

<b>POLICY/PROCEDURE NAME &amp; REVIEW PROCESS</b>	<b>PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT POLICY</b> This policy and procedure has been created to provide all stakeholders with clear guidelines and transparency to our practices and procedures. We welcome feedback and input from all stakeholders at any time and this policy is subject to review based on feedback or due date of annual review.
<b>NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD</b>	<b>QUALITY AREA 3 PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT</b> <b>3.1 DESIGN</b> 3.1.1 Fit for purpose. 3.1.2 Upkeep. <b>3.2 USE</b> 3.2.1 Inclusive environment. 3.2.2 Resources. 3.2.3 Environmentally responsible.
<b>NATIONAL LAW AND REGULATIONS</b>	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 170-Policies and procedures to be followed 171-Policies and procedures to be kept available 172- Notification of change to policies or procedures
<b>RELATED POLICIES and RECORDS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bathroom cleaning record</li> <li>▪ Close record</li> <li>▪ Maintenance record</li> <li>▪ Open record</li> <li>▪ Risk assessments</li> </ul>
<b>SCOPE OF POLICY</b>	This policy applies to all children, educators, families, management, students, volunteers, and visitors at our service.
<b>AIM OF POLICY</b>	To ensure that our service has strong guidelines, procedures, and practices in place regarding the physical environment of the service. The aim is to provide an engaging educational environment that also provides safety for all children who attend the service. Our aim is to provide a clear policy, implement the policy, support practices relating to the policy, train staff regarding the policy and maintain and update the compliance of the policy for all our stakeholders.
<b>SERVICE IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<b>Implementation</b> We understand that the design and flow of the indoor-outdoor spaces is vital in supporting children’s learning, safety, levels of engagement and access to positive experiences and inclusive relationships. Nominated supervisor and staff will ensure there is a balance between indoor and outdoor activities. Indoor environments will be arranged to provide a balance of fine motor skills, investigative and sensory experiences, through a wide variety of resources and equipment. Educators will instil in the children a sense of respect for property and equipment through role modelling and teaching children how to care for resources. Rooms will be arranged to allow for a flow of movement between activities, whilst allowing access to both quiet and active environments. Outdoor environments will promote and engage children in understanding and respecting the natural environment. A good environment will allow for the following:

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- A sense of belonging.
- Emotional security.
- Space.
- Safe risk-taking opportunities.
- Challenges.
- Stimulating resources and materials that are inclusive.
- Experiences based on children’s interests and abilities.
- Displays that are meaningful to the children.

Each member of the team plays an important role in the implementation of each policies guidelines, and they are outlined as below but not limited to the following:

**The Approved Provider**

- Will ensure that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met.
- Will ensure they take reasonable steps to ensure that the nominated supervisor, educators, staff, and volunteers follow the policy and procedures.
- Will ensure they provide the nominated supervisor, educators, staff and volunteers the documentation to perform their role, follow policy, procedure, and document according to regulatory and service requirements.
- Will ensure that adequate induction process is provided to all staff to ensure they have time to read and understand policies and procedures and seek further information if unsure.
- Will ensure that the nominated supervisor and staff are equipped with ongoing professional development and training they require to comply with this policy.
- Will encourage feedback from stakeholders regarding the policy’s effectiveness, particularly in relation to identifying and responding to child safety concerns.
- Will ensure the policy is kept up to date with current legislation, research, and best practice.

