

CHILDREN'S BELONGINGS POLICY

We acknowledge that children may bring certain personal belongings with them to the Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) Service each day, and as such, it is important to clarify responsibilities, and ensure items brought to the Service are safe and appropriate. This policy therefore outlines the types of belongings that children may bring with them on a regular basis and the level of associated responsibility.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

| QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY | | |
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| 2.2 | Safety | Each child is protected. |
| 2.2.1 | Supervision | At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard. |
| QUALITY AREA 5: RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN | | |
| 5.1 | Relationships between educators and children | Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child. |
| 5.1.1 | Positive educator to child interactions | Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships, which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included. |
| 5.1.2 | Dignity and rights of the child | The dignity and rights of every child are maintained. |

| EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS | |
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| 155 | Interactions with children |
| 156 | Interactions in groups |
| 168 | Education and care services must have policies and procedures |

RELATED POLICIES

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| Dealing with Complaints Policy Enrolment Policy | Family Communication Policy Orientation of Families Policy Respect for Children Policy |
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PURPOSE

To ensure families and educators are aware of their responsibility regarding children's belongings including keeping them safe.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, educators, approved provider, nominated supervisor, students, volunteers and visitors of the OSHC Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

It can be distressing for children to misplace their toys from home or other personal belongings whilst attending OSHC. At times toys from home can also cause conflict between children. Children often want to share or show other children or staff special items from home, but these treasures may be inadvertently broken or lost. To save the upset and heartache, parents are requested to encourage children to leave their toys at home, unless they are essential to a child's emotional wellbeing and/or sense of belonging (security items).

We have numerous stimulating, challenging and educational toys and resources catering to a range of children's interests that are available to play with each day/session.

THE APPROVED PROVIDER, NOMINATED SUPERVISOR, EDUCATORS AND STAFF WILL:

- allow children to bring personal belongings to share with others and understand that children may frequently have items in their bag that they have taken to school for news. Items may include special items from gifts, holiday souvenirs, or items relating to a current interest- provided parents /guardians approve these items to be brought to the Service and are considered safe for all children to hold or view
- facilitate opportunities for children to share their toys/news items with others to encourage:
 - children's social development
 - the development of language skills- assisting children to verbalise thoughts, fears, and feelings
 - the cultural and social understandings of all children involved in group time activities and
 - opportunity for development of special interests for the group
- remind families that if they allow children to bring items to the OSHC Service it is completely at the family's own risk as the OSHC Service does not take responsibility for any damaged, lost or stolen items
- re-iterate our policy, that if personal belongings are particularly valuable, fragile, or hold irreplaceable emotional value, it is recommended that the child bring in the item, show it to friends and educators, and then have the educator put them in a safe place. This allows for the child to share the excitement and experience without the risk of loss or damage.

- provide appropriate storage for lost property that will be available to children and families
- manage any grievances or concerns related to lost, damaged, or stolen property of the children in accordance with the *Dealing with Complaints Policy* and procedure
- request that if children wish to bring in DVD/Blu-ray, music, or electronic game, these should be discussed with management and be 'G-rated'. Although media rated 'PG' (Parental Guidance) is generally appropriate for children, it cannot be assumed that all parents want their children exposed to this rating
- ensure that personal belongings are returned to the correct family
- encourage children who bring special belongings into care to place them in a special designated box to reduce the prospect of them becoming lost or broken. For added security this box will be placed in a position that requires the assistance of an educator to access.
- allow children to wear dress-up clothes to the OSHC Service for specific 'mufti-days' or special occasions, however, they will need to be appropriately attired for safe play and meet sun safe requirements
- seek family assistance in preventing their children bringing accessories or violent toys from home such as guns, knives, swords, or other weaponry. Such items can encourage violent play and may present a danger to the child and others within our OSHC environment. Any such toys will be removed from the child immediately and placed in the reception area/front entry for parental collection at the end of the day.
- actively encourage children to care for their belongings by:
 - reminding children when belongings need to be placed in storage. (For example, lunch box into bag.)
 - providing suitable storage to keep belongings safe-bag storage areas
 - negotiating a secure and safe position with families for any item or personal belonging that is either special, expensive, or at risk of being damaged but is nevertheless being left at the OSHC Service.
- inform families through relevant newsletters and publications such as the Family handbook of appropriate personal belongings required at the OSHC Service each day
- encourage families to check their child's bag to ensure no inappropriate personal belongings are accidentally brought from home or left in their child's bag including:
 - medication
 - lotions or creams
 - plastic bags
 - items with button cell batteries or batteries in general

- sharp items such as scissors or inappropriate items/items intended for use outside the service or items used when camping or
- any other item that may be considered dangerous to other children in the OSHC Service

FAMILIES WILL:

- be responsible for providing the child with appropriate belongings and property required for active participation in all service activities and experiences. This property may include (but is not limited to):
 - enclosed footwear and weather appropriate clothing (if not in school uniform)
 - wide brim hat
 - suitable school bag (backpack)
 - appropriate food and lunch box for snacks (if required)
- ensure all personal property and belongings are clearly named or labelled
- check children's bags before arriving at the OSHC Service to ensure their child's bag does not contain unsafe items for an early childcare service

COMFORT TOYS

School age children rarely require a security/comfort item. However, if this is required (particularly by kindergarten children) we recommend children bring something such as a favourite book, small soft toy etc.

We encourage families to communicate specific needs of their child directly with educators and staff.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

Our *Children's Belongings Policy* will be reviewed on an annual basis in consultation with children, families, staff, educators and management.

SOURCES

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2023). [Guide to the National Quality Framework](#).

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).

[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (2011).

Privacy Act 1988.

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

[Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)

REVIEW

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| POLICY REVIEWED BY | Libby Haines | Director | March 2024 |
| POLICY REVIEWED | MARCH 2024 | NEXT REVIEW DATE | MARCH 2025 |
| VERSION NUMBER | V5.03.24 | | |
| MODIFICATIONS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • annual policy review • reviewed content of appropriate toys, accessories permitted to be brought to OSHC Service • sources updated as required | | |
| POLICY REVIEWED | PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS | NEXT REVIEW DATE | |
| MARCH 2023 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • policy maintenance • minor formatting edits within text • continuous improvement/reflection section added • link to Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations added in 'Sources' | MARCH 2024 | |
| MARCH 2022 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minor edits | MARCH 2023 | |
| MARCH 2021 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • addition of related regulations • minor edits | MARCH 2022 | |
| MARCH 2020 | <p>Additional information added to roles of educators and staff</p> <p>Small edits to sentences to improve flow</p> <p>Sources checked for currency</p> | MARCH 2021 | |
| MARCH 2019 | New policy drafted for OSHC | MARCH 2020 | |