

# **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY POLICY**

## **Best Practice – Quality Area 3**

### **AUTHORISATION**

This policy was adopted by the Dawson Street Child Care Co-operative (DCCC), at a Management Committee meeting in 24 May 2017. A minor amendment was approved on 14 February 2018.

### **REVIEW DATE**

This policy will be reviewed in three years in May 2020 or sooner if required.

The Environment Action Plan (Attachment 1) is to be reviewed and updated annually at the May Management Committee meeting to ensure:

- Green action items continue to occur
- Orange action items are being implemented in a timely manner
- Blue action items are being moved into Orange or Green categories as resources and information etc. become available.

### **PURPOSE**

- To provide staff, children and families with inspiration and guidelines on sustainable practices to be carried out within the Centre.
- To ensure staff, children and families engage in environmentally responsible practices wherever possible.
- To promote the Centre as a leader in environmental sustainability to staff, children, parents and the local community.

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

#### **1. VALUES**

DSCCC aims to be a leader in environmental sustainability. The Centre is committed to promoting sustainability and facilitating a healthy community, healthy economy and healthy environment. This policy intends to further improve the Centre's sustainability practices by creating changes through education, infrastructure and practices that reduce water, energy, resources and waste and protect our natural environment.

We believe DSCCC staff, children and families can take responsibility for actions that impact on the planet, be active citizens for change and ensure there is hope for future generations.

#### **2. SCOPE**

This policy applies to the Director staff, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and the Management Committee of DSCCC.

#### **3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION**

##### **Background**

“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).

## Legislation and Standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 3: Physical Environment*
  - 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

## 4. DEFINITIONS

**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.

**Sustainable practices:** Practices that reduce harm to the environment and minimise use of resources.

## 5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

### Sources

- *Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia:* [www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Policy\\_Agenda/Quality/Pages/EarlyYearsLearningFramework.aspx#key\\_documents](http://www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Policy_Agenda/Quality/Pages/EarlyYearsLearningFramework.aspx#key_documents)
- Davis, J. M. and Elliott, S. (2004) Mud pies and daisy chains: Connecting young children and nature. In *Every Child*, 10(4) p4
- Early Childhood Australia (unpublished final draft), *ECA Environmental Sustainability Policy*. Early Childhood Australia: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~eeec/policy.pdf>
- *Educators’ Guide to the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia:* [www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Policy\\_Agenda/Quality/Pages/EarlyYearsLearningFramework.aspx#key\\_documents](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Policy_Agenda/Quality/Pages/EarlyYearsLearningFramework.aspx#key_documents)
- Environmental Education in Early Childhood (EEEC):
- *Guide to the National Quality Standard, ACECQA:* [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au) and <http://acecqa.gov.au/links-and-resources/national-quality-framework-resources/>
- Hughes, M. (2007) *Climbing the little green steps: How to promote sustainability within early childhood services in your local area*, Gosford and Wyong Council: [www.gosford.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gosford.nsw.gov.au) and
- *My Time, Our Place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia:*
- Stonehouse, A. (2006) *NSW Curriculum Framework for Children’s Services:*
- *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework:* [www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/evldf/default.htm](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/evldf/default.htm)
- *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework – Resources for Professionals:*

## **DSCCC Policies:**

- *Behaviour Guidance Policy*
- *Child Safe Environment Policy*
- *Curriculum Development Policy*
- *Excursions and Service Events Policy*
- *Food Safety and Hygiene Policy*
- *Nutrition and Active Play Policy*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*
- *Sun Protection and Heat Policy*
- *Water Safety Policy*

## **PROCEDURES**

The Management Committee, Director and staff are responsible for sustainability practices as outlined in this policy in the following areas:

1. Minimising waste
2. Reducing energy use
3. Saving water
4. Protecting biodiversity
5. Green purchasing
6. Sustainable transport
7. Green cleaning
8. Curriculum on sustainability

New and existing actions to achieve sustainability in these areas are outlined in the Action Plan (Attachment 1).

DSCCC aims to continue with ongoing actions and to implement at least three new actions each year.

More specifically:

### **The Management Committee/Director are responsible for:**

- collaborating with educators, staff, parents/guardians, children and others at DSCCC to identify environmental sustainability strategies for implementation (refer to Attachment 1 – Action Plan)
- allocating the necessary resources to implement the identified environmental sustainability strategies at DSCCC
- ensuring the Nominated Supervisor and all staff are aware of their responsibilities under this *Environmental Sustainability Policy*
- ensuring the identified strategies (refer to Attachment 1 – Environment Action Plan) are implemented at the service
- ensuring parents/guardians are aware of, and have access to, the *Environmental Sustainability Policy*.
- 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*
- 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 such as Environmental Education in Early Childhood (EEEC).

