

CHILD-SER-POL-07

EARLY CHILDHOOD FACILITIES POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Northside Community Service Ltd (Northside) understands it is critical that Early Childhood Centres are safe, fit for purpose, clean, and well maintained to minimise potential risks to children and families who attend Northside Early Childhood Centres and promote learning and wellbeing.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. The purpose of the Early Childhood Facilities Policy is to detail the requirements for the security, safety, and hygiene of Northside's Early Childhood Centre facilities.

3. Application

- 3.1. This policy applies to all employees of Northside, contractors, sub-contractors, and consultants employed by Northside, apprentices or trainees, students gaining work experience, and

volunteers, whilst they are on Northside property or engaged in business that involves Northside Early Childhood Centre facilities.

4. Policy Owner and Review Requirements

4.1. Policy Owner

4.1.1. The policy owner for the Early Childhood Facilities Policy is the Director of Children's Services.

4.2. Review Requirements

4.2.1. This policy is to be reviewed annually.

5. Policy Statements

5.1. Physical Security

5.1.1. Fences

5.1.1.1. In accordance with the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, all Northside Early Childhood Centres must ensure that any outdoor space used by children is enclosed by a fence or barrier that is of a height and design that children of preschool age or under cannot go through, over, or under.

5.1.1.2. Fences are required to be inspected daily, prior to children entering the outdoor environments, as part of the **Outdoor Checklist** to ensure that the fence line is secure and clear of any potential hazards, and that no items that could be used for a child to climb are against the fence.

5.1.1.3. Fences are checked to ensure that they are structurally sound as part of the routine maintenance visits that take place fortnightly through a contracted maintenance company.

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5.1.2. Gates

- 5.1.2.1. Gates are required to be inspected daily, prior to children entering the outdoor environments, as part of the **Outdoor Checklist** to ensure that they are secure.
- 5.1.2.2. Gate mechanisms are checked to ensure that they are functioning properly as part of the routine maintenance visits that take place fortnightly through a contracted maintenance company.

5.2. Door/Gate Codes

- 5.2.1. Door/gate codes are to be changed every 6 months, or when deemed necessary by the Nominated Supervisor in circumstances where there may be a risk to the safety of children, educators, or families, for example in the case of a Family Violence Order, Apprehended Violence Order, Court Order, or another serious incident.

5.3. Cleaning

- 5.3.1. All Northside Early Childhood Centres are professionally cleaned each evening.
- 5.3.2. In the case of an illness outbreak in an Early Childhood Centre, the Nominated Supervisor will organise a deep clean of the Centre by a professional cleaning company.
- 5.3.3. Educators engage in spot cleaning the Centre throughout the day and as the need arises to ensure that cleanliness and hygiene standards are maintained. For more information, please refer to the **Cleaning Procedure**.
- 5.3.4. Educators are to role model cleaning practices for children and encourage children to be involved in the cleaning of environments where appropriate.

5.4. Safety Checklists

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5.4.1. Opening Checklists

- 5.4.1.1. Daily safety checks of the Early Childhood Centre must take place each morning prior to children using the learning spaces, in accordance with the daily **Opening Checklist**.
- 5.4.1.2. The Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person on Duty is to sign off on the **Opening Checklists** at the end of each week to ensure that they are being completed correctly.
- 5.4.1.3. Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person in charge must conduct spot checks of the Opening Checklist weekly to ensure these have been conducted in a thorough manner.

5.4.2. Closing Checklists

- 5.4.2.1. Daily safety checks at the Early Childhood Centre must take place each evening prior to educators leaving the Centre, in accordance with the daily **Closing Checklist**.
- 5.4.2.2. The Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person on Duty is to sign off on the **Closing Checklists** at the end of each week to ensure that they are being completed correctly.
- 5.4.2.3. Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person in charge must conduct spot checks of the Closing Checklist weekly to ensure these have been conducted in a thorough manner.

5.4.3. Outdoor Checklists

- 5.4.3.1. Daily safety checks of all outdoor environments must take place every morning prior to children entering the outdoor environments, in accordance with the daily **Outdoor Checklist**.
- 5.4.3.2. If all children and educators have been inside for a period during the day, the **Outdoor Checklist** must be recompleted prior to anyone returning to the outdoor environments to ensure they are clear of any potential hazards.
- 5.4.3.3. The Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person on Duty is to sign off on the **Outdoor Checklist's** at the end of each week to ensure that they are being completed correctly.
- 5.4.3.4. Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person in charge must conduct spot checks of the Outdoor Checklist weekly to ensure these have been conducted in a thorough manner.

5.5. Hazards and Potential Risks

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- 5.5.1. If a hazard is identified that may increase the likelihood of a risk within the Centre, employees must ensure that the Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person on Duty is notified as soon as practicable. Employees must ensure that children do not occupy the space where the hazard has been identified until this has been rectified.
- 5.5.2. All hazards, including the required actions, must be logged on the [Safe at Northside Incident, Hazard, and Maintenance Form](#) within 24 hours.

6. Breaches and Penalties

6.1. Breaches

- 6.1.1. Breaches of this policy must be reported immediately to the Chief Executive Officer (or nominee). Confidentiality will be maintained where appropriate.

