

Intereach Children's Services

Water Safety Procedure



Applies to	Intereach Family Day Care (FDC) and Intereach Out Of School Hours (OOSH)				
Policy	NQS Three: Physical Environment Policy				
Version	3.1	Date approved	21/11/2023	Next review date	21/09/2026

1. Objective

Intereach acknowledges that water-based play is an important part of children's healthy growth, learning, wellbeing and development and committed to:

- providing opportunities for children to explore their natural environment inclusive of water-based experiences;
- setting clear roles and responsibilities in relation to water safety of children attending the service;
- providing protection for children from the safety risks associated with water-based experiences; and,
- Incorporating water safety awareness and experiences into the educational program.

2. Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Approved Provider to:

- delegate the Nominated Supervisors to sign off on the monthly inspections of any water hazards, water features or swimming pools;
- ensure the person conducting the inspection provides a written report within seven days of completing an inspection to the Nominated Supervisors to sign off;
- ensure a signed copy of the written report is provided to the Family Day Care Educator;
- ensure if a safety issue is identified, the person conducting the inspection provides a written notice of the safety issue to the Nominated Supervisor within 24 hours after conducting the inspection; and,
- if an issue cannot be rectified immediately, ensure the Nominated Supervisor consider existing obligations under Section 167 of the National Law.

It is the responsibility of the Nominated Supervisors to:

- ensure that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met;
- ensuring that children are protected from the risks associated with drowning or non-fatal drowning experiences;
- ensure that there is adequate supervision provided given the ages and developmental needs of children undertaking water activities (including ratios);
- providing information to educators, staff, students, parents/guardians and others at the service about water safety;
- ensure first aid and CPR qualifications and requirements are always met;
- ensure that at least one educator, staff member or nominated supervisor who holds a current approved first aid qualification is in attendance at all times that children are being educated and cared for by the service;
- take reasonable steps to inform and support educators and staff of their responsibilities in implementing the policy and procedures at all times; and,

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- guide and mentor educators and staff to be able to follow the policy and procedures.

It is the responsibility of the FDC Nominated Supervisor or Coordination Unit to:

- provide additional guidance on safety requirements and compliance with fencing requirements; and,
- ensure monthly inspections occur at FDC residences and venues that have swimming pools, water features and other potential water hazards and inspection reports are available for inspection.

It is the responsibility of Educators and the OOSH Responsible Person to ensure:

- familiarity with the water safety procedure and implement responsibilities and practices;
- maintain a child safe environment;
- risk assessments are undertaken for excursions near water and for water-based activities to identify risks associated with water hazards (e.g., spa baths, water features, swimming pools);
- risk management strategies are consistently implemented for water hazards, regular outings and excursions ensure that there is adequate supervision provided given the ages and developmental needs of children undertaking water activities;
- isolate any water hazards that are not able to be adequately supervised from children by a child-resistant barrier or fence (particularly large bodies of water including swimming pools, rivers, ponds etc.);
- inspect indoor and outdoor environments for potential water hazards, particularly during and after wet weather;
- reinforce water safety messages within the children's education program;
- inform families about water safety practices within the service; and,
- hold a current approved first aid and CPR qualification.

It is the responsibility of FDC Educators to:

- provide Intereach with a Compliance Certificate issued for swimming pools in NSW or Victoria;
- for NSW only, ensure if a swimming pool is available at their residence, it is fenced in accordance with the requirements for fencing a new swimming pool under the [Swimming Pools Act 1992](#) of New South Wales.
- for Victoria only, obtain and lodge compliance certificates for their safety barriers. <https://www.vba.vic.gov.au/registration-requirements> for pool and spa owners;
- before attending a regular outing or excursion ensure that the benefit risk assessment has been approved by the coordination unit and permission sought by authorised person; and,
- display a diagram which shows the areas of the FDC residence or venue suitable for the provision of education and care to children including the existence of any water hazards, water features or swimming pools at or near a FDC residence or venue.

It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to:

- ensuring that doors, gates and barriers, including playground gates, are closed after entry or exit to prevent access to water hazards; and,
- be aware of water safety and ensure their children understand the risks associated with water.

3. Procedure

3.1. Activities with a Water Hazard

A **water hazard** (in relation to this Procedure) 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 allows water to collect can also present drowning hazards for young children.

- Adequate supervision is always provided that includes adjusting supervision strategies to suit the activities being undertaken.
- Water hazards, risks associated with water-based activities and increased levels of supervision are considered in a risk assessment prior to conducting excursions.
- Buckets or all water containers that contain water are safely sealed with child proof lids or made inaccessible to children when they are not in use. e.g., mop buckets, nappy buckets, bathtubs, water troughs, pet water containers.
- 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.
- The outdoor learning environment is checked at the beginning and end of each day (or prior to access) for puddles or filled containers that could pose a potential risk to small children after heavy rain.
- Water safety education is provided to children as a part of the service's program;
- Children are not allowed in any form of watercraft.
- Accidents/ incidents where medical or emergency attention was sought or should have been sought for a child is reported as per the reporting guidelines. (Refer to *Incident, Trauma and Illness Procedure*).

3.2. Supervision during water play

- Educator-to-child ratios are maintained at all times.
- Children are constantly monitored around water. and educators and staff will not use their phones to avoid distraction unless in an emergency or if they are taking photos of an experience. Active adult supervision involves focusing all attention on children at all times, when they are in, on or around the water.
- Do not expect older children to look after their younger siblings. Children have short attention spans and can be easily distracted.
- Educators or staff will remain within arm's reach of toddlers/children to ensure they can get to the child in time if something goes wrong.
- Children are taken with the educators or staff if they need to leave the water area.

