

Mandatory – Quality Area 3

PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines and procedures to ensure that:

- all people who attend the premises of Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc, including employees, children, parents/guardians, students, volunteers, contractors and visitors, are provided with a safe and healthy environment.
- all reasonable steps are taken by the Approved Provider, as the employer of staff, to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of employees at the centre.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc has a moral and legal responsibility to provide a safe and healthy environment for employees, children, parents/guardians, students, volunteers, contractors and visitors. This policy reflects the importance Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc places on the wellbeing of employees, children, parents/guardians, students, volunteers, contractors and visitors, by endeavouring to protect their health, safety and welfare, and integrating this commitment into all of its activities.

Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc is committed to ensuring that:

- the management group, staff and volunteers are aware of their health and safety responsibilities as employers, employees and volunteers
- systematic identification, assessment and control of hazards is undertaken at the centre
- effective communication and consultation form a fundamental part of the management process to encourage innovative ways of reducing risk in the centre environment
- training is provided to assist staff to identify health and safety hazards which, when addressed, will lead to safer work practices at the centre
- it fulfils its obligations under current and future laws (in particular, the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*), and that all relevant codes of practice are adopted and accepted as a minimum standard.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, children, parents/guardians, students on placement, volunteers, contractors and visitors attending the programs and activities of Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc.

3. PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- ensuring that all staff and volunteers have access to this policy and have a clear understanding of the procedures and practices outlined within

- providing and maintaining a work environment that is safe and without risks to health (OHS Act: Section 21). This includes ensuring that:
 - there are safe systems of work
 - all plant and equipment provided for use by staff, including machinery, appliances and tools etc., are safe and meet relevant safety standards
 - substances, and plant and equipment, are used, handled, and stored safely
 - material safety data sheets are supplied for all chemicals kept and/or used at the centre (refer to www.ohsinecservices.org.au)
 - there are adequate welfare facilities e.g. first aid and dining facilities etc.
 - there is appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision for employees
(Note: *This duty of care is owed to all employees, children, parents/guardians, volunteers, students, contractors and any members of the public who are at the workplace at any time*)
- ensuring there is a systematic risk management approach (refer to www.ohsinecservices.org.au) to the management of workplace hazards. This includes ensuring that:
 - hazards and risks to health and safety are identified, assessed and eliminated or, if it is not possible to remove the hazard/risk completely, effectively controlled
 - measures employed to eliminate/control hazards and risks to health and safety are monitored and evaluated regularly
- ensuring regular safety audits of the following:
 - indoor and outdoor environments
 - all equipment, including emergency equipment
 - playgrounds and fixed equipment in outdoor environments
 - cleaning services
 - horticultural maintenance
 - pest control
- monitoring the conditions of the workplace and the health of employees (OHS Act: Section 22)
- protecting other individuals from risks arising from the centre's activities, including holding a fete or a working bee etc., or any activity that is ancillary to the operation of the centre e.g. contractors cleaning the premises after hours (OHS Act: Section 23)
- providing adequate instruction to staff in safe working procedures, and informing them of known hazards to their health and wellbeing that are associated with the work that they perform at the centre
- ensuring that all plant, equipment and furniture are maintained in a safe condition
- developing procedures to guide the safe use of harmful substances, such as chemicals, in the workplace
- ensuring that OHS accountability is included in all position descriptions
- allocating adequate resources to implement this policy
- having this policy accessible to all staff
- ensuring the physical environment at the centre is safe, secure and free from hazards for children (refer to *Child Safe Environment Policy*)
- implementing/practising emergency and evacuation procedures (refer to *Emergency and Evacuation Policy*)
- implementing and reviewing this policy in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, contractors and parents/guardians

- identifying and providing appropriate resources, induction and training to assist educators, staff, contractors, visitors, volunteers and students to implement this policy
- ensuring the Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, contractors, volunteers and students are kept informed of any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy
- consulting appropriately with employees on OHS matters including:
 - identification of hazards
 - making decisions on how to manage and control health and safety risks
 - making decisions on health and safety procedures
 - proposed changes at the centre that may impact on health and safety
 - establishing health and safety committees
- notifying WorkSafe Victoria about serious workplace incidents, and preserving the site of an incident (OHS Act: Sections 38–39)
- holding appropriate licenses, registrations and permits, where required by the OHS Act
- attempting to resolve OHS issues with employees or their representatives within a reasonable timeframe
- not discriminating against employees who are involved in health and safety negotiations
- allowing access to an authorised representative of a staff member who is acting within his/her powers under the OHS Act
- producing OHS documentation as required by inspectors and answering any questions that an inspector asks
- not obstructing, misleading or intimidating an inspector who is performing his/her duties.

The above list of procedures is not exhaustive. Centres must develop specific procedures to be followed in managing hazards and issues identified. Such specific issues include chemical management, purchasing of equipment, hazard identification and risk assessment etc. For more information and guidance, refer to www.ohsinecservices.org.au

All Early Childhood Staff are responsible for:

- ensuring that all educators/staff are aware of this policy, and are supported to implement it at the centre
- organising/facilitating regular safety audits of the following:
 - indoor and outdoor environments
 - all equipment, including emergency equipment
 - playgrounds and fixed equipment in outdoor environments
 - cleaning services
 - horticultural maintenance
 - pest control
- ensuring that all cupboards/rooms are labelled accordingly, including those that contain chemicals and first aid kits, and that child-proof locks are installed on doors and cupboards where contents may be harmful
- ensuring the physical environment at the centre is safe, secure and free from hazards for children (refer to *Child Safe Environment Policy*)
- ensuring that all equipment and materials used at the centre meet relevant safety standards, and relevant safety data sheet are kept at the centre.

- ensuring the centre is up to date with current legislation on child restraints in vehicles if transporting children
- implementing and practising emergency and evacuation procedures (refer to *Emergency and Evacuation Policy*)
- identifying and providing appropriate resources and training to assist educators, staff, contractors, visitors, volunteers and students to implement this policy
- keeping up to date and complying with any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy.
- taking care of their own safety and the safety of others who may be affected by their actions
- co-operating with reasonable OHS actions taken by the Approved Provider, including:
 - following OHS rules and guidelines
 - helping to ensure housekeeping is of the standard set out in GRPSA policies
 - attending OHS training as required
 - reporting OHS incidents
 - co-operating with OHS investigations
 - encouraging good OHS practices with fellow employees and others attending the centre
 - assisting the Approved Provider with tasks relating to OHS, such as conducting OHS inspections during working hours
- not interfering with safety equipment provided by the Approved Provider
- maintaining a clean environment daily, and removing tripping/slipping hazards as soon as these become apparent
- ensuring the centre is up to date with current legislation on child restraints in vehicles if transporting children
- implementing and reviewing this policy in consultation with the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, contractors and parents/guardians.

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, particularly in relation to identifying and responding to occupational health and safety issues
- 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 GRPSA policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures (Regulation 172(2)).

ATTACHMENTS

Nil

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc on 12th November 2012.

Reviewed and Approved: 24th September 2016

Reviewed and Approved: June 2020

Review Date: June 2023