



Maintaining a Safe Environment Policy

Policy Number: 23
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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 (WA)2012 requires that approved provider/nominated supervisor/coordinators take reasonable care to protect children from foreseeable risk of harm, injury and infection.

Most relevant policies and procedures

- Incident, Injury, Illness and First Aid
- Children's Comfort Rest and Relaxation
- Delivery and Collection of Children
- Providing a Protective Environment
- Excursions
- Incursions
- Health, Hygiene and Dealing with Infectious Diseases
- Healthy Eating and Food Handling
- Guiding Children's Behaviour
- Dealing with Medications and Medical Conditions
- Workplace Health and Safety
- Supervision
- Sun Protection

Links to ECA Code of Ethics

- **Create and maintain safe, healthy environments, spaces and places, which enhance children's learning, development, engagement, initiative, self-worth, dignity and show respect for their contributions.**

Scope

This policy is written for children, families, educators and visitors of Lifestreamers Early Learning

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. Lifestreamers Early Learning considers the physical environment, educator, supervision, child protection, resources and equipment and all other aspects that provide a child safe environment.

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 educators 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. Lifestreamers Early Learning strives to provide a quality service which maintains high levels of cleanliness and safety without the overuse of chemicals.

Policy Principles

- All children attending our premises are provided with safe environment with proper educator-to-child ratio and supervision plan to ensure all children will be provided with opportunities and experiences in building their learning skills and abilities.
- At all times, educators must take a reasonable precautions and adequate supervision to ensure children's protection from any form of harm or hazard.
- Facilities are designed and maintained to promote supervision for children while maintaining their rights and dignity.
- While we encourage visitors and students at the centre, they will not be left alone or unsupervised with the children.
- All spaces that are not safe for children to play are not accessible eg. cleaning storage, office area, team room, kitchen, laundry etc. Educators will become familiar with the plan and will reinforce the importance of staying within the boundaries with the children.
- A qualified educator will always be on the premises, as will a qualified first aid person. (Education and Care Services National Regulations 136)
- Visitors to the centre will be met at the door by a regular educator to validate their right to be on the premises.
- Educators will be monitored for compliance with the safety standards and a record will be kept of issues to address. Educator 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.
- The bathroom cupboards will not contain any items that are unsafe for children. If unsafe items are stored, the cupboards will be locked.
- Safety discussions will be included in the program.

Considerations for supervision

Below is the ACECQA educator-to-child ratio guideline that the service implements on a daily basis:

Age Group	Educator-to-Child Ratio
For children from Birth to under 24 months of age	1:4
For children aged 24 months to under 3 years old	1:5
For children aged 3 years old or over	1:10

- Educators are fully inducted in their duty of care and responsibilities to children and understand how this duty impacts on the supervision of children.
- When educators are on duty they are responsible for the direct supervision of children. This requires that each child will be within sight and/or hearing of an educator at all times.
- Educators will arrange play areas to ensure children can be effectively supervised, and will communicate effectively with each other about the supervision of children i.e. inform each other before leaving the room.
- Educators will adopt the following strategies to ensure children's adequate supervision.
- The service will identify circumstances in which educator to child ratio increases above regulatory requirements to ensure children's safety.

Security

- The outside gates will be locked between the hours of 7am and 6pm (or when all children have left the premises). This excludes the emergency exit gate closest to the ELC building.
- The front door is fitted with a security swipe entrance. Families are given a swipe once their enrolment fee is paid and it will be coded for their use. Once the family leaves the centre, they either return the swipe or it is taken off the system so it can no longer be used.

