



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.

The physical environment can contribute to children's wellbeing, happiness, and creativity as well as promoting the development of independence. It can contribute to and make visible the quality of children's learning and involvement in experiences. The choices made in an OOSH service about resources, materials, spaces, layout, air, and light in combination with access to a range of experiences in the indoor and outdoor areas, have a direct impact on the quality of learning opportunities available to children.

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 sustainable practice will be supported through daily practices, resources and interactions. The physical environment will support children's participation and engagement, development, learning, and safety, and will provide supervised access to positive experiences and inclusive relationships. Our service provides an environment free from the use of tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs.

PROCEDURE

THE APPROVED PROVIDER, NOMINATED SUPERVISOR AND EDUCATORS' RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

ENSURE THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT IS DESIGNED TO:

- maximise children and young people's engagement and positive experiences
- provide space where children can experience quality care in a safe and healthy environment
- meet licensing requirements for buildings, space requirements, fencing, light, ventilation, firefighting equipment, emergency evacuation exits and safety glass for National Regulations, the Building Code of Australia (BCA), NSW Department of Planning and Environment, local councils and regulatory authorities
- provide adequate storage to meet the needs and requirements of the service
- provide sufficient and accessible handwashing, toileting, eating and food preparation facilities
- ensure toileting and hand-washing facilities are accessible from both the indoor and outdoor environments
- provide an area for managerial purposes, consultation with children's parents and for private conversations to occur (Reg. 111)



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- incorporate natural and artificial lighting, appropriate ventilation, heating, cooling and fresh air into the building/premises (Reg. 110)
- facilitate adequate supervision of children at all times
- ensure safety and minimal disruption for children whilst playing
- ensure immediate communication is available at all times to and from parents and emergency services (Reg. 98)
- provide different types of play to occur both in the indoor and outdoor areas (e.g., quiet play areas and loud play areas)
- provide adequate shade for children in accordance with the recommendations of relevant authorities
- provide shade in the form of trees or physical shade structures
- provide a natural environment for children to explore and experience which may include plants, trees, gardens, rock, mud and/or water
- ensure all required fencing is compliant with current regulations and is maintained to ensure it is in good condition (including boundary fencing)
- provide a variety of indoor and outdoor experiences, catering for children's interests and abilities
- provide a developmentally appropriate environment where children can explore, solve problems, create, construct and engage in critical thinking
- provide an environment that permits children to participate in activities independently or in small groups, and access resources autonomously
- ensure safety of children at all times. Non-fixed play equipment in the Service grounds must be comply with maximum free height of fall under AS-4685:2021
- play equipment must be supervised at all times by an educator
- non-fixed play equipment over 600mm must have soft fall material surrounding the fall zone
- 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

CHOOSE APPROPRIATE RESOURCES AND EQUIPMENT:

- appropriately sized furniture and equipment will be provided in both the indoor and outdoor environment for the age ranges represented in the service
- resources will be adequate in number for the number of children and young people attending our service and be developmentally appropriate
- children will be supported to access appropriate furniture, resources, materials, toys and equipment that encourage appropriate challenges and risk taking in accordance with their individual developmental level
- specific equipment requirements of children with additional needs will be catered for to ensure an inclusive environment
- resources and equipment will be chosen to 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
- large purchases of equipment will be the responsibility of the approved provider and where required, consultation with school management will be sought



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- the nominated supervisor is responsible for consumables and the daily running purchases of the service
 - educators will provide ideas for equipment and materials purchase based on the needs and interests of children attending the service
 - educators will complete a log of equipment that needs maintenance on a prioritised basis for the nominated supervisor
 - children and young people's ideas and suggestions in planning the indoor and outdoor environments will be facilitated
 - children will be encouraged to make decisions about the use of equipment and resources
 - the service will actively seek the input of parents/guardians regarding current interests of their children so as to purchase appropriate toys and equipment
 - incorporate commercial, natural, recycled, homemade, and real resources that can be used in a variety of ways to encourage children's learning and creativity
 - educators will participate in on-going professional development in order to enhance children's learning and ensuring a safe and educational environment

ONGOING MAINTENANCE

- the Service will continuously reflect on its environment and put in place a plan to ensure that the environment reflects our ideology of providing an environment that is safe, stimulating, and engaging for all who interact within it
- frequent risk assessments of the indoor and outdoor environment will be conducted to minimise risk and hazards
- the nominated supervisor will document required maintenance. Repairs and maintenance will be conducted throughout the year according to priority including, hazard removal, safety precautions and any relevant policies
- the service will have regular pest inspections carried out by an accredited pest control company. Documentation of these inspections will be kept and any further recommended treatments as a result of the findings from the pest control check will be carried out in a timely manner
- stay up to date with banned/recalled products and remove these immediately from the Service if required

