



WATER SAFETY POLICY

SUB CATEGORY: Health, Hygiene and Safety

POLICY GOAL

Ensure children's safety at all times around water and water play activities. To ensure children have access to safe drinking water at all times.

RATIONALE

The safety and supervision of children is paramount when in or around water. This policy covers the following aspects

- water play
- excursions near water
- hot water
- drinking water
- hygiene practices with water

Drinking Water

The *Education and Care Services National Regulations S78* states the following;

"(1) The approved provider of an education and care service must ensure that children being educated and cared for by the service—

(a) have access to safe drinking water at all times; and

*(b) are offered food and beverages appropriate to the needs of each child on a regular basis throughout the day."*¹

Water Safety for Children

- *"Drowning can occur quickly and quietly, without any warning noises. It's a top cause of death for children under five years.*
- *Close and constant adult supervision at all times is the key to water safety for kids.*
- *Drowning is one of the major causes of death for children under five years.*
- *Babies and toddlers are top-heavy, which puts them at higher risk of drowning.*
- *If a baby falls into even shallow water, she can't always lift herself out.*
- *In Australia, children under five drown in:*
 - *swimming pools*
 - *baths and spa baths*
 - *rivers, creeks and streams*
 - *beaches*
 - *dams, lagoons and lakes.*
- *Children also drown in less obvious locations, like nappy buckets, water tanks, water features and fish ponds – even pets' water bowls.*

¹ *"Education and Care Services National Regulations"*, Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (Dec 2019)

- *For every drowning, approximately seven other children are hospitalised from non-fatal drowning incidents. Some of these result in severe brain damage.*

To stay safe around water, your child needs close and constant adult supervision. Supervision means constant visual contact with your child and keeping her within arm's reach at all times.²

² "Water safety for children" Raising Children Australian Parenting Website (accessed on-line April 2020)
<https://raisingchildren.net.au/babies/safety/bath-water-safety/water-safety>

Hot water

- *“Scalds and burns from hot water can happen at bath time, as the result of a spilled cup of tea or coffee or during mealtimes when a hot stove, pots or pans can cause a burn.*
- *Over a thousand children and older people are burns and scalds victims each year in Australia.*
- *Never carry a child while drinking a hot cup of tea or coffee.*
- *Never leave a child unattended in the bath.*
- *Ensure your home has a properly installed and functioning hot water tempering device.*
- *Always run the cold water tap first, and then slowly add the hot water.”³*

“Every year, over 360 children aged 0-4 years are treated at the Burn Unit at the Children's Hospital at Westmead as a result of scalds. That's about 1 child a day!

- *Many serious scalds are caused by hot tap water.*
- *8 out of 10 hot tap water scalds in children under 5 years (and 7 out of 10 for all patients) happen in the bathroom.*
- *Severe scalds can scar for life and may cause emotional trauma.*
- *At 60degrees Celsius hot water will cause a full thickness burn in less than one second*

For all burns and scalds

- *Remove clothing and jewellery.*
- *Clothing can hold heat on the burnt area.*
- *If swelling occurs jewellery can stop blood flow to the burnt area.*

Apply cold running water

- *For at least 20 minutes.*
- *If running water is not available, wet 2 cloths and alternate them onto burn every 2 minutes.*
- **Do NOT** use ice, butter, creams, etc

Seek medical attention

- *For any burn bigger than a 20c piece, or with blisters, or*
- *If you have any concerns at all about your child.”⁴*

“Children are curious and like to explore their surroundings. They don't know that hot water and hot drinks can cause burns. A child's sensitive skin burns far more easily than adult skin. Burns and scalds are a major cause of serious injury in children from newborn to 14 years old. Children under four years, especially those aged between one and two years are most at risk due to their increased mobility and natural curiosity.

