

# OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

## Mandatory – Quality Area 3

### PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines and procedures to ensure that:

- all people who attend the premises of Woodridge Pre-school, including employees, children, parents/guardians, students, volunteers, contractors and visitors, are provided with a safe and healthy environment
- all reasonable steps are taken by the Approved Provider, as the employer of staff, to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of employees at the service.

### POLICY STATEMENT

#### VALUES

Woodridge Pre-school has a moral and legal responsibility to provide a safe and healthy environment for employees, children, parents/guardians, students, volunteers, contractors and visitors. This policy reflects the importance Woodridge Pre-school places on the wellbeing of employees, children, parents/guardians, students, volunteers, contractors and visitors, by endeavouring to protect their health, safety and welfare, and integrating this commitment into all of its activities.

Woodridge Pre-school is committed to ensuring that:

- the management group, staff and volunteers are aware of their health and safety responsibilities as employers, employees and volunteers
- systematic identification, assessment and control of hazards is undertaken at the service
- effective communication and consultation form a fundamental part of the management process to encourage innovative ways of reducing risk in the service environment
- training is provided to assist staff to identify health and safety hazards which, when addressed, will lead to safer work practices at the service
- it fulfils its obligations under current and future laws (in particular, the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*), and that all relevant codes of practice are adopted and accepted as a minimum standard.

#### SCOPE

This policy applies to the Approved Provider, Persons with Management and Control, Nominated Supervisor, persons in day to day charge, educators, staff, children, parents/guardians, students on placement, volunteers, contractors and visitors attending the programs and activities of Woodridge Pre-school.

### BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

#### Background

Everyone involved in an early childhood education and care service has a role to play in ensuring the service's operations are safe and without risk to the health and safety of all parties. In Victoria, health and safety in the workplace is governed by a system of laws, regulations and compliance codes that set out the responsibilities of employers and employees to ensure safety is maintained at work.

The *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (OHS Act) sets out the key principles, duties and rights in relation to workplace health and safety. The *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017* specifies the ways duties imposed by the OHS Act must be undertaken and prescribes procedural/administrative matters to support the OHS Act, such as requiring licenses for specific activities, or the need to keep records or notify authorities on certain matters.

The legal duties of an **employer** under the OHS Act are:

- provide and maintain a working environment for employees that is safe and without risks to their health, including psychological health. This duty includes:
  - providing and maintaining safe systems of work
  - providing information, instruction, training and supervision so employees can perform their work safely and without risks to health
- monitor the conditions of workplaces under the employer's management and control monitor employee health
- consult with employees and any health and safety representatives (HSRs) (*refer to Definitions*) when doing certain things, for example, identifying or assessing hazards or risks and making decisions about measures to control those risks
- attempt to resolve health and safety issues in line with any relevant agreed procedure or the relevant procedure prescribed by the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 (OHS Regulations)

In order to comply with their duties, employers:

- must consult with employees and HSRs (*refer to Definitions*) to identify or assess hazards or risks to health and safety at a workplace under the employer's management and control, including work-related factors that can cause or contribute to stress
- where a risk has been identified, either eliminate the risk or implement measures to control it so far as is reasonably practicable
- following a report/injury/incident involving stress, need to investigate whether work-related factors contributed
- need to review and revise risk control measures

The definition of 'health' under the *OHS Act* includes 'psychological health', therefore any reference to OHS obligations in relation to the health of employees extends to their psychological health.

Employees have a duty, while at work, to take reasonable care for their own health and safety, and to take reasonable care for the health and safety of people who might be affected by their acts or omissions in the workplace. Employees also have a duty to cooperate with their employer's actions to comply with requirements under the *OHS Act* and *OHS Regulations*.

### Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Accident Compensation Act 1985* (Vic)
- *AS/NZS 4804:2001 and 4801:2001 Occupational health and safety systems*
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 3: Physical Environment
- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017*

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/>

Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation - [http:// www.legislation.gov.au](http://www.legislation.gov.au)

### DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms e.g. Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Regulatory Authority etc. refer to the *General Definitions* section of this manual.

**An Authorised Representatives of Registered Employee Organisations (ARREO):** A permanent employee or officer of a registered employee organisation who has satisfactorily completed a WorkSafe-approved course and holds an entry permit issued by the Magistrate's Court.

An ARREO may enter a workplace during working hours to enquire into a suspected breach of the OHS Act. Immediately on entry, the ARREO must take reasonable steps to provide the employer or their representative with:

- a notice which describes the suspected breach
- their entry permit for inspection

**Duty of care:** A common law concept that refers to the responsibilities of organisations to provide people with an adequate level of protection against harm and all reasonable foreseeable risk of injury. In the context of this policy, duty of care refers to the responsibility of education and care services to provide children, educators, staff, students, volunteers, contractors and anyone visiting the service with an adequate level of care and protection against reasonable foreseeable harm and injury.

