

ENVIRONMENT

Policy and Procedures

GPAC is committed to providing children with experiences of the natural world which will help them to understand their place within it and take responsible action to preserve it. We endeavour to share information and practices with families.

PROCEDURE:

Staff will adopt creative approaches which provide children with play and hands on experiences related to nature and the natural world.

Staff will have access to appropriate resources and training in this regard.

Children will be encouraged to be part of the decision making process related to the centre's environmental program.

Staff will be encouraged to follow sound environmental practices and act as mentors to children and new staff members.

Families will be consulted and invited to participate in all activities related to the centre's environmental program.

The centre will adopt practices relating to water usage, energy efficiency, waste management, the use of chemicals, air quality, the care of animals and vegetation and consideration for the local environment. The details of these practices will be available to any interested person.

The centre will encourage links and networking with families and the community regarding environmental issues, by keeping them informed about our centre's environmental activities and what others can bring to the centre to assist and enhance the centre's environmental strategies.

WASTE

Our Goal

To be aware of the effects on the environment of the waste we produce and to dispose of this waste in the most responsible way by:

- Minimising the use of non-renewable resources.
- Minimising the use of materials which harm flora or fauna.
- Adopting the practice of **Reduce, Reuse or Recycle**

Our Strategies



In the kitchen:

- Separate food and fruit/vegetable scraps each day.
- Use non bleached paper products whenever possible.
- When doing groceries for service use recyclable bags.
- If plastic bags are used, ensure that these are stored for reuse in service or returned to the store for recycling.
- Fruit and veggies not to be washed **under a running** tap.
- Use crockery rather than disposable utensils.
- Use of plastic wrap kept to a minimum.

Whole of centre:

- Ensure that paper & cardboard, batteries used at the centre are recycled, by placing them in the school's recycling bins.
- Limit the use of purchased items in our activity program by encouraging donations, shopping at Reverse Garbage and Op Shops.
- Use small amounts of water-based paint and glue.
- Soak glue and paint brushes in water rather than wash them under running water.
- Wrap paints, oils and fats in newspaper and dispose of in garbage.
- Limit the use of plastic products in housekeeping and in the centre.
- Purchase in bulk or in refillable containers where possible.
- Avoid the use of polystyrene.
- Allow water only down sink drains. Use sink sieves to trap solids.
- Empty water trays onto the garden and encourage children to empty any unused water onto the garden.
- If renovating, install dual flush toilets.
- Make sure taps are turned off (i.e. not left dripping) and children don't waste water when washing their hands.
- Clean outside areas with a broom – avoid using a hose.

In the office:



- Use recycled paper and other office consumables whenever possible
- Use both sides of paper whenever possible
- Re-use envelopes
- Make note pads from scrap paper or re-use scrap paper in children's art cupboard
- Edit drafts on screen
- Email and use web site rather than distribute hard copy memos, newsletters etc.
- Preview before printing
- Print only what is really needed
- Buy in bulk

CHEMICALS

Our Goal:

To minimise the use of harmful chemicals.

Our Strategies:

- Buy detergents/liquid soaps that are phosphate free or reduced.
- Measure cleaning agents and use as directed.
- Limit the number of synthetic cleaning products. Identify which products are essential and which are non-essential.

The use of soap and water is widely considered to be an effective cleaner for personal and other needs. Research has shown that 'the use of commercial 'anti-bacterial' products is expensive and unnecessary'. (Choice Jan/Feb 1999)

- Avoid the use of toxic substances such as pesticides, herbicides, deodorizers and timber preservatives. (See list of dangerous chemicals in Nature Conservation Council's web site).
- Use non-toxic art materials. If using spray paint at any time, always wear a mask and do not use near children.
- Minimise the use of solvents, e.g. liquid paper.
- Use non-aerosol pump packs where a spray is required.
- Position photocopier in a well ventilated room.
- Check the expiry date on stored chemicals and medications and dispose of at local pharmacy or by contacting Sutherland Council
- Obtain MSDS forms for all chemical products used at the centre and file these in the appropriate folder.
- Store any hazardous chemicals in an inaccessible (locked if possible) area in accordance with the centre's WH&S Policy
- When renovating or redecorating the centre use enviro-friendly paints and other materials.

ENERGY

Our Goal

To minimise the use of non-renewable resources.

Our Strategies

Appliances – We will buy appliances which have a high energy rating, preferably four star or higher. Most electrical appliances have an energy rating guide which reflects the average energy usage for that appliance. The actual energy used will vary according to how the appliance is used and where the centre is located.

- When renovating : Ceiling fans are economical to operate. They provide a cooling air movement in summer and help to move heated air downward in winter.
- Air conditioning units to be regularly serviced and filters cleaned regularly.

- Dishwasher to be operated with a full load and maintained according to manufacturer's instructions. Ensure the filter is cleaned regularly.
- Lighting – use natural light when possible and fluorescent tubes or compact fluorescent lamps in areas where lighting is required to be left on for long periods of time on a regular basis.
- Photocopier should have a 'stand by' facility and double sided copy function.
- Refrigerator and freezer to be regularly checked to ensure that door seals are not split or damaged. A 5cm space to be allowed on all sides of refrigerator and freezer to let heat escape.
- Microwaves must be checked annually for leakage in accordance with centre's WH&S Policy.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Education and Care Services National Regulations	National Quality Standard	Other Service policies/documentation	Other
	3.3 The service takes an active role in caring for its environment and contributes to a sustainable future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parent Handbook - Staff Handbook - Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy - Hygiene Policy 	<p>My Time, Our Place (school age care framework)</p> <p>Sutherland Shire Council's guidelines and regulations</p>

ENDORSEMENT BY THE SERVICE:

Approval date: _____

Review date: _____