



CLYDE ST KINDERGARTEN INC
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY POLICY
Best Practice – Quality Area 3

PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines to assist Clyde Street Kindergarten Inc. to take an active role in caring for the environment, and promoting and contributing to a sustainable future.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Clyde Street Kindergarten Inc. 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, Persons with Management and Control, Nominated Supervisor, Person in Day to Day Charge, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Clyde Street Kindergarten Inc.

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

“One of the most significant responsibilities that [early childhood] professionals have is to support children to retain the sense of awe and wonder that they are born with, to add to that a desire to nurture and protect what is beautiful, and to encourage them to appreciate that there are many possibilities for honouring life and wonders that the world holds” (Stonehouse, A. (2006) *NSW Curriculum Framework for Children’s Services* – refer to Sources).

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 until the ‘formal education’ of primary school. Elliot and Davis (refer to

Sources) state that “early childhood educators have an active and significant role to play ensuring children experience connections with the natural environment in meaningful ways... 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 (adapted from ECA Environmental Sustainability Policy). 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.

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. 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

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The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>
- Commonwealth Legislation – ComLaw: <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/>

4. DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *Footnote*.

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 AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- *Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia:* <http://education.gov.au/early-years-learning-framework#key%20documents>
- Department of Education, Australian Government (2011) *'Educators' Guide to the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia:* <http://docs.education.gov.au/documents/educators-guide-early-years-learning-framework-australia>
- Environmental Education in Early Childhood (EEEC): <http://www.eeec.org.au/index.php>
- *Guide to the National Quality Standard*, ACECQA: www.acecqa.gov.au
- Department of Education, Australian Government, *My Time, Our Place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia:*
- https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-05/my_time_our_place_framework_for_school_age_care_in_australia_0.pdf
- *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework:* www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/eyldf/default.htm

Service policies

- *Child Safe Environment Policy*
- *Curriculum Development Policy*
- *Excursions and Service Events Policy*
- *Sun Protection Policy*
- *Supervision of Children Policy*
- *Water Safety Policy*

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider and Persons with Management and Control 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 the Nominated Supervisor and 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

- ensuring parents/guardians are aware of, and have access to, the *Environmental Sustainability Policy*.

The Nominated Supervisor and Person in Day to Day Charge is responsible for:

- collaborating with the Approved Provider, educators, staff, 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)
- ensuring environmental education and practices are incorporated into the curriculum (refer to *Curriculum Development Policy*)
- providing families with information about environmentally sustainable practices e.g. through displays, fact sheets and local community resources, and by ensuring that they have access to the *Environmental Sustainability Policy*
- making recommendations to the Approved Provider about green and sustainable options for the service, that reflect the guidelines within this policy
- keeping up to date with current research, resources and best practice through newsletters, journals and support agencies such as Environmental Education in Early Childhood (EEEC).

Educators and other staff are responsible for:

- collaborating with the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, fellow educators/staff, 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)
- 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
- keeping up to date with current research, resources and best practice through newsletters, journals and support agencies such as Environmental Education in Early Childhood (EEEC).

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*
- encouraging their children to adopt environmentally sustainable practices at both the service and at home.

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 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 Approved Provider of Clyde Street Kindergarten Inc. at its committee meeting on **14 August 2019**.

REVIEW DATE:

This policy shall be reviewed every 3 years with the next review due in June 2022.

Footnote:

· 'Approved Provider' refers to the Committee of Management of Clyde Street Kindergarten Inc.

· 'Nominated Supervisor' definition below is provided on the Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority website www.acecqa.gov.au.

Nominated Supervisors

People who hold a supervisor certificate are eligible to be a Nominated Supervisor of a service. If a service employs 2 or more educators who hold supervisor certificates, any of them could consent to be the Nominated supervisor but only one staff member can be appointed to the position.

ATTACHMENT 1**Strategies for Environmental Sustainability**

This checklist can be used to promote discussion and formulate an environmental sustainability policy for the service. Many of these strategies were drawn from Mia Hughes' *Climbing the little green steps: How to promote sustainability within early childhood services in your local area* (refer to *Sources*). Other strategies can be added to the checklist as required – refer to *Sources* as a starting point for further information. 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)	Responsibility (e.g. Nominated Supervisor, educators, etc.)
Data Collection		
Collect baseline data from energy and water bills, and monitor waste collection. Use information gathered to set reduction targets and evaluate whether they have been achieved.	Yes	Committee
Green purchasing		
Purchase local products where possible	Yes	Educators/Committee
Purchase recycled products where possible	Yes	Educators/Committee
Purchase energy and water efficient products where possible	Yes	Educators/Committee
Purchase items with minimal packaging where possible	Yes	Educators/Committee
Waste		
Minimise waste from one-use, throwaway products (e.g. paper towels, wet wipes) by changing behaviours and procedures, and using alternative products such as using cloth wipes where possible, cutting paper towels in half and not using paper towels to dry hands, and investigating installing a low energy hand dryer.	Yes	Educators
Encourage children to bring a rubbish-free lunch/snack in a reusable container.	Yes	Educators/Committee/Parents/Guardians

