



Quality Area 3

Policies and Procedures

Animal and Pets Policy

Environmentally Responsible Policy

Physical Environment Policy

ANIMAL AND PET POLICY

Having a relationship with a pet and/or animal can help children develop a caring disposition and skills such as nurturing, responsibility, empathy and improved communication. Having a pet in an Out of School Hours Care environment enables children who are not otherwise exposed to animals learn these skills. The pet will become part of the daily educational program and lead to activities and learning about other animals. The safety of children, however, is always our first priority. Our Service will ensure that no animal poses a health or safety risk to children, staff or visitors of the service.

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
2.2	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

QUALITY AREA 3: PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		
3.1.2	Upkeep	Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained
3.2.3	Environmentally responsible	The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
168	Policies and procedures are required in relation to health and safety
170	Policies and procedures to be followed

RELATED POLICY

Educational Program Policy Environmentally Responsible Policy Hand Washing Policy Managing Unidentified Dogs Policy	Physical Environment Policy Sandpit Policy Snake Awareness Policy Supervision Policy Work Health and Safety Policy
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PURPOSE

Having a pet at our Service can be a valuable part of children's education, enriching their learning about nature, ecology and relationships. Our Out of School Hours Care Service aims to provide a safe, hygienic and humane environment for all animals and pets that visit or reside at the Service, educating children in the proper care of animals.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management, approved provider, nominated supervisor and visitors (including contractors) of the Out of School Hours Care Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

The National Quality Standard encourages educators to understand and appreciate the natural environment and the interdependence between people, plants, animals and the land. Pets help children from a young age learn to care for other living things. They can teach a sense of responsibility, caring and tolerance. They can offer many opportunities for developing observational skills and provide basic natural science experiences. If the educators wish to have a pet in the Service, they must make all the decisions in consultation with management and families.

Whilst there are several benefits to keeping animals within the Service, there are also a range of concerns which Educators need to consider maintaining the safety and wellbeing of both the children and the animals. Encouraging direct contact and developing bonds with animals can help children to develop empathy. Providing children with access to animals within our Service will help them learn about life cycles and relationships and improve communication skills. We feel role modelling of appropriate behaviours with animals and guidance in caring for the needs of animals are beneficial for children

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER PRIOR TO HAVING A PET AT OUR SERVICE:

- Who will pay for the care and upkeep of the animal, including feeding, health care and cleaning?
- How will the animal be cared for on weekends and during Service closure periods?
- What physical space is available in our Service? Is it adequate for the animal you are considering?
- Are all educators and families happy with the decision to keep an animal at our Service?
- What regulations do we need to consider for having a pet on Department of Education premises?

- What time will be available throughout the day to care for the animal or will educators be asked to give up some personal time for this?
- Are there any children or educators at our Service who are allergic to, or have phobias of, animals?
- What changes to our Service's policies and procedures need to be considered? For example, Hand-washing Policy will need to be updated to include washing hands after having contact with the animal.
- What are the health and safety risks?

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER INCLUDE:

- Some animals, such as lizards, turtles, snakes, spiders and tropical fish may not be an appropriate choice. Check with a veterinarian if you are unsure whether an animal is suitable for children, and check with the local health department for regulations and advice regarding animals in an Out of School Hours Care service. Some states and territories require a license for keeping certain animals.
- Animals that may be more likely to be suitable for an Out of School Hours Care Service may include goldfish, hermit crabs, stick insects, mice or rats. All of these animals are relatively low maintenance and can be left safely over a weekend if they are provided with sufficient food and water. However arrangements would need to be made for these pets during school holidays.

ASSESSING AND MANAGING RISKS

Whilst there are many benefits to providing children with access to animals and keeping pets at an Out of School Hours Service, there are issues that approved providers and educators need to consider for the safety and wellbeing of both the children and the animals concerned prior to choosing a pet or having an animal visit the Service.

A risk assessment should therefore be conducted when deciding the type of animal and the way the children engage with it.

