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## Environmental policy

Date Reviewed:

April 10, 2021

Regulation:

Standards:

3

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### Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines to ensure that the sustainability objectives of Woden Valley Early Learning Centre (WVELC) are consistently met.

### Objectives

To take an active role in caring for our environment and contribute to a sustainable future through

- Embedding sustainable practices into WVELC operations; and
- Supporting children to become environmentally responsible including by showing respect for the environment.

### Policy

To support these objectives, WVELC will

- Promote sustainable practices in the immediate environment and beyond;
  - Develop and monitor a Sustainability Action Plan;
  - Promote children's understanding about their responsibility to care for the environment;
  - Comply with all applicable local, state, and federal environmental regulations;
  - Embed a culture of sustainability in our daily routines and practices;
  - Provide staff with Professional Development opportunities in the area of sustainability;
  - Continually seek to improve the environmental performance of WVELC;
  - Engage families and suppliers in meeting our sustainability objective;
  - Use finite resources, including paper, energy, fuel and water as efficiently as possible;
  - Introduce learning activities to encourage children to become environmentally responsible and show respect for the environment;
  - Actively promote recycling of paper, cardboard and other materials; and,
  - Encourage families to introduce sustainable practices at home.
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## Scope

- The Environmental Policy relates to the operations of WVELC located at 1 Dann Close, Garran 2650 ACT, Australia.
- The Environmental Policy covers all normal business activities relating to the provision of child care services.

## Responsibility

The WVELC Director is responsible for maintaining this document and in ensuring that it remains consistent with WVELC's main business operations.



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## Environmental procedures

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### Procedure 1 - Environmental impacts

#### Description

This procedure details guidelines for identifying and documenting the environmental impacts of the Woden Valley Early Learning Centre (WVELC).

The purpose of this procedure is to describe the process to identify the environmental impacts of WVELC's activities, operations and services that interact with the environment.

#### Responsibility

The WVELC Director / Nature Pedagogy Leader is responsible for identifying the environmental impacts that can be controlled or minimised by taking into account planned or new activities and services.

#### Details

All relevant environmental impacts from normal business activities and services are identified and minimised wherever possible. As a guide, specific environmental impacts could fall into the following:

- Use of electricity and other energy sources that generate carbon emissions;
  - Use of transport fuels by vehicles for business purposes;
  - Use of transport fuel by taxis and couriers commissioned by the service;
  - Use of water;
  - Use of paper; and
  - Generation of waste that is sent to landfill.
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## Procedure 2 – Sustainability action plans

### **Description**

This procedure details guidelines for documenting sustainability action plans at WVELC.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this procedure is to describe the process of establishing and maintaining sustainability action plans to achieve the environmental objectives and targets of WVELC.

### **Responsibility**

The WVELC Director / Nature Pedagogy Leader is responsible for organising the activities associated with the implementation and maintenance of sustainability action plans.

### **Details**

Sustainability action plans shall be developed to achieve major environmental objectives as follows:

- Each objective shall have a specific deliverable and an expected timeframe;
  - Progress against each objective shall be monitored regularly; and
  - Action steps shall be updated or revised accordingly.
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## Procedure 3 – Environmental Procurement

### Description

This procedure describes guidelines regarding the environmental procurement of goods and services.

### Purpose

The aim of this procedure is to ensure that environmental considerations are taken into account when purchasing goods and services at WVELC.

### Responsibility

The WVELC Director is responsible for ensuring that environmental considerations are taken into account when purchasing goods and services at WVELC.

### Details

- As a general guideline locally produced goods and services will be given preference to interstate or imported goods and services in order to reduce travel-related emissions.
  - When purchasing products, preference is to 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 is to be given to items that are environmentally responsible, non-toxic and phosphate free.
  - When purchasing office machines and appliances, preference is to be given to office machines, electrical appliances and computer equipment that have an Energy Star rating of four stars or more.
  - When purchasing motor vehicles preference is to be given to motor vehicles that have a high fuel efficiency.
  - When purchasing other supplies and materials preference is to be given to items that are clearly and independently certified that the product is environmentally responsible.
  - Underpinning this procedure is an assumption that all other factors in the processing decision are also taken into account such as price, quality, availability, accessibility and service.
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## Procedure 4 – Environmental Learning Activities

### Description

This procedure describes guidelines regarding the implementation of environmental learning activities for children at WVELC.

