



Bacchus Marsh
Grammar

ELC POLICY

Early Learning Centre Physical Environment (Workplace Safety, Learning and Administration) Policy

Approved by the School Principal 11 December 2024

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Physical Environment (Workplace Safety, Learning and Administration) Policy

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1 National Quality Standard

QA2	2.2.1	Supervision - At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
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QA3	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.
	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	Resources 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.

QA6	6.1.1	Engagement with the service - Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions.
	6.1.3	Families are supported - Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.

QA7	7.1.2	Management systems – Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.
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2 National Law

Section	165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
	167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards

3 National Regulations

Regs	82	Tobacco, drug, and alcohol-free environment
	99	Children leaving the education and care service premises
	100	Risk assessment must be conducted before excursion
	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
156	Relationships in groups
167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
168(2)(a)(iii)	Education and care services must have policies and procedures on water safety, including during any water-based activity
249	Declared approved services (other than declared approved family day care services)
251	Declared out of scope services
337	Centre-based services indoor space requirements
338	Preschool indoor and outdoor space requirements
339	Over preschool age—indoor space requirements

4 Early Years Learning Framework

LO2	Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation
	Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment

LO4	Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination, and reflexivity
	Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, enquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching, and investigating
	Children transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another
	Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies, and natural and processed materials

5 Aim

To provide a physical environment that is safe, appealing, constructive, well-maintained, and welcoming to all individuals who use it.

6 Intersection with Other Policies

Animal and Pet Policy
Chemical Spills
Excursion Policy
Governance Policy
Health, Hygiene and Safe Food Policy
Incident, Injury, Trauma, and Illness Policy
Relationships with Children Policy
Sandpit Policy
Staffing Arrangements Policy
Tobacco, Drug and Alcohol Policy

7 Implementation

- 7.1.1 The Nominated Supervisor will provide a stimulating environment that continually engages children and fosters their learning and development while ensuring their safety and that of educators, families, and visitors.

7.2 Resources and Equipment

7.2.1 The Nominated Supervisor will:

- provide appropriately sized furniture and equipment in the indoor and outdoor settings for the age ranges at the service.
- provide sufficient furniture, resources, materials, learning materials and equipment for the number of children and ensure they are developmentally appropriate.
- check that all equipment, meets Australian Standards, is used in line with manufacturer's warnings and instructions e.g., suitability for outdoor use (if this is unclear, they will ask manufacturer's/installers to provide this information) and educators are trained in correct maintenance and assembly.
- ensure non-fixed play equipment in the grounds is less than one-meter-high and that educators can adequately supervise children at all times.
- place any outdoor climbing equipment, swings or slides on impact absorbing surfaces (soft fall materials) select resources and equipment that reflect the cultural diversity of our families, local community, and nation, including the culture and diversity of Australia's Indigenous community.

7.3 Button Batteries

7.3.1 Button batteries can cause extremely serious or fatal internal burns if swallowed. These will only be present at the service where absolutely necessary i.e., required in devices like TV remote controls, digital thermometers or medical devices. The Nominated Supervisor will ensure all staff:

- keep button batteries or devices containing these up high out of children's reach,
- keep any personal items that may contain button batteries (e.g., car keys) away from children,
- ensure compartments containing button batteries are secured tightly with a screw or other suitable lock,
- immediately and safely discard any device where the battery compartment looks like it may easily break open (e.g., if dropped) in a location children cannot access,
- immediately apply sticky tape to both sides of flat batteries before safely discarding them (as this avoids 'pole to pole' contact and makes them less attractive to children),
- are familiar with the signs that a child may have swallowed a button battery and immediately call an ambulance i.e., choking, drooling, chest pain (grunting), coughing, noisy breathing, vomiting or food refusal, bleeding from the gut (black or red vomit or feces), nose bleeds, fever, abdominal pain, spitting blood or blood-stained saliva.

7.3.2 Educators will:

- provide a list of equipment or resources which need maintenance to the Nominated Supervisor when required. The list will prioritise maintenance requirements,
- introduce children to new resources and equipment, and teach them how to use and care for them appropriately,
- store equipment that should only be used under supervision in a secure place,
- regularly check equipment and resources to ensure it is clean and safe,
- ensure they comply with cleaning schedules for resources and equipment.

7.4 Facilities

7.4.1 The Nominated Supervisor will:

- provide adequate, sufficient, and accessible facilities for handwashing, toileting, eating and sleeping. Toileting and hand-washing facilities will be accessible from our indoor and outdoor environments,
- provide access to clean drinking water in our indoor and outdoor environments,
- provide adequate, sufficient, and hygienic facilities for nappy changing which are inaccessible to children if they are not directly supervised, and providing at least 1 properly constructed nappy changing bench for children under 3 years of age or specific needs,
- providing secure and hygienic laundry facilities,

- ensure that the premises and grounds comply with building regulations (Local, State and Federal Government) and the Building Code of Australia in relation to fire, ventilation, lighting, and safety glass,
- provide appropriate and hygienic areas for food preparation,
- complete a Building Safety Checklist of the premises and grounds and ensure any work necessary meets Australian standards conducted by the OH & S officer and School's Property Manager,
- implement management plans to ensure the safety of educators, children, families, and visitors if the service undertakes major renovations,
- ensure there are at least 3.25 square metres of unencumbered indoor space for each child at the service (does not include passageways, bathrooms, food preparation areas, staff or administrative rooms, storage areas, kitchens unless primarily used by children as part of the program and any space not suitable for children),
- ensure there are at least 7 square metres of unencumbered outdoor space for each child at the service (does not include areas like thoroughfares, car parks and storage sheds). Indoor and outdoor space requirements do not apply to children being educated and cared for in:
 - an emergency for no more than two consecutive days the Service operates, or
 - exceptional circumstances where all the children are siblings in the same family, or the child is in need of protection under a child protection order.

