



Providing a Child Safe Environment

Reviewed: 3/08/2019

Next Review: August 2020

Education and care services regulation/s	Regulation 168(2)(h) Education and care service must have policies and procedures
NSW Department of Education policy, procedure or guidelines	<p>The following department policies and relevant documents can be accessed from the preschool section of the department's website;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People Policy – including implementation document Protecting and supporting children and young people procedures • Student Safety information, procedures to ensure a child safe environment • Working with Children Check Policy • Work Health and Safety (WHS) Policy • Child Protection – Allegations Against Employees Policy
National Quality Standard(s)	<p>2.2.1: Supervision At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard</p> <p>2.2.3: Child Protection Management, educators and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>3.1.2: Upkeep Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained.</p>
Preschool Handbook reference	<p>Wellbeing, pages 37-38, 43-45</p> <p>Staffing, p. 60-61</p>
School policy or procedure	<p>Oak Flats Public School Care and Supervision Policy</p> <p>Oak Flats Public School Wellbeing Framework</p>

Introduction

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

Aim

Oak Flats Preschool 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 in and outdoors will support children's learning, safety, levels of engagement and access to positive experiences and inclusive relationships.

Implementation

- Fencing and barriers which enclose outdoor areas used by children in the education and care service 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. Considerations about minimising access to the

preschool by unauthorised people and animals will also inform the height and design of fencing and barriers.

- Sufficient furniture, materials and developmentally appropriate equipment are provided and maintained in the centre in order to support all children to engage and access the program and develop their developing skills and independence.
- Adequate space requirements are maintained in both the indoor and outdoor environments.
- 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.
- Our preschool is well ventilated, air conditioned and has adequate natural light.
- Indoor temperatures are maintained at levels that support children's safety and wellbeing.
- The play spaces in the centre 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 has been adapted to support access to both indoor and outdoor play activities and to toilet and facilities according to supervision requirements, children's independence and developmental needs.
- Our gardens reflect the local natural habitat and encourage native wildlife into the education and care environment. Plants are selected to minimise risks to children. No poisonous or dangerous plants will be included in the education and care environment.
- Educators will carefully select and provide adequate numbers of resources in order to contribute to children's sense of belong and to provide new learning opportunities that extend and challenge children's learning and development.
- A system of daily checks has been developed to ensure the safety of the Indoor and Outdoor Environments.

The Preschool Teacher will collaborate with SLSO 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.
- Ensure that outdoor environments provide opportunities to learn through play, enabling access to materials that stimulate investigation and reflection, and enriched with natural resources and opportunities to connect with nature.
- 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 to 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 area. 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 any risks.

Ratios, group size and attendance patterns

- The staff to child ratio for the preschool class is one to ten. This ratio should be maintained at all times (regulation 271).
- Preschool classes are required to offer two attendance patterns across the week. Decisions about enrolment patterns are best made in consultation with the school community, including other community-based early childhood providers.
- A part-time program will offer two and a half days to two separate groups of children each week. In exceptional circumstances preschools may offer flexible enrolment patterns to cater for the needs of individual children for example, a child who is at risk. This could include five days per week. A five day per week program is also available where a preschool is located in a remote community; is located in an area with high socio-economic disadvantage, or in a community with a significantly high proportion of Aboriginal children.

Hours of operation

It is recommended that the hours of operation of the preschool match those of the school. On the last day of each term the Principal may choose to close the preschool for a full day to allow for the cleaning of equipment and furniture, and the securing of buildings and resources for the vacation period. However, appropriate provision needs to be made for any child whose family is unable to make alternative arrangements for the closure.

Approval must be sought from the Director, Public Schools NSW if the preschool is to be closed at any other time.

Supervision

- Supervision in the preschool will be part of the whole school supervision plan.
- The plan will acknowledge that preschool children need closer supervision than school-aged children due to their age and the nature of their activities.
- Preschool educators will be aware of potential hazards to ensure the risk of illness, accidents and harm is reduced wherever possible.
- When educators supervise children they will not perform other duties which would affect the quality of their supervision and their interactions with children.
- Staff need to take a common sense approach to ensure children are adequately supervised if the preschool's toilets are not visible or easily accessible from the preschool room.
- Regulation 271 requires a staff-to-child ratio of 1:10. Staff to child ratios alone do not determine what is considered adequate supervision.

