garden watering.
- check garden after watering or rain and mop, drain or divert water to remove it from the learning environment.
- monitor and supervise hollows in rocks or logs designed to catch small amounts of water collected through rainfall
- fill buckets of water used during learning experiences immediately before use, supervise while in use, and empty immediately after use, onto the garden if appropriate.
- ensure that all children have safe independent access to clean and cool drinking water at all times.
- ensure fish tanks that are not able to be adequately supervised at all times and/or pose an unacceptable risk to children are guarded or effective barriers are in place.
  - The turtle tank is to remain covered at all times while children are present.
  - No furniture is placed alongside the tank
  - The tank is to remain in an area with high visibility such as the main preschool room, within sight from teacher preparation room, director's office and outside windows.
- will conduct a risk assessment prior to any excursion taking place. Particular attention will be focused upon water safety where the excursion is near a body of water.
- ensure that any new features added to learning areas are designed to ensure adequate drainage of water to avoid pooling that poses risks of drowning.
- address any pooling that occurs due to blocked or in-adequate storm water systems through maintenance procedures.

When children are present, there will be at least one staff member with a current approved first aid qualification rostered. All staff working directly with children are encouraged to keep first aid qualifications up to date.



## **References**

[Kidsafe Water Safety in Education and Care Settings](#)

[Preschool Water Safety Procedure](#)

[National Quality Standard](#)

[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)

- Regulation 168 (2) (a) (iii): Education and care service must have policies and procedures – Water safety, including safety during any water-based activities
- Regulation 101 (2) (b): Conduct of risk assessment for excursion