### Purpose

The aim of this procedure is to introduce effective learning activities to encourage children at WVELC to become environmentally responsible and show respect for the environment.

### Responsibility

The WVELC Director / Nature Pedagogy Leader is responsible for ensuring that the environmental learning activities at WVELC are adequate and effective to teach children to become environmentally responsible and show respect for the environment.

### Details

Environmental learning activities will be developed and approved by the WVELC Director, in order to teach children about their responsibility to care 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, energy efficiency, 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 at home such as switching off unused lights, appliances and electronic equipment;
  - Promote water efficiency practices at home such as minimising shower times and turning off taps when brushing teeth; and
  - Build a sense of responsibility for caring for the natural environment.
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## Indoor and outdoor environment policy

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### Introduction

The physical environment can contribute to children's wellbeing, happiness, creativity and help develop independence. It can contribute to and express the quality of children's learning and experiences. The choices made in an education and care service about resources, materials, spaces, layout, air and light quality and access to a range of experiences in indoor and outdoor settings, have a direct impact on the quality of learning opportunities available to children.

### Aim

Woden Valley Early Learning Centre (WVELC) will ensure the environment is safe, clean and well maintained.

Children's awareness of the environment and sustainable practice will be supported through daily practices, resources and interactions. The physical environment, both indoors and outdoors, will support children's learning, safety, levels of engagement and access to positive experiences and inclusive relationships.

### Policy

#### WVELC will ensure that

- Fencing and barriers which enclose outdoor areas used by children are maintained to ensure they are of a height and design that prevents children of preschool age from going through, over or under the structure.
  - Sufficient furniture, materials and developmentally appropriate equipment are provided and maintained in order to support all children to engage and access programs that develop their skills and independence.
  - Any laundry facility in the premises is located and maintained in a way that does not pose any risks to children.
  - Adequate space requirements are maintained in both the indoor and outdoor environments.
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- Toilet, washing and drying facilities are developmentally and age appropriate and are located and designed in a way that support safe use and convenient access by children.
- The nappy change areas support safe access and hygienic nappy change routines and that educators and children have ready access to hand washing facilities.
- Education and care environments are well-ventilated and have adequate natural light.
- Indoor temperatures are maintained at levels that support children's safety and wellbeing.
- Play spaces provide children with opportunities to explore and experience the natural environment.
- The outdoor environment has adequate shaded areas to protect children from ultraviolet radiation from the sun.
- The environment seeks to support convenient access to both indoor and outdoor play activities.
- Toilet and nappy change facilities align with supervision requirements, children's independence and developmental needs.
- Where possible, gardens reflect the local natural habitat and encourage native wildlife into the education and care environment.

#### Nominated supervisors will

- Ensure that plants are selected to minimise risks to children.
  - No poisonous or dangerous plants will purposely be included in the WVELC care environment. See fact sheet on Poisonous Plants - <http://www.kidsafensw.org/growmesafely/>
- Collaborate with educators to carefully select and provide adequate numbers of resources in order to meet children's needs.
- Provide new learning opportunities that extend and challenge children's learning and development.

