



MELROSE RURAL CARE

Potentially Dangerous Products, Plants and Objects

PHILOSOPHY: We aim to provide high quality care and education through a partnership between parents, children, community, staff and the Department of Education and Children's Services. We believe children need to express themselves in a safe environment. Our centre is annually audited by DECS Licensing and Standards Unit.

A: STORAGE,

1 Correct Storage

(See also 3.2. "Lifting, Carrying and Moving". For storage of hazardous substances see specific area OHS&W guidelines. For first aid storage, see the department's Administrative Instructions and Guidelines section 3.77)

It is essential that all items are stored correctly to avoid potential health and safety risks. Corridors or points of access and egress **must not** be obstructed by stored items. All shelving must conform to Australian Standard 2143—1978, "Industrial and commercial steel shelving".

1. All materials, goods, equipment or manufactured articles (whether finished or unfinished) must be stacked in a safe and orderly manner to ensure the safety of persons required to work near or to pass by such stacks.
2. Large or heavy objects must be placed in lower storage areas to eliminate the risk of shelves, filing cabinets or cupboards toppling. The risk associated with lifting heavy or large objects from high shelves should be minimised.
3. Fragile items such as glass containers or equipment must be stored carefully to minimise the risk of accidental breakage — eg. glass containers used to store substances should stand separately and not on top of one another.
4. Storage areas should be readily accessible.
5. There should be storage for children's bags away from walkways and practical areas.
6. Shelves and racks should be stable and ideally built-in or fixed to walls.
7. Ensure that storage racks are in a safe and tidy condition so that material can be removed without fear of short lengths falling.
8. Racks holding round material must have lugs and should be sloped, to prevent the material falling off.
9. Large quantities of small-sectioned material should have spacers to prevent toppling.
10. Materials should not extend beyond racks and under no circumstances must items extend over doorways or movement areas.
11. For ease of handling and safety, consider initial cutting of sheet material in half or to a more manageable size.
12. Sheet materials from which sections have been cut should be stored in a stable manner, to prevent them falling when moved.
13. Ladders for gaining access to items stored above head height are essential. These should be stable, in good repair, of appropriate height and be placed on even, firm surfaces.
14. Heavy objects should be stored at a low level.
15. Avoid overloading moveable storage such as compactus units as injuries can occur when using them.
16. There should be ramps to storage areas where necessary.
17. A trolley should be available to load/unload goods.

1.1 Lockers

Doors of lockers and cupboards must close correctly and must not project into corridors or passage ways in a way that impedes traffic flow.

1.2 Access to High-Level Storage — Ladders

Ladders or footstools must be used to access items stored at high level (generally accepted as above shoulder height for the employee). They must be in good repair, of appropriate height for the task and placed on even, firm surfaces. Ladders also must conform to Australian Standard AS 1892— "Portable ladders".

However, the aim should be to eliminate high storage wherever possible.

1.3 Inappropriate Storage

Under no circumstances should drink or food containers be used to store glues, detergents, paint, photographic or other hazardous substances.

All storage containers must be clearly labelled with their contents which must be fully described. (See specific area OHS&W guidelines "Labelling — National Code of Practice")

1.4 Storage and Handling of Hazardous Substances

Centres should strive to decrease or eliminate the hazardous substances which they store and or use. Substances harmful to human health should be replaced with safe alternatives where-ever possible.

Substances regarded as hazardous must be stored in appropriate zones or areas to which unsupervised child access is prohibited and not possible under normal circumstances (eg. behind locked doors).

1. Storerooms and preparation rooms in which hazardous substances are used should be vented externally with exhaust fans.

2. They must have lockable entrance doors which can be opened from inside the room without a key. Doors to adjacent Children's Service's areas and other storage rooms should open outwards, while doors opening to corridors should open inwards.
3. Storerooms must have signs prohibiting entry of unauthorised personnel.
4. Storage shelving units such as cupboards, fixed shelving and frames or wall strips for adjustable shelving must be permanently fixed to the wall.
5. Shelves should have raised front and end edges.
6. All substance containers must clearly identify the contents, date received, shelf life, storage zone and hazard information.
7. A colour-coded system for the easy identification and storage of materials must be introduced in accordance with AS 1216.1—1984, "classification and class labels for dangerous goods". This system comprises adhesive stick-on bands or labels corresponding to the colours of the class labels detailed in the following table. Adhesive stick-on bands or labels are a stock item in the Secondary Science Catalogue or alternatively, adhesive tape or electrical insulating tape could be used. The class symbol should be clearly displayed on each storage area/enclosure.
8. All harmful and corrosive substances must be kept in correctly labelled containers. The labels should show the date of purchase and indicate the shelf life, together with any precautions required in using the substances.
9. Concentrated acids and corrosives must be stored in the workplace's most suitable storage area.
10. Material Safety Data Sheets should be stored in close proximity to substances in use, but not in the same room, as a spillage might render them inaccessible at a time when they are needed. If an MSDS for a particular substance is not readily accessible, the substance must not be used.
11. Hazardous substances should be stored in a suitably ventilated and lockable cupboard or other secure storage to prevent access by unauthorised persons.
12. These substances should be inaccessible to unauthorised persons and should not be kept above shoulder height.
13. The quantities of hazardous substances held should be determined on the basis of minimum requirements for teaching purposes.
14. Quantities taken into the workroom should be sufficient only for immediate use, and unused quantities should be returned to the store.
15. Solvents should be stored in a cool place in securely sealed containers.
16. The use of suitable non-reactive containers which will not break when dropped, or react with contents, is recommended for acids and other hazardous substances.
17. The incompatible nature of many hazardous substances must be considered when storing.