- A nominated responsible person for closing time will advise the last families that the front door is automatically locked at 6pm each afternoon for safety and security reasons. After this time, families can still exit through the front door by pushing the exit button on their right-hand side.
- The café door and the emergency exit gate are fitted with an alarm that sounds if these doors have been opened

Incursions

- Educators will closely supervise children whilst they are on walking incursions out of the service, as the potential for harm is greater outside of the safety of the education and care environment.
- The service will conduct a risk assessment before taking children out of the centre.
- Permission for children to attend will be sought from a parent/guardian or other authorised person for all excursions in compliance with the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012

Health, Hygiene and Infection Control

- All educators are required to observe and maintain high standards of hygiene in the provision of the education and care service.
- Hand washing is considered to be the most effective way of controlling infection within the centre. (Department of Human Services, Communicable Disease Control Branch, "You've Got What!", p.5)
- Notices which clearly explain effective hand washing procedures will be displayed next to hand washing basins
- Current state immunisation requirements state that children must be fully immunized for enrolling into the centre. A record of the child's current immunisation status will be kept at the service
- All workers at the education care service will be encouraged to have all immunisations recommended in the service's Staff Immunisation Policy
- Children and educators with infectious diseases will be excluded from the service in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council guidelines
- Educators and management practices will adhere to the law under the Federal Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA), that **no discrimination** will take place based on a child/parent/educators HIV status.

Healthy Eating and Food Handling

- Educators will be provided with annual professional development to refresh their knowledge of food handling and hygiene practices. New educators to the service will be required to complete training within two months of appointment.
- New educators will be inducted into the centre and be required to follow the principles and practices with regard to Personal Health and Hygiene.
- Where children are on special diets the parents/guardians will be asked to provide a list of suitable foods and their child's food preferences. A Health Management Plan will be completed by management in consent with parent/guardian detailing allergies. Medical confirmation of a child's allergies will be required. Refer also to the service's Anaphylaxis Policy, and Medications and Medical Conditions Policy. More information about food handling policy will be found in our website.

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 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.
- The centre 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 centre 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 centre will ensure that adequate furniture is available to meet the physical and developmental needs of children attending the service.
- The centre will ensure that the nominated supervisor/educators have ready access to an operating telephone or other similar means of communication, whenever children are present at the education and care service.
- 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.
- Children will only use a trampoline, vortex or water trolley whilst under the direct supervision of an educator.

Water Safety

- Where children are taken on an excursion that is close to a body of water additional adult supervision will be organised to ensure children's safety. Direct and constant supervision is required at all times children are in or near water. Educators will have constant visual contact and be in close proximity to all children at all times.
- 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.

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.
- Sharp equipment or materials such as knives, kitchen equipment etc. must be stored in a lockable container inside of the cupboard or in area where children cannot be reached.
- All educators 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.
- Educators 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 educators to be informed regularly of these requirements.
- The centre will purchase and use less toxic substances whenever possible. Where possible, educators will use hot soapy water for cleaning to reduce the use of chemicals in the environment, disinfectant will be used after cleaning.
- The centre 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 labeled to assist relief educators (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. This will be checked each month on the monthly maintenance checklist.
- 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 each room, cleaner's cleaning room, nappy change area and laundry room.
- Flammable materials such as aerosol cans and fly spray 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.
- The bathroom cupboards will not contain any items that are unsafe for children. If unsafe items are stored, the cupboards will be locked.

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 rinsed with hot soapy water and then put through the dishwasher. The dishwasher cycle will include sanitisation, Dishes will be 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 disinfectant and left to air dry.
- Mops will be rinsed in warm soapy water and then hung to dry overnight. They will be washed in the washing machine each week.

- Nappy change benches and mat will be cleaned with hot soapy water in a labelled spray bottle, using a paper towel at the end of each nappy change
- Educators are to refrain from using disinfectant on the nappy mat unless they are cleaning the bathroom at the end of the day.
- Bathrooms are cleaned with warm soapy water and then sprayed with diluted disinfectant.
- Beds will be sprayed with hot soapy water and wiped with paper towel after children's nap.
- All educators are made aware of the amount of disinfectant to be added into spray bottles.
- 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.

Protection of Visitors

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

Maintaining hydration levels

- Water will be offered to children throughout the day regardless of indoor or outdoor play settings.
- Cooled boiled water may be offered to infants and young children after bottle feeds if children show signs of continued thirst.

Related Legislation and Documents

- **Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012**
- **Education and Care Services National Regulations:**
- **National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care**
- **Early Years Learning Framework for Australia**

Document History

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