

## POLICY AIM

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Our objective is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of children, families, educators, and visitors within Sweetpeas services, adhering to moral and legal obligations outlined in Work Health and Safety (WHS) laws. We aim to go beyond compliance with all relevant legislation and work towards best practice to ensure a safe work environment. Our Service is committed to continuous improvement in all areas of workplace health, safety, and wellbeing.

## RATIONALE

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Everyone has a right to be safe at work. Sweetpeas is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and healthy environment for educators, staff, children, families and visitors. We ensure that educators and staff are aware of and meet their legal and ethical responsibilities as clearly documented in current *National Regulations* and Work Health and Safety laws.

Our Work, Health and Safety Policy, procedures and practices ensure that Management fulfils its responsibility to provide a safe workplace, without any negative impact on the health and wellbeing of employees; employees meet their health and safety obligations and are safe in the workplace; and the work environment supports quality early education and care.

## SCOPE - WHO IS AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY?

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- Staff
- Families
- Children
- Management
- Visitors
- Students / Volunteers

## NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD

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### QUALITY AREA 2 - CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Standard 2.1 (Health) - *Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.*
- Standard 2.2 (Safety) - *Each child is protected.*

### QUALITY AREA 3 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- Element 3.1.2 (Upkeep) - *Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained.*

### QUALITY AREA 4 - STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS

- Element 4.2.2 (Professional standards) - *Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.*

### QUALITY AREA 7 - GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

- Element 7.1.2 (Management systems) - *Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.*

## RELATED POLICIES & LEGISLATION

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### RELATED SWEETPEAS POLICIES:

- Administration of First Aid Policy
- Administration of Medication Policy
- Arrival and Departure Policy
- Bush Fire Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Child Safe Environment Policy
- COVID-19 Management Policy
- Dental Health Policy
- Emergency and Evacuation Policy
- Excursion Policy
- Hand Washing Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma & Illness Policy
- Incident Procedure
- Infectious Diseases Policy
- Lockdown Policy
- Manual Handling Procedure
- Medical Conditions Policy
- Nappy Change and Toileting Policy

- Nutrition and Dietary Requirements Policy
- Sleep and Rest Policy
- Sun Protection Policy
- Supervision Policy
- Tobacco, Drug and Alcohol-Free Policy
- Use and Storage of Dangerous Products Policy
- Water Safety Policy

## RELATED EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND REGULATIONS:

- 82 - Tobacco, drug and alcohol-free environment
- 83 - Staff members and family day care educators not to be affected by alcohol or drugs
- 168 - Policies and procedures are required in relation to health and safety

## RELATED LEGISLATION:

- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Work Health and Safety Regulations 2017

## TERMINOLOGY

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- **Health and Safety Representative** - the person elected to represent educators and staff in health and safety matters as per WHS legislation. At Sweetpeas services, this person is designated the title of 'WHS Officer'.
- **Manual Handling** - any activity requiring the use of strength used by the person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain any person or object.
- **Risk Management** - a systematic and methodical examination of potential risks and hazards within our working and learning environment.
- **WHS Deputy** - the person in each service who assists the WHS Officer in meeting all the obligations of their role, as described below.
- **WHS Officer** - the person in each service who has been delegated the role of overseeing issues of Work Health and Safety, as described below.
- **Work Health and Safety** - the management of risks to the health and safety of everyone in the workplace.

## GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

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- **HSR** - Health and Safety Representative aka WHS Officer
- **WHS** - Work Health and Safety

## IMPLEMENTATION AND STRATEGIES

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### EMPLOYEE CONSULTATION

Due to their daily contact with the workplace, employees have the most detailed knowledge of the work processes and the potential hazards in the workplace.

To identify and eliminate potential workplace hazards Sweetpeas provides employees with indoor and outdoor safety checklists and encourages employees to report any matters in respect of workplace health and safety to their service leader and/or the Workplace Health and Safety representative (WHS Officer).

