

Physical Environment (Buildings, Equipment and Maintenance) Policy

NQS

QA2	2.2.1	Supervision – At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from hard 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.
	3.2.3	Environmentally responsible – The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible.

QA6	6.2.3	Community engagement – The service builds relationships and engages with its community.
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QA7	7.1.2	Management systems – Systems are in place to manage risks and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.
	7.2.1	Continuous improvement – There is an effective self-assessment and quality improvement process in place.

National Regulations

Regs	82	Tobacco, drug and alcohol-free environment
	103	Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair
	104	Fencing
	105	Furniture, materials and equipment
	107	Space requirements – indoor space
	108	Space requirements – outdoor space
	109	Toilet and hygiene facilities
	110	Ventilation and natural light
	111	Administrative space
	113	Outdoor space – natural environment
	114	Outdoor space – shade
	115	Premises designed to facilitate supervision
	116	Assessments of family day care residences and approved family day care venues
	117	Glass

EYLF

LO1	Children feel safe, secure and supported
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LO2	Children develop a sense of connectedness to groups and communities and an understanding of their reciprocal rights and responsibilities as active and informed citizens
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	Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment
LO3	Children become strong in their physical learning and wellbeing Children are aware of and develop strategies to support their own mental and physical health and personal safety
LO4	Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies and natural and processed materials

Aim

The aim is to provide an environment that prevents injury to all those who attend the centre to the best of staff ability.

Related Documents

Safety of the Buildings, Equipment and Persons

Cleaning/Hygiene Practices for Early Childhood Educators

Health and Safety Policy and Procedures

Hygiene and Safety Policy

Policy on Toxic and Other Potentially Dangerous Products

Environmental Sustainability Policy (Our Sustainable Community)

Implementation

Child-safe environment

The aim is to provide an environment that prevents injury to all those who attend the centre to the best of the early childhood educators' ability. Educators will be encouraged to practice safe lifting procedures of equipment and children. Equipment will be set out in a way that is safe for use with either soft fall or matting. Children will be encouraged to use the equipment safely.

The outdoor playground equipment is selected according to the age group of the children. Educators check it to ensure that it is safe and in good working order. The soft fall areas within the playgrounds are regularly attended to and comply with safety regulations. Educators are conscious of fostering within the children safe playground behaviours through the appropriate use of equipment.

The centre has information about the selection, installation and maintenance of play equipment and children's furniture in the parent library.

Outdoor safety procedures

The outdoor playground equipment is selected according to the age group of the children. It is to be checked by staff to ensure that it is safe and in good working order. The soft fall areas within the playgrounds need to be regularly raked to comply with safety regulations. The layout and maintenance of all indoor and outdoor equipment and surfaces should be carefully selected to minimize the possibility of injury to children. Staff to be conscious of fostering within the children safe playground behaviours through the appropriate use of equipment. The centre has a checklist for the buildings and equipment that needs to be filled out each term. Staff will be encouraged to practise safe lifting procedures of equipment and children.

Outdoors

- All movable equipment must be stored in a safe and orderly fashion when not in use or at the end of each day. At least two staff to help set and pack up.
- The playground will be kept clean of band aids, tissues etc.
- Outdoor storage areas are to be kept tidy and always shut.
- No children to enter the storage areas.
- Check safety gates are always secured.
- Safety checks will be carried out by all staff that are setting up the outdoor or indoor area, anything that is broken or needs attention must be left in the office or the director must be notified.
- Educators must be always vigilant in supervising the children.

Safety of the building

Any broken or protruding areas of the building need to be brought to the director's attention straight away.

Sandpit management procedure

- Our sandpit is either washed beach or river sand.
- The sandpit is adequately shaded when used by children but also gets the sunshine to disinfect the sand.
- The sand is raked daily and is regularly exposed to sunshine and fresh air which are the most effective disinfectants.
- We remove with a shovel and plastic bag to dispose of any contaminated sand or dangerous/foreign matter such as sharp objects or animal or human faeces and urine which could cause illness or infection in children or educators and the area is bleached. Gloves can be worn.
- We change the sand at least annually or sooner if needed. The sand is also topped up when it runs low.
- All toys are removed from the sandpit at the end of each day, covered to prevent contamination.
- Children and adults wash their hands with soap and water after playing in the sandpit.

