



**Coowarra Out Of School Hours
Care Service Inc**

Physical Environment Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

At Coowarra OOSH, we aim to provide a safe and secure environment where children have access to a variety of activities, in which children are encouraged to participate.

PROCEDURE

- The outdoor environment will be smoke free.
- The physical environment shall be easily accessible to the educators and children.
- Dangerous items or obstacles shall be disposed of in a safe and careful manner prior to the children playing in the area.
- The outdoor space will be set up in a variety of ways to encourage participation.
- Areas will be made available where children can play in large or small groups or by themselves.
- Supervision should be properly maintained. Children are only to play in the areas that are clearly visible to the educators, and where proper child/staff ratios are maintained.
- Clear boundaries shall be set and enforced.
- When it is necessary to go outside the boundaries or line of supervision, an educator must accompany children.
- Use of other outdoor venues will be considered where access to the area is safe, adequate supervision can be maintained, the area is considered of value to the children's physical development and personal comfort, and where adequate staff/child ratios can be maintained both indoors and outdoors.
- Access for children and people with a disability will be maintained ensuring all necessary requirements are considered in the building environment.
- Children's shoes must have a closed in toe and a strap holding the foot in the shoe. Thongs, slip-on shoes and surf sandals are not acceptable.
- The physical environment will be set up with adequate materials and resources for the amount of children enrolled in the care environment, to provide new learning opportunities that extend and challenge children's learning and development
- The play spaces provide children with the opportunity to explore and experience the natural environment.



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- The physical environment should offer children opportunities to be active, messy, and noisy and play on a large scale, or be quiet, relaxed, and play in solitude
- Educators are to ensure that areas in the environment do not become 'overcrowded', and that there is adequate space for children to play
- Entrances and exits to various areas within the physical environment, both indoor and outdoor, should be free of clutter and hazards, to allow children, Educators, families and visitors to all areas of the physical environment
- Areas will be made available for children to play independently or in groups of varying size

Outdoor Environment – OOSH

- The outdoor area shall be easily accessible to Educators and children. At the beginning of each session the Safety Checklist will be completed and areas will be inspected daily for any obstacles or dangerous items. These items shall be disposed of in a safe and careful manner prior to the children playing in the area
- Wherever possible, outdoor learning experiences should be set up that complement and extend on indoor learning experiences and activities
- Wherever possible, children should be encouraged to play in and with natural environments and resources, including gardens etc.
- Designated areas for play will enable adequate supervision to be maintained
- Clear boundaries shall be set and enforced to maintain a safe environment for all children
- Shaded areas will be used whenever possible when setting up activities
- Shoes must be worn by Educators and children whilst outdoors at all times unless engaging in programmed activities where shoes are not required. (i.e. foot painting, or shoes may be removed to play in the sand pit)
- Educators and children will have access to clean drinking water
- Use of other outdoor venues will be considered where:
 - Access to the area is safe
 - Adequate supervision can be maintained
 - The area is considered of value to the children's physical development and personal comfort
 - Where adequate staff/child ratios can be maintained both indoors and outdoors
- Written authorisation to be given by parents for Educators to take children outside the Service



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Indoor Environment – OOSH and LDC

- The indoor area shall be easily accessible to the Educators and children. At the beginning of each session the Safety Checklist will be completed and will be inspected daily for any obstacles or dangerous items. These items shall be disposed of in a safe and careful manner prior to the children playing in the area
- Where children are indoors for long periods due to adverse weather conditions, special activities will be planned. Other areas in the School, such as the Hall, library, under cover spaces and verandahs will be utilised to allow children to disperse into smaller groups to play.
- The indoor area will be well ventilated and have adequate natural light
- The indoor environment should be maintained at a temperature that ensures the wellbeing of the children and Educators
- Easy access to areas shall be maintained by making clear, easily identified passageways and walkways through the building
- All items obstructing passageways/walkways are to be removed and placed in the correct storage areas
- Areas must be set up to ensure that proper supervision can be maintained at all times
- The indoor area is to be set up to allow children to participate in a variety of activities with easy access to equipment
- Wherever possible, design indoor environments that are enriched by natural resources and opportunities to engage with nature
- Where possible separate areas in the indoor environment will be provided for:
 - Parents to sign their children in/out of care
 - Educators to answer phones, maintain daily records and complete administrative tasks
 - Educators and parents to talk in confidence
 - Storage of equipment, food, dangerous materials and family records
 - Preparation of food and drinks
 - Provide access to clean drinking water in the indoor and outdoor environments
 - Kitchen and disposal of garbage
 - Cleaning of equipment
 - Hand washing and hand drying facilities
 - Craft and other creative activities
 - Large and small group activities
 - Display of children's activities and work
 - Quiet space for children to retreat to, or to do homework or lie down if unwell



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Facilities

- Provide adequate, sufficient and accessible facilities for handwashing, toileting, eating and sleeping. Toileting and hand washing facilities will be accessible from the indoor and outdoor environments
- Providing age-appropriate areas with resources
- Regular risk assessments undertaken and reviewed to ensure risks are minimised
- Cover unused power points with safety caps, securing all electrical cords and ensuring all power boards are inaccessible to children

Safety Checks

- To ensure the safety of all children, Educators are to complete daily Safety Checklists of premises and grounds
- Daily checks should include:
 - Perimeters
 - Fences
 - Gates
 - Paths
 - 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 sharps object container or a hard plastic container
- Regular pest inspections of premises with records to verify inspection

CONSIDERATIONS

Education and Care Services National Regulations	National Quality Standard	Other Service policies/documentation
	1.1 Space requirements 2.10 Health of Staff and Children	- Staff Handbook - Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy

UPDATED AND ENDORSED: July 2021

DATE FOR REVIEW AND EVALUATION: March 2023