



FAMILY HANDBOOK

Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnership with Families

Welcome | Our Family Handbook provides important information you need to know to ensure the best possible start to quality education and care at Playhouse Early Education and Care

We strongly recommend you read the provided information and ask questions to confirm your understanding of how our service operates.

We have an open-door policy and you and your family are welcome to visit our Service at any time.

Service Philosophy **COLLABORATION – RESPECT – CONNECTIONS – COMMITMENT**

Our philosophy reflects a shared understanding of the role our service plays with regards to the children, families, educators, and community. We want to make sure our service is a place that represents all who are a part of it. Our philosophy reflects and is informed by theoretical perspectives, research, community values and contexts, and the collective values, beliefs and diverse perspectives of the children, educators and families who attend the service.

Our core values are applied to and are the foundation of our service practices and operation. We are committed to continuous quality improvement to drive and deliver quality outcomes for all who are a part of our service. We use the National Quality Standards to guide best practice and the voices of our families, children, community, and team to shape our service decision making. Playhouse Early

Education and Care aspires to inspire our children through our connections, collaboration, respect, and commitment to quality service delivery.

CHILDREN:

- Our children at Playhouse Early Education and Care respond to and enjoy the company of our educators. Educators interact with children with warmth, respect, compassion and in a positive and meaningful way enabling children to gain confidence to become active participants in their learning. Relationships that are respectful and allow children to feel secure within the environment are fundamental to their learning. By building strong relationships with children, we are able to support their wellbeing, build resilience and enhance their learning capabilities and get the best response from the children in our care. (Erikson)
- Each child's dignity and rights are respected with the understanding that every child is unique and has different needs. Educators treat children equally, learning children's cues, personalities, routines and are responsive to children's needs with a personalised approach. (Erikson)
- Our children are seen as competent active and capable learners, listening to children's ideas and helping children find their own answers encourages and empowers children to succeed. (Piaget)
- Every Child is encouraged to contribute their ideas to co-construct learning, respect others' opinions, listen with intent and collaborate with peers. Instead of educators being the sole facilitator of learning, children should be encouraged as 'peer mentors' assisting each other to learn and develop skills (Gardner)

FAMILIES:

- Our Educator's foster positive relationships with families. Our interactions and supportive, collaborative relationships with families builds a strong foundation for successful learning and development. Regular communication is encouraged to ensure consistency is maintained between the home and care environment. Families voices, involvement and contribution is welcomed and embraced. We encourage positive professional relationships between families and educators, with open and positive communication, welcoming feedback and input into the service and its policies, procedures, practices and philosophy. (Bronfenbrenner)
- We provide an environment that is homelike, secure, nurturing, stimulating and responsive to individual family's needs, and life experiences, providing a space where everyone feels safe, secure, supported, and valued

- We ensure that we provide programs and opportunities within our service that reflect the needs and expectations of the wider community, cultures and families in which our children live. Diversity is embraced with the belief that celebration and preservation of family dynamics, culture, languages, and traditions are important. (Bronfenbrenner)
- In the spirit of reconciliation, we provide an environment that acknowledges, and celebrates Indigenous culture. Through actively seeking to build connections with Indigenous peoples, whom share personal culture and heritage we construct knowledge and a connection with the history of Australia. The sharing of knowledge, open communication and collaborative decision-making, helps in teaching the children in a respectful and meaningful way. We pay our respects to the Traditional Owners of the land on which we stand, Elders past and present daily in our service in our acknowledgement to country.
- Nutrition is also important to our families, a healthy wholesome menu to fuel growth and development is provided across the service. Health and nutrition is valued and an important part of our day. Social connection and conversation is encouraged over meal times with an emphasis on the importance of healthy foods.
- Embedding Health and wellbeing into every day practices promotes a positive start to a child's future and development. The overall wellbeing includes: Learning healthy eating habits, being sun smart, learning about hygiene, self regulation and mindfulness, building a healthy mind and keeping active. Being able to Self-regulate, understand and identify emotions and thinking is an important tool in learning to cope with everyday life. Children's ability to respond and react in different situations is based around their ability to self-regulate. We give children opportunities to learn self-regulation by embedding it into everyday practices and by helping children to reflect on behaviours and choices made. (Skinner)

COMMUNITY:

- The wider community provides children with many life learning skills that cannot be taught within the classroom. We believe connecting children to the wider community enhances children's sense of belonging and understanding of the world in which they live. Implementing regular outings and visits to local community destinations builds connections, appreciation and is beneficial to all involved.
- We work in collaboration with outside agencies to foster continuity and consistency for our children All families and children have individual needs and by creating partnerships with

professional services, we can achieve better outcomes and provide a higher quality of learning for all children

EDUCATORS:

- Using many theorists' perspectives and research-based evidence, our educators provide a curriculum that encompasses a planning cycle capturing the interests of the child, intentional teachings, co-constructed learning, and the child's voice. Our Educators observe and document in depth to understand the abilities, knowledge, age and stage of each child. The Curriculum is developed with purpose, encouraging meaningful learning through exploration, curiosity, critical thinking and problem solving, measured risky play, inquiry and a variety of learning dispositions. We use the *Victorian early years learning framework* that guides early childhood professionals to work together with families in support of their children, embracing and responding to the cultural and linguistic diversity of the Victorian community and diverse approaches to child rearing. (Dewey)(Piaget)(Gardner)
- Providing children with natural elements, upcycled and open-ended resources provides opportunity for creativity which challenges children's cognitive and imaginative development. Children should be connected with their natural environment, embracing nature and having an understanding of sustainability and their impact on our world. Promoting and teaching sustainable practices in everyday learning creates respect, care and appreciation for the natural environment. Providing opportunities to explore outdoors, natural environments and the wider community broadens children's knowledge of the world and natural environment.
- The learning environment is extremely important, and is seen as the 'third teacher'. It must be aesthetically pleasing with every material and experience having a purposeful meaning. When the environment is engaging and empowering it inspires children to learn through play, encouraging collaboration and exploration. By showing respect for children as collaborators, we are providing them opportunities to make decisions and develop a strong sense of identity.
- Having high expectations of every child promotes resilience and gives them a willingness to work hard. By building on each child's strengths and setting high expectations, we give children the tools to achieve success by being able to overcome any risk factors that they may encounter in everyday life. We believe in the capability of children and their abilities even at a young age to make decisions and choices for themselves. Planning is based on the child as an

individual with the knowledge that they all require different expectations and challenges in order to reach their full potential.

