



Guliyali Preschool Procedure

Providing a Child Safe Environment

Reviewed: 27/03/2019



Education and care services regulation/s	NSW Department of Education policy, procedure or guidelines	Preschool Handbook reference	School policy or procedure, where applicable
<u>Regulation 168(2)(h)</u>	<p>The following department policies and relevant documents can be accessed from the preschool section of the department's website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting and supporting children and Young People Policy PD/2002/0067/V02 • Working with Children Check Policy PD/2005/0264/V07 • Work Health and Safety (WHS) Policy PD/2013/0454/V01 • Child Protection – allegations Against Employees Policy DOC16/1020544 	N/A	N/A

Guliyali Preschool will ensure the environment is safe, clean and well maintained. Children's awareness of the environment and sustainable practice will be supported through daily practices, resources and interactions. The physical environment, both in and outdoors will support children's learning, safety, levels of engagement and access to positive experiences and inclusive relationships.

➤ **IMPLEMENTATION:**

- Fencing and barriers which enclose outdoor areas used by children in the education and care service are maintained to ensure they are of a height and design that prevents children of preschool age from going through, over or under the structure.
- Sufficient furniture, materials and developmentally appropriate equipment are provided and maintained in the service in order to support all children to engage and access the program and develop their developing skills and independence.
- Adequate space requirements are maintained in both the indoor and outdoor environments.
- Toilet, washing and drying facilities are developmentally and age appropriate and are located and designed in a way that support safe use and convenient access by children.
- Our classroom is well ventilated and has adequate natural light.
- Indoor temperatures are maintained at levels that support children's safety and wellbeing.
- The play spaces in the centre provide children with opportunities to explore and experience the natural environment.
- The outdoor environment has adequate shaded areas to protect children from ultraviolet radiation from the sun.

- The environment has been adapted to support access to both indoor and outdoor play activities and to toilet facilities according to supervision requirements, children's independence and developmental needs.
- Ensure that plants are selected to minimise risks to children. No poisonous or dangerous plants will be included in the education and care environment. See fact sheet on *Poisonous Plants* – www.gtp.com.au/kisdafe1ld/inewsfiles/inews.5250.1.pdf.
- Educators to carefully select and provide adequate numbers of resources in order to contribute to children's sense of belonging and to provide new learning opportunities that extends and challenges children's learning and development.
- Develop a system of daily checks to ensure the safety of the Indoor and Outdoor Environments. See the following attachments:
 - *Attachment A – Daily Morning Safety Checklist*
 - *Attachment B – Daily Afternoon Safety Checklist*
 - *Attachment C – End of Day Checklist*
 - *Attachment D – Cleaner's Tasks, GA and Record of End of Term Tasks Completed*

➤ **THE PRESCHOOL TEACHER WILL COLLABORATE WITH THE CERT III OR DIPLOMA TRAINED EDUCATOR TO:**

- Design learning environments that are welcoming and accessible for all children and families, considering cultural diversity, social and physical inclusion.
- Design environments that reflect children's different cultures, interests, abilities and learning styles.
- Ensure that outdoor environments provide opportunities to learn through play, enabling access to materials that stimulate investigation and reflection, and enriched with natural resources and opportunities to connect with nature.
- Design indoor environments that are enriched by natural resources and opportunities to engage with nature.
- Offer children opportunities to be active, messy and noisy and play on a large scale.
- Encourage and nurture children's interest in the world around them. By providing children with materials, resources and information, educators can help children to appreciate and respect the beauty of their natural and built environments.
- Select resources and design learning environments that foster children's connections with the natural environment.
- Select natural materials and fibres if possible, when purchasing new equipment and resources. These include items such as wooden shelving and natural materials. Such resources enhance the look and feel of nature within the environment.
- Natural and flexible play materials such as sand, leaves and water will be available for children.
- Encourage children and families to collect and bring recycled equipment and natural resources into the environment.
- Encourage children to care for plants by growing plants from seeds.
- Design areas for appreciation of nature, where educators and children can observe the natural play environment and reflect on nature. This will include the introduction of indoor plants into indoor areas. Educators and children will be responsible for the care of these plants ensuring they have enough sunlight and water. As in the outdoor garden, plants will be selected to minimise the risks to children.

