



## 3.02 Safe Physical Environment Policy

### POLICY STATEMENT

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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.

### AIM

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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.

### STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

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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, **daily when completing the opening and closing checklists**.
- The service will actively seek the input of parents/guardians regarding resources 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 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, 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 UV (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
- Ensuring 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.
- 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.
- Discussing with children the safety characteristics of using resources and equipment.
- Where appropriate involving the children in setting classroom guidelines.
- Providing families with the latest safety information
- Implementing a maintenance log and register of resources and equipment
- Ensuring all equipment, including resources, equipment, car seats, booster seats etc. meets relevant Australian Standards and educators are trained in correct maintenance and assembly.

#### Laundering of 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 in the Artemis Bathroom and not placed in the child's bag. A note will be added to the QK Sign in Kiosk for families to collect.

#### The Sleep/Rest Environment

- Cots and beds should be positioned to encourage a calm and relaxing environment. They should also be separated by a minimum of 300mm to reduce the possibility of cross infection.
- Cots and beds should be regularly checked that all bolts and fittings are secure and safe.

- Beds should be located in an area that is easy to access for all educators and other staff
- Beds should be stored in a dry area.
- Educators must ensure to use correct manual handling techniques when moving the beds in a safe manner.
- Beds should not be placed on high shelves or in unstable or difficult to reach stacks.

#### 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 administration in a maintenance plan/log for the service as required. This will then be implemented throughout the year in accordance with priority, hazard removal, safety precautions and any relevant policies.
- The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for completing a building safety checklist of the service and its grounds bi-annually and ensure any work deemed necessary is done to Australian standards.
- The Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor will also ensure that the service and its grounds comply with Local Government and BCA regulations in regard to fire ventilation, natural and artificial lighting and safety glass.

#### Grouping of Children

- Our service groups the children in accordance to their age and/or developmental stage. Within that space, there are a variety of different learning areas and opportunities for play experiences.
- Each age group has varying adult to child ratios, which are adhered to at all times in both the indoor and outdoor environment.
- Our indoor and outdoor environment provides opportunities for intentional teaching and spontaneous play throughout the day.

#### Safety Checks

A daily inspection of the premises will be undertaken before children begin to arrive (Opening Checklist). This inspection will include the:

- Service perimeters, Fences/Fence Line
- Gates
- Paths
- 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.

Non-fixed play equipment in the service grounds can be no more than 1.5-meter-high and must be supervised at all times by an Educator.

The service will have regular pest inspections carried out by an accredited pest control company quarterly. Documentation of these inspections will be kept and any findings from the pest control check will be carried out in line with the recommendation of the pest control company.

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.

#### Checklist: Outdoor

- **Building maintenance** – regularly maintain and check for hazards, check building is in a safe, clean and hygienic condition. Records of any damages and subsequent repairs are kept.
- **Doors** – have finger jam protectors.
- **Dust mites, pet allergens** – regular dusting and vacuuming.
- **Fences** – fence off securely and effectively all sides of outdoor play areas from roads, water hazards, and driveways. Maintain fences have correct height. Install childproof self-locking devices on gates.
- **Garbage** – safe and prompt disposal. Use lidded secure bins that prevent child access and maintain in a clean and safe condition. Encourage recycling.
- **Garden** and renovation debris removed. Regularly trim branches and bushes (weekly)
- **Heating, cooling, ventilation, lighting** – comfortable, safe, maintained, guarded and are kept out of reach of children.
- **Non-slip** floors, stairs, steps, grounds and nonporous indoor floors for easy cleaning.
- **Safety glass** is installed according to the Australian Standards on all glass doors and windows accessible to children, and safety decals on both sliding doors and plate glass doors at child and adult eye level.
- **Under Service access** (including buildings on stilts and footings) – lock or block access.
- **Window fly screens** securely fitted, maintained and permanent.
- **Hazards and driveways.** Maintain fences, have correct height, install childproof self- locking devices on gates.
- **Bikes and wheeled toys** – checked regularly to ensure no loose parts
- **Service car park** – ensure family members are aware of pedestrian safety rules such as holding their child’s hand and alighting children from the safety door. Encourage families to always supervise their children in the car park to prevent accidents and injuries, which could occur as a result of reversing vehicles.
- **Finger entrapment** – all holes or openings in playground equipment must be between 8-25 mm.
- **Machinery, tools and equipment** – ensure all engine operated or other hazardous equipment, tools or machinery are stored securely and are inaccessible to children.
- **Pet and animal droppings** cleared and inaccessible to children in outdoor areas, supervise pet interactions with children.
- **Safe play rules and adequate safe play areas** - talk with children about how to play safely. Maintain safe layouts for outdoor play areas to avoid collisions between children.
- **Sandpits** - cover when not in use, regularly clean, rake daily, and remove sand soiled by faeces or blood. Rake through pool salt weekly.
- **Soft fall** - appropriate ground cover under outdoor climbing and play equipment, meets standards and tanbark and sand topped up annually.
- **Sun protection** clothing, hats, and sunscreen, for un-shaded areas - minimise play at peak sun exposure times. Install a sunshade over sandpits and play areas.
- **Ensure children are visible and supervised at all times.** High-risk areas and climbing and other outdoor play equipment. Make hazardous equipment, machinery, chemicals, and any other materials inaccessible to children.
- **Water hazards** - cover and make inaccessible to children, e.g. ponds, dams, spas, creeks, nappy buckets.