**Certified Supervisors, educators and other staff are responsible for:**

- collaborating with the Management Committee, Director, fellow educators/staff, parents/guardians, children and others at DSCCC to identify environmental sustainability strategies for implementation at DSCCC (refer to Attachment 1 – Environment Action Plan)
- implementing identified strategies for which they have responsibility (refer to Attachment 1)
- engaging in activities that support DSCCC to become more environmentally sustainable (e.g. recycling)
- incorporating environmental education and sustainable practices within the curriculum
- planning opportunities for children to connect with nature and the natural world, including on excursions and at other service events
- incorporating celebrations of environmental awareness into the program e.g. National Tree Day, National Recycling Week, Clean Up Australia Day and Walk to Work Day
- keeping up to date with current research, resources and best practice through newsletters, journals and support agencies such as Environmental Education in Early Childhood (EEEC).

**Parents/guardians are responsible for:**

- collaborating with the Management Committee, Director, educators, staff, children and others at DSCCC to identify environmental sustainability strategies for implementation (refer to Attachment 1 – Environment Action Plan)
- following the strategies identified and outlined in this *Environmental Sustainability Policy*
- encouraging their children to adopt environmentally sustainable practices at both DSCCC 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 policy has achieved the values and purposes, the Management Committee and Director will:

- Keep track of the successful continuation and implementation of actions as outlined in the Action Plan
- Assess whether issues/concerns raised in relation to sustainable practices were resolved.
- If appropriate, conduct a survey in relation to this policy or incorporate relevant questions within the general parent/guardian survey.
- Take into account reports from staff and parents regarding the policy.
- Where possible appoint a staff Sustainability Officer and a Parent (volunteer) Sustainability Officer.
- Keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice

## ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Environment Action Plan

Date Reviewed	Details of Changes (if any)	Date of Next Review
February 2018	Updated Action Plan (bubbles not balloons) Minor formatting changes	May 2020

24 May 2017

Updated Action Plan  
Minor updates to policy

May 2020

## Attachment 1

### Environment Action Plan

The Table below includes actions that have already been implemented and additional actions to further improve the Centre's sustainability practices.

Action that are 'Already being done' and 'Ongoing' are marked in green.

Action items with a due date (usually within the next 12 – 24 months) are marked in orange.

Action items yet to be implemented/allocated a due date are marked in blue.

Action	Status	Timeframe
Minimising waste		
Reuse plastic bags for dirty children's clothing	Staff use bags passed on to the centre by parents. Parents are advised through DSCCC newsletter to include their own green bag into the children's backpack to minimise the use of plastic bags.	Ongoing
Use recycled materials where possible within the children's program and office  Set up partnership through preschool teacher network between local early childhood centres and RMIT	Left over paper from RMIT is used for art work.  Recycled art materials sourced from Reverse Art Truck	Ongoing  Quarterly at Teacher Network Meetings at the Moreland Council.
Reduce the use of paper within the office as well as reducing the use of laminator	Staff use emails and website to provide information to parents and community. Leftover paper for drawing is used in rooms.  Rethinking about laminating documents and only laminate if necessary.	Ongoing
Use Council's Recycle bins	The centre recycles plastic, glass, paper, cardboard, foil, and metal.	Ongoing
Separate organic waste	The centre has capacity to cater for all food scraps (i.e. worm farm, food for chickens).	Completed

Use cloth towels where possible to minimize use of disposable paper towels.	Kinder room now uses hand towels instead of paper towels. Investigate to use in sunflower room.	Ongoing
Minimise paper towel usage for staff	Staff have their own hand towels.	Completed
Use nappy wash services to replace disposable nappies	There is currently no such service available.	Depending on when a suitable service becomes available.
Introduce small recycling, landfill and green waste bins in older children's rooms to educate children and staff	Small bins are now located in reception area and all rooms.	Completed
Reducing energy use		
Reduce energy consumption within the building	Staff are trying to save energy through behaviour change (e.g. switching off lights, computers and appliances when not in use). We will look for additional ways and technologies to reduce energy consumption of the building (e.g. installing timers, energy efficient lighting, appliances, cooling and heating, installing light sensors, draught proofing). Washing is dried on cloth lines if possible as opposed to constantly using the dryers.	Ongoing: Keep educating existing and new staff about being wise with energy.  By December 2020: Talk to Council about possible measures to make the building energy smarter.
Make the centre carbon neutral by buying green power and offsets for greenhouse emissions that can't be avoided.	This is a long term target. The centre needs to reduce its energy use as much as possible first.	2020 in line with Council's zero net emissions target for the community.
Saving water		
Use water tanks for children's play and toilet flushing	Water tanks need to be checked regularly to make sure they work.	Ongoing.
Ensure dual flush toilets are installed	All toilets in the centre are dual flush. Full flush buttons inactive	Completed
Collect excess water from children's drinking stations and use to water plants	Water cans next to watering stations to use excess water for garden.	Ongoing