Water safety policy

Water Play is so much fun with so many children, especially in the warmer months. All water play will be done in a safe manner. The water play consists of buckets with brushes, water troughs, our very shallow wading pool, and hoses to cool down. We ask that parents dress their child in clothes that will allow for water play and provide extra clothes that your child can change into afterwards. Water play will occur either in the morning or afternoon. If we have water play in the morning, the children will be changed when all children and staff go indoors. However, if we have water play in the afternoon, we ask that parents/carers to change your own child into dry clothes when you arrive to collect. This is due to staff supervision of the remaining children still engaged in water play. If you do not want your child to have water play, please advise a staff member.

Maintenance and improvements

Any maintenance that needs doing to the building or equipment is brought to the director/nominated supervisor's attention. Daily staff check all equipment as they put it out. Please report any maintenance that needs doing to the director or write it in the maintenance book. Staff will remove any unsafe or broken equipment and put it in the office or in the area away from children. A non-toxic, environmentally friendly pest control will treat the centre, as often as is necessary for the control of pests.

This centre is a tobacco, drug and alcohol-free environment

Please refrain from smoking in the centre and car park. The Montessori Journey is a smoke free centre.

Which areas should I prioritise for cleaning?

Any surfaces that are frequently touched should be prioritised for cleaning and disinfection. These include tabletops, counters, door handles, light switches, desks, toilets, taps, kitchen surfaces and cupboard handles, phones, and workplace amenities. You should also prioritise cleaning and disinfecting surfaces which are visibly soiled (dirty) and which are used by multiple people (e.g., taps, phones, tablets for signing in, door handles etc).

- All cleaning products must be out of the reach of the children when staff are using them and must be always put back in the correct storage area when they are not.
- Tidy and clean as you go, floors are to be swept and mopped daily (not forgetting under shelving, using our disinfectant. All spills wiped immediately.
- Shower and toilets are to be always kept clean. Children's bathrooms must be cleaned with detergent at rest time and wiped over at the end of the day and after any soiling accidents. All toilets are to be flushed and toilet bowls scrubbed, if necessary, at the end of each day.
- Tables and chairs are cleaned with detergent.
- Mop bucket must be always away from the children.
- Rinse mop bucket, mop and cleaners sink after each use, bleach the mops weekly and dry in the sunlight.
- Leave dirty washing in the Van Gogh laundry room. Laundry door to be kept always locked.
- All spray bottles must be named clearly with its contents and stored out of the children's reach.
- Sweep outside luncheon area and mop any spills daily. Scrub outside area with detergent weekly or sooner if needed.
- Sweep under the mats in the classrooms and mop children's mat at least once a week.
- Use correct colour coded sponges for different areas.
- All glass areas need cleaning when needed.
- All doors, frames and walls need wiping over at least once a week or sooner if needed.
- Dust on top of high and low shelves not forgetting under lockers.

Clean these daily with detergent and warm water

- Rubbish must be taken out daily. Wipe bins inside, outside and lids Daily.
- Any toys, materials, construction, etc that is put in the mouth must be cleaned with detergent before another child uses it.
- Surfaces the children have frequent contact with, for example, tables and chairs are all to be wiped with detergent and warm water.
- Bathrooms - wash tap handles, sinks, toilet handles, toilet seats, toilet and behind the toilet. Check the bathroom during the day and clean when necessary.
- All floors with the disinfectant.

Clean these weekly with detergent and warm water

- Shelving and lockers are cleaned weekly or sooner if needed.
- Clean all walls of any marks, Jif can be used if needed.
- All glass, doors, windows, and sills
- Doorknobs
- Clean the fridge and microwave weekly unless needed sooner.
- Mattresses to be wiped over with a rag and soapy water.
- Mops are to with be bleached weekly and dried in the sun.

Schedules for cleaning the equipment used by the children and procedure before putting construction, books, and teaching resources away

- Any toys, materials, construction, teaching resources used in each class must be cleaned with soapy water and sun dried before going back into the storeroom cupboards. Please write a note with last room that used the equipment, when it was washed, and which staff member washed the equipment and leave it in the container. If the construction or materials are broken or misplaced, please leave it in the office.
- Books should be wiped over with a moist soapy cloth before they go back in the cupboard.

