

POLICY NO 50: ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Key Policy Contact Person: Manager, Our Village Family Childcare

POLICY STATEMENT:

Our Village Family Childcare Service is committed to taking an active role in caring for its environment through daily practices, resources and interactions all contributing to a sustainable future. We recognise children have a genuine interest in sustainability and the potential to make a positive impact, assisting children and families to become advocates for a sustainable future.

As per the Early Years Learning Framework V2.0 OVFC is committed to promote sustainability as a multidimensional approach, acknowledging that sustainability is not just about the environment.

- Environmental Sustainability – helping children to caring for the natural world by recognising their role in ecosystems and the importance of protecting, preserving and improving the environment.
- Social Sustainability – promoting inclusion, respectful behaviour and fairness with the local and global communities.
- Economic Sustainability – assisting children understand the connection between economic activities and their impacts to the environment and community through fair and equitable access to resources, conserving resources and reducing consumption and waste.

CRITICAL INFORMATION:

Our Village Family Childcare Service is committed to taking an active role in caring for its environment and contributing to a sustainable future. We believe in educating children to be environmentally sensible and to show respect for their environment.

Contents

POLICY STATEMENT:	1
PURPOSE:	2
SCOPE/RESPONSIBILITIES:	2
STATEMENT OF DIVERSITY	2
DEFINITIONS:	2
PROCEDURES:	2
REFERENCES:	6
RELATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES/ WORK INSTRUCTIONS:	7

PURPOSE:

Our Village Family Childcare is committed to improving environmental sustainability. This policy and procedure aim to promote and support sustainable practices that are socially responsible across the service and reduce our impact on the environment and improve health within our service and the community.

SCOPE/RESPONSIBILITIES:

This document applies to all Educators, Families, Coordination Unit Staff, Volunteers and Students of Our Village Family Childcare Service.

STATEMENT OF DIVERSITY

Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health is committed to improving the health of our community and being accessible to all, including people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, those from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background, people with a disability, Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQA+) people and other socially vulnerable groups and supporting their communities across the lifespan from birth to older age.

DEFINITIONS:

Environmental Sustainability	is the practice of interacting with the planet responsibly . We do it to avoid depleting natural resources and compromising the future generation's ability to meet their daily needs.
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PROCEDURES:

Educators

Each Educator where possible will:

- As part of economic and environmental sustainability promote the 7Rs of sustainability within their program:
 - Reduce
 - Reuse
 - Recycle
 - Respect
 - Repair
 - Reflect
 - Refuse
- Integrating recycling as part of everyday practice within their daily routine.

- Provide children opportunities to learn and engage with nature, conservation and sustainable practices including
- Role model environmentally and sustainable practices within their program plan for example but not limited to:
 - Offer recyclable containers throughout mealtimes and encourage children to place food scraps into separate containers E.G Worm Farms, Chickens, Composting, Fogo Bin etc.
 - Have discussions in relation to environmentally responsible practices with the children and families as part of their program.
 - Share information with families on environmental and sustainable practices that are implemented at the service and encourage of these practices in the home environment.
 - Role model energy and water conservation practices: For example, turning off lights and air-conditioning when a room is not in use, emptying water play, old drinking water onto plants and other garden areas.
- Share ideas between educators, children, and families about environmentally responsible ideas, implementation, and resources. This will be supported through our communication strategies, including emails, social media platforms and informal conversations.
- Seek out equipment that is environmentally friendly where possible.

Sustainable Practices may include but not limited to	Ideas
Recycle	- Bins and signage for waste and recycled materials. - Recycled paper. - Use scrap paper for art and craft. - Use both sides of paper for drawing. - and repurpose materials for play and art and craft E.G plastic containers and bottles, cooking utensils, pots and pans, old household items (wrapping paper, wallpaper, ribbon, decorations), fabrics, wool and sewing items. - avoid disposable, single use items.
Garden and the Outdoor Environment	- Planting an edible environment such as - vegetables, herbs, and fruit trees. - Sensory Garden. - Worm farm, Chickens. - Give food scraps to worms or pets, or to a child to take home for their pet/s. - Encourage children to learn more about activities such as 'garden to plate.' - Allow opportunities for children to participate in experiences such as seed sprouting, vegetable gardening, cooking with what is grown, and provide learning about weeds.

