

Maintenance of a Safe Environment Policy

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Rationale and Policy Considerations

All children have the right to experience quality care in an environment which provides for their health and safety. The Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 requires that approved provider/nominated supervisor/coordinators take reasonable care to protect children from foreseeable risk of harm, injury and infection.

Legislation and Government Requirements

- Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012.
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012.
- State Workplace Health & Safety Legislation

Needs

Children's

Safe and healthy environment in which to play and learn.

Families'

Reassurance that health and safety standards are maintained at the service and their children's health & safety is assured.

Educators

A safe and healthy environment in which to provide experiences for children; appropriate allocation of resources to maintain a safe and healthy environment.

Management

To minimise legal liability of the service and ensure health and safety issues are brought to their attention.

Scope

This policy is written for children, families, staff and visitors of Merino Court Childcare Centre

Policy Statement

The education and care service aims to provide and maintain a safe and healthy environment in which children may play in and explore their world free from harm. The service will protect the health and safety of children and every person who enters the service's premises or uses the service's equipment by keeping informed about and complying with the applicable workplace health & safety legislation, complying with the Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012, and ensuring appropriate Codes of Practice, Standards and recommendations from recognised authorities are followed at the service to protect persons from harm, injury, illness or abuse. All staff will be aware of potentially dangerous products which may pose a risk of poisoning or injuring the children in the centre. Procedures will be in place to ensure children are safe while attending the centre.

Merino Court Childcare Centre strives to provide a quality service which maintains high levels of cleanliness and safety without the overuse of chemicals. Chemicals will only be used when necessary and alternative forms of cleaning products will be used for the majority of the time. Chemicals will not be used while children are in the vicinity.

Policy Principles

- The service plan, which clearly defines boundaries and areas where children in each age grouping may safely play, is displayed in the reception area. Educators/staff will become familiar with the plan and will reinforce the importance of staying within the boundaries with the children. Educators will ensure play areas are always appropriately supervised.

- The outdoor environment has a supervision plan to ensure that all areas can be viewed by staff, regardless of the number present.
- During lunch breaks when the staff numbers are reduced, there will be at least one staff member with each group.
- A qualified staff will always be on the premises, as will a qualified first aid person. (Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012. Reg. 136.1) Visitors to the centre will be met in the foyer by a regular staff member to validate their right to be on the premises.
- Staff will be monitored for compliance with the safety standards and a record will be kept of issues to address. Staff meetings will include discussions regarding ways to improve compliance and ideas as to the use of non-toxic products to minimise the use of harmful chemicals within the centre.
- Staff will ensure play areas are always supervised in a manner that is sufficient to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children appropriate to their stage of development. While we encourage visitors and students at the centre, they will not be left alone or unsupervised with the children. At least one staff from each group will be present with the children at all times.
- The bathroom cupboard will be kept locked throughout the day using keys kept up on the hook out of reach of children. The kitchen door will be kept closed at all times and made available to staff only. Children will not be permitted in the kitchen or laundry areas. The staff toilet door will remain locked at all times.
- Safety discussions will be included in the program.

Maintenance of Buildings and Outdoor Areas

- A maintenance register will be maintained to track the maintenance of buildings and equipment and monitor the effectiveness of safety checks.
- Educators/staff will complete **Daily Safety Checklists** to assess the safety of all areas of the service.
- The education and care premises will comply with the Education and Care Services National Regulations in regard to:
 - Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair
 - Indoor space requirements
 - Outdoor space requirements
 - Ventilation and natural light
 - Toilet and hygiene facilities
 - Laundry and hygiene facilities
 - Food and beverage storage and handling facilities
 - Furniture, materials and equipment
 - Fencing and security
 - Swimming pool prohibition
 - Administrative space
 - Nappy change facilities
 - Visibility
 - Outdoor space and natural environment
 - Shaded outdoor space
- All heating systems used in the education and care centre will meet the requirements of the applicable workplace health & safety legislation.
- All requirements for electrical installations set down in AS/NZS 3000:2007 Electrical Installations (known as Australia New Zealand Wiring Rules) will be met. Power points will be to an approved safety standard and will be out of reach of all children, or fitted with approved safety shutters or with an earth leakage circuit breaker.
- Electrical appliances and cords will be kept out of reach of all children.
- Wall mounted fans will have blade guards fitted in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Wall and ceiling fans will not be operated whilst children are present if they pose a hazard to children. Free standing fans will only be used in areas not used as play areas. These may include: office, kitchen, cot room, educator/staff room. The educator will ensure that free standing fans are located so that children are adequately protected from inadvertent physical contact with the blades.
- The service will meet standards for glazing in public buildings set down in the Building Code of Australia and that windows when opened do not create a hazard to children.