Potential risks may include:

- diseases- from birds (Parrot fever -psittacosis) and other animals
- injury due to biting, kicking or pushing a child over (e.g. farm animals)
- scratching (e.g. chickens, rabbits, guinea pigs)
- pests and vermin (snakes, rats, mice)
- allergies (e.g. bees, wasps, ants)

DISEASE:

As animals can spread disease, access to animals at the Outside School Hours Care Service requires special consideration to prevent this. Health authorities identify that germs can be present on the skin, hair, feathers and scales, and in the faeces, urine and saliva of animals. While these germs may not cause disease in the animal, they may cause disease in humans.

EFFECTIVE HAND WASHING AND CLEANING:

Children and adults should employ effective hand washing after touching or feeding animals, or cleaning their bedding, tanks, cages or enclosures. However it is important to engage children with these tasks as they learn responsibility through 'hands on' learning experiences.

APPROPRIATE SUPERVISION

Children should also be appropriately supervised when they have contact with animals to avoid potential injury or harm to the child or the animal.

Ensure children wear appropriate clothing and footwear when handling animals and pets. Be aware of children who may have allergies to insects such as bees, wasps and ants that may be more apparent when animals are kept in an educational setting.

SERVICE PETS

- Management and Educators should prepare children for the animal visit, gaining perception into how the children may react to the pet.
- Management, Educators, children and families should consider the rationale for having a pet and long-term implications of such a decision prior to getting the pet.
- All pets and their enclosures are to be kept clean and hygienic with appropriate bedding and water.
- Food will be made available for all pets and animals but kept out of reach of children at all times.
- Any animal or pet kept at the Out of School Hours Service will be regularly fed, cleaned, vaccinated, and wormed (as appropriate), and checked for fleas and diseases.
- Animals including pets will not be allowed in the sand pit or any other play area. In event that this happens, educators will refer to and adhere to the *Sand Pit Policy*.

- Animals including pets will never be taken into the food preparation area nor will they have access to the eating areas, toys, eating surfaces and/or utensils.
- Anyone who has handled the animal or pet will immediately wash their hands.
- Children's animal or pets will only be allowed in the Out of School Hours Service when the Nominated Supervisor has granted permission.
- The program will include how to properly care for animals and how to treat them appropriately.

UNINVITED ANIMAL VISIT

There are situations that may spontaneously occur, involving animals. For example, there may be a situation where an animal or bird has made its way into the OSHC Service. Depending upon the type of animal or bird, educators may use this as a spontaneous learning experience for the children. At all times the highest priority will be to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children.

If an animal or bird is potentially dangerous such as a snake or spider, educators will contact an appropriate authority for assistance.

South Australia: [Fauna Rescue](#) of SA (08) 8289 0896 or 1300 562 527

A professional should monitor the animal's movements to ensure a speedy and efficient capture, but priority is to be given to Educator, child and family safety. At no time is the potentially dangerous animal, insect or bird to be approached or touched by Educators, children or families.

PESTS & VERMIN

- Pest control will occur at the Out of School Hours Service on an annual basis as a minimum.
- Educators will monitor any occurrences in the Service to determine the success of control measures.
- Negotiation may be required with school management for organisation depending upon the location of the OSHC service
- If pests and/or vermin are seen, or evidence of pests and/or vermin such as droppings, Educators will advise the management.
- Management is responsible for arranging additional pest control visits as required.
- Where appropriate, Educators will discuss safety issues relating to dangerous products, plants, vermin and objects with the children.

- Educators will thoroughly clean all areas that pests have accessed in the Out of School Hours Service with disinfectant.
- If the remains of animal or animal faeces have been found, the remains will be disposed of according to the local Council guidelines and the area where the remains were found will be thoroughly disinfected.
- Educators are responsible for assessing any situation in the Out of School Hours Service where animals are involved to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children, families and animals.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

Our *Animal and Pet Policy* will be updated and reviewed annually in consultation with families, staff, educators and management.

CHILDCARE CENTRE DESKTOP- RELATED RESOURCES

Risk Assessment Action Plan- Pets/Animals

SOURCE

Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Bone, J. (2013). The animals as the fourth educator: A literature review of animals and young children in pedagogical relationships. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood* 38(2). Deakin West, ACT: Early Childhood Australia.

