

Last reviewed: March 2022

Nillumbik Playhouse Policy

Child Safe Environment

POLICY STATEMENT

Nillumbik Playhouses provide healthy and safe physical environments, routines and relationships to support children's wellbeing and enable them to build upon their current knowledge, skills and abilities, and enhance their independence and ability to care for themselves. Educators model healthy lifestyles and support children to make good health choices and care for their own and others' welfare.

This policy provides guidance on:

- Children's nutrition, food and beverages and dietary requirements.
- Sun protection.
- Water safety.
- Sleep and rest for children and infants.
- Building and playground safety.
- Visitors to the centre.
- Tobacco, drug and alcohol-free environment.
- Animals.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, students on placement, contractors, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of the Playhouse, including during offsite excursions and activities, and any other individual involved in this organisation.

LEGISLATION

Children's Services Regulations 2009 (v10)

Regulation 79(1-2); 80(1); 81(1); 82

Regulation 93(1)

Regulation 101-104

Education and Care Services National Regulations

Regulation 78; 79; 80

Regulation 168(2)(e)(i)(ii); 170; 171; 172

Regulation 100; 113; 114;

Children's Services Act 1996 (Vic)

Section 26; 27;29

National Quality Standard

Standard 2.1-2.2

Child Safe Standards

Standard 1; 3; 7

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

Regulation 165; 167; 172

GOALS / What we are going to do

- Ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of children is protected at all times.
- Foster awareness and understanding of healthy lifestyles through including in the children's program a range of learning experiences.
- Guide relevant staff and families to support children's healthy lifestyles.

EVALUATION

To ensure continuous improvement, the Primary Nominee will:

- Regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness, including children, families and staff.
- Monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy.
- Notify Parents/Guardians when making any changes to this policy or its procedures.
- Make updates to the policy as part of the service's policy review cycle, or in response to current legislation, research, policy and best practice updates, or as otherwise required.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Relevant service policies such as:

Enrolment and orientation	Emergency and evacuation	Interactions with children
Staffing	Child safe environment	Delivery and collection of children

RESOURCES

Early Childhood Australia- Health, Safety and Wellbeing

www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au

Department of Education and Training- Children's health and safety FAQ

www.education.vic.gov.au

SunSmart- Early childhood sample SunSmart policy

www.sunsmart.com.au

Red Nose- Safe Sleeping resources

www.rednose.com.au

Australian Dietary Guidelines

www.eatforhealth.gov.au

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted on 20 March 2022.

REVIEW DATE

This policy will be reviewed in March 2024.

PROCEDURES/ How it will be done

Children's nutrition, food and beverages and dietary requirements

The Nominated Supervisor will:

- Ensure that children have access to safe drinking water at all times and are offered food and beverages (appropriate to needs of each child) on a regular basis throughout the day.
- Work with families to ensure any food or beverages provided at Playhouse take into account the dietary requirements appropriate to each child's growth and developmental needs, and any specific cultural, religious or health requirements.
- Encourage Parents/Guardians to provide food or beverages that are nutritious and adequate in quantity. Provide families with information on the types of foods and drinks recommended for children and suitable for children's lunchboxes.

The Educators will:

- Create an enjoyable mealtime routine where children have enough time to eat and enjoy their foods as well as enjoy the social interactions with educators and other children.
- Encourage children to eat the more nutritious foods provided in their lunchbox, such as sandwiches, fruit, cheese and yoghurt, before eating any less nutritious foods provided.
- Respect each child's appetite, be patient with slow and messy eaters, and don't insist they eat.
- Ensure water is readily available for children to drink throughout the day.
- Be aware of children with food allergies, food intolerances and special diets and consult with families to develop individual management plans.
- Ensure young children do not have access to foods that may cause choking.
- Ensure all children remain seated while eating and drinking.
- Provide active supervision to children while eating and drinking.
- Discourage children from handling other children's food and utensils.

Parents/Guardians will:

- Provide sufficient nutritious foods and beverages for their child to consume while at Playhouse.
- Notify the Playhouse of any specific cultural, religious or health requirements

Sun protection

Playhouse will take steps to ensure children, educators and visitors are protected from over-exposure to UV radiation from the sun.

The Primary/Approved Nominee will:

- Ensure the outdoor environment provides shade for children, educators and visitors, particularly in the high use areas.
- Conduct a shade assessment regularly to determine the current availability and quality of shade.
- Request permission from Parent/Guardians for educators to apply sunscreen to their child.

