



# Environmental Sustainability Procedure

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## Policy

The Environmental Sustainability Procedure falls under the Pedagogical Program Policy. At Hawthorn Early Years (HEY) the pedagogical program is underpinned by the National Quality Framework, our philosophy and the HEY Pedagogical Strategy. The documents as mentioned, provide educators with the information they need to design pedagogical programs that reflect the values of HEY while maximising each child's opportunities for learning welcoming their identities and cultures

## Application of Procedure

This procedure applies to the Approved Provider, the Board of Hawthorn Early Years all subcommittees of the Board of Management, employees, students, volunteers, families, children and others attending the programs and activities of Hawthorn Early Years.

## Hawthorn Early Years Is Committed To:

Promoting environmentally sustainable practices across the Service, including providing specialised educational programs which support children in developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will assist them in becoming environmentally responsible.

Working in partnership with the City of Boroondara, The Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation, our kitchen garden coordinator, and other community services to investigate and implement ways to reduce our carbon footprint and continue to extend our knowledge in environmental sustainability.

## Hawthorn Early Years will:

### **Kitchen Garden/Sustainability Working Group**

Appoint an Environmental Coordinator (from the educational leadership team) who will lead an Environmental Sustainability Working Group to identify and work towards achieving the Services environmental aims and objectives.

The Environmental Coordinator will be responsible for:

- Supporting each classroom to appoint one representative from the teaching team to become a member of the Kitchen Garden/Sustainability Working Group.
- Scheduling and facilitating regular working group meetings (usually once per term)
- Generating a service goal to work towards annually
- Reflecting on current sustainability practices



- Overseeing the Kitchen Garden coordinator and proposed lesson plans
- Updating and distributing the Quality Improvement Plan
- Collaborating with other services within the community to gain ideas and inspiration
- Ensuring project costs do not exceed the allocated budget
- Communicating initiatives through staff and parent updates.
- Supporting the working group by providing time to attend meetings and allocating necessary resources.
- Collaborating with educators, families, children and others to identify environmental sustainability strategies for implementation. Supporting the Kitchen Garden/Sustainability representatives throughout the year.
- Viewing sustainability calendars and assessing progress.

### **Seek resources and training**

Seek and apply for grants where possible, to support the implementation of strategies.

Replenish the HEY community library with shared resources to use within the educational program.

Offer regular professional development and training opportunities in environmental sustainability, including updating training within the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation.

Utilise peak bodies and environmental organisations such as Planet Ark, Environmental Education in Early Childhood (EEEC) and Early Childhood Australia.

### **Practice and promote sustainability**

Ensure contractors employed to carry out works at the Service are monitored and do not use toxic products during operating hours.

Provide families with information about environmentally sustainable practices through newsletters, updates and community events.

Embed the Sustainability/Kitchen Garden program within the Educational program as a specialised program.

### **All employees, volunteers and students will:**

Recognise that through environmental education we can build in children, positive attitudes and behaviours towards the natural environment.

Teach children how their and others actions impact on the environment and empower them with knowledge so that we can and make a positive impact on achieving a sustainable future.

Encourage children to take responsibility for their environment.



Incorporate celebrations of environmental awareness into the program e.g. National Tree Day, National Recycling Week and Walk to Work/ School Day.

Work towards the Service goals for the duration of the year.

Support the Kitchen Garden Coordinator in their role and extend lesson plans within the educational program.

### **Nominate for or support the classroom kitchen garden/sustainability representative**

Members of the Kitchen Garden/Sustainability Group will be responsible for:

- Initiating and leading projects within their classrooms
- Communicating with the Kitchen Garden Coordinator
- Reflecting on classroom sustainability practices
- Filling out the sustainability calendar
- Championing sustainable practices throughout the Service.
- Collaborating with educators, families, children and others to identify environmental sustainability strategies for implementation.

### **Use the following strategies in order to embed sustainable practices at the Service**

#### **Recycling**

Use recycle bins throughout the Service and discuss recycling with the children.

Ensure the indoor recycle bins are regularly emptied so that they do not become too full to use.

Ensure the council recycle bins are brought in from the street once emptied as per the roster.

Order products with recyclable packaging wherever possible.

Encourage families to contribute recycled materials from home to use within the program e.g.: collage materials, boxes, paper and dress ups.

Access materials through recycling programs such as Reverse Truck and Resource Rescue.

Recycle food scraps from the kitchen to use in the worm farms and compost bins.

Purchase “green”/recycled office supplies, print in draft quality where practical and use double-sided printing.

Encourage children to think about the materials they use within the program, for example using both sides of the paper when drawing.

#### **Water Conservation**

Recycle drinking water from meal times and drink bottles to water the plants.



Use water from the water tanks for water play and to water the gardens.

Create limits for the use of water within the educational program.

Encourage children to turn off taps and learn about water conservation in everyday life.

Conserve water by running full loads of the washing machine and dishwasher where possible.

### **Energy Conservation**

Use the clothes racks to dry clothes instead of the dryer, whenever time and weather permits.

Turn off lights when not needed if there is adequate natural light.

Turn appliances off at the wall when not in use.

Keep heating and cooling at conservative and appropriate levels. Always consider natural ventilation in relation to windows, doors and window coverings prior to switching on an energy appliance.

- Cooling between 23-25 degrees.
- Heating between 18-20 degrees

### **Reduce the Use of Toxic Chemicals**

Use only approved, naturally based chemicals at the Service to help prevent illnesses.

Use only non-toxic art supplies and natural materials for sensory experiences e.g. not shaving cream, which can cause skin and eye irritations.

Thoroughly wash all fruits and vegetables to avoid exposure to toxic chemicals and educate children about the importance of doing so.

Use non-toxic techniques both inside and outside to prevent and control pests. If a serious threat remains and pesticide application is the only viable option this will be applied by a licensed professional outside operating hours.

### **Composting & Worm Farm**

Encourage children to connect with the environment through worm farming and composting.

Involve children in the care of the worm farms by feeding worms scraps from the kitchen.

Discuss life cycles and the food chain with children.

Use scraps from the kitchen to create compost for the gardens.

### **Gardening & Plants**

Use native plants in the gardens wherever possible and tap into services such as Greenlink Nursery and the local council to learn about local native plants.



Involve children in watering and ongoing maintenance of gardens and pot plants.

Use water tolerant plants within the Service.

Use mulch to prevent soil drying out.

Teach children about care of the land, flora and fauna.

Grow edible and sensory gardens.

Use the worm juice from the worm farms to create fertilizer for the gardens and plants.

Consider the seven seasons within the Wurundjeri region.

### **Practical Purchasing & Use of Natural Resources**

Monitor new equipment purchases to ensure that environmental factors are considered including:

- Open-ended
- Durable, washable and repairable
- As natural as possible
- Made from renewable, re-used or recycled materials.

Limit the use of plastic (including laminating) wherever possible, particularly plastics with PVC.

Repair equipment whenever possible.

Use natural resources to enhance learning environments and for creative experiences.

### **Excursions**

Utilise the outdoor environment where possible including going on walks in nature.

Facilitate environmental excursions and incursions.

Visit other services known for their exemplary sustainability practices.

### **Parents/Guardians will:**

Collaborate with the educators, employees, children and others at the Service to identify and support environmental sustainability strategies for implementation.

### **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.

A full set of definitions can be found in the Policies and Procedures definitions list.