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2023).

[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (Amended 2023)

Elliott, S., McCrea, N., Edwards, H., & University of New England. (2012). Sustainable outdoor play spaces in early childhood centres: Investigating perceptions, facilitating change and generating theory.

Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017). (Amended 2023).

Kidsafe NSW Inc. <https://kidsafe.com.au/>

National Health and Medical Research Council. (2012) (updated June 2013). Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services (5th Ed.).

NSW Government Department of Health. (2018). Petting zoos and personal hygiene fact sheet. Retrieved from <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/petting-zoos-and-personal-hygiene.aspx>

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

[Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY:	SARAH DUFFY	DIRECTOR	JUNE 24
POLICY REVIEWED	JUNE 24	NEXT REVIEW DATE	JUNE 25
VERSION NUMBER	V7.9.23		
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • policy maintenance - no major changes to policy 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sources checked for currency Continuous improvement/reflection section added CCD related resource section added 	
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE
SEPTEMBER 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> policy maintenance - no major changes to policy hyperlinks checked and repaired as required link to Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations added in 'Sources' 	SEPTEMBER 2023
SEPTEMBER 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> minor formatting edits addition of Educational Program Policy sources checked for currency 	SEPTEMBER 2022

ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE POLICY

Our Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) Service encourages the awareness of environmental responsibility and implement practices that contribute to a sustainable future. Children are supported to become environmentally responsible and show respect for the environment. We practice and promote sustainability through reducing waste, minimising consumption, and protecting and conserving wildlife and natural habitats.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 3: PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		
3.2	Use	The Service environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning.
3.2.1	Inclusive Environment	Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child's participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.
3.2.2	Resource' support play-based learning	Resources, materials and equipment allow for multiple uses, are sufficient in number, and enable every child to engage in play-based learning.
3.2.3	Environmentally responsible	The Service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible.

RELATED POLICIES

Animal and Pet Policy Educational Program Policy	Physical Environment Policy
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PURPOSE

We aim to ensure the environment is safe, clean and sustainable. We believe in educating children about the environment which is promoted through daily practices, resource and interactions. Being Environmentally Responsible will assist children and families to become advocates for a sustainable future.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, educators, staff, Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, management, students, volunteers and visitors of the OSHC Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Teaching and learning about being environmentally responsible starts with everyday practice. We believe being environmentally responsible should be embedded into the operations of the OSHC Service, rather than being a tokenistic 'theme' that is investigated every now and then. Our Service is committed to protecting our environment to ensure a sustainable future for our children. This involves educators, children and families working together to protect our environment as we educate children about the importance of 'creating and promoting sustainable communities.' (MTO, 2.0. p17)

THE APPROVED PROVIDER/NOMINATED SUPERVISOR WILL:

- ensure the principles of the approved framework- *My Time, Our Place, (V2.0). 2022* underpin our educational program within the Service- including the new principle of *Sustainability*
- network with the local community to keep up to date with current practices and ideas for being environmentally responsible. This may include installing water tanks, grey water system, converting toilet cisterns to dual flush, and converting to water saving taps
- engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders, where possible, to explore and share their own history, culture and rich sustainable practices
- encourage educators, families and children to engage in sustainable practices and appreciate the natural environment, understand our impact on the natural world, and the interdependence between people, animals, plants, lands and waters

- provide professional development opportunities for educators to learn about integrating environmentally sustainable education into all areas of their program and engage in shared critical reflection
- reflect on environmental, economic and social impacts on the world in all aspects of Service operation and include in the review the development of a sustainable Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)
- ensure the Service joins a preferred provider e.g., [Sustainable Schools NSW](#) (or State equivalent) to liaise with other education and care services and maintain currency on practices and ideas for being environmentally responsible
- where relevant, review policies and procedures within the OSHC Service with educators, children and families, to achieve more sustainable outcomes and practices
- use electronic communication where possible to reduce paper use within the office and in each room for newsletters, billing, and other communication needs
- conduct environmentally responsible audits to ensure consistency and continuous improvement
- source resources and materials from second-hand stores to use within the OSHC Service
- ensure sustainable practices are incorporated into the daily routine
- collaborate with families and the community for involvement in potential quality practice for the Service. For example: [Take 3 for the Sea](#), [Food wise](#), [Planet Ark](#)
- provide colour coded bins for Landfill only, Organic waste, Paper recycling, Mixed recyclables.

