

Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained

## Section 3. Learning what is required for meeting.

The following section will show you exactly what to do to ensure your practice is meeting. You **do not** need to complete this section if you have successfully completed 'Section 2'.

### Why is the element important?

**Looking at the element in detail** - A service reviewed what the NQF Guide said about element 3.1.2 there were two parts to the element to ensure the safety and health of all children and staff:

1. effective cleaning practices
2. effective maintenance practices.

### What could potentially go wrong if educators didn't do the above?

**Health Hazards:** Inadequate cleaning practices can lead to the accumulation of germs, bacteria, and allergens, increasing the risk of infectious diseases among children and staff.

**Injury Risks:** Poorly maintained equipment or premises may have safety hazards such as loose parts, sharp edges, or damaged surfaces, which can result in injuries to children or staff.

**Spread of Illness:** Inadequate cleaning can facilitate the spread of illnesses, impacting the well-being of both children and staff within the service.

**Non-compliance:** Failing to maintain a clean and safe environment can lead to non-compliance with regulatory requirements and potential legal consequences.

**Decline in Learning Environment:** A dirty or cluttered environment can negatively affect the overall learning experience, hindering children's cognitive and creative development.

**Decreased Staff Morale:** An unsafe or unsanitary environment can lead to dissatisfaction among staff, affecting their morale and job satisfaction.

**Parental Concerns:** Parents may have concerns about their child's well-being and may be dissatisfied with the service if they observe subpar cleanliness and maintenance.

**Negative Reputation:** Consistent issues with cleanliness and maintenance can harm the service's reputation, making it less attractive to potential families and staff.

**It is crucial that both outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures, and fittings are designed to serve their intended purpose effectively, including facilitating access for every child. Also, it is essential that premises, furniture, and equipment are consistently maintained to ensure they remain safe, clean, and in excellent condition.**

**Addressing Health Hazards:** To mitigate health hazards stemming from inadequate cleaning practices, it's essential to establish a rigorous cleaning routine. This schedule should encompass high-touch surfaces, shared materials, and frequently used items. Utilise appropriate cleaning products and sanitizers specifically recommended for child care settings. In addition, staff members should be well-versed in proper handwashing techniques and overall hygiene practices. Regular education and reminders can help reinforce these vital practices and reduce the risk of germs, bacteria, and allergens spreading among children and staff.

**Minimising Injury Risks:** To reduce injury risks related to poorly maintained equipment and premises, conduct regular safety inspections. Identify and address potential hazards, such as loose parts, sharp edges, or damage to equipment or structures. Ensure that all equipment is age-appropriate and meets safety standards. Provide staff with comprehensive training on safety protocols and procedures, including how to recognise and report potential hazards promptly. By proactively addressing safety concerns, you can significantly reduce the risk of injuries to both children and staff.

**Preventing the Spread of Illness:** Inadequate cleaning practices can contribute to the spread of illnesses, affecting the well-being of children and staff. To combat this issue, promote good hygiene habits among children, emphasizing proper handwashing, and

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teaching them to cover coughs and sneezes. Enforce illness exclusion policies that require children to stay home when they are contagious. Regularly disinfect toys, surfaces, and equipment, particularly during flu seasons or outbreaks. By implementing these measures, you can help prevent the spread of contagious diseases within your service.

### **Ensuring Compliance and a Positive Learning**

**Environment:** To maintain compliance with regulations and promote a positive learning environment, stay well-informed about relevant licensing requirements. Develop and maintain comprehensive policies and procedures that align with regulatory standards. Conduct regular self-audits and assessments to ensure continued compliance. Organise the learning environment to be clutter-free, stimulating, and age-appropriate. Rotate and refresh materials and resources to keep the environment engaging. Involve children in cleaning routines to teach responsibility and maintain a clean and orderly space.

### **Supporting Staff Morale and Addressing Parental**

**Concerns:** Promote open communication between staff and management to address concerns and drive improvements. Recognise and appreciate staff efforts in maintaining a safe and clean environment, fostering a positive work atmosphere. Offer training and resources to help staff effectively address cleanliness and maintenance issues. Maintain transparent communication with parents about cleaning and safety practices, addressing any concerns promptly and providing reassurance regarding their child's well-being. Share regular updates and photos that showcase the service's commitment to cleanliness and safety.

### **Enhancing Reputation and Community Engagement:**

To prevent a negative reputation stemming from cleanliness and maintenance issues, prioritise these aspects as core values of the service. Actively seek feedback from families and staff and use it as a foundation for continuous improvements. Showcase the service's commitment to cleanliness and safety through marketing and communication channels, highlighting your dedication to providing a safe, clean, and nurturing environment 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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