Sustainable Practices may include but not limited to	Ideas
Energy Preservation	- Install LED lighting where possible and turn them off when not in use. - Turn off electrical appliances at the outlet when not in use. - Use natural ventilation and insulated blinds/drapes rather than air conditioning when temperatures are not extreme.
Water Preservation	Talk to the children about: - using half flush on the toilet. - turning off the taps and ensuring leaking taps are fixed. - turning off the tap when soaping their hands. - Collect rainwater and use in the garden and for water/sand play. - Use water play water on the garden rather than tipping out at the end of the day. - Use recycled water e.g., for watering gardens as pot plants.
Natural World	- Resource natural materials – trees, blocks, boxes etc. in arts, crafts, and play. - Talk to the children about the natural decomposition cycle through exposure and participation in worm farms and composting food scraps. - Have ‘bird attracting’ plants in your garden. - Have ‘butterfly attracting’ plants in your garden. - Create a lizard lounge.
Communication	- Share the service’s sustainability journey for families and visitors to view, provide feedback and offer suggestions. - Provide families with hints and tips through social media as well as service updates about how they can become sustainable at home. - Encourage families to donate recyclable material for loose parts play. - Conversations that raise awareness with children and families about environmental issues and the interdependence between people, animals, plants, land, and water.
Green Cleaning	- Use warm soapy water to remove bacteria. - Use Biodegradable and pH neutral soaps. - Use bicarb soda, eucalyptus, tee tree oil, spirit orange, lemon juice, cream of tartar, salt, and vinegar as cleaning aids throughout the service.

Sustainable Practices may include but not limited to	Ideas
Social Sustainability	- Provide inclusive resources such as books, toys and learning material that represent diverse backgrounds and experiences.

Coordination Unit and Organisation Responsibilities

The Coordination Unit Team will:

- Network with Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health and the local community to keep up to date with current practices and ideas for being environmentally responsible.
- Encourage educators, families, and children to engage in sustainable practices and appreciate the natural environment through our communication strategies, including emails, social media platforms and informal conversations.
- Electronic communication is used where possible to reduce paper use within the office and in other communication needs.
- Coordinators to conduct environmentally responsible home visit focus' to ensure consistency and continuous improvement. E.G ensure sustainable practices are incorporated into the daily routine.
- Seek out resources and materials from recycling companies e.g., 'Reverse Garbage' or second-hand stores to use within the service.
- Seek out professional development opportunities for educators to learn about integrating environmentally sustainable education into all areas of their program.

Waste

- Reduce the amount of waste produced.
- Educate and provide professional development opportunities for educators to learn about integrating environmentally sustainable education into all areas of their program and practices the 7Rs of sustainability.
- Aim for all paper stock to be 100% recycled; and
- Make use of recycling programs for old computer hardware, used toner cartridges and obsolete equipment or furniture.

Water

- Promote practices to reduce water usage, within our organisation.
- Monitor water usage where practical; and
- Aim to ensure water efficient products and equipment are used throughout our organisation and are considered when maintenance work is conducted.

Energy

- Aim to ensure energy efficient equipment is used throughout the organisation, including lighting.
- Minimise energy consumption to reduce the impact on the natural environment.
- Use natural light wherever possible.
- Establish and encourage the use of paperless systems where practical.
- Where practicable, read electronic documents on screen rather than printing a copy.
- Consider the 'carbon miles' that products have travelled to reach us, buying local where possible.
- Buy products (e.g., coffee, chocolate) that have been produced using environmentally ethical and fair-trade practices; and
- Promote best practice use of energy within our organisation.
- All staff, volunteers and contractors will be encouraged to adopt energy conserving practices, including:
 - Closing doors and windows when heating/cooling systems are operating.
 - Turning lights and air conditioning units off when not required; and
 - Turning off computers at the end of each day.
- Encourage staff to actively travel to and from meetings (where possible) and provide alternatives to car transportation.
- Include more energy efficient vehicles to its transport fleet where possible.

Transportation

- Encourage staff to actively travel to and from meetings (where possible) and provide alternatives to car transportation.
- Include more energy efficient vehicles to its transport fleet where possible.

Biodiversity

- Aim to plant native flora as preferred vegetation.
- Identify areas for increased planting of trees; and
- Aim to balance the ecosystem of SCCH's service premises to attract more native fauna.

Business practices

- SCCH will, where appropriate, encourage the adoption of environmentally sustainable practices by our landlord / building managers and clients; and
- SCCH will include in our criteria for selection of suppliers and contractors their environmental performance.

REFERENCES:

- [Education and Care Services National Regulations, \(Current version July 1, 2023\) Regulation 113](#)
- [Create the Perfect Play Space Learning Environment](#)
- [Early Years Learning Framework – Belonging, Being Becoming V2.0](#)

- [My Time, Our Place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia V2.0](#)
- [Sustainability Practices in Childcare - Aussie Childcare Network](#)
- [Sustainability in children's education and care – We Hear You \(acecqa.gov.au\)](#)
- [Guide to the National Quality Framework – Quality Area 1, 3](#)
- SCCH Environmental Sustainability Policy and Procedure

RELATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES/ WORK INSTRUCTIONS:

- Equipment and Resources – 15
- Health and Safety – Water Safety – 44
- Children's Learning and Development & Active Play – 43
- Assessment, Approval and Reassessment of Approved Family Day Care Residences and venues – 2
- SCCH Environmental Sustainability Policy and Procedure
- Monitoring, Support and Supervision of FDC Educators - 21
- Animals and Domestic Pets - 30

VERSION CONTROL AND LEGISLATION:

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