



# PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT POLICY

Related Quality Area	QA2: Children’s Health and Safety QA3: Physical Environment
Related Policies	Work Health and Safety Health and Safety Sun Safety Policy Water Safety Policy Clothing Policy Environmentally Responsible Policy Arrival & Departure Policy

## PURPOSE

The Nightcliff Family Centre (the Centre) will ensure the environment is safe, clean, and well maintained for children, families, educators, and visitors. Children’s awareness of the environment and sustainable practice will be supported through daily practices, resources and interactions. The physical environment will support children’s participation and engagement, development, learning, and safety, and will provide supervised access to positive experiences and inclusive relationships.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, and management of the Service.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Our Centre is committed to providing an environment that promotes safety and enhances children’s learning and development by:

### Choose Appropriate resources and equipment

- Appropriately sized furniture and equipment will be provided in both the indoor and outdoor environment for the age ranges represented in the service.
- The Approved Provider will be responsible for any large purchases of equipment. The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for consumables and the daily running purchases of the service.
- Educators will provide ideas for equipment and materials purchase based on the needs and interests of their classroom.
- Educators will complete a log for the Nominated Supervisor of equipment that needs maintenance on a prioritised basis.
- The Service will actively seek the input of parents/guardians regarding current interests of their children so as to purchase appropriate toys and equipment.
- Resources and equipment will be chosen to reflect the cultural diversity of the Service’s community and the cultural diversity of contemporary Australia, including the incorporation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.
- Children will be provided with resources and equipment that encourages appropriate challenges and risk taking in accordance with their individual developmental level.
- The environment will be organised to ensure safety and minimal disruption for children whilst playing.
- Specific equipment requirements of children with additional needs will be catered for to ensure an inclusive environment.

- Climbing equipment will be set up in a safe way and compliant with Australian Safety Standards. For example, incorporating soft fall materials wherever climbing equipment is set up.
- Frequent risk assessments of the indoor and outdoor environment will be conducted in order to minimise risk and hazards.
- An environment will be provided that allows different types of play to occur both in the indoor and outdoor areas (e.g. quiet play areas and loud play areas)
- A natural environment for children to explore and experience will be provided which may include plants, trees, gardens, rock, mud and/or water.
- Educators will participate in on-going professional development in order to enhance children's learning and ensuring a safe and educational environment.
- Our Centre will work within our Sun Safety policy and procedures, providing adequate shade for children in accordance with the recommendations of relevant authorities.
- An environment that ensures children are appropriately supervised at all times will be provided.
- All required fencing will be maintained in good condition and is compliant with current regulations.
- A variety of indoor and outdoor experiences will be provided, catering for children's interests and abilities.
- Children will be supported to access appropriate furniture, resources, materials, toys and equipment. These resources will be adequate in number for the number of children attending our Centre and be developmentally appropriate.
- A developmentally appropriate environment will be provided where children can explore, solve problems, create, construct and engage in critical thinking.
- An environment will be provided that permits children to participate in activities independently or in small groups, and access resources autonomously.
- The environment will incorporate commercial, natural, recycled, homemade, and real resources that can be used in a variety of ways to encourage children's learning and creativity.
- Sufficient and accessible handwashing, toileting, eating, and sleeping facilities will be available.
- Toileting and hand-washing facilities are accessible from both the indoor and outdoor environments.
- Adequate and appropriate hygienic facilities for nappy changing are provided, which are soundly constructed ensuring children's safety.
- Natural and artificial lighting, appropriate ventilation, heating, cooling and fresh air will be incorporated into the building.
- Appropriate areas for food preparation are provided.
- A separate indoor space for children who are under two years of age is available.
- An area for managerial purposes, consultation with children's parents and for private conversations to occur is available.
- Power points not in use have safety caps, all double adaptors and power-boards are out of reach of children, and all electrical cords are secured and not dangling.
- Educators discuss the safety characteristics of using toys and equipment with children.
- Where appropriate children are involved in setting classroom guidelines.
- Families are provided with the latest safety information on items such as cots, highchairs, car seats, etc.
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### Laundrying of Soiled Items

- Soiled clothing will be returned to a child's home for laundering. Educators will remove soiled content and place into a plastic bag. Items will be stored securely in a sealed container or double-bagged before being placed in the child's bag.