The Educators will:

- Check the daily sun protection times on the SunSmart app or website. Where daily UV levels are forecast to reach three or higher (typically from mid-August to the end of April in Victoria)
- Use SunSmart measures (covering clothing, wide brimmed hats, sunscreen, shade and when applicable sunglasses) themselves when at the Playhouse. Encourage children to choose and use available areas of shade when outside•
- Ensure children are suitably dressed to play in the sun and wear an appropriate sun hat. Apply SPF30 (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen to any child's skin not covered by clothing at least 20 minutes prior to going outdoors and reapply every two hours, or more frequently if sweating or swimming).
- Support children over three years of age to apply their own sunscreen (under supervision) at least 20 minutes prior to going outdoors.
- Store sunscreen in a supervised, cool place, out of the sun and monitor the expiry date. (Where children have allergies or [sensitivities to sunscreen](#), parents are asked to provide an alternative sunscreen or children are encouraged to play in the shade.)
- Consider [the special needs of infants](#). Keep all babies under 12 months out of direct sun when UV levels are 3 or higher. Our service acknowledges that the best sun protection can be achieved when a combination of physical sun protection measures such as shade, clothing and hats are used. For those small areas of exposed skin not protected by clothing or hats, we apply approved sunscreen to infants six months and older. The widespread use of sunscreen on babies under 6 months old is not recommended.

- Direct children who do not have appropriate hats or outdoor clothing to play in a shady place or in a suitable area protected from the sun.
- Ensure sun protection is incorporated into the learning and development program.

The Parent/Guardian will:

- Dress children in cool, densely woven fabric clothing with elbow-length sleeves, higher neck-lines and knee length or longer style shorts or skirts.
- Provide a legionnaire, broad-brimmed or bucket style hat that shades the face, neck and ears. Caps and visors are not considered a suitable alternative.
- Apply SPF30 (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen to their child's exposed skin prior to attending Playhouse.

Water safety

Drowning can occur quickly and quietly, without any warning noises. It is one of the major causes of death for children under five years and protecting children from drown is a priority for Playhouse.

Water play at the Playhouses, both indoors and outdoors, is a valued activity for children as it is enjoyable and promotes multiple developmental benefits. Whilst water hazards at Playhouse are kept to a minimum, it is acknowledged that nappy buckets, water troughs, sinks and toilets can all be hazardous for children and diligent supervision is required.

The Primary/Approved Nominee will:

- Ensure staff First Aid and CPR qualifications and requirements are met at all times.
- Ensure the thermostat on the hot water system is set to a medium temperature so children are not able to scald themselves when washing hands.
- Ensure educators, volunteers or visiting persons do not consume hot drinks in any area accessible to children.
- Ensure particular attention upon water safety in risk assessments where an excursion is near a body of water.
- Label grey water systems or water tanks with “do not drink” signage.

The Educators will:

- Embed water safety messages into the children’s education program.
- Discuss with the children that the water associated with play activities is for the purpose of play and not for consumption.
- Actively supervise children at all times around any body of water including water troughs, toilets and nappy buckets and make sure they are not accessing water from grey water systems or water tanks for drinking.
- Ensure water troughs or containers for water play are filled to a safe level.
- Empty or cover any sort of water container when not in use and stored in a manner that prevents the collection of water.
- Change water for pets at the service regularly and ensure it is not accessible to children unless supervised by an adult.

- Empty and clean drinking water containers daily.
- No cleaning buckets are left in areas accessible to children.

Sleep and rest for children

The Nominated supervisor will:

- Ensure sleep and rest environments and equipment are safe, free from hazards and conducive to sleep.
- Implement safe sleep and rest practices as outlined by ACECQA www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/supporting-materials/inforSheet/safe-sleep-and-rest-practices
- Consult with families about their child's individual needs and be sensitive to different values and parenting beliefs, cultural or otherwise, associated with sleep and rest.
- Implement hygienic handling of linen used in the provision of sleep and rest, including cushion covers.

The Educators will:

- Take reasonable steps to ensure children's needs for sleep and rest are met, having regard for each child's age, developmental stages and needs. If a child requests a rest, or they are showing signs of tiredness, regardless of time of day, a comfortable, safe area is made available for them to rest.
- Ensure every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children when sleeping and resting, including closely monitoring sleeping and resting children and the sleep and rest environments.
- Ensure that children who do not wish to sleep are provided with alternative quiet activities and experiences.

The Parents/Guardians will:

- Work with educators to develop an appropriate sleep and rest strategy for their child while at the Playhouse.

Building and playground safety

The Nominated supervisor will:

- Ensure the ongoing maintenance of the premises.
- Ensure Playhouse equipment and facilities comply with regulatory requirements:
 - The Playhouse has access to furniture, materials and developmentally appropriate equipment, suitable for the educational or recreational program provided for each child (regulation 93).
 - Adequate, age-appropriate and safe toilet and hand washing facilities (regulation 101) are provided.
 - Nappy changing facilities are adequate and age-appropriate and are maintained in a safe and hygienic manner (regulation 102).
 - 3.25 square metres of clear indoor space is provided for each child being cared for or educated in the room (regulation 96(1)).
 - Outdoor space meets the fencing requirements (regulation 99).