7.5 Environment

7.5.1 The Nominated Supervisor will:

- include natural elements like plants, trees, gardens, rock, mud, and water,
- provide adequate shading,
- adequately fence the environment,
- incorporate natural and artificial lighting, appropriate ventilation, heating, cooling, and fresh air,
- include elements that challenge children and encourage appropriate risk taking for the child's developmental level,
- incorporate specific requirements for additional needs children as seamlessly as possible,
- incorporate sustainable practices which develop environmental responsibility,
- ensure elements in the environment encourage children to explore, solve problems, create, construct, and engage in critical thinking.

7.6 Layout

7.6.1 The Nominated Supervisor will:

- organise the environment so children, educators and visitors can move around without disrupting children's activities,
- create spaces which encourage collaborative learning through group interactions and one-on-one interactions,
- create areas where children can engage in quiet, restful, or independent activities,
- establish the environment so children can be adequately supervised at all times,
- provide space for administrative functions, consultation with children's parents and private conversations.
- additions/changes to outdoor environment

7.7 Activities

7.7.1 The Nominated Supervisor and educators will:

- undertake regular risk assessments to ensure risk is minimised or eliminated at all times,
- provide adequate and ongoing training in risk management practices for new and existing educators, staff, and volunteers,
- engage children in a wide variety of indoor and outdoor experiences,
- discuss safety issues with children (e.g., using toys or equipment) and involving children in rule setting to minimise or eliminate safety risks,

- keep hot drinks out of children's rooms or other care areas and never place them within children's reach,
- cover unused power points with safety caps, securing all electrical cords and ensuring all double adaptors and power-boards are inaccessible to children,
- provide families with the latest child-related safety information.

7.8 Children's Groupings

7.8.1 It is important that children have opportunities to interact with other children and educators in group situations. This contributes to their learning and development and helps children to develop respectful and positive relationships. When forming groups, the Nominated Supervisor and educators will consider whether the size and composition of the group is appropriate by considering whether children:

- are settled,
- develop secure relationships with educators and positive relationships with peers.

7.8.2 The Nominated Supervisor and educators will:

- base children's rooms and groupings on their age and/or development,
- Encourage shared outdoor spaces encouraging interaction with all children and educators.

8 Safety Checks

8.1.1 To ensure the safety of all children and educators, the Nominated Supervisor will ensure the following safety checks are carried out:

- a daily inspection of the premises before children arrive (use the Indoor and Outdoor Daily Safety Checklists attached to the policy), to ensure the service is safe, secure and hygienic, and there are no dangerous objects on the premises or service grounds, for example sharps or poisonous flora and fauna, including a check of:
 - perimeters
 - fences
 - gates
 - paths
 - buildings
 - all rooms accessible to children
 - fixed equipment

8.1.2 Educators will wear gloves and use tongs to pick up any sharp objects (e.g., syringes) and place them in the 'sharp object box'. This box will be disposed of in line with local council recommendations. Any maintenance required will be immediately reported to the Nominated Supervisor who will make the appropriate arrangements to have repairs carried out.

- regular inspections of trees in the service grounds for overhanging, dead or dangerous looking branches as well as for any infestations or nests.
- regular pest inspections by an accredited pest control company. Any recommendations made by the company will be implemented if they will not compromise the health and safety of children and adults.

8.1.3 The Nominated Supervisor will keep records of pest inspections and findings, and records to verify completion of safety checks.

9 Cleaning of Buildings, Premises, Furniture and Equipment

9.1.1 To ensure that cleaning is carried out regularly and thoroughly and the environment, resources and equipment are hygienic, professional cleaners are employed to clean nightly and the Nominated Supervisor will ensure educators and other staff:

- implement structured cleaning schedules (attached to the policy) to ensure that all cleaning is carried out regularly and thoroughly so that the service environment, resources, and equipment are hygienic as required,
- use the least dangerous cleaning substance possible,
- use paper towels to eliminate cross-contamination of different areas,
- use disposable gloves,
- wash and dry hands after cleaning before returning to the children,
- clean and dry-cleaning equipment between uses so germs can't multiply on the equipment,
- store cleaning equipment securely,
- wash dress-up and play clothes in hot water and detergent as required and before storage,
- clean the service throughout the day as the need arises,
- clean up accidents and spills as quickly as possible.

9.2 Use of Detergents

- 9.2.1 Ordinary detergents will be used to help remove dirt from surfaces. Proper cleaning with detergent and warm water, followed by rinsing then drying and airing time kills most germs as they are unable to multiply in a clean environment.

9.3 Use of Disinfectants

- 9.3.1 Disinfectants are usually unnecessary as very few germs can survive exposure to fresh air and natural light. In an outbreak situation, public health units may specify the use of a particular disinfectant.
- 9.3.2 Essentially, there is no ideal disinfectant. Disinfectants cannot kill germs if the surface is not clean. For disinfectants to work effectively, there still needs to be thorough cleaning using a detergent beforehand. However, it is more important to make sure surfaces have been cleaned with detergent and warm water than to use a disinfectant. To kill germs, any disinfectant needs:
- to be of the right concentrate,
 - a clean surface to be able to get to the germ,
 - enough time to kill the germs - at least 10 minutes.
- 9.3.3 Even when all these conditions are met a disinfectant will not kill all the germs present.

9.4 Clothing

- 9.4.1 Educators will:
- wash their clothing daily,
 - wear protective garments (e.g., aprons) to cover clothing that cannot be washed frequently.

