**PURPOSE**

This policy will outline the procedures that apply to managing water safety, including safety during any water-based activities at Docklands Day Nursery. With the warmer weather your thoughts might turn to paddling pools in the garden and water play.  While both these activities are undoubtedly exciting for children and many children with trajectory schemas benefit hugely from water play, we do have to be very careful about exposing other people’s children to such risks.

**POLICY STATEMENT**

**1. VALUES**

Docklands Day Nursery (DDN) is committed to:

* providing opportunities for children to explore their natural environment including water play
* ensuring that children are protected from the risks associated with drowning or non-fatal drowning experiences.
* ensuring that curriculum planning incorporates water safety awareness.
* providing information to educators, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and others at the nursery about water safety.

**2. SCOPE**

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisor, Person in Day-to-day Charge, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of (DDN), including during offsite excursions and activities.

**3. BACKGROUND**

The supervision and safety of children within and around water is of paramount importance to us.

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 nursery environment. 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 and also to the availability of drinking water for children.

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

Drowning is a leading cause of death for children in the UK, 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 staff members to provide a safe, stimulating environment for the 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.

**Risk for different children**

Babies – likely to drown in water if they crawl up to investigate.

Toddlers – likely to drown in water if they want to experiment with it.

Disabled child – likely to drown in water if they do not understand the risks.

Child with English as a second or additional language – likely to be hurt if they do not understand the dangers related to them in English.

* **The following control measures should be kept in other to keep the children safe:**
* Spills which might cause slips or falls are mopped up immediately.
* Substances added to water (soap flakes, food colouring, essential oils etc) are suitable for use by children and non-toxic.
* Resources added to water (plastic fish, buckets, pieces of sponge, toy boats etc) are safety checked before and during play.
* Children are fully supervised when playing with water.
* Water is the correct temperature for use by children and is checked with a thermometer if the practitioner is unsure.
* Children with hand eczema or sores on their skin are provided with waterproof gloves.
* Children wear waterproof aprons and are changed quickly if they are wet;
* The practitioner ensures places where water might collect are checked before children go outside.
* Overcrowding at the water tray is avoided through supervision.
* Babies are fully supervised when in contact with water and provided with a small bowl of water rather than pulling up at the water tray.
* Resources used with water play are checked for safety before use and discarded if broken or damaged.
* Children are reminded to roll up their sleeves and wear aprons.
* Practitioners are aware that wet clothing makes children susceptible to infection and can cause sore skin.
* Fresh water is used and changed daily: if there is a risk of local contamination advice is taken before children are allowed to play.
* Daily checks ensure the water tray is safe to use.
* All practitioners are trained in first aid.
* Children are reminded not to drink the water.
* Telephones are taken outside so that children are not left unattended when playing with water.
* Paper towels and single use cloth towels are provided for children to dry themselves.

Enabling the children to manage their own safety can be a slow process for many children. Practitioners need to remind them of the dangers regularly and can involve them in age-appropriate question and answer sessions which encourage them to think about danger and work out how to manage it for themselves.

For example, we are going to play with the water today...

* Who can remember what we need to wear?
* Who knows what happens if water gets spilled?
* Can anyone remember why we need to dry up after we have finished playing?
* If you are thirsty which water, do you drink?
* How many children can safely play around the water tray?
* What happens if you want to play with the water tray and there are 3 children already gathered around it?
* What should you do if you drop one of the toys from the water tray on the floor? Give it to an adult to wash, yes well done!
* Who can remember where we keep the aprons?
* What should you do if your clothes get wet from the water tray?

By involving the children in considering their own risk assessment we are helping them to think the risks through and to be more aware of what might hurt them – and we are helping to prepare them for school when they will be given more autonomy over their play.