Under no circumstances should drink or food containers be used to store glues, detergents, paint, photographic or any hazardous substance.

1.5 Flammable Liquids

Employees should be familiar with AS 1940—1993, "The storage and handling of flammable and combustible liquids".

Two factors which need to be considered in relation to storage are:

- the flammability and resultant **flashpoint** ** of the material
- the conditions required to maintain maximum **shelf life** of the material.

**** Flashpoint:** *The lowest temperature at which application of a small flame causes the vapour above a flammable liquid to produce a momentary flash under standardised test conditions.*

Substances which, under certain conditions, may become spontaneously combustible must not be stored in a flammables cabinet.

Some of the flammable liquids that could be used in Children's Service's Centres are listed below:

Methylated spirits
Paints and enamels

Mineral Turpentine
Pressure pack cans marked flammable

1.6 Storage Guidelines — Flammables Cabinet

1. Flammable liquids should be stored in a standard flammables cabinet which is vented to the outside air and is lockable. It must be suitably labelled to indicate the volatile nature of the contents, (eg. red "Flammables" symbol, the words "Flammable Liquids" and the number "3") and the maximum storage capacity.
2. Oxidising agents must not be included in this cabinet.
3. The quantity purchased should only be sufficient for current needs.
4. Locate storage cabinets and containers of flammable liquids away from sun or other heat sources.
5. Refrigerators must not be used to store flammable, volatile or corrosive substances unless they are modified to fulfil safety requirements — i.e. made lockable with electrical systems rendered spark-free.
6. As a general rule, store solids above liquids, as spillages are likely to be less damaging.
7. Stainless steel trays in storage cupboards are designed to act as spillage-catching agents and are not to be used to store substances.
8. Store flammable liquids only in containers designated for the specific liquids.
9. One or more fire extinguishers of suitable capacity and type must be maintained in close proximity to every flammable materials storage cabinet or room.

1.7 Spillage of Solvents

1. Spilled solvents should be mopped up with clean rags or by spreading absorbent material such as sawdust or dry sand, which is to be removed by the end of the session or certainly by the end of the day.
2. Material contaminated with solvents should be removed from the work area and stored in a place such that evaporation of the solvents may safely take place, after which the material may be disposed of through the normal workplace rubbish collection. This will ensure that the absorbent materials will not create further hazards.

Incinerators must not be used for the disposal of solvent-saturated materials.

1.8 Handling Guidelines

1. Persons required to handle substances and liquids must be made aware of the potential for adverse reactions due to pre-existing medical conditions such as asthma/sinus aggravation and skin sensitivity.

2. In such cases skin protection and respirators will be required.
3. Always take care when opening containers in case of deterioration or pressurisation.
4. All decanting should be carried out at the storage point. Good ventilation and total absence of ignition sources are essential.
5. No source of ignition should be within 15 metres unless screened by a suitable wall. Therefore, a room in which there are naked lights, flames or non-flameproof electrical equipment at a low level is not suitable.
6. At least one suitable fire extinguisher (carbon dioxide or dry powder) must be readily available nearby. *(See General Guidelines 11, "Fire Prevention and Control")*
7. Do not carry substances in open containers.
8. Take care to prevent splashing on skin or clothing.
9. Be sure to replace lids on containers.
10. Flammable liquids containers must not be altered or repaired.

B: HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

It is strongly recommended that hazardous substances are avoided and safe alternatives used wherever possible at all Centres. This will minimise the associated risks.

Hazardous substances have many forms, being solids, liquids, gases or vapours. They may be chemical elements, compounds or mixtures, occurring naturally or artificially. Hazardous substances may be compressed gases, flammable or combustible materials, oxidising agents, poisonous, corrosive or dangerously reactive materials.

