

## Physical Environment (Workplace Safety, Learning and Administration) Policy

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### NQS

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.

### National Regulations

Regs	82	Tobacco, drug and alcohol free environment
	99	Children leaving the education and care service premises
	103	Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair
	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



	249	Declared approved services (other than declared approved family day care services)
	251	Declared out of scope services

## EYLF

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

## Aim

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

## Related Policies

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

## Implementation

The Approved Provider / 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.

## Resources and Equipment

The Approved Provider / 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, toys and equipment for the number of children and ensure they are developmentally appropriate
- check that all equipment, including resources, car seats, booster seats etc meets Australian Standards and educators are trained in correct maintenance and assembly
- ensure non-fixed play equipment in the grounds is less than one and a half metres 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)
- maintain an up to date inventory/registry of equipment
- 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
- actively seek the views of parents and families about our resources and equipment
- advise educators and families about the purchase of new equipment and ensure a risk assessment is carried out
- prepare an ongoing prioritised maintenance plan for the service at the beginning of each year, and implement the plan throughout the year, and organise maintenance systems (eg checklists, logs, building and equipment records).

Educators will:

- provide a list of equipment or resources which need maintenance to the Approved Provider / Nominated Supervisor every 6 months. 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
- allow children to use a trampoline only when they are directly supervised
- regularly check equipment and resources to ensure it is clean and safe
- ensure they comply with cleaning schedules for resources and equipment

### **Facilities**

The Approved Provider / Nominated Supervisor will:

- provide adequate, sufficient and accessible facilities for hand-washing, 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
- 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 every 6 months and ensure any work necessary meets Australian standards

- 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.

### **Environment**

The Approved Provider / Nominated Supervisor will:

- include natural elements like plants, trees, gardens, rock, mud and water
- provide adequate shading
- 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 special 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

### **Layout**

The Approved Provider / 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
- keep plans about the arrangement of the rooms and outdoor spaces to show how our service creates inviting learning spaces, and document how the arrangement, resources and equipment contribute to children's learning.

- keep a record of any changes made to the physical environment eg rearrangement of rooms, additions/changes to outdoor environment

### Activities

The Approved Provider / 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 (eg using toys or equipment) and involving children in rule setting to minimise or eliminate safety risks.
- 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

### Children's Groupings

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. 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.

## Safety Checks

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
  - buildings
  - all rooms accessible to children
  - fixed equipment

Educators will wear gloves and use tongs to pick up any sharp objects (eg syringes) and place them in the 'sharp object box'.. Any maintenance required will be immediately reported to the Approved

Provider / 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.

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

## **Cleaning of Buildings, Premises, Furniture and Equipment**

To ensure that cleaning is carried out regularly and thoroughly and the environment, resources and equipment are hygienic, 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 .
- use the least dangerous cleaning substance possible
- use colour-coded sponges (eg pink for the kitchen, yellow for the bathroom) to eliminate cross-contamination of different areas
- use different rubber gloves in each room which are then hung out to dry and air
- 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
- clean the service at the end of each day and throughout the day as the need arises
- clean up accidents and spills as quickly as possible.

### **Use of Detergents**

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.

### **Use of Disinfectants**

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.

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.

Even when all of these conditions are met a disinfectant will not kill all the germs present.

### Toys

To avoid the spread of disease, the Approved Provider / Nominated Supervisor will:

- only buy washable toys
- discard non-washable toys that are for general use (non-washable toys may be used for one child only)

### Packing Toys Away

Educators will:

- pack small pieces in bags provided and replace bags which may be deteriorating
- use elastic bands to contain similar items (like railway tracks)
- complete puzzles before packing away if possible.

## Hazardous Substances

When **purchasing** dangerous chemicals, substances, medicines or equipment, the Approved Provider / 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 Data Safety 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. The register will be readily accessible.

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 (eg follow advice for products which need to be stored in a refrigerated environment)

- wear appropriate personal protective clothing recommended on the manufacturer's instructions.

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
- lock all dangerous substances and equipment, including cleaning materials, detergents, toiletries poisons, dangerous tools and equipment with sharp and razor edges, in a place or facility which is labelled, secure and inaccessible to children.
- lock particularly dangerous and hazardous materials such as pesticides, herbicides, petroleum, kerosene, solvents and equipment which is operated by an engine or hazardous to children, in a locked facility external to the main building of the service, and separate from children's play or outdoor environments. The facility must have a bonded floor, be inaccessible to children and be clearly labelled as storing dangerous substances and/or equipment
- store any dangerous substances that need to be refrigerated in a labelled, child resistant container, preferably in a separate compartment or in a part of the refrigerator inaccessible to children
- wear appropriate personal protective clothing recommended on the manufacturer's instructions.

