

Physical Environment Policy

National Quality Standards (NQS)

The physical environment can contribute to children's wellbeing, happiness, creativity and developing independence. It can contribute to and express the quality of children's learning and experiences. The choices made in an education and care service about resources, materials, spaces, layout, air and light quality and access to a range of experiences in the indoor and outdoor, have a direct impact on the quality of learning opportunities available to children.

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety	
2.3.2	Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect Children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury

Quality Area 3: Physical Environment	
3.1.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, furniture, equipment, facilities and resources are suitable for their purpose
3.1.2	Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained
3.1.3	Facilities are designed or adapted to ensure access and participation by every child in the service and to allow flexible use, and interaction between indoor and outdoor space.
3.2.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces are designed and organised to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.
3.2.2	Resources, materials and equipment are sufficient in number, organised in ways that ensure appropriate and effective implementation of the program and allow for multiple uses

Quality Area 6: Partnership with families and Community	
6.1.1	There is an effective enrolment and orientation process for families
6.1.2	Families have opportunities to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions
6.1.3	Current information about the service is available to families
6.2.1	The expertise of families is recognised and they share in decision making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
6.2.2	Current information is available to families about community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.
6.3.1	Links with relevant community and support agencies are established and maintained.
6.3.2	Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing relevant information and clarifying responsibilities
6.3.3	Access to inclusion and support assistance is facilitated
6.3.4	The service builds relationships and engages with their local community.

Education and Care Services National Regulations

Children (Education and Care Services) National Law NSW	
182	Tobacco, drug and alcohol free environment
156	Relationships in groups
103	Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair
104	Fencing and security
105	Furniture, materials and equipment
106	Laundry and hygiene facilities
107	Space requirements—indoor
108	Space requirements—outdoor space
109	Toilet and hygiene facilities
110	Ventilation and natural light
111	Administrative space
112	Nappy change facilities
113	Outdoor space—natural environment
114	Outdoor space—shade
115	Premises designed to facilitate supervision
116	Assessments of family day care residences and approved family day care venues
117	Glass (additional requirement for family day care)
73	Educational programs
74	Documenting of child assessments or evaluations for delivery of educational program
75	Information about the educational program to be kept available
76	Information about educational program to be given to parents
80	Weekly menu
86	Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness
99	Children leaving the education and care service premises
102	Authorisation for excursions
111	Administrative space (Centre-based services)
168(2)(k)	Policies and procedures are required in relation to enrolment and orientation
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available

Early Years Learning Framework

Learning Outcome 2	
2.1	Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation
2.2	Children respond to diversity with respect
2.4	Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment

Learning Outcome 4	
4.1	Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, Commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity
4.2	Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, enquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating
4.3	Children transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another
4.4	Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies and natural and processed materials

PURPOSE

Our Service will ensure the environment is safe, clean and well maintained for children, families, educators and visitors. Children’s awareness of the environment and sustainable practice will be supported through daily practices, resources and interactions. The physical environment will support children’s learning, safety, levels of engagement and access to positive experiences and inclusive relationships.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, and management of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Our Service is committed to providing an environment that promotes safety and enhances children’s learning and development by:

Choosing appropriate resources and equipment

- Providing appropriately sized furniture and equipment in both the indoor and outdoor environment for the age ranges signified in the service.
- The Approved Provider will be responsible for any large purchases of equipment. The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for the daily running purchases of the service.
- Educators will compile a list for the Nominated Supervisor of equipment that needs maintenance on a prioritised basis yearly.
- The Service will actively seek the input of parents/guardians regarding toys and equipment at the service.
- Resources and equipment will be chosen to reflect the cultural diversity of the Service’s community and the cultural diversity of contemporary Australia, including the incorporation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
- Providing children with challenges in relation to indoor and outdoor fundamentals in the environment to inspire appropriate challenges and risk taking in accordance with children’s individual developmental level.
- Ensuring the environment is organised to ensure safety and minimal disruption for children.
- Integrating precise requirements of children with additional needs to ensure an inclusive environment.
- Ensuring climbing equipment is set up in a safe way. For example, incorporating soft fall materials wherever climbing equipment is set up.

- Conducting consistent risk assessments of the indoor and outdoor environment in order to minimise risk and hazards.
- Providing an environment that allows children in several dispositions to occur in the same space (e.g. quiet play areas and loud play areas)
- Providing a natural environment for children to explore and experience which may include (e.g. plants, trees, gardens, rock, mud or water)
- Encouraging Educators to participate in on-going professional development in order to enhance children's learning and ensuring a safe and educational environment.
- Working in collaboration with our Sun Safety policies and procedures, providing adequate shading for children that work in accordance with the recommendations of relevant authorities.
- Providing an environment that ensures children are appropriately supervised at all times.
- Ensuring all required fencing is in working condition and is compliant with current regulations.
- Providing a variety of indoor and outdoor experiences, catering for children's interests and abilities.
- Supporting the children to access appropriate furniture, resources, materials, toys and equipment. These resources will be adequate in number for the number of children attending our Service and be developmentally appropriate.
- Providing an environment where children can explore, solve problems, create, construct and engage in critical thinking that is developmentally appropriate
- Providing an environment that permits children to participate in activities independently or in small groups and access resources autonomously.
- Providing an environment that incorporates commercial, natural, recycled, homemade and real resources that can be used in a variety of ways to encourage children's learning.
- Providing sufficient and accessible hand-washing, toileting, eating and sleeping facilities
- Toileting and hand-washing facilities are accessible from both the indoor and outdoor environments.
- Providing adequate and appropriate hygienic facilities for nappy changing, which are properly constructed ensuring children's safety.
- Incorporating natural and artificial lighting, appropriate ventilation, heating and cooling and fresh air.
- Providing appropriate areas for food preparation.
- Providing a separate indoor space for children who are under two years of age.
- Providing an area for managerial purposes, consultation with children's parents and for private conversations to occur. (Office)
- Discussing with children the safety characteristics of using toys and equipment.
- Where appropriate involving the children in setting classroom guidelines.
- Providing families with the latest safety information
- Ensuring all equipment, including resources, equipment etc. meets relevant Australian Standards and educators are trained in correct maintenance and assembly.