- The service will ensure that hot water taps to which a child has access will be thermostatically controlled at less than 42 C or will be fitted with a device which prevents the operation of the tap by a child.

Equipment

- All equipment and toys purchased for the service will meet Australian Standards for safety. The Australian Standards relating to the construction and installation of fixed and temporary outdoor play equipment will be adhered to, to ensure children's safety when using outdoor play equipment. This includes the type of materials and installation requirements used for outdoor surfaces. The service will access current information from Kids Safe about the installation and use of outdoor play equipment.
- The approved provider/nominated supervisor will ensure that outdoor play equipment does not pose a hazard to children because of its design, manufacture, installation or use, and soft fall surfaces are provided under and around any outdoor play equipment from which there is a reasonable likelihood of a child falling because of the equipment's design or the manner in which it is used.
- Educators will check soft surfaces under and around outdoor play equipment to ensure it is adequate and evenly spread, on a daily basis.
- All educators will be diligent to ensure that all equipment and toys are kept in a thoroughly safe, clean and hygienic condition and in good repair at all times, and stored in a safe manner.
- Educators who become aware of faulty or broken equipment will remove this equipment from use and advise the approved provider/nominated supervisor of the need for its replacement or repair. All such incidents will be noted on a **Maintenance Register**.
- The service will ensure that adequate furniture is available to meet the physical and developmental needs of children attending the service.
- The service will ensure that the nominated supervisor/educators/staff members have ready access to an operating telephone or other similar means of communication, whenever children are present at the education and care service.
- Sandpits will be covered at night and/or raked daily to dispose of any animal faeces, other contaminants or potentially dangerous objects.
- The outside playing area will be checked regularly to ensure poisonous vegetation is not accessible to children.
- Children will be carefully introduced to new toys and pieces of equipment and taught how to use and care for them appropriately.
- Children using play equipment will be supervised at all times. Equipment that should only be used under supervision will be stored in a safe place out of reach of children.
- Wading or paddling pools will only be used under the direct supervision of an educator. When not in use this equipment will be emptied and stored in such a manner that it cannot collect water. Wading and paddling pools must be of a size that can be emptied by one person.
- Children will only use a trampoline, vortex or water trolley whilst under the direct supervision of an educator.

Storage and Use of Potentially Dangerous Products

- All chemicals are to be stored in a locked cupboard or in an area where children are excluded.
- Cupboards will be labeled to show that they hold chemicals but not in a way that draws the attention of the children.
- All educators/staff will be made aware of which products may pose a danger to children in the service and will do their best to minimise the use of these products without jeopardising the hygiene of the children or themselves.
- Staff are to be aware that spray and wipe bottles of disinfectant etc. are never to be left unattended. When they are being used, they must not leave the hand or be left low or anywhere where children can reach them. Relief workers, visitors and all staff to be informed regularly of these requirements.
- The service will purchase and use less toxic substances whenever possible. Where possible, staff will use hot soapy water for cleaning to reduce the use of chemicals in the environment, disinfectant will be used after cleaning.

- The service will maintain a register of all hazardous substances kept on the education and care premises.
- All potentially dangerous products will be clearly labelled and stored in their original labelled containers (except for the spray bottles which will be clearly labeled with the contents) with the relevant Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for that product, out of reach of all children, or unauthorised adults. Storage areas will be clearly labelled to assist relief educators/staff.
- Storage areas will be clearly labeled to assist relief staff (Education and Care Services National Regulations) When chemicals are transferred from bulk storage to useable containers, the useable container must have a poison warning label attached. A monthly reminder will be placed in the yearly diary.
- All hazardous products are used in accordance with the manufacturer's written instructions and specific workplace procedures, and dangerous chemicals are only used when children are not present at the service.
- First Aid Action Plans are developed for each hazardous product kept on the education and care premises. The first aid action plans will be displayed in the bathroom, laundry and nappy change room.
- Flammable materials such as aerosol cans and flyspray are stored separately from anything that constitutes or is likely to constitute a fire hazard.
- Educators will discuss the dangers of certain products with the children.

