

Physical Environment Policy

The physical environment can contribute to children's wellbeing, happiness, creativity and promote the development of 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.

National Quality Standard (NQS)

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety		
2.1	Health	Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted
2.1.1	Wellbeing and comfort	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's needs for sleep, rest and relaxation
2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
2.1.3	Healthy Lifestyles	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard
2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented.

Education and Care Services National Regulations

Children (Education and Care Services) National Law NSW	
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
82	Tobacco, drug and alcohol -free environment
86	Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness
99	Children leaving the education and care service premises
102	Authorisation for excursions
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)
156	Relationships in groups
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available

Related Policies

Environmentally Responsible Policy
Programming Policy
Work Health and Safety Policy
Health and Safety Policy
Sleep and Rest Policy
Sun Safety Policy
Water Safety Policy

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.
- 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 and compliant with Australian Safety Standards. 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, sand, or water)
- 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.
- Liaise with the school and report any fixtures or school based equipment that need fixing.
- Supporting the children to access appropriate furniture, resources, materials, toys, and equipment. These resources will be adequate in number for the amount 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 sufficient and accessible handwashing, toileting, eating and sleeping facilities
- Ensuring toileting and hand-washing facilities are accessible from both the indoor and outdoor environments.
- Incorporating natural and artificial lighting, appropriate ventilation, heating and cooling and fresh air.
- Providing appropriate areas for food preparation.
- Ensuring power points not in use have safety caps, all double adaptors and power-boards are out of reach of children and all electrical cords are secured and not dangling.

Laundering of Soiled Items

Rest Environment

- A quiet resting area will be available for children to rest or read, read or just have some time to themselves when needed.

Safety Checks

A daily risk assessment of the premises will be undertaken before children begin to arrive. This inspection will include the:

- Service perimeters
- Fences/Fence Line
- Gates
- Paths
- Buildings
- All rooms accessible by children
- Fixed equipment
- Sand Pit

This must be done in order to identify any dangerous objects in the grounds ranging from sharps to poisonous or dangerous plants and animals.

In the event of a sharp object being found (for example a syringe) educators will wear gloves and use tongs to pick up the object and place it in the sharp object box. This box will be disposed of as per the recommendations of our local council.

Similarly, trees in the grounds must be checked regularly for overhanging, dead or dangerous looking branches as well as check for any infestations or nests.

The Indoor and Outdoor Daily Safety Checklists will be used as the procedure to conduct these safety checks. A record of these will be kept by the service. The Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor will make the appropriate arrangements to have repairs carried out as soon as possible.

Cleaning of Buildings, Premises, Furniture and Equipment

General Cleaning

- 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.
- 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.
- 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 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 are cleaned at least once a day and when required by the school cleaners
- 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.

Inspection and Testing of Electrical Equipment

- Services must ensure that electrical equipment is regularly inspected and tested 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.

Sun Protection

We will use the SunSmart UV Index tool to ensure we are protecting children and staff from UV radiation. Educators will document the UV rating each day to ensure the safety of children, staff and Educators. The UV Index will be used when:

- Planning or participating in outdoor activities

OSCA works in cooperation with the school's sun policy.

1. Outdoor Activities

The Service will use a combination of sun protection measures whenever **UV Index levels reach 3 and above**. This will include:

- From October to March sun protection is required at all times. Extra sun protection is needed between 11am and 3pm and during this period outdoor activities should be minimised. Minimising outdoor activities includes reducing both the number of times (frequency) and the length of time (duration) children are outside.
- From April to September (excluding June and July) outdoor activity can take place at any time. However, from 10am – 2pm sun protection (sunscreen and hat) is required.
- In June and July when the UV index is mostly below 3, sun protection is not required.
- All sun protection measures (including recommended outdoor times, shade, hat, clothing and sunsreen) will be considered when planning excursions and incursions.
- Educators continuing to check the UV rating prior to going outdoors and as the heat increases throughout the day.

2. Shade

The service will provide and maintain adequate shade for outdoor play. Shade options can include a combination of portable, natural and built shade. Regular shade assessments should be conducted to monitor existing shade structures and assist in planning for additional shade.

3. Hats

Educators and children are required to wear sun safe hats that protect their face, neck and ears. A sun safe hat is:

- Legionnaire hat.
- Bucket hat with a deep crown and brim size of at least 5cm (adults 6cm).
- Broad brimmed hat with a brim size of at least 6cm (adults 7.5cm).

Please note baseball caps or visors do not provide enough sun protection and therefore are not recommended. Children without a sun safe hat will be asked to play in an area protected from the sun (e.g. under shade, veranda or indoors) or can be provided with a spare hat.

4. Clothing

When outdoors, educators and children will wear sun safe clothing that covers as much of the skin (especially the shoulders, back and stomach) as possible. This includes wearing:

- Loose fitting shirts and dresses with sleeves and collars or covered neckline.
- Longer style skirts, shorts and trousers.
- Children who are not wearing sun safe clothing can be provided with spare clothing.
- Enclosed shoes and socks to protect children's feet. Children to put shoes in their bags when they are bare feet. Staff will make sure if it is safe for children to go bare feet whilst at the center.
- Always wear enclosed comfortable shoes when on an excursion. Thongs are allowed in summer.

Please note: midriff, crop or singlet tops do not provide enough sun protection and therefore are not recommended.

5. Sunscreen

All educators and children will apply SPF50+ broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before going outdoors and reapply every 2 hours. Sunscreen is stored in a cool, dry place and the use-by-date monitored.

6. Role Modelling

Educators will act as role models and demonstrate sun safe behaviour by:

- Wearing a sun safe hat (see Hats).
- Wearing sun safe clothing (see Clothing).
- Applying SPF50+ broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before going outdoors.
- Using and promoting shade.
- Wearing sunglasses that meet the Australian Standard 1067 (optional).

Families and visitors are encouraged to role model positive sun safe behaviour.

- Make sure no child swims in any water without:
 - Written permission from family member to learn water safety and swimming.
 - Appropriate educators/child ratios in place
 - Having sufficient numbers of educators present who have first aid or recognised water safety and rescue procedures.
- At all times children near water are closely supervised. A child will never be left unattended near any water.

Service Closure

- Two Educators must close the Service each night
- Both Educators are to check the entire premises to ensure that all children and families have departed by checking sign in and out sheets for all rooms.

- In the case where a parent has omitted to sign their child out, and the educators did not witness the child leave the service, the educators must take every step to get in contact with the parent to ensure the child has safely left the Service.
- If unable to contact the family, the educators are to contact other educators present on that day for confirmation that the child has been collected. The Nominated Supervisor is to then be notified before leaving the Service.
- Individuals visiting our Service must also sign in when they arrive at the Service, and sign out when they leave.
- Details of absences during the day must also be recorded

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
- Revised National Quality Standard- 2018

Review

Policy Reviewed	Modifications	Next Review Date
July 2020		July 2021