

Riverbanks College B-12 Preschool Water Safety Policy

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Owner	Lauren Kluske

Rationale

The Riverbanks College B-12 Preschool understands the risks that water-based activities pose and will undertake measures to protect the health and safety of all RBC preschool children involved in water-based activities.

The safety and supervision of children in and around water is of the highest priority. Our preschool has a responsibility to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of each child at all times.

Drowning is the leading cause of death for children aged 1-4 years in Australia. While most drowning occurs in backyard swimming pools, it is important to be aware that children can drown in as little as 5cm of water. Whilst water hazards at our services are kept to a minimum, we acknowledge that water troughs, sinks and toilets can all be hazardous for children and diligent supervision is required.

Background

The supervision and safety of children with and around water is of paramount importance. Learning spaces and environments should offer an array of possibilities and connect children with natural materials. Water is one experience that offers children sensory-rich, open-ended experiences that engage children's curiosity and imagination. Children may encounter these resources in the service environment and/or when on excursions. These experiences, especially those conducted with and near water, will be carefully supervised ensuring the safety of children and adults.

Water safety relates to access to water in the building, the playground or on excursions and also to the availability of drinking water for children.

It is imperative that educators remain vigilant in their supervision of children in and around water and are alert to potential risks in everyday practice in the learning environment.

Water hazards

A water hazard is anything that can hold 5cm of water and fit a child's nose and mouth. There are a number of water hazards in children's learning environments, including:

- Sinks, basins, fish tanks/bowls, baths
- Swimming pools, portable pools, spas

- Water courses, ponds, sandpits, clam shells
- Water troughs, containers and buckets used for play, animal drinking containers
- Pooling water.

RBC preschool staff will:

- complete a risk assessment before allowing RBC preschool children to engage in water-based activities at RBC preschool or on excursion and ensure all risks are minimised or eliminated where possible
- ensure no child swims in any water without:
 - written permission from families/carers
 - appropriate staff/child ratios in place and adequate supervision
- provide active supervision – RBC preschool 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 staff/child ratios, noting family day care standards apply for swimming activities.
- ensure RBC preschool children with diarrhoea, upset stomachs, open sores or nasal infections do not swim or play in water
- ensure all RBC preschool children wear appropriate swimmers in a pool, go to the toilet before entering the pool, and follow correct toileting hygiene practices while in the pool
- remove all RBC preschool children immediately if a child passes a bowel motion in the pool, advise pool managers if at a public pool, disinfect and if practical empty a home pool or trough.

To prevent accidents and illnesses related to water-based activities at RBC preschool, RBC preschool staff will:

- fill wading pools with less than 300 mm of water
- cover all water containers like ponds, spas, nappy buckets, bathtubs or ensure they are inaccessible to children at all times
- immediately empty all wading pools/water troughs etc. after every use and store in a way that prevents water collecting in them (e.g. upright/inverted)
- ensure children's play areas are safely fenced off from water hazards like rivers, dams, creeks, lakes, irrigation channels, water-wells
- check premises after rain or regular watering and empty/dissipate water that has collected in pot-holes or containers
- ensure all pools and troughs in which RBC preschool children play in are hygienically cleaned, disinfected and chlorinated (larger pools) in accordance with the instructions on the relevant maintenance container. For wading pools and troughs educators will:
 - remove leaves and debris daily
 - hose away surface dirt
 - scrub inside with disinfectant and rinse it away before refilling.

Water troughs, buckets and other water receptacles

- Water receptacles must be emptied immediately after use and stored upside down and out of children's reach. Access to laundry and kitchen areas must be restricted when unattended by RBC preschool staff.

Reference:

Education and Care Services National Regulations 168

Children's Health and Safety

Regulation 168 (2) (a) (iii) water safety, including safety during any water-based activities

Sourced:

Education Standards Board Water Safety Fact Sheets

Kidsafe-Water Safety Fact Sheet: www.kidsafevic.com.au

Royal Life Saving Society – Australia: www.royallifesaving.com.au

For more information

Department for Education Outdoor Learning Environments Standard