➤ **RATIOS, GROUP SIZE AND ATTENDANCE PATTERNS:**

The staff to child ratio for the preschool class is one to ten. This ratio should be maintained at all times (regulation 271). Each preschool class offers a maximum of 20 full time equivalent (FTE) places. This may include multiple groups with a maximum of 20 children in each group. Preschool classes are required to offer two attendance patterns across the week. Sessions offered can be of full or half day

duration. Decisions about enrolment patterns are best made in consultation with the school community, including other community-based early childhood providers.

Options for attendance patterns may include:

- A half-day sessional program for 5 days catering for two separate groups of children each day
- A part-time full-day program offering five days over a two-week period catering for two separate groups of children per week, that is, two days or three days one week and three days or two days in the alternate week
- A part time full day program offering two days to one group and three days to another group of children each week.
- A part time program offering two and a half days to two separate groups of children each week

In exceptional circumstances preschools may offer flexible enrolment patterns to cater for the needs of individual children, for example, a child who is at risk. This could include five days per week. A five-day per week program is also available where a preschool is located in a remote community, is located in an area with high socio-economic disadvantage, or in a community with a significantly high proportion of Aboriginal children.

➤ **HOURS OF OPERATION:**

It is recommended that the hours of operation of the preschool match those of the school (Guliyali Preschool offers 8:50am until 2:50pm). On the last day of each term the Principal may choose to close the preschool for a full day to allow for the cleaning of equipment and furniture, and the securing of buildings and resources for the vacation period. However, appropriate provision needs to be made for any child whose family is unable to make alternative arrangements for the closure. Approval must be sought from the Director - Public Schools NSW if the preschool is to be closed at any other time.

➤ **CLEANING:**

The Education and Care Services National Regulations (regulation 103) require that child services premises, including equipment and furnishings, are safe, clean and in good repair. Each departmental school has a cleaning contractor who aims to keep the whole school safe, clean and hygienic. The contractor makes sure that the school is cleaned to the cleaning performance standards by 8:00am each day or at a time agreed to by the Principal.

Preschool staff need to ensure that furnishings and play equipment are checked regularly and kept in a safe, clean and hygienic condition. There will need to be regular cleaning (as appropriate) of:

- Tables and chairs
- Indoor equipment
- Soft toys
- Puzzles
- Books
- Sand equipment
- Outdoor construction toys

It is recommended that a cleaning schedule be kept in the preschool folder. The Principal may decide to close the preschool on the last day of each term. This allows for staff to

disinfect equipment, furniture and beds, and secure buildings, resources and equipment ready for the new term.

➤ **CLEANING PRODUCTS:**

Staff should also consider the type of products used for cleaning desks, toys and equipment in the preschool. Many chemical cleaning products (including disinfectants) may be a potential risk to health, possibly triggering conditions such as asthma, allergies and poisoning.

Detergent and water are suitable for all general environmental cleaning. The use of disinfectant is only necessary if a surface is contaminated with potentially infectious material. However, the surface needs to be cleaned with detergent and water before using disinfectant or bleach. At Guliyali Preschool our aim is to promote an environmentally friendly preschool therefore we use vinegar and water on the lunch tables, chairs and shelves. The use of microfiber cloths is recommended as they remove dirt and moisture effectively.

Attached is the Cleaning Cloth Code that all educators refer to when cleaning.

➤ **BUILDINGS AND EQUIPMENT:**

All buildings and equipment should be safe and in good repair. It is important that departmental provisions for maintenance programs in schools include the preschool. Urgent minor repairs for the preschool should be carried out as for all other areas in the school. The *Education and Care Services National Regulations* (regulations 104, 105) require each child to have access to sufficient furniture, materials and developmentally appropriate equipment. The design and height of the preschool fences and gates should prevent children from climbing over, going through or crawling under them.

Consideration also needs to be given to the following:

- Gates leading to and from outdoor play areas need to be of the same height and equipped with a childproof self-locking mechanism. Gates require special attention and need regular maintenance to ensure they remain self-locking.
- Outdoor play areas have a childproof fence of at least 1200mm on all sides. 1500mm is the recommended height.
- The surfacing used underneath or around play equipment on the premises should comply with the playground surfacing requirements of the Australian and New Zealand standard AS/NZS 4422:1996.
- The recommended depth of soft fall under fixed equipment is 300mm.
- Mobile play equipment over 500mm also needs to be set up on soft fall to a depth of 300mm.
- Playground equipment must be safe and in good repair. It should not pose any fall, pinch, crush or trap hazard to the children.

This is consistent with requirements for play equipment in the school. Kidsafe NSW Inc. can provide information and advice on playground safety and design. The website address is: www.kidsafensw.org.