They may have deleterious effects on health, striking the bloodstream, central nervous system and reproductive organs and some are thought to be responsible for causing numerous cancers. The effects on the health of exposed individuals depend on the type of substance and the level and duration of exposure.

Users should become conversant with the following terms associated with health conditions and other aspects of handling hazardous substances.

Hazardous Substances — Health Effects and Other Terms	
Allergy	An abnormal response of a hypersensitive person to chemical and physical stimuli. Allergic manifestations of major importance occur in about 10% of the population.
Anaesthesia	Loss of sensation — in particular, the temporary loss of feeling induced by certain chemical agents.
Asphyxia	Suffocation from lack of oxygen.
Assessment	A legislative requirement, set out in the Code of Practice to Control Workplace Hazardous Substances, which must be applied to every hazardous substance and/or process in use in the workplace. A record of the assessment must be available to all employees who may be exposed to the substance/process. Necessary control measures identified in the assessment must be operating and induction and training must have been carried out and documented before the substance/process is used.
Carcinogens	Cancer-forming substances.
Corrosives	Corrosive substances burn any body tissues they contact such as skin, lungs and eyes. The burns can be as serious as those caused by fire.
Dermatitis	Inflammation of the skin from any cause.
Intoxication	Drunkenness or poisoning.
Irritants	Many substances irritate body systems. Irritation of the skin can lead to dermatitis and irritation of the respiratory tract can result in bronchitis.
Material Safety Data Sheet	The information sheet which must be supplied by the manufacturer/ distributor for each substance in use in the workplace. A hard copy (or the capacity to create one) of every MSDS must be readily accessible at all times.
Metal Fume Fever	An acute condition caused by a brief but high exposure to the freshly-generated fumes of metals such as zinc and magnesium or their oxides. Symptoms appear from 4–12 hours after exposure and consist of fever and shaking chills. There is complete recovery, usually within one day.
Poisons	Substances (solid, liquid or gas) which are harmful to body tissues. Poisons may have acute or short-term effects such as headaches and unconsciousness. Chronic, long-term effects include cancer and liver disease.
Narcosis	Stupor or unconsciousness produced by chemical substances.
Narcotics	Chemical agents that put a person to sleep, completely or partially.
Sensitisers	Contact with many substances promotes sensitivity or allergic reactions — eg. contact dermatitis (skin sensitisation) and asthma (lung sensitisation).
Toxaemia	Poisoning by way of the bloodstream.

Toxicity	A relative property of a chemical agent. It refers to a harmful effect on some biological mechanism and the condition under which the effect occurs.
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Routes of Entry

There are three major routes by which substances can enter the body:

Dermal: Dermal absorption of substances is very common, with hands and arms being at particular risk.

Respiratory: Protection of the respiratory tract is important where toxic dusts and vapours or very small droplets are prevalent. Fine particles and droplets found in dust and mist are easily inhaled.

Oral: The greatest danger of oral intake occurs when hazardous substances are decanted into food or drink containers and utensils. Practices such as attempting to blow out clogged spray nozzles or siphoning fluids by mouth or eating and drinking with contaminated hands must be strictly avoided.

The possibility of chemical poisoning is related to:

- * the susceptibility of exposed individuals
- * acute and cumulative toxicity of the substance
- * the substance's concentration before and after dilution for use
- * its rate of absorption into the body
- * length of time before the skin or clothing is washed
- * frequency and duration of exposure
- * the type of formulation — in general, liquid formulations are more readily absorbed through the skin than powder while solid (powder) formulations are more of a toxicity problem in regard to inhalation.

If a substance is ingested, refer to its Material Safety Data Sheet for emergency treatment details. If this is not available, telephone the Poisons Information Centre for first aid information.

Tel: 13 11 26

1 Management of Hazardous Substances

1.1 Approved Lists

To assist Directors to ensure that hazardous substances are managed safely, lists of approved substances have been prepared for several curriculum areas or activities. **Workplaces will be required to purchase, use and store only those substances which are included on the Approved Lists.**

To assist in the management of hazardous substances, a list of approved hazardous substances is provided. It summarises information from ChemWatch.

