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CLEANING AND MAINTAINING THE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

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National Quality Standard (NQS)²⁰¹⁸

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety		
2.1	Health	Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted
2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard
2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented.

Education and Care Services National Regulations

Children (Education and Care Services) National Law

82	Tobacco, drug and alcohol -free environment
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

Introduction

Woden Early Childhood Centre (WECC) believes that children have the right to receive care and education in an environment that provides for their health and safety. Good cleaning and maintenance of the environment assists in the prevention of illness and unintentional injuries. Environmental responsibility also encompasses the cleaning and maintenance of WECC in ways that are sustainable and environmentally friendly.

Scope

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management and visitors of the service.

Goals – What are we going to do?

- follow procedures and schedules that ensure the building, premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained
- promote awareness of environmental sustainability through daily practices and information sharing
- involve children in discussions about health and safety issues and support children to develop guidelines to keep the environment safe for all
- encourage eco-friendly practices and encourage employees, children and families to use chemical free options for cleaning

Strategies – How will it be done?

The Nominated Supervisor or Director will:

- arrange for WECC to be cleaned by professional cleaners at the end of each day
- ensure that written policies and procedures regarding cleaning and maintaining child safe environments are developed
- develop systems to ensure that daily checks and risk assessments of the environment are documented, that the daily cleaning of WECC is carried out to a satisfactory standard and that where repairs, cleaning or maintenance issues are identified, they are attended to promptly
- respond to any identified risks, repairs, cleaning or maintenance issues promptly
- support educators to research and consider alternative and sustainable cleaning options and arrange for regular professional development to ensure a clean and safe environment for children

Educators will:

- ensure that cleaning duties do not compromise care and supervision of children at any time
- identify when the building, premises, furniture or equipment require cleaning or maintenance. The identified issue will be dealt with immediately. This will be done by cleaning as required or by removing the damaged furniture or equipment to be repaired or discarded as decided by the Nominated Supervisor or Director. The educator will complete required documentation and refer this to the Nominated Supervisor or Director for attention
- involve children in discussions about health and safety issues and support children to develop guidelines to keep the environment safe for all
- role model good cleaning practices for the children and encourage children to be involved in the cleaning of the environment where appropriate
- support children to have an active role in caring for their environment and to contribute to a sustainable future

- be responsible for spot cleaning WECC to ensure cleanliness and hygiene standards are maintained throughout the day
- seek to minimize the use of chemicals in the education and care environment
- research natural cleaning alternatives for use in the education and care environment. Natural or chemical-free options that are sensitive to the needs of employees and children with allergies will be utilised when possible
- consider sustainable practice when they are cleaning. They will reflect on their practices and access professional development, journals and the Internet for more idea on eco-friendly cleaning options
- use soapy water for daily cleaning of tables, nappy change surfaces, mouthed toys and general spills both indoors and outside. The soapy water can be made from pH neutral detergent diluted in water and stored in a labelled spray bottle out of reach of children
- consider the use of vinegar and water as an alternate to disinfectant for cleaning the bathrooms and nappy change mats throughout the day. the vinegar and water can be made in a labelled spray bottle with equal parts of white vinegar and water and stored out of reach of children
- consider using the following:
 - bicarbonate of soda (made into a paste) – replaces Jif and Gumption
 - lemon juice – an alternative to bleach
 - Borax – alternative to bleach, disinfectant and insect sprays
 - bees wax – alternative to furniture and floor polish
- aim to minimise waste by:
 - encouraging recyclable materials to be placed in labelled recycling containers rather than garbage bins
 - recycling food scraps at meal and snack times. Children and educators can place food scraps into containers which will then be placed in composting or worm farm containers. The kitchen will have containers for food scraps and recycling for educators to use

Evaluation

WECC is well cleaned and maintained to support children's health and safety. Children and educators work cooperatively to care for the environment in a sustainable manner. The education and care environment reflect sustainable practices, 'green cleaning' and eco-friendly choices. Educators, children, families and the wider community will learn together and embrace environmentally friendly practices.

Related Policies

- *Child Protection*
- *Emergency and evacuation*
- *First aid*
- *Hygiene and infection control*
- *Incident, injury, trauma and illness*
- *Interactions with children*
- *Providing a child safe environment*
- *Safe storage of dangerous goods*
- *Supervision*

Statutory legislation and considerations

- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011

Sources and references

- Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (2014)
- Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations
- ECA Code of Ethics
- Guide to the National Quality Standard
- Kidsafe ACT – <http://kidsafeact.com.au>
- Health and Safety in Children’s Services Model Policies and Practices – 2nd Edition. Revised (2003) – <http://ccccnsw.org.au/wp-content/uploads/CCModelPoliciesFinal.pdf>
- Staying Healthy in Child Care – Preventing Infectious Diseases in Child Care – 5th Edition

Authorisation

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President

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