9.5 Toys

- 9.5.1 To avoid the spread of disease, educators will:
- wash toys as required,
 - immediately remove a toy that has been sneezed on, mouthed, soiled, or discarded after play by a child who has been unwell, so it can be washed at the end of the day,
 - wash toys in warm water and detergent (many can be washed in a dishwasher but not at the same time as dishes) and rinse in clean water,
 - take care cleaning toys that cannot be immersed in water e.g., wooden toys, toys with paper and cardboard and books, and wipe with a damp cloth and detergent.

9.6 Play Dough

- 9.6.1 To reduce the risk of spreading infections, educators will:
- Store play dough in an airtight container,
 - Make a new batch of play dough at the beginning of the week and dispose of at the end of the week for the 3-4-year-old and 4-5-year-old room,
 - Discard play dough at the end of each day if there is an outbreak of infectious diseases.

10 Hazardous Substances

10.1.1 When purchasing dangerous chemicals, substances, medicines or equipment, the Nominated Supervisor will:

- select and use the least hazardous substance or equipment,
- only select substances which have child resistant lids or caps,
- ensure dangerous substances/chemicals are supplied with a Safety Data Sheet (SDS) formerly called a Material Safety Data Sheet,
- ensure educators adhere to the manufacturer's instructions for use, storage, and first aid recorded on the SDS,
- keep a register of all hazardous chemicals, substances and equipment used at the Service. Information recorded will include where they are stored, their use, any risks, and first aid instructions and the current SDS.

10.1.2 When using dangerous chemicals, substances, medicines or equipment, educators will:

- ensure the child resistant lids or caps are properly closed after use,
- adhere at all times to manufacturer's advice and instructions (e.g., follow advice for products which need to be stored in a refrigerated environment),
- wear appropriate personal protective clothing recommended on the manufacturer's instructions.

10.1.3 When storing dangerous chemicals, substances, medicines or equipment, educators will:

- store all dangerous substances in their original containers,
- keep all labels and/or use by dates intact at all times,
- dispose of (without using) any dangerous substance not stored in the original container, or with destroyed labels and/or unknown use by dates. Disposal will be safe and in line with local council guidelines. Containers will not be reused under any circumstances,
- wear appropriate personal protective clothing recommended on the manufacturer's instructions.

10.2 First Aid

10.2.1 The Approved Provider will:

- seek medical advice immediately if poisoning or potentially hazardous ingestion, inhalation, skin, or eye exposure has occurred by calling the Poisons Information Line on 131126 or Ambulance service on 000,
- immediately ring the emergency services on 000 if there is any major emergency involving a hazardous chemical or equipment, a gas, fire, or explosion hazard,
- implement the first aid procedures in the Incident, Injury, Trauma, and Illness Policy, and if required the emergency procedures in the Emergency Management and Evacuation Policy, if a child or any other person is injured by a chemical, substance, or equipment.

10.3 Other requirements

10.3.1 The Approved Provider will:

- notify the appropriate Workplace Health and Safety Authority if there is any major emergency involving a hazardous chemical or equipment, a gas, fire or explosion hazard or a child or any other person is seriously injured by a chemical, substance, or equipment (refer Work Health and Safety Policy,
- regularly implement the Poison Safety Checklist attached to this policy to ensure we protect the health and safety of all children and adults at the service.

11 Kitchens

11.1.1 The Nominated Supervisor will ensure:

- children cannot gain access to any harmful substance, equipment, or facility,
- a door, half-gate or other barrier prevents unsupervised entry by children into the kitchen.

12 Laundry

- 12.1.1 The laundry area includes a washing machine with hot & cold-water supply for the laundering of soiled linen.
- 12.1.2 Items returned to a child's home for laundering, will be stored securely and will not be placed in a child's bag in contact with personal items. Educators will give the laundering bag to the families with the soiled clothes.

13 Sun Protection

- 13.1.1 The Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators, and staff understand that correct sun protection practices reduce a child's risk of skin cancer and eye damage and ensure they obtain enough vitamin D from the sun to allow for healthy bone development and maintenance. They will implement all sun protection measures numbered 1-10 to fully comply with Cancer Council's National SunSmart Early Childhood Program.
- 13.1.2 Sun protection times are a forecast for the time-of-day UV levels will reach 3 or above. At these levels, sun protection is recommended for all skin types.
- 13.1.3 Note overheated surfaces (e.g., metal, concrete, stone, sand, rubber, plastic, soft fall mats and synthetic grass) can cause serious burns to young children when daily temperatures are high. The Nominated Supervisor will ensure educators regularly conduct temperature checks of outdoor facilities and equipment when temperatures are high to assess the risk of burns to children. Note if educators cannot comfortably leave their hand on a surface for five seconds, children may suffer burns before they can react to the temperature. Educators will plan indoor activities if there is a significant risk to children of burns from overheated surfaces i.e., surface temperatures are very high and/or children wearing shoes still risk burns if they sit, kneel, or lie down on surfaces.
- 13.1.4 Outdoor play is an important part of children's healthy learning, development, and wellbeing. To ensure children's health and safety during outdoor play, the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators, and staff will:
 - use a combination of sun protection measures listed below whenever UV levels reach 3 and above. This will usually be from mid-August to the end of April. UV levels are highest in the middle of the day between 10 am and 2pm (11am and 3pm daylight savings). Active outdoor play is encouraged throughout the day all year, provided appropriate sun protection measures are used, when necessary,
 - access local sun protection times (when UV levels will reach 3 or above) and UV levels via the SunSmart widget which has been downloaded on the service website, the free SunSmart app, myUV.com.au or from the Bureau of Meteorology website www.bom.gov.au/uv.