Product	Hazardous	Health	Flamm	React	Body	Chronic
Ajax cloudy ammonia	Yes	Low	Min	Min	Low	Min
aluminium potassium sulfate (alum)	No	Low	Min	Low	Min	Min
Aquadhere	Yes	Min	Min	Min	Low	Min
calcium carbonate	Yes	Min	Min	Min	Low	Min
chromic potassium sulfate	No	Low	Min	Low	Low	Low
citric acid	Yes	Low	Min	Min	Low	Min
copper sulfate	Yes	Low	Min	Min	Mod	Min
Glen 20 Spray Disinfectant	Yes	Low	Ext	Min	Low	Low
Glycerol	No	Min	Low	Min	Low	Min
Handy Andy	Yes	Low	Min	Min	Low	Min
magnesium sulfate (Epsom salts)	No	Low	Min	Min	Low	Min
methylated spirits	No	Mod	High	Min	Low	Min
mineral turpentine	No	Low	Mod	Min	Low	Min
Mr Sheen	Yes	Min	Ext	Min	Low	Min
potassium permanganate (Condy's crystals)	Yes	Low	Min	Mod	Mod	Min
sodium bicarbonate (baking soda)	Yes	Min	Min	Min	Low	Min
sodium carbonate (washing soda)	Yes	Low	Min	Min	Low	Min
sodium chloride	Yes	Low	Min	Min	Low	Min
sodium silicate	No	Min	Min	Min	Mod	Min
sucrose	No	Min	Low	Low	Low	Min
Wallpapering Paste (Polycell, Polypaste)	No	Min	Low	Min	Min	Min
White King (Kiwi)	Yes	Low	Min	Mod	Mod	Mod
white vinegar	No	Low	Min	Min	Low	Min

The Approved Lists enable:

- * the provision of safety information for substances on the lists, either electronically through NEXUS or in paper format;
- * health surveillance of employees to be addressed;

- * the provision of appropriate and adequate storage facilities for hazardous substances in use in workplaces;
- * the assessment and control of exposure to hazardous substances;
- * the preparation of workplace registers of hazardous substances and emergency manifests.

In regard to curriculum areas or activities for which Approved Lists have not been prepared, it is the responsibility of the Director to ensure the management guidelines detailed in this section are fully addressed.

- The Approved List of substances for use in Children's Service's represents all the hazardous substances that are necessary to meet the requirements of the secondary Children's Service's curriculum.
- The list was reviewed by the Occupational Health Division, Department for Industrial Affairs and the Children's Service's safety task group. After consideration of curriculum requirements and the hazards associated with the use and storage of particular substances, some substances were identified as posing particular health and safety risks and were removed from the list. Some items have been specifically banned.

Only those substances listed in the Approved List may be purchased for school use.

1.2 Management Guidelines

In relation to managing hazardous substances, Directors of workplaces must ensure that:

- a) Workplaces ***use only those substances that appear on the Approved List*** and for which manufacturers/suppliers have provided Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs).
- b) Workplaces store/use only the ***minimum range and minimum quantity*** of hazardous substances — i.e. order sufficient quantities for current use only. The practice of 'buying in bulk' to achieve economic savings is not commensurate with the principles of good management of hazardous substances.
- c) Where alternatives exist, ***the least hazardous substances must be used.***
 1. A readily accessible hazardous substances register — including MSDSs, hazard, safety and emergency action details — is established, followed and maintained.
 2. Suitable protective and application equipment is available and is being used.
 3. Hazardous substances are ***stored and labelled correctly and correct disposal procedures are understood and followed.***
 4. Clear instructional guidelines on safe work procedures are adequately displayed in appropriate work areas and are adhered to.

For every substance in use in the workplace, whether or not it appears on the Approved List, the following procedure is observed:

- a) A hard copy of its MSDS (or the capacity to create one) is readily accessible on site.
- b) The MSDS has been read and understood by each employee likely to come into contact with that substance.
- c) MSDS requirements are met — eg. for disposal, storage, handling, staff training and personal safety equipment.
- d) The criteria for approval have been met and the substance has been authorised for use by DECS' Health and Safety Services.
- e) An assessment of the substance has been undertaken in accordance with the process set out in the Code of Practice to Control Workplace Hazardous Substances and a record of the assessment is available to all employees with potential for exposure.
- f) All necessary control measures identified in the assessment are operating and induction and training has been carried out and documented.

1.3 Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs)

The usual method of obtaining information about the hazardous properties of a chemical or other substance is in the form of an MSDS from the manufacturer/supplier. ***Labels on containers must not be relied upon in place of MSDSs***, which must include the following:

- * safe handling and storage instructions
- * spillage procedures
- * disposal method
- * poisoning hazard by ingestion, skin absorption or inhalation
- * any other necessary safety information.

Manufacturers/suppliers of substances must include MSDSs.

2 Approval of Unlisted Substances

If substances not listed in the Approved List are required for lessons, camps or curriculum extension topics, appropriate information must be obtained from the supplier and the following approval process adhered to before the substances are purchased and used in school activities. It is possible for a particular workplace to successfully tender for an approval because it has met the approval criteria.

Do not assume that a substance new to the list may be used in your workplace unless it has also satisfied the approval criteria.

