Environmental Protection and Care & Sustainable Practices

Purpose

This policy will provide guidelines for practicing environmentally sustainable waste disposal, promoting energy efficiently, reducing water usage, increasing biodiversity, and curriculum design through educating children, families and the community on sustainable practices.

Objectives

- To ensure that John Street takes an active role in caring for its environment, and contributes to a sustainable future. *(NQS 3.3)*
- To support children to become socially responsible and show respect for the environment. *(Outcome 2 EYLF)*
- To promote the role of educators who encourage children as active participants for sustainability, influencing the quality of life now, and for future generations. *(Practice Principle 4 VEYLDF)*

Definitions

**Sustainable practices** - the long-term maintenance of responsibility, which has environmental, economic, and social impact.

**Energy Efficiency** - efforts to reduce the amount of energy required to provide products and services

**Energy Ratings** – the measurement of a product or services energy efficiency

**Biodiversity** – the health of ecosystems

**Conservation** – the protection and management of biodiversity

Scope of Policy

This policy applies to the Board, Director, educators, staff, volunteers, students, and the children and families of John Street.
Policy Statement

Community attitudes to environmental care and sustainable practices are constantly changing, and John Street acknowledges its responsibility to reflect these changes in its service. John Street is committed to environmental protection and care, and practices which contribute to a sustainable future, and we endeavour to embed sustainable practices in our service operations, supporting children and families to become environmentally and socially responsible and show respect for the environment.

The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia guides John Street’s curriculum decision-making practices in supporting children to connect with and contribute to their world, with growing appreciation and care for both natural and constructed environments. Educators at John Street are always looking for examples of interdependence in the environment and discussing the ways the life and health of living things are interconnected.

John Street is one of eleven children’s services sites in the City of Yarra where Council installed solar panels on the building, with funding support from Federal and State Governments. The solar panels enable educators, children, their families and the community to see solar power in action, which has been designed to help Council reach its goal of having 10% of its electricity produced from local renewable sources.

Procedures

Recycling, Waste Disposal & Food Scraps

To ensure that waste is disposed of in an environmentally sustainable way:

- Children’s rooms, bathrooms, and staffing areas including office, kitchen and other general areas not accessible to children will have appropriately sealed rubbish bins
- Recyclable products will be disposed of correctly – this includes all milk cartons, glass, aluminium and steel cans and paper/cardboard
- Recycle bins are found in all children’s rooms
- Hard waste/non recyclable materials will be disposed of in the general waste bins.
- General waste bins are found in all child children’s rooms and
- Garden waste will be reused as mulch where practicable
- Recycled, recyclable paper is used for photocopying, and double sided where suitable
- Children are encouraged to scrape bowls and plates into a scraps bowl after meals and snacks
- Food scraps are either added to the ‘Worm Farms’, compost facility, or provided as food for our chickens as appropriate
- Children’s artwork is sent home regularly. John Street is responsible for any unnamed works, and where possible, these are recycled.
- John Street uses paper hand towels for use after hand washing, which is disposed of in the recycle bins in recognition of the excessive laundry (energy consumption and water use)
produced by cloth towels in an environment such as this.

- Disposable nappies are regarded as hazardous waste, which we endeavor to keep at a minimum. See John Street’s Toileting and Nappy Change Policy for sustainable practices and management.

**Energy Efficiency**

To control energy consumption so that we reduce our impact on the natural environment:

- Lighting and heating etc are switched off when not in use
- Children are encouraged to turn off equipment and lights when not in use
- John Street chooses the most appropriate energy saving methods available, including considering energy ratings on a range of equipment, appliances and lighting products including refrigerators, clothes washers, televisions, and compact fluorescent lamps
- Solar panels have been installed on the roof to utilise electricity from local and renewable sources

**Water**

To promote water as a precious natural resource:

- Trees are planted that are conducive to the children’s learning environment, requiring minimal watering
- A water tank is used for watering the plants and for water play
- Children and staff are involved in the planning of water conservation
- Children are educated on why we turn off the taps when not in use
- Children and staff are encouraged to use the dual flush cisterns

