Environment and Sustainability Policy

including Sustainability Management Plan

Purpose

Peak Sports and Learning actively participates in caring for our environment and promotes sustainable practices through educating and working with the children, families and wider community. Children develop positive attitudes and values about sustainability by engaging in learning experiences, joining in discussions that explore solutions to environmental issues, and watching adults model sustainable practices. Sustainability is embedded in both our philosophy and program. Our practice is guided by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the three pillars of sustainability: environmental, social and economic. A Sustainability Management Plan guides the implementation of environmental sustainability practices and assists Educators to regularly review and improve these practices.

Considerations

Education and Care Services National Regulations	National Quality Standard/s	Other Service policies/documentation	Other
Regulation 113	1.1.3, 1.2.1, 1.3.2, 1.3.3, 3.2.3, 5.2.1, 6.2.3, 7.1.1, 7.2.1	Enrolment Handbook Staff Handbook Service Philosophy - Sustainability Management Plan - Enrolment and Orientation Policy - Excursion and In-service Activity Policy	- My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia V2.0 - United Nations Sustainable Development Goals - Three pillars of sustainability (environmental, social and economic)

Procedures

From Our Philosophy

Sustainable practices are embedded in the children's daily routine and in their day-to-day activities, these include:

- Using recyclable materials where possible.
- Encouraging children to use half flush on the toilets.
- Encouraging children to turn the water off when they have washed their hands.
- Encouraging children to recycle paper and rubbish within their rooms, at home and when in the wider community.
- Talking with the children about electricity and encouraging them to turn off lights.
- Educating children in the natural decomposition cycle through exposure and participation in worm farms and composting food scraps.
- Educating children and having them participate in 'garden to plate' activities i.e. seed sprouting, weeding, vegetable gardens, cooking amongst other activities.

- Educating children in how to care for pets and letting them actively participate in caring for the centre pet.
- Educating children on caring for plants and our waterways i.e. recycling water etc
- An Energy Saver is nominated each session to take pride in and ownership of our sustainable practices, such as switching off lights that are not needed and turning off taps.

Sustainability in our Routines

- Educators share and engage children and families in eco-friendly practices, aim to give children and their families an awareness of the need to protect the planet and its future for the generations to come.
- Educators discuss sustainability with the children and families. Ask the children and the families to come up with some ideas to improve the sustainability of the Centre.
- The Centre will make the following part of their daily routine:
  - Recycling and reusing materials for learning activities
  - Minimising waste and effectively using service resources
  - Water Conservation
  - Energy Conservation
  - Gardening
  - Composting
  - Purchasing sustainable equipment
  - Ensuring that children take care of resources to reduce loss or damage
  - Saving leftover drinking water to place in the garden.
  - Turn off taps, light switches etc when not in use.
  - Fish and plants are grown and children are involved in their care
- Use the least hazardous cleaning substance appropriate for the situation, for example, ordinary detergent for cleaning dirt from tables and other surfaces.
- Educators to role model good sustainable practices.
- Encourage children to recycle paper. Provide recycle bins at craft area and model how to use them properly.
- Maintain a garden, a worm farm and a compost bin. Discuss with the children how it all works and why we need to do this. Implement environmentally friendly pest and weed management.
- Containers for composting food scraps are used in the kitchen and at afternoon tea.
- Children participate in composting and garden care daily.
- Reduce the amount of plastic and disposable equipment at the Centre and aim to purchase materials made from natural fibres.
- “Reduce, re-use and recycle” signs and information are displayed at the Centre and it should be a natural process for all concerned.
- A sustainability display is in each Centre with photos and ideas to educate children and families. Children are involved in updating and adding to this display.
- Books with environmental themes are included in the reading area.
- Families are encouraged to donate reusable materials such as jars, containers and magazines. A poster and collection point is located at the parent information area.

Sustainability in our Program

- Our educators will promote learning programs that explore ideas and practices for environmental sustainability and helps children understand the interdependence between people and the environment by:
  - Connecting children to nature through art and play and allowing children to experience the natural environment through natural materials like wood, stone sand and recycled materials, plants including native vegetation, nesting boxes, a vegetable garden with gardening tools and watering cans.
  - Developing education programs for water conservation, energy efficiency and waste reduction.
  - Celebrating children's environmental knowledge and sustainable activities.
  - Include books with environmental themes in the reading area.
  - Involving children in nature walks, education about plants and gardening and growing plants and flowers from seed. Any walk outside the service premises is an excursion and follows our Excursion and In-service Activity Policy.
  - Engaging children in learning about the food cycle by growing, harvesting, and cooking food. Cooking and tasting activities follow our food safety, allergy and medical management procedures.
  - Using the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the three pillars of sustainability (environmental, social and economic) to guide our program planning and everyday sustainable practices.
  - Enlisting the help of groups with expertise in environmental issues, for example bush care groups, wildlife rescue groups, Clean Up Australia, to deliver elements of our sustainability program as in-service activities, in line with our Excursion and In-service Activity Policy.
  - Acknowledging and celebrating environmental awareness events like Clean Up Australia Day and Walk to School Day.
  - Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives on caring for Country, including learning about the local land, plants and animals and acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the land our services operate on.
  - Empower children and young people to take ownership of sustainability practices by nominating daily "Environmental Warriors" who help lead and model environmentally responsible actions across the service.