**Hazard:** An element with the potential to cause death, injury, illness or disease.

**Hazard identification:** A process that involves identifying all foreseeable hazards in the workplace and understanding the possible harm that each hazard may cause.

**Hazard management:** A structured process of hazard identification, risk assessment and control, aimed at providing safe and healthy conditions for employees, contractors and visitors while on the premises of Woodridge Pre-school or while engaged in activities endorsed by Woodridge Pre-school.

**Hazardous manual handling:** Work which requires a person to use force to lift, lower, push, pull, carry, move, hold or restrain something. It's hazardous manual handling if it involves:

- repeated or sustained application of force
- sustained awkward posture
- repeated movements

single or repeated use of high force, where it would be reasonable that the person may have difficulty undertaking it. For example, lifting a heavy object.

- exposure to sustained vibration
- handling live people (including children) or animals
- handling loads that are unstable, unbalanced or hard to hold or grasp

**Health and safety representatives (HSR):** Workers who are elected to represent the health and safety interests of their work group.

**Harm:** Includes death, or injury, illness (physical or psychological) or disease that may be suffered by a person as a consequence of exposure to a hazard.

**Material safety data sheet:** Provides employees and emergency personnel with safety procedures for working with toxic or dangerous materials. The data sheet includes all relevant information about the material such as physical properties (e.g. melting/boiling point, toxicity and reactivity), health effects, first aid requirements and safe handling procedures (e.g. personal protective equipment, safe storage/disposal and management of spills).

**OHS committee:** A committee that facilitates co-operation between an employer and employees in instigating, developing and carrying out measures designed to ensure the health and safety of employees in the workplace.

**Psychological Hazards:** means any factor or factors in:

- (a) the work design; or
- (b) the systems of work; or
- (c) the management of work; or
- (d) the carrying out of the work; or
- (e) personal or work-related interactions;

that may arise in the working environment and may cause an employee to experience one or more negative psychological responses that create a risk to their health and safety.

**Risk:** The chance (likelihood) that a hazard will cause harm to individuals.

**Risk assessment:** A process for developing knowledge/understanding about hazards and risks so that sound decisions can be made about the control of hazards. Risk assessments assist in determining:

- what levels of harm can occur
- how harm can occur
- the likelihood that harm will occur.

**Risk control:** A measure, work process or system that eliminates an OHS hazard or risk, or if this is not possible, reduces the risk so far as is reasonably practicable.

**Wellbeing:** In the context of occupational health and safety refers to the overall state of physical, mental, and emotional health of individuals within the workplace environment. It encompasses various factors such as job satisfaction, work-life balance, physical health, mental health, and social interactions within the workplace.

## SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

### Sources

- Compliance code: Hazardous manual handling: [www.worksafe.vic.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au)
- *Early Childhood Management Manual*, ELAA
- WorkSafe Victoria, Early Childhood Education and Care: Safety basics: [www.worksafe.vic.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au)
- Risk Assessment and Management Tool, ACECQA: [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au)
- WorkSafe Victoria: [www.worksafe.vic.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au)

### Service policies

- *Child Safe Environment Policy*
- *Code of Conduct Policy*
- *Emergency and Evacuation Policy*
- *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy*
- *Information and Communication Technology Policy*
- *Participation of Volunteers and Students Policy*
- *Prevention of Harassment and Bullying Policy*
- *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*
- *Road Safety and Safe Transport Policy*
- *Staffing Policy*

## PROCEDURES

**The Approved Provider and Persons with Management and Control is responsible for:**

- providing and maintaining a work environment that is safe and without risks to health (OHS Act: Section 21). This includes ensuring that:
  - there are safe systems of work
  - the design of work enables employees to be engaged in work that is healthy, safe and productive
  - all plant and equipment provided for use by staff, including machinery, appliances and tools etc., are safe and meet relevant safety standards
  - substances, and plant and equipment, are used, handled, and stored safely

- material safety data sheets are supplied for all chemicals kept and/or used at the service (refer to: [www.ohsinecservices.org.au](http://www.ohsinecservices.org.au) )
- there are adequate welfare facilities e.g. first aid and dining facilities etc.
- there is appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision for employees
- there are processes in place to identify and respond to psychosocial hazards (*refer to Definitions*) .

