

# Water Safety Policy

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**Quality Area 2:** Children’s health and safety

**Standard 2.2:** Each child is protected

Element 2.2.1: At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.

Element 2.2.2: Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.

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## **POLICY STATEMENT**

At Arabanoo, we recognise the importance of water play in providing children and young people with valuable learning experiences. We are committed to planning and facilitating water-related activities that offer appropriate levels of challenge, enabling children to explore, experiment, and take calculated risks. These activities will be conducted in both outdoor and indoor environments as well as during excursions.

The safety and wellbeing of children are our top priorities. To ensure their protection during water-related activities, Arabanoo is dedicated to implementing comprehensive safety measures that include:

- **Risk Management:** We will continuously identify, evaluate, and mitigate potential risks associated with water play and water-related activities.
- **Risk Assessment:** Detailed risk assessments will be conducted for all water-related activities and excursions near water to ensure that hazards are identified and addressed before activities commence.
- **Adequate Supervision:** We will ensure that children are adequately supervised at all times during water play, excursions, and in areas where water hazards are present.
- **Clear Procedures:** Specific procedures will be established and communicated to guide access to water and ensure safe practices are followed within Arabanoo.

By adhering to these principles, Arabanoo aims to create a safe and engaging environment where children can enjoy the benefits of water play while their safety is diligently maintained.

## **Rationale:**

The Education and Care Services National Regulations require approved providers to ensure their services have policies and procedures in place for managing water safety, including safety during any water-based activities.

According to Kidsafe, the recognised authority on the prevention of injuries in children, drowning continues to be one of the leading causes of fatalities among Australian children. Each year, numerous children either drown or experience near-drowning incidents. Non-fatal drowning incidents are also a significant concern due to their potential long-term effects, including brain damage and permanent disability.

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The most common factor in childhood drowning is a lack of supervision. A child can drown in as little as a few centimetres of water. Water hazards or features that may pose a risk include dams, ponds, water fountains, large drains, or any areas that retain water. Items such as buckets, sinks, ponds, pools, water features, and water tanks are also potential drowning hazards.

This policy underscores the importance of vigilant supervision, rigorous risk management, and clear procedures to prevent drowning and ensure the safety and wellbeing of children during water-related activities. By adhering to these guidelines, Arabanoo aims to minimize the risks associated with water play and create a secure environment for all children in our care.

## CONSIDERATIONS:

Education and Care Services National Law & Regulations	National Quality Standard	Other Service policies/documentation	Other
National Law 165, 167	2.1 7.1.1, 7.2.1	Excursion Policy. Staff Handbook Staffing Policy First Aid Policy Incident, Injury and Trauma Policy Child Safe Environment Policy Sun Protection	My Time, Our Place.
National Regulations  101, 115, 168, 170, 171, 172			Work, Health & Safety Act 2011.  <a href="#">ACECQA – Risk Assessment and management</a>  <a href="#">Kidsafe – Water safety resources</a>

## ENDORSEMENT BY THE SERVICE:

**Approval date:** Sept 2024

**Date for Review:** Sept 2026

## Policy History

Version 1.0

December 2005, May 2006, March 2007, May 2007, February 2009, August 2010, May 2011, March 2012.

Version 2.0

Overhaul of policies following regulatory changes in 2012. Drafted from the Network template and using the Current Arabanoo Policy Handbook by Natalie Slessor. Reviewed by Cath Stephens and Jane Ellis, May 2013.

Version 3.0

Reviewed by Anna Sherington and Jane Ellis, June 2014

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Version	Date reviewed	Who by	Area changed	Changes made	Authorisation
4.0	12 August 2015	Liz Watkinson and Vanessa Williamson		Minor adjustments to wording	Kerry Sinclair 12 February 2016
5.0	11 May 2017	Carin Rollo & Cecile Cassanova		Minor adjustments to wording	
	15 May 2017	Belinda Edmunds and Rowan Friend		Expanded procedures for water-based excursions.  Separated Policy and Procedure	Belinda Edmunds 15 June 2017
6.0	01 May 2019	Rowan Friend & Michelle Stewart	Standards	Updated to the new NQS	Kate Sellick – 8 May 2019
7.0	June 2024	KW OSHC Consulting	Policy Statement	Refined and made clear what the principles of the policy are	3 Sept 2024 – Rowan Friend
			Rationale	Included with reference to regulations and Kidsafe data	