Dealing with spills of blood and other body fluids

- Keep other children away from any spills, treat all blood and body fluids as if they could possibly be infectious.
- Avoid direct contact with blood or body fluids.
- We have a vomit bucket in the laundry which has a spills kit, please restock when used.
- Wear gloves if possible
- When attending an injured child who is bleeding comfort and move the child to a safe area.
- Apply pressure to the bleeding area. Use gloves.
- When the wound is covered, and no longer bleeding remove gloves. Put them in a plastic bag and place the bag in the rubbish bin, wash your hands with soap and water.
- Clean up the area where blood or other body fluids are, with warm water and detergent. Disinfect the area with freshly diluted bleach and leave as long as possible. Please do not use bleach on the plastic grass. Detergent is enough.

Remember

Blood or body fluids may contain viruses such a hepatitis B or the HIV viruses. Therefore, it is important to disinfect the area where a spill has occurred,

Cleaning technique and bathroom cleaning procedure

Cleaning is an important part of infection control in the centre. Cleaning is a form of disinfection because it removes all surface dirt. Detergent and warm water for cleaning is recommended. Use colour coded sponges in each area. Toilets are wiped behind, around the seat and under the seat. Bleaching is done on a Friday or sooner if needed. Mopping daily with the bathroom labelled mop. Sinks cleaned with detergent with the pink sponges. Around and under each sink.

Use colour coded sponges in each area

Kitchen dishes:	Sponge with scourers (Soak in a bleach solution weekly).
Bathroom:	Pink sponges for the sinks, taps and top of the toilets. Green sponges for the germinated areas. Toilet seat and rim etc.
Tables:	Blue (Soak in a bleach solution regularly).
Cups:	Yellow (Soak in a bleach solution regularly).
Art and Craft:	Sponge with scourers (Left with the art and Craft material in the container).

Please keep the sponges separate and in the correct labelled containers.

Use of bleach

- 1 part bleach to 9 parts water.
- Use to clean spills of blood, faeces, vomit, and mucus.

- On other areas and toys when there is an outbreak of an easily transmitted disease. For example, gastroenteritis or hand, foot, and mouth disease.

Remember

- Disinfectants are a very common cause of dermatitis; it is best to wear gloves when handling chemical disinfectants.
- Clean items with detergent before using bleach or disinfectants as it won't work due to any fats on the surface.
- Dry mops and cleaning cloths well after use. Sunlight is excellent for killing germs.

The use of disinfectants should never replace good cleaning.

Types of disinfectants

(Information sourced by the book Staying healthy in Childcare 5th Edition)

- Diluted household bleach may be the desired disinfectant. Bleach kills bacteria, fungi and viruses. However, protein quickly inactivates bleach. For this reason, wash surfaces thoroughly with detergent and warm water before applying diluted bleach. Does not use bleach on metal because it is corrosive. Bleach should be diluted for use in the centre. Make a fresh dilution of bleach when needed. Dilute bleach by using 1 part bleach to 9 parts water.
- The centre uses a disinfectant called (lemongrass disinfectant) the MSDS sheet is inside the laundry cupboard door. For ½ a bucket of warm water you use ¼ cup of the above disinfectant. This product is active against many bacteria and is very useful as an all-purpose housekeeping disinfectant, but they are of little value in killing viruses or fungi. If there is problem in the centre with viral illness (such as diarrhoea or conjunctivitis) or fungal illness (such as thrush) try a different method of disinfection, for example, sunlight or diluted bleach, soap and detergent should not be used together with a disinfectant as they neutralise each other. The longer you leave the disinfectant on the more germs will be killed it stops working if the disinfectant dries on the surface.
- No disinfectant can be depended upon to kill all germs.
- A disinfectant fluid must touch a germ cell and be absorbed by it to kill it.
- It is very important to dilute disinfectants correctly before use. Disinfectants gradually deteriorated after dilution. Always use freshly diluted disinfectants.
- All disinfectants take time to work. Some bacteria die more slowly than others under the same conditions. The longer an object is immersed in a disinfectant solution, the more germs will be killed. It is not enough simply to wipe objects or surfaces with the disinfectant.

To ensure that all products used within the centre are stored and handled in a safe way. Potentially dangerous products are those which pose a risk of poisoning, allergy and / or injury to children and may include:

Inside implementation of toxic and potentially dangerous products

- Tobacco, drug, and alcohol-free environment
- Using biodegradable detergents and non-toxic cleaning products (where possible) without jeopardising the hygiene within the centre. Environmentally friendly products are encouraged.
- We only put sunscreen on the children when the SunSmart App tells us the children need it on, otherwise, we only put their hats on, limiting the amount of unnecessary chemicals going on your child.
- All paints and glues are nontoxic.
- Medication Stored in lockable box in fridge if it needs to be kept cold.
- Sharp utensils in lockable cupboards or doors with high hooks.