(Note: *This duty of care is owed to all employees, children, parents/guardians, volunteers, students, contractors and any members of the public who are at the workplace at any time*)

- Ensuring safe work schedules through:
  - providing suitable rest breaks
  - designing shifts to minimise fatigue
  - providing for appropriate fatigue recovery
  - providing sufficient notice of schedule or shift changes
  - in accordance with their employment agreement
- ensuring there is a systematic risk management approach (refer to: [www.ohsinecservices.org.au](http://www.ohsinecservices.org.au) ) to the management of workplace hazards. This includes ensuring that:
  - hazards and risks to health and safety are identified, assessed and eliminated or, if it is not possible to remove the hazard/risk completely, effectively controlled
  - measures employed to eliminate/control hazards and risks to health and safety are monitored and evaluated regularly
- ensuring regular safety audits of the following:
  - indoor and outdoor environments
  - all equipment, including emergency equipment
  - playgrounds and fixed equipment in outdoor environments
  - cleaning services
  - horticultural maintenance
  - pest control
  - chemical management plan
- ensuring that all cupboards/rooms are labelled accordingly, including those that contain chemicals and first aid kits, and that child-proof locks are installed on doors and cupboards where contents may be harmful
- ensuring that all equipment and materials used at the service meet relevant safety standards and are fit and safe for purpose.
- monitoring the conditions of the workplace and the health of employees (OHS Act: Section 22)
- protecting other individuals from risks arising from the service's activities, including holding a fete or a working bee etc., or any activity that is ancillary to the operation of the service e.g. contractors cleaning the premises after hours (OHS Act: Section 23)
- providing adequate instruction to staff in safe working procedures, and informing them of known hazards to their health and wellbeing that are associated with the work that they perform at the service
- ensuring that all plant, equipment and furniture are maintained in a safe condition
- ensuring a risk assessment is completed for all new and donated plant, equipment and furniture to identify potential occupational health and safety risks associated with the purchase, hire, lease or receipt of donated goods

- developing procedures to guide the safe use of harmful substances, such as chemicals, in the workplace
- maintaining a clean environment daily, and removing tripping/slipping hazards as soon as these become apparent
- identifying any work involving hazardous manual handling (*refer to Definitions, Sources*) and eliminating the risk, as far as reasonably practicable.
- ensuring that OHS accountability is included in all position descriptions
- allocating adequate resources to implement this policy
- displaying this policy in a prominent location at the service premises
- ensuring the physical environment at the service is safe, secure and free from hazards for children (refer to *Child Safe Environment Policy*)
- implementing/practising emergency and evacuation procedures (refer to *Emergency and Evacuation Policy*)
- implementing and reviewing this policy in consultation with the Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, contractors and parents/guardians
- identifying and providing appropriate resources, induction and training to assist educators, staff, contractors, visitors, volunteers and students to implement this policy
- ensuring the Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, contractors, volunteers and students are kept informed of any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy
- consulting appropriately with employees on OHS matters including:
  - identification of hazards
  - making decisions on how to manage and control health and safety risks
  - making decisions on health and safety procedures
  - the need for establishing an OHS committee and determining membership of the committee
  - proposed changes at the service that may impact on health and safety
  - establishing health and safety committees
- monitoring the conditions of the workplace and the health, safety and wellbeing of employees (*OHS Act: Section 22*)
- notifying WorkSafe Victoria about serious workplace incidents, and preserving the site of an incident (OHS Act: Sections 38–39)
- holding appropriate licenses, registrations and permits, where required by the OHS Act
- attempting to resolve OHS issues with employees or their representatives within a reasonable timeframe
- protecting other individuals from risks arising from the service's activities, including holding a fete or a working bee etc., or any activity that is ancillary to the operation of the service e.g. contractors cleaning the premises after hours (*OHS Act: Section 23*)
- *providing adequate instruction to staff in safe working procedures, and informing them of known hazards to their health and wellbeing that are associated with the work that they perform at the service*
- not discriminating against employees who are involved in health and safety negotiations
- allowing access to an authorised representative of a staff member who is acting within his/her powers under the OHS Act
- producing OHS documentation as required by inspectors and answering any questions that an inspector asks
- not obstructing, misleading or intimidating an inspector who is performing his/her duties
- ensuring that all educators/staff are aware of this policy, and are supported to implement it at the service



- keeping up to date and complying with any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy.