6.2. Penalties

- 6.2.1. If Northside believes that unethical or illegal activities inconsistent with Northside's purpose or mission have occurred, these processes will be followed:
- 6.2.1.1. An investigation will take place to determine potential breaches;
 - 6.2.1.2. Where an employee has breached this Policy, and the offence is judged to be serious, the procedures outlined in the Northside **Grievance Policy** will be followed; and
 - 6.2.1.3. Where a breach involves illegal activities, Northside has an obligation to report these to the relevant external law enforcement agencies, and individuals may be subject to prosecution.

7. Audits

- 7.1. All records will be subject to ongoing assurance and audits. All records belong to Northside. In most cases, these will be admissible as evidence and are subject to the relevant Territory and Federal Laws.

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- 7.2. The Director of Compliance and Quality is responsible for the development of the audit plan overseeing Early Childhood Centre compliance and facilities maintenance.
- 7.3. The Director of Compliance and Quality is to provide a report to the CEO in relation to the results of audits undertaken during the period.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

- 8.1. Roles and responsibilities for security are detailed below:

8.1.1. The Approved Provider (Northside) is responsible for:

- 8.1.1.1. Arranging for each Early Childhood Centre to be professionally cleaned at the end of each day;
- 8.1.1.2. Developing systems to ensure that daily checks and risk assessments of the environments are documented and that where repairs, cleaning, or maintenance are identified, they are attended to promptly;
- 8.1.1.3. Ensuring policies are subject to regular review.

8.1.2. Nominated Supervisors are responsible for:

- 8.1.2.1. Developing systems to ensure that the daily cleaning of the Early Childhood Centre is carried out to a satisfactory standard;
- 8.1.2.2. Arranging for a deep clean of the Early Childhood Centre to take place in the event of an illness outbreak;
- 8.1.2.3. Ensuring that daily checks and risk assessments of the environment are conducted and documented;
- 8.1.2.4. Responding to any identified risk, repairs, cleaning, or maintenance issue promptly;
- 8.1.2.5. Ensuring all educators, employees & families are notified of any changes to policies and procedures;
- 8.1.2.6. Ensuring Policies and Procedures are kept available & accessible;
- 8.1.2.7. Ensuring educators and employees follow policy & procedures;

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- 8.1.2.8. Ensuring that cleaning duties do not compromise the education and care or supervision of children at any time.

8.1.3. Educators are responsible for:

- 8.1.3.1. Identifying when the building, premises, furniture, or equipment require cleaning or maintenance and deal with the issue immediately by cleaning as required or removing damaged furniture or equipment. If the issue cannot be dealt with immediately, or maintenance or thorough cleaning is required, the educator must notify the Nominated Supervisor;
- 8.1.3.2. Spot cleaning environments to ensure cleanliness and hygiene is maintained throughout the day;
- 8.1.3.3. Involving children in discussions about health and safety issues and supporting children to develop guidelines to keep the environment safe for all;
- 8.1.3.4. Role modelling cleaning practices for the children and encouraging children to be involved in the cleaning of the environment where appropriate;
- 8.1.3.5. Responsible for ensuring daily cleaning duties are undertaken at routine times, and documented appropriately;
- 8.1.3.6. Following Policies and Procedures.

9. Associated Documents

9.1. Associated Northside Documents

- 9.1.1. **Grievance Policy**
- 9.1.2. **Outdoor Checklist**
- 9.1.3. **Opening Checklist**

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9.1.4. **Closing Checklist**

9.1.5. **Cleaning Procedure**

8.1 Additional Associated Documents

8.1.1 [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)

8.1.2 [ACECQA Information Sheet: Nominated Supervisor](#)

10. Definitions

- 10.1. **Northside** - Northside Community Service, including all Services operated by both Community Services and Children's Services business units.
- 10.2. **Employee** - means the employees of Northside, and contractors, sub-contractors and consultants employed by Northside, apprentice or trainee, student gaining work experience, and volunteer, whilst they are on Northside property or engaged on Northside business.
- 10.3. **Nominated Supervisor**- The qualified staff member (usually the Centre Director) who has been legally appointed with relevant documentation as the Nominated Supervisor of a particular centre.
- 10.4. **Responsible Person on Duty**- The person in charge of the service when the Nominated Supervisor is absent and marked as such on the Responsible Person Record.
- 10.5. **Educators**- Early childhood practitioners who work directly with children in early childhood settings.
- 10.6. **ACECQA: Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority**- The independent national authority that works with all regulatory authorities to administer the National Quality Framework, including the provision of guidance, resources, and services to support the sector to improve outcomes for children.
- 10.7. **CECA: Children's Education and Care Assurance**- The regulatory authority in the ACT that undertakes investigation, compliance, enforcement, and assessment and rating functions against the National Quality Standard.
- 10.8. **AVO**- An AVO is an Apprehended Violence Order. It is an order to protect victims of domestic violence when they are fearful of future violence or threats to their safety. They are sometimes called restraining orders or protection orders.

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- 10.9. **FVO-** A FVO is a Family Violence Order. It is a Court Order that may restrict contact between people or impose conditions on their behaviour.

11. Document Control and Version History

11.1. Document Control

Document Reference:	Early Childhood Centre Facilities Policy
Status:	Approved
Approval Authority:	Anna Whitty – Chief Executive Officer
Signature of Approval Authority:	
Approval Date:	11/5/2023
Effective Date:	11/5/2023
Review Date:	11/5/2024
Functional Unit:	Children's Services
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11.2. Version History

Revision Date	Version No.	Brief reason for change	Reference Sections

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