13.2 Sun Protection Measures

1. Scheduling Outdoor Activities

Educators and staff will use UV levels and sun protection times when planning outdoor activities including excursions.

2. Shade

The service will provide and maintain adequate shade for outdoor play. Shade options can include a combination of portable, natural, and built shade.

The Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor will conduct regular shade assessments to monitor existing shade structures and assist in planning for additional shade. Portable shade structures will be moved throughout the day where appropriate to take advantage of shade patterns.

Outdoor activities will be planned in shaded areas. Play activities will be set up in the shade and moved throughout the day to take advantage of shade patterns. Children will be directed to use available areas of shade when outside.

3. Hats

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

- legionnaire hat,
- bucket hat with a deep crown and brim size of at least 5cm (adults 6cm),
- broad brimmed hat with a brim size of at least 6cm (adults 7.5cm).

Children without a sun safe hat will be asked to play in an area protected from the sun (e.g., under shade, veranda or indoors) or can be provided with a spare hat.

Please note: Baseball caps or visors are not sun safe because they do not provide enough sun protection.

4. Clothing

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

- loose fitting shirts with elbow length sleeves, and dresses with sleeves and collars or covered neckline,
- knee-length or longer style skirts, shorts, and trousers,
- clothing that is made from cool, densely woven fabric.

Children who are not wearing sun-safe clothing will be provided with spare sun-safe clothing or will be asked to play in an area protected from the sun.

Note: children who are playing outside on days where surface temperatures are high must wear shoes to minimise the risk of burns.

Note: Midriff, crop, or singlet tops are not sun safe because do not provide enough sun protection.

Families will be encouraged to supply sunglasses that meet the Australian Standard 1067 (Sunglasses: Category 2, 3 or 4) for children to wear outdoors when UV levels are 3 or above. These sunglasses are close fitting, wrap-around sunglasses that cover as much of the eye area as possible.

5. Sunscreen

All educators, staff and children will apply SPF50 or higher broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before going outdoors and reapply every 2 hours (or more often if sweating, washed or wiped off.) Educators will assist children to apply sunscreen correctly if required. Sunscreen will be stored in a cool, dry place and the use-by-date monitored. Authorisation to apply sunscreen will be obtained from parents. Children may not be able to play outside if we are not authorised to apply sunscreen.

6. Role Modelling

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

- wearing a sun protective hats, clothing, and sunglasses outside,
- applying SPF50+ or higher broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen,
- using and promoting shade,
- discussing sun protection with children,
- demonstrating a positive and proactive approach to the management of sun protection in the service.

7. Education and Information

Educators will regularly include learning about sun safety in the curriculum and review the resources available at Generation SunSmart www.generationsunsmart.com.au and SunSmart www.sunsmart.com.au. Educators will provide children with opportunities to take leadership roles in managing sun protection. For example, children will be assigned duties regarding UV/sun protection time checks, hat reminders and management of sunscreen.

Positive messages about sun safety and sun protection measures will be included in communications with families e.g., through newsletters and our service website. Families will be encouraged to role model positive sun safe behaviour and use SunSmart measures when at the Service.

8. Policy Availability

The Sun Protection policy, updates, and requirements (including a hat, clothing, and sunscreen) will be made available to educators and staff, families, and visitors.

9. Review

The Policy will be monitored and reviewed every three years in accordance with regulatory recommendations. The Nominated Supervisor will apply to join Cancer Council’s National SunSmart Early Childhood Program and will participate in a SunSmart policy and program review every three years to maintain the SunSmart standards. See www.sunsmart.com.au

Roles	Responsibilities
Approved provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met take reasonable steps to ensure that the nominated supervisor, educators and staff follow the sun protection policy and procedures ensure adequate shading over areas for both active and passive outdoor play ensure access to an adequate supply of sunscreen for children, educators and staff ensure staff dress code/uniform includes sun protective clothing and hats ensure that copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible and available to nominated supervisors, coordinators, educators, staff, volunteers and families ensure families are aware of and agree to support the service’s sun protection policy and procedures
Nominated supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> implement the sun protection policy and procedures as outlined in the document monitor the daily sun protection times for your location communicate these to educators, staff and children support the implementation of sun protection measures during the sun protection times promote sun safe practices with all children, families, educators and staff within the service
Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> implement the sun protection policy and procedures as documented monitor the daily sun protection times for your location and manage sun safe outdoor play and learning accordingly

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • monitor, and where practical, adjust outdoor learning and play experiences to minimise direct and indirect UV exposure • utilise and role-model sun safe practices • communicate with families about SunSmart practices in general and specific expectations within the service (e.g., wearing protective clothing, sun protective hat styles).
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be aware of, support and follow the service’s sun protection policy and procedures • ensure children are dressed in appropriate sun protective clothing

14 Extreme Heat

14.1.1 Extreme heat is usually defined as a period of abnormally and uncomfortably hot weather that could adversely affect people’s health. The Department of Human Service and Health issues heat health alerts for each weather forecast district to subscribers. (Subscribe at <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/environmental-health/climate-weather-and-public-health/heatwaves-and-extreme-heat/heat-health-alert-status>) This is based on calculated heat health temperature thresholds for each region.

14.1.2 Young children are especially vulnerable to extreme heat. To protect the health of our children and educators/staff during periods of extreme heat educators will:

- Regularly offer children water to drink,
- Regularly ask children if they would like to cool their faces by splashing water on their faces in the bathroom sink,
- Ensure children are dressed in cool clothing e.g., short sleeves,
- Keep children indoors in a cool, comfortable environment with air conditioning or fans,
- Organise water play activities inside,
- Use awnings or blinds to block the sun, particularly on sides of the service facing the sun,
- Cancel or postpone excursions and outdoor activities,
- Check the storage instructions for medications and take appropriate action e.g., move medication to fridge or request new medication supply if extreme temperature likely to damage medication,
- Listen for bushfire messages if in a bushfire risk area,
- Review information/messages on the Better Health Channel app/VicEmergency app,
- Ensure children, including siblings of children at the service, are never left in parked cars,
- Make available to families the Victorian Government brochure ‘How to Cope and Stay Safe in Extreme Heat’.