- Educators know that children will need assistance and will know when to step in and guide children to support them in their learning process. We believe that Children need interactions on a one-to-one basis at times facilitating the child's learning. (Vygotsky)
- Flexible progressive routine times and indoor/outdoor programs are an important part of the curriculum, enabling children to be autonomous, independent and making decisions for themselves. This also creates valuable opportunities for periods of uninterrupted play. (Montessori)
- Hygiene and cleanliness is an important aspect of infection control and providing a hygienic space for children to play. We adhere to the highest standards of hygiene, with practices and procedures in place to eliminate and control the spread of germs and infectious diseases
- Reflection and critical evaluation of our practice, teaching and curriculum is an important element to strive for continuous quality improvement. Through reflective practice we learn, challenge and grow, as professionals, allowing for evolving programs, better practices and teachings that support children in their learning and development.

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Centre Information

Our Service caters for children aged **6 weeks to 5 years of age**. It is approved by the Department of Education and Training to provide care for up to 57 children per day.

We are open from **7.00am to 6.30pm** Monday to Friday, **52 Weeks a year** and closed on Victorian public holidays. Notice will be given in advance via email when these days occur.

We have 4 classrooms:

Babies - 0-2

Toddlers - 2-3

Pre-Kinder - 3-4

Kinder - 4-5

Contact Information

Phone: 0481 391 001

Email: playhouseearlyeducation@gmail.com

Website: TBA

Management Structure

Our service is privately owned by NICKELL PTY LTD trading as Playhouse Early Education and Care

Approved Providers: *Nicole White and Kelly Davis*

Nominated Supervisor/Centre Manager: *Kelly Davis*

Educational Leader/Community Leaders: *Kelly Davis*

Our Commitment to Child Safety

Our Service is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children is maintained at all times whilst being educated and cared for by educators and staff at Playhouse Early Education and Care. We promote a child safe environment that minimises the risk to all children in our care from all types of

abuse, harm and neglect. We understand our responsibilities and statutory duty of care to adopt and comply with the National Principles of Child Safe Organisations and the Reportable Conduct Scheme to build our capacity as an organisation to prevent and respond to allegations of child abuse.

Our staff carry out their responsibilities as mandatory reporters as required by law under the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection Act 1998) and maintain up to date with knowledge of child protection law and child protection training.

Our staff are recruited through an extensive screening process to ensure they display the right personal qualities and experiences to provide high quality supervision and care to child in addition to holding a validated Working With Children Check.

We have a zero tolerance for inappropriate behaviour towards children and any breach of child protection law. Any allegation or concern will be responded to promptly by management. We request that you contact our Nominated Supervisor if you have any concerns.

Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct establishes the standards for all employees of our Service. Employees are committed to adhere to the ethical responsibilities of early childhood professionals outlined in the Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics. The values that underpin our work ethic include equality, respect, integrity and responsibility.

Our educators and staff

Our Service is made up of a team of high-quality professional educators who are committed to and passionate about early childhood education and care. Our staff promote the human rights, safety and wellbeing of all children and consider and respect the diverse backgrounds and needs of children. We create an environment that promotes and enables children's participation and is welcoming, culturally safe and inclusive for all children and their families.

Our educators are continually evaluating how our curriculum meets the educational needs of our children and reflecting on ways to improve children's learning and development and are supported by a team of highly qualified professionals. Our educational leader and early childhood teachers guide our educators in providing quality, research based educational programs.

Our educators take into account children's learning styles, abilities, interests, linguistic and cultural diversity and family circumstances when planning and implementing learning programs. We support and respect the history and backgrounds of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and aim to foster each child's sense of identity.

All staff are encouraged and supported to attend professional training and development to further their knowledge and skills.

All staff hold valid Working with Children Checks/Cards and all Responsible Persons (placed in charge of the day-to-day running of the service) have current ACECQA approved First Aid, Emergency Asthma and Anaphylaxis qualifications.

For further details on the qualifications of the educators, please see our Nominated Supervisor.

National Quality Framework

Our Service complies with the Australian Government's National Quality Framework (NQF) which consists of the legislative framework of the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations, the National Quality Standard and a rigorous assessment and rating system. Our educational program and curriculum are based on the Victorian Early Years Learning Framework (VEYLF). We regularly self-assess our practices against the National Quality Standard and strive for continuous improvement through our Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). The QIP assists our service to identify quality aspects of care we are already providing and assists in developing future goals for further improvement. Families are welcome to provide feedback and suggestions for improvement.

Additional information about the NQF can be found at [ACECQA/nqf/about](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about)

Regulatory Authorities

Our Service is regulated by the national body for early education and care – the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) as well as the state licensing department in our State/Territory- Victoria. To contact our Regulatory Authority, please refer to the contact details below:

VICTORIA

VIC Department of Education phone: 1300 307 415

email: licensed.children.services@education.vic.gov.au

Educator to child ratios

We comply with the National Regulations for educator to child ratios across our Service to ensure adequate supervision is provided for all children. Ratios are calculated across the service (not by individual rooms). This provides us with flexibility to respond to children's interests and needs at different times during the day.