- **Water troughs** are to be used under adult supervision only and will not be used without a stand, keeping it off the ground. Children are to remain standing on the ground whilst using the water trough
- **Play equipment** that is higher than 50cm has soft fall installed underneath at least 25cm in depth under and 1.5m from the perimeter of the equipment. Place outdoor play equipment away from paths and solid garden edging.
- **Surfacing** used underneath and around equipment complies with Australian and New Zealand Standards AS/NZS 4422, 1996, and is maintained regularly; materials may need to be raked, redistributed and checked weekly for spiders, sharp objects or animal litter.

#### Checklist: Indoors

- **Access for children and adults with disability** - ensure safe access into, within and out of the Service, security, toilet and washing facilities, and check for hazards for wheelchairs and people with impaired sight, hearing or mobility.
- **Barriers** - age appropriate, child proof, self-locking barriers to balconies, stairways, kitchen, bathroom, laundry, garage, other levels in the service, front and back garden.
- **Children at risk** – maintain extra security and supervision for children at special risk.
- **Choking hazards** e.g. small toy parts, beads, nuts, blind and curtain cords, plastic bags and balloons.
- **Emergency evacuations – develop** an evacuation plan and emergency contact numbers display, inform families, and practice evacuation procedures.
- **Fire** – fire blanket, extinguisher, fire exits, smoke detectors, electrical safety switch.
- **First aid** kit with approved contents is maintained and accessible. Ensure First Aid certificates are current for relevant educators.
- **Furniture and nursery equipment** - stable, maintained and meets safety standards.
- **Guard and make inaccessible to Children:** heaters, coolers, fireplaces, stoves, microwaves, power points, and office equipment. Ensure heaters are away from children’s cots.
- **Hazardous indoor and outdoor plants** identify, remove or make inaccessible to children.
- **Heaters** – ensure that children cannot come in contact with hot surfaces. It is preferable to use heating where combustion products are ducted outside. If gas heating is used ensure there is adequate ventilation while the heater is operating.
- **Hot water** - ensure the hot water supply is regulated so as to keep it below the temperature at which a child can be scalded (the current KidSafe NSW Inc. recommendation is below 43.5°C).
- **Machinery, tools and equipment** – ensure all engine operated or other hazardous equipment, tool or machinery are stored securely and are inaccessible to children.
- **Noise** – reduce excessive exposure.
- **Non-slip, non-porous** floors, stairs.
- **Pets and animals** – inform families of pets being kept on premises and plans to obtain new pets. Ensure pets are vaccinated, wormed, don’t have fleas, clean, and healthy. Keep pet accessories such as pet food, litter boxes, pet toys away from children. Supervise children-pet interactions at all times.
- **Record details** and notify parents of any child accident.
- **Safe play rules and adequate play spaces:** discourage running indoors and safe furniture layout to avoid collisions.
- **Safety glass used and installed** according to Australian Standards, and Australian Building Codes on all glass doors and windows accessible to children, **safety decals** on sliding doors and plate glass doors at child and adult eye level.
- **Security** – ensure all entry doors are locked at all times and place bells on doors.
- **Smoke free environment** in all areas.
- **Educator’s personal items** – ensure educator’s personal items such as bags, sharp instruments, toiletries and medicines are kept secure and are inaccessible to children.
- **Store in locked cabinet** any unsafe items, e.g. chemicals, medicines, razors, knives and electrical equipment.

- **Supervision and visibility of children** – ensure children are visible and supervised at all times. High-risk areas are children in high chairs, playpens and play areas, on change tables, and in nappy change and toilet areas. Have at least two educators on premises at all times with vision of each other and the children, have two educators present or in view when changing nappies or washing children.
- **Toys** – meet safety standards, age appropriate, maintained, and non-toxic.

#### 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.
- Professional cleaners are employed to clean the service each evening.
- 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 twice a day and when required
- Signage is to be used after mopping warning 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 (annually).
- 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 (monthly).
- 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

Our Service will work in collaboration with the Cancer Council SunSmart Program to ensure children's health and safety is maintained at all times whilst at the service. We will use the SunSmart App throughout the day to check UV levels to ensure we are protecting children and staff from UV radiation. For more information see 2.16 UV Sun Safety Policy.

#### Service Closure

- Two Educators must close the service each night and complete the closing checklist
- Both Educators are to check the entire premises to ensure that all children and families have departed and check the QK sign in and out kiosk 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

## EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS

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### 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
- 77 - Health, hygiene and safe food practices
- 80 - Weekly menu
- 86 - Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness
- 99 - Children leaving the education and care service premises
- 103 - Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair
- 105 - Furniture, materials and equipment
- 106 - Laundry and hygiene facilities
- 107 - Space requirements—indoor
- 108 - Space requirements—outdoor space
- 109 - Toilet and hygiene facilities
- 112 - Nappy change facilities
- 115 - Premises designed to facilitate supervision
- 168 - Education and care service must have policies and procedures

## SOURCE LIST

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This section contains websites, industry bodies, or Legislation that have been used to assist in sourcing the information for this policy. It also acts as a guide to sourcing further reading on each relevant policy.

- [Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority](#)
- [Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011](#)
- [Guide to the National Quality Standard](#)
- [Revised National Quality Standard](#)
- [Early Years Learning Framework](#)
- [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#)
- [Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011](#)

## RELATED POLICIES

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- 1.01 Educational Curriculum Policy
- 2.14 Rest Time Policy
- 2.15 Supervision Policy
- 2.16 Sun Safety Policy
- 2.17 Water Safety Policy
- 2.19 Work Health Safety Policy

**POLICY REVIEW**

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The review schedule has been developed using a risk assessment methodology with consideration given to sector, industry, and legislative changes.

Date reviewed	Policy changed		Modifications	Next Review Date
May 2018	Yes	No	Minor adjustments made with the addition to more information about the UV Rating and linking to (UV) Sun Safety Policy	June 2019