**The Nominated Supervisor**

- Will ensure that plants are selected to minimise risk to children and allow for children to engage with nature and that no poisonous or dangerous plants will be placed in the indoor or outdoor environment.
- Will ensure resource orders for the service will be chosen in collaboration with educators. Consideration will be given to natural materials and fibres when purchasing the equipment and resources.
- Will ensure the environments provide access and participation for every child.
- Will complete risk assessments for all indoor and outdoor play areas and will be regularly reviewed and revised by the nominated supervisor and in conjunction with the educators.
- Will ensure maintenance is completed for the service at least fortnightly.
- Will adhere to and implement the obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations.
- Will ensure they take reasonable steps to ensure that the educators, staff, and volunteers follow the policy and procedures.
- Will ensure they provide the educators, staff and volunteers the documentation to perform their role, follow policy and procedure and ensure they are checking the documentation according to regulatory and service requirements.
- Will ensure that a rigorous recruitment process is completed, and a thorough induction process is provided to all staff to ensure they have time to read and understand policies and procedures and seek further information if unsure.
- Will ensure that the staff are supported with ongoing professional development and training they require to comply with this policy.
- Will encourage feedback from stakeholders and staff regarding the policy’s effectiveness, particularly in relation to identifying and responding to child safety concerns.
- Will ensure the policy is kept up to date with current legislation, research, and best practice.
- Will conduct regular staff meetings to address policy compliance with legislation, policy implementation, changes to policy and or collect feedback for annual review of policy.

