



# Water Safety Policy

## BACKGROUND

Water activities are a significant part of Australian life and provide children with opportunities to access a variety of activities for experience, learning and fun. However, all bodies of water present a significant hazard and require service educators to ensure increased vigilance around them. According to Kidsafe, drowning continues to be one of the main causes of fatalities of Australian children. It is acknowledged that children can drown in as little as 5cm of water.

The number of educators present at water activities is to be determined by a risk assessment of the proposed activity. The adequacy of supervision shall be determined by a range of factors including:

- numbers, ages, and abilities of the children
- number and positioning of educators
- each child's current activity
- areas where children are playing, in particular the visibility and accessibility of these areas
- risks in the environment and experiences provided to children
- educators' knowledge of each child and each group of children
- the experience, knowledge, and skill of each educator.

The service recognises the following locations are bodies of water:

- wading pools
- lakes
- ponds
- the sea
- creeks
- dams
- rivers
- equipment used by the service that could contain 5cm or more of water and would allow a child to submerge both nose and mouth at the same time.

## POLICY STATEMENT

Holy Family Catholic School OSHC service recognises the risks posed by bodies of water and takes the safety of children and educators involved in water-based activities and around bodies of water seriously. The service will ensure that every precaution is taken so that children are able to enjoy water-based activities safely. Risk assessments will be carried out for programmed water-based activities and the outcomes will underpin the educator to child ratio for the activities.

Water-based play is an important part of our children's healthy growth, learning, wellbeing and development. Our educators and staff ensure that all precautions are employed to safeguard children during these experiences. We create opportunities for children to learn and develop. This includes incorporating water safety awareness into the educational program.

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**HOW THE POLICY WILL BE IMPLEMENTED**

The service shall ensure the safety of children around bodies of water by:

- Undertaking a risk assessment that will determine the required educator to child ratio for the proposed activity.
- Ensuring there are educators present that have a current, approved first aid qualification including CPR.
- Demonstrating a preference for venues that provide additional supervision in the form of lifeguards.
- Ensuring educators are placed in positions that allow them to supervise any child accessing a body of water directly and actively.
- Avoiding any venue with a body of water where sufficient precautions cannot be taken to ensure the safety of children.

The Director is responsible for:

- Actively looking for venues that provide additional supervision in the form of lifeguards when the venue contains or has access to a body of water.
- Ensuring educators have the skills and abilities to safely facilitate the water activities.
- Ensuring educators position themselves in the environment so that every child is within sight of an adult at all times and that supervision is direct and vigilant; and that educators rotate their position in the environment on a regular basis to allow movement and maintain vigilance.
- On a swimming excursion, having some educators physically in the water, to supervise/interact with children.
- Conducting a risk assessment on any venue the service plans to visit, to ensure that the service is able to provide appropriate levels of supervision and that the risk does not exceed the service’s ability to maintain the safety of children.

**REFERENCES:**

- Quality Area 2 – Children’s health and safety
- Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011) R 165, R 167, R 169

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