14.1.3 When the period of extreme heat has subsided educators will:

- Open the windows if there is a cool breeze,
- Allow children outside, following our sun safety procedures.

14.1.4 If there is a complete loss of power during a heatwave, educators will implement service procedures for emergency power (see Emergency Management and Evacuation Policy). Families will be contacted to collect children if educators believe children’s health is at risk from the heat.

15 Water Safety

15.1.1 The Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor and educators understand the risks that water-based activities pose and will undertake measures to protect the health and safety of all children involved in water-based activities.

15.1.2 A water hazard is anything that can hold enough water to cover a child’s nose and mouth and includes:

- sinks, basins, fish tanks, fishbowls, baths,
- swimming pools, portable pools, spas,

- water courses, ponds, sandpits, clam shells,
- water troughs, containers and buckets used for play, animal drinking containers,
- pooling water.

15.1.3 Educators will:

- complete a risk assessment before allowing children to engage in water-based activities at the service or on excursion and ensure all risks are minimised or eliminated where possible,

15.1.4 To ensure a safe environment and prevent accidents and illnesses related to water-based activities at the service educators 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, any overhanging trees,
- empty all portable water hazards (e.g., buckets and water troughs) at the end of each day and store in a way that prevents water collecting in them (e.g., upright/inverted).

15.1.5 Ensure all troughs in which children play are hygienically cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the instructions on the container. For trough educators will:

- remove leaves and debris daily,
- spray inside with disinfectant and rinse it away before refilling.

16 Severe Storms and Lightening

16.1.1 The effects of severe storms and lightning can be catastrophic. Severe thunderstorms, for example, can produce large hail, damaging wind, lightning, and heavy rainfall, which can cause death, injury, and damage to property. Sometimes lightning may occur when there isn't a thunderstorm. Lightning may be seen, for example, during an intense bushfire or heavy snowstorm. It's important to remember that blue skies and lack of rain do not reduce lightning risk. People do not need to be hit directly by lightning to suffer injury.

16.1.2 Electrical current can move along the ground or jump sideways from other objects.

16.1.3 The Nominated Supervisor will include severe storms and lightning activity in their risk assessment of potential emergencies, and all employees will take the steps identified to minimise the risks children and adults are exposed to during these events.

16.1.4 The Nominated Supervisor and educators will monitor storm activity using radar on the Bureau of Meteorology website www.bom.gov.au or app/ VicEmergency app/Melbourne Pollen app or if this is not available listen to the local radio station for storm warnings and updates.

16.1.5 When a severe storm threatens the service the Nominated Supervisor and educators will:

- ensure all children stay inside the service until the storm passes, sheltering in the strongest part of the premises if necessary,
- secure or store any loose objects in the outdoor environment that could blow around in strong winds,
- shelter and secure any animals,
- secure all external doors and windows e.g., tape/board up windows and glass entrances,
- use sandbags if required,
- disconnect all electrical items, aerials, and computer modems - cover and/or move away from windows,
- park service vehicles under shelter or cover with firmly tied tarpaulins/blankets.

16.1.6 While sheltering inside during a severe storm, the Nominated Supervisor and educators will ensure they and all children stay well clear of windows, doors and any skylights, close curtains/blinds and avoid using a fixed telephone unless it is absolutely necessary due to lightning danger. The Nominated Supervisor will continue to monitor storm activity and call emergency services if required.

16.1.7 It is unlikely children would be on an excursion or at Land Beyond the Fence (Bush Kinder) site if severe weather or lightning is threatening as the Nominated Supervisor and educators would be monitoring weather conditions beforehand. However, if educators are caught outdoors with children

as a severe storm approaches, they will immediately seek shelter in the strongest most enclosed structure available if they are unable to return to the service before the storm reaches them.

- 16.1.8 After a severe storm passes, the Nominated Supervisor and educators will inspect the outdoor environment for fallen power lines, broken furniture, and equipment etc. to ensure it is safe before letting children outside to play.

16.2 Lightning

- 16.2.1 Lightning can strike more than 10 kms from the edge of a thunderstorm which is the minimum safe distance from a storm. If there is lightning activity, the Nominated Supervisor and educators will use what's known as the Flash to Bang rule. This involves counting the seconds between the flash of lightning and the bang of thunder as the storm approaches. Sound travels around 1 km every 3 seconds, so a count of 30 seconds means the storm is around 10 kms away. If the count nears 30, the Nominated Supervisor will ensure educators cancel all outdoor activities and move children inside or to a safe shelter if this is not possible. If the count is less than 30 educators will take immediate and urgent action to move children inside/to a safe shelter.
- 16.2.2 Educators will also use the Flash to Bang rule if there is an unexpected lightning storm while children are on an excursion or at Land Beyond the Fence (Bush Kinder) site. In this case educators will seek shelter with the children in safe areas if they do not have time to return to the service. These include substantial, enclosed buildings, and enclosed vehicles if people do not touch any metal parts. Where these shelters are not available educators and children will shelter in hollows or on low ground, including clumps of low bushes and trees the same height e.g., forest, ensuring they are not the tallest objects in the area. Educators will remove any metal objects on their or the children's heads or bodies.
- 16.2.3 Educators will avoid sheltering with children in or near insubstantial structures like picnic sheds and shade shelters, metal structures like fences, gates, poles, high/open ground, water and isolated or tall trees. They will not use umbrellas as this is unsafe when there is lightning. Educators will immediately move to a new location with children if their hair stands on end or they hear 'buzzing' from nearby rocks, fences etc.
- 16.2.4 The Nominated Supervisor and educators will keep children inside or in a safe shelter for at least 30 minutes after the last thunderclap or lightning strike to ensure the storm is a safe distance away. They will continue to monitor the Bureau of Meteorology radar and observe outside conditions before letting children outside.