3.3. Reducing Water Hazard

- Safety barriers, such as pool barriers or fence are used to restrict access to water.
- Hazards such as pot plants and chairs from pool barriers are removed to prevent children climbing on to them and over the barrier.
- Doors or gates which may allow children access to a body of water are closed.
- A safe play area is used to separate children from bodies of water. E.g., swimming pool.

- Pool barriers and gates are regularly inspected and maintained to ensure that it is working properly. Weather conditions and general wear and tear can affect the performance of pool barriers.

3.4. Swimming Pools (Applicable to FDC only)

The approved provider of a FDC service must ensure that any swimming pool (including portable/inflatable pools capable of being filled with water to a depth of greater than 30cm) at a FDC residence or approved family day care venue of the service is fenced and gated according to the relevant legislation:

- for NSW, refer to <https://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/housing-and-property/building-and-renovating/pools-and-pool-safety/pool-fencing-requirements>.
- for Victoria, refer to <https://www.vba.vic.gov.au/consumers/swimming-pools>.

FDC Educators will:

- ensure that any pool filters at the premises are inaccessible to children;
- ensure furniture is not situated close to a pool fence as this could be used as a climbing aid;
- not use their swimming pools for children in care or their own children while operating their FDC business;
- ensure that the pool gate always remains securely closed when an educator's own children are using the swimming pool when FDC children are in care. and,
- ensure that the pool gate and surrounding fencing is checked as part of the daily environment check, which is completed before children arriving.

3.5. Monthly inspections (FDC only)

The Nominated Supervisor or the Coordination unit staff will conduct monthly inspections of FDC residences and venues of any potential water hazards, water features or swimming pools.

An inspection will be conducted in person or remotely using technology to inspect the residence or venue, however only six inspections may be conducted remotely in any calendar year. An inspection will not be conducted remotely if the previous two inspections were conducted remotely.

The person who conducted the inspection will provide the Nominated Supervisor and the FDC educator a written inspection report within 7 days of conducting the inspection with the following information:

- the address of the residence or venue;
- the date and time of the inspection;
- the full name of the person who conducted the inspection and the person's signature;
- whether the inspection was conducted on site or remotely;
- details of any safety risks or issues identified during the inspection;
- if any safety risks or issues are identified:
 - the action that the person who conducted the inspection considers should be taken to rectify it and mitigate risks associated with it before it is rectified; and
 - an estimate of the time needed to rectify the identified safety issue.

If safety issues are identified as a result of the inspection, the person conducting the inspection will provide a written notice of the safety issue to the Nominated Supervisor within 24 hours after conducting the inspection.

If the issue cannot be rectified immediately, the Nominated Supervisor will consider if access is appropriate and ensure that every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children being educated and cared for by the service from harm and hazard likely to cause injury as per Section 167 of the National Law.

4. . Monitoring, evaluation and review

This procedure will be reviewed every three years and incorporate feedback and suggestions from children, families, educators, coordinators, volunteers, and students.

5. National Quality Framework

Element	Concept	Description
2.1	Health	Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.
.2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard
2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented
3.1	Design	The design of the facilities is appropriate for the operation of a service.
3.1.1.	Fit for purpose	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child.
3.2.3	Environmentally responsible	The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible.
7.1.2	Management Systems	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service
7.1.3	Roles and responsibilities	Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood, and support effective decision making and operation of the service.

6. Context

6.1. Standards or other external requirements	<p>Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (2017). National Quality Standards.</p> <p>Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (2017). Guide to the National Quality Framework.</p> <p>Better Health Channel. Water safety for children accessed November 2023 from www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/water-safety-for-children</p>
6.2. Legislation or other requirements	<p>Education and Care Services National Regulations consolidated 2017</p> <p>Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010</p> <p>Building Amendment (Swimming Pool and Spa) Regulations 2019 Act 2012 (Vic)</p> <p>Building Act 1993 (Vic)</p> <p>Swimming Pools Regulation 2008 (NSW)</p> <p>Swimming Pool Act 1992 and Amendment Act 2010 & 2012 NSW (depending upon the date the pool was built)</p>

6.3. Internal Documentation	<p>Incident, Injury, Trauma, and Illness Procedure</p> <p>Children's Services Physical Environment Policy</p> <p>Providing a Child Safe Environment Procedure</p> <p>Notification of a Serious Incident Policy</p> <p>Excursion Procedure</p> <p>Supervision Procedure</p> <p>FDC Home Safety Risk Assessment Audit</p> <p>FDCA Public Liability Insurance Incident Report Form</p> <p>FDC Permission for High-Risk Experiences</p> <p>Benefit Risk Assessment Plan</p> <p>Non-Regular Outing Permission</p> <p>Regular Outing Permission</p> <p>OOSH Daily Hazard Identification Checklist</p> <p>FDC - Monthly Water Hazard Safety Inspection and Checklist</p>
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7. Document control			
Version	Date approved	Approved by	Next review date
1.0	11/06/2020	R. Phillips - Acting Senior Manager, Children and Family Services	11/06/2023
2.0	09/06/2023	M. Piffero - General Manager, Operations	09/06/2026
3.0	21/09/2023	M. Piffero - General Manager, Operations	21/09/2026
3.1	21/11/2023	M. Piffero – General Manager, Operations – minor changes to delegation and monthly reports for FDC	21/9/2026