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### Educators

- Will be vigilant when organising spaces, in assessing any risks to children, e.g., probability of swallowing small items, observing sharp protrusion points, arranging appropriate space needed for the activity.
- Will replace and remove broken, damaged, or dangerous materials and resources immediately.
- Will alert the nominated supervisor of any areas throughout the premises that may pose a risk to children or are broken and require fixing. These will be placed on the service **maintenance record** for repair or removal.
- Will value and ensure that the outdoor and indoor learning environments support children’s learning, creativity, social engagement, and sense of belonging.
- Will provide areas that will support children to take increasing responsibility for their health, hygiene, and personal care- e.g., hygiene stations, self-help areas.
- Will be encouraged to open windows and use fresh air rather than putting on air conditioners.
- Will ensure that outdoor environments are neither too hot nor too cold when taking children into the play space.
- Will ensure that children are dressed appropriately when engaging in outdoor and indoor play.
- Will ensure areas within the indoor and outdoor spaces reflect and consider cultural diversity, social and physical inclusion, children’s different cultures, interests, abilities and learning styles.
- Will ensure environments are set up in order to minimise the risk of injury, minimise disruption between activities, minimise conflict between children and reduce prolonged exposure to excess internal and external noise.
- Will extend on the indoor program and plan outdoor learning experiences that complement the indoor activities and learning experiences.
- Will ensure indoor and outdoor environments are enriched with natural resources and opportunities to connect with nature.
- Will offer children the opportunity to be active, messy, and noisy and play on a large scale.
- Will provide natural and flexible play materials such as sand, leaves, and water for children.
- Will ensure they encourage children and families to collect and bring recycled equipment and natural resources into the environment.
- Will encourage children to care for plants by growing plants from seeds and visiting and caring for these plants on a daily basis as part of their curriculum.
- Will encourage children and families to take an active role in respecting the resources. Staff will model respect and appreciation for resources and equipment.
- Will ensure play spaces promote a sense of calm and are clean and well organised and are warm and inviting which in turn will encourage children to play and feel a sense of belonging.
- Will avoid constantly changing the physical environment too much so that our environments are predictable and consistent. This helps to develop a sense of security and ownership for our children.
- Will complete **open record and close record** as part of each daily process to ensure that the indoor and outdoor spaces are safe and set up for the day.
- Will ensure toy cleaning is a part of the process of the educators’ practices. Mouthed toys will be washed daily and where possible placed in sunlight to dry.
- Will ensure daily cleaning of bathrooms and play spaces will be conducted by educators and will be recorded on **bathroom cleaning record**.
- Will be vigilant in supervising all areas accessed by children in the indoor and outdoor areas to ensure the safety of our children.
- Will adhere to and implement the obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations.
- Will ensure they take reasonable steps to follow the service policy and procedures and seek advice or further support if unsure.
- Will ensure they complete and document any related records regarding the implementation of this policy and practice requirements of the service.
- Will attend any ongoing professional development, staff meetings and training they require to comply with this policy and practice requirements of the service.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will provide feedback to the nominated supervisor or approved provider regarding the policy's effectiveness, particularly in relation to identifying and responding to child safety concerns.</li> <li>Will provide feedback regarding policy review when required.</li> </ul>
<b>REGULATION IMPLEMENTATION</b>	The following procedures outline and support all stakeholders to understand and implement the regulatory guidelines of this policy.
<b>In regard to Regulation 103 - Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair and Regulation 105 Furniture, materials and equipment.</b>	<p><b>Approved Provider will</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that maintenance is carried out on a regular basis and nominated supervisor and staff are completing the <b>maintenance record</b> and nominated supervisor is ensuring that <b>maintenance record</b> is being completed.</li> <li>Ensure any maintenance that is recognised to be of a compliant issue must be reported to the approved provider immediately and rectified as soon as possible. Approved provider will instruct nominated supervisor as to how to keep area safe until fixed.</li> <li>Ensure any broken equipment that cannot be fixed is removed and replaced.</li> <li>Ensure regular cleaning is occurring in the service and supply support documentation to record this process.</li> <li>Ensure all educators are responsible for alerting nominated supervisor to the maintenance of equipment and resources.</li> <li>Ensure nominated supervisor conducts walk throughs of the service to check that building, equipment and resources are compliant and check and collate documentation records.</li> <li>Ensure that furniture materials and equipment are in good repair and there is an adequate amount of each to support staff and children.</li> <li>Ensure change tables and mats are supplied and are maintained in good condition and are replaced if they become ripped or broken.</li> <li>Ensure there is a process in place to check that staff are cleaning and maintaining the equipment to a high standard.</li> <li>Ensure staff are supplied with documentation to record any damage that needs to be fixed or removed in the form of a <b>maintenance record</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>In regard to Regulation 104 - Fencing and security</b>	<p><b>Approved Provider will</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that any outdoor space used by children at the education and care service premises is enclosed by a fence that will not allow children preschool age or under to be able to go through it, over it or under it.</li> <li>Ensure the existing fence must not be altered to the point that children can gain access over it or under it, therefore no equipment, ladders, boxes, garden beds must be placed against any external fences.</li> <li>Ensure nominated supervisor monitors this by walking through outdoor areas at regular times throughout the day and alerting staff or children to any unsafe practices.</li> <li>Ensure staff monitor children's play by actively supervising and redirecting children from placing equipment near to the fence.</li> <li>Ensure <b>open records</b> and <b>close records</b> will be completed to ensure that this practice is checked for and amended if required.</li> <li>Ensure any compromise to fences will be reported immediately to the nominated supervisor for emergency repairs.</li> <li>Ensure if a fence or gate is broken and could potentially allow children access out of the service then all play must be moved to indoors or another area until fence or gate is fixed.</li> </ul>