#### The Educational Leader will collaborate with educators to

- Equally value both the outdoor and indoor learning environments as places that support children's learning, creativity, social engagement and sense of belonging.
  - Seek to develop learning environments that are secure and predictable and that support children to take increasing responsibility for their health, hygiene and personal care.
  - Design learning environments that are welcoming and accessible for all children and families, considering cultural diversity, social and physical inclusion.
  - Design environments that reflect children's different cultures, interests, abilities and learning styles.
  - Design environments that support small group work in ways that minimise the risk of injury, minimise disruption between activities, minimise conflict between children and reduce prolonged exposure to excess internal and external noise.
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- Design outdoor learning experiences that complement and extend the indoor activities and learning experiences.
- Ensure that outdoor environments provide opportunities to learn through play, enabling access to materials that stimulate investigation and reflection.
- Design indoor environments that are enriched by natural resources and opportunities to engage with nature.
- Offer children opportunities to be active, messy and noisy and play on a large scale.
- Encourage and nurture children's interest in the world around them. By providing children with materials, resources and information, educators can help children appreciate and respect the beauty of their natural and built environments.
- Select resources and design learning environments that foster children's connections with the natural environment.
- Select natural materials and fibres if possible, when purchasing new equipment and resources. These include items such as wooden shelving and natural materials. Such resources enhance the look and feel of nature within the environment.
- Natural and flexible play materials such as sand, leaves and water will be available for children.
- Encourage children and families to collect and bring recycled equipment and natural resources into the environment.
- Encourage children to care for plants by growing plants from seeds.
- Design areas for appreciation of nature, where educators and children can observe the natural play environment and reflect on nature. This will include the introduction of indoor plants into indoor areas. Educators and children will be responsible for the care of these plants ensuring they have enough sunlight and water. As in the outdoor garden, plants will be selected to minimise the risks to children.

### Evaluation

WVELC has aesthetically pleasing, safe, flexible and functional play and learning environments. Educators, children and families are supported to consider environmentally sustainable practices. Children's emotional, physical, social, cognitive and spiritual wellbeing are supported by the design and functions of the indoor and outdoor environments. The environment complements the educational and care aims of the service, supporting children to have a strong sense of being and belonging, as well as facilitating their growth and development.

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## Animal and pet policy

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### Aim

The Woden Valley Early Learning Centre (WVELC) aims to provide a healthy environment that provides children with opportunities to become responsible and knowledgeable citizens. Woden Valley ELC aims to teach children how to become responsible owners of animals, how to treat animals with respect and provide them with appropriate care.

### Objectives

1. To provide a safe, clean and humane environment for all animals that reside at WVELC;
2. To ensure a safe and hygienic environment that minimises the risk of children, parents/guardians, employees and visitors being harmed by animals in care;
3. To ensure the nature pedagogical leader or person responsible for caring for animals is knowledgeable and able to perform their duties; and
4. To be a role model of positive behaviours that guide and care for animals.

### Procedures

#### Caring for animals

- Animals residing at WVELC will be regularly fed, cleaned, have fresh water available and be health checked as required.
  - Animal homes or bedding are to be cleaned effectively daily.
  - Animals will not have access to children's bedding, resources, food preparation areas, eating surfaces or utensils.
  - Children are to be supervised at all times when interacting with animals.
  - Animals will be viewed as a natural part of the environment that provide a wealth of learning opportunities for children.
  - Animals introduced to WVELC are to be approved by a nominated supervisor.
  - If WVELC finds itself unable to care for an animal, a WVELC representative will find alternative carers and start a rehoming process.
  - If an animal becomes seriously ill, WVELC will seek professional help and euthanise an animal, if advised, in humane way.
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## Infection Control

The following preventative measures will be used to minimise any risk of ill health caused from supervised contact with animals.

- Children are discouraged from touching animals while they are eating;
- Children are encouraged to not put animals near their faces;
- Children are to wash and dry their hands after touching animals;
- Children with asthma or allergies (including anaphylaxis) will be discouraged from interactions with animals; and
- Any accidental injury caused by an animal in care will be treated with first aid, an **accident, injury and trauma report** will be completed and a child's family will be notified.

## References

- Education and Care Services National Regulations, December 2011
  - National Quality Standard -Quality Standard 3 Physical Environment 3.2 –We encourage educators to build children's understanding and respect for the natural environment and the relationship between people, plants, animals and the land.
  - Work Safety Act 2008
  - Staying Healthy in Childcare – Preventing Infectious Diseases in Childcare – 4th Edition pg. 31 (19/09/12)
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