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## KEY TERMS

TERM	MEANING	SOURCE
Adequate Supervision	<p>Means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An educator can respond immediately, particularly when a child is distressed or in a hazardous situation.</li> <li>• Knowing where children are at all times and monitoring their activities actively and diligently.</li> </ul>	Guide to the NQF (Operational Requirements – Quality Area 2)
Risk Assessment	A systematic process of evaluating the potential likelihood and consequences of risks that may be involved in a projected activity or undertaking.	
Serious Incident	<p>For the purposes of the definition of serious incident in section 5(1) of the Law, each of the following is prescribed as a serious incident:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The death of a child-               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. While that child is being educated and care for by an education and care service; or</li> <li>ii. Following an incident occurring while that child was being educated and cared for by an education and care service.</li> </ol> </li> <li>b. An incident involving serious injury or trauma to a child occurring while that child is being educated and cared for by an education and care service –               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Which a reasonable person would consider required urgent medical attention from a registered medical practitioner or</li> <li>ii. For which the child attended, or ought reasonably to have attended, a hospital;</li> </ol> </li> <li>c. Any incident involving serious illness of a child occurring while that child is being educated and cared for by an education and care service for which the child attended, or ought reasonably to have attended, a hospital;</li> <li>d. Any emergency for which emergency services attended;</li> <li>e. Any circumstance where a child being educated and cared for by an education and care service –               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Appears to be missing or cannot be accounted for; or</li> <li>ii. Appears to have been taken or removed from the education and care service premises in a manner that contravenes these Regulations or</li> <li>iii. Is mistakenly locked in or locked out of the education and care service premises or any part of the premises.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	National Regulations (Regulation 12)
Hazard	Situations or things that have the potential to harm a person	
Water Hazard	Any water body that poses a potential drowning risk to children and could include:	Guide to the NQF (Operational

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Large bodies of water, such as rivers, creeks, dams, ponds, swimming pools, jetted bathtubs (or jacuzzis), in-ground spas, above ground portable spas (or hot tubs) or any container with pool drainage that allows water to pool.</li><li>• Smaller bodies of water, such as baths, nappy buckets and pet water containers.</li></ul>	Requirements – Quality Area 7)
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## PROCEDURES

### Preventing and Managing Water Safety Incidents

Risk management strategies are implemented daily to ensure bodies of water are identified and managed. Arabanoo conducts a session audit to identify any risks or hazards prior to the children's arrival. This audit includes the identification of bodies of water, such as large puddles or buckets of water, which are then reported to the Responsible Person and Nominated Supervisor. Safety measures will be put in place to either mitigate or remove the risk

### Water-based Experiences within Arabanoo

At Arabanoo, we believe that water-based play is an important part of our children's healthy learning, growth, wellbeing, and development. Our educators ensure that all precautions are employed to safeguard children during these experiences.

Risk assessments are conducted for each water-based experience. Risk assessments will outline:

- Identified risks associated with the water-based experiences.
- The management processes for the identified risks.
- How the experience will be led by educators.
- How Arabanoo will meet and monitor supervision during the experience.
- How Arabanoo intends to meet the regulations related to preventing incidents, injury, trauma and illness in relation to water safety,
- Actions that will be followed if a child is found unattended in the vicinity of a body of water or water hazard.

### Specific procedures include:

- Water use within the service will be supervised at all times by educators to ensure the safety of children.
- The hygienic state of water will be assessed before it is used for children's play.
- Educators will supervise the use of water troughs or containers for water play.
- Children will be instructed on the safe use of equipment during water-based activities, for example, slip and slide, water pistols, bubble machines, etc.
- Children at water-based incursions requiring swimwear will also wear Arabanoo rash vests in accordance with Arabanoo's Sun Protection Policy.
- Children will be discouraged from drinking the water used in activities, including from water vessels.
- Upon completion of a water-based, activity any water containers will be emptied and turned upside down and packed away.
- Containers or troughs will be emptied onto garden areas after use.

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## Water Safety in Relation to Excursions

Educators at Arabanoo recognise the risks posed by bodies of water and are committed to ensuring that every precaution is taken so children can safely enjoy water-based excursions. Comprehensive risk assessments will be conducted for all water-based excursions.

While the Regulations do not specify an educator-to-child ratio for water-based experiences, the number of educators present will be determined by a risk assessment of the proposed activity. Sections 165, 167, and 169 of the National Law provide clear guidelines on the necessity of adequate supervision.

The adequacy of supervision and number of educators needed will be based on the following factors:

- **Numbers, Ages, and Swimming Abilities of the Children:** Consideration of each child's swimming ability, as informed by the child's parents.
- **Each Child's Current Activity:** Monitoring children's activities to ensure safety.
- **Areas Where Children Are Playing:** Ensuring visibility and accessibility of all areas.
- **Identified Risks in the Environment:** Addressing potential hazards in the vicinity.
- **Educators' Knowledge of Each Child and Group:** Utilising educators' familiarity with the children.
- **Experience, Knowledge, and Skill of Each Educator:** Leveraging educators' expertise to enhance safety.

A risk management plan will be undertaken for all excursions near or at bodies of water. Please refer to the Arabanoo Excursion Policy for detailed guidelines. The Risk Assessment will include:

- Identified risks associated with the excursion and any water-based experiences and/or hazards.
- The management processes for the identified risks.
- How the experience will be led by educators.
- How Arabanoo will meet and monitor supervision during the experience.
- How Arabanoo intends to meet the regulations related to preventing incidents, injury, trauma and illness in relation to water safety.
- Actions that will be followed if a child is found unattended in the vicinity of a body of water or water hazard.