17 Visitors

- 17.1.1 To ensure we can meet Work Health and Safety requirements and ensure the safety of our children, individuals visiting our service must sign in when they arrive at the service and sign out when they leave.

18 Inspection and Testing of Electrical Equipment

- 18.1.1 Services must ensure that electrical equipment is regularly inspected and tested by a competent person if the electrical equipment is supplied with electricity through an electrical socket and used in conditions where it could be damaged, including exposure to moisture, heat, vibration, mechanical damage, corrosive chemicals, or dust. A record of the testing, which may be a tag attached to the equipment tested, must be kept until the equipment is next tested or disposed of and must specify:
- the name of the tester
 - the date and outcome of the testing
 - the date on which the next testing must be carried out.

19 Fire Equipment

- 19.1.1 All fire equipment at our service will comply with relevant laws and regulations, council requirements and the Building Code, and be maintained in line with the Australian Standard AS 1851-2012 (see Attachment D).

20 Back Care and Manual Handling

- 20.1.1 Manual handling means any activity requiring the use of force exerted by the person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry, or otherwise move, hold, or restrain any person or object.
- 20.1.2 Manual handling injuries can be the result of incorrect manual handling techniques, overuse, or from accidents. Injuries include back strains, and sprains in other parts of the body such as the neck, arm, shoulder, and knee, bruising and lacerations.
- 20.1.3 Employers and managers have a legal duty to provide safe workplaces and implement safe workplace practices.

20.2 Principles of Preventing Manual Handling Injuries

1. Eliminate or reduce the amount of manual handling.
2. Reduce the amount of bending, forward reaching, and twisting, in all tasks.
3. Reduce worker fatigue.
4. Keep all equipment in good working order.
5. Keep the workplace environment safe.

20.2.1 The Nominated Supervisor will:

- provide annual training in manual handling and back care,
- display written, current information regarding manual handling in the staff room,
- ensure equipment and facilities are designed and maintained to reduce manual handling injuries,
- ensure work practices are consistent with safe manual handling guidelines,
- ensure educators and staff follow our safe manual handling procedures,
- identify, assess, and control all risks associated with manual handling,
- clearly mark any equipment which requires more than one person to lift or move it.
- To help prevent manual handling injuries educators and staff will:
 - kneel rather than bend down e.g., to help a child put their shoes on,
 - sit rather than bend e.g., to comfort a child,
 - sit in an appropriately sized chair (or on the floor) so their upper legs are horizontal to hips and feet flat on the floor,
 - sit in an appropriately sized chair and table to complete writing tasks (e.g., programming),
 - lift safely and avoid twisting, especially with awkward loads,
 - help larger children to climb up steps/ladder provided to change table,
 - use a step ladder to reach above shoulder level,
 - avoid extended reaching forward e.g., leaning into low equipment boxes,
 - share the load if the equipment is heavy, long, or awkward,
 - ask for help and organise a team lift when sliding, pulling, or pushing equipment that is not easy to move e.g., trestles or gym mats,
 - rearrange surroundings to meet the needs of both children and adults where possible,
 - use equipment and furniture that can be moved around as safely and easily as possible,
 - store seldom-used objects up high between the shoulder-to-raised arm height,
 - avoid storing objects between a person's knuckles and the floor,
 - use mechanical aids like ladders and trolleys where possible to avoid lifting and stretching,
- Reduce accidents by implementing good housekeeping practices including ensuring:
 - the floors and other walking surfaces are uncluttered, even, and non-slippery,
 - the environment is tidy,
 - there is adequate space to work,
 - equipment is maintained regularly,
 - lighting is adequate.

20.3 How to Lift Safely

1. Place your feet in astride position.
2. Keep your breastbone as elevated as possible.
3. Bend your knees.

4. Brace your stomach muscles.
5. Hold the object close to your centre of gravity i.e., around your navel.
6. Move your feet not your spine.
7. Prepare to move in a forward-facing direction.
8. Ask for help when it is not possible to lift on your own.

20.4 Avoid Twisting when Lifting

20.4.1 To avoid injuries resulting from twisting educators and staff will:

- move equipment when children are not around,
- rearrange storage so that it is easier and safer to replace and remove items,
- lift only within the limits of their strength,
- use beds and equipment that are easy to move,
- ensure they can see where they are going when carrying equipment or children.

20.5 Assessing the Correct Storage and Shelving Height

20.5.1 Correct storage and shelving height is important to prevent slips, falls and strains. When standing with feet together and hands by sides:

- the best height range for handling loads is around waist level,
- the acceptable height for lifting is any point between a person's knuckle and shoulder.

21 Sources

ACECQA Policy and Procedure Guidelines

Australian Standard 1926.1 Swimming Pool Safety

Australian Standards 1851-2005 "Maintenance of Fire Protection Systems and Equipment"

Building Code of Australia

Building Code of Australia (pools built from 1 July 1993)

Bureau of Meteorology 'Preparation and safety during thunderstorms' Australian Government

www.bom.gov.au

Cancer Council SA

Cancer Council SA and the National SunSmart Early Childhood Program

Cancer Council SA SunSmart early childhood policy guidelines (including sample policy)

Dangerous Substances (National Code of Practice for the Labelling of Workplace Substances) Code of Practice Approval 2006

Development Act 1993 (pools built from 1 July 1993)

Early Years Learning Framework

Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations

Education Standards Board SA 'Heat and bushfires: What to do?'