To facilitate the exchange of information, the WHS Officer will review, at the regular staff meeting, the health and safety performance of the service and raise any matters or issues on behalf of employees.

### PROCEDURES FOR IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF WORKPLACE HAZARDS AND RISKS

Sweetpeas expects all its employees to take an active role in identifying situations with the potential to cause harm or injury in the service. Sweetpeas through its Management will assist employees to identify potential hazards by:

- Requiring daily checks of the indoor and outdoor environments
- Recording the medical conditions and medical management plans of all enrolled children in the service as per the *Medical Conditions Policy*

- Encouraging all employees to read publications and visit websites, including relevant codes of practice (see also each service's WHS folder)
- Requesting the WHS Officer and their deputy to periodically check records of injuries and accidents which have occurred in the workplace, and disseminate this information to all Sweetpeas employees
- Adding maintenance or repair requests to the relevant maintenance chat on Facebook.

## PROCEDURES FOR ELIMINATION AND CONTROL OF WORKPLACE HAZARDS

Where educators or other staff identify a health and safety hazard, the person who identified the hazard should ensure it is reported to their service leader and/or WHS officer. The WHS Officer (or their Deputy) will report the hazard on the relevant service maintenance chat on Facebook Messenger, including:

- a photo of the location of the hazard,
- a description of the issue, and
- a rating of its urgency (i.e. non-urgent, medium urgency, urgent).

If, for some reason, the member of staff cannot access the chat, they should leave a maintenance request in the diary located in the office and message the Managing Director.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE APPROVED PROVIDERS

- organise annual testing of electrical equipment
- organise bi-annual testing of fire safety equipment
- clearly mark any equipment which requires more than one person to lift or move it
- make sure that equipment and containers are designed and maintained to be, as far as workable, safe and without risk to health and safety when manually handled
- make sure that the work practices involving manual handling and the work environment are designed to be, as far as workable, consistent with safe manual handling activities
- identify, assess and control all risks associated with manual handling in each workplace

#### *Staff Awareness of Work Health and Safety*

The Approved Provider will ensure that all employees have a sound knowledge and awareness of the principles and practices of Workplace Health and Safety.

To achieve this outcome, the Approved Provider will:

- Inform all new employees of Sweetpeas 's Work Health and Safety Policy as part of their induction process
- Provide opportunities for staff to attend Work Health and Safety training
- Provide opportunities for the WHS Officer to obtain training to increase his/her knowledge of Work Health and Safety
- Ensure the Workplace Health and Safety Officer has received the necessary training required for their position

The Approved Providers must ensure that the services have responsible staff with first aid training on premises at all times that children are being care for. Though there is not a set requirement, they must also ensure that the services have enough first aid kits to cater for the number of children they have.

### RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NOMINATED SUPERVISOR

The WHS Officer will cooperate with the Nominated Supervisor to:

- Encourage employees to fully support injury and illness prevention
- Assist staff to identify and assess hazards
- Consult with staff to eliminate or control these hazards
- Investigate workplace injuries, accidents or illnesses (notify the Regulatory Authority if required)
- Liaise with the Managing Director, Director and Assistant Director to resolve workplace health and safety issues
- Remain well informed about workplace health and safety performance
- Consult with staff about changes in the workplace that may affect the health and safety of employees

- Undertake regular workplace inspections and convene regular WHS meetings
- Ensure the provision of training and instruction to staff about WHS related issues
- Ensure Whole Service Risk Assessment is carried out and reviewed
- Ensure completion of WHS Officer's obligations (including emergency and evacuation rehearsals; audits of emergency and evacuation kits; audits of accidents, injuries and illnesses; maintenance reporting) and allocate time to complete these obligations, where needed

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EDUCATORS

Whilst the Approved Providers/Nominated Supervisor have a responsibility to ensure a safe and healthy working environment for its entire staff, all employees are expected to assist in ensuring that the health and safety management system operates effectively.

