



# LOCK AREA SCHOOL

WITH HEAD, HEART AND HAND

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Government  
of South Australia  
Department for Education

## Early Years Environmental Sustainability Policy

### Purpose

This policy will provide guidelines to assist the Lock Early Learning Centre to take an active role in caring for the environment, and promoting and contributing to a sustainable future.

### Policy Statement

#### Values

The Lock Early Learning Centre 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.

#### Scope

This policy applies to the Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Lock Early Learning Centre

### 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).

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.

Environmental education can be defined as learning about the environment and how natural systems function, the interconnectedness of plants, animals and humans. 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.

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 there is opportunity not only to make reductions to waste, water and energy consumption through their operations, but to role-model sustainable living 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.

## **Sources**

- Belonging, Being & Becoming, The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia: <http://education.gov.au/early-years-learnign-framework#key%20documents>
- Guide to the National Quality Standard, ACECQA: [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au)

## **Procedures**

The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

- Collaborating with educators, staff, parents/guardians, children and others at the service to identify environmental sustainability strategies for implementation.
- Allocating the necessary resources to implement the identified environmental sustainability strategies at the service.
- Ensuring the identified strategies for environmental sustainability are implemented at the service.
- Ensuring parents/guardians are aware of, and have access to, the Environmental Sustainability Policy.
- Collaborating with the Approved Provider, educators, staff, parents/guardians, children and others at the service to identify strategies for which they have responsibility at the service.
- Ensuring environmental education and practices are incorporated into the curriculum.
- Providing families with information about environmentally sustainable practice keeping up to date with current research, resources and best practice through newsletters, journals.

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.
- Implementing identified strategies.
- Engaging in activities that support the service to become more environmentally aware.
- Incorporating celebrations of environmental awareness into the program eg. National Tree Day, National Recycling Week, Clean Up Australia Day.
- Keeping up to date with current research, resources and best practice through newsletters and journals.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Following the strategies identified and outlined in this Environmental Sustainability Policy encouraging their children to adopt environmentally sustainable practices at both the service.

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 services policy review cycle, or as required.
- Notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

## Strategies

- Purchase chemical-free, green cleaning products.
- Individual cloth towels to dry hands located near the bathroom and washed each week.
- Encourage staff and 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, cardboard, foil and metal.
- Compost food scraps.
- Turn off computers and/or screens when not in use.
- Turn off computers and electrical equipment before leaving the building.
- Turn lights off when not required.
- 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.
- Ensure that water from troughs and bowls is reused to water the garden.
- Grow food crops in vegetable gardens.
- Grow indigenous (native) and water-wise plants.
- Use improvised, recycled and natural materials for program activities.
- Play a recycling game to promote an understanding of items that can be recycled.
- Make and sustain worm farms.

## Family and community involvement

- Inform families about this policy and the service approach to environmental sustainability through photo displays and newsletters, etc.