AGE OF CHILDREN:**EDUCATOR TO CHILD RATIOS:**

Under 3's

1:4

Over 3's

1:11

Victorian Early Years Learning Framework (VEYLF)

At Playhouse Early Education and Care we will provide professional qualified educators, who plan and implement an effective program developed to meet each child's individual needs. Our educators work collaboratively with children to gain their ideas and feelings which are then reflected into the program. We focus on children's interests to further their development and build trust. When a child is interested and engaged, they are more likely to learn. The program cycle is constantly evolving through critical reflection and evaluation.

Our curriculum is based on the Victorian Early Years Learning Framework (VEYLF) and consists of the following learning and development outcomes:

Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity

- Children feel safe, secure, and supported
- Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency
- Children develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities
- Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect

Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world

- Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation
- Children respond to diversity with respect
- Children become aware of fairness
- Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment

Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

- Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing
- Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing

Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners

- Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity
- Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, enquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating
- Children transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another
- Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies and natural and processed materials

Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators

- Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes
- Children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts
- Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media
- Children begin to understand how symbols and pattern systems work
- Children use information and communication technologies to access information, investigate ideas and represent their thinking

The framework conveys the highest expectations for children's learning from birth to five years and through transitions to school. The expectations are communicated through the five overall learning outcomes.

Communication

We work in partnership with you and your family. We support and encourage communication with your child's educators about your child's unique needs and their general enjoyment of their day at our Service. Everybody has a preferred time and method of communication. Sometimes, mornings and afternoons can be a little rushed, and not the best time to discuss your child's progress. You are encouraged to talk to our Nominated Supervisor to arrange to meet your child's educator at a mutually convenient time.

Our Service uses an online platform called OWNA to provide real time updates about your child.

Our Service has various other types of communication at the service for families including:

- Newsletters
- Phone calls
- Emails
- Letters
- Face to face engagement
- E-forms
- Family weekend forms
- Mid-year and End of year interviews
- Formal meetings/discussions

Enrolment Information

Prior to your child commencing at our Service, you will be required to complete an enrolment form and provide all relevant documentation.

Enrolment Form

If you require assistance completing the enrolment form, please contact our Nominated Supervisor or reception staff for assistance.

We will require a copy of your child's immunisation history statement from the Australian Immunisation Register. This must show that your child is up to date with vaccinations for their age OR

your child is on a recognised vaccine catch up schedule OR has a medical condition preventing them from being fully vaccinated.

Please note, the names written on the enrolment form must match the names on your child's birth certificate to meet legal requirements.

Family law and access

Our Service will uphold any responsibilities or obligations in relation to Family Law and access to the service. We require certified copies of any court order, parenting orders or parenting plans, relating to your child and request that if situations change, a copy of the Court Order is provided to our Service. We will only allow children to leave the Service with the written permission of the custodial parent/guardian. Without a Court Order we cannot stop a parent collecting a child.

Authorised Nominees

You will be requested to provide information about authorised nominees on your child's enrolment form. These are persons that you provide permission to:

- collect your child from the Service
- provide consent for medical treatment for your child from a medical practitioner, hospital or ambulance service
- provide consent for the transportation of your child by an ambulance service
- provide consent to go on an excursion.

Please understand that it is essential we have up-to-date information on your child's enrolment record in case of an emergency. It is important that you notify the Nominated Supervisor (or Responsible Person) of any changes to enrolment information including:

- your residential address
- health of your child
- telephone/mobile numbers
- contact details for any parent or authorised nominee
- family changes (parenting orders)
- emergency contact information details etc.

Authorisations

The enrolment form will include additional authorisations for our Service to seek medical treatment and emergency transportation for your child if required. Authorisations will also be requested for application of sun cream, permission to administer emergency medication to your child in the case of an asthma or anaphylaxis emergency. (Ventolin or Epi-pen), permission for an educator with current first aid to administer paracetamol in an emergency and permission to access medical treatment and transport in case of an emergency.

Photographs, social media, promotion

As part of the enrolment process, we will also ask for your permission to take photographs and video of your child during normal activities and excursions for sharing with our parent community through social media and/or to promote our Service to the community through marketing and promotional materials. Photographs and video may also be used as part of our observation and programming process.

Excursions/ Bush Kindy / Regular Outings

Excursions are an important and a valuable part of learning in early education. They expose a child to a range of different experiences and help them to observe and understand the world around them. For any excursion or regular outing in our community, we will complete comprehensive risk assessments to minimise any identified risks as part of our planning for excursions. We provide parents with information about the excursion in advance and require written authorisation for each child to participate on an excursion or regular outing.

Medical conditions- Allergies, Asthma, Diabetes or Epilepsy

It is vital that we are aware of any medical condition including diabetes, epilepsy, allergies, eczema, asthma, risks of anaphylaxis of your child including any potential triggers. Families are required to indicate any allergy or asthma on the enrolment form.

Our Service requires a Medical Management Plan or Asthma/Anaphylaxis Action Plan to be completed by your General Practitioner to assist in managing your child's needs. This needs to be provided prior to your child's commencement at the Service. In consultation with the Nominated Supervisor, you will

be asked to develop a Risk Minimisation Plan and Communication Plan to assist our educators and staff. Any prescribed medication that your child may require must be provided each day they attend our Service.

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of your child, please update your child's Medical Management Plan/ Action Plan every 12 months or whenever a change in their medication or treatment occurs. (Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy) (ASCIA).

Diagnosed disability

If your child has a diagnosed disability, please speak to our Nominated Supervisor prior to enrolment. We provide a supportive and inclusive environment that allows each child to fully participate in quality education and care. We aim to develop and sustain supportive relationships with families and encourage discussions about how we can support your child to have equitable access to resources and participation.