The Educators will:

- Actively supervise children to prevent or reduce the risk of injury or harm to children.
- Apply strategies to minimise or eliminate risks in the child's physical environment by ensuring the safety of buildings, grounds, equipment, materials and furniture used at the Playhouse, and the safe storage and use of dangerous substances such as cleaning products and chemicals.
 - Routinely undertake risk assessments of the child's physical environment and isolate and report identified hazards.
 - Check all toys and are equipment are safe and in good working order before introducing them to the children's play environment.
 - Request removal of unsafe toys and equipment from the premises to avoid reintroduction to children.
 - Appropriately label and securely store potentially dangerous products and ensuring.
 - Identify and appropriately manage risks and hazards associated with animals on the premises prior to children engaging with them.

Visitors to the centre

The Nominated supervisor and educators share responsibility to effectively manage visitors whilst on the premises:

- Only authorised persons or a person under the direct supervision of an educator or other staff member of Playhouse are to remain on the premises while children are being educated or cared for (Section 170 The Act 2010).

An authorised person is one who:

- Holds a current working with children check or working with children card;
- A parent or family member of a child who is being cared for or educated at Playhouse;
- An authorised nominee of a parent or family member of a child who is being cared for or educated at Playhouse;
- In the case of an emergency, medical personnel or emergency service personnel;
- A person who is permitted under the working with children law to remain.

This does not include a person:

- Whose access to the child is prohibited or restricted by an order of the court of which the Playhouse is aware;
 - Who is an appropriate person within the meaning of section 171 or the Act, eg. A person who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Ensure that visitors to the service do not disrupt nor impinge upon the provision of care.
 - Ensure that visitors are not left alone with children.
 - Ensure that all visitors to the service sign in and out when entering and departing, on the 'Record of Visitor to service' form.
 - Ensure visitors are accounted for in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Tobacco, drug and alcohol-free environment

The Primary/Approved Nominee will:

- Ensure the environment is free from the use of tobacco, illicit drugs and alcohol
- Ensure that the staff members, volunteers and students are not affected by alcohol or drugs (including prescribed medication) that may impair their capacity to supervise or provide education and care to children at Playhouse.
- Ensure alcohol, tobacco or drugs on the premises are kept out of reach of children.

The Educators will:

- Not consume alcohol or be affected by alcohol or drugs that might impair their capacity to provide education or care to children at the Playhouse.

Animals

Playhouse implements preventative measures to avoid any risk to the health and safety of children from contact with animals. Examples of appropriate learning experiences include:

- Washing or brushing the dog
- Brushing the cat
- Changing the food and water for a pet such as a rabbit, bird, guinea pig
- Feeding a fish
- Collecting chicken eggs
- Bottle feeding lambs
- Patting or observing a pet or domestic dog.

The Nominated supervisor will:

- Ensure any contact with the animal/s is under direct supervision of the early childhood educator or Parent/Guardian and with permission from the Parents/Guardians
- Ensure that educators are aware of any allergies or illnesses the children may suffer as a result of coming into contact with the animal.
- Be aware of and abide to any federal, state or territory legislative requirements, including child care licensing, public health, animal welfare and occupational health and safety requirements in relation to keeping animals.

The Educators will:

- Directly supervise children who are in contact with pets or animals.
- Teach children safe ways of interacting with animals:
 - Ensure a child is comfortable being close to the animal before the interactions with an animal occurs.
 - Be aware of the cultural differences in the handling of animals.
 - Teach children about animal behaviour.

- Ensure children do not have unsupervised access to their food or water.
- Never allow children to put faces next to animals.
- Wash hands after touching animals.
- Ensure effective management of animal's health and wellbeing:
 - Ensure any animal introduced to children at the Playhouse is wormed and treated for fleas regularly.
 - Ensure that pets have adequate amounts of nutritious foods and access to fresh drinking water daily.
 - Isolate animals from children when they are drinking or eating.
 - Dispose of animal faeces and litter daily, or more often if necessary, using gloves.
 - If an animal that resides at Playhouse shows signs of illness, contact a vet to treat the animal and isolate it from interactions with children until it is well.
- Ensure effective health and safety practices are implemented when managing animals living conditions at Playhouse:
 - Avoid keeping reptiles, birds from the parrot family and other animals as recommended by the national health and medical research council "Staying healthy in Child Care".
 - Ensure animals are confined to a specific area of the Playhouse to prevent contamination of sandpits, soil, pot plants and vegetable and gardens.
 - Keep bird cages a reasonable distance from food preparation areas.
 - Clean out birdcages and fish tanks regularly using gloves; Children should not assist with the cleaning of bird cages or fish tanks.

Parent/Guardians will:

- Advise Playhouse of any allergies or illnesses the children may suffer as a result of coming into contact an animal.
- Ensure any family pet they seek to introduce to children at the Playhouse is wormed and treated for fleas regularly.