### **First Aid**

The Approved Provider / Nominated Supervisor 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 .

### **Other requirements**

The Approved Provider / Nominated Supervisor 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.

## Kitchens

The Approved Provider / 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.

## Sun Protection

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 1-9 to fully comply with Cancer Council's National SunSmart Early Childhood Program.

The Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators and staff will:

- use a combination of sun protection measures 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). Healthy sun exposure is encouraged when UV levels are below 3
- access the daily SunSmart UV Alert from the Bureau of Meteorology website [www.bom.gov.au/uv](http://www.bom.gov.au/uv) or download Cancer Council Australia's SunSmart app to a Smartphone or widget available from the SunSmart home page to the service website to find out daily local sun protection times and UV index
- ensure protection measures are adequate for children with all skin types, including children with very fair skin

Note overheated surfaces (eg 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 and are adequately trained in this process. The Nominated Supervisor may require educators keep records of the dates, times and temperatures tested. 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 ie surface temperatures are very high and/or children wearing shoes still risk burns if they sit, kneel or lie down on surfaces.

Educators will provide children with opportunities to take leadership roles in managing sun protection. For example children will be:

- encouraged to access the internet to check the UV ratings for the day and advise educators of the times when the UV Index will be 3 or above
- assigned duties regarding UV reminders, hat reminders and management of sunscreen.

## Sun Protection Measures

### 1. Outdoor Activities

Educators and staff will ensure sun protection measures are considered when planning all outdoor activities including excursions. Active outdoor play is encouraged throughout the day all year provided sun protection measures are used when UV levels are 3 or above.

### 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. Regular shade assessments will be conducted to monitor existing shade structures and assist in planning for additional shade.

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 and dresses with sleeves and collars or covered neckline
- longer style skirts, shorts and trousers
- dark coloured clothing that is made from cool, densely woven fabric

Children who are not wearing sun safe clothing can be provided with spare clothing.

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

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

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 SPF30 or higher broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before going outdoors and reapply every 2 hours (or more often if washed or wiped off.) Educators will assist children to apply the 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 and babies 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 SPF30+ or higher broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen
- using and promoting shade

**Families and visitors are encouraged to role model positive sun safe behaviour.**

#### **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](http://www.generationsunsmart.com.au) Positive messages about sun safety and sun protection measures will be included in communications with families eg through newsletters and our service website.

#### **8. Policy Availability**

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

#### **9. Review**

The Policy will be monitored and reviewed annually..

## **Extreme Heat**

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. T

Babies and 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 with wet washers or by splashing water on their faces in the bathroom sink
- Ensure children are dressed in cool clothing eg singlets, 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 eg 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
- 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'

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

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) including the use of battery operated fans to cool children. Families will be contacted to collect children if educators believe children's health is at risk from the heat.

## Water Safety

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.

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.
- ensure no child swims in any water without:
  - written permission from parents.
  - appropriate educator/child ratios in place and adequate supervision.
- closely supervise children at all times and never leave any child unattended near water.
- ensure children with diarrhoea, upset stomachs, open sores or nasal infections do not swim or play in water.
- ensure all children wear appropriate swimmers in a pool, go to the toilet before entering the pool, and follow correct toileting hygiene practices while in the pool.
- remove all children immediately if a child passes a bowel motion in the pool, advise pool managers if at a public pool, disinfect and if practical empty a home pool or trough.

To prevent accidents and illnesses related to water based activities at the service educators will:

- fill wading pools with less than 300 mm of water.
- ensure any swimming pool at the service complies with State government or council laws governing pools and the Building Code of Australia.
- ensure pool gate opens outward, is self-closing and self-latching on the first swing and has a latch that is more than 1.5m from the ground.
- ensure pool fence is secure, at least 1.2m high, has no vertical gaps more than 100mm apart and is no more than 100mm from the ground.
- ensure any boundary fences used as part of the child-safety barrier are at least 1.8 metres high on the side that faces the pool, with a 900mm non-climbable zone at the top inside of the fence.
- ensure that no pool pump, grate or suction device is broken or has missing parts.
- ensure pool chemicals are stored securely away from the pool area.
- 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.
- display a Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation guide prominently in pool area.
- ensure pool securely fenced if over 300mm deep. All pools, including inflatable or portable wading pools that are capable of being filled with more than 300 mm of water must be fenced.
- cover all water containers like ponds, spas, nappy buckets, bathtubs or ensure they are inaccessible to children
- immediately empty all wading pools/water troughs etc. after every use and store in a way that prevents water collecting in them (e.g. upright/inverted).
- ensure children's play areas are safely fenced off from water hazards like rivers, dams, creeks, lakes, irrigation channels, wells.
- check grounds after rain or watering and empty water that has collected in holes or containers.
- ensure all pools and troughs in which children play are hygienically cleaned, disinfected and chlorinated (larger pools) in accordance with the instructions on the container.