If your child has a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) package, we may need your consent to make contact with services and/or therapists who are working with your child to seek information regarding their learning plan to support continuity of learning.

Our Service may be able to apply for additional support through the Inclusion Support Program (SIP) to assist your child's access.

Fees, rebates and attendance

Fees

Our daily fees can be retrieved in service or by phoning us directly- these are subject to change with a 2 week notice period to families. Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is available for all families who have applied.

Fees must always be paid on time and during the week of care. Fees must be paid via automatic Direct Debit, an agreement must be completed on enrolment.

Statement of fees

Each week we will send you a statement/invoice before your weekly debit is processed. Please check these statements/invoices to ensure all details are correct and accurate via the OWNA app. If there is

any discrepancy, please contact the Nominated Supervisor or Accounts Manager as soon as possible to ensure that your query is rectified.

Payment methods

Parents/guardians are required to complete an online Direct Debit form upon enrolment. Fees will be deducted **Weekly, Fortnightly or Monthly depending on individual Family requests. *Direct debits will be processed on a Tuesday or a Friday collection as specified by families.***

Please note that additional charges will apply for any failed transactions as a result of insufficient funds.

Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

Child Care Subsidy offers assistance to families to help with the cost of child care aged 0-13 years.

There are 3 factors that will determine a family's level of Child Care Subsidy, which include:

- Combined annual family income
- Activity test – the activity level of both parents
- Service type – type of child care service and whether the child attends school

Families who wish to receive Child Care Subsidy as reduced fees must apply through the [myGov](#) website. This includes completing the Child Care Subsidy activity test. Child Care Subsidy is paid directly to our Service to be passed on to families as a fee reduction. Families will contribute to their childcare fees and pay the difference between the fee charged by our Service and the subsidy amount received. This is called the 'gap fee'.

On enrolment we will need the Customer Reference Number (CRN) of the person linked with the child, along with the child's CRN so we can confirm the attendance and ensure that you are receiving the appropriate subsidy.

Families who have more than one child in care receiving the child care subsidy are eligible for the higher second child percentage through CCS. From 7 March 2022, families with children aged five or under in care will get a higher subsidy for their second child and youngest child receiving CCS subsidy. Eligible higher rate children will receive a 30% higher subsidy, up to a maximum 95%.

Children eligible for the higher CCS rate will have the increase automatically included in their CCS percentage reported to services.

Complying Written Agreement- CWA (Enrolment acceptance)

A Complying Written Agreement (CWA) is an agreement between our Service and a parent or guardian to provide childcare in exchange for fees. The CWA includes information about your child's enrolment including your child's full name and date of birth, the date the arrangement is effective from, session details and details of the fees to be charged. Before Child Care Subsidy can be paid, you must approve the enrolment information within the CWA via the [MyGov website](#).

Absences

We encourage families to notify the Service as soon as possible if your child will be absent for any day or session you have booked. It is recommended that absences are notified to the Service by email or by phone.

Child Care Subsidy will be paid for any absence from an approved childcare service your child attends for up to 42 days per child per financial year. Additional absences beyond 42 days may be approved for specific reasons with supporting documentation. Please talk to us about additional absences.

You can access your child's absence record on your online statement by selecting '[View Child Care Details and Payments](#)' on your [Centrelink online account](#). You can also do this using the [Express plus Families mobile app](#)

Public holidays will be counted as an absence if your child would normally have attended the Service on that weekday, and fees have been charged for that day for your child.

If your child has not attended our Service for 14 continuous weeks, your child's enrolment will be cancelled, and Centrelink will stop paying your CCS subsidy.

Fees in arrears/ Financial Support

If fees are outstanding a reminder letter will be issued after one week and then again at two weeks if fees are still outstanding. Should fees still be outstanding after three weeks, a debt recovery process will be implemented. At any time during the debt recovery process the family will be encouraged to enter a debt agreement with the service to repay outstanding fees. Playhouse Early Education and Care reserves the right to suspend/withdraw your child's enrolment if your account is overdue after 3 weeks and a final letter terminating or suspending the child's position will be issued.

If you are experiencing financial hardship, please speak to the Nominated Supervisor or Director. Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) may be available to support your family. We may be able to organise a payment plan before your fees go into arrears.

Withdrawal from care/Reducing Enrolment Days

The service requires a **2 week** written notice period to withdraw and/or reduce enrolment days for your child/ren from any permanent booking at the service. Children are not able to attract CCS for any days after the last day your child physically attends our Service. *There are some circumstances where CCS can be paid after the last day your child physically attends with an approved reason.*

Service Closing Time and Late Collection Fees

Please be aware our Service and program closes at 6:30pm. In accordance with National Regulations and licensing, we are not permitted to have children in the service after 6:30pm. A late fee is incurred for children collected after 6.30pm.

The fee is \$1 per minute per child for every 15 minutes and will be added to your next account. The late fee is strictly adhered to, as two staff members are required to remain at the Service until all children are collected.

If we are unable to contact either the parent or a person nominated by the parent on the enrolment form to arrange collection of the child/children within an hour of the Service closing, we may need to contact the Police or other authorities to take responsibility of your child.

Permanent and Casual Bookings

Permanent bookings are an ongoing booking that:

- remains the same from one week to the next
- are chargeable regardless of attendance (**unless you have provided the adequate notice to swap your days**)

Casual bookings are one off bookings that:

- can be booked at the last minute for emergency care. This is provided that we have vacancies. If there is no vacancy, we will put your child on a casual waiting list and will contact you if a vacancy becomes available

- are designed to support families taking on casual work and shift work
- can be cancelled at no cost, provided 24-hour notice via email is given

Waiting list

Casual waiting list: We will create a casual waiting list for casual bookings that have been requested for a session that we are at capacity. If positions become available, we will allocate them in order of application whilst adhering to recommendations of *Priority of Access*.