Adopt green cleaning practices by using safe and sustainable cleaning products and methods. Investigate the use of safe and sustainable cleaning products by external providers (ongoing).	Yes	Educators/External providers
Recycle plastic waste (codes #1–#7), glass, paper, cardboard, foil and metal.	Yes	Educators/Parents/Guardians
Compost food scraps.	Yes	Educators/Children
Minimise the use of food items for children’s play experiences (e.g. rice, pasta, jelly etc.) as this is wasteful of both the food items, and the water and energy used in production.	Yes	Educators
Promote recycling and reusing items e.g. through SWAP markets for children’s clothing, toys and books.	Yes	Educators
Energy		
Turn off computers and/or screens when not in use.	Yes	Educators/Administrators
Turn off computers and electrical equipment before leaving the building.	Yes	Educators/Administrators/Committee
Install and use Heat Recovery System in conjunction with air conditioning, when appropriate.	Yes	Already in place/Committee
Close doors and windows when heating or air conditioning the building where possible, while maintaining adequate ventilation. Strategies must be developed for indoor-outdoor programs to enable this to occur.	Yes	Educators/Administrators
Turn off fridges that are not in use during extended holiday periods (ensure no food remains and the fridge is cleaned well).	Yes	Educators
Turn lights off when not required. Install light sensors where possible.	Yes	Educators/Administrators
Upgrade old appliances with energy efficient appliances when appropriate.	Yes	Committee

Water		
Install 5,000–20,000 litre water tanks which are connected to toilets.	Yes	Already in place/Committee
Set limits for water use during play, while acknowledging that water play is important and that children need to use water in order to learn how to conserve it.	Yes	Educators
Ensure that water from troughs and bowls is reused to water the garden.	Yes	Educators
Use grey water (containing low salt/phosphate detergents) to water grass and gardens when children are not in attendance at the service.	Yes	External contractors
Install water saving taps in children's bathrooms.	Yes	Already in place/Committee
Install greywater flushing toilets.	Yes	Already in place/Committee
Biodiversity		
Grow food crops in vegetable gardens	Yes	Committee
Plant fruit trees	Yes	Committee
Grow a diverse range of plants, and develop children's understanding of how plant diversity encourages animal diversity.	Yes	Committee/External contractors/Educators
Grow indigenous (native) and water-wise plants.	Yes	Committee/External contractors
Water plants in the play space using recycled water where possible. Plants are a precious resource for the planet and should be protected and nurtured.	Yes	Clyde Street Kindergarten Community
Transport		
Create prominent, effective spaces for the storage of bikes and prams to promote riding and walking to staff and families.	Yes	Already in place
Curriculum		
Role-model sustainable practices and behaviours. Actions such as reusing water from a sink and	Yes	Educators

switching off lights when not in use can have a large impact on young children, who are at a formative stage with respect to skills and attitudes.		
Aim to counteract the 'throwaway' mentality that children experience every day in relation to waste.	Yes	Educators
Take every opportunity to talk with young children about sustainable practices.	Yes	Educators
The curriculum offers many opportunities to explore sustainable issues and practices. The following are some current practices:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a range of pictures, books and stories that address environmental sustainability issues. 	Yes	Educators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use improvised, recycled and natural materials for program activities. 	Yes	Educators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play a recycling game to promote an understanding of items that can be recycled. 	Yes	Educators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate alternatives to texta pens and liquid paint, such as powder paint and refillable markers or pencils (ongoing). 	Yes	Committee/Educators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Join Environmental Education in Early Childhood (EEEC) for more ideas. 	Yes	Educators
Family and community involvement		
Inform families about this policy and the service's approach to environmental sustainability through the Clyde Street Kindergarten Inc. handbook, newsletters and display of this policy.	Yes	Committee/Educators

Become involved in community events such as Earth Hour, World Environment Day and Clean Up Australia Day.	Yes	Educators/Committee/Parents/Guardians
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