

Sustainability & Environmental Awareness

Policy 2018

National Quality Standard

3.3	The service takes an active role in caring for its environment and contributes to a sustainable future.
3.3.1	Sustainable practices are embedded in service operations.
3.3.2	Children are supported to become environmentally responsible and show respect for the environment.

National Regulations

105	Furniture, Materials and Equipment
110	Ventilation and Natural Light
113	Outdoor Space - Natural Environment
114	Outdoor Space - Shade

Aim

The purpose of this policy is to provide the guidelines and framework to ensure that the sustainability objectives of Medowie Gumnut Preschool are consistently met.

At Medowie Gumnut Preschool, we are committed to embedding sustainable practices across our service operations and supporting children to become environmentally responsible.

Who is affected by this Policy?

- * Management
- * Educators
- * Children
- * Families
- * Volunteers
- * Students

Implementation

In order to meet these aims, a Sustainability Action Plan will be developed and regularly monitored. The Sustainability Action Plan will include all the action steps that are required to meet the above objectives. In addition:

- * Each action step shall have a specific deliverable and an expected timeframe.
- * Progress against each action step shall be monitored regularly
- * Action steps shall be updated or revised accordingly.

Sustainability Committee

The Centre will establish a Sustainability Committee made up of staff and parents, and will seek external support as required.

The Sustainability Committee shall meet at least every 3 months at a time determined by the committee.

The Sustainability Committee will be a formal working committee, however will only have the authority to recommend a course of action to the Centre Director.

Environmental Compliance

Medowie Gumnut Preschool will comply with all relevant environmental acts and regulations issued by Federal, State and Local government bodies.

Environmental Procurement

Environmental considerations will be taken into account when purchasing goods and services on behalf of the Centre. In particular:

- *When purchasing products, preference will be given to items that are made from sustainably derived materials, have recycled content or can be reused or refilled.
- *When purchasing or using cleaning supplies, preference will be given to items that are environmentally responsible, non-toxic and phosphate free
- *When purchasing office machines, computer equipment and appliance, preference will be given to items that have an Energy Star rating of 4 stars or more.
- *If purchasing business vehicles, preference will be given to motor vehicles that have a high fuel efficiency rating.
- *When purchasing other supplies and materials, preference will be given to items that are clearly and independently certified that the product is environmentally responsible.
- *Locally produced goods and services will be given preference to interstate or imported goods and services in order to reduce travel related emissions.
- *Underpinning this philosophy is an assumption that all other factors in purchasing decisions are also taken into account; such as price, quality, availability, accessibility and service.

Environmental Learning Activities

Environmental learning activities will be developed and approved by the Centre Director in order to teach children an understanding and respect for the environment. In particular, environmental activities will be designed and introduced to children that:

- *Develop their life skills, such as growing and preparing food, waste reduction and recycling
- *Teach them an appreciation of the natural environment and the interdependence between people, plants, animals and the land
- *Encourage energy efficiency practices such as switching off unused lights, appliances and electronic equipment
- *Promote water efficiency practices such as making sure taps are turned off, minimising shower times, and turning off taps when brushing teeth
- *Build a sense of responsibility for caring for the natural environment.

Waste Management

Medowie Gumnut Preschool will adopt general waste management principles with a view to maximising the level of recycling and minimising general waste sent to landfill.

In particular, Medowie Gumnut Preschool will aim to reduce plastic pollution by introducing plastic free lunches on nominated days.

Energy Efficiency

Medowie Gumnut Preschool will adopt energy efficiency practices to minimise the amount of electricity and gas used in the normal course of business.

Medowie Gumnut Preschool will consider adopting renewable energy options where it is economically viable to do so, in order to minimise the use of coal-fired electricity.

Parent/Family Involvement

Parents and Families will be encouraged to practice waste management and energy efficiency techniques at home to allow children to receive a consistent message.

Parents and Families will be regularly advised of the sustainability activities that the children are involved in and will be asked to participate in various sustainability events.

Sources

- The NSW Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and the NSW Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2018
- Guide to the National Quality Standard 2018
- Little Green Steps Environmental Program (www.gosford.nsw.gov.au) 11 August 2006
- New South Wales Department of Community Services (2002). NSW Curriculum Framework for Children's Services - The Practice of Relationships, Essential Provisions for Children's Services, Office of Childcare, New South Wales
- National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC). (2005). Quality Improvement and Accreditation System Quality Practices Guide. (1st Ed.). Surry Hills: NCAC
- Curtis, D and Carter, M (1996). Designs for Living and Learning - Transforming Early Childhood Environments. Red leaf Press, Saint Paul, MN
- Early Childhood Environmental Education Network (Seeds for the Future Network News) (www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au) 11 August 2006
- Australian Human Rights Commission: <http://www.hreoc.gov.au>
- Early Childhood Australia: <http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/>
- Safework Australia: <http://safeworkaustralia.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>
- The Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority: <http://www.acecqa.gov.au/>

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