

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY



Mandatory – Quality Area 3

PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines and procedures to ensure that:

- all people who attend the premises of Stables Kindergarten, 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 service.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Stables Kindergarten 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 Stables Kindergarten 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.

Stables Kindergarten 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 service
- effective communication and consultation form a fundamental part of the management process to encourage innovative ways of reducing risk in the service environment
- training is provided to assist staff to identify health and safety hazards which, when addressed, will lead to safer work practices at the service
- 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, Persons with Management and Control, Nominated Supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, educators, staff, children, parents/guardians, students on placement, volunteers, contractors and visitors attending the programs and activities of Stables Kindergarten.

3. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

Everyone involved in an early childhood education and care service has a role to play in ensuring the service's operations are safe and without risk to the health and safety of all parties. In Victoria, health and safety in the workplace is governed by a system of laws, regulations and compliance codes that set out the responsibilities of employers and employees to ensure safety is maintained at work.

The *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (OHS Act) sets out the key principles, duties and rights in relation to workplace health and safety. The *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017* specifies the ways duties imposed by the OHS Act must be undertaken and prescribes procedural/administrative matters to support the OHS Act, such as requiring licenses for specific activities, or the need to keep records or notify authorities on certain matters.

The legal duties of an **employer** under the OHS Act are:

- to provide and maintain a workplace that is safe and without risk to the health of employees. This responsibility extends to contractors for routine tasks over which the employer has management. For contractors completing non-routine tasks, the employer must ensure that the service's daily operations and layout do not pose unreasonable risks
- to ensure other individuals, such as families and visitors, are not exposed to health and safety risks arising from the organisation's activities
- to consult with employees about OHS matters that will, or will likely, affect employees directly, including identifying hazards and assessing risks, and making decisions about risk control measures.

The OHS Act places the responsibility on **employees** for:

- 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 employer, including following guidelines, attending OHS-related training, reporting incidents, co-operating with OHS investigations, encouraging good OHS practice with fellow employees and others at the service, and assisting the employer with conducting OHS inspections during operating hours
- not interfering with safety equipment provided at the service, such as fire extinguishers.

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Accident Compensation Act 1985 (Vic)*
- *AS/NZS 4804:2001 and 4801:2001 Occupational health and safety systems*
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety*
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 3: Physical Environment*
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017*

4. DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

Duty of care: A common law concept that refers to the responsibilities of organisations to provide people with an adequate level of protection against harm and all reasonably foreseeable risk of injury. In the context of this policy, duty of care refers to the responsibility of education and care services to provide children, educators, staff, students, volunteers, contractors, and anyone visiting the service with an adequate level of care and protection against reasonably foreseeable harm and injury.

Hazard: An element with the potential to cause death, injury, illness or disease.

Hazard identification: A process that involves identifying all foreseeable hazards in the workplace and understanding the possible harm that each hazard may cause.

Hazard management: A structured process of hazard identification, risk assessment and control, aimed at providing safe and healthy conditions for employees, contractors and visitors while on the premises of Stables Kindergarten or while engaged in activities endorsed by Stables Kindergarten.

Harm: Includes death, or injury, illness (physical or psychological) or disease that may be suffered by a person as a consequence of exposure to a hazard.

Material safety data sheet: Provides employees and emergency personnel with safety procedures for working with toxic or dangerous materials. The data sheet includes all relevant information about the material such as physical properties (e.g. melting/boiling point, toxicity and reactivity), health

effects, first aid requirements and safe handling procedures (e.g. personal protective equipment, safe storage/disposal and management of spills).

OHS committee: A committee that facilitates co-operation between an employer and employees in instigating, developing and carrying out measures designed to ensure the health and safety of employees in the workplace.

Risk: The chance (likelihood) that a hazard will cause harm to individuals.

Risk assessment: A process for developing knowledge/understanding about hazards and risks so that sound decisions can be made about the control of hazards. Risk assessments assist in determining:

- what levels of harm can occur?
- how harm can occur?
- the likelihood that harm will occur?

Risk control: A measure, work process or system that eliminates an OHS hazard or risk, or if this is not possible, reduces the risk so far as is reasonably practicable.

5. SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

Sources

- *Early Childhood Management Manual*, ELAA
- OHS in Early Childhood Services (ELLA): www.ohsinecservices.org.au
- WorkSafe Victoria: www.worksafe.vic.gov.au

Service policies

- *Child Safe Environment Policy*
- *Code of Conduct Policy*
- *Emergency and Evacuation Policy*
- *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy*
- *Participation of Volunteers and Students Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*
- *Road Safety and Safe Transport Policy*
- *Staffing Policy*

PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider and Persons with Management Control are responsible for:

- providing and maintaining a work environment that is safe and without risks to health and wellbeing (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 service (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 service's activities, including holding a fete or a working bee etc., or any activity that is ancillary to the operation of the service 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 service
- 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
- displaying this policy in a prominent location at the service premises
- ensuring the physical environment at the service 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
 - the need for establishing an OHS committee and determining membership of the committee
 - proposed changes at the service 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. Services 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

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

- ensuring that all educators/staff are aware of this policy, and are supported to implement it at the service
- 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 service is safe, secure and free from hazards for children (refer to *Child Safe Environment Policy*)
- ensuring that all equipment and materials used at the service meet relevant safety standards
- ensuring the service is up to date with current legislation on child restraints in vehicles if transporting children (refer to *Road Safety and Safe Transport Policy*)
- implementing and practising emergency and evacuation procedures (refer to *Emergency and Evacuation Policy*)
- implementing and reviewing this policy in consultation with the Approved Provider, educators, staff, contractors and parents/guardians
- 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.

Educators and other staff are responsible for:

- 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 service 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 service
 - 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
- practising emergency and evacuation procedures (refer to *Emergency and Evacuation Policy*)

- teaching children about positive safety behaviours, including correct use of protective equipment, correct use of facilities and equipment, and identifying and responding to hazards.
- ensuring the physical environment at the service is safe, secure, and free from hazards for children (refer to *Child Safe Environment Policy*)
- maintaining a clean environment daily, and removing tripping/slipping hazards as soon as these become apparent
- keeping up to date with current legislation on child restraints in vehicles if transporting children (refer to *Road Safety and Safe Transport Policy*)
- implementing and reviewing this policy in consultation with the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, contractors and parents/guardians.

Students on placements, volunteers, contractors and parents/guardians at the service are responsible for:

- being familiar with this policy
- co-operating with reasonable OHS rules implemented by the service
- not acting recklessly and/or placing the health and safety of other adults or children at the service at risk.

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 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 (Regulation 172(2)).

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Stables Kindergarten OH&S Procedures and Risk Areas
- Attachment 2: Stables Kindergarten Term Safety Inspection Checklist

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Stables Kindergarten on 4/08/2021

REVIEW DATE: 4/08/2024

ATTACHMENT 1

Stables Kindergarten OH&S Procedures and Risk Areas

HAZARD IDENTIFICATION AND RISK ASSESSMENT

Stables kindergarten utilises a systemic risk management approach to the management of workplace hazards. This includes ensuring that:

- hazards and risks to health, safety and wellbeing 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.

Risk Management Procedure:



Regular safety audits must be conducted of the indoor and outdoor environments including all equipment, emergency equipment, playgrounds, cleaning services, horticultural maintenance, and pest control. OH&S issues must be resolved within a reasonable timeframe.

Workplace Hazard Inspections to be conducted at Stables Kindergarten consist of:

- a daily inspection of the service conducted by staff members prior to the children's attendance using the daily indoor and outdoor checklist.
- Once a Term Checklist.
- Excursion site inspection and risk assessments using the *excursion risk management plan*.
- Specific inspections in response to OH&S issues raised by employees.

INCIDENT REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION

In the event of an incident or injury, staff should:

- Provide first aid and arrange for medical treatment if required.
- Report injury/incident to the Manager verbally.
- Take any steps needed to protect the health and safety of all persons following the incident.
- For injuries/incidents involving children, refer to the *Child Safe Environment* policy.
- For staff and volunteers, use the *Hazard, Incident, Near Miss, Injury/Illness Report and Investigation Form* and give this to the Manager as soon as possible. The Manager will report to the committee and follow up as required.
- The Manager should immediately report a notifiable injury/incident to WorkSafe Victoria and submit required documentation to WorkSafe Victoria within 48 hours.
- DET is to be notified via the NQA ITS portal if the incident is considered a notifiable incident

OH&S INDUCTION TRAINING

All staff complete a full induction prior to commencement of work conducted by the Manager. Visitors, volunteers and students, contractors and temporary employees are made aware of their OH&S responsibilities to themselves and other. See Staffing Policy for more information.

RISK AREA - Manual Handling

Measures to reduce the risk of manual handling injuries through correct technique by using the PLAN SMART approach:

- PLAN - Prior to commencing any manual handling task, consider if all or part of the task can be eliminated or if a control measure can reduce the risk such as using mechanical aids.
- S - Size up the load/stable base of support/secure the load.
- M - Move close to the load/keep the load close to your waist.
- A - Always applying the semi-squat position.
- R - Raise the object smoothly and with your legs.
- T - Turn by moving your feet, avoid twisting movements.