Protecting biodiversity		
Grow food crops and herbs in vegetable gardens and pots	This is already being done.	Ongoing
Grow fruit trees	We need to find out what fruit trees would be suitable to grow at the centre. Currently investigating to plant a citrus tree.	By December 2017: Plant first tree
Grow a diverse range of plants and develop an understanding of how plant diversity encourages animal diversity	This is being done in every day group time.	Ongoing
Grow indigenous, native and water wise plants	Many of the plants in the front yard are indigenous. Most plants are water wise.	Completed
Use bubbles instead of balloons in outdoor areas	This is already being done.	Ongoing
Buying Green		
Address issues of concern such as formaldehydes in paint, BPAs in plastics or chemicals in cleaning products		
Seek second hand products and furniture instead of new ones where possible.	Staff are aware of sourcing items from Savers, op shops, garage sales and donations from families. Donate resources to the Australian Clothing Recyclers which we have the bin at the centre.	Ongoing
Using natural materials in play resources and equipment.	Staff are aware to reduce the purchase of plastic and to source for natural alternative when purchasing new material.	Ongoing
Purchase recycled paper, paper towels and other recycled products where possible	Centre purchases recycled paper towels, toilet paper and office paper where possible.	Buy recycled toilet and office paper by December 2017 if affordable.
Ensure all new appliances are rated 5 star or better for water and energy efficiency	Staff always use the water saving settings.	

Buy seasonal and organic food from local suppliers where possible	This is already being done.	Ongoing
Buy free range eggs, meat, chicken and sustainably caught fish	This is already being done.	Ongoing
Have a vegetarian day once a week	This is already being done. Sema makes lots of vegetarian dishes	Ongoing
Sustainable Transport		
Create prominent, effective spaces for bikes and prams to ensure that we encourage families to ride or walk	There is currently sufficient space for prams, bike trailers and bikes. More space might have to be created in the future depending on demand.	Ongoing
Staff to walk, cycle, use public transport or carpool when travelling for professional development or wherever possible	Staff that live nearby catch public transport, walk or ride to work. Carpooling is always done for PD days	Ongoing
During routine outings and excursions to utilise walking or taking the public transport options where possible.	Routine outings are within walking distance.	Ongoing
Green Cleaning		
Use green cleaning products and sustainable cleaning methods	This is already being done where hygiene standards allow it, sourcing cleaning products from Back to Basics.	Ongoing
Using warm soapy water instead of disinfectants wherever possible	This is already being done where hygiene standards allow it.	Ongoing
Train staff in green cleaning	Regular staff are aware of this through policy and procedures and this is part of new staff induction policy.	By December 2017
Educate about sustainability		
Children		

Role model sustainable practices and behaviours through small actions like saving water from the drinking stations or switching off lights	Jugs and food scrap bucket with picture display available on lunch trolleys for each room	Ongoing
Talk with young children about sustainable practices, and involve older children in carrying out the practice	Already being done	Ongoing
Explore the waste hierarchy of refuse, reuse, reduce, repair and recycle	Moreland City Council incursion and embedded in the educational program in the rooms.	Annually
Explain what the worm farm and composting are about	Moreland City Council incursion and embedded in the educational program in the rooms.	Annually
Educate children to use as little paper towel as possible to dry hands	Make up a sign above paper towel dispenser highlighting one piece of paper towel	Ongoing
Teach children why plastic waste is a problem and that a lot of it ends up in the ocean and hurts the sea animals (including the "Bubbles, not Balloons" commitment)	Already being done	Ongoing
Encourage children to recycle paper by placing it into the correct bin	Already being done	Ongoing
Educate children about the different waste trucks driving past	Already doing it incidentally as this occurs	Ongoing
Discuss water wastage during water play	Already being done. Specific tanks for water play	Ongoing
Involve the children in gardening activities	Already being done	Ongoing
Teach children to value and respect animals and plants and their natural environment	Already being done. Staff engage in discussions with children on these topics outside	Ongoing - Trickle stream added in 2014 using water tank water. Children will be educated in caring for this space
Educate children about where food comes from and what they eat	Already being done during lunch routines and gardening activities	Ongoing

Teach children to start with small portions and not to throw away food	Already being done. Staff sit and have lunch with children and discuss issues such as this daily Younger children have food portioned out for them	Ongoing
Provide natural resources within the children's program, such as baskets, shells, leaves, rock, logs gumnuts etc.	Already being done	Ongoing
The centre to become involved in community events such as Earth hour, World Environment day and Clean up Australia day.	These are made available on the calendar of events and discussed with children and activities are planned around this	Ongoing
Organise incursions run by Moreland City Council	Sessions include: Where does my rubbish go? and Walter the worm	Annually
Staff and parents		
Inform and involve staff in sustainability practices of the centre so they feel confident to continue sustainability education at home.	Place a copy of this policy on the website and also encourage parent feedback	Ongoing
Hold an annual sustainability event for children, parents, staff and the local community (e.g. SWAP Party)	Already doing	Ongoing
Educate and inform families on environmentally sustainable practices at the Centre through emails and newsletters.	Alison to source information for newsletter	Dawson Street Termly Newsletters
Working bees are held periodically in order to encourage community involvement.	Already doing	Ongoing