

Cleaning and Maintaining the Environment Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Learning Links is committed to the safety and wellbeing of staff and clients.

Learning Links has established cleaning and maintenance procedures and methods of working to reduce risks that may present in our work environment.

This policy provides staff and families with information on our cleaning and maintenance strategies that support:

- Children's right to education in an environment that provides for their health, wellbeing and safety.
- Regular and effective cleaning and maintenance of the environment to ensure that illness and unintentional injuries are avoided.
- Learning Links' focus on environmental responsibility which encompasses the cleaning and maintenance of the education and care service using methods that are sustainable and environmentally friendly.

Policy

Our Education and Care Services are committed to providing safe and healthy environments that reduce the risks in our work environment by:

- Monitoring and reviewing the release of information from authorities on an ongoing basis; responding swiftly to advice from Health and Regulatory authorities; and incorporating this advice and directives into our way of working.
- Following procedures and schedules that ensure the buildings, premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained.
- Promoting awareness of environmental sustainability through daily practices and information sharing.
- Involving children in discussions about health and safety issues and supporting children to develop guidelines to keep the environment safe for all.
- Promoting eco-friendly practices and encouraging staff, children and families to use chemical free options for cleaning where possible.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Environmental sustainability	Responsibly interacting with the planet to maintain natural resources and avoid jeopardizing the ability for future generations to meet their needs.
Eco-Friendly	Products and practices that are not harmful to the environment.

Eligibility

This Policy and Procedure applies to all staff employed in Learning Links Education and Care Services.

Responsible

Responsibilities for the policy are:

Person	Responsible for
Approved Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining oversight of the implementation of the cleaning and maintaining the Environment Policy and Procedures to ensure the wellbeing of all staff, children and families.

<p>Nominated Supervisor/ Manager Early Childhood</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that education and care services are cleaned by professional cleaners at the end of each day; • Ensuring that written policies and procedures regarding child safe environments, cleaning and maintenance are developed, reviewed and implemented. • Checking updates on a regular basis from reliable sources and communicating these as required to the Approved Provider, staff and families. • Implementing best practice hygiene and environmental cleaning practices. • Ensuring adequate stock of Personal Protection Equipment(PPE) and hygiene supplies and managing staff, family and child access to these as relevant. • Develop systems to ensure that daily checks and risk assessments of the environment are documented and that where repairs, cleaning or maintenance issues are identified, they are attended to promptly. • Develop systems to ensure that the daily cleaning of the service is carried out to a satisfactory standard; • Ensure that daily checks and risk assessments of the environment are conducted and documented; • Respond to any identified risks, repairs, cleaning or maintenance issues promptly; • Support educators to consider alternative and sustainable cleaning options and arrange for professional learning and information to ensure a clean and safe environment for children.
<p>All Staff (Early Childhood Educators)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that cleaning duties do not compromise care and supervision of children at any time; • Identify when the building, premises, furniture or equipment require cleaning or maintenance. • Identified issues that require being dealt with immediately, either by cleaning as required or by removing the damaged furniture or equipment to be repaired or discarded in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor. • Complete required cleaning and maintenance documentation and refer to the Nominated Supervisor for attention as required; • Involve children in discussions about health and safety and support children to develop knowledge and strategies to keep the environment safe for all; • Model cleaning practices for children and encourage children to be involved in the cleaning of the environment where appropriate; • Support children to have an active role in caring for their environment and to contribute to a sustainable future; • Be responsible for spot cleaning the education and care service to ensure cleanliness and hygiene standards are maintained throughout the day; • Minimise the use of chemicals in the education and care environment to the extent possible; • Research natural cleaning alternatives for use in the education and care environment. Natural or chemical-free options that are sensitive to the needs of educators and children with allergies will be utilised when possible;

All Staff (Early Childhood Educators)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider using the following eco-friendly alternatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bicarbonate of Soda (made into a paste) – replaces Jif and Gumption. ○ Lemon juice – an alternate to bleach. ○ Borax – alternate to bleach, disinfectant and insect sprays ○ Bees wax – alternate to furniture and floor polish. ○ Consider sustainable practice when cleaning. ○ Reflect on current practices and access professional learning, journals and the Internet for more ideas on eco-friendly cleaning options.
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Related Legislation