RISK AREA - Slips, Trips, Fall Hazards and Environment

Measures to prevent injury through slips, trips and falls:

- No work should be undertaken by a volunteer or employee if it involves the possibility of an involuntary fall greater than 2 metres.
- If a ladder is required to undertake a task, ensure it is an approved step ladder.
- Familiarise yourself and inspect the work area and what objects, furniture and possible obstacles are in it.
- Wear appropriate footwear.
- Isolate or sign post spills and wet areas and clean up the area as soon as possible.
- Ensure adequate lighting is used.
- Ensure room temperature and humidity are at acceptable levels
- If contractors are working in the room, children are to be removed from the immediate area

RISK AREA - Chemical Safety

Measures to prevent injury through unauthorised access to chemicals and hazardous substances:

- Maintain a list of all approved dangerous goods and hazardous substances used and stored at Stables Kindergarten.
- Compile and maintain Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for each chemical at the service and review the MSDS annually. Update if older the 5 years.
- Ensure employees understand how to safely use any chemicals stored in the workplace.
- Ensure chemicals are not bought into the service without corresponding MSDS and listing on the chemical register.
- Ensure all chemicals are labelled, securely stored and are inaccessible to children.
- Use all chemicals in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Clean up/isolate any spills immediately and dispose of the waste appropriately. If a spill can't be identified or cleaned up/isolated, staff are to evacuate the service in accordance with the Emergency Evacuation Procedure (as listed in the *Emergency Management Plan*).

RISK AREA - Stress

A resilient workforce needs to be capable of dealing with stressful situations both within and outside the workplace. For more information see the Staffing Policy. Measures to control and improve work related stress hazards and risks:

- Foster an open, supportive teamwork environment.
- Regularly review stress prevention measures evaluating their effectiveness through consultation of staff.
- Regularly review systems and management of work and physical work environment.
- Deal with all concerns raised in confidence and with sensitivity and provide moral and other support where necessary including the use of a professional counsellor.
- Use a mediation service if irreconcilable difficulties between employees develop

RISK AREA - Staff Attire

- Ensure staff are wearing appropriate footwear
- Ensure staff are adhering to the service's SunSmart Policy

ATTACHMENT 2

Stables Kindergarten Term Safety Inspection Checklist

TERM SAFETY INSPECTION CHECKLIST

(Conducted at the beginning of each term)

Date: _____

Employee Name: _____

Position: _____

Signature: _____

Internal	Yes	No	Action to be Taken	Person Responsible	Due Date
Floor coverings in good order					
Floor level, without cracks or dips					
Electrical leads kept clear of aisles and walkways					
Alarm system functional					
Toilet areas are well ventilated					
Lighting in all indoor work areas is sufficient and suitable for work performed					
Temperature maintained at a comfortable level					
Air quality is good (no fumes, odours or particles)					
Kitchen facilities are kept clean and in good working order					
Food stored appropriately and refrigerated where required					
Work benches and appliance are kept clean, and the fridge is cleaned out regularly					
Knives and other sharp implements are kept out of children's reach					
Shelving in good order and					

materials and equipment stored safely and aisles kept clear					
There is adequate protective equipment (e.g. disposable gloves) for cleaning tasks					
Toys and surfaces in play area are washed regularly					
Staff and visitors don't have hot drinks around children unless in lidded non-spill containers					
External	Yes	No	Action to be Taken	Person Responsible	Due Date
Walls, gates and fences in good working order without gaps or protrusions.					
Surfaces cleared regularly of fallen leaves					
Impact absorbing material under all equipment where fall height could exceed 90cm					
Fall zone free from objects and extends at least 1.5 metres beyond perimeter of equipment					
All equipment is checked regularly to ensure it is safe and in good repair i.e.: no protruding bolts, nails of splinters					
Sandpit and digging patch clean, and any rubbish and dangerous objects removed, such as glass					
In the garage and shed, equipment is stored away properly, kept tidy and clear aisles					
Shelving in the garage and shed is in good order					
Gardens maintained – debris and dead, loose or overhanging branches (to be reported to council) identified					
Pathways are free of raised edges or any other potential					

tripping hazard					
All chemicals are locked away and an MSDS has been supplied for each hazardous substance					
Veranda is clear of obstructions and provides a free and clear walkway					
Emergency Evacuation Plans clearly displayed at each exit					
Other:					
Other:					