**Biodiversity**

To promote the protection and conservation of biodiversity:

- Our outdoor natural environment is maintained and developed by planting trees that are conducive to our environment
- Children’s play areas are environmentally friendly and recycled materials are used where possible
- Natural materials that reduce the impact on the environment are preferred
- Working bees are held periodically in order to encourage community involved in maintaining our outdoor environments
- John Street explores humane and sustainable means of controlling existing and potential threats to biodiversity from feral animals, weeds and vermin.
Curriculum Design

To educate children and families on environmentally sustainable practices:

- The children at John Street will be involved in the planning and decision-making of environmentally focused improvements.
- A healthy and aesthetically pleasing learning environment is provided by John Street and maintained through the reduction of waste and rubbish.
- Community participation is encouraged in all projects undertaken, and invites families with expertise to help maintain and improve the John Street environment.
- Information is provided to families on how to recycle correctly, reduce waste, and conserve energy, including ways to reduce water usage both indoors and outdoors.
- Children are educated about environmental protection and conservation to encourage them to adopt sustainable practices that they carry on through life.
- Educators are encouraged and supported in environmental practices so that they become appropriate role models for children and families.
- Curriculum decision making practices of educators consider how children develop an awareness of the impact of human activity on environments and the interdependence of living things.

Maintenance & Sustainability Committee

John Street’s Maintenance and Sustainability Committee acts to:

- Promote environmentally responsible practices
- Identify best practice strategies and solutions for John Street regarding the protection and care for the environment

See also maintenance and child safe environment policy.

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the John Street community to adopt protective environmentally sustainable practices and promote these to other community members.

Legislative Provisions

National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care & School Age Care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard 3.3</th>
<th>The service takes an active role in caring for its environment and contributes to a sustainable future</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Element 3.3.1</td>
<td>Sustainable practices are embedded in the service operations</td>
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<td>Element 3.3.2</td>
<td>Children are supported to become environmentally responsible and show respect for the environment</td>
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</table>
Early Years Learning Framework for Australia

Outcome 1

Victorian Early Years Learning & Development Framework

Practice Principle 4

Sources

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) and Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority (VCAA) 2009, *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework for all Children from Birth to Eight Years*, State of Victoria, Melbourne. Pg 11


Energy Rating Website - A joint initiative of Australian, State and Territory and New Zealand Governments www.energyrating.gov.au

Yarra City Council
Phone: 9205 5190
Email: info@yarracity.vic.gov.au

Related John Street Policies, Procedures & Guidelines

<table>
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<th>Policies</th>
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<tr>
<td>Providing a Child Safe Environment; Communication with Families; Program Planning; Independent Toileting &amp; Nappy Changes;</td>
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Authorisation & Review

The Board will ensure that John Street upholds community attitudes and concerns about environmental protection and care, and sustainable practices.

The review and development of policies and procedures will be completed by the Grants and Policy sub-committee of the Board, in collaboration with John Street’s Director. Drafts will be circulated to seek input from staff and feedback from families, before final approval from the Board.

In accordance with R. 172 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, John Street will ensure that families of children enrolled at John Street are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on: John Street’s provision of education and care to any child.
enrolled at the service; a family’s ability to utilise the service; or the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

To ensure that John Street is compliant, and maintains collaborative approaches with the community, John Street will notify all families of children enrolled at least 14 days before making ANY policy change, unless this time period would pose risk to the safety, health or wellbeing of any child enrolled in the service, in which case John Street will act to adjust any policies and/or procedures to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of all children at the service, and will notify families as soon as practicable after making the necessary change(s).

The Board authorises this policy and welcomes the opportunity to discuss any aspect with stakeholders. We appreciate your support while we strive to provide a quality education and care service for children and families in our community.

Date approved: ____________________________

Signed: ____________________________

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<tr>
<th>Date Reviewed</th>
<th>Details of Change</th>
<th>Date of next Review</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 2011</td>
<td></td>
<td>August 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 2012</td>
<td>Reformatted, information developed to reflect the NQS, and expanded to articulate energy efficiency, biodiversity and curriculum design.</td>
<td>December 2013</td>
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