

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

Best Practice – Quality Area 3

PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines to assist North Brighton Kindergarten to take an active role in caring for the environment, and promoting and contributing to a sustainable future.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

North Brighton Kindergarten is committed to:

- promoting respect for, and an appreciation of, the natural environment among all at the service
- fostering children's capacity to understand and respect the natural environment, and the interdependence between people, plants, animals and the land
- supporting the development of positive attitudes and values in line with sustainable practices
- ensuring that educators and other staff engage in sustainable practices during the operation of the service.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of North Brighton Kindergarten.

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

"One of the most significant responsibilities that [early childhood] professionals have is to support children to retain the sense of awe and wonder that they are born with, to add to that a desire to nurture and protect what is beautiful, and to encourage them to appreciate that there are many possibilities for honouring life and wonders that the world holds" (Stonehouse, A. (2006) NSW Curriculum Framework for Children's Services – refer to Sources).

Current research confirms that experiences in the early years help establish lifelong behaviour and values, and this reinforces the need for sustainability education to be included in early childhood programs. It is important for children to understand their place in the world and the role that they can play in protecting the environment. Children should learn to be environmentally responsible and be empowered to make a difference, and this learning should not wait until the 'formal education' of primary school. Elliot and Davis (refer to Sources) state that "early childhood educators have an active and significant role to play ensuring children experience connections with the natural environment in meaningful way which will ultimately promote action for sustainability".

Environmental education can be defined as learning *about* the environment and how natural systems function; the interconnectedness of plants, animals, humans and the planet we inhabit. Environmental education promotes the growth of knowledge, skills and values about the environment, often with a focus on science and nature. In an early childhood setting, environmental education is integrated into everyday decisions made as part of the curriculum.

Sustainability can be defined in a broader and more holistic context of education *for* the environment. The complexities of social, environmental and economic systems are acknowledged, and their implications for sustaining life are considered. The aim of sustainability education is to promote a sense of responsibility, respect, empowerment, active participation, enquiry and a desire for social change (adapted from ECA Environmental Sustainability Policy 2005). The goal of sustainability education is to empower children and adults to think and act in ways that meet their immediate needs without jeopardising the potential of future generations to meet *their* own needs. Sustainable practice

in early childhood settings requires a holistic approach that integrates all aspects of sustainability into service operations.

The *National Quality Standard* (Quality Area 3: Physical Environment) includes a discussion on the service taking an active role in caring for its environment and contributing to a sustainable future (Standard 3.3). As service providers to the community, education and care services have an opportunity not only to make reductions to waste, water and energy consumption through their operations, but to role-model sustainable living to young children in a world facing climate change, increasing levels of air, land and water pollution, and depleted natural resources.

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 3: Physical Environment
 - Standard 3.3: The service takes an active role in caring for its environment and contributes to a sustainable future
 - Element 3.3.1: Sustainable practices are embedded in service operations
 - Element 3.3.2: Children are supported to become environmentally responsible and show respect for the environment

4. DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

Environmental sustainability: The responsible use and management of the planet's resources to ensure that they remain available and uncompromised for future generations to use and enjoy.

5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- *Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia:* <http://education.gov.au/early-years-learning-framework#key%20documents>
- Davis, J. M. and Elliott, S. (2004) Mud pies and daisy chains: Connecting young children and nature. In *Every Child*, 10(4) p4. Available at: http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/pdf/every_child/ec0404_mudpies.pdf
- Early Childhood Australia: http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/resource_themes/
- 'Educators' Guide to the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia: <http://docs.education.gov.au/documents/educators-guide-early-years-learning-framework-australia>
- Environmental Education in Early Childhood (EEEC): <http://www.eeec.org.au/index.php>
- *Guide to the National Quality Standard*, ACECQA: www.acecqa.gov.au
- Hughes, M. (2007) *Climbing the little green steps: How to promote sustainability within early childhood services in your local area*, Gosford and Wyong Council: <http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/what-we-offer/regulation-and-accreditation/early-childhood-education-care/useful-links-and-resources/sustainability-resources>
- *My Time, Our Place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia:* <http://education.gov.au/my-time-our-place-framework-school-age-care-australia>
- Stonehouse, A. (2006) *NSW Curriculum Framework for Children's Services:* http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/docswr/_assets/main/documents/childcare_framework.pdf

- *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework:*
www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/eyldf/default.htm
- *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework – Resources for Professionals:*
www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/eyldf/profresources.htm

Service policies

- *Child Safe Environment Policy*
- *Curriculum Development Policy*
- *Excursions and Service Events Policy*
- *Sun Protection Policy*
- *Supervision of Children Policy*
- *Water Safety Policy*

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- collaborating with the Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, parents/guardians, children and others at the service to identify environmental sustainability strategies for implementation (refer to Attachment 1 – Strategies for environmental sustainability)
- allocating the necessary resources to implement the identified environmental sustainability strategies at the service
- ensuring the Nominated Supervisor and all staff are aware of their responsibilities under this *Environmental Sustainability Policy*
- ensuring the identified strategies (refer to Attachment 1 – Strategies for environmental sustainability) are implemented at the service
- ensuring parents/guardians are aware of, and have access to, the *Environmental Sustainability Policy*.

