

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

Policy Number	P-Q3-B001	Version Number	4.00
Drafted by	Director of Education	Approved Date: Review Date:	May 2025 May 2026
Responsibility	The Board of Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre Association (Inc.) (See definitions)		
Related Service Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Safe Environment Policy Curriculum Development Policy Excursions and Service Events Policy Sun Protection Policy Supervision of Children Policy Water Safety Policy 		
Legislation and Standards	<p>Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 National Quality Standard 3: Physical Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia:</i> https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-01/EYLF-2022-V2.0.pdf Davis, J. (Ed.) (2015). <i>Young children and the environment: Early education for sustainability</i> (2nd edn.), Port Melbourne, Victoria: Cambridge University Press. Environmental Education in Early Childhood (EEEC): http://www.eeec.org.au/index.php <i>Guide to the National Quality Standard, ACECQA:</i> www.acecqa.gov.au Hughes, M. (2007) <i>Climbing the little green steps: How to promote sustainability within early childhood services in your local area</i>, Gosford and Wyong Council: https://www.centresupport.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Environment-%E2%80%93-Climbing-the-Little-Green-Steps.pdf <i>Eco Smart for Early Childhood – a sustainability filter for Quality Improvement Plans</i> http://www.nswconference.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Julie-Gaul-and-Deb-Watson.pdf <i>Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework:</i> https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/providers/edcare/veyldframework.pdf 		

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre Board of Governance on 15th August 2016.

PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines to assist Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre to take an active role in caring for the environment and promoting and contributing to a sustainable future.

PRINCIPLES

Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's 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 Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, and children of the funded children's programs available at Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre.

DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy.

Environmental sustainability: The responsible use and management of the planet's resources to ensure that they remain available and uncompromised for future generations to use and enjoy.

BACKGROUND AND IMPLEMENTATION

"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 Curriculum Framework for Children's Services* – refer to Sources).

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. Children must learn to be environmentally responsible and be empowered to make a difference, and this learning must not wait until the 'formal education' of primary school. Elliot and Davis (refer to Sources) state that "early childhood educators have an active and significant role to play ensuring children experience connections with the natural environment in meaningful way which will ultimately promote action for sustainability".

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

Sustainability can be defined in a broader and more holistic context of education *for* the environment. The complexities of social, environmental, and economic systems are acknowledged, and their implications for sustaining life are considered. The aim of sustainability education is to promote a sense of responsibility, respect, empowerment, active participation, enquiry, and a desire for social change (adapted from ECA Environmental Sustainability Policy 2005). The goal of sustainability education is to empower children and adults to think and act in ways that meet their immediate needs without jeopardising the potential of future generations to meet *their* own needs. Sustainable practice in early childhood settings requires a holistic approach that integrates all aspects of sustainability into service operations.

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 (Standard 3.3). As service providers to the community, education and care services have an opportunity not only to make reductions to waste, water and energy consumption through their operations, but to role-model sustainable living to young children in a world facing climate change, increasing levels of air, land and water pollution, and depleted natural resources.

ROLE RESPONSIBILITIES

The Approved Provider (Board of Governance) is responsible for:

The Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Centre Board is the Approved Provider and has ultimate responsibility for the management and control of the service.

The Board delegates operational responsibility and day to day management of the service to the Nominated Supervisor and monitors the performance of the organisation, including responsibilities contained in this policy, through regular reporting and by ensuring appropriate resources are available to carry out the organisation's

functions.

The Nominated Supervisor and Persons in Day-to-Day Charge is responsible for:

- collaborating with the Board of Governance, educators, staff, parents/guardians, children, and others at the service to identify environmental sustainability strategies for implementation at the service
- ensuring environmental education and practices are incorporated into the curriculum (refer to *Curriculum Development Policy*)
- providing 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 Board of Governance sustainable options for the service, that reflect the guidelines within this policy
- seeking and applying for grants, where appropriate, to support the implementation of strategies within this policy
- keeping up to date with current research, resources and best practice through newsletters, journals, and support agencies.

Educators and staff are responsible for:

- collaborating with the Nominated Supervisor, fellow educators/staff, parents/guardians, children, and others at the service to identify environmental sustainability strategies for implementation at the service (refer to Attachment I – Sustainability projects and achievements at Bubup Womindjeka)
- implementing identified strategies for which they have responsibility at the service (refer to Attachment I – Sustainability projects and achievements at Bubup Womindjeka)
- engaging in activities that support the service to become more environmentally sustainable
- incorporating environmental education and sustainable practices within the curriculum
- planning opportunities for children to connect with nature and the natural world at the service, including on excursions and at other service events
- incorporating celebrations/acknowledgements of environmental awareness into the program e.g., National Tree Day, National Recycling Week, Clean Up Australia Day
- Days of cultural, educational, and environmental significance are acknowledged and celebrated in a manner that is respectful and inclusive of our diverse community, sustainable practices and our children's varying ages and development.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- collaborating with the Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, children, and others at the service to identify environmental sustainability strategies for implementation at the service
- following the strategies identified and outlined in this *Environmental Sustainability Policy*
- encouraging their children to adopt environmentally sustainable practices at both the service and at home.

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 Nominated Supervisor 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 service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

ATTACHMENTS

Relevant Forms/Documents

Version History			
Date	Version	Author/s	Details
August 2016	1.00	Chief Executive Officer	New Policy
April 2020	2.00	Director of Education	Policy updated in consultation with Sustainability Officer
April 2021	3.00	Director of Education and Sustainability Officer	Policy reviewed, attachment 1 updated.
April 2022	4.00	Sustainability Officer	Policy reviewed, sources updated.
April 2023	4.00	Director of Education	Policy reviewed, sources links updated.
May 2024	4.00	Director of Education	Policy reviewed, sources links updated.
May 2025	4.00	Director of Education	Policy reviewed, no changes made.