EDUCATORS, STAFF MEMBERS, VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENTS WILL:

- encourage children and young people to engage with concepts of sustainability and their capacity to advocate and act for positive change (MTOP, V2.0)
- support children and young people's understanding of their citizenship, rights and responsibilities as members of local and global communities through meaningful and relevant educational experiences (MTOP, p.17)
- incorporate recycling as part of everyday practice at the OSHC Service
- support children and young people's commitment to social justice through curriculum decision making
- role model environmental sustainability practices during play
- role model environmentally responsible practices with the children and families as part of the curriculum
- discuss environmentally responsible practices with the children and families as part of the curriculum

- provide information to families on environmentally responsible practices that are implemented at the OSHC Service and encourage the application of these practices in the home environment
- share ideas between educators, children, and families about environmentally responsible ideas, implementation, and resources. This will be supported through our communication strategies, including parent meetings, emails, newsletters, and informal conversations
- role model energy and water conservation practices: For example, turning off lights and air-conditioning when a room/space is not in use, emptying water play containers onto garden areas
- seek to purchase equipment that is environmentally friendly where possible. Educators will reduce the amount of plastic and disposable equipment they purchase and select materials that are made of natural materials
- use the concept of '*reduce, re-use and recycle*', which will become part of everyday practice for both children and educators to build lifelong attitudes towards environmentally responsible practices
- use 'green cleaning' products to replace chemicals where possible.

SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES MAY INCLUDE:

SUSTAINABLE PRACTICE	IDEAS
RECYCLING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide bins and signage for waste and recycled materials • Recycle paper and all other recyclable rubbish • Use recycled water (e.g. for watering gardens)
GARDENING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plant vegetables, herbs, and fruit trees • Establish a worm farm • Give food scraps to worms or Service pets, or to a staff member to take home for their pet/s • Provide education to children about activities such as '<i>garden to plate</i>' activities • Provide opportunities for children to participate in experiences such as seed sprouting, vegetable gardening, cooking with what is grown, and provide education about weeds
ENERGY CONSERVATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install LED lighting where possible • Turn off non-LED lights when not in use • Turn off electrical appliances at the outlet when not in use • Use natural ventilation and insulated blinds/drapes rather than air conditioning when temperatures are not extreme
WATER CONSERVATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using half flush on the toilet • Turn off the taps and ensure leaking taps are fixed immediately • Encourage shorter showers • Teach children to turn off tap when brushing teeth • Collect rainwater and use in the garden and for water/sand play • Use water play water on the garden rather than tipping out after use.

NATURE AND WILDLIFE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use natural materials – trees, blocks of wood and leaves etc. in arts and crafts and play • Educate children about the natural decomposition cycle through exposure and participation in worm farms and composting food scraps • Educate children in how to care for pets, letting them actively participate in caring for the Service pets. • Plant ‘bird attracting’ plants and install a birdbath • Plant ‘butterfly attracting’ plants • Create a lizard lounge • Collaborate with wildlife educators to assist in educating children
COMMUNICATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display the Service’s sustainability journey in the foyer area for families and visitors to view, provide feedback and offer suggestions • Provide families with hints and tips in newsletters about how they can become sustainable at home • Use scrap paper for art and craft • Use both sides of paper for drawing

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

The *Environmentally Responsible Policy* will be reviewed on an annual basis in conjunction with children, families, staff, educators and management.

