

	Environmental Sustainability Procedure
Linked Policy Document	This procedure details actions and processes pursuant to the <i>Environmental Sustainability Policy</i> .
Version No.	Version 3.1 November 2021 (approved)
Authorisation	General Manager Community Services
Expiry Date	Policy to be reviewed by 1 December 2024
Responsible Officer	Manager Families and Children
Policy Owner	Early Childhood Coordinator

1. Purpose

This procedure will provide a process to take an active role in caring for the environment and promoting and contributing to a sustainable future.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management and Control, Nominated Supervisor, Responsible Persons, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending Melton City Council children's services programs and activities.

3. Definitions

For terms that relate specifically to this procedure refer to the *Environmental Sustainability Policy*. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *Glossary of Terms*.

4. Procedure

4.1. In terms of sustainable management of existing buildings

- Ensure lights are switched off in buildings at the end of the day and over weekends.

4.2. In terms of staff/educator behaviour change and awareness

- Create a higher profile for sustainable behaviours and motivate other staff/educators.
- Circulate updates for staff/educators on sustainable workplace behaviours and follow up with information on how those behaviours have positively impacted on our energy reduction. This could be achieved via email or team meeting updates.
- Ensure new staff/educators are aware that Council has a Green Team. Discuss the Green Team's role in the organisation and invite new staff to join.
- Encourage new staff/educators to adopt sustainable work behaviours.
- Encourage excellence and awareness in sustainable behaviour change among staff/educators.
- Encourage behaviour change and recognise best practice. Best practice techniques should be shared among staff/educators.

4.3. In terms of educating children about sustainability

Educators will talk with children, plan and provide experiences and role model practices around:

- learning about nature and its importance
- water conservation
- reduce, re-use and recycle practices
- acknowledging and where practicable working with the traditional owners of the land, their connection to nature, the land, conservation and sustainability
- any other sustainable practices.

4.4. In terms of waste management

- Reduce paper wastage at its source by changing printing set-ups and staff printing behaviours where needed.
- Remove rubbish bins from most desks and install centralised waste stations
- Remove individual rubbish bins and replace with recycling bins.
- Dispose of general rubbish at centralised waste stations to encourage people to consider if waste product could be recycled instead. This also reduces the use of bins liners and promotes staff education and support from senior management.

4.5. In terms of vehicle use

- Develop ways to coordinate staff carpooling to/from events and meetings by increasing awareness of carpooling among staff.

5. Responsibility/Accountability

5.1. The Approved Provider, according to Regulations is responsible for the implementation of the *Environmental Sustainability Policy*. This will be achieved through the Leadership Group and their service staff:

- collaborating with the Person in Day to Day Charge, Nominated Supervisor, Responsible persons, educators, staff, parents/guardians, children and others at the service to identify Environmental Sustainability strategies for implementation (attachment 1 – Optional tool)
- allocating the necessary resources to implement the identified Environmental Sustainability strategies at the service
- the Person in Day to Day Charge, Nominated Supervisor, Responsible persons and all staff are aware of their responsibilities under this *Environmental Sustainability Policy*
- ensuring the identified strategies are implemented at the service
- parents/guardians are aware of, and have access to, *the Environmental Sustainability Policy*.

The Nominated Supervisor, Person in Day to Day Charge, Responsible persons, 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 (Attachment 1 – Optional tool)
- implementing identified strategies for which they have responsibility at the service
- ensuring environmental education and practices are incorporated into the Educational Program (refer to *Educational Program Development Policy*)
- offering 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 sustainable options for the service, that reflect the guidelines within the *Environmental Sustainability Policy*

- seeking and applying for grants, where appropriate, to support the implementation of strategies within the *Environmental Sustainability 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).

5.2. Educators and other staff are responsible for:

- collaborating with the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Person in Day to Day Charge, Responsible persons, educators, staff, parents/guardians, children and others at the service to identify Environmental Sustainability strategies for implementation at the service (Attachment 1 – Optional tool)
- implementing identified strategies for which they have responsibility at the service
- researching, resourcing, and engaging in activities that support the service to become more environmentally sustainable (e.g. recycling)
- incorporating environmental awareness education and sustainable practices within the Educational Program
- planning opportunities for children to connect with nature and the natural world at the service, including on excursions, incursions and at other service events
- 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).

5.3. Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- collaborating with the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Person in Day to Day Charge, Responsible Persons, educators, staff, children and others at the service to identify Environmental Sustainability strategies for implementation at the service (see attachment 1 – Optional tool)
- following the strategies identified and outlined in the *Environmental Sustainability Policy*
- encouraging their children to adopt environmentally sustainable practices, both at the service and at home.