Permanent waiting list: If you would like to increase your child/ren's permanent sessions but there are no permanent vacancies, your child/ren will be placed on a waiting list until a position becomes available. Positions will be allocated in order of application, whilst adhering to *our Priority of Access process*.

Priority of Access

Our Service aims to assist families who are most in need and may prioritise filling vacancies with children who are:

- at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- a child of a sole parent who satisfies, or parents who both satisfy, the activity test through paid employment.

Swap/Change Days

We have a Change days/Swap days policy in place to support families and to help maintain a healthy care environment. If there is adequate staffing and a position available within our centre ratios, Playhouse Early Education and Care is happy to swap your child's regular day of care for another day that week. Swap days must be made within the same week of care due to CCS allocated hours. Please see Nominated Supervisor for all Swap Day requests.

Service Policies and Procedures

You will find a hard copy of our Service policies and procedures in the centre office and a digital copy on our online platform OWNA. We expect our staff and families to always adhere to our policies and procedures to ensure we maintain compliance and abide by the National Law and National Regulations.

Educators cannot make exceptions for individuals unless the Nominated Supervisor or Management do so on account of serious and/or unusual circumstances.

We are constantly reviewing our policies and procedures and ask for staff and family participation to ensure our policies and procedures adhere to the needs of our families and meet required regulations. Your involvement helps us to improve our Service and may lead us to change our policies and procedures.

Arrival and Departure

Each day, you must sign your child in upon arrival and sign out upon departure and note the date and times. We are required by legislation to maintain our attendance record at all times. This record may be used in the event of an emergency situation at the Service.

Our staff have a duty of care to your child and will only allow your child to be released into the care of either a parent, guardian or an authorised nominee as listed on your child's enrolment record. If your child needs to be collected by another person for some reason, an authority to collect form must be provided in writing to the Nominated Supervisor. Our staff may ask to view photo identification of the adult collecting your child from care to confirm their identity.

Orientation-Preparing for your child's first day

Orientation is an important start for your child and family to connect to our Service. We encourage each child to attend our Service in the company of a family member before they start their first day with us. This gives you and your child the opportunity to gain an understanding of our program, the lay out of the room, where to put your child's belongings, provide educators with additional information about your child and how we can best support their transition and settling in period. The Nominated Supervisor will contact you to arrange suitable times and days for visits. Our orientation process is flexible and works in with the needs of each individual family and child to ensure a smooth and successful transition.

If your child is reluctant to attend, please discuss this with their assigned educator so that they can develop strategies with you to support the transition from home to the Service.

The first day/week

The first day in a new service is a big step for you and your child. Please don't be alarmed if your child experiences some separation anxiety. This is normal and our experienced educators will assist you and your child through this transition period. We encourage parents to stay as long as they like during the morning drop off to help your child settle into an activity. There may be tears and extra tight hugs when saying goodbye for the first few weeks but there are always cuddles, reassurance and genuine care from educators for both the children and their families. Sometimes this experience is upsetting more so for the family, not necessarily the child. We are understanding to this and offer support through phone calls during the day, photos, and open communication with our families.

Saying goodbye

Ideally, your child will be settled at an activity before you leave, however some children find it hard to settle until their parents have left the service. What works best is a set routine so try to establish the care routine from the orientation process. Being well organised and avoiding a rush usually results in a calm start to the day.

Most children will want to have a look around first to see who else has arrived and to look at what activities are available. Please explain to your child when you are leaving as they may become upset if they haven't had the opportunity to say goodbye. This will gain trust from the child, not only in you but in the educator, who is reassuring your child about their day and when you will return. Rest assured, we'll contact you if your child becomes distressed or upset throughout the day.

What you need to bring

BACKPACK

For independence, we work towards all children being able to recognise and open their own bag. You can help by allowing them to be involved in selecting their bag and taking ownership of it. Please ensure it is large enough to hold all their belongings and is clearly labelled.

SPARE CLOTHING

Every now and then, accidents occur, and it may be necessary for your child to get changed into a fresh set of clothes. Please include a complete change of clothes every day which can stay in your child's bag...just in case!

DRINK BOTTLE - OPTIONAL

A labelled drink bottle may be bought to the centre every day for water. Children are able to refill their drink bottle when necessary, throughout the day. We always provide water and cups, but a drink bottle is a great start to school readiness.

SUN HAT

A protective sun hat (either broad brimmed or legionnaire hat) must be worn every day when playing outside for protection against the sun. Please make sure to include it in your child's bag every day regardless of the weather conditions

Meals

Our Service promotes healthy eating habits and provides delicious and nutritious food for your child each day. We provide a nutritionally balanced breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and supper. We follow the Australian Dietary Guidelines to ensure our meals are prepared to meet the dietary requirements for all children.

We cater for the dietary requirements of all children enrolled at our Service. Please discuss your child's special requirements, allergies and any other medical conditions with the nominated supervisor.

Breastfeeding

We are a breastfeeding friendly service. Mothers who are breastfeeding are welcome to attend the Service during the day to feed their infant. We have a private, clean and quiet area for mothers to breastfeed their infants or express breastmilk.

Families that are breastfeeding should speak to the Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person to be aware of our policies on storing and serving breast milk.

Families that are formula feeding should also consult our Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person to be aware on how we need the formula prepared and stored. Regular communication is encouraged to ensure your infant's needs are met as they grow.

Please refer to our *Breastfeeding Policy*.

Clothing

It is helpful to your child if they are dressed in non- restrictive, serviceable, and easy to wash clothes so that they feel free to join in all the activities and to develop independence. Shoes also, need to allow children freedom to run, climb, hop, and jump as well as being easy for the child to take off and put on by themselves. Runners and sandals are recommended and an appropriate shoe to wear.