<b>In regard to regulation 106 -Laundry and Hygiene facilities.</b>	<p><b>Approved Provider will</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure all staff have access to laundry facilities at the service.</li> <li>Ensure these areas are kept clean, tidy and are not a risk to health and safety.</li> <li>Ensure they are not accessible to children all laundry doors must be locked.</li> <li>Ensure all staff in younger rooms have access to a soiled clothing bin. This will have a lid that closes fully, all soiled clothing placed in a plastic bag in the bin with child's name on bag, be out of reach of children and the nominated supervisor should implement a process for families to be made aware of soiled clothing- tags on personal bags/ email alert / notice at sign in etc.</li> </ul>
<b>In regard to regulation 107 - Space requirements – indoor and Regulation</b>	<p><b>Approved Provider will</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the indoor and outdoor areas have enough unencumbered space for children to play as per below.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>108 - Space requirements – outdoor space</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>OUTDOOR SPACE-</b> The service premises must have at least seven (7) square metres of unencumbered outdoor space for each child being educated and cared for at the service. Areas such as pathways, thoroughfares, car parks and storage sheds or any other space that is not suitable for children cannot be counted as outdoor space. (Guide to the NQF)</li> <li>▪ <b>INDOOR SPACE-</b> The service premises must have at least 3.25 square metres of unencumbered indoor space for each child being educated and cared for at the service. Areas such as passageways, bathrooms and nappy change areas, bottle preparation areas, space set aside for the use or storage of cots, staff or administrative rooms, storage areas and any space not suitable for children are not counted as unencumbered play space. The area of a kitchen is not counted as unencumbered space unless it is primarily used by children as part of an educational program. Verandas can be included in the outdoor space ONLY with written approval of Regulatory authority. (Guide to the NQF)</li> <li>▪ Therefore, nominated supervisor and staff must not construct or remove space from these areas at any time unless the Approved Provider has been made aware.</li> <li>▪ If any of these areas are compromised or will be compromised due to renovation, damage after a storm, damage occurring due to age etc, then the nominated supervisor must inform approved provider immediately and the area must be sealed off from access to children if it poses a risk to their safety.</li> <li>▪ If any building or construction work will impede on these areas and limit indoor and outdoor space to children, then a waiver must be sought if works are to be completed on weekdays.</li> </ul>
<p><b>In regard to Regulation 109 - Toilet and hygiene facilities.</b></p>	<p><b>Approved Provider will</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure that there are adequate, developmentally, and age-appropriate toilet, washing and hand drying facilities for use by children being educated and cared for by the service.</li> <li>▪ Ensure they are clean and well stocked, and staff will complete checks on the bathrooms throughout the day to ensure that children have access to supplies.</li> <li>▪ Ensure children are monitored by staff when bathrooms are in use and staff will encourage children to perform hygienic toileting practices.</li> <li>▪ Ensure in the event that there is any damage or any of the facilities break down staff must inform nominated supervisor immediately in order to seek professional services to rectify problem.</li> <li>▪ Ensure buckets of water are never left in bathrooms for children to access.</li> <li>▪ Ensure wet floor signage will be placed in bathrooms after mopping floors or any water spills.</li> <li>▪ Ensure any maintenance issues relating to the bathrooms will be reported immediately to nominated supervisor and recorded on <b><i>maintenance record</i></b>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>In regard to Regulation 110- Ventilation and natural light</b></p>	<p><b>Approved Provider will</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure that nominated supervisor and staff maintain indoor spaces as per regulation below.</li> <li>▪ Well ventilated- allow natural air in as much as possible avoid putting on air conditioners and fans if the weather is suitable to have fresh air flowing in through windows.</li> <li>▪ Have adequate natural light- keep windows uncovered and avoid lights if there is enough natural light for children to see whilst playing and eating.</li> <li>▪ Maintain temperatures at a suitable rate that ensures the safety and wellbeing of children- this means avoid putting air conditioners on exceptionally low cold temperatures in summer and extremely high hot temperatures in winter, especially in sleep rooms and cot rooms. Maintain all temperatures at 24 degrees as a starting point.</li> </ul>
<p><b>In regard to Regulation 112- Administrative space</b></p>	<p><b>Approved Provider will</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure there is adequate space provided at the service for conducting administrative functions.</li> <li>▪ There is a private space for consulting with parents of children and for conducting private conversations.</li> <li>▪ Ensure nominated supervisor keeps the administrative space clean and tidy and presented in a professional manner at all times.</li> <li>▪ Ensure documents and paperwork of a confidential manner will not be left lying around administrative space and computers must be kept inaccessible by the use of passwords.</li> </ul>
<p><b>In regard to Regulation 113- Outdoor space – natural environment</b></p>	<p><b>Approved Provider will</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure outdoor spaces allow children to explore and experience the natural environment.</li> <li>▪ Ensure the outdoor space can include gardens, sandpits and dirt patches, pebble/gravel pits, edible plants, shady trees, worm farms, compost areas, and water play areas.</li> </ul>