All employees are expected to take reasonably practicable steps to:

- Use safe work practices and procedures
- Be aware of risk related to viruses and other illnesses and conduct appropriate cleaning throughout the service
- Use appropriate safety devices, safeguards and equipment provided in the interests of health, safety and welfare of Sweetpeas employees and other stakeholders
- Co-operate in all activities aimed at prevention of workplace accidents, injuries and illnesses
- Report unsafe or defective equipment and work arrangements to the WHS Officer, their Deputy or centre leader
- Report all accidents, injuries and illnesses occurring in the workplace or occurring whilst travelling to or from the workplace to the WHS Officer and/or their Deputy
- Where an incident or a near-miss has occurred, the employee will notify the Approved Provider/ Nominated Supervisor and complete any relevant forms
- Supervise children in all forms of play, including risky play (see below)

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF FAMILIES AND VISITORS TO THE SERVICE

Families and visitors are to:

- take reasonable care of their own health and safety whilst visiting the Service
- report any health and safety issues to management
- participate in consultation in WHS issues affecting them
- take reasonable care to ensure they don't affect the health and safety of other people (eg: Health Declaration for infectious diseases)
- comply with Sweetpeas policies and procedures in relation to WHS including actions to reduce the risk of transmission of infectious diseases or illnesses such as physical distancing (if recommended by Australian Government Department of Health or NSW Health) personal hygiene practices and exclusion if children and visitors if unwell (see *Infectious Diseases Policy* and *Incident, Injury, Trauma & Illness Policy*)
- comply with Service policies related to the use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs at all times (see *Tobacco, Drug and Alcohol-Free Environment Policy*).

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY OFFICER

- Ensure indoor and outdoor safety checklists are accurate and relevant to the service
- Check first aid kits are up to date and containing adequate quantity of resources
- Ensure that all emergency kits are full of necessary items and within date
- Ensure medical management information for all children is kept up to date
- Ensure maintenance chat is updated with new hazards or broken items
- Follow any WHS lifting and handling procedures as well as other safety procedures
- Ensure storage rooms are packed appropriately (i.e. large heavy resources on lower shelves)
- Keep up to date knowledge of WHS matters
- Understand and adhere to WHS Regulations and WHS Act
- Ensure risk minimisation measures through risk assessments are conducted wherever necessary
- Report any notifiable hazards, risks or incidents in the environment
- Conduct health and safety inspections of all rooms and play areas
- Assist educators to develop safety guidelines for children for engaging in risky play (see below)
- Conduct regular emergency and evacuation rehearsals as per *Emergency and Evacuation Policy*

## RISK MANAGEMENT

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Risk Management is part of Sweetpeas Kindergarten's commitment to WHS to ensure that clear processes are in place for the identification of hazards, assessment of risks and implementation of control measures so far as reasonably practicable. Risk management plans include Indoor and Outdoor Safety Checklists, Whole Service Risk Assessments, Child Safe Risk Assessments and Medical Conditions Risk Minimisation Plans. Plans are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are effective in controlling risks.

The process of risk management and assessment assists to:

- identify hazards
- assess who or what might be harmed and how
- evaluate the risks and deciding on appropriate control measures
- record findings
- review the effectiveness of existing control measures regularly and update when necessary
- consult and communicate with all stakeholders- staff, families, visitors and community members.

Rehearsals/drills are routinely conducted for emergencies including evacuation, lockdown, medical emergencies and management of natural disasters such as bush fire and flood. (see relevant policies for specific procedures)

Additionally, risk assessments can be undertaken when presented with a hazard such as the potential health risk associated with exposure to coronavirus- COVID-19 and implement control measures to manage those risks.