To identify substances which should be added to the Approved List, workplaces must:

- (1) Check product information by using:
 - * MSDSs
 - * label information
 - * local user information.
- (2) Assess product using the criteria for approval.
- (3) Complete an approval request application form.
- (4) Send two copies of the form, with a copy of the MSDS attached, to the Hazardous Substances Project Officer, Occupational Health Services Unit, and Central Office. (Retain a copy for the workplace). ***Forward planning is essential if this substance is needed for current activities.***

Before using new or additional substances, employees/users must ensure that:

- * they can access a hard copy of the MSDS
- * the MSDS has been read and understood.

2.1 Criteria for Approval

All questions must be answered in the affirmative.

- (1) Is the substance free of the items banned from school use?
- (2) Does it meet the requirements of the subject curriculum?
- (3) Is the substance necessary? (i.e. no suitable, non-chemical processes are possible.)
- (4) Does it suit the proposed uses?
- (5) Is the substance a safer alternative than one already on the Approved List?
- (6) Are there no potential health hazards (as perceived by workplace employees)?
- (7) Do you have suitable storage facilities for this substance?
- (8) Are you able to correctly and safely dispose of unused portions?
- (9) Are the control measures appropriate and sufficient and are they applied as required in the hazardous substances regulations and code of practice?

2.2 Limitations of Approved List

The Approved List substance hazard levels are a guideline only and are not a substitute for reading MSDSs.

Users of substances must consult MSDSs and container labels.

- Reference in the guidelines to “site” includes the total Children’s Service’s workspace.
- Where there has been reference to a maximum storage amount, the amount stated is for the total Children’s Service’s workspace and covers all classes/types of the product.
- Absence of a statement against a substance means there was none available or applicable, hence the importance of consulting the MSDSs.

2.3 Review of Approved List

- The Approved List will be updated to meet new curriculum initiatives or when new safety information is received about substances currently included or less hazardous alternatives.
- Health and Safety Services advisers will monitor the distribution of the lists, notify all workplaces of any amendments and ensure that appropriate safety information is available to all employees.

2.4 Removal of Substances from Approved List and from Storage

- Substances stocked by workplaces, but which have been removed from the Approved List, may be used for a period of up to one year after removal from the list *unless those substances have been made subject to a specific prohibition or removal advice.*
- Their MSDSs must remain on the workplace’s database for one year after 30 June of the year in which the list becomes invalid.
- DECS will forward notification if information comes to hand that a particular substance on the list poses an immediate and unacceptable hazard.

Such a substance must be immediately removed from the Approved List in current use. Workplaces will also be advised of the correct disposal procedures.

2.5 An Easy Guide To The Use Of Chemwatch

Under the name, **cwmanual.doc**.

1. Click twice on the Chemwatch icon in the Program Manager
2. Click once on Database
3. Click once on Level 2
4. Click once on Materials Search
5. Type in name of product eg. detergent, toilet, Selleys, sodium chloride
6. Select either own (a generic listing) or full (pure chemicals) as the database if required
7. Click once on start search
8. Click twice on the selected product on the list
9. Read summary page
10. Click once on MSDS Menu and select button of interest and then click print if desired
11. Click on Return
12. Click once on Full Report to read the Full MSDS - print if desired
13. Click on Return
14. Click once on Mini MSDS - print if desired

Users who wish to print information for more than one product should look up the, *how to use the Inray*.

Managers and staff who wish to access training are invited to contact the OHS&W Training Officer on 8226 1440.

C: GROUNDS

1 Safety and Maintenance

1. The surface of all paved areas and playing surfaces must be maintained in a clean and safe condition without holes, cracks, projections or other potentially dangerous defects.
2. Barriers/cautions must be placed around holes/defects that can’t be repaired immediately.
3. Lighting must be sufficient to ensure all paths can be safely used at night.
4. Deep gutters or drains must be covered.
5. Damaged outdoor furniture must be repaired or removed to ensure that it does not pose a safety risk, or invite use by vandals.

1.1 Equipment

1. Certain irrigation systems use guiding wires or spikes, which are potentially dangerous, and therefore times of use should be carefully assessed to minimise the hazard. Other safety precautions such as ‘witches hats’ and spike coverings should also be examined.
2. Storage for hazardous substances should be separate from other grounds maintenance materials and equipment.

1.2 Traffic

1. Vehicular access, speed and parking on Centre grounds are determined by Regulation 13 of the regulations under the Education Act.

