



The Indoor & Outdoor Environment Policy (PE 2)

Policy Rationale

Cooks Hill Preschool is a community based early childhood education service that is committed to providing a safe, welcoming and happy place for children to play, explore and learn.

The physical environment can contribute to children's wellbeing, happiness, creativity and developing independence. It can contribute to and express the quality of children's learning and experiences. The choices made about resources, materials, spaces, layout, air and light quality and access to a range of experiences in the indoor and outdoor, have a direct impact on the quality of learning opportunities available to children.

Strategies, Practices and Procedures

Cooks Hill Preschool will ensure the environment is safe, clean and well maintained. Children's awareness of the environment and sustainable practice will be supported through daily practices, resources and interactions. The physical environment, both indoors and outdoors will support children's learning, safety, levels of engagement and access to positive experiences and inclusive relationships.

The Approved Provider & Nominated Supervisor will use best endeavours to;

- Ensure the fencing and barriers which enclose outdoor areas used by children in the Preschool, are maintained to ensure they are of a height and design that prevents children of preschool age from going through, over or under the structure. Considerations about minimising access to the Preschool by unauthorised people and animals will also inform the height and design of fencing and barriers.
- Sufficient furniture, materials and developmentally appropriate equipment are provided and maintained in the Preschool in order to support all children to engage and access the program and develop their skills and independence.
- Adequate space requirements are maintained in both the indoor and outdoor environments.

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24 Dawson St, Cooks Hill, NSW, 2300

ABN: 71220 753 936

email: cookshillpreschool@live.com.au ph.: 02 49264464



- Toilet and washing facilities are developmentally and age appropriate and are located and designed in a way that support safe use and convenient access by children.
- Education and care environments are well ventilated and have adequate natural light.
- Indoor temperatures are maintained at levels that support children's safety and wellbeing.
- The play spaces in the Preschool provide children with opportunities to explore and experience the natural environment.
- The outdoor education and care environment has adequate shaded areas to protect children from ultraviolet radiation from the sun.
- The environment seeks to support convenient access to toilet facilities according to supervision requirements, children's independence and developmental needs.
- Where possible, gardens reflect the local natural habitat and encourage native wildlife into the Preschool. Plants are selected to minimise risks to children. No poisonous or dangerous plants will be included in the education and care environment. (Guided by KidSafe).
- Collaborate with educators to carefully select and provide adequate numbers of resources in order to contribute to children's sense of belong and to provide new learning opportunities that extend and challenge children's learning and development.

Educators will use best endeavours to;

- Equally value both the outdoor and indoor learning environments as places that support children's learning, creativity, social engagement and sense of belonging.
- Seek to develop learning environments that are secure and predictable and that support children to take increasing responsibility for their health, hygiene and personal care.
- Design learning environments that are welcoming and accessible for all children and families, considering cultural diversity, social and physical inclusion.
- Design environments that reflect children's different cultures, interests, abilities and learning styles.
- Design environments that support small group work in ways that minimise the risk of injury, minimise disruption between activities, minimise conflict between children and reduce prolonged exposure to excess noise.
- Design outdoor learning experiences that complement and extend the indoor activities and learning experiences.

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- Ensure that outdoor environments provide opportunities to learn through play, enabling access to materials that stimulate investigation and reflection, and enriched with natural resources and opportunities to connect with nature.
- Design indoor environments that are enriched by natural resources and opportunities to engage with nature.
- Offer children opportunities to be active, messy and play on a large scale.
- Encourage and nurture children's interest in the world around them. By providing children with materials, resources and information, educators can help children to appreciate and respect the beauty of their natural and built environments.
- Select resources and design learning environments that foster children's connections with the natural environment.
- Select natural materials and fibres if possible, when purchasing new equipment and resources. These include items such as wooden shelving and natural materials. Such resources enhance the look and feel of nature within the environment.
- Natural and flexible play materials such as sand, leaves and water will be available for children.
- Encourage children and families to collect and bring recycled equipment and natural resources into the environment.
- Encourage children to care for plants by growing plants from seeds.
- Design areas for appreciation of nature, where educators and children can observe the natural play environment and reflect on nature.
- Educators and children will be responsible for the care of plants ensuring they have enough sunlight and water.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy every 18 months.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations , the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

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Links to Legislation & National Quality Standards

- Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010
- Guide to the National Quality Standard (3) ACECQA (2019)
- Policy adapted from CELA 2019
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011. 104-114.
- Kidsafe NSW Inc www.kidsafensw.org

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