



# WATER SAFETY POLICY

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## POLICY RATIONALE

TeamKids recognises that activities involving or within proximity of water, may pose particular risks. The Education and Care Services Nations Regulations, requires approved providers to ensure a policy is in place, that supports educators to manage water safety, including safety during water-based activities. The health, safety and wellbeing of children remains the number one priority for TeamKids.

TeamKids identifies 'Water-based activities' as activities that engage children in an environment where they are in and/or near water. These may include:

- Surfing
- Canoeing
- Tubing
- Snorkelling
- Raft building
- Kayaking
- Fishing
- Beach games
- Rock pooling

TeamKids is committed to exercising extra caution where any water-based activity or water-based excursion is delivered.

Children's access to any body of water, that may pose a risk to children, is also assessed and managed to ensure safety standards are maintained at all times. This may include dams, ponds, water fountains, large drains and any area/item, that contains water such as buckets, sinks, pet bowls, ponds, pools, water features and water tanks.

## POLICY OBJECTIVES

This policy provides clear guidelines, expectations and commitments to all educators and parents/guardians regarding child water safety. The policy details TeamKids' goals for water safety for all children and staff; commits to safe water practices and children playing safely in and around water. Management of risks and appropriate supervision is essential to water safety. No child will be left unattended when in proximity to water.

## WATER SAFE PROCEDURES

Water safety does not only include water-based activities. It may also include the risk to children from water contained in buckets, water features (such as ponds & lakes), water hazards and water play equipment. The risks may be different depending on the location of the service and/or excursion. For example, rural or remote locations will have different risks in relation to water.

Children may be able to access water hazards; however, risk mitigation measures put into place, will ensure children's health and safety. Should children be exposed to water in any manner, a risk assessment will be completed. The risk assessment will consider safety measures such as fencing, covers for waterbodies and the distance between the body of water and the expected location of children. The service Responsible Person is responsible for the risk assessment of service-based water safety. TeamKids will complete risk assessments for water safety within excursions and all educators at a service, will review and sign that they have understood any risk assessment, before commencing an excursion. The service Nominated Supervisor is responsible for ensuring these processes are conducted in accordance with all legal requirements. Drowning continues to be one of the main causes of fatalities of Australian children and the risk of serious injury in non-fatal water safety incidents requires that TeamKids ensure the risk involving water are assessed, monitored and managed. Educators are responsible to manage any risks around water. Information about the management of these risks is listed in this policy and any associated risk assessment.

Any water-based experiences, provided at the service will be individually assessed for supervision requirements. Educators will ensure children are in positions that allow direct supervision of children at all times and educator to child ratios will be adjusted according to the risk assessment. The depth of water, access for children, needs of individual children and number of children, will determine the educator to child ratio that will be in place, unless it is a swimming excursion, where the further details below will be implemented. Children will be guided as to what is suitable access before commencing any water-based experience. Rules will be made clear to children and educators will monitor children's interactions to ensure they are appropriate. The risk of slip from water spillages will be monitored and rectified through the use of towels, paper towel or mops, immediately when noted.

Where possible, containers of water will be emptied or removed from the area where children are located. This will be a part of the daily hazard check at services and risk assessments for excursions. Where it is not possible to empty potentially hazardous water containers, limiting children's access and/or increased supervision will be implemented. This will be noted in the risk assessment or hazard check document. This will enable the Nominated Supervisor to reflect on other possible means to ensure children's safety. Containers with water, used for experiences, will be emptied and packed away, at the end of each experience period. Items such as mop buckets and water troughs, will be kept in an area inaccessible to children at all times. When in use, educators will supervise their location to ensure children do not have unsupervised access to these.

If a child is noted to be unattended at a pool or other water hazard, the educator will act immediately to ensure the safety of that child. The Responsible person will be notified, followed by the Nominated Supervisor and an internal investigation commenced.

If required, the matter will be notified to the Regulatory Authority, as a potential supervision breach and/or risk of harm or hazard to a child. This will be completed by the Quality & Compliance Team using an incident report completed by the service Responsible Person.

TeamKids services do not include swimming pools, however some schools in which TeamKids operate, have a pool or body of water such as a lake or pond on site. This may be indoors or outdoors. TeamKids will ensure that at the time of entering a contract with the school, the pool or body of water has the correct/legal fencing

requirements or safety barriers. The Nominated supervisor is responsible to ensure this is physically checked regularly to ensure these barriers remain in place and are in appropriate condition. This process will also include speaking with the school in which the service is located, to ensure appropriate legally required checks have taken place.

