ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE POLICY

Our Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) Service encourages the awareness of environmental responsibility and implement practices that contribute to a sustainable future. Children are supported to become environmentally responsible and show respect for the environment. We practice and promote sustainability through reducing waste, minimising consumption, and protecting and conserving wildlife and natural habitats.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 3: PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT		
3.2	Use	The Service environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning.
3.2.1	Inclusive Environment	Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child's participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.
3.2.2	Resource' support play-based learning	Resources, materials and equipment allow for multiple uses, are sufficient in number, and enable every child to engage in play-based learning.
3.2.3	Environmentally responsible	The Service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible.

RELATED POLICIES

Animal and Pet Policy Educational Program Policy	Physical Environment Policy

PURPOSE

We believe in educating children about being environmentally responsible, which is promoted and supported through daily practices, resource and interactions. Sustainable practice is encouraged within the OSHC Service and community, assisting children and families to become advocates for a sustainable future.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, educators, staff, approved provider, nominated supervisor, management, students, volunteers and visitors of the OSHC Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Teaching and learning about being environmentally responsible starts with everyday practice. We

believe being environmentally responsible should be embedded into the operations of the OSHC Service, rather than being a tokenistic 'theme' that is investigated every now and then. Our OSHC Service is committed to protecting our environment to ensure a sustainable future for our children. This involves educators, children and families working together to protect our environment as we educate children about the importance of 'creating and promoting sustainable communities.' (MTOP, 2.0. p.17)

THE APPROVED PROVIDER/NOMINATED SUPERVISOR WILL:

- ensure the principles of the approved framework- *My Time, Our Place,* (2022) (V2.0) underpin our educational program within the OSHC Service- including the new principle of *Sustainability*
- network with the local community to keep up to date with current practices and ideas for being environmentally responsible. This may include installing water tanks, grey water system, converting toilet cisterns to dual flush, and converting to water saving taps
- engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders, where possible, to explore and share their own history, culture and rich sustainable practices
- encourage educators, families and children to engage in sustainable practices and appreciate the natural environment, understand our impact on the natural world, and the interdependence between people, animals, plants, lands and waters
- provide professional development opportunities for educators to learn about integrating environmentally sustainable education into all areas of their program and engage in shared critical reflection
- reflect on environmental, economic and social impacts on the world in all aspects of Service operation and include in the review the development of a sustainable Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)
- ensure the OSHC Service joins a preferred provider e.g., Sustainable Schools NSW (or State equivalent) to liaise with other education and care services and maintain currency on practices and ideas for being environmentally responsible
- where relevant, review policies and procedures within the OSHC Service with educators, children and families, to achieve more sustainable outcomes and practices
- use electronic communication where possible to reduce paper use within the office and in each room for newsletters, billing, and other communication needs
- conduct environmentally responsible audits to ensure consistency and continuous improvement
- source resources and materials from *Reverse Garbage* or second-hand stores to use within the OSHC Service
- ensure sustainable practices are incorporated into the daily routine

- collaborate with families and the community for involvement in potential quality practice for the Service. For example: Take 3 for the Sea, Food wise, Planet Ark or Curby for soft plastic recycling
- provide colour coded bins for landfill only, organic waste, paper recycling, mixed recyclables.

EDUCATORS, STAFF MEMBERS, VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENTS WILL:

- encourage children and young people to engage with concepts of sustainability and their capacity to advocate and act for positive change (MTOP, V2.0)
- support children and young people's understanding of their citizenship, rights and responsibilities as members of local and global communities through meaningful and relevant educational experiences (MTOP)
- incorporate recycling as part of everyday practice at the OSHC Service
- support children and young people's commitment to social justice through curriculum decision making
- role model environmental sustainability practices during play
- discuss environmentally responsible practices with the children and families as part of the curriculum
- provide information to families on environmentally responsible practices that are implemented at the OSHC Service and encourage the application of these practices in the home environment
- share ideas between educators, children, and families about environmentally responsible ideas, implementation, and resources. This will be supported through our communication strategies, including parent meetings, emails, newsletters, and informal conversations
- use a worm farm/composting bin/ to reduce food waste in the OSHC Service. Children will be encouraged to place food scraps into separate containers for use in the worm farm or composting bin
- role model energy and water conservation practices: For example, turning off lights and air-conditioning when a room/space is not in use, emptying water play containers onto garden areas
- seek to purchase equipment that is environmentally friendly where possible. Educators will reduce the amount of plastic and disposable equipment they purchase and select materials that are made of natural materials
- use the concept of '*reduce, re-use and recycle'*, which will become part of everyday practice for both children and educators to build lifelong attitudes towards environmentally responsible practices
- use 'green cleaning' products to replace chemicals where possible.

SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES MAY INCLUDE:

SUSTAINABLE PRACTICE	IDEAS
RECYCLING	• Provide bins and signage for waste and recycled materials • Recycle paper and all other recyclable rubbish • Use recycled water (e.g., for watering gardens) • Connect with free recycling programs such as TerraCycle to recycle hard-to-recycle rubbish
GARDENING	• Plant vegetables, herbs, and fruit trees • Establish a worm farm • Give food scraps to worms or service pets, or to a staff member to take home for their pet/s • Provide education to children about activities such as '*garden to plate'* activities • Provide opportunities for children to participate in experiences such as seed sprouting, vegetable gardening, cooking with what is grown, and provide education about weeds
ENERGY CONSERVATION	• Install LED lighting where possible • Turn off non-LED lights when not in use • Turn off electrical appliances at the outlet when not in use • Use natural ventilation and insulated blinds/drapes rather than air conditioning when temperatures are not extreme
WATER CONSERVATION	• Using half flush on the toilet • Turn off the taps and ensure leaking taps are fixed immediately • Encourage shorter showers • Teach children to turn off tap when brushing teeth • Collect rainwater and use in the garden and for water/sand play • Use water play water on the garden rather than tipping out after use
NATURE AND WILDLIFE	• Use natural materials – trees, blocks of wood and leaves etc. in arts and crafts and play • Educate children about the natural decomposition cycle through exposure and participation in worm farms and composting food scraps • Educate children in how to care for pets, letting them actively participate in caring for the service pets. • Plant 'bird attracting' plants and install a birdbath • Plant 'butterfly attracting' plants • Create a lizard lounge • Collaborate with wildlife educators to assist in educating children

COMMUNICATE	• Display the Service's sustainability journey in the foyer area for families and visitors to view, provide feedback and offer suggestions • Provide families with hints and tips in newsletters about how they can become sustainable at home • Use scrap paper for art and craft • Use both sides of paper for drawing

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

The *Environmentally Responsible Policy* will be evaluated and reviewed on an annual basis or earlier if there are changes to legislation, ACECQA guidance or any incident related to our policy. Feedback will be requested from children, families, staff, educators and management, and notification of any change to policies will be made to families within 14 days.

CHILDCARE CENTRE DESKTOP- RELATED RESOURCES

Sustainability Audit	Sustainability Commitment Statement

SOURCES

Australian Association for Environmental Education (AAEE) www.aaee.org.au
Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2026). *Guide to the National Quality Framework*
Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2023). *Information sheet. Belonging, Being & Becoming. Sustainability.*
Australian Government Department of Education. (2022). *My Time, Our Place- Framework for School Age Care in Australia.V2.0.*
Department of Environment and Energy: www.environment.gov.au
Education and Care Services National Regulations. (Amended 2025)
Queensland Early Childhood Sustainability Network (QECSN) www.qecsn.org.au
UNESCO. *Sustainable Development Goals- Resources for educators*

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	RITA STRACHAN	YLV DIRECTOR	
POLICY REVIEWED	FEBRUARY 2026	NEXT REVIEW DATE	FEBRUARY 2027
VERSION NUMBER	V9.02.26		
MODIFICATIONS	• annual policy review • sources checked for currency and updated as required		

POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE
FEBRUARY 2025	• annual policy review • added Childcare Centre Desktop Related resources section • sources checked for currency and additional resources added	FEBRUARY 2026