



## Law & Regs

### Law Section 167: Protecting Children from Harm and Hazards

The approved provider and nominated supervisor must take all reasonable steps to keep children safe from harm and any potential hazards that could cause injury while they are in care.

**Regulation 103: Safe, Clean, and Well-Maintained Premises and Equipment.** The approved provider must make sure that all premises, equipment, and furniture used for the education and care service are kept safe, clean, and in good condition. *Note: If this regulation isn't followed, a compliance direction may be issued.*

### Why is the element important?

Element 3.1.2 is for maintaining a safe, clean environment that supports the health and well-being of children and staff. We do this by; **Effective Cleaning** – Regular hygiene of spaces, furniture, and equipment prevents the spread of illness; **Effective Maintenance** – Keeping premises and equipment in good repair reduces accidents, ensuring a secure space for children and educators.

#### Effective Cleaning and Maintenance Practices:

**Regular Cleaning Schedules** – Bathrooms, kitchens, and play areas are cleaned daily to maintain hygiene and prevent the spread of germs.

**Toy Sanitation** – Toys and learning materials are disinfected weekly and after being mouthed by infants to avoid contamination.

**Daily Safety Checks** – Educators conduct a daily inspection of the grounds and equipment to identify and address any potential hazards.

**Prompt Repairs** – Broken or damaged items like furniture, playground equipment, or fencing are reported immediately and fixed promptly to avoid risks.

**Regular Deep Cleaning** – Monthly or seasonal deep cleans of all rooms, including carpets and curtains, reduce allergens and ensure a hygienic space.

**Pest Control** – Scheduled pest inspections and treatments ensure no harmful pests compromise children's health or safety.

**Safe Disposal of Waste** – Bins are emptied daily, and biohazard waste (e.g., nappies, tissues) is disposed of according to health standards to prevent odours and contamination.

**Maintenance of Outdoor Play Equipment** – Outdoor play equipment is regularly checked for stability, with any broken parts repaired or replaced to avoid injuries.

**Adhering to Australian Standards** – Equipment like sleep and rest equipment and areas, and mattresses are routinely checked against Australian Standards to ensure they meet safety regulations.

**Clear Communication on Changes** – When new equipment is introduced or changes are made to the environment, all staff are briefed on safe practices and maintenance requirements to ensure everyone's awareness.

#### Potential Risks if Not Followed:

If educators do not follow these cleaning and maintenance practices, several risks arise:

**Increased Illness** – Poor cleaning practices can spread germs and infections among children and staff.

**Higher Injury Risk** – Broken equipment or poorly maintained premises increase the chances of accidents, like slips or falls.

**Regulatory Non-Compliance** – Ignoring these practices may lead to breaches of regulations, resulting in compliance actions.

**Reduced Trust from Families** – If safety or hygiene issues arise, families may lose confidence in the service's ability to care for their children responsibly.

**Educators should adopt a reflective approach, seeing it from the perspectives of children, parents, and their own professional responsibility.**

**Clean and Inviting Spaces.** Educators can reflect: *"How would a parent feel when they see a spotless playroom, or how would a child feel starting their day in a clean,*

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*fresh-smelling room?*" Regularly cleaning tables, floors, and toys creates an inviting atmosphere that reassures parents about the safety and cleanliness of the centre.

**Thorough Daily Inspections.** Before children arrive, educators can think: *"If I were a parent, would I want to worry about a loose fence panel or worn-out steps?"* Checking these areas first thing each day helps prevent potential injuries, and parents feel at ease knowing educators prioritise safety.

**Sanitising Toys and Surfaces.** Educators might consider: *"Would I want my child playing with a toy that wasn't cleaned properly?"* By sanitising toys, especially after infants use them, educators prevent the spread of germs and illnesses. This practice demonstrates to families that hygiene and child health are top priorities.

**Promptly Addressing Hazards.** When discovering broken equipment, educators can think: *"How would this look to a child or a parent? Could it cause worry or harm?"* Taking immediate action by removing or repairing hazardous items shows a commitment to safety that parents appreciate and children benefit from.

**Regular Carpet and Furniture Cleaning.** Educators can reflect: *"If my child crawled on this carpet, would I feel it was clean and safe?"* Keeping carpets, couches, and fabric surfaces free from dust, spills, and allergens is particularly important for infants who spend more time on the floor. This attention to detail reassures parents and reduces health risks.

**Safe Outdoor Play Environments.** Educators could ask themselves: *"What would I want to see in an outdoor play area if my child were here?"* This might involve ensuring play structures are in good repair, removing sharp or loose objects, and performing a full inspection before outdoor play. Children experience a safer, freer environment, and parents trust that the outdoors is well-managed.

**Visible Cleaning Schedules and Procedures.** Displaying clear cleaning schedules in areas like bathrooms and kitchens helps educators stay on track and shows families the structured commitment to cleanliness. Parents feel assured that routines are consistently followed, and children benefit from a tidy and germ-free environment.

**Transparent Communication of Changes.** When new features or equipment are added, educators might think: *"Would I know how to use this safely if I were a new staff member or volunteer?"* Transparent communication ensures all team members understand

changes, preventing misunderstandings and keeping spaces safely organised. Parents feel confident knowing the staff is well-informed.

**Involving Children in Simple Cleaning Tasks.** Educators can think from a child's perspective: *"What would it be like to help keep my play space clean?"* Simple tasks like tidying up toys or watering plants empower children to take responsibility for their surroundings. This practice also helps children appreciate the importance of a clean environment, which parents view as a positive learning experience.

**Responding to Parental Feedback on Cleanliness and Safety.** Educators could consider: *"If a parent had a concern, how would I feel if I were them?"* Encouraging open dialogue about maintenance and cleanliness, and responding promptly to feedback, demonstrates respect for family perspectives. This partnership builds trust with parents and enhances the quality of care for children.

After reading these points, which one(s) do you think you are doing well? Describe your practice in detail so it can go directly into your QIP or SAT (NSW only).

After reading these points, which one(s) do you think you need to work on? Describe how you could improve your practice.

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