

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Document Name:	Water Safety
Review Dates:	21.01.2022; 02.04.2025; 26/05/2026; 26/05/2029
Review Cycle:	3 years
Approved By:	Director
Approval Date	31.05.2019; 19.11.2021; 02.04.2025; 26/05/2026

WATER SAFETY

1. POLICY STATEMENT AND/OR PURPOSE

Catholic Early Learning and Care is committed to:

- Allowing children to explore their natural environment including through water play.
- Managing risks associated with water activities.
- Ensuring programming incorporates water safety awareness, and
- Providing training/information to educators about water safety.

2. APPLICATION

This procedure applies to all Catholic Early Learning and Care Services in the Diocese of Cairns.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

Nominated Supervisor/Responsible Person Responsibilities:

- Conduct and implement risk assessments for identified water hazards
- Appropriate communications, permissions and checklists have been completed
- Building water safety messages into the educational program as appropriate
- Ensure that the services hold a supply of clothing and towels.

Educators' Responsibilities:

- Comply with service risk assessment
- Identifying and eliminating water hazards where possible as part of the daily inspection
- Following water safety guidelines for the service
- Actively supervising all water activities
- Teaching children about staying safe around water
- Reporting water hazards and incidents immediately to the Nominated Supervisor/Responsible Person
- Reading, signing and following risk assessments
- Prior to planned water activities educators will conduct physical and visual environmental checks.
- Educators will ensure spontaneous play is supported, ensuring that children's interests are fostered through a flexible program.
- During spontaneous water play activities educators will continually monitor weather and environmental conditions.
- Educators will positively redirect children if their behaviour or environmental safety is compromised.

4. PROCEDURE

Water Safety at services:

Hazard inspection:

As part of the daily indoor/outdoor checklist educators identify and remove any water hazards where possible.

Education:

- Annual WHS Mandatory training
- Risk Assessments
- Policies are reviewed regularly

Water containers:

Water containers that present a drowning hazard for children (e.g. buckets, pet water bowls, tanks, water features). Educators will:

- Ensure that resources containing water are never left unattended (including buckets used for cleaning)
- Store containers in a manner to prevent the inadvertent collection of water.
- Must be emptied and allowed to dry thoroughly at the end of each water play activity to prevent the build-up of potentially harmful bacteria and mould.

Water immersion play:

(Troughs, sensory strays, large containers and shell sandpits)

- For Early Learning where children are immersed in water, the water level should be no more than 15 cm with a ratio of 1:5 implemented
- For OSHC where children are immersed in water, the water level should be no more than 30cm with a ratio of 1:8 implemented.
- Educators must be within arm's reach at all times.

Children will be discouraged from drinking the water during play activities.

Rain Play/Spontaneous play:

Educators must:

- Check weather forecasts and warnings prior to outdoor play
- Educators will conduct physical/visual checks of the environment prior to outdoor play
- Identify any hazards including:
 - Slippery surfaces
 - Deep puddles
 - Water flow areas or drains
- Ensure a safe, defined play area is established

Rain play may be permitted when:

- Rain is light to moderate (e.g. drizzle or low steady rain)
- There are no severe weather warnings in place
- Outdoor areas are assessed as safe and suitable
- Adequate supervision and staffing are available
- Play/learning experience is deemed safe and appropriate for wet weather
- Educators will cease play if child behaviour or environmental safety is compromised.

Post water play procedures:

- Children will be changed into dry clothing after rain play ceases, or earlier if a child appears cold or uncomfortable.
- Wet clothing will be stored appropriately.
- Handwashing and appropriate hygiene practices will be followed the activity.
- Parents will be contacted and notified if spare supplies have run out and child does not have their own.

Excursions

- Staff are to be in arm's reach and with a 1:5 ratio when children are playing in water.
- CELC does not permit deep water excursion activities such as swimming pools.
- CELC does not permit children to enter the ocean at any time.
- Activities that involve shallow creeks must be less than 30cm for OSHC and less than 15cm for Kindergarten and Early Learning.
- Services conducting an excursion involving water will complete an Environmental Checklist in OWNA on arrival and prior to children engaging in the experience.

Swimming Lessons: Early Learning Only

- When organising swimming lessons, the service must ensure that all swim instructors hold current Blue Cards and appropriate swimming instructor qualifications, in compliance with relevant legislation and regulations.
- Upon arrival at the swim school, staff are responsible for delivering a safety briefing to educators and children. This briefing must include emergency procedures, as well as the location of fire exits and designated assembly points.
- Parents or guardians are required to complete a questionnaire outlining their child's confidence and ability in the water.
- Swim instructors will conduct an initial trial lesson to assess each child's swimming ability, ensuring they are placed in an appropriate class level.

Refer to the Excursions Policy and Procedure

Incursions:

- Services must implement a ratio of 1:8 when engaging inflatable waterslides where water pools at the bottom.

Active Supervision:

Educators must ensure that active supervision always occurs in accordance with Laws and Regulations.

Educators will adapt supervision practices appropriately where possible to support children’s developmental needs, interests and requests.

5. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Water Safety Guidelines for Unstructured Aquatic Activities
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ATKd5C3844&feature=youtu.be>

6. BREACHING THIS POLICY

Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against a person who is found to have breached the requirements contained within this document. Action taken will depend on the nature and circumstance of each breach and could include: an official warning and note on the individual’s personnel file; a formal written and/or verbal apology; counselling; demotion; transfer; or suspension or dismissal for very serious matters.

7. SEE ALSO

Legislation:

- Work Health & Safety Act & Regulations 2011
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Reg 168 2. (a) iii Water Safety
- Reg 101 Conduct of risk assessment for excursion
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- The National Quality Standards for Early Childhood Education and Care 2018
- Water Safety Guidelines for Unstructured Aquatic Activity – Department of Education and Training NSW

8. ENQUIRIES

Catholic Early Learning and Care Executive Director - admin@cclc.catholic.org.au

9. APPROVAL



Chris Warner
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Date: 29 May 2026