

Policy Name:	<b>Occupational Health and Safety Policy</b>
Date Created:	July 2011
Date Last Reviewed	March 2014, April 2017, April 2020
Created By:	The Committee of Management and Staff
Authorised By:	Committee of Management
Review Responsibility:	The Committee of Management and Staff
Review Date:	April 2023

### **Mandatory – Quality Area 3**

#### **Purpose**

This policy will provide guidelines and procedures to ensure that:

- all people who attend the premises of Sherbourne Preschool, including the Committee of Management, staff, children, parents/guardians, students, volunteers, contractors and visitors, are provided with a safe and healthy environment
- all reasonable steps are taken by the Committee of Management as the employer of staff, to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of employees at the service.

#### **Application**

This policy applies to the Committee of Management, the staff, children, parents/guardians, students on placement, volunteers, contractors and visitors attending the programs and activities of Sherbourne Preschool

#### **Definitions**

**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 reasonable 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, staff, students, volunteers, contractors and anyone visiting the service with an adequate level of care and protection against reasonable 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 Sherbourne Preschool or while engaged in activities endorsed by Sherbourne Preschool.

**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.

**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

## **Policy Statement**

Sherbourne Preschool has a moral and legal responsibility to provide a safe and healthy environment for employees, children, parents/guardians, students, volunteers, contractors and visitors.

Sherbourne Preschool is committed to ensuring that:

- the management group, staff and volunteers are aware of their health and safety responsibilities as employers, employees and volunteers
- on days that are forecasted to reach temperatures 40 degrees and above (as forecasted by the Bureau of Meteorology) kinder sessions will not operate (no Children). Families will be notified by 8pm the night before via text message SMS to both legal guardians
- on days when the temperature is to reach 38 degrees and above parents will be encouraged to keep their child at home or arrange for early their collection
- on the days that we are notified that utility services, including, water, electricity and gas, will not be available or in the event that these services are disconnected for a long period of time. Families will be notified and asked to collect their child immediately via cloudworks
- 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.

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.

## Our Responsibilities

### The Committee of Management is responsible for:

providing and maintaining a work environment that is safe and without risks to health (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](http://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](http://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*)
- identifying and providing appropriate resources, induction and training to assist educators, staff, contractors, visitors, volunteers and students to implement this policy
- ensuring the, 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 Nominated Supervisor and Person in Day to Day Charge is 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*)
- 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**

Nil

## **AUTHORISATION**

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Sherbourne Pre-School on April 2020

**REVIEW DATE:** APRIL 2023

## **Legislation and standards**

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

*Accident Compensation Act 1985, as amended 2007*  
*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*

Standard 2.3: Each child is protected

Element 2.3.1: Children are adequately supervised at all times

Element 2.3.2: Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury

*National Quality Standard, Quality Area 3: Physical Environment*

Standard 3.1: The design and location of the premises is appropriate for the operation of a service

Element 3.1.1: Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, furniture, equipment, facilities and resources are suitable for their purpose

Element 3.1.2: Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained

*National Quality Standard, Quality Area 7: Leadership and Service Management*

Standard 7.1: Effective leadership promotes a positive organisational culture and builds a professional learning community

*Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*

## Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007

### **Sources**

*Early Childhood Management Manual*, KPV

*Getting into the Act*, WorkSafe Victoria

*Getting help to improve health and safety*, WorkSafe Victoria

*Guide to the OHS Act 2004*, WorkSafe Victoria

*Managing safety in your workplace*, WorkSafe Victoria

OHS in Early Childhood Services (KPV):

[www.ohsinecservices.org.au](http://www.ohsinecservices.org.au)

WorkSafe Victoria: [www.worksafe.vic.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au)