Get Ready Guide Qld Govt

Heat health plan for Victoria

Kidsafensw: Playground surfacing

Lightning Safety Recommendations NSW Sport and Recreation Outdoor Activities (based on

Recommendations for lightning protection in sport, Makdissi and Brukner, Medical Journal of Australia 2002)

National Quality Standard

NQF e-bulletin QLD 12.11.19

QLD Health: "Button batteries – why they're dangerous and what you can do to keep your kids safe"

Royal Life Saving Society Home Pool Safety Checklist

Royal Life Saving Society Wading Pools Checklist

SA Policy and Procedure Guidelines

Staying Healthy –Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services 2012

Swimming Pools (Safety) Act 1972 (pools built before 1 July 1993)

Vic Govt Better Health: How to cope and stay safe in extreme heat

Work Health and Safety Act 2012

Work Health and Safety Regulation 2012

Work Safe Victoria: Children's services – occupational health and safety compliance kit

22 Review

The policy will be reviewed annually by:

- Employees
- Families
- Interested Parties
- Management

23 Authorisation

ELC Document Name	Physical Environment (Workplace Safety, Learning and Administration) Policy	
Name of Reviewer: Approved Provider	Principal Andrew Neal	Signature:
Name of Reviewer: Nominated Supervisor	Kerry Osborn	Signature:
Date Revised	December 2024	

24 History

Date	Amendment
August 2024	1. Environment, Layouts, Activities and Groups reviewed – no change, new formatting version 2.5
December 2024	2. Minor alterations 13.2 Sun Protection Measures and 14 Extreme Heat

Attachment A

Environmental Checklists

The following can be used as a guideline to produce Checklists for the service's individual needs.

Checklist: Outdoor

- **Building maintenance** – regularly maintain and check for hazards, check building is in a safe, clean, and hygienic condition. Keep records of any damages and subsequent repairs.
- **Doors** – have finger jam protectors.
- **Dust mites, pet allergens** – regular dusting and vacuuming.
- **Fence** - outdoor play areas securely on all sides from roads, water hazards, and driveways. Maintain fences at correct height. Install childproof self-locking devices on gates.
- **Garbage** – safely and promptly disposed of. 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.
- **Garages and sheds** - kept locked.
- **Heating, cooling, ventilation, lighting** – comfortable, safe, maintained, guarded, and are kept out of reach of children.
- **Hygienic**, regularly cleaned and maintained conditions protect against vermin, bacteria, mildew, lead, asbestos, and other dust allergens.
- **Non-slip** floors, stairs, steps, grounds, and nonporous indoor floors for easy cleaning.
- **Pesticides** - dangerous chemicals should not be used to remove vermin.
- **Renovations** – reduce dangers e.g., lead, asbestos, holes, and excavations.
- **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.
- **Security** - minimise unauthorised access with appropriate fencing and locks.
- **Spills** – clean away as they occur.
- **Under Service access** (including buildings on stilts and footings) – lock or block access.
- **Window fly screens** securely fitted, maintained and permanent.

Checklist – Indoor

- **Access for children and adults with a 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 of children at special risk.
- **Choking hazards** - e.g., small toy parts, beads, nuts, blind and curtain cords, plastic bags, sandwich bags and balloons are removed.

- **Decorations and children's artwork** – aren't near ceiling fans, air conditioners or heaters. Avoid use of tacks, pins, and staples.
- **Emergency evacuation** –evacuation plan and emergency contact numbers displayed, families informed, and evacuation procedures rehearsed.
- **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.
- **Guard and make inaccessible to children:** heaters, coolers, fireplaces, stoves, microwaves, power points, and office equipment.
- **Hazardous indoor and outdoor plants** - identify, remove, or make inaccessible to children.
- **Heaters** – ensure that children cannot come in contact with hot surfaces and ensure heaters are away from children's cots. 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 to keep it below the temperature at which a child can be scalded (Any new hot water installations in early childhood services are required to ensure water delivered from the tap does not exceed 45° 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 kept on premises and plans to obtain new pets. Ensure pets are vaccinated, wormed, don't have fleas, are clean and healthy. Keep pet accessories such as pet food, litter boxes, pet toys away from children. Exclude dogs from children's play areas. Keep children-pet interactions minimal and supervise interaction times.
- **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.
- **Educators personal items** – ensure personal items such as bags, sharp instruments, toiletries and medicines are kept secure and are inaccessible to children.
- **Stairways**, ramps, corridors, hallway, external balcony are enclosed to prevent a child falling.
- **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 highchairs, 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, including when changing nappies or washing children.
- **Toys** – meet safety standards, age appropriate, maintained, and non-toxic.

Daily Maintenance - Check Daily (AM)

Week beginning: / /

Outdoor	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Comments
Animals/ insects like wasps, redbacks/funnel web spiders, snakes removed						
Environment clean and tidy. Rubbish removed.						
Equipment and resources removed if broken. No strangulation hazards.						
Equipment secured to ground/wall etc.						
Fences/Gates have no climbing or escape routes for children and childproof self-locking devices on gates.						
Floors, stairs, steps, paths are non-slip						
Garbage inaccessible to children and lidded						
Garden debris and sharp, poisonous or allergy causing plants removed						
Hazardous Storage Area/Garages and sheds locked						
Loose fill materials are deep enough						
Machinery, Tools and Equipment inaccessible to children e.g. power tools, screwdrivers						
Objects like broken glass, broken windows, syringes removed.						

