



Providing a Child Safe Environment

Reviewed: 5/08/2021

Next Review: Term 4 2022

Education and care services regulation/s	<p>Regulation 84 Awareness of child protection law</p> <p>Regulation 103 Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair</p> <p>Regulation 105 Furniture, materials and equipment</p> <p>Regulation 109 Toilet and hygiene facilities</p> <p>Regulation 115 Premises designed to facilitate supervision</p> <p>Regulation 167 Record of Service's compliance</p> <p>Regulation 168(2)(h) Education and care service must have policies and procedures</p>
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 Student Safety information, procedures to ensure a child safe environment • Working with Children Check Policy • Work Health and Safety (WHS) Policy • Child Protection Policy: Responding to and reporting students at risk of harm • Child Protection – Allegations Against Employees Policy
National Quality Standard(s)	<p>Quality Area 2 - Children's Health and Safety</p> <p>2.2 Safety Each child is protected</p> <p>Quality Area 3 - Physical Environment</p> <p>3.1 Design The design of the facilities is appropriate for the operation of a service</p> <p>3.2 Use The service environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning</p>
Leading and Operating Department Preschool Guidelines	<p>Leading and Operating Department Preschool Guidelines</p> <p>Children's health and safety pp.39-50</p> <p>Physical environment pp. 51-56</p>
School policy or procedure	<p>Oak Flats Public School Care and Supervision Policy</p> <p>Oak Flats Public School Wellbeing Framework</p>
Sources	<p>Raising children website</p>

Introduction

The environment of a service 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

At Oak Flats Preschool we ensure the environment is safe, clean and well maintained. Children's awareness of the environment and sustainable practice is supported through daily practices, resources and interactions. The physical environment, both in and outdoors supports children's learning, safety, levels of engagement and access to positive experiences and inclusive relationships. We aim to keep children safe from harm and/or hazards.

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 supports 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. Children do not play outside during the hottest parts of the day.
- 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 are included in the education and care environment.
- Educators carefully select and provide adequate numbers of resources in order to contribute to children's sense of belonging and to provide new learning opportunities that extend and challenge children's learning and development.
- Risk management plans are written for the indoor and outdoor environments. Any changes to the environment such as maintenance or construction or any hazards that are potentially dangerous require a risk management plan to be written.
- A environmental safety check is carried out daily by the teacher to ensure all areas are safe and to identify any potential hazards in the preschool.

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 are 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 includes the introduction of indoor plants into indoor areas. Educators and children are responsible for the care of these plants ensuring they have enough sunlight and water. As in the outdoor garden, plants are 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 is to 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.
- The preschool's part-time program offers 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.

Hours of operation

- The hours of operation of the preschool match those of the school.
- We are licensed from 9:00 am until 3:00 pm and operate according to the NSW Department of Education school terms.
- The preschool has 5 pupil free days per year as determined by the NSW Department of Education.
- Any child left at the preschool after 3:15 pm is sent to wait in the school office and their parents/carers or emergency contacts are notified.
- **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 is part of the whole school supervision plan.
- The educators' lunch breaks and RFF are covered by teachers and SLSOs from the school and included in staff rosters.
- The plan acknowledges that preschool children need closer supervision than school-aged children due to their age and the nature of their activities.
- Preschool educators are aware of potential hazards to ensure the risk of illness, accidents and harm is reduced wherever possible.
- When educators supervise children they do not perform other duties which would affect the quality of their supervision and their interactions with children.
- Staff 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. During outside play, the children are to access the outside toilet whenever possible.

- Preschool educators engage in active supervision and are always scanning and walking around the area where the children are.
- A large mirror is used to see around corners where visibility is reduced.
- 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 NSW Department of Education mandatory child protection training annually 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.
- All suspicions of any risk of harm to a child must be reported to the school principal as the nominated supervisor of the preschool. They will then use the mandatory reporter guide to assist in decision making about the incident.
- Notification of a serious incident must be made to the Early Learning Unit. A serious incident includes physical or sexual abuse of a child at the preschool (allegation, complaint or occurring) or a serious injury, illness or trauma.

Cleaning **Nicole please check and add. Scaffold says “What and how is cleaning carried out? What products/methods are used for cleaning?”**

- Our preschool educators ensure that furnishings and play equipment are checked regularly and kept in a safe, clean and hygienic condition. A cleaning schedule ensures the regular cleaning (daily, weekly, monthly) of:
 - tables and chairs
 - floors
 - indoor equipment
 - indoor toys
 - puzzles
 - books
 - sand equipment
 - outdoor toys and equipment
- All toys and resources are cleaned before they are packed away in the store rooms.
- Toys and resources that have been in contact with bodily fluids are immediately removed from the floor and washed.
- Spare hats are washed at the end of the day after use.
- **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 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 is 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 and Mud Kitchen

- The sandpit is securely covered when not in use to prevent contamination, such as animal excreta, broken glass and other objects. It is checked daily.
- The sand pit is cleaned weekly. This is done by raking through with salt. Monthly the sand is dug over to reduce moisture and stop the sand from turning sour.
- The sand is kept topped up to the maximum level (within 100 mm of the top edge of the sandpit edging).
- The sand is renewed annually or as necessary.
- The mud kitchen equipment is hosed off daily and disinfected at the end of the week.
- Once a term the mud kitchen stored area is thoroughly cleaned.
- The mud kitchen is checked daily for spiders and broken equipment.

Buildings and Equipment

- All buildings and equipment must be safe and in good repair.
- Any damaged or broken equipment, furniture is removed from the children's access. If repairs are required they are noted in the school's general assistant's (GA) book and he carries them out. This includes building repairs.
- Urgent minor repairs for the preschool are 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 is well maintained. Electrical cords are secured safely away from children's reach and power points are fitted with protectors, to ensure children's safety.
- When not in use equipment is stored in a safe place that is inaccessible to children.
- Fire extinguishers are placed appropriately throughout the building, as in the rest of the school, and a fire blanket is kept adjacent to any cooking facilities.
- Fire extinguishers are checked according to the DoE maintenance schedule.

Chemical Safety

- All dangerous cleaning materials, disinfectants, poisonous and other dangerous substances and medications are kept in a child-resistant container.
- They must be labelled with a description of contents and directions for their use.
- Potentially hazardous products are kept in either the laundry, a locked cupboard in the kitchen or a locked cupboard in the indoor area.
- 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.

- Educators will determine the risk factors involved in having animals in the preschool and will develop a risk assessment plan.
- Children's wishes to not interact with animals will be respected and adhered to
- All children and adults are to 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. The GA will remove the toxic plants and dispose of them appropriately
- Children will wear gloves when gardening in order to minimise the risk of injury or illness.
- All plants will be checked using the following website and not brought into the preschool:
 - <https://raisingchildren.net.au/toddlers/safety/poisons/dangerous-plants>

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 as well as the care and professionalism of the staff. The environment complements the educational and care aims of the service, supporting children to have a strong sense of belonging, being and becoming as well as facilitating their growth and development.