The average delivery temperature of domestic hot water is 70°C. A much safer temperature for domestic hot water is 50°C. This is because water at a lower temperature takes longer to cause injury. For example:

- *At 60°C, it takes one second for hot water to cause third-degree burns.*
- *At 55°C, it takes 10 seconds for hot water to cause third-degree burns.*
- *At 50°C, it takes five minutes for hot water to cause third-degree burns.*

To reduce the risk of injury to your child from hot water scalds, it is recommended that you have a device installed to control the delivery temperature of bathroom hot water to a maximum of 50°C”.⁵

Laws and Australian Standards for hot water systems – AS/NZS 3500.4:5015

³ “Hot Water Burns” Queensland Health (accessed on-line April 2020)

<http://conditions.health.qld.gov.au/HealthCondition/condition/1/55/371/Hot-water-burns>

⁴ “Hot Water Burns Like Fire” Brochure Kidsafe NSW (2010) (accessed on-line April 2020)

<https://www.kidsafensw.org/imagesDB/wysiwyg/Hotwaterburnlikefire2010.pdf>

⁵ “Burns and Scalds – Children” Better Health Channel Victoria State Government (accessed on-line April 2020)

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/burns-and-scalds-children>

“Clause 1.9.2 stipulates that, all new heated water installations shall, at the outlet of all sanitary fixtures used primarily for personal hygiene purposes, deliver heated water not exceeding—

(a) 43.5°C for early childhood centres, primary and secondary schools and nursing homes or similar facilities for young, aged, sick or people with disabilities; and

(b) 50°C in all other buildings. NOTE: Temperature limits are required to minimize the risk of scalding”⁶

“According to AS3498, the delivery of hot water for personal hygiene must be at a maximum of 50°C to prevent burns. For institutions such as early childhood centres, schools, and nursing homes or other facilities where the young, sick, aged or disabled could be using hot water, the maximum temperature at the tap must be 45°C.”⁷

IMPLEMENTATION

- The children’s play areas will be checked each morning to ensure that no containers or pools of water are accessible for children. If rain occurs during the day, outdoor play areas will be checked for safety prior to the children entering the outdoor environment.
- Buckets used for general cleaning in the Centre will be emptied immediately after use. Buckets must not be left in play areas or accessible to children.

Education

- Educators will incorporate water safety education into programs and use resources such as DVD, books and songs to promote water safety.
- Educators will take every opportunity to discuss water safety with children including the risks associated with hot water.

Water play activities

- Children must be supervised at all times during water play experiences.
- Educators will ensure water troughs or containers for water play are filled to a safe level. These activities will be supervised at all times by adults and containers or troughs will be emptied onto garden areas after use. Children will be discouraged from drinking from these water activities.
- Excursions that contain water hazards are high risk and should be considered carefully. A risk Assessment must be completed for all excursions. Refer to the Excursion Policy
- Educators must ensure that children are not able to reach into aquariums and fishbowls. Aquariums and fish tanks must be secured in such a way that they cannot be pushed/pulled over, in a classroom where children are under 3 years of age or the classroom Risk Assessment demonstrates the need.
- As the Montessori International College currently caters for children 3-5 years of age, risk assessments within each classroom should include considerations of risk mitigation strategies for water experiences within the classroom and aquariums.

Drinking water

- Educators must ensure that children are provided with clean drinking water at all times.
- This will be supervised to ensure that the water is safe and hygienic for consuming.
- Where children provide drinking bottles, these should be sent home each day for cleaning. Educators need to supervise children’s access to water bottles to ensure they are not sharing others bottles.

⁶ “Public Health Association of Australia: Policy-at-a-glance – Hot Tap Water Temperature and Scalds Policy” Public Health Association (accessed on-line April 2020) <https://www.phaa.net.au/documents/item/215>

⁷ “Tempering Valve Regulations You Need to Know Now” Plumb Perfection 2017 (accessed on-line April 2020) <http://plumbperfection.com.au/tempering-valve-regulations-need-know-now/>

- Water containers (for eg. water jugs) where used must always be securely sealed. At the end of each day, the water container must be emptied and cleaned thoroughly.
- Where cups are used for accessing drinking water there must be a clearly visible procedure for the storage of clean and dirty cups and for cleaning of these.