2. A policy of disallowing the riding of bicycles on Centre grounds should be considered.

1.3 European Wasp Control

(See also the department's policy "European Wasp Control in Departmental Worksites")

There has been a rapid increase in Australia of the population of European wasps, which are aggressive if aggravated scavenging pests; more dangerous than bees because of their more potent venom and capacity to inflict multiple stings. They are also more likely than bees to gather around humans. The wasps are most active during summer and autumn and are attracted to meat, sweet foods and drinks. Centre yards are a likely habitat, with the wasps tending to enter places such as drink containers, from which they can give potentially fatal stings to the mouth and throat. Students should be encouraged **not to leave** drink containers unattended. Neither staff nor students are to be encouraged to either spray or attack wasps, thereby aggravating them and triggering an aggressive response.

Allergic reactions to stings can also occur, usually within an hour. These could include:

- intense/continuous pain
- swelling
- red puffy eyes and/or face
- breathing difficulties.

Persons suffering an allergic reaction to a European wasp sting should receive medical treatment as soon as possible — send to a doctor or hospital casualty unit.

Directors should report any wasp sightings/stings to their local Department for Building Management (D.A.I.S.) office and council authority. Once a European Wasp nest is located, contact your local Council. Health and safety advisers have more information.

1.4 GUIDELINES FOR THE CONTROL OF SNAKES

Some of DECS schools and Centres are in locations where snakes may be a problem, in that they pose a danger to staff and students. Mid to late spring and summer are times when snakes become active.

Guidelines for the management of this issue are:

1. Most snakes **will** avoid humans, and if left alone and not restricted, **will** move away from any perceived threat.
2. If a snake appears in the schoolyard, teaching areas or classrooms, ensure students are kept away, and give the opportunity for the snake to escape.
3. If the snake remains and is perceived to be a threat, the first course of action (after clearing the area to a safe distance) is to contact the local district council or DTEI and request assistance in removal of the animal. There is no direct charge to the school for this service. It is recognised that in remote areas this will not provide a rapid solution but is the preferred response when immediate action is not required.
4. The introduction of administrative preventative strategies such as keeping long grass cut back, not allowing suitable habitats, e.g. piles of timber and sheets of galvanised iron to develop, reducing mice population by maintaining clean yards and surroundings, should assist in minimising the problem.
5. Ensure that first aid procedures and hospital/doctor/ambulance phone numbers are clearly displayed in the staff room. Provide a specifically labelled bandage for snakebite only, in both school and school bus first aid kits.
6. It is strongly recommended that students and staff be given specific instructions as to the correct procedures to adopt if they encounter a snake, i.e. move away and ensure the animal has access to an escape route and is not prevented from using it.

2 Outdoor Learning Areas

1. Persons responsible for developing and managing children's outdoor learning areas must be sensitive to the child's needs and carefully assess any risks that may exist: safety must have the first priority. No area can be totally safe but every effort must be made to reduce potential hazards. **(See CS Outdoor Learning Area document)**
2. All changes and additions to an existing area must be approved by the CSO.
3. Equipment for climbing, swinging, hanging, standing, sliding, etc. must conform to **Australian Standards (1924 Part 1 & 2)** and be maintained according to **(AS 2155, Part 6)** including carrying out monthly inspections with a special emphasis on safety. Attention should focus on structural strength, durability, low maintenance and cost.
4. Sharp timber edges should be bevelled and all sharp metal edges or ends capped.
5. Anti slip surfaces for platforms are recommended.
6. Fasteners such as nails, screws and bolts should be galvanised, recessed where possible and pose no hazard.
7. Earth for mounds should not contain clay, rubble or rubbish.
8. All surfaces should be carefully considered according to their function.
9. Siting for items must conform to **AS 2155 (1982)**
10. Drainage must be natural, on site or into a purpose built drainage pit. Contained water must be drained daily.
11. The maximum height for any possible fall must not exceed 1.8 metres. Platforms over 500mm above the ground require a guardrail and over 1m also requires infill safety fences. The gap between the ground and platforms less than 300mm must be closed off.
12. Impact absorbent material such as Grape Marc, Wood-chip Mulch, Pine Chip and Chip 'n' Bark must be placed beneath all climbing areas where there is a fall height of more than 0.8m. The area should be prepared like a pit to the depth of 250 - 350 mm. (depending on material) and extend the fall height plus 1m beyond the edge of equipment. Regular maintenance of this material is required.
13. Use trolleys or approved sack-trucks to move equipment.
14. An effort should be made to provide adequate shade.

Trestles

1. Trestles

- must not exceed 1.2m in height.
- if they have rungs, then the top rung must not be used for boards
- tubing diameter should not be less than 19mm
- 12 gauge tubing is a minimum requirement
- base width should equal height
- angle of uprights to ground not to exceed 63 degrees
- open tube ends must be closed
- to have no lateral bracing on the ends
- metal disks must be welded to the base of legs to prevent sinking
- require stoppers on each side if used for jouncing boards to prevent board from sliding off.