Education and Care Services National Regulations
Guide to the National Quality Standard (3) ACECQA (2015)
Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
The NSW Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and the NSW Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011
Staying Healthy in Child Care: Preventing Infectious Diseases in Child Care, 5th Edition, 2013

Related National Guidelines

LINKS TO THE NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD

2.1.3 – Effective hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
2.1.4 – Steps are taken to control the spread of infectious diseases and to manage injuries and illness, in accordance with recognised guidelines.
2.3.2 – Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury.
2.3.3 – Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.
3.1.2 – Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained.
3.3 – The service takes an active role in caring for its environment and contributes to a sustainable future.
3.3.1 – Sustainable practices are embedded in service operations.
3.3.2 – Children are supported to become environmentally responsible and show respect for the environment.

Related Learning Links Policies, Procedures and Forms

- Keeping Children Safe Policy and Procedure
- Interactions with Children Policy and Procedure
- Infectious Diseases Policy and Procedure
- Environmental Sustainability Policy and Procedure
- Incident, Illness, Trauma and Injury Policy and Procedure
- Work, Health and Safety Policy and Procedure
- Dealing with COVID-19 Policy and Procedure
- Frequent contact surfaces COVID-19 Daily Cleaning Schedule
- Daily indoor safety and hazard identification checklist (Classroom, Foyer and bathroom, craft area/ staff kitchen, staff office).
- Cleaning and Maintenance of the Preschool Ground's checklist
- Daily Bathroom Cleaning and Risk Identification Checklist
- Site Work, Health and Safety Risk Assessments

Key Resources

- The NSW Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/newlegislation2012/Pages/default.aspx
- Health and Safety in Children's Centres: Model Policies and Practices (2nd ed.)
www.community.nsw.gov.au/docswr/assets/main/documents/childcare_model_policies.pdf
- DEEWR (2009). Belonging, Being and Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. www.deewr.gov.au
- Guide to the National Quality Standard ACECQA (2011)
- Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- NSW Department of Environment and Heritage-
www.environment.nsw.gov.au/households/EasyCleaning.htm
- Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities –www.environment.gov.au
- Clean and Green: Natural Cleaning Formulas by Loretta Wallace –
www.nourishedmagazine.com.au/blog/articles/clean-and-green-natural-cleaning-formulas
- Health and Safety in Children's Centres: Model Policies and Practices (2nd ed.)

Procedure for maintaining a clean and hygienic environment

If a child in the Education and Care Service is involved in an incident, becomes ill, experiences trauma or an injury whilst attending the program, staff will follow this procedure:

Step	Action
1.	Use fresh mild soapy water for daily cleaning of tables, chairs, surfaces, mouthed toys and general spills both indoors and outside. <i>Soapy water can be made from pH neutral detergent diluted in water and stored in a labelled spray bottle out of reach of children.</i>
2.	Use vinegar and water to disinfect and clean the bathroom, toilets, sinks and nappy change mats throughout the day. <i>The vinegar and water can be made in a labelled spray bottle with equal parts of white vinegar and water and stored out of reach of children. Mix a few drops of essential oils is desired.</i>
3.	Aim to minimise waste by encouraging recyclable materials to be placed in labelled recycling containers rather than garbage bins where possible.

Procedure for maintaining the safety of the environment and identifying potential risks or hazards

Step	Action
1	Daily inspection checklists to be completed for all areas of the indoor and outdoor environment to assess cleanliness, safety and possible risks that may have arisen overnight or since the last check was completed.
2	Daily indoor safety and hazard identification checklists to be completed and signed off by early shift staff prior to 8am for both classrooms, the children's bathroom, foyer and entry prior to children and families arriving to Preschool.
3	Daily outdoor hazard identification checklists to be completed and signed off by late shift staff prior to 9am for the outdoor area, craft and kitchen area entry prior to children and families accessing the outdoor space.
4	Any hazards or maintenance that are identified by staff during daily checks are to be documented on the daily checklist and a copy provided to the Manager for follow up as required.
5	Completed daily checklists to be kept on a clipboard until the end of each term, then passed to the Manager for filing and scanning to 1data for archiving at the end of each calendar year.

6	WH&S is a fixed agenda item for every Preschool staff meeting. Staff are encouraged to discuss any WH&S, cleaning and / or maintenance issues at each staff meeting.
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Document control

This table outlines the control details for this document.

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