## Severe Storms and Lightning

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

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.

The Nominated Supervisor and educators will monitor storm activity using radar on the Bureau of Meteorology website [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au) or app or if this is not available listen to the local radio station for storm warnings and updates.

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 eg 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.

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 absolutely necessary due to lightning danger. The Nominated Supervisor will continue to monitor storm activity and call emergency services if required.

It is unlikely children would be on an excursion or at a bush play 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.

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.

### **Lightning**

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.

Educators will also use the Flash to Bang rule if there is an unexpected lightning storm while children are on an excursion or at a bush play 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 eg 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.

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.

The Nominated Supervisor and educators will keep children inside or in a safe shelter for at least 30 minutes after the last thunder clap 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.

## Visitors

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.

## Inspection and testing of electrical equipment

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.

## Fire Equipment

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).

## Back Care and Manual Handling

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.

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.

Employers and managers have a legal duty to provide safe workplaces and implement safe workplace practices.



### 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.

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- 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 eg to help a child put their shoes on
- sit rather than bend eg to comfort a child, educators will sit on the floor and encourage the child to sit on their lap
- sit in an appropriate sized chair (or on the floor) so their upper legs are horizontal to hips and feet flat on the floor
- sit in an appropriate sized chair and table to complete writing tasks (eg programming)
- carry children with one arm under the child's buttocks and the other arm supporting the child's back, with the child facing them as close as possible to their body
- not carry a child on their hip because this can strain the back, and only carry children when necessary
- lift safely and avoid twisting, especially with awkward loads
- use a step ladder to reach above shoulder level
- avoid extended reaching forward eg 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.

### **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

### **Avoid Twisting when Lifting**

To avoid injuries result 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
- be especially careful when lifting a child with special needs.

### **Organising a Team Lift**

Educators and staff will:

1. Ask a colleague who is willing and able to help, and ideally is fairly well matched with them in size and strength
2. Agree on a plan of action to achieve a coordinated lift
3. Appoint one person as team leader to 'call' the lift.

### **How to Assess the Correct Storage and Shelving Height**

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.

## Sources

**Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011**

**My Time Our Place**

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

**National Quality Standard**

**Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004**

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

**Cancer Council VIC Sample SunSmart policy for ECEC services**

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

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

**Building Code of Australia**

**Building Act 1993**

**Building Regulations 1994**

**Building Commission Practice Note 2013-05**

**Royal Life Saving Society Home Pool Safety Checklist**

**Royal Life Saving Society Wading Pools Checklist**

**Australian Standard 1926.1 Swimming Pool Safety**

**Kidsafensw: Playground surfacing**

**Heat health plan for Victoria**

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

**Cancer Council VIC and the National SunSmart Early Childhood Program**

**Bureau of Meteorology 'Preparation and safety during thunderstorms' Australian Government [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au)**

**Get Ready Guide Qld Govt**

**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)**

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

**NQF e-bulletin QLD 12.11.19**

## Review



The policy will be reviewed annually by:

- Management
- Employees
- Families
- Interested Parties

**Reviewed: 1<sup>st</sup> November 2018**

**Date for next review: 1<sup>st</sup> November 2019**



**Attachment A**

**Daily Checklist**

	B	G	L	L	COMMENTS	CONTROL MEASURE	RISK RATING	Reported to
			1	2				
<b>Indoors</b>								
Fire Evacuation Route & procedure displayed prominently at each exit								
Child safety covering in PowerPoints								
Chairs stack no higher than 6x								
Hand washing procedure next to each sink including toilets								
Hand Soap and paper towels at each sink								
Toileting procedure next to each toilet								
Emergency exits clear								
Fire hydrant clear								
Fire extinguisher clear								
Fire hose clear								
Fire indicator panel clear (G)								
Hallways and doorways clear of objects and rubbish								
Toilets clean								
Toilet paper								
Sanitary bins								
All rooms clean, tidy and well presented								
Room is set up for the club								
Electrical cords tidy and not a tripping hazard								
No sharp or dangerous objects								
No broken equipment								
OTHER								
<b>Outdoors</b>								
No glass or broken bottles								



No sharp objects								
No broken equipment								
OTHER								