The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

- collaborating with the Approved Provider, educators, staff, parents/guardians, children and others at the service to identify environmental sustainability strategies for implementation at the service (refer to Attachment 1 – Strategies for environmental sustainability)
- implementing identified strategies for which they have responsibility at the service (refer to Attachment 1 – Strategies for environmental sustainability)
- ensuring environmental education and practices are incorporated into the curriculum (refer to *Curriculum Development Policy*)
- providing families with information about environmentally sustainable practices e.g. through displays, fact sheets and local community resources, and by ensuring that they have access to the *Environmental Sustainability Policy*
- making recommendations to the Approved Provider about green and sustainable options for the service, that reflect the guidelines within this policy
- seeking and applying for grants, where appropriate, to support the implementation of strategies within this policy
- keeping up to date with current research, resources and best practice through newsletters, journals and support agencies such as Environmental Education in Early Childhood (EEEC).

Certified Supervisors, educators and other staff are responsible for:

- collaborating with the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, fellow educators/staff, parents/guardians, children and others at the service to identify environmental sustainability strategies for implementation at the service (refer to Attachment 1 – Strategies for environmental sustainability)
- implementing identified strategies for which they have responsibility at the service (refer to Attachment 1 – Strategies for environmental sustainability)
- engaging in activities that support the service to become more environmentally sustainable (e.g. recycling)

- incorporating environmental education and sustainable practices within the curriculum
- planning opportunities for children to connect with nature and the natural world at the service, including on excursions and at other service events
- incorporating celebrations of environmental awareness into the program e.g. National Tree Day, National Recycling Week, Clean Up Australia Day and Walk to Work Day
- keeping up to date with current research, resources and best practice through newsletters, journals and support agencies such as Environmental Education in Early Childhood (EEEC).

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- collaborating with the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, children and others at the service to identify environmental sustainability strategies for implementation at the service (refer to Attachment 1 – Strategies for environmental sustainability)
- following the strategies identified and outlined in this *Environmental Sustainability Policy*
- encouraging their children to adopt environmentally sustainable practices at both the service and at home.

Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.

EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Strategies for Environmental Sustainability

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of North Brighton Kindergarten on 4th Dec 2017.

Review date: December 2019

Attachment 1: Strategies for Environmental Sustainability

Item	Strategy	Adopt	Responsibility	Timing or Method of Delivery	Progression notes
Curriculum					
Term Based Environmental Topic	Identify an environmental topic and celebrate relevant environmental awareness days (i.e. National Recycling Week) for each term. Explore the topic through the curriculum and at times display children's work on the Early Years Learning Framework Board in the Kindergarten.	Yes	Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisors, Educators	Each Term	
Promote Curriculum to Parents	Advise parents of the environmental topic via email (preference) or fortnightly program updates and how it is to be incorporated into the curriculum	Yes	Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor, Educators	Each Term	Educators are successfully sharing and incorporating environmental topics in their programming. Excursions to the Cranbourne gardens have been very successful.
Sustainability in Practice	Role model sustainable practices and behaviors in the Kindergarten including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) No lights are switched on during rest time. (b) Use recycled and natural materials as well as some non-natural materials for program play. (c) Minimise use of tap water during water play. 	Yes Yes Yes	Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisors, Educators	As Appropriate All lights are turned off during children's rest time. Educators include both recycled and natural materials and non-natural materials for program play. The playground rainwater tank was installed as a sustainable	This is now becoming automatic

	<p>(d) Recycle water on garden after water play, where appropriate</p> <p>(e) Provide books on the environment in the library.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>		<p>water supply. New creek bed and water fountain drain into the garden and water the surrounding plants</p> <p>The water play container is emptied onto the garden after each session.</p> <p>The library contains books on the natural environment, animals, plants and sustainability.</p>	
Family and Community Involvement					
Engage families in changes to our play area	Consult families and engage them in improvements to our outdoor space	Yes	Executive Committee Education Leader and other educators	<p>As required.</p> <p>Families were consulted and participated in planning of our new outdoor space</p> <p>Parents assisted in the creation of the space. We received a tree from a family that was old and dangerous and this tree was cut up and incorporated in our design.</p> <p>A design diary was shared in the communal space for families to read and leave comments</p>	Successful
Provide Information about the Policy	Inform families about this policy and provide a copy in the policy folder.	Yes	Approved Provider	Families informed by email and a copy kept in the policy folder.	