Sandpit clean with no animal poo or sharp objects						
Surfaces with protruding/loose screws, nails, bolts, splintered wood, rust, flaking paint, sharp edges smoothed/repaired or children's access to them blocked.						
Water Storage Containers empty /inverted or inaccessible to children						
Window Fly Screens securely fitted						
Indoor	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Comments
Artwork and decorations away from fans/heaters and not hung with tacks, pins or staples						
Blind/curtain cords inaccessible to children						
Choking hazards like small toy parts, beads, plastic bags and balloons inaccessible						
Laundry/Cleaner's Cupboard locked						
Doors unbroken and have finger jam protectors						
Electrical cords don't present safety hazard						
Emergency evacuation diagram/procedures displayed and fire equipment accessible/operational						
Employee Belongings secure and inaccessible to children						
Equipment and resources (e.g., toys) removed if broken. Trip hazards like curling mats removed						

First aid kit in correct place						
Floors, stairs, mats. and rugs are non-slip						
Fridge temperatures checked						
Furniture and nursery equipment secure and safe e.g., no tip over hazards						
Hazardous chemicals, medicines, knives stored in locked cupboards						
Hot Drinks out of reach of children						
Hygienic and tidy environment throughout service e.g., no fall hazards						
Kitchen, Laundry, and Storage Areas inaccessible to children						
Machinery, Tools and Equipment inaccessible to children e.g., knives and scissors, microwaves, heaters, fans						
Nappy Bin inaccessible to children/Empty daily						
Power Points covered with safety plugs if not used						
Room Layouts show clear exit paths through setup of toys and children						
Toys clean and hygienic						
Initials:						

Attachment B

Poison Safety Checklist

Month/Date _____

Checklist	Yes	No	Action required
Have all chemical products been checked to determine if they need to be stored in a lockable cupboard?			
Have all chemical products been checked to determine if they require disposal (out of date or no longer required)?			
Are all chemicals labelled correctly?			
Are food and chemicals stored separately?			
Are all chemicals stored securely?			
Are Safety Data Forms available for all chemicals in the Service and placed with the chemical?			
SDS Register available?			
SDS Register Current?			
Are containers for soiled nappies securely covered and the contents inaccessible to children?			
Are low toxicity products used whenever possible?			
If any handbags contain medication, are they stored safely?			
Is the Poisons Information Centre number available at every phone? (13 11 26)			
Is there any paint flaking of the walls that may contain lead?			
Have all poisonous plants been removed from the Service's premises?			
Have families been provided with information on poison safety?			
Have chemical storage areas been labelled with chemicals stored here signs?			
Medication is stored in locked containers/cupboard?			

Educators Name: _____

Educators Signature: _____

Closing Checklist - Check Daily (PM)

Week beginning: / /

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Comments
Outdoors:						
All gates are locked						
Outdoor activities packed away						
Water Storage Containers empty /inverted or inaccessible to children						
Indoors:						
Nappy bin emptied						
Fridge temperatures checked						
Dryer/washing machine turned off (wet clothes hung on drying rack)						
All children signed out on Playground						
Doors:						
All room exit doors locked						
Front door switched to lock						
Reception door locked						
Reception filing cabinet locked						
Electronic Equipment:						
Phones on charge						
Doorbell monitors on charge						
Tablets on charge						
Office mobile on charge						
Initials:						

Attachment C

Indoor learning environment Cleaning – Daily Schedule and Procedure

- Use disinfectant after detergent if surface is contaminated or could be contaminated with potentially infectious material (e.g., urine, faeces, vomit.)
- Clean low shelves and other surfaces not often touched by children weekly or when visibly dirty.
- All indoor learning environments are professionally cleaned nightly.
- Paper towel is used to dispose of and prevent cross-contamination when cleaning surfaces.

Room _____

Week beginning: / /

Indoor Learning Environment	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
All tables and frequently used surfaces have been wiped down					
Learning Resources					
All learning Toys and objects that have been mouthed have been removed and washed appropriately.					
All resources being put away/stored are washed before storage.					

Bathroom Cleaning Schedule

Date:	10am	1pm	3pm
Wipe tap handles			
Wipe down sinks			
Wipe door handles/knobs			
Wipe toilet seats			
Sweep floors, if required			
Mop Floors, if required			
Restock supplies			
Staff initial			

Attachment D

Fire Equipment and Maintenance (Fire Equipment Services (FES) conduct these checks)

Key	
Inspection Procedure of Fire Safety Installations (F.S.I)	1. Inspect for obvious visual faults. 2. Inspect for faults and witness test of F.S.I by a competent person 3. Inspect for faults where possible and accept logbook details of F.S.I 4. Check Building file for details of any extra requirements.
Required Record of Keeping Fire Safety Installations (F.S.I)	L = logbook required R = record of maintenance required T = Metal tag on F.S.I or service details/service label (Y) = Weekly test may be omitted refer AS 1851-2005

Special Fire Service	Inspection Procedures for FSI	Required Record Keeping for FSI	Maintenance Schedule							Annual Survey of Installation	Maintenance Standard or Building Preference
Fire Mains	1					Y	Y	Y			1851-Section 2 & 4
Fire Hydrants (including internal & external hydrants, boosters connection/s and water storage tanks)	2	L-T				Y	Y		Y	Y	1851-Section 4
Fire Pump sets	2	L-T	(Y)	Y		Y	Y		Y	Y	1852 – section 3
Fire Hose Reels	2	R-T				Y	Y			Y	1851- Section 14
Fire Extinguishers (Portable)	2	R-T				Y	Y		Y	Y	1851- Section 15
Fire Blankets	2	R-T				Y					1851-Section 16