Soiled Items

- Soiled clothing will be returned to a child's home for laundering. Educators will remove soiled content and placed into a plastic bag. Items will be stored securely in a sealed container and not placed in the child's bag.

Ongoing Maintenance

- The Service will continuously reflect on its environment and put in place a plan to ensure that the environment continuously reflects our ideology of providing an environment that is safe, stimulating and engaging for all who interact with it.
- The Nominated Supervisor will document required maintenance with school administration and the City of Vincent required. This will then be implemented throughout the year in accordance with priority, hazard removal, safety precautions and any relevant policies.
- The Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor will also ensure that the Service and its grounds comply with Local Government and BCA regulations in regards to fire ventilation, natural and artificial lighting and safety glass.

Cleaning of Buildings, Premises, Furniture and Equipment

General Cleaning

- The Service will use structured cleaning schedules to ensure that all cleaning is carried out regularly and thoroughly.
- Educators will clean the service at the end of each day and throughout the day as needed.
- Accidents and spills will be cleaned up as quickly as possible to ensure that the service always maintains a high level of cleanliness and hygiene.

When purchasing, storing and/or using any dangerous chemicals, substances, medicines or equipment, our service will:

- Adhere at all times to manufacturer's advice and instructions when using products to clean furniture and equipment at the service.
- Store all dangerous chemicals, substances and medicines in their original containers provided by the manufacturer. All labels and/or use by dates should be kept intact at all times.
- Any substance found to be stored in a different container than originally provided, or with destroyed labels and/or unknown use by dates where appropriate will not be used under any circumstances.
- Containers should be disposed of correctly following local council guidelines, and not reused under any circumstances.
- All dangerous chemicals, substances and equipment must be stored in a locked place or facility that is labelled, secure and inaccessible to children. These materials may include, but are not limited to, all cleaning materials, detergents, poisonous or dangerous substances, dangerous tools and equipment including those with sharp and razor edges and toiletries.
- Educators should follow the instructions of manufacturers, particularly of any product, which may need to be stored in a refrigerated environment pursuant to the aforementioned directives.

- Any substances that need to be refrigerated must be stored in a labelled, child resistant container, preferably in a separate compartment or in a part of the refrigerator inaccessible to children.
- All hazardous chemicals must be supplied with a Safety Data Sheet (SDS) formerly called a Material Data Safety Sheet. Our service will adhere to the manufacturer's instructions for use, storage, and first aid instructions recorded on the SDS.
- The Service will keep a register of all hazardous chemicals, substances and equipment used at the Service. Information recorded should include where they are stored, their use, any risks, and first aid instructions and the current SDS. The register will be readily accessible.
- Appropriate personal protective clothing should be worn in accordance to the manufacturer's instructions when using and disposing of hazardous substances or equipment.
- Seek medical advice immediately if poisoning or potentially hazardous ingestion, inhaled, skin or eye exposure has occurred, or call the Poisons Information Line on 13 11 26, or call an Ambulance on 000.
- In the case of any child or educator becoming injured by a chemical, substance or equipment, the service will initiate our emergency, medical and first aid procedures, notify the appropriate authority that administers workplace health and safety immediately and any other person or authority as required by regulations or guidelines.
- In any major emergency involving a hazardous chemical or equipment, a hazardous gas or a fire or explosion hazard, call the emergency services, dial 000 and notify the appropriate authority that administers workplace health and safety and any other person or authority as required by regulations or guidelines.
- The Poison Safety Checklist will be used in order to ensure we are consistently meeting requirements.

Children's bathroom

- Supervision in the bathroom is important when in use.
- Educators and other staff should also encourage children to follow hygiene practices.
- Bathrooms should be cleaned at least once a day.
- Bathroom floors should always be mopped.
- Signage is to be used after mopping to ensure that the child/children, educators and other staff and families are warned that the floor is wet
- Educators are to ensure they follow the bathroom and toilet cleaning procedure

Inspection and Testing of Electrical Equipment

- Services must ensure that electrical equipment is regularly inspected and tested (once a year through the education department) by a competent person if the electrical equipment is supplied with electricity through an electrical socket and used in conditions where it could be damaged, including exposure to moisture, heat, vibration, mechanical damage, corrosive chemicals or dust.
- A record of all electrical testing and tagging, must be attached and kept until the equipment is next tested or disposed of and must specify:
 - a) The name of the tester
 - b) The date and outcome of the testing.

c) The date on which the next testing must be carried out.

Maintenance of Fire Equipment

- All fire equipment at our service will be maintained as per the legal standards.
- External agencies will be employed to assist the service with this maintenance if no currently employed staff or educators are qualified to complete the maintenance checks.

Source

- Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2015,
- Guide to the National Quality Standard.
- Swimming Pools Act 1992
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011
- National Quality Standard Cancer Council
- NSW Sample Sun Protection Policy

Review

Policy Review Date
July 2017