



USE OF FRONT YARD POLICY

PURPOSE

- The purpose of this policy is to provide the children of Tecoma Preschool more of an opportunity to explore the natural environments around them. This allows them the chance to become knowledgeable beings who feel safe and secure allowing them to discover, investigate and learn. Children are also given more of a choice and they will be empowered to make individual/group decisions about the front yard space.
- To assist children and families in being part of the kinder community and taking part in the development and use of the front yard.
- To develop children's knowledge of growth and healthy eating – taking care of the vegetable patch, caring for the chickens.
- To inspire children to use the environment in a caring manner that encourages respect for our natural environment.
- To develop children's knowledge regarding raising chooks, including taking care of them and collecting eggs, along with developing their awareness of interacting with animals.

POLICY STATEMENT

VALUES

- To provide each child with an enriching and supportive environment
- Guide them through their journey of self discovery and personal growth
- Develop strength to create friendships and have a true sense of belonging

SCOPE

This policy applies to the staff, families, committee, and any other person involved with the service.

- Staff will be encouraged to use their expertise and educational background to assist in the development and use of the front yard. It will then be imperative that their programs incorporate the use of this space to educate, excite and inspire the children.
- Committee members are to ensure the space remains safe and accessible to children. This involves ensuring that the outdoor space meets regulation requirements and that regular working bees are organised to maintain the space.
- Families will be encouraged to participate in the creation and upkeep of the front yard through working bees and maintenance jobs.

BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Multiple discussions by all parties involved in the kinder (children, families and staff) in regards to the use of the front yard has prompted the committee and staff to brainstorm how the yard can be incorporated into the kinder programs. It was decided that the front yard will be developed into a space where children could expand their sense of wonder about the natural environment. The space encourages more passive experiences such as story times, fairy garden exploration and planting seedlings/vegetables etc.

This policy will provide staff with more choice as to whether they would like to implement an indoor/outdoor program or take the children on an impromptu visit to the front garden. The front yard will allow the children to explore nooks and

crannies, tunnels, growth in the vegetable patch and involve themselves in various sensory experiences. Families will also be involved in the development and upkeep of the front yard during working bees.

Tecoma Preschool was established in 1988. It is known for being homely and welcoming and this advancement in space will expand and add a new dimension to the kindergarten environment.

SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

SOURCES

- Child wellbeing & Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Education & Care Services National Law Act 2011
- National Quality Standards
- Belonging, Being Becoming – Early Years National Framework 2009
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework 2009
- Child Safe Standards
<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards-resources>

RELATED POLICIES

- Child Safe environment Policy
- Environmental Sustainability Policy
- Interactions with Children Policy
- Supervision of Children Policy
- Active Play Policy

PROCEDURES

The committee is to:

- Support staff in implementing a program that incorporates the front yard space. This includes professional development to support growth of knowledge in outdoor spaces.
- Ensure the representative responsible for overseeing developments of the yard is communicating with both staff and committee to allow for smooth/timely additions.
- Organise timely working bees that encourage parents to be part of the community and participate in developing the space.
- Communicate with the Shire of Yarra Ranges to ensure developments are approved.
- Seek permission from parents through the online enrolment form

The staff are to:

- Provide a program that inspires and encourages young children in this new environment.
- Represent the preschool as ambassadors for the importance of learning in a positive natural environment that allows for experimentation.
- Participate in Professional development sessions that better their knowledge of the benefits of using outdoor spaces in the program.
- Provide Adequate Supervisions when using this area. See definition below.

Adequate supervision: (In relation to this policy) **supervision** entails all children (individuals and groups) in all areas of the service, being in sight and/or hearing of an educator at all times including during toileting, sleep, rest and transition routines. Services are required to comply with the legislative requirements for educator-to-child ratios at all times. Supervision contributes to protecting children from hazards that may emerge in play, including hazards created by the equipment used.

EVALUATION

To ensure this policy achieves the purposes stated in this policy, the committee will:

- Assess the use of the yard to ensure it is being used in a positive and successful manner.
- Assess that parents have had their input and suggestions used in the space via feedback (e.g. surveys).
- Assess that children are using the space with the intentions put forward.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1. Supervisions and Safety Checks Guidelines of Front Yard Space

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Tecoma Preschool.

Next REVIEW DATE: FEB 2023

ATTACHMENT 1. Supervisions and Safety Checks Guidelines of Front Yard Space

SUPERVISION

- Supervision and guidance of the children in this front yard space must encourage quiet passive experiences. Calm and quiet exploration of this environment will be determined by the choice of experiences.
- If all children are occupying the front yard space, all staff must work together to position themselves to ensure all areas of the 'L shaped' yard can be seen. Keep communication clear.
- When a child is wanting to move indoors to use the toilet or for any other reason, a staff member **MUST** accompany them and ensure they return outdoors. This must be communicated to all staff beforehand.
- If staff find themselves in the front yard by themselves, ensure once again that positioning is appropriate.
- When this space is used for indoor/outdoor space, the staff member assigned to the outdoor space must ensure they are in a suitable position to see all areas of the 'L shaped' space independently.
- A portable 1st Aid kit will be taken outdoors whenever children are in the outdoor front space.

SAFETY CHECKS

- Before the front yard space is used each day, a staff member **MUST** check the perimeter for rubbish or unwanted materials that may have appeared overnight.
- Ensure gates are closed and locked.
- Regularly encourage working bees that enable a cleanup and tidy of the front yard and its gardens.
- Ensure the gardener is booked in for each kinder holiday break to keep it clean and tidy.
- Children will be encouraged to assist with the care of the gardens during sessions.
- Ensure chooks are safely away in their chicken run.