

POLICY & PROCEDURAL STATEMENTS

Topic: Early Learning – Water-based Activities

Policy: Avenue Neighbourhood House @ Eley Inc. (ANH@E) Early Learning Centre is committed to ensuring that all water-based activities are actively supervised, and water vessels are emptied when not in use.

ANH@E is committed to

- Providing opportunities for children to explore their natural environment including through water play.
- Ensuring that children are protected from the risks associated with drowning or non-fatal drowning experiences.
- Ensuring that curriculum planning incorporates water safety awareness.
- Providing information to educators, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers, and others at the service about water safety.

Early learning spaces and environments should offer an array of possibilities and connect children with natural materials. Water is one experience that offers children sensory-rich, open-ended experiences that engage children's curiosity and imagination. These experiences, especially those conducted with and near water, will be carefully supervised ensuring the safety of children and adults. Water safety relates to access to water in the building, the playground, and to the availability of drinking water for children. It is imperative that early learning educators remain vigilant in their supervision of children in and around water and are alert to potential risks in everyday practice in the learning environment.

Relevant Legislation and Standards

- Children's Services Regulations 2020 (Vic).
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) (Part 2: Principles for Children).
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Vic): Section 167.
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (regulations 101 (2), 168 (2) (a)(iii).
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety, Standard 2.2 Safety.
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic).

Definitions

Adequate supervision in relation to this policy entails all children (individuals and groups) in all areas of the Early Learning Centre, being in sight and/or hearing of an early learning educator at all times including during toileting, sleep, rest and transition routines. Services are required to comply with the legislative requirements for educator-to-child ratios at all times.

Supervision contributes to protecting children from hazards that may emerge in play, including hazards created by the equipment used. Adequate supervision refers to constant, active, and diligent supervision of every child at the service. Adequate supervision requires that educators are always in a position to observe each child, respond to individual needs, and immediately intervene if necessary. Variables affecting supervision levels include:

- Number, age and abilities of children.
- Number and positioning of educators.
- Current activity of each child.
- Areas in which the children are engaged in an activity (visibility and accessibility).
- Developmental profile of each child and of the group of children.
- Experience, knowledge, and skill of each educator.
- Need for educators to move between areas (effective communication strategies).

Approved first aid qualifications including anaphylaxis management and emergency asthma management training are published on the ACECQA website www.acecqa.gov.au

Hazard is a source or situation with a potential for harm in terms of human injury or ill health, damage to property, damage to the environment, or a combination of these.

Notifiable incident is an incident involving workplace health and safety that is required by law to be reported to WorkSafe Victoria. Notification is required for incidents that result in death or serious injury/illness, or dangerous occurrences. For a complete list of incidents that must be reported to WorkSafe Victoria, refer to the Guide to Incident Notification on the WorkSafe Victoria website: www.worksafe.vic.gov.au

Serious incident is an incident resulting in the death of a child, or an injury, trauma, or illness for which the attention of a registered medical practitioner, emergency services or hospital is sought or should have been sought. This also includes an incident in which a child appears to be missing, cannot be accounted for, is removed from the service in contravention of the regulations, or is mistakenly locked in/out of the service premises. A serious incident should be documented in an Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record as soon as possible and within 24 hours of the incident. The Regulatory Authority (Department of Education and Training) must be notified within 24 hours of a serious incident occurring at the service and records are required to be retained by the service.

Water hazard in relation to this policy, can lead to drowning or non-fatal drowning incidences. Drowning hazards include large bodies of water such as swimming pools, rivers, creeks, dams, and ponds. Smaller bodies of water, including nappy buckets, water containers, pet water bowls, and poor drainage which allow water to collect can also present drowning hazards for young children.

Water Safety Procedure

ANH@E Early Learning Centre as the approved provider is responsible for:

- Ensuring that children are adequately supervised at all times when near water hazards and water-based activities.
- Ensuring that educator-to-child ratios are maintained at all times.
- Conducting a risk assessment in relation to any water hazards on or near the premises that may be accessible to children.

- Conducting a regular safety check of the service premises.
- Ensuring any water hazards that are not able to be adequately supervised at all times are isolated from children by a child-resistant barrier or fence.
- Ensuring that an educator with a current approved first aid qualification is in attendance and immediately available at all times children are being educated and cared for by the service.
- Ensuring that details of current approved first aid qualifications are filed with each staff member's record.
- Reporting serious incidents to DET.
- Reporting notifiable incidents to WorkSafe Victoria.
- Ensuring that water safety awareness is embedded in the curriculum.
- Providing current information to parents about water safety.

The Nominated Supervisor or persons in day to day control is responsible for:

- Implementing this policy.
- Ensuring parents/guardians are informed of this policy on enrolment.
- Ensuring information on water safety is incorporated into the educational program.
- Ensuring that children are adequately supervised and protected from hazards and harm at all times.
- Ensuring that water hazards and risks associated with water-based activities are considered in a risk assessment prior to conducting the activity.
- Ensuring that an educator with a current approved first aid qualification is in attendance and immediately available at all times children are being educated and cared for by the service.
- Ensuring that all educators' current approved first aid qualifications meet the requirements of the National Regulations and are approved by ACECQA (refer to Administration of First Aid Policy).
- Informing the House Manager immediately if any serious or notifiable incidents occur at the service.

Early Learning Educators and other staff are responsible for:

- Providing adequate supervision at all times.
- Adjusting supervision strategies to suit the activities being undertaken.
- Maintaining a current approved first aid qualification.
- Ensuring gates and other barriers restricting access to water hazards are closed at all times and that fences are kept clear at all times.
- Ensuring that containers of water (including nappy buckets and cleaning buckets) are sealed with child-proof lids.
- Ensuring wading/paddling pools, water play containers, and portable water courses are emptied immediately after each use and stored in a manner that prevents the collection of water when not in use.
- Checking the outdoor learning environment at the beginning and end of each day for puddles or filled containers that could pose a potential risk to small children after heavy rain.
- Providing water safety education as a part of the Service's program.
- Informing the House Manager immediately if any serious or notifiable incidents occur at the service.

Status	Current
Effective Date	05 June 2024
Review Date	By June 2026
Approval Authority	Board of Governance
Enquiries	9808 2000