Cleaning Procedures to Reduce the Use of Chemicals

- All surfaces will be washed with warm soapy water and the appropriate coloured cloth.
- Water and cloth will be tipped out and washed between uses.
- Dishes will be washed with hot soapy water, soaked in sanitiser and then rinsed in hot water and left to air dry.
- Toys and mouthed toys are washed each day in warm soapy water and left to air dry.
- Blood and body fluids will be cleaned with warm soapy water and a disposable towel and then sprayed with disinfectant
- Floors will be washed daily with hot water and left to air dry.
- Floors will be washed weekly with hot water and vinegar and left to air dry.
- Re-usable cloth mops will be soaked in warm soapy water and then washed in the washing machine after each use.
- Other mops will be taken off their sticks and soaked in hot water over night and washed in the washing machine between use.
- Face cloths and bibs are soaked during the day in nappysan and then washed in the washing machine.
- Nappy change benches will be cleaned with hot soapy water after each nappy change.
- Bathrooms are cleaned with warm soapy water and then sprayed with diluted disinfectant.
- Beds will be sprayed with diluted disinfectant each time the sheets are changed and left to air dry.
- Spray bottles will have a marker to show the correct amount of disinfectant to be added to avoid overuse.

Protection of Visitors

- Visitors may be present at the service from time to time and will have their safety assured whilst at the service through the following procedures:
 - The service will require visitors to report to the nominated supervisor/educator/staff member on arrival.
 - The nominated supervisor/educator/staff member will be aware of where visitors are at all times.
 - Educators/staff will accompany visitors where possible.
 - Visitors will be restricted from any hazard area.
- Educators/staff will be inducted on safety issues concerning visitors.
- Visitors will be inducted about hazards on the premises (if any).

Related Documents

- **Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012** - Section 3(2)(a); 167; 179; 189
- **Education and Care Services National Regulations:** Part 4.2 - Children's Health & Safety, Part 4.3 Physical Environment, Part 4.4. Staffing Arrangements - Division 2, 3 and 6, 158- 166, 168, 169
- **National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care (Oct. 2011)** - Standard 2.1; Standard 2.2; Standard 2.3; Element 3.1.2; Element 4.1.1 Element 6.1.2; Element 6.2.2; Element 7.1.5 Element 7.3.3

- **Early Years Learning Framework for Australia**
- **Framework for School Age Care in Australia**
- Daily Safety Checklist
- Cleaning checklists
- Food Safety Standards Checklists
- Duty of Care Checklist
- Electrical safety checklist
- Equipment safety checklist
- Hazardous chemicals and substances safety checklist
- Maintenance Register
- Register of hazardous substances

Links to other policies

- Accidents, Emergencies and First Aid
- Children's Comfort Rest and Relaxation
- Delivery and Collection of Children
- Educator/Staff Dress Code
- Equipment and Toys
- Establishing a Protective Environment
- Excursions and Transport
- Health, Hygiene and Infection Control
- Healthy Eating and Food Handling
- Guiding Children's Behaviour
- Illness
- Medications and Medical Conditions
- Occupational Safety and Health
- Supervision
- Sun Protection
- Use of Tobacco, Alcohol or other Drugs

Sources

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"Safe use of Household Chemicals", 2000, Health Department of Western Australia.

"Staying healthy in Childcare" 4th Edition, 2005, National Health and Medical Research Council

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Further Sources

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National Health and Medical Research Council - *Staying Healthy in Child Care - 4th Edition 2005* - Retrieved 4 April 2011, from http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/file/publications/synopses/ch43.pdf

Safe Work Australia - *Model Work Health and Safety Laws Fact Sheet* - Retrieved 4 April 2011, from <http://safeworkaustralia.gov.au/AboutSafeWorkAustralia/WhatWeDo/Publications/Documents/553/ModelWorkHealthAndSafetyLawsFactSheet.pdf>

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Document History

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