SOURCES

Australian Association for Environmental Education (AAEE): www.aeee.org.au
 Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2023). [Guide to the National Quality Framework.](#)
 Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2023). [Information sheet. Belonging, Being & Becoming. Sustainability.](#)
 Australian Government Department of Education. [My Time, Our Place- Framework for School Age Care in Australia.V2.0, 2022](#)
 Department of Environment and Energy: www.environment.gov.au
[Education and Care Services National Regulations.](#) (Amended 2023).
 Queensland Early Childhood Sustainability Network (QECSN): www.qecsn.org.au
 Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).
 UNESCO. [Sustainable Development Goals- Resources for educators](#)
[Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	SARAH DUFFY	DIRECTOR	JUNE 24
POLICY REVIEWED	JUNE 24	NEXT REVIEW DATE	JUNE 25

VERSION NUMBER	V7.2.24	
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> annual policy review additional information added to align to MTOP (V2.0) principle- <i>Sustainability</i> sources checked for currency and additional resources added 	
POLICY REVIEWED	MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE
FEBRUARY 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> policy maintenance - no major changes to policy hyperlinks checked and repaired as required continuous improvement/reflection section added link to Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations added in 'Sources' 	FEBRUARY 2024
FEBRUARY 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy reviewed as per annual review cycle Sources checked for currency 	FEBRUARY 2023

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT POLICY

The physical environment can contribute to children's wellbeing, happiness, and creativity as well as promoting the development of independence. It can contribute to and make visible the quality of children's learning and involvement in experiences. The choices made in an Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) service about resources, materials, spaces, layout, air, and light in combination with access to a range of experiences in the indoor and outdoor areas, 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.
QUALITY AREA 3: PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		
3.1.1	Fit for Purpose	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child.
3.1.2	Upkeep	Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
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
84A	Sleep and rest
86	Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness
98	Telephone or other communication equipment
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
113	Outdoor space—natural environment

114	Outdoor space—shade
115	Premises designed to facilitate supervision
123	Educator to child ratios- centre based services
156	Relationships in groups
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures are to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available

RELATED POLICIES

Animal and Pet Policy Child Safe Environment Policy Educational Program Policy Environmentally Responsible Policy Health and Safety Policy	Road Safety Policy Rest Time Policy Safe Storage of Hazardous Chemicals Policy Sun Safety Policy Water Safety Policy Work Health and Safety Policy
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PURPOSE

Our OSHC 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 participation and engagement, development, learning, and safety, and will provide supervised access to positive experiences and inclusive relationships. Our OSHC Service provides an environment free from the use of tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, young people, families, educators, staff, approved provider, nominated supervisor, management, students, volunteers and visitors of the OSHC Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

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

THE APPROVED PROVIDER, NOMINATED SUPERVISOR AND EDUCATORS’ RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

ENSURE THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT IS DESIGNED TO:

- maximise children and young people's engagement and positive experiences
- provide space where children can experience quality care in a safe and healthy environment
- meet licensing requirements for buildings, space requirements, fencing, light, ventilation, firefighting equipment, emergency evacuation exits and safety glass for National Regulations, the Building Code of Australia (BCA), South Australian Department of Planning and Environment, local councils and regulatory authorities
- provide adequate storage to meet the needs and requirements of the OSHC Service
- provide sufficient and accessible handwashing, toileting, eating and food preparation facilities
- ensure toileting and hand-washing facilities are accessible from both the indoor and outdoor environments
- provide an area for managerial purposes, consultation with children's parents and for private conversations to occur (Reg. 111)
- incorporate natural and artificial lighting, appropriate ventilation, heating, cooling and fresh air into the building/premises (Reg. 110)
- facilitate adequate supervision of children at all times
- ensure safety and minimal disruption for children whilst playing
- ensure immediate communication is available at all times to and from parents and emergency services (Reg. 98)
- provide different types of play to occur both in the indoor and outdoor areas (e.g., quiet play areas and loud play areas)
- provide adequate shade for children in accordance with the recommendations of relevant authorities
- provide shade in the form of trees or physical shade structures
- provide a natural environment for children to explore and experience which may include plants, trees, gardens, rock, mud and/or water
- ensure all required fencing is compliant with current regulations and is maintained to ensure it is in good condition (including boundary fencing)
- provide a variety of indoor and outdoor experiences, catering for children's interests and abilities
- provide a developmentally appropriate environment where children can explore, solve problems, create, construct and engage in critical thinking
- provide an environment that permits children to participate in activities independently or in small groups, and access resources autonomously

- ensure safety of children at all times. Play equipment must comply with playground standards- AS 4685-2014
- 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