## Activity Permission Forms:

- Parental permission will be required for children to participate in water-based activities.
- Parents will be asked to provide information on their child's swimming ability prior to the activity.
- Educators will be briefed on each child's swimming ability prior to the excursion.

## Identification and Supervision:

- Children at water-based excursions will wear Arabanoo rash vests in accordance with Arabanoo's Sun Protection Policy. This assists educators in identifying the children under their supervision.

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- Children who are not able to swim, or whose parents/carers have indicated that they should not enter the water, will be identified in the pre-excursion staff briefing.
- A designated educator will be responsible for supervising children who are not in the water, ensuring they stay safely on dry land.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Clear roles and responsibilities ensure that management, educators and staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to water safety.

### **Approved Provider:**

- Ensure that obligations under the *Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations* are met.
- Ensure that the environment is safe for children, particularly in areas where water activities take place.
- Ensure that supervision levels are appropriate for the ages and developmental needs of the children during water activities, including adhering to recommended ratios.
- Ensure that thorough risk assessments are undertaken, taking into consideration water hazards and risks associated with water-based activities.
- Ensure that the water safety policy and procedures are current, regularly reviewed, and communicated to educators, staff, and stakeholders.
- Ensure Nominated Supervisors, educators, staff, and volunteers follow the water safety policy and procedures.
- Make copies of the policy and procedures readily accessible to Nominated Supervisors, educators, staff, and volunteers, and available for inspection.
- Maintaining open communication with families regarding water safety practices and any changes to policies or procedures that may affect their children.
- Establishing clear emergency procedures for water-related incidents and ensuring all staff are familiar with these procedures.
- Notify families at least 14 days before changing the policy or procedures if the changes will:
  - Affect the fees charged or the way they are collected.
  - Significantly impact the service's education and care of children.
  - Significantly impact the family's ability to utilise the service.

### **Nominated Supervisor:**

- Ensure that supervision levels are adequate given the ages and developmental needs of the children involved in water activities and adhering to recommended ratios.
- Inform families about the water safety practices in place at the service.
- Ensure that first aid and CPR qualifications and requirements are met at all times. This includes:
  - Ensuring that at least one educator, staff member, or Nominated Supervisor with a current approved first aid qualification is present at all times when children are being educated and cared for.
- Conduct thorough risk assessments for excursions near water and for water-based activities within the service.
- Take reasonable steps to ensure that the water safety policy and procedures are current, regularly reviewed, and effectively communicated to educators, staff, and stakeholders.

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- Develop and implement supervision plans specific to water-based activities, ensuring that all children are adequately supervised at all times.
- Establish clear emergency procedures for water-related incidents and ensuring that all staff are familiar with these procedures.
- Inform and support educators and staff regarding their responsibilities in implementing the water safety policy and procedures at all times.
- Provide guidance and mentorship to educators and staff to ensure they can follow the water safety policy and procedures effectively.
- Regularly monitor and review water safety practices and procedures to ensure they remain effective and up to date with current regulations and best practices.

## **Educators:**

- Incorporate water safety messages into the children's education program to promote awareness and safe practices.
- Ensure that all water hazards are managed according to the outlined procedures. This includes:
  - Emptying and packing away water troughs immediately after play has ended.
  - Ensuring buckets containing liquids are not accessible to children.
  - Emptying, safely covering, or making inaccessible to children all water containers when not in use, such as mop buckets, buckets and water troughs.
- Ensure that water troughs or containers for water play are supervised at all times and are emptied immediately after use.
- Regularly inspect indoor and outdoor environments for potential water hazards, particularly during and after wet weather, to ensure any risks are promptly addressed.
- Adhere to the service's water safety policy and procedures, ensuring all guidelines and protocols are followed to maintain a safe environment.
- Be aware and informed about risk assessments for excursions involving water.
- Be aware and informed about risk assessments for water-based activities.

## **Families:**

- Familiarise themselves with the service's water safety policy and procedures.
- Provide accurate information about their child's swimming abilities on activity permission forms.
- Ensure their child is appropriately prepared for water-based activities, including bringing necessary items like swimwear and sun protection.
- Reinforce water safety messages at home and discuss the importance of following instructions during water-based activities.
- Communicate any concerns or observations regarding water safety to the educators or nominated supervisor promptly.
- Participate in discussions or meetings about water safety practices and provide feedback to help improve policies and procedures.



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**Procedure History**

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5.0	11 May 2017 & 1 June 2017	Carin Rollo, Cecile Cassanova, Rowan Friend and Belinda Edmunds	Reordering of sections for clarity	Grammar and small wording changes  Separated policy from procedure	Belinda Edmunds 15 June 2017
6.0	1 May 2019	Rowan Friend & Michelle Stewart	Water Safety in relation to excursions  Standards	Removed different coloured rash vests are given to non/weak swimmers  Updated to the new NQS	Kate Sellick – 8 May 2019
7.0	July 2024	KW OSHC Consulting	Definitions	Added key terms used throughout policy and procedure	3 Sept 2024 – Rowan Friend
			Procedure	Improved clarity and readability	