Create new outdoor space	Udes local designer and incorporated local flora in our design	Yes	Committee of Management	As required	Completed in 2017. Ongoing maintenance that required participation of the families is ongoing
Creation of community garden	NBK has a plot at the St.Stephen's Community garden	Yes	Education Leader	visited as per curriculum / planning allows. Families are also able to attend out of kinder hours	This program has been successful and has seen families participating well
Water					
Water Conservation	Encourage children to use dual flush toilets correctly.	Yes	Certified Supervisors and Educators	Reminders by Certified Supervisors and Educators when required.	
	Encourage children to reduce the amount of water they use during hand washing	Yes	Certified Supervisors and Educators	Reminders by Certified Supervisors and Educators when required	
	Disengage hot water in bathroom.	Yes	Approved Provider	Completed	
	Encourage use of short wash on dishwasher or hand wash to reduce water use in the kitchen	Yes	Approved Provider	Reminder sign placed in kitchen	
	Incorporated wet creek bed and water fountain in outdoor playspace	Yes	Approved provider / Educational leader	Water drains into garden bed	
Energy Use					
Office Equipment	Turn off computers, screen, fax and photocopiers when not in use. Do not	Yes	Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisors,	Reminder sign in office	This is now becoming automatic

leave on standby to reduce energy use.

Educators and Administration

Lights, heating and cooling	Turn off lights, heating or air conditioning before leaving the building.	Yes	All	Reminder sign at alarm pad.	
Kitchen equipment	Turn off electrical equipment in kitchen i.e. microwave, toasters and kettle at power source at the end of the day.	Yes	All	Reminder sign in kitchen	
Regulating Temperature	Maintain heating thermostat at 18 degrees	Yes	Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor, Educators.	Sign placed on thermostat to regulate temperature at 18 degrees Celsius.	
Energy Use Continued					
Shading and Blinds	Install awning over playground entrance to provide shade and to keep kindergarten room cool during hot weather.	Yes	Approved Provider	Installed	
	Install shade cloth over sandpit to provide shade.	Yes	Approved Provider	Installed	
	Planted large tree in play area in increase shading in the PM	Yes	Approved provider	Planted (still needs to grow to provide full effect)	
Waste Minimisation					
Reduce	Encourage use of email, where possible and utilise Parent PaperWork	Yes	All	All parents' email addresses to be collected at the start of the year and entered into Parent Paperwork Regular reminder at	

to inform parents of things going on at the kinder			staff meetings and committee meetings.		
	Encourage children to only use one paper towel to wipe their hands after washing.	Yes	Certified Supervisor and Educators	Certified Supervisor and Educators regularly remind children.	A child is now on 'duty' to remind children to use 1 paper towel to dry their hands
	Set default on the computers to print double sided and include a reuse paper tray.	Yes	Administration	Default set and maintained	
	Encourage children to bring in rubbish free snacks and lunch ('nude food') in reusable containers.	Yes	Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisors and Educators	A notice to be sent out to parents by email at least once a term.	
Paper Recycling	Encourage recycling of paper into two categories – reuse or recycle for waste disposal in office.	Yes	Approved Provider	Paper recycling bins provided in the office for staff use and one in kindergarten room for use by children.	
Other Recycling	Explore opportunities to recycle ink cartridges and toner.	Yes	Approved Provider	Recycle cartridges and toner at Planet Ark Collection Points.	
	Explore opportunities to recycle plastic, glass, cardboard, foil and metal.	Yes	Approved Provider	Install recycling bins in the kitchen and encourage use. Install "Recycle" Bins to collect soft plastics from children's lunches and other sources	This is working well and the children are learning what type of waste goes in which bin

Green Purchasing	Purchase recycled products i.e. paper towels, toilet paper and tissues where possible and within budget.	Yes	Approved Provider	Recycled products will be purchased where available from suppliers and within budget.	
Biodiversity					
Garden maintenance	Maintain the garden in the kindergarten playground	Yes	Approved Provider	Organise parent working bees to maintain the garden when required.	
Garden planting	When required, new plants should be indigenous, native and/or drought resistant plants in order to develop children's understanding of how plant diversity encourages animal diversity and how water use can be reduced.	Yes	Approved Provider	To be considered when purchasing new plants for the garden or kindergarten room as permitted by the budget.	This was a main consideration when planning and designing the new outdoor space in 2017
Water Source for Garden	Water the garden from the water tank as per the maintenance instructions for the garden	Yes	Approved Provider	Educators on a roster	
Food Security	Plant herbs or vegetables in the planter boxes as part of the curriculum for children to understand the importance of growing our own food.	Yes	Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisors and Educators	Planting to occur at times when it is appropriate to the curriculum and meets the children's specific interests.	A plot has also been purchased at the St.Stephen's community garden for the children to use and families can also attend out of hours
Transport					
Raise Awareness	Publicise Walk to School Days	Yes	Nominated Supervisor	Once per year	
Bike Parking	Monitor Demand for Additional Bike/Pram Parking at the Centre and lobby Council for additional bike hoops if required.	Yes	Approved Provider	At the start of each year seek feedback from class representatives to determine demand for more facilities.	Grant applications have failed. This is an ongoing process. Council to be asked about

