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## PROVIDING A CHILD-SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

### QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

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#### National Quality Standard (NQS)

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety		
2.1	<b>Health</b>	Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted
2.1.1	<b>Wellbeing and comfort</b>	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation
2.1.2	<b>Health practices and procedures</b>	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented
2.1.3	<b>Healthy lifestyles</b>	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child
2.2	<b>Safety</b>	Each child is protected
2.2.1	<b>Supervision</b>	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard
2.2.2	<b>Incident and emergency management</b>	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented

**Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011**

<b>Children (Education and Care Services) National Law Act 2010</b>	
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## Introduction

Woden Early Childhood Centre (WECC) recognises the importance of providing a safe environment for all children at WECC. All children have the right to experience quality education and care in an environment that safeguards and promotes their health and safety.

The physical environment can contribute to children’s wellbeing, happiness, creativity and promote the development of independence. It can contribute to and express the quality of children’s learning and experiences. The choices made in an education and care service about resources, materials, spaces, layout, air and light quality and access to a range of experiences in the indoor and outdoor environment, have a direct impact on the quality of learning opportunities available to children.

## Scope

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

## Goals – What are we aiming to do?

Our Service will ensure the environment is safe, clean and well maintained for children, families, educators and visitors. Children’s awareness of the environment and suitable practices will be supported through daily routines, resources and interactions. The physical environment will support children’s learning, safety, levels of engagement and access to positive experiences and inclusive relationships.

WECC will:

- ensure that children are adequately supervised at all times
- organise rooms and environments to minimise risks to children
- monitor and minimise hazards and safety risks in the environment
- implement WECC's *Child Protection and Accident, Illness and Injury* policies
- take every reasonable precaution to protect children from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury

## Strategies – How will it be done?

Our Service is committed to providing an environment that promotes safety and enhances children's learning and development

### *Supervision*

The Nominated Supervisor or Director will:

- ensure that sufficient numbers of educators are on duty to meet ratio and qualification requirements and to ensure adequate supervision of children at all times as per the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations
- adopt policies and procedures to protect children from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury
- engage casual educators as appropriate
- ensure educators are aware of the need for adequate supervision of children at all times. This may include the development of supervision charts for outdoor or indoor areas

Educators will:

- adequately supervise children within their room/group at all times
- inform the Nominated Supervisor or Director whenever supervision in their room is inadequate to ensure the health and safety of all children

### *Organisation of rooms and environments*

The Nominated Supervisor or Director will:

- make sufficient allowance within budgets for the maintenance and repair of equipment and resources in the indoor and outdoor environments, to ensure children's safety
- organise repairs and maintenance to equipment and environments in a timely manner
- organise rooms and grouping to enable adequate supervision of children and to minimise risks to children

Educators will:

- organise indoor and outdoor spaces to minimise risks to the health and safety of children
- inform the Nominated Supervisor or Director of repairs and maintenance needed to ensure safeguard children's health and safety

### *Risk assessment*

The Nominated Supervisor or Director will:

- conduct a risk assessment of the Service environment on an annual basis to determine any risks to children's health and safety

- analyse and evaluate the risks associated with identified hazards
- determine appropriate ways to eliminate or control identified hazards
- review risk assessments after any serious incident report is made to the ACT Department of Community Services

Educators will:

- report any risks or hazards within WECC to the Nominated Supervisor or Director as soon as possible

#### *Choosing appropriate resources and equipment*

There are a number of things to consider when choosing appropriate resources and equipment.

The Approved Provider will be responsible for any large purchases of equipment. The Nominated Supervisor or Director is responsible for the daily running of those purchases

The Approved Provider will:

- provide sufficient and accessible hand washing, toileting, eating and sleeping facilities
- Toileting and hand washing facilities will be accessible from both indoor and outdoor environments
- provide appropriate, well-constructed and hygienic facilities for nappy changing, to ensure children's safety
- ensure the environment incorporates natural and artificial lighting, appropriate ventilation, heating and cooling, and fresh air
- provide appropriate areas for food preparation
- provide a separate indoor space for children under two years of age
- provide an area for managerial purposes, consultation with children's parents and for private conversations to occur

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- provide appropriately sized furniture and equipment in both the indoor and outdoor environment for the age range represented at the Service
- encouraging educators to participate in ongoing professional development in order to ensure a safe and educational environment
- In line with WECC's *Sun Protection* policy and procedures, provide adequate shading for children
- provide an environment that ensures children are able to be appropriately supervised at all times
- ensure that all required fencing is in working condition and complies with current regulations
- provide or source families with the latest safety information on relevant equipment or resources as requested
- keep a maintenance log and register for toys and equipment
- ensure that all equipment and resources, including prams, strollers, cots etc. meet relevant Australian Standards and educators are trained in correct maintenance and assembly, if appropriate
- ensure regular pest inspections are carried out by an accredited pest control company. Documentation of these inspections will be kept and any finding from the pest control check will be carried out in line with the recommendation of the pest control company
- ensure individuals visiting the Service are signed in on arrival and out on departure

Educators will:

- compile a list of equipment that needs maintenance on a prioritised basis, twice annually, and provide it to the Nominated Supervisor or Director
- actively seek the input of parents/guardians regarding toys and equipment at the Service

