

YMCA Ballarat Policy – Water Safety in Children's Services

Policy Number	Date Approved	Date Last Amended	Status
CS225-O(OP)	23/01/2019		Approved

1. PURPOSE

As required under the National Quality Framework, the YMCA must have a Water Safety in Children's Services Policy that provides guidance where a service is in operation at the same facility as a pool, and for water based activities and/or excursions. This policy ensures all YMCA Children's Services water based excursions and activities are conducted in a manner that places safety as the highest priority and without undue risks to YMCA Educators and participants, while embracing the positive learning experience the aquatic environment can provide.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to The Young Men's Christian Association of Ballarat Inc and related entities. For the purposes of this document we refer to these entities as the YMCA.

The scope of this Policy applies to all Board Members, Sub Committee members, staff and volunteers.

The scope of this Policy applies to all approved Children's Services that operate under the Education and Care Services National Regulations, 2011. This includes Before and After School Care Services, Vacation Care, Early Learning Centres and Kindergartens.

3. POLICY

3.1 Adherence

All requirements of the *Excursions and Service Events Policy* will be adhered to. This includes;

- Staff to child ratio will be as determined by a risk assessment. The final ratio must not however exceed 1:8 (staff: child), as well as consider any specific additional or special needs of children with a disability.
- Risk assessment will be conducted for all water-based activities and excursions and routine outings.
- Pre-excursion visit to be conducted to assist with risk assessment where applicable.

Activities and aquatic play will be planned to incorporate appropriate learning outcomes and goals, reflecting the relevant Learning Framework, children's interests and abilities. Water based activities will be conducted under the supervision of specialist staff with required qualifications for that activity and as identified by a risk assessment (eg. pool activity requires the appropriate lifeguard supervision for that water space).

- Additional specialist staff referred to in the point above may be counted within the staff: child ratio, but only if deemed appropriate throughout the service's relevant risk assessment.

Educators will participate in the activity as much as reasonably possible and as required by the identified hazard management controls. For example, during a pool based activity Educators are recommended to be in the water with the children.

3.2 Other Policies

All Educators and the Nominated Supervisor will ensure effective implementation of the following policies and procedures;

- Sun Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
- Interactions with Children in Children's Services Policy

3.3 Programming

In the case where a YMCA Children's Services program may be conducted at a facility that includes a pool, for example a Holiday Program located at a recreation facility, an additional risk assessment specific to water safety must be developed to assist in the protection of children from harm or hazard due to the aquatic environment and high risk involved.

3.4 Open Water Environments

Excursions whereby participants will be entering an open water environment (for example at the beach or in a river environment) are required to be approved in collaboration with the Nominated Supervisor and relevant regional HSE Coordinator/Manager, and as determined by a risk assessment.

3.5 Exclusions

The *Water Safety in Children's Services Policy* does not apply to excursions which would not be classified as water based activity such as visits to the aquarium, zoo or park. While these locations do have bodies of water present the participants would not normally be at risk of entering the water. The *Excursions and Service Events Policy* would still apply to these excursions, including the conduction of a risk assessment.

3.6 Water Play and Safety

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.

Educators will remain vigilant in their supervision of children in and around water, and are alert to potential risks in everyday practice in the learning environment.

4. LEGISLATIVE AND INDUSTRY REQUIREMENTS

- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic) (Part 2: Principles for Children)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 167
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 101(2), 168(2)(a)(iii)
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
 - Standard 2.3: Each child is protected
 - Element 2.3.2: Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury

Drowning is a leading cause of death for children in Victoria, with infants and toddlers the group most at risk. Non-fatal drowning incidents can result in permanent brain damage and disability. Knowledge of potential hazards associated with water will assist educators to provide a safe, stimulating environment for preschool children.

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. Children can drown in as little as a few centimetres of water.

