

Water Safety Policy

1. Purpose

Y Whittlesea is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children in and around water. This policy aims to prevent drowning and non-fatal drowning incidents by guiding educators, families, and staff in safe practices, risk mitigation, and educational approaches. It also promotes children's development and engagement with water-based learning in a secure and supervised environment.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Y Whittlesea Early Years Services, including educators, staff, students, volunteers, families, and management involved in the care and education of children where water is present, either on-site or during excursions.

3. Policy Statement

Water can be a valuable element in children's play and learning, offering sensory and open-ended experiences. However, it also presents significant risks, especially for young children. Drowning is a leading cause of preventable death in children under five. This policy outlines our commitment to:

- Preventing drowning or near-drowning incidents
- Promoting active supervision and vigilance
- Embedding water safety into educational practice
- Ensuring risk assessments and safe infrastructure
- Supporting children's learning through safe, structured water play
- All water-based activities, including the presence of water troughs, outdoor play areas, or excursions near water bodies, will be supervised with a heightened awareness of the risks involved.

4. Responsibilities

Approved Providers / Nominated Supervisors will:

- Ensure all educators and staff are trained in this policy and water safety procedures
- Conduct and maintain risk assessments for water hazards and water-based activities
- Ensure children are not left unsupervised near any body of water—no matter how small
- Provide adequate supervision ratios and appropriately trained staff for water activities
- Ensure all water hazards (e.g. fishponds, buckets, puddles) are guarded, inaccessible, or removed
- Isolate permanent bodies of water with compliant child-resistant fencing or barriers
- Ensure first aid and CPR qualified staff are always on-site
- Notify the Regulatory Authority of any serious water-related incident within 24 hours
- Ensure hot water and hot drinks are inaccessible to children
- Maintain water play and water storage areas in accordance with hygiene and safety standards

Educators and Staff will:

- Provide direct, active supervision during all water-based activities, constant line of sight and within arm's reach where necessary
- Never leave children alone near any water, including small containers
- Conduct daily safety checks of all areas for water hazards (including outdoor play spaces and bathrooms)
- Store or empty water containers (e.g. mop buckets, wading pools) after each use
- Use water troughs safely and ensure children remain standing when playing
- Empty and store wading pools upright when not in use
- Incorporate water safety education into the program (e.g. role-play, books, discussions)
- Exclude or provide alternatives for children who are unwell or have medical concerns from water-based activities
- Report any identified water hazards immediately to the Nominated Supervisor

- Follow strict hygiene practices for any wading pool, including:
- Daily cleaning and disinfection
- Chlorine treatment before use
- Immediate closure and sanitation if a child soils the pool

Families will:

- Provide appropriate clothing and spare clothes for water play
- Be informed of and support the service's water safety procedures
- Educate their children about the risks of water where possible
- Notify the service of any relevant medical conditions that may affect their child's participation in water activities

5. Related policies, procedures and resources:

- First aid
- Enrolment and Orientation
- Incident, injury, illness and Trauma
- Child Safe Environment
- Occupational Health and Safety

6. Legislative and Industry Requirements: [Link here](#) to Legislative Compliance Register

7. Consequences of breaching this policy: All elements of this policy must be adhered to, and any breach will be dealt with in accordance with the [YMCA Whittlesea Disciplinary and Termination Policy](#).

8. Policy owner: The GM Early Years is responsible for keeping this policy current - including making amendments as required, and regular reviews as scheduled.

9. Document Control: Review of this policy will be undertaken every two years, or prior as required by law, in consultation with appropriate Y People.

Version:	Description of Amendment	Amended by	Date	Release Date
4.0	Reviewed	M Rowse	15/7/25	July 25
3.0	Reviewed and transferred to new template	Farryn Burrill	3/10/2024	Oct 24
2.0	Reviewed policy and updated referencing from the YMCA to the Y	Belinda Turner	28/06/2021	July 21
1.0	Policy reviewed from 2014 (checked 2017) policy and recreated and updated	Children and families leadership team	29/03/2019	Apr 19