### Rearranging, Adding or Removing Furniture

- The Service will document the links between the arrangements and choice of resources and equipment, and the children's learning in the program.

### Sleep/Rest Environment

- All cots must meet the mandatory Australian Standard for Cots- (AS/NZS 2172)
- Mattresses should be in good condition- clean, firm and flat and fit the cot base with no more than 20mm gap between the mattress sides and ends.
- Cots and beds will be positioned to encourage a calm and relaxing environment. There will be a minimum space of 300mm between each cot to reduce the possibility of cross infection.
- Cots and beds will be regularly checked to ensure all bolts and fittings are secure and safe.

Beds will be located in an area that is easy to access for all educators and other staff.

- Beds will be stored in a dry area.
- Educators will ensure to use correct manual handling techniques when moving the beds.
- Beds should not be placed on high shelves or in unstable or difficult to reach stacks.
- Light bedding will be used for cots and beds.
- Checks will be made to identify any hazards to ensure a safe environment
- Hanging cords, strings from blinds, curtains or electrical devices will be away from cots and mattresses.

### Ongoing Maintenance

- The Service will continuously reflect on its environment and put in place a plan to ensure that the environment reflects our ideology of providing an environment that is safe, stimulating, and engaging for all who interact within it.
- The Nominated Supervisor will document required maintenance in a maintenance plan/log for the Service as required. Repairs and maintenance will be conducted throughout the year according to priority including, hazard removal, safety precautions and any relevant policies.
- The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for completing a **building safety checklist** of the service and its grounds bi-annually and ensure any work deemed necessary is completed to Australian standards.
- The Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor will also ensure that the Service and its grounds comply with Local Government and BCA regulations in regard to fire-fighting requirements, ventilation, natural and artificial lighting, and safety glass.

### Grouping of Children

- Our Centre groups the children according to their age and/or developmental stage. Within that space, there are a variety of different learning areas and opportunities for play experiences.
- Each age group has different legally required adult to child ratios, which are adhered to at all times in both the indoor and outdoor environment.
- Our indoor and outdoor environment provides opportunities for developmentally appropriate planned experiences, intentional teaching, and spontaneous play throughout the day.

### Safety Checks

A daily inspection of the premises will be undertaken before children begin to arrive. This inspection will include the:

- Service perimeters
- Fences/Fence Line

- Gates
- Paths
- Buildings
- All rooms accessible by children
- Fixed equipment
- Sand Pit

This must be done in order to identify any dangerous objects in the grounds ranging from sharps to poisonous or dangerous plants and animals.

In the event of a sharp object being found (for example a syringe) educators will wear gloves and use tongs to pick up the object and place it in the 'sharp object box'. This box will be disposed of as per the recommendations of our local council.

Similarly, trees in the grounds must be checked regularly for overhanging, dead, or dangerous looking branches as well as checked for any infestations.

Non-fixed play equipment in the Service grounds can be no more than one metre high and must be supervised at all times by an Educator.

The Service will have regular pest inspections carried out by an accredited pest control company. Documentation of these inspections will be kept and any further recommended treatments as a result of the findings from the pest control check will be carried out in a timely manner.

The Indoor and Outdoor Daily Safety Checklists will be used as the procedure to conduct these safety checks. A record of these will be kept by the service. The Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor will make the appropriate arrangements to have repairs carried out as soon as possible.

## CHECKLIST: INDOORS AND OUTDOORS

The Centre will use the Daily Safety check format.

## CLEANING OF BUILDINGS, PREMISES, FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT

### General Cleaning

- The Service will use structured **cleaning schedules** to ensure that all cleaning is carried out regularly and thoroughly.
- Educators will clean the service at the end of each day and throughout the day as needed.
- Accidents and spills will be cleaned up as quickly as possible to ensure that the service always maintains a high level of cleanliness and hygiene.

When purchasing, storing and/or using any dangerous chemicals, substances, medicines or equipment, our Centre will:

- Adhere at all times to manufacturer's advice and instructions when using products to clean furniture and equipment at the service.
- Store all dangerous chemicals, substances and medicines in their original containers provided by the manufacturer. All labels and/or use by dates should be kept intact at all times.