5.4. Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following the *Environmental Sustainability Policy* and its procedures.

6. References, Sources, Links to Legislation and Other Documents

6.1. Please refer to Reference and Sources located below

Environmental Education in Early Childhood (Victoria) Inc. (EEEC)

- Home Page
www.eeec.org.au

6.2. Related service policies:

- *MCC Child Safe Policy, Procedure and Code of Conduct*
- *Educational Program Development Policy*
- *Excursions and Service Events Policy*
- *Sun Protection Policy*
- *Supervision of Children Policy*
- *Water Safety Policy.*

6.3 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*

7. Attachments

Attachment 1

Strategies for Environmental Sustainability – Optional tool

Service / program _____ **Date:** _____ **Educator / staff:** _____

This checklist can be used to promote critical reflection, discussions, support the QIP, guide budgeting or grant spending, resourcing prioritisation and support the environmental sustainability strategy 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. Strategies can be added and deleted within the checklist as required. Allocate responsibility for implementation.

Strategy	Adopt (Yes/No)	Responsible for implementation (e.g. Nominated Supervisor, educators, etc.)
Green purchasing		
Purchase local products.		
Purchase recycled products.		
Purchase energy and water efficient products.		
Purchase organic produce.		
Purchase chemical-free, green cleaning products.		
Purchase formaldehyde-free paint.		
Waste		
Minimise waste from one-use, throwaway products (e.g. paper towels, disposable nappies, wet wipes) by changing behaviours and procedures, and using alternative products. Such as:		
Replace paper towels with individual cloth towels on a peg located in the bathroom or at each child's locker and washed each week/or at the end of the daily program.		
Cut paper towels in half to reduce waste while working towards using cloth towels or installing a low energy electric hand dryer.		
Replace wet wipes with re-washable cloths.		
Encourage children to bring a rubbish-free lunch/snack in a reusable container.		
Adopt green cleaning practices by using safe and sustainable cleaning products and methods.		
Recycle plastic waste, glass, paper, cardboard, foil and metal.		
Investigate composting of food scraps.		
Explore the waste hierarchy of refuse within the educational program i.e. reduce, reuse, repair and recycle.		

Refrain from using food items for children's play experiences (e.g. rice, pasta, jelly etc.) as this is wasting food items, and the water and energy used in production and is culturally insensitive.		
Promote recycling and reusing items e.g. through SWAP markets for children's clothing, toys, and books.		
Energy		
Turn off computers and electrical equipment before leaving the building.		
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.		
Turn lights off when not required. Install light sensors where possible.		
Water		
Set limits for water use during play, while acknowledging that water play is important and that children need to use water to learn how to conserve it.		
Ensure that water from troughs and bowls is reused to water the garden.		
Place buckets or watering cans next to drink stations to collect excess water.		
Biodiversity		
Grow food crops in vegetable gardens.		
Plant fruit trees.		
Grow a diverse range of native plants, and develop children's understanding of how plant diversity encourages animal diversity.		
Grow indigenous (native) and water-wise plants.		
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.		
Transport		
Encourage staff to walk, cycle or catch public transport to work and on excursions, where possible.		
Curriculum		
Role-model sustainable practices and behaviours. Actions such as reusing water from a sink and switching off lights when not in use		
Research, plan and practice indigenous conservation practices		
Take every opportunity to talk with young children about sustainable practices and encourage older children to take part in these practices.		
The curriculum offers many opportunities to explore sustainable issues and practices. The following are some suggestions:		
Create an 'earth hour' each day where no lights/minimal lighting is used e.g. during rest, relaxation or sleep times.		
Use a range of pictures, books and stories that address environmental issues, traditional indigenous connections.		
Have waste-free days.		
Use improvised, recycled and natural materials for program activities.		
Play a recycling game to promote an understanding of items that can be recycled.		

Investigate alternatives to texta pens and liquid paint, such as powder paint and refillable markers or pencils.		
Join Environmental Education in Early Childhood (EEEC) for more ideas.		
Family and community involvement		
Inform families about this policy and the service's approach to environmental sustainability through information sessions, photo displays and newsletters etc.		
Design a poster/display outlining the key principles of environmental sustainability, indigenous connections to the land. This may include a charter or key targets to be achieved.		
Become involved in community events such as Earth Hour, World Environment Day and Clean Up Australia Day.		
Comments:		