

WCS Children's Services

SAFETY - Dangerous Products, Plants, Vermin and Objects Policy

Background

Vermin and other pests in uncontrollable numbers at a premises where children are being cared for are a health and safety hazard.

Policy Statement

Young children have limited understanding of the potential dangers of products, plants and objects in the environment. With this in mind, the Service follows the recommendations and guidelines from recognised health and safety authorities regarding the handling, labeling, storage and use of these items to minimise any risk to children's safety while they are at the Service.

Strategies and Practices

- Educators seek advice from the Poisons Information Service on 13 11 26 whose number is easily accessible. Where applicable, the Service maintains an up-to-date list of all chemicals and cleaning agents used in the Service. Safety Data Sheets (SDS), together with any additional first-aid instructions required, are maintained for each item, and kept wherever potentially hazardous materials are stored in the Service. The SDS are filed in a way that educators can readily retrieve the information in an emergency. In such emergency, educators follow the procedures detailed on the particular SDS.
- All potentially hazardous materials are kept in locked child-proof cupboards and, wherever possible, beyond the reach of children, when not being used. Only frequently used items are stored in the rooms that children access.
- Where possible, clear warning signs are displayed wherever potentially hazardous materials are stored. As part of the program, educators discuss with the children various safety issues relating to hazardous materials, poisonous plants and other dangers such as vermin.
- Wherever possible, hazardous products are kept in their original labelled container. When decanted, the alternative container, which is not a food or beverage container, is clearly labelled with the product name as written on the supplier's label. Educators check all labels regularly for legibility.
- When using any hazardous products, all educators follow the instructions on the labels. Educators who cannot understand the instructions seek guidance from other educators.
- Hazardous products and chemicals are disposed of in strict accordance with the instructions on the SDS.
- Educators conduct daily safety checks of the building and outdoor play areas for foreign objects, vermin, sharps, possible harmful plants or damaged equipment. Refer to the Service's *Safe Play Spaces Policy*.

- The Service is treated by a pest controller licensed by the relevant state health authority, when necessary.
- Environmentally friendly cleaning products may be used wherever their use does not compromise hygiene.
- The Service's *Administration of Medication Policy* contains guidelines for parents when bringing medications into the Service, and for the educators handling and storing these medications.
- Any item brought into the Service is checked by educators to ensure it does not pose any danger to children (eg batteries), and any identified risk is discussed with the family to ensure they are aware of the danger and why the item cannot be left at the Service.
- Safety plugs are fitted to all power points where possible. Children are supervised when using electrical appliances at the service. All electrical appliances are appropriately 'tested and tagged' annually.
- Should any child's food be wrapped in plastic, educators ensure the wrapping is disposed of appropriately.
- The Service minimises the use of plastic bags, and these are stored inaccessible to children. When used for soiled clothing, the bags are secured and placed in child's bag.
- Poisonous and hazardous plants, when identified, action is taken in accordance with advice from the Poisons Information Service (Telephone 13 11 26), where appropriate. Educators intentionally teach children of the danger posed by these plants.
- In the event of a sharp/dangerous object such as razor or knife blade or broken glass being found at the Service, the item is disposed of in the Sharps Disposal Container, or suitable container by an educator or adult in safe manner.
- In the event of a hypodermic needle being found at the Service
 - Educators:
 - Do not attempt to pick up the syringe
 - Remove children from the area and keep them away until the needle has been removed
 - Notify the Supervisor.
 - The Supervisor/FDC educator will:
 - Call the sharps hotline (Canberra Connect [13 22 81](tel:132281)) to find out how and where to safely dispose of the syringe
 - Act according to advice from the hotline.
- In the event of vermin being found at the Service:
 - Educators:
 - Do not attempt to pick up or kill the vermin
 - Remove the children from the area and keep them away until the vermin has been removed
 - Notify the Supervisor immediately
 - The Supervisor/FDC educator will:
 - contact appropriate person for advice.

- In the event of a snake being found at the Service:
 - Educators:
 - Do not attempt to pick up or kill the snake
 - Remove the children from the area and keep them away until the snake has been removed, or the Supervisor gives direction to the contrary
 - Notify the Supervisor immediately
 - The Supervisor/FDC educator will:
 - Seek advice from relevant authority (Canberra Connect [13 22 81](#)).
 - Act according to the advice from that authority.

Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians

- To follow the Service's *Administration of Medication Policy* at all times, including completing medication authorisation form. In particular, to ensure medication is never left in children's bags but handed directly to educators, with the exception of asthma medication in OSHC.

Links Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, National Quality Standard 2018

Regs	85	Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures
	90	Medical conditions policy
	97	Emergency and evacuation procedures
	168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures

QA	2.1.1	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation.
	2.1.2	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
	2.2.1	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
	2.2.3	Plans to effectively manage incidents are emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practised and implemented.
	3.1.2	Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained.
	7.1.2	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.

Sources, further reading and useful websites

Sources

- DET Education. (2012). Health & Safety Factsheet: Safe handling & disposal of needles and syringes.
<http://education.qld.gov.au/health/pdfs/healthsafety/usedneedles-factsheet.pdf>
accessed 29 March 2012
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, 2017
- National Quality Standard 2011, 2018

- RSPCA. (2011). *There's a snake in my backyard what should I do?*
http://kb.rspca.org.au/Theres-a-snake-in-my-backyard-what-should-I-do_443.html
- Canberra Connect ph 13 22 81
- Dr. B. Abbey and P. Maclean, NQS - the complete system of policies, procedures and forms, www.childcarebydesign.com.

Further reading

- Environment and Resource Management. http://www.derm.qld.gov.au/wildlife-ecosystems/wildlife/living_with_wildlife/snakes/frequently_asked_questions.html
- Kids Health. (2011). Fact Sheet: Poisonous or harmful plants.
http://kidshealth.chw.edu.au/sites/kidshealth.chw.edu.au/files/fact-sheets/pdf/poisonous-plants_0.pdf accessed 30 March 2012
- Queensland Health. (2008). *Basic First Aid for poisoning by plants or fungi*.
http://www.health.qld.gov.au/poisonsinformationService/plants_fungi/firstaid.asp

Useful websites

- Kidsafe – www.kidsafe.com.au
- Queensland Health – www.health.qld.gov.au
- Queensland Poisons Information Service – www.health.qld.gov.au
- Snake Catchers – www.snakecatchers.com/index.html
- Wildlife-RSPCA – www.rspcaqld.org.au/en/WildlifeQueensland

Policy Review

This policy is a living document and will be monitored and reviewed as issues are identified or within 24 months. Proposed changes will be circulated and discussed by all programs and any external stakeholders for approval.

Person Responsible for Review:

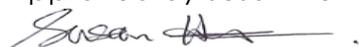
Manager, Children's Services

Implementation Date:	3 November 2014	Review Date:	July 2021
-----------------------------	-----------------	---------------------	-----------

Modification History

Date	Sections and/or Paragraphs	Source	Details
2016/07/13	Whole document		Format change
2018/02/09	Quality Areas	Revised National Quality Standard 2018	
2018/07	Review of whole document		Minor wording changes; Removal of links to other policies
2019/04	Review of whole document		Minor changes

Approved by Susan Henderson, Manager Children's Services.



Date: 16 January 2017