## HAZARD REDUCTION

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Educators and staff have responsibilities to take a risk management approach to all activities and plan for the safety of themselves and children. This may include:

- always work with safety in mind
- be aware of any hazards and report them immediately
- keep hallways and doors completely clear as an object could become a hazard in an emergency evacuation situation
- using resources appropriately
- open doors slowly
- do not stand on furniture (chairs or tables)
- walk, not run within the Service
- adhere to sun protection guidelines
- ensure personal safety by wearing PPE, implementing hand hygiene procedures
- follow behaviour guidance plans to ensure personal safety and that of other children

## ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT TESTING (TEST & TAG)

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Sweetpeas services ensure that electrical equipment is tested by a qualified person on an annual basis which is recorded with a tag attached to the equipment tested. This must be kept until the equipment is next tested or disposed of and must specify:

- name of the tester
- date and outcome of the testing
- re-test date

Alternatively, the tester will send a detailed list of electrical equipment tested, location, test date, pass/fail and when electrical equipment is due to be re-tested

Records will be maintained including details of electrical equipment tested, tag number, location, test date, pass/fail and when electrical equipment is due to be re-tested.

## MAINTENANCE OF FIRE EQUIPMENT

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All fire equipment at our Sweetpeas services will be maintained as per the Australian Workplace Safety Standards. External agencies will be employed to conduct the maintenance of the fire equipment. Fire

equipment will be inspected every six months and an annual fire safety certificate will be kept on display at each service.

## HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

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We strive to minimise the health and safety risks associated with the handling and storage of hazardous materials. We adopt a risk management strategy that enables practices that minimise the risk of harm, injury, or illness caused by any hazardous material.

As far as is reasonably practical, our services will:

- provide the least hazardous chemical, product, or equipment for the task without jeopardising hygiene
- ensure that staff, contractors, students, and visitors are protected from both short and long-term health effects of hazardous substances and processes
- ensure all staff, contractors, visitors, and students have access to Safety Data Sheets (SDS) and adequate training on the safe use and storage of all hazardous substances prior to any exposure to those substances.
- ensure that non-toxic plants are planted within the workplace and regular garden and grounds maintenance will be undertaken to minimise the risk of toxic plants within the grounds and premises.

## CLEANING

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Educators and staff must:

- adhere to the cleaning schedules and procedures within the Service including hand washing, use of gloves, colour coded mops/cloths
- follow manufacturer's directions for cleaning products and chemicals (see Safety Data Sheets- SDS)
- ensure a register of all hazardous chemicals, substances and equipment is used at the Service. The register should include where they are stored, their use, any risks, first aid instructions and the current SDS.
- ensure chemicals are never mixed together
- ensure chemicals and cleaning products are stored in original containers provided by the manufacturer wherever possible
- ensure all items are clearly labelled
- wash hands immediately if any chemical is spilled
- in the event of a chemical spill, isolate the area and advise the Nominated Supervisor
- wash hands thoroughly after using any chemical or disinfectant
- ensure containers are disposed of correctly following local council guidelines and not reused under any circumstances
- seek medical advice immediately if poisoning or potentially hazardous ingestion, inhalation, skin or eye exposure has occurred.
  - **Poisons Information Line 13 11 26 or call an ambulance on 000**
  - ensure emergency, medical and first aid procedures are carried out

## SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS

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Children must be adequately supervised at all times. Identifying potential hazards such as sustaining an injury from play equipment or slipping on a wet surface should be considered through the risk assessment process. Establishing appropriate control measures for staff and children, assist in managing the possible risk.

All staff should:

- wear covered shoes with slip resistant soles and heels
- be alert for any object that could be a trip hazard
- pick up any objects sticking up from the floor or ground, so as not to cause injury
- ensure warning signs alerting others of wet and slippery floors are used
- immediately clean any spills to avoid slips and falls

- notify the Nominated Supervisor and the WHS Officer if a slip or fall is witnessed, whether it is a work colleague or visitor
- ensure the appropriate paperwork is completed (e.g. Accident Report) and inform Nominated Supervisor and Managing Director.

## BACK CARE AND MANUAL HANDLING

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Sweetpeas refers to Safe Work Australia / Manual Handling practices as part of our commitment to ensure a best practice approach. Educators are at risk of work-related ergonomic injuries, particularly back injuries, through carrying children, bending, reaching and not using adult sized furniture.