CHOOSE APPROPRIATE RESOURCES AND EQUIPMENT:

- appropriately sized furniture and equipment will be provided in both the indoor and outdoor environment for the age ranges represented in the OSHC service (K-6 years)
- resources will be adequate in number for the number of children and young people attending our OSHC Service and be developmentally appropriate
- children will be supported to access appropriate furniture, resources, materials, toys and equipment that encourage appropriate challenges and risk taking in accordance with their individual developmental level
- specific equipment requirements of children with additional needs will be catered for to ensure an inclusive environment
- resources and equipment will be chosen to reflect the cultural diversity of the OSHC Service's community and the cultural diversity of contemporary Australia, including the incorporation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community
- large purchases of equipment will be the responsibility of the approved provider and where required, consultation with school management will be sought
- the nominated supervisor is responsible for consumables and the daily running purchases of the OSHC service
- educators will provide ideas for equipment and materials purchase based on the needs and interests of children attending the OSHC service
- educators will complete a log of equipment that needs maintenance on a prioritised basis for the nominated supervisor
- children and young people's ideas and suggestions in planning the indoor and outdoor environments will be facilitated
- children will be encouraged to make decisions about the use of equipment and resources
- the OSHC Service will actively seek the input of parents/guardians regarding current interests of their children so as to purchase appropriate toys and equipment
- climbing equipment will be installed according to manufacturers' recommendations and compliant with Australian Safety Standards. For example, incorporating soft fall materials wherever climbing equipment is set up.

- incorporate commercial, natural, recycled, homemade, and real resources that can be used in a variety of ways to encourage children's learning and creativity
- educators will participate in on-going professional development in order to enhance children's learning and ensuring a safe and educational environment

REST ENVIRONMENT:

- educators will adhere to our *Rest Time Policy*
- provide an area/environment for children to rest and relax

REARRANGING, ADDING OR REMOVING FURNITURE:

- maintain a record of any changes that is made to the physical environment of the OSHC Service, such as rearranging of rooms etc. to show continuous improvement [see: Record of Service Modifications]
- links between the arrangements and choice of resources and equipment and the children's learning in the program will be documented

ONGOING MAINTENANCE

- the Service will continuously reflect on its environment and put in place a plan to ensure that the environment reflects our ideology of providing an environment that is safe, stimulating, and engaging for all who interact within it
- frequent risk assessments of the indoor and outdoor environment will be conducted to minimise risk and hazards
- educators will complete an *Outdoor Environment and Playground Safety Audit* at least every six (6) months
- the nominated supervisor will document required maintenance in a maintenance plan/log for the Service as required. Repairs and maintenance will be conducted throughout the year according to priority including, hazard removal, safety precautions and any relevant policies
- the approved provider/nominated supervisor is responsible for engaging an external expert to complete a building safety checklist of the service and its grounds bi-annually and ensure any work deemed necessary is completed to Australian standards [if part of a school- check with school administration/general assistant]
- the OSHC Service will have regular pest inspections carried out by an accredited pest control company. Documentation of these inspections will be kept and any further recommended treatments as a result of the findings from the pest control check will be carried out in a timely manner

- stay up to date with banned/recalled products and remove these immediately from the Service if required.

GROUPING OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

For the purposes of regulation 123 (1) (d), the educator to child ratio for children over preschool age at a centre-based Service is 1 educator to 15 children.

DAILY SAFETY CHECKS

A daily inspection of the premises will be undertaken before children arrive. The *Opening/Closing Checklist and Outdoor Cleaning/Safety Checklist* will be used as the procedure to conduct these safety checks. A record of these will be kept by the OSHC Service. The approved provider/nominated supervisor will make the appropriate arrangements to have any identified repairs carried out as soon as possible. [See Resource Section of policy).

The inspection will include:

- service perimeters
- fences/fence Line
- gates
- paths
- buildings
- all rooms/areas accessible by children
- fixed equipment
- sand pit/mud pit

This must be completed 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 checked for any infestations.

CLEANING OF BUILDINGS, PREMISES, FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT

GENERAL CLEANING

- the OSHC 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.
- educators and staff will adhere to our *Health and Safety Policy*.

