

(Revised October 2023)

Policy Statement:

The Mueller College Outside School Hours Care Service recognises,

- Healthy ecosystems and environments are necessary to the survival of humans and other organisms. Education and care Services play an important part of improving sustainability understanding and practice as it is situated to educate students in meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. This responsibility is reflected in the National Quality Standard, which asks that each Service takes an ‘active role’ in caring for the environment and contributes to a sustainable future (NQS Standard 3).
- The intention of adopting sustainable practices should be to encourage a questioning and investigative approach with students regarding their surroundings and environment, rather than to dictate a particular set of values. The elements listed in this Policy formulate the Service’s environmental strategy.

National Quality Standard (NQS)

Quality Area 1: Educational Program & Practice
3: Physical Environment
7: Governance and Leadership

1.1	Program	The educational program enhances each child’s learning and development.
1.1.3	Program learning opportunities	All aspects of the program, including routines, are organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child’s learning.
1.2	Practice	Educators facilitate and extend each child’s learning and development.
1.2.1	Intentional teaching	Educators are deliberate, purposeful, and thoughtful in their decisions and actions.
3.1	Design	The design of the facilities is appropriate for the operation of a service.
3.1.1	Fit for purpose	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child.
3.2	Use	The service environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning.
3.2.1	Inclusive environment	Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child’s participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.
3.2.3	Environmentally responsible	The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible.
7.1	Governance	Governance supports the operation of a quality service.
7.1.2	Management systems	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.

Education and Care Services National Regulations

103 (1)	Requires all equipment and furniture used in providing the education and care service are safe, clean and in good repair.
105	Requires each child being educated and cared for by the education and care service has access to sufficient furniture, materials and developmentally appropriate equipment suitable for the education and care of that child.
110	Ventilation and natural light The approved provider of an education and care service must ensure that the indoor spaces used by children at the education and care service premises— (a) are well ventilated; and (b) have adequate natural light; and (c) are maintained at a temperature that ensures the safety and wellbeing of children. Penalty: \$2000. Note— A compliance direction may be issued for failure to comply with this regulation.
113	Outdoor space—natural environment The approved provider of a centre-based service must ensure that the outdoor spaces provided at the education and care service premises allow children to explore and experience the natural environment. Example— The use of natural features such as trees, sand and natural vegetation. Note— A compliance direction may be issued for failure to comply with this regulation.

Education and Care Services National Law

301 (3,f)	Requirements and standards to be complied with for safety, security, cleanliness, comfort, hygiene and repair of premises, outdoor spaces, fencing, gates, resources and equipment used for providing education and care services;
301 (3,g)	Requirements and standards about the premises to be used to provide an education and care service including siting, design, layout, space, security and entitlement to occupy;

Objective:

The Mueller College Outside School Hours Care Service will make every effort to encourage and increase awareness of environmental responsibilities and will work to develop practices that contribute to a sustainable future. Students will be supported to become environmentally responsible and show respect for the environment.

Procedure:

- The Service aims to incorporate sustainability discussions with educators at the Service and provide ongoing professional development opportunities to assist them to confidently implement sustainable practices.
- The Service promotes conservation and encourages students and families to protect and care for the environment. Educators will model, as appropriate, environmentally friendly and sustainable practices.
- Educators will attempt to build strategies into the program to encourage the students towards critical thinking in relation to questioning and discussing sustainable issues such as food scrapes, droughts, water conversation etc.
- The use of fresh food for lunches and morning and afternoon teas will be encouraged to reduce the over use of packaging.
- Educators will model as appropriate, environmentally friendly and sustainable practices including recycling, gardening and composting.
- Educators will seek to embed sustainable practices at the Service. The concepts of “reduce, re-use and recycle” should be part of everyday practice for both students and educators and will help to develop lifelong attitudes towards sustainable practices.
- Themes in relation to the importance of our natural environment and environmental protection and sustainability will be included in the students’ programs and in the day to day operation of the Service. Students are encouraged to appreciate elements of the natural environment.
- Materials used for art and craft activities will include recycled or reused products.
- Wherever possible students should be intricately involved in the caring for plants and animals and the processes taken through compost care and recycling.
- The Service will actively examine reduction in energy and water consumption.
- The Service will continue to examine waste management and implement recycling practices.
- Wherever possible, environmentally friendly cleaning products will be used at the Service.
- Native animals and insects will be treated with care and respect and if captured for use in the educational program, will be set free after an appropriate observation time.
- Plants and animals should be cared for as per the cleaning roster ensuring any animal feeding, water changes and watering of plants is diligently adhered too.

Recycling

- Recycling of paper towel will be encouraged with students. Every effort will be made to reuse and recycle products as the opportunity arises.
- Recycle bin is to be emptied from the garbage bag into the **locked** council recycle bin at the end of J block.
- The council bin needs to be unlocked and place on Wattle Rd outside of the Child care Centre every **second Tuesday at 6pm** by the After School Care staff.
- The After School Care staff will then need to bring in the bin and re-lock it every second Wednesday.
- Exact dates for bin collection can be confirmed on the Morton Bay Regional Council website

Compost

- Students are encouraged to put food scraps in the compost bins which will be emptied daily.
- Staff will also have a compost bin in the staff fridge that is emptied weekly.
- Compost and paper from the shredder will be added to the compost outside the Service.

REFERENCES:

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2011, Current as at March 2023
- Education and Care Services National Regulations, Current as at October 2023
- My Time, Our Place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia – Produced by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations for the Council of Australian Governments. Ver2.0, Revised 2022
- Guide to the National Quality Framework, Revised July 2023
- National Quality Standard, Revised 1 February 2018
- Guide to the National Quality Standard, Revised May 2022
- Belonging Being and Becoming – the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. Produced by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations for the Council of Australian Governments.
- Sustainability – Wikipedia
- Environmental Protection Regulation 2008
- Talking about Practice: Embedding sustainable practices (NQS PLP e-Newsletter No. 67 2013)
- Going 'green' in childcare services – Extract from Putting Children First (Issue 29 March 2009)
- A 'green' thumbs up to sustainable practices (Posted on Feb 25, 2013 by ACECQA)

See also:

- Mueller OSHC Student Programmes Policy & Procedure
- Mueller College environmental strategy