Sustainability in Administration

- Review procedures and policies regularly to make them more sustainable
- Maintaining and regularly reviewing a Sustainability Management Plan with all centres
- Reduce paper by considering electronic newsletters, invoices, enrolment records, child observations etc.
- Purchase only recycled copy paper, paper towels and recycled toilet paper.

- Purchase only environmentally friendly cleaning products, provided they still meet hygiene and infection control requirements
- Email information to families about how they can help their children learn about sustainability and what they can do at home, as well as at the Centre.
- Keep up to date with local council and Government departments regarding information on sustainable practices in the local community. Look for grants that help us improve water and energy conservation.
- Sustainability to be included in staff and family newsletters
- Sustainability to be an item on meeting agendas and relate to the Quality Improvement Plan

Sustainability Management Plan

Overview

This Sustainability Management Plan, in conjunction with our Environment and Sustainability Policy, guides the implementation of sustainable practices and assists Educators to regularly review and improve these practices. The checklist below ensures that each Peak centre has an ongoing self-assessment and defined time frames to implement any actions needed to continually improve in Quality Area 3 of the National Quality Framework.

Bathroom	YES	NO	Action Required
Signs displayed to turn off taps			
Signs displayed to use half flush			
Taps turned off and not dripping			
Lights turned off when not in use and signs in place			
Natural light wherever possible.			
Children aren't wasting water when washing hands			

Kitchen	YES	NO	Action Required
Signs displayed to turn off taps			
Lights turned off when not in use and signs in place			
Appliances turned off at power points at night where possible			
Fruit and veggies washed in a tub rather than a running tap			
Water used sparingly for cleaning up			
Scraps are placed in compost bin or worm farm tubs			
Separate recycling and waste bins used			
Reusable containers for food storage			
Reusable cutlery, plates and cups			
Refrigerator energy efficient, seals intact, well maintained			
Cotton dishcloths used			
Use a full sink of water to wash or soak items rather than running water from the tap			

Hall	YES	NO	Action Required
Lights turned off when not in use and signs in place			
Maximise the use of natural light and ventilation throughout the day			
Fans used rather than air-conditioners in summer			
Staff and children wear warm clothing in winter			
A 'cosy corner' with blankets for children to use in winter ☐ N/A			
Gas heater operated correctly and conforms to Australian Standard ☐ N/A			
Furnishings and cushions dust free			

Hall	YES	NO	Action Required
Strict procedures in place to care for pets and signs in place to educate children in their care ☐ N/A			
Children sort waste in to correct bins including recycling, compost, worm farm and general rubbish			
Signage is displayed to educate children to use bins correctly			
Recycled paper, cardboard and other materials used for activities			
Reverse Garbage and other recycle centres used			
Parents contribute recycled paper, fabric, wool, containers etc			
Both sides of paper and scrap paper used in free time art			
Baskets provided for recyclable paper at craft table			
Finishing off tub used for colouring in sheets			
Arts and crafts materials are non-toxic			
Natural, and water-based paints are used			
Children regularly engage in activities and discussions that educate them about environmental sustainability			

General and Purchasing	YES	NO	Action Required
Non-toxic cleaning products used			
Chemical air-fresheners not used			
Aerosol spray bottles not used			
Electrical products have high energy star ratings			
Low wattage and small appliances preferred to larger ones			
Water using fixtures and appliances, have the highest water efficiency rating			
Products with batteries avoided			
Products bought in bulk or re-usable containers			
Products with packaging recycle symbol chosen			
Reusable shopping bags are used			

Outdoors and Nature Play	YES	NO	Action Required
Activities involve but don't waste water			
Children are involved in care of gardens, worm farm and compost			
Food from the garden is used in cooking and food preparation			
Gardens, potted plants maintained and watered			
Signs displayed to educate children on plant and garden care			
Use mulch on gardens			
Compost and natural fertilisers used			
Non-toxic sprays used for all plants			
Elements of nature are used inside in displays and activities			

Version Control Table

Version Control	Date Released	Next Review	Approved by	Amendment
1	Jan 2017	March 2018	Directors	Nil – small amendments to procedures
2	August 2018	August 2019	Directors	- Rewritten and edited to reflect 2018 updated Quality Standards. - Sections added for Routines, Program and Administration - Policy linked to a Sustainability Management Plan
3	August 2019	February 2020	Directors	-Reusable containers introduced to reduce use of cling wrap.
4	February 2020	February 2022	Directors	Small amendments – added Energy Saver role. Moved to new document review timeline.
5	February 2022	February 2024	Directors	Updated in line with added sustainability projects, e.g. worm farm
6	February 2024	February 2025	Directors	Reviewed with nil amendments
7	February 2025	February 2026	Directors	Added environmental warriors.
8	February 2026	February 2027	Directors	Updated to My Time, Our Place V2.0. Practice now guided by the UN Sustainable Development Goals and three pillars of sustainability, replacing resource kits. Added links to the Excursion and In-service Activity Policy, a caring for Country program item, and hygiene and food safety safeguards.