WHEN PURCHASING, STORING AND/OR USING ANY DANGEROUS CHEMICALS, SUBSTANCES, MEDICINES OR EQUIPMENT, OUR OSHC SERVICE WILL:

- ensure all procedures are followed to maintain a safe environment
- adhere to the Service's *Safe Storage of Hazardous Chemicals Policy*
- adhere at all times to manufacturer's advice and instructions when using products to clean furniture and equipment at the service
- 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, first aid instructions, and the current SDS. The register will be readily accessible.

CHILDREN'S BATHROOM

- children will be actively supervised whilst accessing toilet facilities to ensure other children are safe from harm
- educators will check the toilet facilities for safety and materials prior to commencement of daily program
- educators and other staff will encourage children to follow appropriate hygiene practices- hand washing, not playing in bathrooms.
- bathrooms will be cleaned at least daily and at other times as required
- bathroom floors will be mopped at least daily
- signage is to be used after mopping to ensure that children, educators and other staff and families are aware that the floor is wet
- educators are to ensure they follow the bathroom and toilet cleaning procedure
- educators will complete the *Bathroom Safety Audit* [every 6 months].

MAINTENANCE OF FIRE EQUIPMENT

- all fire equipment at our OSHC Service will be maintained as per the legal standards

- external agencies will be employed to assist the OSHC Service with this maintenance if no currently employed staff or educators are qualified to complete the maintenance checks.

SUN PROTECTION

- the OSHC Service will adhere to our *Sun Safety Policy* and procedures at all times
- a combination of sun protection measures will be implemented whenever UV Index levels reach 3 and above
- educators will continue to check the UV rating prior to going outdoors and as the heat increases throughout the day (see *Sun Safety Policy* for further information)
- temperature of outdoor equipment and surfaces will be monitored during the day to ensure the area and equipment is safe for children to play (see: *Daily Playground Surface Temperature Check*)

WATER SAFETY

Regulations state that services are not permitted to have pools unless they existed on the premises before 6 November 1996. However, to stop accidents and illnesses relating to swimming pools, wading pools, water troughs and other water situations our OSHC service will:

- remove any items or objects that could be used to climb into the fenced area of a pool, trough, or water storage unit e.g., chairs, bins, bikes, and any shrubs or overhanging trees
- make sure no child swims in any water without:
 - risk assessments being completed and approved by the approved provider
 - 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
- staff will ensure that all water containers are made inaccessible to children and also make sure children's play areas are safely fenced off from water hazards such as rivers, dams, creeks, lakes, irrigation channels, wells etc.
- all wading pools/water troughs etc. will be immediately emptied after every use: storage will prevent the collection of water e.g., upright/inverted. The grounds will also be checked after rain or watering and water that has collected in holes or containers will be emptied/removed.
- wading/water troughs are hygienically cleaned, disinfected, and chlorinated appropriately:

- on a daily basis remove leaves and debris, hose away surface dirt and scrub inside with disinfectant
- wash away disinfectant before filling trough.

SERVICE CLOSURE

- educator/s are to check the entire premises to ensure that all children and families have departed by checking sign in and out sheets
- educator/s must sign the sign in and out sheets confirming all children are signed out
- educator/s are to follow service-closing procedures each night (see: *Opening/Closing Checklist*)
- 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 educator/s must take every step to get in contact with the parent to ensure the child has safely left the OSHC 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. If this occurs, the nominated supervisor is to be notified before leaving the OSHC Service.
- details of absences during the day must also be recorded.

OSHC SERVICES LOCATED ON SCHOOL PREMISES

Approved providers and nominated supervisors must ensure school grounds meet all National Regulations and Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010, licensing, Building Code of Australia, Dept of Planning and Environment, local Council and Regulatory Authorities for an OSHC Service and continuously remain compliant at all times with all regulatory authorities.

Approved providers and nominated supervisors must meet all requirements of an OSHC Service and ensure the Service maintains access to sufficient storage, equipment, food and hygiene facilities. These requirements are maintained through strong and healthy communication with representatives from the school and the school office administration. A license agreement between the OSHC Service and school representative will be developed prior to education and care being provided at the OSHC Service which sets clear expectations and formalises the working relationship.