2.1 Sandpits

1. Sandpits should be at least 12 square metres in size; this is considered adequate for 10 playing children.
2. They should be filled to a depth of 300 - 800mm (800mm for minimum 2/3 of pit) of washed - river or beach sand which is free from contaminants.
3. The base of the pit should comprise of uncemented bricks above 50mm of gravel and pipes if natural drainage is poor.
4. Edges comprising of treated pine or sleepers need to be fixed to the ground.
5. A tap is required within two metres.
6. Sandpits should be partly shaded in high UV conditions.

7. They must be located away from active equipment such as swings or slippery-dips.

Maintenance

1. The sand should be raked regularly and turned over periodically to avoid anaerobic conditions; it should be replaced entirely if it becomes contaminated.
2. The sand may be disinfected with a regular treatment of sodium hypochlorite solution. Eight cubic metres of sand may be treated with 20 litres of water mixed with 400 grams of sodium hypochlorite. Rinse all mixing utensils with clean water immediately after use and do not allow undiluted sodium hypochlorite to contact metal.
3. Covers made from sailcloth, mesh, and shade cloth plasticised sheets, polyfabric, hinged panels or trellis with light timber or wire netting may be used to prevent contamination when not in use.

2.2 Pest Control

Insects and other pests are a common means by which disease-causing bacteria are transmitted. In addition to provisions for general cleaning and hygiene, **the following precautions are essential:-**

1. Deny pests likely access points by ensuring that doors and windows close as tightly as possible and any cracks in walls and cupboards are repaired.
2. Store all foodstuffs in well-sealed containers.
3. Close cupboard doors promptly.
4. Be vigilant for evidence of mice such as droppings in cupboards and holes in packages.
5. Maintain flyscreens on windows and doors in good condition.
6. The downdraft from air puffers sited over doorways can also exclude flies and other insects. Those that enter can be effectively eliminated by ultraviolet electric zappers, located out of the reach of students.
7. Keep all utensils, surfaces and other areas clean and free of crumbs etc.
8. Dispose of food scraps into well-sealed bins.
9. Do not spray any type of insecticide on or near food, crockery, appliances and utensils.
10. Pest control or cleaning materials must not be kept in the food storage, preparation or eating areas. Only pyrethrum-based insecticides may be used in DECS workplaces.

Pest Infestations

* Pest control other than of a minor nature must be assigned to qualified personnel.

* In the event of infestations of pests such as rats, mice, lice, birds and termites, workplaces should contact their District Office health and safety adviser.

Care of pets in the Centre

Many children bring pet creatures into the Centre such as ducks, chickens and fowls, rabbits, mice, guinea pigs, reptiles, and birds. Care must be taken to house such pets in clean, hygienic cages/enclosures and that these are cleaned thoroughly and regularly to prevent them attracting pests.

2.3 Shade

- It is recommended that all outdoor areas are fully or partly shaded as a protection from UV radiation.
- Natural shade provided by trees is ideal but some other provision needs to be made (such as pergolas, sails, tents, movable gazeboes etc.) if this source of shade is inadequate.
- It should be acknowledged that shade provides only limited protection against UV radiation and therefore should not in itself be seen as adequate to safeguard against skin or eye damage.
- There is at present **no Australian standard** relating to the erection of shading structures in children's play areas, especially over sandpits and climbing structures.
- If intending to erect such structures, Centres need to contact their Local Government Authority (LGA) building Inspectors for reference – many LGA's have public children's playgrounds, and will have had to consider this issue.
- The materials used need to be robust, able to withstand exposure to the weather, strongly attached to each other, and if slung as a shade must be high enough above the structure so that they cannot be reached by a person standing on top of the structure
- The decision to erect must incorporate a risk assessment.
- Appendix B of the Australian Building Code may be referred to for guidance.

2.4 Plants

These plants are considered **VERY** harmful to children. **Other plants not listed may be A SEVERE HEALTH RISK to your child if consumed.**