Thongs, slippers and gumboots are not suitable, and we prefer that these are NOT worn to the Service. Also, please consider clothing that enables the child to move around easily and allows children to be independent in dressing. Clothing such as long dresses, overalls, braces, belts and stiff buttons can prove a problem for children who need to go to the toilet. We require all t-shirts to have sleeves (no mid-drift tops) and hats that are broad brimmed are essential for effective sun safety.

Toys

The Service has an abundance of toys and adequate resources and we ask that children do not bring in toys from home. This eliminates toys getting lost, broken, disappointment for other children and responsibility on educators to track numerous toys throughout the day.

Behaviour Guidance

We encourage children to engage in cooperative and pro-social behaviour. We give children the opportunity to self-regulate their behaviours during play to develop their confidence and self-esteem. Educators follow a *Behaviour Guidance Policy* that extends across the whole Service giving consistency of expectation in all rooms. We use a positive approach to guiding children's behaviour to help them develop a respect for others, for property and respect for self. If you require further information on this policy, please ask educators and refer to our Policy manual.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing is more than just feeling happy, it is about our overall health- physical, social, emotional and mental wellbeing. We provide opportunities for your child to develop a strong sense of wellbeing through dance, movement, yoga, mindfulness, music and relaxation.

Physical Play

Physical play includes activities that use physical movements to allow children to use their energy, enhance their concentration, motivation, learning and wellbeing. We feel physical play is a vital part of everyday life. We believe in providing children with a range of physical activities and experience on a daily occurrence for them to challenge their large and small muscles, allowing them to gain increasing control over their bodies as they learn the importance of physical play.

Physical play provides children with the opportunity to:

- develop strong bones and muscles
- improve strength and balance
- develop Flexibility and coordination
- develop Fundamental Movement Skills
- develop spatial awareness
- develop mathematical concepts
- be confident as they learn to control their bodies and understand their limits
- learn to cooperate and share with others
- promote healthy growth and development

Rest and Sleep

Rest and sleep routines vary according to individual needs. We aim to make rest time a relaxed, pleasant time for all children. We provide beds for children and play soft, calm relaxing music in the background. Your child may wish to bring a security item to have at rest time if they wish. Please feel free to discuss your child's rest or sleep needs with educators. Each day we provide information about the times your child rested or slept. Quiet activities, such as puzzles and books are available for those children who do not sleep throughout the day, although small rest and relaxation times are encouraged to support overall wellbeing for the child.

Sustainability

Our Service is passionate about sustainability. We believe in supporting children to appreciate and care for the environment by embedding sustainable practice into the daily operation of our Service, infrastructure and teaching.

In order to empower our sustainability program, we emphasise children's ability to make a difference, enabling them to learn and appreciate their environment in an engaging, fun and exciting manner. We do this by engaging children in discussion about sustainable practice, encouraging them to participate in a recycling program, reducing energy and conserving water. We aim to provide children with the skills and knowledge required to become environmentally responsible.

Birthdays

It is very exciting for a child to be having a birthday and celebrating their special day. If a cake is required for a child's birthday, please let the nominated supervisor know in advance and we will make the cake with the birthday child on their special day. A separate cupcake will be made for the birthday child to blow their candles out to avoid cross contamination by having only the birthday child blowing out the candles on their cake.

For further information, please see our Celebration Policy.

Sun Safety

Our Service implements a combination of sun protection measures to ensure the health and safety of your child at all times. We monitor the UV index levels daily and schedule outdoor activities when levels are safe. Our outdoor environment provides shade for play experiences and we conduct regular risk assessments to ensure the play space and equipment is safe for children.

Children and educators must wear hats and appropriate clothing, including footwear when outside. Educators will encourage children, including by way of modelling behaviour, to avoid excessive exposure to the sun and to wear suitable sunscreen (at least SPF 30+), which is reapplied according to the manufacturer's recommendations. We ask that children come to the Service with sunscreen already applied so they are able to participate in outdoor play immediately and not have to wait the 20 minutes after application. Consent to apply sunscreen is included in our enrolment form.

Please refer to Sun Safety Policy for further information

Parent Participation and Feedback

Our Service has an Open-Door Policy and actively seeks and encourages families to be involved in the Service. This can range from evaluating and adding input to your child's program and observations, volunteering within the Service and sharing skills and experiences that the children and the program will benefit from and providing feedback.

We respect that time is limited for most families and we ask that you inform us as to your preferred way of communication. We can arrange meetings with your child's educator at a time that suits you throughout the year and offer email, Facebook, Newsletters, daily information and pride ourselves on strong verbal communication on a daily basis. We seek input from families on all aspects of the Service but in particular, your child's goals, observations and programs.

If, for any reason you question or do not understand any aspect of the Service or your child's experience we have a *Family Complaints Policy* that supports all stakeholders in our community and like all policies, is available for families to consult and implement at any time. Copies of our policies are available in the office and parent library on the OWNA Portal. You are welcome to take a copy home or review it at your leisure.

Family involvement

We welcome and encourage the involvement of all parents/families at our Service. Your ideas, experiences and skills are greatly valued and will enable us to extend each child's interests, abilities and knowledge. There are many ways for your family to be involved. We understand that our busy lives can't always afford the time, however any contribution no matter how big or small is much appreciated. Here are just a few ideas.

Your occupation or hobby

You are the most important person in their world. We welcome all parents to the Service to talk about their occupation or a specific hobby (e.g- music, craft, cooking, special event). Family engagement and sharing experiences supports children's interests and these talks are the best educational resources you can provide for the Service. We use information that has come from these discussions about

occupations and hobbies in our program and the ideas explored which can turn into interest projects providing valuable learning and discovery.