Keep Watch is a public education program of Royal Life Saving Society – Australia, aimed at preventing the drowning deaths of children under 5 years of age in all aquatic locations. The program has four key actions:

- **supervise** children constantly around water
- **restrict access** to water hazards by using child-proof barriers and fences
- provide **water awareness** training to children
- **resuscitation** saves lives – ensure that staff have completed current first aid training.

5. DEFINITIONS

Water based activity: A programmed activity conducted by an OSHC includes, but is not limited to;

- YMCA or otherwise managed Indoor Pool, Outdoor Pool programs, activities or play
- Aquatic adventure parks, water slides, splash parks and wave pools
- Any aquatic or sporting activities in open water or closed water space such as, sailing, boating, kayaking, snorkeling, surfing or similar
- Any aquatic or sporting activities conducted on or around water such as, fishing and rock pool rambles or similar
- **Risk assessment:** (In the context of this policy) a risk assessment must identify and assess any hazard that poses a risk to a child's health, safety and/or wellbeing while on an excursion, and specify how these risks will be managed and/or minimised (Regulation 101).

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Department/Area	Role/Responsibility
Operations	<p>YMCA Nominated Supervisor and/or service Management will oversee the implementation and service adherence to this policy (ie policy compliance).</p> <p>Nominated Supervisor and/or Person with Management and Control will seek individual community feedback and facilitate an active consultation process with service users as appropriate.</p> <p>All Educators will be provided with this policy annually and are responsible for the daily implementation of the policy when directly supervising children.</p>
Children's Services Manager	<p>Is responsible for ensuring suitable resources and support systems to enable compliance with this policy.</p> <p>Drive the consultation process and provide leadership and advice on the continuous improvement of the policy.</p>
Children's Services	<p>Children's Services is responsible for the development, monitoring and review of the Policy and related systems, ensuring all content meets all legislated requirements.</p> <p>Facilitate annual policy training to Children's Services Educators on the appropriate implementation and use of policy.</p>
Operations Co-ordination Team (OCT)	Approve the Policy
CEO	Provide official sign off on the Policy

7. MONITORING AND/OR EVALUATION

The Water Safety in Children's Services Policy will be reviewed three years from the date of initial approval.

The ongoing monitoring and compliance to this policy will be overseen by Centre/Service Managers. The National Quality Framework Ratings and Assessment process, and Service Approval conditions, will also assist in the external audit and monitoring of the policy, by delegates of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

The evaluation of the policy will be facilitated by the Children's Services using stakeholder feedback to drive continuous improvement and reflect service users' comments where practical.

The YMCA Ballarat Human Resources department is responsible for formally reviewing and updating this policy every two (3) years, however, this Policy should also be reviewed on an ongoing basis to reflect changes in the law.

YMCA Ballarat may audit compliance with undertaking risk assessments and compliance with the induction and training principles of this Policy through the YMCA compliance system.

8. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS (LINKS TO PROCEDURES AND/OR WORK PRACTICES)

1. Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF)
2. National Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)
3. My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia
4. Education and Care Services National Law Act
5. Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
6. Aquatic Resources
 - a. Lifesaving Victoria
 - b. 2010/11 Drowning Report
 - c. Guidelines for Safe Pool Operations (Royal Lifesaving Australia Society)
 - d. Water Safety Victoria -Water Safety Guide: *Play it Safe by the Water*
 - e. Kidsafe - Water Safety Fact Sheet

This Policy is supported by the Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Procedure and supporting Resources which are designed to assist Managers in complying with this Policy.

9. APPROVAL AND REVIEW

Approved By

Name: Brooke LeSeuer
Position: CEO
Meeting Name: Executive Team
Meeting Date: 23/01/2019
Effective Date: 23/01/2019
Review Date: 23/01/2022
Policy Owner: Erica Smith – People & Culture Manager
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Amendments

Version	Date	Author	Change Description
V1		Jane Robson	Created
V2	July 2015	Jane Robson	Updated
V3	Jan 2019	Erica Smith	Update in new template