➤ **ELECTRICAL AND FIRE SAFETY:**

All electrical equipment should be well maintained. Electrical cords must be secured safely away from children's reach and power points fitted with protectors, to ensure children's safety.

When not in use equipment should be stored in a safe place that is inaccessible to children.

Fire extinguishers must be placed appropriately throughout the building, as in the rest of the school, and a fire blanket kept adjacent to any cooking facilities. Fire extinguishers need to be checked yearly.

➤ **CHEMICAL SAFETY:**

THE WORK, Health and Safety (WHS) Regulations and clause 70 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations require staff to ensure that all dangerous cleaning materials, disinfectants, poisonous and other dangerous substances and medications are kept in a child-resistant container. They must be labelled with the description of contents and directions for their use.

The following items should be kept in secure storage facilities that are inaccessible to children:

- All cleaning materials, including vinegar/water, detergents and disinfectants
- Poisonous and other dangerous substances
- Dangerous tools and equipment
- Toiletries
- Medications (kept in a childproof container and refrigerated, if necessary)
- First aid equipment

Dangerous substances such as cleaning solutions, items or equipment are not to be kept in places such as toilets, where children might be able to access them.

➤ **ANIMALS IN THE PRESCHOOL:**

Animals used in the preschool educational program can provide valuable learning experiences for children. Animals can help children care for other living things and teach a sense of responsibility, caring and tolerance. Staff must supervise children at all times when in contact with animals and good hygiene practices are to be followed, as animals can pass on both minor and serious diseases to humans.

The following procedures are a good guide:

- All children and adults wash their hands thoroughly after handling animals, especially before touching food.
- Animals' food and water containers must be kept separate from any areas used for food preparation for children.
- Animals must be kept off tables where food is prepared and served.
- Animals should be well cared for and kept healthy.
- Animal enclosures and cages must be kept clean.
- If an animal is unwell, the advice of a vet must be sought.
- Children should not handle animals that are unwell.

➤ **PLANTS IN THE PRESCHOOL:**

Any plants or vegetation that pose any risk of injury or severe discomfort or poisoning need to be identified and maintained or removed to ensure that they are no longer a hazard to children in the preschool. For more information refer to the Department's Landscape Management in NSW Public Schools at

https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/assetmanagement/assets/media/landscape_management.pdf

➤ **SANDPITS:**

Sandpits are fun and are often an integral part of the preschool program. To avoid the spread of infection particular attention needs to be paid to their cleanliness.

There are a number of ways to do this:

- Securely cover when not in use to prevent contamination, such as animal excreta, broken glass and other objects.
- Check daily and remove contaminated sand or rubbish clean periodically. *This can be done by:*
- Watering with either mild detergent, diluted household disinfectant or a 1:10 solution of bleach
- Raking through with salt
- Digging the sand over monthly to reduce moisture and stop the sand from turning sour
- Keep sand topped up to the maximum level. Sand should be within 100mm of the top edge of the sandpit edging
- Renew the sand annually or as necessary
- Kidsafe NSW Inc. has information and advice on sandpit safety and design. The website address is www.kidsafensw.org

➤ **SUPERVISION:**

Supervision in preschools should be a part of the whole school supervision plan in line with the Department's Memorandum to Principals: *Care and Supervision of Children 97/165 S.156*. The plan should acknowledge that preschool children need closer supervision than school-aged children due to their age and the nature of their activities. Therefore, preschool staff must be more aware of potential hazards to ensure the risk of illness, accidents and harm is reduced wherever possible. When staff supervise children they should not perform other duties that would affect the quality of their supervision and their interactions with children. Staff need to take a common sense approach to ensure children are adequately supervised if the preschool's toilets are not visible or easily accessible from the preschool room.

What do the Education and Care Services National Regulations say?

Regulation 271 requires a staff-to-child ratio of 1:10. Staff to child ratios alone do not determine what is considered adequate supervision. For more information, see the guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*.

➤ **CHILD PROTECTION:**

All Department staff must complete child protection training to ensure they understand their responsibilities under the child protection legislation as 'mandatory reporters'. Teachers must follow the Department's child protection procedures if there are concerns about risk of harm to a child. They should also support children to develop self-care skills that enable them to protect themselves and others from harm. The Department's *Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People: Revised Procedures* details the responsibilities of preschool staff if they have concerns about suspected risk of harm to a child.