DAILY SAFETY CHECKS

A daily inspection of the premises will be undertaken before children arrive. The approved provider/nominated supervisor will make the appropriate arrangements to have any identified repairs carried out as soon as possible. The inspection will include:

- service perimeters
- fences/fence Line
- gates
- paths
- buildings
- all rooms/areas accessible by children



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This must be completed 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 (for example a syringe) educators will wear gloves and use tongs to pick up the object and place it in the 'sharp object box'. This box will be disposed of as per the recommendations of our local council.

CHILDREN'S BATHROOM

- children will be actively supervised whilst accessing toilet facilities to ensure other children are safe from harm
- educators will check the toilet facilities for safety and materials prior to commencement of daily program
- educators and other staff will encourage children to follow appropriate hygiene practices- hand washing, not playing in bathrooms.
- bathrooms will be cleaned at least daily and at other times as required
- bathroom floors will be mopped at least daily
- signage is to be used after mopping to ensure that children, educators and other staff and families are aware that the floor is wet

MAINTENANCE OF FIRE EQUIPMENT

- all fire equipment at our service will be maintained as per the legal standards

SERVICE CLOSURE

- educator/s are to check the entire premises to ensure that all children and families have departed by checking sign in and out sheets
- educator/s must sign the sign in and out sheets confirming all children are signed out
- educator/s are to follow service-closing procedures each night
- in the case where a parent has omitted to sign their child out, and the educators did not witness the child leave the Service, the educator/s 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 to then be notified before leaving the OSHC Service.
- all visitors to the service must sign in upon arrival and sign out when they leave
- details of absences during the day must also be recorded.

SERVICES LOCATED ON SCHOOL PREMISES

Approved providers and nominated supervisors must ensure school grounds meet all National Regulations and Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010, licensing, Building Code of Australia, Dept of Planning and Environment, local Council and Regulatory Authorities for an service and continuously remain compliant at all times with all regulatory authorities.



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Approved providers and nominated supervisors must meet all requirements of an OOSH Service and ensure the Service maintains access to sufficient storage, equipment, food and hygiene facilities.

These requirements are maintained through strong and healthy communication with representatives from the school and the school office administration. A license agreement between the service and school representative will be developed prior to education and care being provided at the service which sets clear expectations and formalises the working relationship.

The approved provider and nominated supervisor will ensure:

- communication between the Service and School must be regular and maintained for all managerial requirements
- an emergency contact of a representative from the school is available for the responsible person at the service
- teachers share information about children's requirements for the day
- all regulatory documents and posters are in the correct position and have not been removed by the school, and any notice boards are positioned in correct place on arrival and packed away on departure
- that all equipment used on the premises is maintained and in good repair, a maintenance of equipment record is kept with risk rating
- schools planning any activity restricting use of normal areas to be used by the Service need to be given with two weeks prior notice. A suitable alternative arrangement needs to be made that meet all regulations for the service
- outdoor play environments are planned and educators are positioned to ensure effective supervision is maintained whilst children are transitioning between indoor/outdoor learning environments and accessing toilets
- internet access must be established with the school either by using the school internet service or a separate internet provider established
- areas of service and outside grounds are found and left in a safe, clean, tidy and hygienic state
- use of school bins and rubbish collection is to be discussed and prearranged with the school
- all equipment to be stored away correctly at the end of each session to ensure no safety hazard left for school
- furniture and equipment to be transported between storage and the education environment will be fixed with castors.

CONSIDERATIONS

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.1	Health	Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.



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2.1.1	Wellbeing and comfort	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's needs for sleep, rest and relaxation.
2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
2.1.3	Healthy Lifestyles	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected.
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented.
QUALITY AREA 3: PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		
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.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
82	Tobacco, drug and alcohol -free environment
98	Telephone or other communication equipment
103	Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair
104	Fencing and security
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
113	Outdoor space—natural environment
114	Outdoor space—shade
115	Premises designed to facilitate supervision



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123	Educator to child ratios- centre based services
156	Relationships in groups
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures are to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available

RELATED POLICIES

Animal and Pet Policy Child Safe Environment Policy Educational Program Policy Health and Safety Policy	Safe Storage of Hazardous Chemicals Policy Sun Safety Policy Water Safety Policy Work Health and Safety Policy
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UPDATED AND ENDORSED: September 2025

DATE FOR REVIEW AND EVALUATION: May 2028