- ensure resources and equipment reflect the cultural diversity of the service's community and the cultural diversity of contemporary Australia, including the incorporation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community
- ensure the environment is organised to ensure the safety of, and minimal disruption to, children. This includes:
  - ensuring climbing equipment is set up in a safe way and compliant with Australian Safety Standards (e.g. incorporating soft fall materials wherever climbing equipment is set up)
  - conducting consistent risk assessments of the indoor and outdoor environment in order to minimise risk and hazards
  - providing an environment that allows children in several dispositions to occur in the same space (e.g. quiet play areas and loud play areas)
  - consider any additional needs children may have, to ensure an inclusive environment
  - provide a natural environment for children to explore and experience, which may include plants, trees, gardens, rock, mud or water
  - provide a variety of indoor and outdoor experiences, catering for children's interests and abilities
  - support the children to access appropriate furniture, resources, materials, toys and equipment. These resources will be adequate for the number of children attending our service and will be developmentally appropriate
  - provide an environment where children can explore, solve problems, create, construct and engage in critical thinking that is developmentally appropriate
  - provide an environment that permits children to participate in activities independently or in small groups and access resources autonomously
  - provide an environment that incorporates commercial, natural, recycled, homemade and resources that can be used in a variety of ways to encourage children's learning
  - Educators will discuss with children the safety considerations of particular toys and equipment, as appropriate
  - Where appropriate, involve the children in setting classroom guidelines
  - ensure that power points not in use have safety caps, all double adaptors and power boards are out of reach of children and all electrical cords are secured and not dangling
  - ensure our indoor and outdoor environment provides opportunities for intentional teaching and spontaneous play throughout the day

#### *Laundering of soiled items*

- soiled clothing will be returned to a child's home for laundering. Educators will remove soiled content and place the clothing in a plastic bag

#### *Rearranging, adding or removing furniture*

- WECC will keep a record of any changes that are made to the physical environment of the service, such as rearranging of rooms, to show continuous improvement
- WECC will document the links between the arrangements and choice of resources and equipment and the children's learning in the program

#### *The sleeping/rest environment*

- cots and beds should be positioned to encourage a calm and relaxing environment, and be separated by a minimum of 30cm and positioned head to toe to reduce the possibility of cross infection
- cots should be regularly checked to ensure all bolts and fittings are secure and safe
- beds should be located in a dry area that is easy for all educators and other staff to access. Beds should not be placed on high shelves or in unstable or difficult to reach stacks
- educators should use correct handling techniques when moving beds, to ensure this is done in a safe manner

### *Grouping of children*

- WECC groups the children in accordance with their age and/or developmental stage. Within that space, there are a variety of different learning areas and opportunities for play experiences
- each age group has mandated adult-child ratios, which are adhered to at all times in both the indoor and outdoor environment

### *Safety checks*

A daily inspection of the premises will be undertaken before children begin to arrive, including:

- service perimeters
- fences/fence line
- gates
- paths
- buildings
- all rooms accessible by children
- fixed equipment
- sand pit

This must be done in order to identify any dangerous objects in the grounds, ranging from sharps to poisonous or dangerous plants and animals.

In the event of a sharp object being found (e.g. a syringe) educators will wear gloves and use tongs to pick up the object and place it in the 'sharp object box' which is stored in the office. This box will be disposed of as per the recommendations of our local council.

Similarly, trees in the grounds must be checked regularly for overhanging, dead or dangerous looking branches, infestations or nests.

Non-fixed play equipment in the Service grounds can be no more than one metre high and must be supervised at all times by an educator.

The Indoor and Outdoor Daily Safety Checklists will be used as the procedure to conduct the above safety checks. A record of these will be kept by the Service. The Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor will make the appropriate arrangements to have repairs carried out as soon as possible.

### *Children's bathroom*

- Supervision in the Toddler/Intro children's bathroom is required when in use
- Supervision in the Pre School children's bathroom is important when in use, to assist as necessary
- Educators and other staff should encourage children to follow appropriate hygiene practices
- Bathrooms should be cleaned at least twice a day and as required
- Bathroom floors should always be mopped
- Mopping of bathrooms occurs while children are resting to ensure that the floor has time to dry prior to use
- Educators are to ensure they follow the bathroom and toilet cleaning procedures

### *Child protection*

The Nominated Supervisor or Director, working with educators, will comply with the requirements of WECC's *Child Protection* policy to ensure the risk of harm to children is minimised.

## Service closure

Educators will:

- follow Service-closing procedures each night
- ensure a minimum of two educators must close the Service each night
- ensure those educators check the entire premises to ensure that all children and families have departed
- sign the sign in and out sheets to confirm all children are signed out
- In the event a parent has omitted to sign their child out, and the educators did not witness the child leave the service, the educators must take every step to get in contact with the parent to ensure the child has safely left the Service. If unable to contact the family, the educators are to contact other educators present on that day for confirmation that the child has been collected. The Nominated Supervisor is then to be notified before leaving the Service
- ensure absences during the day are recorded

## Evaluation

Children are healthy and safe at our service and the number of serious health and safety incidents is reduced over time. Data will be obtained from the Centre's Accident and Injury Forms

## Related policies /documents

- *Cleaning and maintaining the environment*
- *Health and Safety*
- *Incident, injury, trauma and illness*
- *Promoting positive risk in play*
- *Safe storage of dangerous goods*
- *Sleep and Rest*
- *Sun Protection*
- *Water Safety*
- *Work Health and Safety*

## Statutory legislation and considerations

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

## Sources and references

- Community Child Care Co-operative New South Wales Sample Policies

## Authorisation

John Rothwell  
President  
2017-18 WECC Management Committee