Safety Checks and Maintenance of Buildings and Equipment Policy

The Peter Toms Early Learning Centre will maintain buildings and equipment effectively to minimise the risk of accidents, injuries and exposure to hazardous substances.

Playground Safety

The Peter Toms Early Learning Centre playground is designed to ensure all areas are easily supervised and visible. It is the responsibility of educators to ensure the safety of everyone on the premises.

A daily inspection of the playground takes place before children are allowed outside. This inspection will include the:

- Perimeters
- Fences
- Gates
- Paths
- Equipment.

This needs to be done in order to find any potentially dangerous objects in the grounds that may be harmful to children or staff.

Educators check for hazards in the sandpits before children are allowed in the sandpit and dispose of this matter appropriately.

Similarly, trees in the grounds are regularly checked for overhanging, dead or dangerous looking branches and checked for any infestations or nests.

Climbing equipment is to be placed in the playground with appropriate soft fall areas as specified in the Australian Standards fall zone areas – refer to the “fall zone area” chart (AS4685.1 – 2004).

For all of these factors it is the Director’s or nominated person’s responsibility to ensure that staff/child ratios are maintained outdoors and that outdoor staff are appropriately situated so they can actively supervise the children.

Safety of Buildings

In regards to the safety of building, is the responsibility of the Director to develop a prioritised building maintenance program. This policy will be implemented through a variety of individual service procedures which ensure that staff inspect and maintain health and safety standards in each room. This includes:

- Child proof locks on all cupboards which contain potentially hazardous materials such as cleaning materials and medicines.
- High handles on all external gates and doors.
- Regular inspections and required maintenance of electrical appliances.
- Floors being cleared and cleaned to prevent damage and injury.
• Proper storage of all equipment including poisonous chemicals, medicines and first aid equipment.
• Similarly, air conditioning and heating devices will be checked regularly and not used if they are deemed unsafe. These units are out of children’s reach.

The Peter Toms Early Learning Centre will:

• follow a procedural daily safety check and required maintenance/ hazard documentation.
• have a procedure for noting and continuing maintenance of building and equipment.
• staff identify hazards and immediately act to the best of their ability to rectify them.
• equipment and resources given to children are age-appropriate.
• power points not in use have safety caps on them when lower than 1500m.
• all electrical cords are secured.
• power-boards are bound in secure safety covers.
• large equipment (e.g. A frames) are stable.
• climbing equipment is placed on soft-fall surfaces which are recommended by safety authorities.
• regular collection of updated information from respected safety authorities about equipment, building and furniture maintenance.
• staff talk to children about using toys/equipment safely. When circumstances allow, children should be involved in setting these rules.
• any plan for playground improvement is based on the latest information from certified child safety institutions and reflect early childhood learning.
• seek advice from families about the safety of buildings and equipment, such as questionnaires and annual reviews.
• communication and information available to families about the latest available safety information.
• detailed maintenance records of building and equipment are kept.
Outdoor maintenance

**Building maintenance** – regularly maintain and check for hazards, check building is in a safe, clean and hygienic condition. Records of any damages and subsequent repairs are kept.

**Doors** – open and close correctly.

**Dust mites, pet allergens** – regular dusting and vacuuming.

**Fence** - securely and effectively all sides of outdoor play areas from roads, water hazards, and driveways. Maintain fences have correct height. Ensure childproof self-locking devices are working on gates.

**Garbage** – safe and prompt disposal. Use secure bins that prevent child access and maintain in a clean and safe condition. Lidded bin for all nappy changing disposal. Encourage recycling with recycle bins.

**Garden** - debris removed. Regularly trim branches and bushes.

**Sheds** - keep locked and for staff only.

**Heating, cooling, ventilation, lighting** – comfortable, safe, maintained and are kept out of reach of children.

**Hygienic** - regularly cleaned and maintained conditions protect against vermin, bacteria, mildew, lead, asbestos and other dust allergens.

**Non-slip** - floors, steps, grounds and nonporous indoor floors for easy cleaning.

**Safety glass** - is installed according to the Australian Standards on all glass doors and windows accessible to children, and safety decals on glass doors at child and adult eye level.

**Security** - minimising unauthorised access with appropriate fencing and locks.

**Spills** – clean away as they occur.

**Under Centre access (e.g. communication rooms, water tanks)** – Is locked and available to authorised persons only.
Indoor maintenance

**Access for children and adults with disability** - ensure safe access into, within and out of the Centre, security, toilet and washing facilities, and clear of hazards for wheelchairs and people with impaired sight, hearing or mobility.

**Barriers** - age appropriate, child proof, high handled doors to playground, laundry, kitchen entrance, and staffroom.

**Choking hazards** - e.g. small toy parts, beads, nuts, blind and curtain cords secured, plastic bags, sandwich bags and balloons are out of children’s reach.

**Decorations and children’s artwork** – Avoid use of tacks and pins except for notice boards.

**Emergency evacuation** – develop an evacuation plan, display evacuation plans for families and visitors, and practice evacuation procedures.

**Fire** – extinguisher, fire exits, smoke detectors, electrical safety switch.

**First aid** - kit has approved contents is accessible. Ensure First Aid certificates are current for staff.

**Furniture and equipment** - stable, maintained and meets safety standards.

**Hazardous indoor and outdoor plants** identify, remove or make inaccessible to children.

**Hot water** - ensure the water supply to children is set at a constant temperature (the current Kidsafe recommendation is below 43.5°C).

**Noise** – reduce excessive exposure.

**Non-slip, non-porous** floors & steps.

**Pets and animals** – Pets and animals kept at the Centre (Hermit crabs and fish) are not to be touched by children, tanks are well maintained and safe for children's rooms.

**Record details** and notify parents of any child accidents.

**Safe play rules and adequate play spaces**: discourage running indoors and safe furniture layout to avoid collisions.

**Safety glass used and installed** according to Australian Standards, and Australian Building Codes on all glass doors and windows accessible to children

**Security** – ensure all (external) entry doors are locked at all times

**Smoke free environment** in all areas.

**Staff personal items** – ensure staff’s personal items such as bags, toiletries and medicines are kept secure and are inaccessible to children.

**Store safely and out of reach to children** any unsafe items, e.g. chemicals, medicines and inappropriate sharp objects such as adult only knives.
Supervision and visibility of children – ensure children are visible and supervised at all times. High risk areas such as toilet areas. Have at least two staff on premises at all times with vision of each other and the children.

Children’s equipment and resources (paints, crayons etc) accessible to children meet safety standards, are age appropriate, maintained, and non-toxic.

Legislative Requirements

Federal
- National Childcare Accreditation Council
- Standards Australia
- Australian Workplace Safety Standards Act 2005
- Australian Workplace Safety Standards Regulations 2005

Victoria
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004

Who is affected by this policy?
Children, families, staff and visitors

Sources
- National Childcare Accreditation Council
- Australian Workplace Safety Standards Act 2005
- Australian Workplace Safety Standards Regulations 2005

Victoria
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004

Review
- Review will be conducted by:
  - The Peter Toms Early Learning Centre staff
  - Families

Policy date created: 14th July 2012