The Program

We strongly encourage communication between families and educators to ensure continuity in what we are delivering to your child and acknowledge that the role of the educator is to work in partnership with families, children's first, and most influential educators.

Culture

We aim to foster quality, caring, respectful relationships among families and community and invite you to share aspects of your culture, history, language, and celebrations with our Service. Your involvement greatly assists us to enrich the lives of all our families and children. Our service is culturally respectful and a safe and inclusive service for all families within our community.

Reading

Children love to read and be read to. If any family members have the time, please contact your room educators to organise a day for reading. We love grandparents visiting our Service as well, or any other special members of your family who wish to participate in some reading visits to our service!

Recyclable items

We are always on the lookout for recyclable items for the rooms. Empty food containers, ribbons, wrapping paper, towel tubes (excluding toilet rolls, egg cartons or milk cartons due to hygiene and allergy related concerns and policies) paper or anything interesting from your work or home environment is much appreciated. There are some amazing creations to explore with various upcycles and recycled items. This allows children's creative flare to shine, whilst supporting the environment and promoting recycling and sustainability.

Special events

Our Service organises special centre events throughout the year. We will communicate these to families in a timely manner prior to any event. We always encourage parent input in all aspects of these events and love parent participation. Some of these include fundraising, celebrations and information sessions.

Suggestions

Parents are always welcome to visit or call the Service at any time throughout the day. If you have any suggestions or ideas on how we best can work together in the Service, please let us know.

If you have any concerns or queries, please see your child's educator or the Nominated Supervisor. We have specific procedures in place if you would like to formally raise any concerns.

Please see Family complaints policy

Health and Hygiene

Our Service has effective and systematic risk management systems in place to identify any possible risk of hazards to our learning environment and practices. All staff diligently practice and model personal hygiene measures such as hand washing, cough and sneeze etiquette and disposal of tissues. We request that all children and visitors to our service wash their hands or use the alcohol-based hand sanitiser upon arrival.

Our educators teach and model correct hand washing techniques to children and regularly clean and disinfect high touch objects throughout the service to reduce the spread of infection.

When should I **NOT** send my child to the Service?

Our Service is a busy and demanding day for the bodies and minds of our children. We are not equipped to care for sick children; however, we will do everything we can to comfort a child who has become sick whilst in our care.

To minimise the spread of infections and diseases, and maintain a healthy environment for all children, educators and staff, we implement recommendations developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)- *Staying Healthy in Childcare*. Our policies and procedures for *Sick Children* and the *Control of Infectious Diseases* are available for all families to view.

Please monitor your child's health and do not bring your child to the Service if they are suffering from an infectious disease/illness or are generally unwell.

If your child becomes ill whilst at the Service, we will contact you or an authorised nominee to collect your child. If your child is unable to be collected, educators will contact the child's emergency contact for collection. When your child is collected, you will be provided with an *Injury, Incident, Trauma and*

Illness Record completed by the educator which includes information about your child's illness, their symptoms, general behaviour and any action taken. You will be requested to sign and acknowledge the details in this record.

If your child has been vomiting or had diarrhoea, they will be excluded for 24 hour exclusion Period and 48 hour exclusion period during an outbreak. For certain illnesses, a medical clearance certificate may be required before your child returns.

Infectious Diseases

The National Health and Medical Research Council have supplied the following information regarding minimum exclusion period for children from an early childhood education and care service. Please inform staff if your child has any of the following so that we can notify the Public Health Unit and other families of any infectious disease/illness. (Confidentiality is always maintained).

Recommended exclusion periods- Poster Staying Healthy: Preventing Infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services

CONDITION	EXCLUSION
Hand, foot and mouth disease	Until all blisters have dried
HIB	Exclude until medical certificate of recovery is received
Hepatitis A	Exclude until a medical certificate of recovery is received, but not before 7 days after the onset of jaundice or illness
Herpes- Cold sores	Young children unable to comply with good hygiene practices should be excluded while the lesion is weeping. Lesions to be covered by dressing, where possible
Influenzas and flu-like illnesses	Exclude until well
Measles	Exclude for at least 4 days after onset of rash
Meningitis (Bacterial)	Exclude until well
Meningococcal Infection	Exclude until adequate carrier eradication therapy has been completed
Mumps	Exclude for 9 days or until swelling goes down (whichever is sooner)
Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	Exclude the child for 5 days after starting antibiotic treatment
Rubella (German measles)	Exclude until fully recovered or for at least 4 days after the onset of rash
Salmonella	Exclude until diarrhoea ceases

Streptococcal Infection (including scarlet fever)	Exclude until the child has received antibiotic treatment for at least 24 hours and the child feels well
Tuberculosis	Exclude until a medical certificate from an appropriate health authority is received
Worms (intestinal)	Exclude if diarrhoea present

If your child is unimmunised according to our records, then they will be excluded until the threat has passed and upon advice of the Public Health Unit

Immunisation

The Public Health Act 2010 requires all families to provide an Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) for their child prior to enrolment in an early childhood education and care service. The immunisation history statement must show that each enrolled child is up to date with immunisations for their age.

The relevant vaccinations are those under the National Immunisation Program (NIP), which covers the vaccines usually administered before age five. These vaccinations must be recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).

The only unimmunised children who can be enrolled in child care (after 1 January 2018) are those who are on a recognised catch-up schedule or those who are unimmunised due to medical reasons as described in the Australian Immunisation Handbook. Parents must provide an AIR Immunisation History Form or an AIR Immunisation Medical Exemption Form upon enrolment.

In the case of an outbreak of any vaccine preventable disease, management will contact families as soon as possible. We ask that families immediately inform our Service if someone in their family is diagnosed with an infectious disease to help minimise the risk to other children, families and educators.