The approved provider and nominated supervisor will ensure:

- communication between the Service and School must be regular and maintained for all managerial requirements

- an emergency contact of a representative from the school is available for the responsible person at the OSHC Service
- teachers share information about children's requirements for the day
- the school office/teacher issue an absence list at the start of each session and advise if anyone will be leaving early or arriving late due to school commitments
- all regulatory documents and posters are in the correct position and have not been removed by the school, and any notice boards are positioned in correct place on arrival and packed away on departure
- supervision plans displayed in building and grounds are displayed and not removed
- a maintenance book is completed for any building and ground repairs, hazard and risk rating included and to be kept and shared with school periodically or immediately if risk rating is high
- all equipment used on the premises is maintained and in good repair, a maintenance of equipment record is kept with risk rating
- all resources used are owned by the OSHC Service
- items borrowed for special occasions with school permission are inspected prior and after use and any maintenance recorded. A risk assessment may be required to be made before use for some items, such as a microphone or BBQ
- schools planning any activity restricting use of normal areas to be used by the Service, such as the school hall, need to be given with two weeks prior notice. A suitable alternative arrangement needs to be made that meet all regulations for an OSHC Service
- walkie talkies are issued and working for communication between school grounds and building when the session is split into different areas to always maintain appropriate supervision
- outdoor play environments are planned and educators are positioned to ensure effective supervision is maintained whilst children are transitioning between indoor/outdoor learning environments and accessing toilets
- an identifying uniform is worn by educators so children can quickly identify educators within the school environment in an emergency
- internet access must be established with the school either by using the school internet service or a separate internet provider established
- areas of OSHC Service and outside grounds are found and left in a safe, clean, tidy and hygienic state
- use of school bins and rubbish collection is to be discussed and prearranged with the school
- all equipment to be stored away correctly at the end of each session to ensure no safety hazard left for school

- furniture and equipment to be transported between storage and the education environment will be fitted with castors.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

The *Physical Environment Policy* will be reviewed on an annual basis in conjunction with children, families, educators, staff and management.

CHILDCARE CENTRE DESKTOP - RELATED RESOURCES

Bathroom Safety Audit	Outdoor Environment and Playground Safety Audit
Daily Playground Surface Temperature Check	Outdoor Cleaning/Safety Checklist
Equipment and Maintenance Record	Physical Environment Audit
Equipment and Resource Audit	Record of Service Modifications
Hazardous Substances Register	Visitor sign in/sign out record
Opening/Closing Checklist	

SOURCES

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2023). [Guide to the National Quality Framework](#).

Cancer Council NSW: <https://www.cancercouncil.com.au>

Cancer Council Australia. Be SunSmart. <https://www.cancer.org.au/cancer-information/causes-and-prevention/sun-safety/be-sunsmart>

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2023).

[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (Amended 2023).

KidSafe Australia: <https://kidsafe.com.au>

National Health and Medical Research Council. (2013). Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services.

NSW Government Kids and Traffic Early Childhood Road Safety Education Program

Red Nose Australia. Safe environment <https://rednose.org.au/section/safe-environment>

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

Swimming Pools Act 1992 (NSW)

Work Health and Safety Act 2011

[Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	SARAH DUFFY	DIRECTOR	JUNE 24
POLICY REVIEWED	JUNE 24	NEXT REVIEW DATE	JUNE 25
VERSION NUMBER	V8.02.24		

<p>MODIFICATIONS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • annual policy maintenance • additional information added for OSHC Services that are set up on school premises • minor edits within policy as indicated • hyperlinks checked and repaired as required 	
<p>POLICY REVIEWED</p>	<p>PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS</p>	<p>NEXT REVIEW DATE</p>
<p>FEBRUARY 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • annual policy maintenance • minor formatting edits within text • hyperlinks checked and repaired as required • Continuous Improvement/Reflection section added • Childcare Centre Desktop Related resources section added • link to Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations added in 'Sources' 	<p>FEBRUARY 2024</p>