The above list of procedures is not exhaustive. Services must develop specific procedures to be followed in managing hazards and issues identified. Such specific issues include chemical management, purchasing of equipment, hazard identification and risk assessment etc. For more information and guidance, refer to: [www.ohsinecservices.org.au](http://www.ohsinecservices.org.au)

**The Nominated Supervisor and Person in Day to Day Charge is responsible for:**

- ensuring that all educators/staff are aware of this policy, and are supported to implement it at the service
- organising/facilitating regular safety audits of the following:
  - indoor and outdoor environments
  - all equipment, including emergency equipment
  - playgrounds and fixed equipment in outdoor environments
  - cleaning services
  - horticultural maintenance
  - pest control
- ensuring the policy is adequately accessible to the Woodridge Pre-School community (educators, parents/carers) via the website
- ensuring that all cupboards/rooms are labelled accordingly, including those that contain chemicals and first aid kits, and that child-proof locks are installed on doors and cupboards where contents may be harmful
- ensuring the physical environment at the service is safe, secure and free from hazards for children (refer to *Child Safe Environment Policy*)
- ensuring that all equipment and materials used at the service meet relevant safety standards
- ensuring the service is up to date with current legislation on child restraints in vehicles if transporting children (refer to *Road Safety and Safe Transport Policy*)
- implementing and practising emergency and evacuation procedures (refer to *Emergency and Evacuation Policy*)
- implementing and reviewing this policy in consultation with the Approved Provider, educators, staff, contractors and parents/guardians
- identifying and providing appropriate resources and training to assist educators, staff, contractors, visitors, volunteers and students to implement this policy
- keeping up to date and complying with any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy.

**Educators and other staff are responsible for:**

- taking care of their own safety and the safety of others who may be affected by their actions
- co-operating with reasonable OHS actions taken by the Approved Provider, including:
  - following OHS rules and guidelines
  - helping to ensure housekeeping is of the standard set out in service policies
  - attending OHS training as required
  - reporting OHS incidents
  - co-operating with OHS investigations
  - encouraging good OHS practices with fellow employees and others attending the service

- assisting the Approved Provider with tasks relating to OHS, such as conducting OHS inspections during working hours
- not interfering with safety equipment provided by the Approved Provider
- practising emergency and evacuation procedures (refer to *Emergency and Evacuation Policy*)
- teaching children about positive safety behaviours, including correct use of protective equipment, correct use of facilities and equipment, and identifying and responding to hazards
- ensuring the physical environment at the service is safe, secure and free from hazards for children (refer to *Child Safe Environment Policy*)
- maintaining a clean environment daily, and removing tripping/slipping hazards as soon as these become apparent
- keeping up to date with current legislation on child restraints in vehicles if transporting children (refer to *Road Safety and Safe Transport Policy*)
- implementing and reviewing this policy in consultation with the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators, staff, contractors and parents/guardians.

**Students on placements, volunteers, contractors and parents/guardians at the service are responsible for:**

- being familiar with this policy
- co-operating with reasonable OHS rules implemented by the service
- not acting recklessly and/or placing the health and safety of other adults or children at the service at risk.

## EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Approved Provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness, particularly in relation to identifying and responding to occupational health and safety issues
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures (Regulation 172(2)).

## ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – OHS Policy Checklist

Attachment 2 – OHS Procedure Checklist

## AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Woodridge Pre-school on 27 March 2025

## REVIEW DATE: MARCH 2028



## ATTACHMENT 1 – OHS POLICY CHECKLIST

<b>Your OHS policy should include:</b>	
a statement of the purpose of the policy	<input type="checkbox"/>
a statement of the legal duty of your organisation as an employer	<input type="checkbox"/>
an expression of your organisation's commitment to eliminating hazards where practicable, and minimising risks where hazards cannot be eliminated	<input type="checkbox"/>
an outline of how a hazard or issue will be managed – including resources to be provided	<input type="checkbox"/>
roles and accountabilities of managers and supervisors	<input type="checkbox"/>
a description of how the policy will be communicated to employees/volunteers and put into practice.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Your OHS procedure should include:</b>	
a statement of the purpose of the procedure	<input type="checkbox"/>
the standards the procedure must meet (e.g. relevant legislation, codes of practice, Australian Standards or industry best practice)	<input type="checkbox"/>

the specific steps to be followed to achieve your required objectives in managing the hazard or issue the procedure addresses	<input type="checkbox"/>
roles and accountabilities of managers, supervisors, employees and volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>
direction to any additional guidance people will need to implement the procedure	<input type="checkbox"/>
a process for review of the procedure, and the date by which that will happen.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finally, review and test your OHS policies and procedures to make sure they are:	
written simply and clearly, so they will be understood by all employees and volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/>
comprehensive, consistent and compliant with relevant legislation and standards in the way they will manage the hazard or issue addressed.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Adapted from *Getting Started with Workplace Health & Safety: An Introduction to Workplace Health & Safety Policies, Procedures & Evaluation*, WorkSafe Victoria

