CHILDREN'S BELONGINGS POLICY

We acknowledge that children will bring or carry with them certain personal belongings to the Service 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		
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	
155	Interactions with children
156	Interactions in groups
168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures

RELATED POLICIES

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

PURPOSE

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

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, educators, staff, visitors, the Approved Provider, nominated supervisor and management of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

It can be distressing for children to misplace their toys from home whilst attending an education and care service. At times, toys brought from home can also cause conflict between children at the service. Children often want to share or show other children or educators their special items from home, however, these 'treasures' may be inadvertently broken or lost. To save the upset and heartache, families 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 and challenging toys and resources catering to children's interests that are available to play with each day.

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

- allow children to bring personal belongings for news, including 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 participate in news as a way to encourage children to talk about their special toy or personal belonging during group time. This practice encourages:
    - 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
- store children's items in a safe place throughout the day, retrieving them for news time, and then returning them to a safe place
- remind parents, that if they choose to leave belongings in the Service during the day, it is completely at their own risk as the 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 parent take it with them. 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 at all times
- 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
- ensure that personal belongings are returned to the correct family
- encourage children who bring special belongings into care to place them in a special '*toys from home*' 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 Service, 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 child care 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 appropriately when belongings need to be placed in storage. For example, lunch box into bag.
    - providing suitable storage to keep belongings safe
    - 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 Service
- inform families through relevant newsletters and publications such as the *Family Handbook* of appropriate personal belongings required at the Service each day
- encourage families to check their child's bag to ensure no inappropriate personal belongings are accidently 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

- any other item that may be considered dangerous to other children in the Service.

FAMILIES WILL:

- be responsible for providing their 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
    - weather appropriate clothing
    - sun safe clothing
    - wide brim hat
    - suitable school bag (backpack)
    - container/flask for water
    - appropriate food and lunch box (where required)
- ensure all personal property and belongings are clearly named or labelled or have been shown to an educator upon arrival if labelling is not possible
- check children's bags before arriving at the Service to ensure their child's bag does not contain unsafe items for an early childcare service

COMFORT TOYS/ SECURITY ITEMS

Many children have a 'security' item that soothes them and helps them to cope throughout a busy day. Security items may include items such as a special blanket, dummy, soft toy, or even a strip of satin ribbon from a blanket etc.

We recommend that if children have a comfort toy or security item that it is labelled (if possible) and brought to the Service each day. When not required or in use we will ensure that it has a designated storage space that is known to the child.

Parents are encouraged to regularly discuss the use of comfort toys/security items with educators as their child's needs change.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

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

SOURCE

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2024). *Guide to the National Quality Framework*
Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).
Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2023).

Education and Care Services National Regulations. (Amended 2023).
Privacy Act 1988.

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	Krystle Hills	Centre Manager	20/05/2025
POLICY REVIEWED	May 2025	NEXT REVIEW DATE	Dec 25
MODIFICATIONS	• annual policy review- moved from March to December • minor edits • sources updated as required		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS		NEXT REVIEW DATE
MARCH 2024	• annual policy review • reviewed content of appropriate toys, accessories permitted to be brought to Service • sources updated as required		MARCH 2025
MARCH 2023	• 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