We are legally required to notify the Public Health Unit of any cases of vaccine preventable diseases occurring at our Service. For an up to date immunisation schedule, please refer to your enrolment pack.

Medication

If your child requires medication whilst at our Service, you must complete an *Administration of Medication Record* to give your consent for an educator to administer prescribed medication to your child. Medication must be given directly to an educator for appropriate safe storage.

Educators can only administer medication that is:

- prescribed by a registered medical practitioner (with instructions attached to the medication or in written form from the medical practitioner)
- in its original packaging and have the original label clearly showing your child's name
- before the expiry/use by date.

Upon collection of your child at the end of the day, you or an authorised person will be requested to sign *the Administration of Medication Form*.

Incidents, injury or trauma

We aim to minimise the risk of accidents and injury as much as possible however, through play, exploration and adventure, children sometimes have accidents. We always have an educator with a First Aid, emergency asthma, anaphylaxis management and CPR qualification on shift at all times we provide education and care to children. First Aid kits are located throughout the Service.

In the event of a minor injury, first aid will be provided as required. An *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record* will be completed and when you collect your child, you will be notified about the injury and asked to acknowledge and sign the record. If your child injures their head, even if it is a small bump, you will be contacted to advise you of the injury. Our educators will continue to monitor your child closely and advise if you should come and collect them.

If an injury or incident is serious and we believe urgent medical attention is required, the Nominated Supervisor will contact you immediately. If we cannot contact a parent or guardian, we will attempt to contact an authorised nominee for consent. Where you or your authorised nominee cannot be contacted, we may call an ambulance. If you are unable to meet the ambulance at the Service, we will send one of our educators/staff members to accompany your child in the ambulance.

Please note that Ambulance cover is the responsibility of each family.

An *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record* will be completed, and a parent will be required to acknowledge and sign this record. A copy of any documentation from the hospital or treating doctor will also be requested. Our Service will also be required to notify the Regulatory Authority in the event of any serious incident or injury. In these circumstances, you may be contacted by our Approved Provider and the Regulatory Authority to follow up the incident and actions taken by our Service.

Safety in our Service

Emergency and evacuation procedures

Our Service conducts risk assessments regularly and develops emergency management plans for a range of possible hazards. Throughout the year we follow our policies and procedures to carry out emergency and evacuation drills. These may occur at any given time throughout the day and week to ensure all children know what to do in case of an emergency. Emergency and evacuation drills are carried out in a well-organised and orderly manner and will simulate a range of possible emergency situations such as fire (bush fire), lock down or flood. Under regulations, we are required to practice emergency and *emergency management and evacuation drills every three months*.

Educators are trained to use the fire extinguishers that are in the Service. An emergency evacuation plan and lock down procedure are displayed in every room and exit locations are clearly indicated.

Drop off and pick up time

Early childhood education and care services are busy places especially during the morning drop off and afternoon pickup. We ask that parents be extremely mindful of danger when arriving and departing from our Service.

- Please always hold your child's hand in the carpark area
- Be alert of reversing drivers in the car park as it is very difficult to see small children
- Use the kerbside, rear passenger door when getting your child into and out of their restraint
- Never leave a child or infant in the car unattended
- Never leave the front entry door/gate open
- Always do a visual check around your vehicle before driving
- Please ensure children do not enter areas in the Service that are for adults/staff only.

Workplace Health and Safety

We are committed in providing an environment that is safe and healthy for every employee, volunteer, child, family and visitor. We have made every reasonable effort to minimise the risk of serious injury and request all persons to our Service to adhere to our policies regarding Workplace Health and Safety.

Each morning, our educators conduct daily safety checks of the indoor and outdoor environment and will alert management of any potential risk or hazard to children to ensure this is rectified before children use the equipment or area.

We welcome all feedback regarding the safety of our Service. If you see something that concerns you regarding safe work practices, the safety of building and equipment or general work health and safety issues, please contact the Nominated Supervisor immediately.

Social Media

We use social media to communicate, share information and celebrate what is happening in our Service with enrolled families and our service community.

We promote safety and wellbeing of all children and are committed to ensure safe online environments when engaging in digital technology including social media. Our social media accounts are managed by the Nominated Supervisor and we set the highest level of privacy and security settings on the accounts. Content is regularly scanned, and any offensive language or comments removed immediately, and these users blocked.

Photographs of your child will only be added if written authorisation has been provided on the enrolment form.

We maintain appropriate privacy of families, children and educators by not publishing any personal information online.

Stay connected and find us on Facebook

Privacy and Confidentiality

We are committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of children, individuals and families and have policies in place to ensure strict confidentiality is maintained.

To plan programs for your child/ren, we need to collect information from you. This information helps us to assess and plan programs in partnership with you. We do not disclose personal information about you or your child to other people or organisations without your consent unless we are required to do so by law. We do not ask for personal information about you or your child from other professionals or organisations without your consent. You can look at the information in your child's file at any time or request a copy of information in the file.

Our *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* is available to view at any time. This policy sets out how we ensure our Service acts in accordance with the requirements of the Australian Privacy Principles and the Privacy Act 1988. We ensure all personal information is protected, records and documents are maintained and stored in accordance with Education and Care Services National Regulations and that all staff understand the requirements of the Notifiable Data Breaches (NDB) scheme. Any Privacy complaints will be managed promptly and in a consistent manner as outlined in our *Dealing with complaints Policy*.

Our Service is required to keep and maintain detailed records about children, parents and staff in accordance with relative legislation contained in the National Law and Regulations and Family Assistance Law. We ensure all records are stored in a secure and locked location. We must keep records for the prescribed periods of times as legislated related to child enrolment, attendance, medication records, incident, injury, trauma and illness records, child assessments and any relevant legal information/documents. Full details about record keeping is available in our *Record Keeping and Retention Policy*.