PLANT	TOXIC PART	SYMPTOMS
African Milk Bush <i>Synadenium grantii</i>	All parts	Irritation of the mucous surfaces, diarrhoea, vomiting.
Agapanthus <i>Agapanthus orientalis</i>	Leaves	Acute skin irritation and ulceration of the mouth.
Angels Trumpet <i>Datura Aborea (D.Candida)</i>	Fruit, seeds and flowers	Dry throat, increasing thirst. Disturbance of vision, giddiness, flushed face, headache, restlessness and staggering, dilation of pupils, tachycardia, coma and death.
Arum Lily <i>Santedeschia aethiopica</i>	All parts	Swelling of tongue and throat. Causes severe illness and acute gastric upset.
Autumn Crocus <i>Colchicum autumnale</i>	All parts	Gastro-intestinal upset, respiratory paralysis, renal damage, exhaustion and shock.
Azalea or Rhododendron	All parts	Nausea, vomiting, depression, difficulty in breathing, coma.
Bird of Paradise <i>Poinciana gilliesii</i>	Pods and seeds	Vomiting, diarrhoea, drowsiness and vertigo.
Black Locust <i>Robinia psuedoacacia</i>	All parts	Gastro-intestinal upset, coldness of extremities, heart irregularities, pupil dilation.
Box <i>Buxus sempervirens</i>	Leaves and twigs	Gastro enteritis, bloody diarrhoea, respiratory failure and convulsions.
Cape Lilac <i>Melia azedarach</i>	Fruit	Gastro-intestinal distress, bloody stools, excitement or depression. 6-8 fruit can be fatal to a child.
Castor-oil Plant <i>Ricinus communis</i>	Seeds	Restlessness, cold clammy skin, thirst, rapid pulse, cramps, drowsiness, stuporous, collapse. 2-8 seeds are lethal dose for adult. Can cause a severe allergic reaction.
Cotoneaster	Fruit (red berries)	Intense nausea and vomiting.
Daffodil & Jonquil <i>Narcissus pseudonarcissus</i> and <i>Narcissus jonquilla</i>	Bulbs	Nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, trembling and convulsions.
Daphne	Berries	Nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, trembling and convulsions.
Dumb-Cane <i>Dieffenbachia spp.</i>	All parts	Intense burning and irritation of mouth and tongue. Swelling and accumulation of fluid causes difficulty in swallowing.
Duranta <i>Idurnata repens</i>	Fruit	Sleepiness, high temperature.
Foxglove <i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	All parts	Irregular heart beat and pulse. Usually digestive upset and dizziness.
Hemlock <i>Conium Maculatum</i>	All parts	Violent, painful convulsions and a gradual loss of muscle power.
Jessamine <i>Cestrum spp.</i>	All parts	Nausea, pupil dilation, muscular weakness, hallucinations, tachycardia, weak pulse, coma.

Laburnum Laburnum anagyroides	All parts, especially seeds	Vomiting, purging, tetanic spasms.
Lantana Lantana camara	Green berries	Not fully documented, but includes muscular weakness and circulatory collapse.
Naked Lady Euphorbia tirucalli	All parts	Vomiting, purging, delirium, death. Latex sap is an irritant, causes temporary blindness on contact with eyes. Blistering to the skin.
Nightshades	All parts, especially berries	Intense digestive disturbance, affects nervous system.
Oleander Nerium oleander and Thevetia peruviana	All parts	Extremely poisonous! Affects the heart and pulse. Usually causes digestive upset and mental confusion. Ingestion of one leaf or flower can be fatal to a child.
Poinsettia Euphorbia pulcherrima	Leaves, stalk, sap	Severe nausea if swallowed. Extreme irritation to skin and eyes from latex sap.
Rhubarb Rheum rhaponticum	Leaf blade	Staggering, abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhoea, impaired clotting of blood, coma.
Rhus Toxicodendron succedaneum	All parts	Severe irritation and blistering of the skin. Intense swelling of the face that may spread to other parts.
Toadstool	All parts	Intoxication (in a few minutes to two hours), unusual secretion of saliva, sweating, diarrhoea, vomiting and circulatory failure. Mental disturbance, convulsions and coma.
Thorn Apple Datura stramonium and Jimson Weed	All parts	Abnormal thirst, distorted sight, delirium, incoherence, coma.
Winter Sweet Carissa spectabilis	All parts	Severe gastro-intestinal irritation, irregular heart beat and pulse.

SAFETY MEASURES:

1. Make sure ALL plants, both indoor and outdoor, are accurately identified.

2. Remove or securely fence off all identified poisonous plants.

Contact these agencies for more information on identifying poisonous plants in your garden:

Poisons Information Centre: 13 11 26

Kidsafe SA: (08) 8161 6318

IF YOU SUSPECT YOUR CHILD HAS INGESTED ANY UNKNOWN PLANT OR GARDENING PRODUCT, CONTACT THE
POISONS INFORMATION CENTRE IMMEDIATELY ON 13 11 26

Preschool Director

MELC Rural Care

Sourced: 1. Department of Education and Children's Services

Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare

Children's Services

OHS&W Guidelines March 2003

2. Kidsafe - Poisonous Plants 2011

(<http://www.kidsafesa.com.au/index.php?page=factSheets&cat=Information+Pages&subcat=Fact+Sheets>)

3. DECS Licensing and Standards Unit

Ratified: / /2008

Review: 2009

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