

Children's Belonging's Policy



This policy clarifies responsibilities for children's property when brought with them to the Farmhouse Montessori School- Nth Balgowlah Campus as well as the Nth Head Primary School Campus. We acknowledge that children will bring to the School or carry with them certain personal belongings. This policy 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.
2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented.

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

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, staff, management and visitors of the service.

IMPLEMENTATION

It can be distressing for children to misplace their toys from home and can cause conflict between children.

- Children often want to share or show other children or caregivers special things from home, but these treasures may be easily broken or lost. To save the upset and heartache, parents 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. We have numerous stimulating and challenging toys and resources for all children to play with and are in numerous quantities, catering to their interests.

- During exceptional program circumstances, the children may (on occasion) be able to bring with them personal belongings, this may include school holiday programs, news etc. News is a great way to encourage children to talk during group time about their special toy or personal belonging. This practice encourages children's social development, enables children to verbalise thoughts, fears and feelings, broaden the cultural and social backgrounds of all children involved in group time activities, assist in the development of language skills and provide an opportunity for development of special interests for the group.
- We will provide appropriate storage for lost property that will be available to children and families at all times.
- Any grievances or concerns related to lost damaged or stolen property of the children will be managed in accordance with the grievance and complaints procedure.
- We will take as much care as possible in ensuring that personal belongings are returned to the correct family.
- In accordance with Montessori philosophy we enforce a non-violent toy policy in which we seek family assistance in preventing their children to bring in violent toys from home. Any such toys will be removed from the child immediately and placed in the reception area for parental collection at the end of the day
- At the Farmhouse Montessori School, we strongly promote a philosophy of peace. In keeping with that, our students are not permitted to bring weaponry of any kind in any form. Bags or clothing worn or brought to school should not have superheroes or other aggressive characters depicted on them. In keeping with the Montessori philosophy of the Absorbent Mind, we would also prefer if other commercial characters such as Disney or Nickelodeon personalities did not feature on students' clothing and bags. Young children have trouble discerning fantasy from reality, and we like to promote a sense of reality on school grounds.
- The staff and educators will take as much care as possible in ensuring that clothing; toys, books and puzzles etc. are returned to their correct family. The labelling of all items can help us achieve this. However, we must make it clear that the School is not responsible for damaged, lost or stolen items. If families choose to leave belongings in the School during the day it is completely at the family's own risk
- We will actively encourage children to care for their belongings by:
 - Reminding children appropriately when belongings need to be placed in storage e.g. Lunch box into bag.
 - Collaborate with families any item of personal belonging which is either special, expensive or at risk of being damaged to be kept in a secured and safe position
- We will inform the family through relevant newsletters and publications such as the family handbook of appropriate personal belongings required at the Service.

NOMINATED SUPERVISORS, RESPONSIBLE PERSON, 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
- 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
 - children to verbalise thoughts, fears, and feelings
 - and broadens the cultural and social understandings of all children involved in group time activities
 - the development of language skills, and
 - provides an 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 safety.
- remind parents, that if they choose to leave belongings in the Service during the day, it is completely at their own risk.
- 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 *Grievance Policy* and Procedure.
- request that if children wish to bring in DVD/Blu-ray, music, or electronic game, these should be discussed with management and be 'G-rated'. Although media rated 'PG' (Parental Guidance) is generally appropriate for children, it cannot be assumed that all parents want their children exposed to this rating.
- take as much care as possible in ensuring that personal belongings are returned to the correct family. To assist us with this we ask families to ensure that any item that can be labelled, either has the child's name on it, or the child's initials (for example, on the tag of soft toys where space is limited). If an item cannot be labelled it is the parent's responsibility to advise an educator that their child has this item in their possession.
- 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.
- enforce a non-violent toy policy in which we seek family assistance in preventing their children from bringing in violent toys from home. Any such toys will be removed from the child immediately and placed in the reception area for parental collection at the end of the day.
- allow children to wear dress-up clothes to the service, however, we ask that accessories such as guns, knives, swords, or other weaponry are left at home. Such items can encourage violent play and may present a danger to the child and others within our child care environment.
- take as much care as possible in ensuring that children's clothing and linen items are returned to their correct family. The labelling of all items can help staff achieve this. However, the Service cannot take responsibility for any damaged, lost or stolen items.
- 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.

FAMILIES WILL

- Be responsible for providing the child with appropriate belongings and property required for active participation in the School. This property may include (but is not limited to):
 - Enclosed footwear
 - Weather appropriate clothing
 - Wide brim hat
 - Suitable School bag (backpack)
 - Appropriate food and lunch box and water bottle
 - Sport Wear (Nth Head only)
 - Stationery Items (Nth Head only)
- Ensure all personal property and belongings are clearly named or labelled.

COMFORT TOYS/ SECURITY ITEMS

North Balgowlah Campus

- 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.

North Head Campus

- Children with addition needs that require a security item that helps them to cope throughout a busy day are permitted. This will however be listed on the student IEP.
- Parents must make sure that the item is clearly labelled.

Source	Related Policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014). Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016). Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2011). Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017). Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017). (amended 2020). <i>Privacy Act 1988</i>. Revised National Quality Standard. (2018). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enrolment Policy Orientation of New Families Policy Respect for children

Policy Reviewed	Modifications	Next Review Date
October 2017	Updated the references to comply with revised National Quality Standard	March 2018
September 2018	Minor grammatical change made and new school logo added	September 2019
May 2021	Nominated supervisor section inserted Comfort Toy section inserted for Nth Balgowlah and Nth Head Sources updated	2024