



# Orroroo School Based Preschool Water Safety Policy

## **RATIONALE**

(from *Water Safety in Education and Care Settings*, Department for Education and KidSafe, December 2018)

### **Childhood drowning**

- The most common factor for childhood drowning is lack of active supervision.
- A child can drown silently in as little as 5cm of water, in less than 20 seconds.
- For every 1 child who drowns, 10 others are rescued from a near drowning incident.

### **Why young children are most at risk of drowning**

- They love to play with water and are naturally drawn to it.
- They do not understand the danger.
- They are top heavy (their head is large in comparison to their body) and they have a tendency to fall.

### **Water hazards**

- A water hazard is anything that can hold 5cm of water and fit a child's nose and mouth.

## **MANAGEMENT OF WATER HAZARDS**

### **1. Reporting water hazards**

All fixed/permanent water hazards are reported by the Principal using the Department for Education online hazard reporting and corrective action forms.

[https://edi.sa.edu.au/hr/for-managers/health-and-safety/critical-incident-and-injury-reporting?SQ\\_VARIATION\\_260558=0](https://edi.sa.edu.au/hr/for-managers/health-and-safety/critical-incident-and-injury-reporting?SQ_VARIATION_260558=0)

### **2. Risk assessment**

Risk assessments are required to be completed for all water hazards and water-based activities, including excursions near water. Risk assessments should include:

#### **A. Active supervision**

Children must be actively supervised at all times when there is a risk of access to any water hazard. Active supervision includes:

- Direct and constant monitoring of children – within arm's length (within 1 – 2 metres)
- Careful intentional positioning
- Scanning and moving around the area
- Listening closely for sounds or the absence of noise
- Observing play and anticipating behaviour
- Higher adult/child ratios

#### **B. Eliminating hazards**

Water must be emptied immediately after use and stored in a manner that prevents the vessel filling with water when not in use. All aspects of the environment must be designed to ensure adequate drainage of water to avoid pooling.

### C. Restricting access

Consideration should be given to the existence/absence of compliant fencing or barriers.

## **3. Water Hazards at Orroroo School Based Preschool**

### a) Sinks and basins

- Children's bathroom
  - Plugs are not provided.
- Adult toilet
  - Plugs are not provided and children's access is prevented through supervision.
- Kitchen
  - Access is restricted by a low gate which is to be kept locked unless a supervising adult is present.

### b) Water receptacles (buckets, troughs and other containers)

- Active supervision (see above) is to be provided at all times when children are playing with water >5cm deep in a container that can fit a child's mouth and nose.
- Water must be emptied immediately after use or whenever active supervision is not possible and receptacles must be stored in a manner that prevents them filling with water when not in use.

### c) Sandpit

- Active supervision (see above) is to be provided at all times when children are playing in the sandpit with water that is either:
  - Pooled to a depth of >5cm, *or*
  - Used to fill containers that can fit a child's mouth and nose to a depth of >5cm.
- When sandpit play finished or active supervision is no longer possible:
  - Tap/hose should be turned off tightly and supervision maintained until water has drained away.
  - Containers must be emptied and stored in a manner that prevents them filling when not in use.

### d) Water course (creek bed)

- Active supervision (see above) is to be provided at all times by a designated staff member when there is water in the creek bed.
- For preschool-aged children (over 3 years) water is to be turned off as soon as the water covers the stepping stones. (See below depth control for children under 3 years.)
- Active supervision is to be maintained until water in all areas of the creek bed has drained to >5cm depth.
- Preschool, occasional care and RICE staff are to monitor drainage and report any pooling to >5cm depth using Orroroo Area School's hazard reporting process (so that grounds staff can adjust drainage).
- The tap is padlocked when preschool, occasional care and RICE programs are not in session to prevent after hours use by persons entering the preschool grounds.
- The creek bed and surrounding area is to be included in the daily safety check and checked again by preschool, occasional care and RICE staff before use by children (e.g. for snakes).
- Preschool, occasional care and RICE staff are to monitor the prevalence of insects (mosquitos, bees) attracted by water in the creek bed and restrict use of water for a period of time if insects are considered an unacceptable risk.

*ADDITIONAL CONROLS FOR CHILDREN UNDER 3 YEARS:*

- Active supervision with a ratio of 1:4 is required when children under 3 years are playing in water the creek bed.
- When children under 3 years are playing in water in the creek bed, the depth of the water in any area of the creek bed should not exceed the level of the smallest child's ankle bone.

e) Pooling water

Preschool, occasional care and RICE staff are to report any pooling of water to >5cm depth in any area of the preschool using Orroroo Area School's hazard reporting process.

**NOTE: Water activities may need to be limited to enable active supervision, e.g. EITHER water in creek bed OR water play in sandpit (not both unless there are sufficient supervising adults to allow active supervision in more than one 'water' area in addition to regular supervision requirements).**

## 5. Excursions

- The preschool teacher is to complete a risk assessment for all excursions, including those near water.
- The risk assessment for excursions near water should include consideration of active supervision, eliminating hazards and restricting access.
- Completed risk assessments for excursions should be submitted to the Principal or delegate for approval (as per Orroroo Area School process) prior to the excursion.
- The preschool teacher is responsible for communicating controls to all supervising adults participating in the excursion.
- The preschool teacher is responsible for communicating controls in a meaningful and appropriate manner to all children participating in the excursion.

## 4. Communication

- The preschool teacher is responsible for communicating this policy to relief teachers and regular/relief ancillary staff (including occasional care staff).
- The preschool teacher is responsible for communicating this policy to RICE staff, via the communication book in the first instance, then at the early childhood meeting at the beginning of Term 1 each year.
- RICE is to be provided with a copy of this policy and the associated risk assessment for the creek bed. The Principal is responsible for providing the preschool teacher with a copy of the policy upon ratification by Governing Council and requesting that it be communicated to RICE.

## 5. Review

- The Principal is responsible for annual review and ratification of this policy at Governing Council.
- Consultation with the preschool teacher about the effectiveness of the policy should take place prior to review at Governing Council.

*Original date of Policy: 03/12/219 When ratified.*