

# Out School Hours Care (SA) ASSOCIATION Inc.

## Position Paper

## No 2

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### Ideals for an OSHC facility - - a sector view of perfection

Following the announcement of funding for all primary school by the Prime Minister earlier this year, several OSHC services asked about what needed to be considered in a custom designed OSHC facility. The ideas below have been prepared in consultation with some service providers and for larger services the items listed should be addressed in some way. Smaller services may be more easily accommodated in existing multipurpose space in schools as long as the operator has plans for ongoing development of the area used by OSHC and fully considers the children's needs as well as the OSHC Standards SA and OSHCQA.

The Association members will continue to press for greater acknowledgement that will include OSHC as an integral part of a school environment. For state schools this would mean that OSHC can be duly considered as a service offered by its school and in so doing have its space requirements formally addressed. OSHC services generally operate over 50 weeks of the year as opposed to schools where operation is over 40 weeks. It is therefore important to fully address the needs of the adults and children who are the stakeholders of these services.

For state schools there should be a consistent approach to the operational costs that OSHC services are asked to meet. Given that in most instances OSHC services are used as a marketing tool by schools seeking to attract and maintain enrolments it is logical that this is considered when considering cost recovery from OSHC. A similar consistent approach should be adopted by the Catholic schools and other groups that have common ground.

It is recognised that the ideas set out are ideals and so may not be achievable in all areas. However, this is a sector benchmark, and somewhere for negotiations to begin. There is also a need to address each point in this document as each point will enhance the quality and create the potential to provide excellence in the service delivered. Staff facilities ensure that the needs of staff are dealt with and in relation to first aid the process of managing this must focus on the dignity and rights of children.

If an OSHC service has to be re-housed the OSHC Standards SA should be met at all times, even in temporary accommodation. Any temporary moves should ultimately offer greater scope than the current facilities.

It is agreed that general OSHC space should be used for alternative activities during the school day. Service providers emphasise that shared use of space should not equate to the assumption that all OSHC equipment and consumables are for open use too.

Estimate the required area needed to meet the OSHC Standards SA - [www.decs.sa.gov.au/oshc](http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/oshc) .

1. Facilities should have adequate heating and cooling that complies with OHS&W requirements

2. The main area should be an open area with access to up to 3 separate withdrawal facilities (quiet flooring that can be easily cleaned). A Smart Board can be installed for multipurpose use of the room.

The withdrawal areas have the capacity to be closed with clear /transparent concertina doors or can be open – these areas would be carpeted. These rooms could have varied functions and each may have different functions on different days. The capacity to maximise ease of supervision should be addressed whilst maintaining some level of privacy for children.

Withdrawal area 1–is to be used for TV, DVD and electronic games.

Withdrawal area 2- to be used for home work and for board games and similar quiet activities – will need some table space and a couple of computers to support homework also some basic reference material – e.g. dictionaries and atlases.

Withdrawal area 3 – for dramatic play and dance may be where dress ups and home corner type stuff is set up. Other options for these areas may also be for a 10+ space. Consider storage, pin boards and whiteboards as you go

3. Kitchen area that addresses 2 separate functions – 1) Adults preparing food for children – open and easy to manage bench tops and, 2) cooking and food preparation undertaken by children as an activity. For this purpose you may want to consider some work bench space as an appropriate height for children. In the kitchen consider double sink, oven (large domestic or commercial) cook top, dishwasher, fridge /freezer, microwave, walk in pantry, lockable cupboards for chemicals, adequate storage especially for the range of small appliances.

4. Office space that offers the following - ergonomic work space with computer access for at least 2 employees. There must be storage space and secure space for confidential information. OSHC staff must have access to this area as and when required and this area should not be a shared space.

This concept assumes that there will be access to school toilets facilities – if not; toilets will be required in accordance with the standards. If area needs to have own toilets standards must be met and then can uni sex toilets be an option? A staff toilet may also be considered.

## Other aspects to be considered

- Space for parent information and for signing in and out. This will need to facilitate the account delivery process.
- Space where you can have **private** interviews with parents (enough room for yourself and 2 others). The office may not be the best place for this and so please consider.
- Art sink in the main area as well as hand washing facilities for children.
- Storage space for indoor/outdoor equipment, bulky gear and stationery - the list here is endless and remember more space will breed more stuff!
- Pin boards, and capacity to hang some stuff from ceiling for drama etc
- Undercover outdoor area that is protected from the prevailing weather where children can undertake messy play – painting, clay and science stuff etc. You may incorporate some lockers for bulky gear into this area
  
- A staff room – small room furnished with comfortable chairs for staff can take breaks in vacation care. This area would be where staff resources were housed as well. Therefore will need notice boards and personal lockers for staff members. In this room to maximise its effectiveness you might also include a small fridge, single sink and a microwave with cupboards to match
- First aid area for children – first aid kit, sink possible toilet and comfortable chair – there may be some capacity to double this one with the staff area but bear in mind a first aid area needs to be easily supervised if there is a child in need of constant observation. This feature is particularly for those services that are accessed regularly by children with additional needs.

## Other Comments

1. Windows and window treatments – smaller windows or windows at bench height will give you more usable space indoors and still give staff a reasonable view of outdoor areas. Keep window treatments simple and cost effective. External shutters offer a compromise.
2. Consider some ecological stuff – rainwater tanks. Consider investing in strategies to recycle as much as you can and have worm farms etc to minimise food scraps.

## Outdoor space

Operators should take time to consider this too. Of course most school sites can adequately address the requirement of the OSHC Standards, i.e. 12sq metres per child. The intent was that within that area children could enjoy a range of varied experiences and consider the possibility of some adventure type options for children.

There are issues to be considered.

- Access to toilets from designated outdoor area
- How easily can the area be accessed from the designated OSHC facility – what are the supervision issues?
- Does the area meet the needs of OSHC children – if it includes access to playground equipment is the equipment suitable for the OSHC age range?
- Is there any capacity for sand and water play
- Is there adequate shade available
- Is there capacity for children to sit and chat
- Is there scope for creative play
- Is there any capacity for children to develop garden or embark on other eco friendly projects e.g. worm farms or chickens.
- Are there opportunities for children to experience any variety of smells, colours and textures in the vegetation that surrounds their play space
- Does the allocated space have scope for activities that involve a safe level of risk taking?