Hot water

- Adults must not consume hot drinks in areas where children have access. Hot drinks and other hot liquids must not be taken into children's rooms or the playground.
- The Centre will professionally maintain all hot water accessible to children as per the state guidelines.
- Services should conduct regular checks of water temperatures in locations where children have access using a food probe or similar thermometer ensuring that taps in child accessible areas the maximum temperature must not exceed 45°C.

COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION

- Educators and families will have access to this policy at all times.
- Educators and families will be provided with opportunities to be involved in the review of this policy.
- Nominated Supervisors will check with local and state/territory organisations regarding the maximum hot water temperature for their area.
- Educators will be advised of their responsibility in relation to this policy upon induction

RELATED FORMS AND DOCUMENTS

- Excursion Policy
- Excursion Risk Management Plan
- Water temperature record checks
- Educator Induction Checklist

SCOPE AND ENFORCEMENT

The failure of any person to comply with this policy in its entirety may lead to;

- Termination of child enrolment
- Performance management of an employee which may lead to termination

RECOGNISED AUTHORITIES AND DOCUMENTS WHICH GUIDE POLICY

- *"Laurie Lawrence's Kids Alive Do The Five – Living With Water DVD"*, Peter Walmsley, Department of Health and Ageing, Australian Government (2009)
- *Kids Alive Do The Five website* <https://kidsalive.com.au/> (accessed on-line April 2020)
- *"Education and Care Services National Regulations"*, Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (Dec 2019)
- *"Hot Water Burns like Fire"* brochure, Queensland Government (accessed on-line April 2019) https://www.health.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/422336/28207.pdf
- *"Public Health Association of Australia: Policy-at-a-glance – Hot Tap Water Temperature and Scalds Policy"* Public Health Association (accessed on-line April 2020) <https://www.phaa.net.au/documents/item/215>
- *"Water safety for children"* Raising Children Australian Parenting Website (accessed on-line April 2020) <https://raisingchildren.net.au/babies/safety/bath-water-safety/water-safety>
- *"Hot Water Burns"* Queensland Health (accessed on-line April 2020) <http://conditions.health.qld.gov.au/HealthCondition/condition/1/55/371/Hot-water-burns>

- “Hot Water Burns Like Fire” Brochure Kidsafe NSW (2010) (accessed on-line April 2020) <https://www.kidsafensw.org/imagesDB/wysiwyg/Hotwaterburnlikefire2010.pdf>
- “Burns and Scalds – Children” Better Health Channel Victoria State Government (accessed on-line April 2020) <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/burns-and-scalds-children>
- Public Health Association of Australia: Policy-at-a-glance – Hot Tap Water Temperature and Scalds Policy” Public Health Association (accessed on-line April 2020) <https://www.phaa.net.au/documents/item/215>
- “Tempering Valve Regulations You Need to Know Now” Plumb Perfection 2017 (accessed on-line April 2020) <http://plumbperfection.com.au/tempering-valve-regulations-need-know-now/>

DATE CREATED: November 2011

REVIEW DETAILS:

| Review Date | Details of Changes |
|--------------------|---|
| January 2013 | No changes made, sources updated where applicable. |
| January 2014 | No changes made, sources updated where applicable |
| May 2015 | No changes made, sources updated where applicable |
| April 2016 | No changes made, sources updated where applicable |
| May 2017 | Sourced updated and further information in Rationale provided. The following inclusions under Implementation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Aquariums and fish tanks must be secured in such a way that they cannot be pushed/pulled over. ● Where cups are used for accessing drinking water there must be a clearly visible procedure for the storage of clean and dirty cups and for cleaning of these. |
| May 2018 | Note update on heated water temperatures under AS/NZS 3500.4 0 – new heated water installations to 43.5°C down from 45°C |
| April 2019 | Updated sources where applicable. |
| April 2020 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Updated sources and weblinks ● Quotes in Rationale modified to match changes in websites ● Removed water temperature guide table due to various versions under building codes. Replaced with requirement for taps in child accessible areas to be a maximum of 45°C |