



Environmental Sustainability Policy Best Practice – Quality Area 3

PURPOSE

To recognise the importance of our role as a community organisation that promotes awareness and action towards caring for the world we leave our children. This policy will provide guidelines to assist our Kindergarten to take an active role in caring for the environment, and promoting and contributing to a sustainable future.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Kurboroo 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 Kurboroo Kindergarten

3. BACKGROUND & LEGISLATION

Background

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. Research supports the notion 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. 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.

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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.

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

- Environmental Education in Early Childhood (EEEC): <http://www.eeec.org.au/index.php>
- *Guide to the National Quality Standard, ACECQA:* www.acecqa.gov.au
- *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

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 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
- seeking and applying for grants, where appropriate, to support the implementation of strategies within this policy ensuring parents/guardians are aware of, and have access to, the *Environmental Sustainability Policy*.

Staff are responsible for:

- collaborating with the Approved Provider, 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)

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- role modelling sustainable practices to children and families
- 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
- visiting other services known for their exemplary sustainability practices
- keeping up to date with current research, resources and best practice through professional development, newsletters, journals and support agencies such as Environmental Education in Early Childhood (EEEC).
- ongoing reflection about everyday practices and their impact on the environment
- providing families with information about environmentally sustainable practices e.g. through displays, fact sheets and local community resources, and by ensuring that families have access to the *Environmental Sustainability Policy*

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*
- **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 of Kurboroo Kindergarten 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 Kurboroo Kindergarten Committee September 2017

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ATTACHMENT 1
Strategies for Environmental Sustainability

This checklist can be used to promote discussion and formulate an environmental sustainability policy for the service.

Ensure that responsibility for implementation is allocated to each strategy adopted e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators, parents/guardians, children etc.

Agreed strategies should form the basis of the service's *Environmental Sustainability Policy*.

Strategy	Adopt (Yes/No)	Responsible for implementation (e.g. Nominated Supervisor, educators, etc.)
Data Collection		
Collect base line data from energy and water bills, and monitor waste collection. Use information gathered to set reduction targets and evaluate whether they have been achieved.	No - Maroondah City Council financial responsibility?	
Green Purchasing		
Purchase local products	??	
Purchase recycled products	??	
Purchase energy and water efficient products	??	
Purchase organic products	??	
Purchase products with minimal packaging	??	
Purchase chemical free/ green cleaning products	??	
Purchase formaldehyde free paint	Yes	Educators
Waste		
Install low energy electric hand dryer	? In new renovation?	President / Committee
Encourage children to bring rubbish free lunchboxes	Yes	Educators
Recycle plastic waste, glass, paper, cardboard, foil and metal (where applicable)	Yes	Educators
Investigate food composting	? In new renovation	President / Committee
Support and educate to the waste hierarchy - Reduce, reuse, repair and recycle	Yes	Educators
Energy		
Turn off screens / technology when not in use	Yes	All
Turn off all technology when leaving building	Yes	All
Turn off fridges when not in use for extended periods of time (eg School Holidays) (ensure no food remains in fridge)	??	

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Turn off lights when not required	? light sensors in renovation ? Staff toilets?	
Water		
Install water tanks	? In new renovation?	President / Committee
Install water saving devices (taps)	? In new renovation?	President / Committee
Biodiversity		
Grow vegetable/ herb gardens	? In new renovation?	President / Committee
Grow native and water wise plants	? In new renovation?	President / Committee
Transport		
Encourage staff and families to walk / ride where possible. – Include pram parking in new renovation design	? In new renovation?	President / Committee
Curriculum		
Role model sustainable practices and behaviours	Yes	Educators / Parents
Use improvised, recycled and natural materials for program activities	Yes	Educators
Play recycling game to promote an understanding of items that can be recycled	Yes	Educators
More information at: Environmental Education in Early Childhood for more ideas (https://www.eeec.org.au/) Including possible incursion?		

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