



## Policy and Procedure Environment and sustainability

### Purpose

Acacia is committed to promoting sustainable practices at all levels of our organisation. Acacia accepts that as part of its core beliefs we endeavour to preserve the environmental sustainability of our planet as an organisation, member in our communities and as a participant in the wider context of the world.

Acacia aspires to minimise the impact on our environment and maximise the effective use of resources. We strive to achieve this by increasing communication and awareness of our efforts in accordance with this policy and fostering responsible environmental behaviour amongst staff, educators, children, families, student's, volunteers and visitors.

### Scope

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending Acacia

### C- Compassion:

Educators will model respect, care and show appreciation and compassion towards the physical environment and when embedding sustainable practices

### H- Honor:

We have a responsibility to honor the first people of the land. Care for the animals, plants and earth. Honor our communities need for sustainable practices for current and future generations

### I - Integrity:

**We are inclusive and model practices that promote shared decision-making. We model practices and behaviour that is sustainable and promotes habits in children and our community that support sustainability.**

### L- Learning:

We will be reflective in our actions, decisions and continue to learn collectively. We will create opportunities where children can actively engage in nature to play, explore and learn.

### D- Diversity:

We will support families/children's social, cultural and linguistic diversity in our curriculum decision-making processes. Children's experiences are recognised and valued. The aim is ensure that all children have equitable access to resources and participation, and opportunities to demonstrate their learning and to value difference.

The centre recognises the importance of developing in children and their families an awareness, appreciation and concern for their environment. We do this within our education



program and our everyday practices. Resources are made available and shared with all families so they can continue environmental awareness within their own homes and daily practices.

- Minimise the use of plastic bags. Families will provide their child an environmentally reusable bag for soiled clothing
- Cardboard boxes.
- Educators are encouraged to be resourceful in obtaining recyclable goods.
- Educators encourage and model recycling in an environmentally sustainable way.
- Children of all age groups learn about environmental issues
- All appropriate measures are taken to minimise the use of non-recyclable materials
- Use of non-recyclable materials is managed, but not excluded from the classroom, as it is felt that children need to use materials such as glue, tape and paint for the development of skills that are of practical use in our modern education system and in the broader society. The use of such materials is monitored and can be altered as required to suit changes in the Centre's environmental policies.

### Office Practices

Wherever possible staff will reduce the amount of paper used by

- Using paper on both sides,
- Communicating with families, staff and community and management via email,
- Sharing information via School Stream
- Think sustainably by using digital photos, whiteboards or noticeboards and using small notices to parents rather than full page notices.

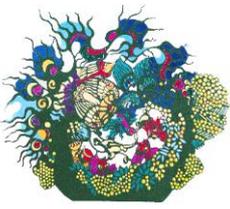
Please note that due to the restraints of Privacy Legislation, paper cannot always be recycled for use on the reverse side.

### Energy

At Acacia we are always researching current best practices to reduce our carbon footprint within our building.

The following strategies are implemented to reduce our energy consumption;

- Energy audits are conducted by local energy consultants.
- The use of energy efficient light globes and LED tubes
- Temperature settings of Heating and Cooling units are kept within recommended guidelines
- lighting, and electrical appliances are turned off when not in use
- The use of natural light is preferred for light and heating.
- Electrical appliances and white goods are maintained to ensure they are running efficiently
- Products with batteries are generally avoided
- the use of the clothes drier is kept to a minimum



- Strategies are installed in all new buildings and renovations to reduce carbon footprint, such as sensor lights, double glazed windows etc.

## **Bio Diversity**

At Acacia we believe a holistic approach in caring for our environment by implementing sustainable practices throughout our organisation and everyday program.

We achieve this by;

- Incorporating produce grown in our vegetable & herb gardens and fruit trees within children's meals.
- Environmentally friendly materials are referred when purchasing goods for our centre and for use in children's play
- utilising garden mulch and compost in our gardens
- hosting annual Working bees with families to foster an environmental awareness with development families and their children and maintaining our outdoor environment
- planting plants that are conducive to the environment
- Planting Native local plants Educating children to care for their natural environment both plants and animals
- Utilise products, where feasible, which are environmentally friendly in the cleaning of the centre.
- Children are encouraged to utilise a range of natural materials such as leaves, twigs, pebbles, sand and earth in the programs.

## **Water**

At Acacia we believe that water is a valuable resource that needs to be conserved. Management, staff and educators are committed to educating children on sustainable water practises. This is done by the following practices:

- Water audits are conducted by a local water authority and suggested modifications are implemented where possible.
- Children and adults are encouraged to use the half flush when using the toilets
- We ensure all taps and plumbing are well maintained.
- All water from water play and left over from drinking cups is to be used in our gardens.
- Educators, children and staff are involved in the planning of water conservation.
- We have a timed irrigation system throughout our gardens using water from our tanks.
- We endeavour to use plants that require minimal watering.
- Outdoor areas are being swept instead of hosed. Water conservation is taught to children and their families with aides and tools available by the local water authority.

## **Waste Reduction**



At Acacia we endeavour to educate children about minimising waste and to implement concepts of reduce, re-use and recycle. We are mindful of the amount of waste we emit and therefore, are committed in reducing the amount of waste that goes to landfill.

The following practices are undertaken:

- The use of recycled materials and reusing safe waste products where possible with in the children's program and office. Families are encouraged to donate appropriate materials to re-use at our centre.
- Recycle bins are available in each room
- Where possible recycle waste in local council or commercial recycling bins
- Compost bins are used for garden and food scraps
- Leftover food scraps are also feed to chickens
- We monitor and reflect on methods to reduce the quantity of food scraps leftover after meal times.
- Second hand goods are purchased to be used in our program.
- Swap program is available for families to donate and collect second hand goods from the centre.
- Foods being delivered from suppliers are brought in large boxes that can be given back to the driver for more use

### **Sustainability in our modern world**

Sustainability does not only cover environmental issues but also thinking sustain our selves in our modern world. Examples. Being self-sufficient, self-resourceful sustainable in futures. We get a good education so we don't rely on welfare. Self-resource for future generations. As educators it is our responsibility. As early childhood educators we acknowledge that we set the foundation to receive a quality education so they can succeed in their future endeavours. Which provides a cycle of resourceful and self-sustained skills for their future generations

- Reflect on practices
- Advocate for children's rights
- Advocate for early childhood accessibility is affordable
- Engage debating in consultations withheld by government regulatory authorities
- Engage in local community groups such as Atherton Gardens Network, Brimbank Childcare Network and Richmond Community Network
- to work in partnership in ensure our children's and families lives is bright and successful

### **References**

City of Yarra

- *Yarra Environment Strategy: Towards Local Sustainability 2008-2020*,
- Early Childhood Australia - National Quality Standards Professional Learning Program
- *Spaces for children*, e Newsletter No 25, 2011
- [www.sustainability.vic.gov.au](http://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au)
- <http://www.melbournewater.com.au/Pages/home.aspx>
- [www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-quality-standard/quality-area-3-physical-environment](http://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-quality-standard/quality-area-3-physical-environment)