Child Protection

All Department staff must complete child protection training to ensure they understand their responsibilities under the child protection legislation as "mandatory reporters".

Teachers must follow the Department's child protection procedures if there are concerns about risk of harm to a child. They should also support children to develop self-care skills that enable them to protect themselves and others from harm.

The Department's Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People: Revised Procedures details the responsibilities of preschool staff if they have concerns about suspected risk of harm to a child.

Cleaning

- Our preschool educators will ensure that furnishings and play equipment are checked regularly and kept in a safe, clean and hygienic condition. A cleaning schedule will ensure the regular cleaning (as appropriate) of:
 - tables and chairs
 - indoor equipment
 - soft toys
 - puzzles
 - books
 - sand equipment
 - outdoor construction toys
- The Principal may decide to close the preschool on the last day of each term. This will allow for educators to disinfect equipment, furniture and beds, and secure buildings, resources and equipment ready for the new term.
- Educators will consider the type of products used for cleaning desks, toys and equipment in the preschool. Many chemical cleaning products (including disinfectants) may be a potential risk to health, possibly triggering conditions such as asthma, allergies and poisoning. Detergent and water will be used for all general environmental cleaning. The use of disinfectant is only necessary if a surface is contaminated with potentially infectious material. However, the surface needs to be cleaned with detergent and water before using disinfectant.

Sandpit

- The sandpit will be securely covered when not in use to prevent contamination, such as animal excreta, broken glass and other objects. It will be checked daily.
- The sand pit will be cleaned periodically. This will be done by either:
 - watering with either mild detergent, diluted household disinfectant or a 1:10 solution of bleach;
 - raking through with salt or
 - digging the sand over monthly to reduce moisture and stop the sand from turning sour.
- The sand will be kept topped up to the maximum level (within 100 mm of the top edge of the sandpit edging).
- The sand will be renewed annually or as necessary.

Buildings and Equipment

- All buildings and equipment will be safe and in good repair.
- Urgent minor repairs for the preschool will be carried out as for all other areas in the school.
- Playground equipment must be safe and in good repair. It should not pose any fall, pinch, crush or trap hazard to the children.
- The recommended depth of soft fall under fixed equipment is 300 mm. Mobile play equipment over 500 mm also needs to be set up on soft fall to a depth of 300mm

Electrical and Fire Safety

- All electrical equipment will be well maintained. Electrical cords will be secured safely away from children's reach and power points fitted with protectors, to ensure children's safety.
- When not in use equipment will be stored in a safe place that is inaccessible to children.
- Fire extinguishers must be placed appropriately throughout the building, as in the rest of the school, and a fire blanket kept adjacent to any cooking facilities.
- Fire extinguishers will be checked according to DoE maintenance schedule.

Chemical Safety

- All dangerous cleaning materials, disinfectants, poisonous and other dangerous substances and

medications will be kept in a child-resistant container.

- They must be labelled with a description of contents and directions for their use.
- The following items will be kept in secure storage facilities that are inaccessible to children:
 - all cleaning materials, including detergents and disinfectants
 - poisonous and other dangerous substances
 - dangerous tools and equipment
 - toiletries
 - medications
 - first aid equipment.

Animals in the Preschool

- Animals used in the preschool educational program can provide valuable learning experiences for children. Animals can help children care for other living things and teach a sense of responsibility, caring and tolerance. Staff must supervise children at all times when in contact with animals and good hygiene practices are to be followed, as animals can pass on both minor and serious diseases to humans.
- All children and adults wash their hands thoroughly after handling animals, especially before touching food
- Animals' food and water containers must be kept separate from any areas used for food preparation for children
- Animals must be kept off tables where food is prepared and served
- Animals should be well cared for and kept healthy
- Animal enclosures and cages must be kept clean
- If an animal is unwell, the advice of a vet must be sought
- Children should not handle animals that are unwell.

Plants in the Preschool

Any plants or vegetation that pose any risk of injury or severe discomfort or poisoning will be identified and maintained, or removed to ensure that they are no longer a hazard to children in the preschool.

Evaluation

Oak Flats Public School Preschool is committed to providing a safe play environment for our students. The preschool 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.