## ATTACHMENT 2 – OHS PROCEDURE CHECKLIST

Hazard	Yes	No	Comments
<b>1. Floors</b>			
Surface is even and in good repair			
Surface is free from tripping and slipping hazards (e.g. oil, water, sand)			
Surface is safe (e.g. not likely to become excessively slippery when wet)			
<b>2. Kitchen and work benches</b>			
Work bench space is adequate and at comfortable working height			
Kitchen and workbench space is clean and free of clutter			
Equipment not in use is properly stored			
Lighting is satisfactory			
A door or gate restricts child access to the kitchen			
Ventilation fan is in good working order			
Kitchen appliances are clean and in good working order			
<b>3. Emergency evacuation</b>			
Staff have knowledge of fire drills and emergency evacuation procedures			
Fire drill instructions are displayed prominently in the service			
Regular fire drills are conducted			
Extinguishers are in place, recently serviced and clearly marked for type of fire			
Exit signs are posted and clear of obstructions			
Exit doors are easily opened from inside			

<b>4. Security and lighting</b>			
Security lighting is installed in the building and car park			
There is good natural lighting			
There is no direct or reflected glare			
Light fittings are clean and in good repair			
Emergency lighting is readily available and operable (e.g. torch)			
<b>5. Windows</b>			
Windows are clean, admitting plenty of daylight			
Windows have no broken panes			
<b>6. Steps and landings</b>			
All surfaces are safe			
There is adequate protective railing which is in good condition			
<b>7. Ladders and steps</b>			
Ladders and steps are stored in a proper place			
Ladders and steps are free of defects (e.g. broken or missing rungs etc.)			
They conform to Australian Standards			
They are used appropriately to access equipment stored above shoulder height			
<b>8. Chemicals and hazardous substances</b>			
All chemicals are clearly labelled			
All chemicals are stored in locked cupboard			
Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) are provided for all hazardous substances			
<b>9. Storage (internal and external)</b>			
Storage is designed to minimise lifting problems			
Materials are stored securely			
Shelves are free of dust and rubbish			
Floors are clear of rubbish or obstacles			
Dangerous material or equipment is stored out of reach of children			
<b>10. Manual handling and ergonomics</b>			
Trolleys or other devices are used to move heavy objects			
Heavy equipment (such as planks and trestles) is stored in a way that enables it to be lifted safely			
Adult-sized chairs are provided and used for staff (to avoid sitting on children's chairs)			
Workstations are set up with the chair at the correct height			
Workstations are set up with phone, mouse and documents within easy reach and screen adjusted properly			
Work practices avoid the need to sit or stand for long periods at a time			
<b>11. Electrical</b>			
There are guards around heaters			
Equipment not in use is properly stored			

Electrical equipment has been checked and tagged			
Use of extension leads, double adaptors and power boards are kept to a minimum			
Plugs, sockets or switches are in good repair			
Leads are free of defects and fraying			
Floors are free from temporary leads			
There are power outlet covers in place			
<b>12. Internal environment</b>			
Hand-washing facilities and toilets are clean and in good repair			
There is adequate ventilation around photocopiers and printers			
<b>13. First aid and infection control</b>			
Staff have current approved first aid qualifications and training			
First aid cabinet is clearly marked and accessible only to staff			
Cabinet is fully stocked and meets Australian Standards (refer to <i>Administration of First Aid Policy</i> )			
Disposable gloves are provided			
Infection control procedures are in place			
Current emergency telephone numbers are displayed			
<b>14. External areas</b>			
Fencing is secure, unscalable and of a height prescribed by the Building Code of Australia (no breaches in the fence or materials left adjacent that would assist children to scale the fence)			
Child-proof locks are fitted to gates			
Paving and paths have an even surface and are in good repair			
Paving and path surfaces are free of slipping hazards, such as sand			
Soft-fall and grass areas are free of hazards			
Equipment and materials used are in good repair and free of hazards			

<b>15. Equipment</b>			
Furniture and play equipment are in good repair (no protruding bolts, nails, splinters)			
Impact-absorbing material is placed under all equipment where fall height could exceed 0.5 metres			
Guardrails are provided for play equipment over 1 metre			
<b>16. Sun protection</b>			
There is an adequate supply of SPF 50+ broad spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen provided for use by children and staff			
Sunhats are provided for all staff required to work in the sun			
There is a <i>Sun Protection Policy</i> in place, which requires staff and children, and others who work in the sun to use sunscreen and an appropriate sunhat			

