Water Policy
Background

At St Joseph's Preschool we believe that water play is soothing and stimulating and can provide opportunities for experimentation and exploration in which children play and learn alone or alongside others. Water play helps children to learn and explore new skills and promotes sensory development as well as scientific and mathematical concepts. Water activities are a significant part of Australian life and provide children with opportunities to access a variety of activities for experience, learning and fun. However, all bodies of water present a significant hazard and require educators to ensure increased vigilance around them to ensure the safety of children. It is acknowledged that children can drown in as little as 5cm of water.

The Regulations do not specify a specific educator to child ratio for activities where water is a feature. The number of educators present is to be determined by a risk assessment of the proposed activity. It must also be noted that in sections 165, 167 and 169 of the National Law there are clear statements about adequate supervision. The adequacy of supervision shall be determined by a range of factors that include:

- numbers, ages and abilities of the children
- number and positioning of educators
- each child’s current activity
- areas where children are playing, in particular the visibility and accessibility of these areas
- risks in the environment and experiences provided to children
- educators’ knowledge of each child and each group of children
- the experience, knowledge and skill of each educator.

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Definition of a body of water

The Preschool recognises the following locations are bodies of water:

- swimming pools
- wading pools
- lakes
- ponds
- the sea
- creeks
- dams
- rivers
- equipment used by the Preschool that could contain 5 cm of water and would allow a child to submerge both nose and mouth at the same time.

St Joseph’s Preschool will aim to prevent child accidents and illnesses relating to water hazards and comply with national standards. The safety and supervision of children is paramount when in or around water. This relates to water play, excursions near water, hot water, drinking water and hygiene practices with water in the Preschool environment. Water use within the Preschool will be supervised to ensure the safety of children, staff and families is a priority. The adequacy of supervision shall be determined by a range of factors that include:

- numbers, ages and abilities of the children
- number and positioning of educators
- each child’s current activity
- areas where children are playing, in particular the visibility and accessibility of these areas
- risks in the environment and experiences provided to children
- educators’ knowledge of each child and each group of children
- the experience, knowledge and skill of each educator.
Implementation

St Joseph’s Preschool shall ensure the safety of children around bodies of water by:

- Undertaking a risk assessment that will determine the required educator to child ratio for the proposed activity.
- Ensuring there are educators present that have a current, approved first aid qualification including CPR.
- Ensuring educators are placed in positions that allow them to directly and actively supervise any child accessing a body of water.
- Avoiding any activity containing a body of water where sufficient precautions cannot be taken to ensure the safety of children.
- Water troughs or other large containers will be emptied after use and stored to prevent the collection of water, e.g. upturned. If a water tray is left unemptied it must be covered with a secure lid/cover.

Roles and Responsibilities

Preschool staff are responsible for ensuring a risk assessment is carried out on any activity St Joseph’s educators’ sets up that allows children to access a body of water.

Educators must position themselves in the environment so that every child is within sight of an adult at all times and that supervision is direct and vigilant.

Philip Schultz
Principal

Anne Burke
School Board Chairperson

Dated: June 2015