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ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY POLICY

QUALITY AREA 3: PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

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National Quality Standard (NQS)

Quality Area 3: Physical Environment		
3.2	Use	The service environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning.
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	Resource' 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.

Introduction

At WECC we strive to sustain, maintain and uphold a safe, healthy and sustainable physical environment. We incorporate environmentally responsible and sustainable practices that are achievable in the centre.

WECC encourages the awareness of environmental responsible and sustainable practices and implement practices that contribute to a sustainable future. Children are supported to become environmentally responsible and show respect for the environment. We practice and promote sustainability through reducing, reusing and recycling waste, minimising consumption, and protecting and conserving wildlife and natural habitats. As we practice this, we become positive role models for the children and families of the centre. These practices will aim to provide a cleaner, healthier and more sustainable environment for educators, children and families.

Purpose

The education and care environment reflects sustainable practices, 'Green Cleaning' and eco- friendly choices. Educators, children, families and the wider community learn together and embrace environmentally

friendly practices.

We believe in educating children about being environmentally responsible which is promoted and supported through daily practices, resource and interactions. Sustainable practice is encouraged within the Centre and community, assisting children and families to become advocates for a sustainable future.

Scope

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

Implementation

Teaching and learning about being environmentally responsible starts with everyday practice. We believe being environmentally responsible should be embedded into the operations of the Centre, rather than being a tokenistic 'theme' that is investigated every now and then. Our centre is committed to protecting our environment to ensure a sustainable future for our children. This involves Educators, children and families working together to protect our environment as we educate children about the importance of being environmentally responsible within our everyday practice.

WECC will:

- Reduce waste, incorporate *Green Cleaning* ideas, and create an eco-friendly environment
- Endeavour to equip WECC with and implement water-saving strategies, green cleaning and recycling. Where applicable, grants will be applied for to aid in the implementation of these effective environmental strategies
- Define the aims of this statement through specific environment policies. These individual policies will guide practices within WECC. These policies are:
 - o *Animals in the environment*
 - o *The indoor and outdoor environment*
 - o *Cleaning and maintaining the environment*
 - o *Smoke free environment*
 - o *Safe storage of dangerous goods*
 - o *Environmental sustainability*
- Ensure educators keep up to date with the latest research on environmental education through journals, resource agencies and professional development. This information will be shared with families and children.

Management will:

- Network with the local community to keep up to date with current practices and ideas for being environmentally responsible. This may include installing water tanks, grey water system, converting toilet cisterns to dual flush, and converting to water saving taps.
- Encourage educators, families and children to engage in sustainable practices and appreciate the natural environment.
- Ensure the centre joins a preferred to liaise with other education and care services and maintain currency on practices and ideas for being environmentally responsible.
- Where relevant, review policies and procedures within the centre to achieve more sustainable outcomes
- Use electronic communication where possible to reduce paper use within the office and in each room for newsletters, billing, and other communication needs.
- Conduct environmentally responsible audits to ensure consistency and continuous improvement.
- Source resources and materials from Reverse Garbage or second-hand stores to use within the centre.
- Ensure sustainable practices are incorporated into the daily routine.

These will include:

Sustainable Practice	Ideas
Recycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recycle paper and all recyclable rubbish. • Use recycled water (e.g. for watering gardens).
Gardening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plant vegetables, herbs, and fruit trees. • Establish a worm farm. • Give food scraps to worms or centre pets, or to a staff member to take home for their pet/s. • Educate children and have them participate in 'garden to plate' activities. • Have children participate in experiences such as seed sprouting, vegetable gardens, cooking with what is grown, and educate about weeds.
Energy Conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install LED lighting where possible. • Turn off non-LED lights when not in use. • Turn off electrical appliances at the outlet when not in use. • Use natural ventilation and insulated blinds/drapes rather than air conditioning when temperatures are not extreme.
Water Conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using half flush on the toilet. • Turn off the taps and ensure leaking taps are fixed immediately. • Teach children to turn off tap. • Collect rainwater and use in the garden and for water/sand play. • Tip water play water on the garden rather than down the drain at the end of the day.
Nature and Wildlife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use natural and recycled materials – trees, blocks, boxes etc. in arts and crafts and play. • Educate children about the natural decomposition cycle through exposure and participation in worm farms and composting food scraps. • Educating children in how to care for pets, letting them actively participate in caring for the centre pets. • Plant 'bird attracting' plants and install a birdbath. • Plant 'butterfly attracting' plants. • Collaborate with wildlife educators to assist in educating children.
Communicate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display the centre's sustainability journey in the foyer area for families and visitors. • Provide families with hints and tips in newsletters about how they can become sustainable at home. • Partake in collecting recyclables for a cause such as Lids for Kids

Educators will:

- Incorporate recycling as part of everyday practice at the centre. Recycling containers will be provided throughout mealtimes and experiences.
- Role model environmentally responsible practices.
- Discuss environmentally responsible practices with the children and families as part of the curriculum.
- Provide information to families on environmentally responsible practices that are implemented at the centre and encourage the application of these practices in the home environment.
- Share ideas between Educators, children, and families about environmentally responsible ideas, implementation, and resources. This will be supported through our communication strategies, including parent meetings, emails, newsletters, and informal conversations.
- Use a worm farm/composting bin/ to reduce food waste in the Centre. Children will be encouraged to place food scraps into separate containers for use in the worm farm or composting bin. Educators will provide visual guides and discuss with the children and families which scraps worms can eat, which foods

can be composted, and which food scraps must go in the bin. The children will be involved in maintaining the worm farm and compost bin. Alternatively, waste food will be collected for an educator to take home to their pets to show the children that our practices have an effect outside the centre as well.

- Role model energy and water conservation practices: For example, turning off lights and air-conditioning when a room is not in use, emptying water play containers onto garden areas.
- Seek to purchase equipment that is environmentally friendly where possible. Educators will reduce the amount of plastic and disposable equipment they purchase and select materials that are made of natural materials.
- Use the concept of 'reduce, re-use and recycle', which will become part of everyday practice for both children and Educators to build lifelong attitudes towards environmentally responsible practices.
- Use 'green cleaning' products to replace chemicals where possible.

Related policies / documents

- *The Indoor and Outdoor Environment*
- *Curriculum Plan Statement*
- *Animal and Pet Policy*

Statutory legislation and considerations

- Nil

Sources and references

- Australian Association for Environmental Education (AAEE): www.aaee.org.au
- Department of Environment and Energy: www.environment.gov.au
- Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2011).
- Kearns, K. (2017). *The Business of Childcare* (4th Ed.).
- NSW Early Childhood Environmental Education Network (ECEEN): www.eceen.org.au
- Queensland Early Childhood Sustainability Network (QECSN): www.qecsn.org.au
- Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).
- The Point Preschool: www.thepointpreschool.com.au

Authorisation

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President
2019 WECC Management Committee