Manual handling is any activity requiring the use of strength used by the person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain any person or object.

Manual handling injuries may be caused by the activities listed above. Injuries can include back strains, similar strains and sprains in parts of the body such as the neck, arm, shoulder and knee. Manual handling injuries also include overuse injuries or, because of falling during manual handling, bruising or laceration.

The Work Health and Safety or WHS folder located in each Sweetpeas service contains information on the relevant codes of practice and safe manual handling practices as recommended by SafeWork NSW. Additionally, Sweetpeas Management compiled recommendations for avoiding manual handling injuries into our *Manual Handling Procedures* document.

## RISKY PLAY/ADVENTUROUS PLAY

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Educators will provide an environment that encourages children to effectively learn in play which involves supporting them to take risks. No play space is risk free. It is important for children's development to become adventurous and participate in opportunities to explore and test their own capabilities, manage risk, and to grow as capable, resourceful, and resilient people.

Educators will assess the risks to children's safety and develop guidelines to encourage children to test their abilities within a safe environment.

When we find children exploring risky play, educators will supervise and assist when appropriate.

## RELATED RESOURCES

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- Hazards A-Z: <https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/hazards-a-z>
- List of codes of practice: <https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/resource-library/list-of-all-codes-of-practice>
- Physical safety at work: <https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/safety-starts-here/physical-safety-at-work-the-basics>
- Mental health and safety at work: <https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/safety-starts-here/mental-health-at-work-the-basics>

## RELATED SWEETPEAS DOCUMENTS

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- Indoor and Outdoor Safety Checklists
- Evaluation of Emergency Drills form
- Emergency Drills Quarterly Audit form
- First Aid Kit Stock List
- Evacuation Bag Checklist
- Lockdown Bag Contents
- Major Evacuation Bag Contents
- Medical Conditions Risk Minimisation Plans
- Whole Service Risk Assessment

## REFERENCES

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- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) - <http://www.acecqa.gov.au/>

- Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- National Quality Framework (NQF) - <http://acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework/>
- NHMRC - Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services (5<sup>th</sup> edition)
- Safe Work Australia - <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/>
- SafeWork NSW - <http://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/>
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017

## REVIEW AND AMENDMENTS

This policy will be updated regularly to ensure compliance with all relevant legal requirements. Appropriate consultation of all stakeholders (including staff and families) will be conducted on a timely basis. In accordance with *Regulation 172* of the National Regulations, families of children enrolled will be notified at least 14 days and their input considered prior to any amendment of policies and procedures that have any impact on their children or family.

Version	Amendment(s)	Review Date	Updated By
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewed leadership</li> <li>• Critically evaluated</li> <li>• Updated information added for COVID-19 and additional cleaning</li> </ul>	June 2020	Janine Evans (Nominated Supervisor)
3.1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated COVID-19 recommendations</li> </ul>	June 2021	Janine Evans (Nominated Supervisor)
3.2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated COVID-19 recommendations</li> </ul>	June 2022	Janine Evans (Managing Director)
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cosmetic changes for new policy format</li> <li>• Updated wording of policy aim and rationale</li> <li>• Removed majority of COVID-19 references as per NSW Health updates</li> <li>• Added new sections related to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Terminology</li> <li>○ Risk Management</li> <li>○ Hazard Reduction</li> <li>○ Hazardous Materials</li> <li>○ Cleaning</li> <li>○ Slips, Trips and Falls</li> <li>○ Electrical Equipment Testing</li> <li>○ Maintenance of Fire Equipment</li> <li>○ Back Care and Manual Handling</li> <li>○ Risky Play</li> <li>○ Related Resources</li> <li>○ Related Sweetpeas Documents</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Reviewed references and links</li> </ul>	September 2022	Cassandra Way (Assistant Manager) and Janine Evans (Managing Director)