- Any substance found to be stored in a different container than originally provided, or with destroyed labels and/or unknown use by dates where applicable will not be used under any circumstances.
- Containers will be disposed of correctly following local council guidelines, and not reused under any circumstances.
- All dangerous chemicals, substances and equipment must be stored in a locked place or facility that is labelled, secure and inaccessible to children. These materials may include, but are not limited to, all cleaning materials, detergents, poisonous or dangerous substances, dangerous tools and equipment including those with sharp and razor edges and toiletries.
- Educators will follow the instructions of manufacturers, particularly of any product that may need to be stored in a refrigerated environment as per instructions.
- Any substances that need to be refrigerated must be stored in a labelled, child resistant container, preferably in a separate compartment or in a part of the refrigerator inaccessible to children.
- All hazardous chemicals must be supplied with a Safety Data Sheet (SDS) formerly called a Material Data Safety Sheet. Our Centre will adhere to the manufacturer's instructions for use, storage, and first aid instructions recorded on the SDS.
- The Service will keep a register of all hazardous chemicals, substances and equipment used at the Service. Information recorded should include where they are stored, their use, any risks, and first aid instructions and the current SDS. The register will be readily accessible.
- Appropriate personal protective clothing should be worn in accordance to the manufacturer's instructions when using and disposing of hazardous substances or equipment.
- Seek medical advice immediately if poisoning or potentially hazardous ingestion, inhaled, skin or eye exposure has occurred, or call the Poisons Information Line on **13 11 26**, who may advise you to call an Ambulance on **000**.
- In the case of any child or educator becoming injured by a chemical, substance, or equipment, the Service will initiate our emergency, medical and first aid procedures, immediately notify the appropriate authority that administers workplace health and safety and any other person or authority as required by regulations or guidelines.
- In any major emergency involving a hazardous chemical or equipment, a hazardous gas or a fire or explosion hazard, call the emergency services, dial 000 and notify the appropriate authority that administers workplace health and safety and any other person or authority as required by regulations or guidelines.
- The **Poison Safety Checklist** will be used in order to ensure we are consistently meeting requirements.

### Children's Bathroom

- Supervision in the bathroom is vital when in use.
- Educators and other staff will encourage children to follow appropriate hygiene practices- hand washing.
- Bathrooms will be cleaned at least twice a day and at other times as required.
- Bathroom floors will be mopped at least daily.
- Signage is to be used after mopping to ensure that children, educators and other staff and families are aware that the floor is wet.
- Educators are to ensure they follow the bathroom and toilet cleaning procedure.

### Maintenance of Fire Equipment

- All fire equipment at our Centre will be maintained as per the legal standards.
- External agencies will be employed to assist the service with this maintenance if no currently employed staff or educators are qualified to complete the maintenance checks.

## SUN PROTECTION

Our Centre is a member of Cancer Council NT 'SunSmart Program. Refer to the Centre's Sun Safety Policy and Clothing Policy for comprehensive information about the Centre's approaches to ensuring all children and staff are protected from the harmful effects of ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun.

## WATER SAFETY

Refer to the Centre's Water Safety policy for detail information about our approach to ensure safe practices around water.

## SERVICE CLOSURE

- Two Educators must close the Service each night.
- **Both Educators** are to check the entire premises to ensure that all children and families have departed by checking sign in and out sheets for all rooms AND physically checking all rooms and areas.
- Educators are to follow Service-closing procedures each night.
- Refer to the Centre's Arrival & Departure information for detailed information regarding the recording of children's movements in and out of the Centre and the safe collection of children.
- Individuals visiting our Service must also sign in when they arrive at the Service, and sign out when they leave (see: Visitor sign in/sign out record)
- Details of absences during the day must also be recorded.

## REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	Josephina Minani Anu Thapa Kathy Man Anju Bali Olive Asis Mei Mei Archie Servai Judy Rondon	Staff and Director	May 2022
POLICY REVIEWED	May 2022	NEXT REVIEW DATE	May 2024
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy reviewed as per review cycle</li> </ul>		
POLICY REVIEWED	May 2024	NEXT REVIEW DATE	May 2026
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individuals visiting our Service must also sign in when they arrive at the Service, and sign out when they leave (see: Visitor sign in/sign out record)</li> <li>• Details of absences during the day must also be recorded.</li> </ul>		