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<b>and Regulation – 114 Outdoor space – shade</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that they enhance the outdoor areas by providing logs, rocks, and potted plants to achieve natural environment requirements.</li> <li>Ensure that there is appropriate access for children to interact with the natural environment and natural vegetation.</li> <li>Ensure that staff are providing an adequate balance of play in the outdoors as well as introducing a balance of natural elements for children to be creative with.</li> <li>Ensure that staff keep children in shaded areas as much as possible when playing outdoors for extended time.</li> <li>Ensure shade cloths are maintained and installed if there is an inadequate amount of natural shade from trees.</li> </ul>
<b>In regard to Regulation 115 - Premises designed to facilitate supervision</b>	<p><b>Approved Provider will</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that the dignity and rights of the child is maintained at all times when staff are actively supervising, in regard to bathroom and change tables.</li> <li>Ensure thorough recruitment and induction of all staff is completed and active supervision is discussed at induction.</li> <li>Ensure educators are aware of the role and the complete understanding of active supervision and their obligation to uphold it.</li> <li>Ensure nominated supervisor checks that there are supervision plans available throughout the outdoor area in order to direct staff to provide safety to any restricted or high incident areas.</li> <li>Ensure nominated supervisor monitors and supports educators to facilitate active supervision through role modelling and guidance.</li> <li>Ensure educators are supported with ongoing training and development if identified support is required.</li> </ul>
<b>In regard to regulation 170- Policies and procedures to be followed.</b>	<p><b>Approved Provider will</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that all staff and volunteers are made aware of Regulatory policies and procedures by ensuring that this forms a part of the induction process.</li> <li>Ensure probationary reviews will be conducted once new staff are appointed at the 3- month and 6-month mark to ensure that they are following policy and procedure and to review and revise regulatory policies.</li> <li>Ensure staff meetings will be conducted on a regular basis to allow for review of policy and procedure and further training and revision of procedural practices in relation to policy and procedure.</li> <li>Ensure annual review and revision of policies and procedures will be conducted, and all educators will be given the opportunity for input.</li> </ul>
<b>In regard to Regulation 171- Policies and procedures to be kept available.</b>	<p><b>Approved Provider will</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that policies and procedures are available to all staff and the location and availability will form a part of the induction process.</li> <li>Ensure policies will be available on request for all staff members to have access when required.</li> <li>Ensure policies will be available when required for staff members to download copies and/or print out if required in order to complete assignments or to form part of their research and/ or update their knowledge.</li> <li>Ensure policies will be available for all stakeholders when requested and when updating.</li> </ul>
<b>In regard to Regulation 172- Notification of change to policies or procedures</b>	<p><b>Approved Provider will</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure staff meetings will be conducted on a regular basis to allow for review of policy and procedure, provide further training and allow for input if required in relation to policy and procedure.</li> <li>Ensure stakeholders will be invited to provide feedback for policies and procedures at any time, not just on annual review but will also be invited to add feedback at review time or after an event that may require change to policy or procedure.</li> <li>Ensure policies and procedures will be emailed or put on display in the foyer for stakeholders to have the ability to provide feedback.</li> <li>Ensure feedback will be considered from stakeholders and educators and may result in a change in policy.</li> <li>Ensure policy and procedure may be changed at any time if there has been an incident in the service that has required a change to be implemented for the safety and health of children and or educators.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure in the event of a change to a policy after feedback or a situation that occurs, we will provide 14 days' notice to all stakeholders before the change takes effect.</li> </ul>
<b>CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT</b>	<p>We are dedicated to the ongoing improvement of our practices and procedures through the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducting regular reviews and updates of this policy with all stakeholders.</li> <li>Actively seeking feedback from children, families, and staff members.</li> <li>Providing targeted skill development and training for staff when areas for improvement are identified or when gaps in policy and procedure implementation are observed.</li> </ul>
<b>KEY TERMS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Stakeholder</b> - a person or group of people who have an interest in a business, a person such as an employee or customer. They have a sense of responsibility toward it and an interest in its success.</li> </ul>
<b>WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE THE FOLLOWING SOURCES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Australian Children's Education &amp; Care Quality Authority. ACECQA</li> <li>Code of Ethics</li> <li>Education and Care Services National Regulations.</li> <li>Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010.</li> <li>Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations.</li> <li>Guide to the National Quality Framework.</li> <li>National Quality Standard.</li> <li>United Convention on the Rights of the Child</li> </ul>

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