- Soiled clothing put in a tied bag and put in a box on a high shelf in the bathroom and parents will pick up at the end of the day.
- Certain food products including but not limited to products containing or sharing processing facilities of nuts being brought into the centre.
- All cleaning bottles and containers will be adequately labelled.
- Storage of potentially dangerous products will be inaccessible to children using child proof locked cupboards or areas with high latches to keep the children out.
- Contents of cupboards will have simple warning signs that potentially dangerous products are in storage which will also let visitors and relief staff know where these items are kept.
- Staff do a safety check each morning whilst setting up the garden and sandpit as to remove any hazardous objects in the outdoor environment.

Outside implementation of toxic and potentially dangerous products

- Planting non-poisonous plants.
- Purchasing less plastic and more natural equipment.
- Pest control will be done when children are not present and as safe as permits inside and outside.

At opportune moments staff will discuss with the children about safety issues relating to dangerous products, vermin, plants objects etc.

Our centre receives MSDS sheets (Manufacture Safety Data sheets) with all our cleaning products which are kept in the laundry cupboard in the Van Gogh room.

Strategies for achieving environment sustainability

As a community, we can create, encourage, and increase awareness of environmental responsibility and guide centre practices with families, staff, and the children. The centre tries to purchase as little plastic and tries to only use things that can be recycled in time to come. Our resources outside are all natural, e.g., Logs, rocks, bark, natural trees for shade, timber cubby houses one that was being dumped and boat, real old clothes for dress ups. Disposed of keyboards and old phones for office play. Family unwanted cooking pots, pans and kettles used in the sandpit. A donation of a large tyre from a farm which is thoroughly enjoyed by the children. A rainwater tank.

Educators will make sustainable practices a part of the daily routine by including recycling or reusing in their everyday practices at the centre. Involve parents to bring in their unwanted things.

- Rainwater tanks for our gardens and daily play, when it is used up children know to wait for the rain and that's why it is so important not to waste what's in our tank.
- Solar panels have made a big difference to our electricity bills.
- When we close for the two weeks all switches are turned off including fridges, microwaves, and any other power points.
- Dual flush toilets.
- Plant trees that do not require that much water but provide lots of shade.
- Resources that parents are throwing out that can be used for collage and other art experiences.
- Promoting awareness of "no litter lunchboxes" e.g., more containers that can be washed and sent home used so parents can buy food in bulk and less packaging is used.
- Using the heating and cooling appropriately with opening windows and doors in hot weather and keeping appropriate clothing on children in the cooler months. Staff know if they do turn on the heaters and aircons the times they need to turn them off, so they are not being overused.
- Using the Sun to dry our wet washing and articles of clothing.

- We use spray bottles not aerosol cans.
- Teaching the children not to waste water inside or outside.
- Educators will role model energy practices of turning off lights and electrical items when not in use.
- Teaching the children to empty water play containers onto the gardens and just not tip it anywhere.
- Soaking paint equipment.
- Children help sort the rubbish into the different bins e.g., food scraps for the chickens, general waster in the bin with the lid and paper in the bin with no lid.
- Children handle equipment and furniture correctly and if it gets broken, they know we try and fix it before it gets thrown out.
- The centre mainly uses recycled paper and cardboard within the centre and the office. Any used paper is appreciated within our centre.
- Show and tell animals/insects are returned into their environment.
- Encourage children to close doors behind them when the heater and aircon is on.
- The centre limits the use of plastic and uses more resources that will be biodegradable in the future.
- All our children mats are recycled mats.
- The educators will show and discuss with the children at opportune moments the centre's practices on how we reduce, re-use and recycle, teaching children and families how to become a more sustainable community.

Sources

National Quality Standard

Education and Care Services National Regulations (Queensland)

Early Years Learning Framework

Workplace Health and Safety QLD Gov.

Queensland Health Department

Safe Work Australia

Work Health and Safety Act 2011

Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by:

- Director
- Employees
- Families
- Interested Parties

Last reviewed: October 2023

Date for next review: November 2024