# ML7 SUSTAINABILITY – POLICY AND PROCEDURE

**SUSTAINABILITY POLICY**

**Policy Statement**

The purpose of the *Sustainability Policy* at Little.ly Early Learning Centre is to demonstrate that Little.ly holds sustainable practices to its core. We encourage awareness of environmental responsibilities and implement practices that contribute to a sustainable future. Children are supported to become environmentally responsible and show respect for the environment.

**Scope**

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management and visitors of the Service.

**Background**

Empowering children to be active participants and enacting change in their world is integral to the guiding principles of the National Quality Framework. Encouraging and enriching a child’s potential as an active agent of change for their environment is integral to 2018 NQS Element 3.2.3 – The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible*.*It is through positive and meaningful experiences and engagement in sustainability practices that the foundations are laid for the development of environmentally responsible adults.

Associate Professor Julie Davis (2015) from Queensland University of Technology describes meaningful environmental education opportunities as more than education ‘IN’ the environment (nature education experiences in the outdoors), or education ‘ABOUT’ the environment (children engaging in the natural sciences, recycling or conservation). Education should also be ‘FOR’ the environment, about understanding human-environment interactions and interdependence and their impact on sustainability.

**Legislative Requirements**

**Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)**

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| We are committed to reduce and eliminate the discharge of pollutants into the air, land and water. We encourage awareness of environmental responsibilities and implement practices that contribute to a sustainable future. Throughout daily programs and practices, children are supported to become environmentally responsible and show respect for the environment. |

**National Quality Standards**

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| **Quality Area 3: Physical Environment** |
| 3.1 | The design of the facilities is appropriate for the operation of a service |
| 3.2 | The service environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning. |
| 3.2.3 | The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible. |

**Education and Care Services National Regulations**

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| 156 | Interactions with children |
| 113 | Outdoor space |

**Principles that inform our policies**

All decision making about our *Sustainability Procedures* are carried out in accordance with the principles of our *Sustainability Policy*.

**General Considerations**

* Learning about sustainability starts with everyday practice.
* We believe environmentally sustainable practices should be embedded into the operations of the Service.
* Our service is committed to protecting our environment to ensure a sustainable future for our children. This involves educators, children and families working together to protect our environment to ensure a sustainable future for our children through continuous improvement we strive to improve every day.
* We aim to ensure the environment is safe, clean and sustainable.
* We are committed to providing outdoor spaces that allow children to explore and experience the natural environment, such as trees, sand and natural vegetation.
* We believe in educating children about the environment which is promoted through daily practices, resources and interactions. This supports children to become environmentally responsible.
* Sustainable practice will be encouraged within the service assisting children and families to become advocates for a sustainable future.

**Key Terms**

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| **Term** | **Meaning** | **Source** |
| Sustainability | Sustainable practices are the processes services employ to maintain the qualities that are valued in the physical environment. Living sustainably is about living within the means of natural systems (environment) and ensuring that our lifestyle doesn’t harm other people | ACECQA |
| Empower | Give a person the means to achieve something | Collins dictionary |

**Links to other policies**

* Education and Care Services National Regulation. 2015
* National Quality Standard
* Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities: [environment.gov.au](http://www.environment.gov.au/)
* Early Childhood Environmental Education Network: [eceen.org.au](http://www.eceen.org.au/)
* Early Childhood Environmental Education Network (ECEEN): [eceen.org.au](http://www.eceen.org.au/)
* Environmental Education in Early Childhood (EEEC): [eeec.org.au](http://www.eeec.org.au/)
* Little green steps WA
* <http://shellharbourkids.com.au/media/GMGC_ResourceKit_V2.pdf>

**Induction and ongoing training**

Little.ly requires that induction and ongoing training of all staff include the *Sustainability Policy* to enable staff to fulfill their roles effectively.  In addition, Little.ly promotes information sharing at staff meetings, sharing of information received from industry trends or changes in legislation, and in consultation at policy review sessions.

**Policy created/reviewed**

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| **Policy Reviewed** | **Modifications** | **Next Review Date** |
| Implemented February 2019 |  | February 2020 |
| February 2020 | Minor adjustments made with further suggestions on how to embed sustainability into everyday practice | February 2021 |
| August 2021 | Reviewed policy following endorsement of the ECEC package | August 2022 |

**Monitoring, evaluation and review**

This policy will be reviewed annually or on occurrence of any relevant legislative change. Management of Little.ly will conduct reviews in consultation at staff meetings.

**SUSTAINABILITY PROCEDURE**

**Management will plan and arrange the orientation and the educators will implement the orientation**

**Management will:**

* Network with the local community to keep up to date with current practices and ideas for sustainability.
* Encourage educators, families and children to engage in innovative practices and appreciate the natural environment.
* Ensure the Service joins a preferred provider to liaise with other education and care services and keep up to date on practices and ideas for sustainability.
* Where relevant, review policies and procedures within the Service to find more sustainable outcomes.
* Where possible electronic communication will be used to reduce paper use within the office and in each room for newsletters, billing and other communication needs.
* Provide ongoing professional development for all staff.
* Support and encourage the practices of the Sustainability leader.

**Practices will include:**

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| **Sustainable Practices** | **Ideas** |
| **Recycling** | * Recycling materials per room and in office
* Reusing materials where possible
* Sending broken resources to men’s shed for fixing
* Toy swap shop between educators and families
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| **Gardening** | * The sustainability leader and chef work together to implement the fresh produce concept with the services garden beds
* Establishing a Worm Farm
* Give food scraps to worms or the animals daily
* Plant Australian flora with low water requirements
* Use of only natural grass and plants
* Children to be responsible for looking after our garden
* Fruit and veg swap with the local community
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| **Energy Conservation** | * Turn off lights and switches when not in use
* Use washing line instead of dryer
* Use natural light and heat when appropriate
* Turn printer and computer off when not in use
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| **Water Conservation** | * Using half flush on the toilet
* Turning off the water when not in use
* Use half flow taps
* Encourage children to minimise water
* Used leftover water to water the garden
* Use tank water to wash and feed an animal
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| **Natural Resources and Equipment** | * Use natural materials where possible – fallen bark, boxes, falling flowers, etc.
* Educating children in the natural materials
* Educating children on how to care for pets, letting them actively participate
* Protect bugs and insects outside
* Refrain from picking plants and trees
* Use natural-based chemicals where possible
* Use face washers and hand towels to replace buying materials
* Membership at reverse art for recyclable materials
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