## **SWIMMING EXPERIENCES**

If a swimming program is conducted at a venue where there is no venue appointed lifeguard on duty during times when children are engaged in swimming:

- An educator who holds a Bronze Medallion or AusSwim level trained staff member will be in attendance of the pool area at all times, in addition to the programs overall staff to child ratios.

# WATER SAFETY

## WATER SAFE PROCEDURES CONTINUED

Where the venue provides a lifeguard, the additionally qualified educator will not be required.

- The staff-student ratio of 1:10 apply to Intermediate and Advanced swimmers and a staff ratio of 1:6 apply to all Beginner swimmers. Including times when water-based activities may be planned and led by external service providers.

This procedure may be altered subject to individual service approval conditions, imposed by the Regulatory Authority.

Where water activities occur outside of the pool environment, a qualified staff member will complete a Risk Assessment of the activity and the environment.

## PARENT REQUIREMENTS

Parents must provide the completed and signed 'Swimming Ability Permission Form' for their child to participate in the swimming component of the program and/or any water-based activities.

Children of 4 years old are not permitted to access pools or water-based activities at TeamKids

## TEAMKIDS STAFF REQUIREMENTS

All TeamKids staff members wear an easy to recognise TeamKids uniform so all children can quickly and confidentially identify staff.

All staff supervising with the swimming component of the program are familiar with all relevant medical information of each child, including epilepsy, diabetes, asthma and heart conditions, and where appropriate, measures are taken.

All staff communicate and are made aware of, all children's illnesses, individual needs, special equipment and/or medical conditions that may exist before entering the pool area.

At all times a minimum of one staff member will have their approved first aid and CPR training qualifications.

Where staff and children are divided into groups and separate across a venue, all staff carry a means of communication and are contactable by all other staff members at any time. This may include a service phone.

Staff discuss the rules of being near and around water with children before arriving at a pool and/or water-based activity.

Staff are to ensure that they understand the swimming capability and competency of each child participating in swimming or water-based activities.

# WATER SAFETY

## TEAMKIDS STAFF REQUIREMENTS CONTINUED

Staff explain to each child how to signal for help if needed, before entering the pool or water-based activity.

Staff are positioned in a manner that supervision of all children occurs at all times near water.

Staff ensure that children walk and never run, when near water.

## SWIMMING STANDARD REQUIREMENTS

Where children swim at a 'Beginners Standard', as reflected by their parent in the swimming consent form, (that is, children are in shallow water and have little or no experience swimming), TeamKids ensures a ratio of 1 staff to maximum 6 students and water depth is restricted to 1.2m with clear and obvious barriers.

Where children swim at an 'Intermediate Standard', as reflected by their parent in the swimming consent form, the children's ability is demonstrated to staff at the beginning of the swimming component of the program in shallow water. These children demonstrate their ability to swim at least 25 metres unassisted. TeamKids ensures ratios of 1 staff to maximum 10 Intermediate Standard swimmers/children.

Where children swim at an 'Advanced Standard', as reflected by their parent in the swimming consent form, the children's ability to; swim 50 metres using 2 recognisable strokes; and demonstrate 1 survival stroke (breaststroke or freestyle) in deep water, is demonstrated to staff at the beginning of the swim component of the program. TeamKids ensures ratios of 1 staff to maximum 10 Advance Standard swimmers/children.

The swimming components of the programs consist of 1-hour sessions at maximum before 15-minute breaks are imposed.

Children with ear infections, throat infections, colds, papillomas and other contagious infections are not permitted to enter the water.

## DIVING BOARDS

1m and 3m Diving Boards are only used after all children are out of the pool. All children line up and wait at the bottom of the ladder (completely off the diving board platform) and only proceed after staff has provided clear and safe instructions. Before any diving activities by children, staff provide a demonstration of how to safely enter the water.

- No child is permitted to dive off the 5m board.
- No children under the age of 8 are allowed on the 3m diving board.



# WATER SAFETY

## REFERENCES:

ACECQA National Quality Framework Resource Kit (2012)

Quality Area 2 – Children’s health and safety

Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011) R 25(1)(c) for venues with pools.

Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010) S 165, S 167

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